
Central to Eveleigh Urban Transformation and Transport Program

Final Report on Engagement Activities and Feedback from Aboriginal Community Members, Organisations and Stakeholders (Phase 1 – 2015)

Prepared by



December 2015

CONTENTS

DISCLAIMER	3
INTRODUCTION	4
BACKGROUND TO CENTRAL TO EVELEIGH PROGRAM	5
ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES AND PROCESS	6
BACKGROUND	8
SUMMARY OF COMMUNITY FEEDBACK	12
SUGGESTIONS FOR LONG-TERM ENGAGEMENT MECHANISMS AND GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORKS	42
CONCLUSIONS AND NEXT STEPS	49
APPENDIX A – LINE OF INQUIRY AND PROMPT QUESTIONS	50
APPENDIX B – CONTACT LISTING	53

Disclaimer

The comments and quotes included in this report are not to be taken as a final representation of the feedback about the Central to Eveleigh Urban Transformation and Transport Program and associated development questions.

They are a synopsis of diverse community, individual and organisational perspectives.

Ongoing discussions with community members and stakeholders will take place during September and October on request and, importantly, as a means by which long term engagement can be fostered and embedded.

Any additional specific comments will be provided to UrbanGrowth NSW as addendum reports.

INTRODUCTION

This report has been prepared by Origin Communications to provide an overall synopsis of the diverse individual, organisational and broader community perspectives of the Aboriginal communities in the Central to Eveleigh study area regarding proposed re-development and growth associated with the Central to Eveleigh Urban Transformation and Transport Program being managed by UrbanGrowth NSW.

On behalf of UrbanGrowth NSW, a series of interviews, meetings, workshops and informal discussion groups were conducted with members of Aboriginal communities, key stakeholders and organisations to gather feedback about the proposed vision and change processes for the study area.

A key aspect of this approach was to afford community members and organisations servicing the area an opportunity to voice concerns, identify priorities, highlight procedural steps and describe the types of housing, transport and community facilities that were desirable for the diverse Aboriginal community members in the area. These viewpoints are indicative only and represent an extremely diverse range of opinions and standpoints on various aspects of the Program.

The Central to Eveleigh study area surrounding the rail corridor has an extensive history and contemporary resonance for many Aboriginal people and communities. Redfern and its surrounding suburbs have a fundamental place in the Aboriginal story and the area remains one replete with active and vibrant cultural and community connections. For these reasons it is important to actively foster engagement and ongoing dialogue with the diverse communities associated with this area and ensure that Aboriginal community views are accurately reported and incorporated into the Central to Eveleigh Program.

These processes and discussions are an initial step toward developing ongoing community engagement during the life of the Program and ensuring that Aboriginal communities are provided with myriad avenues to become informed, involved and engaged in a long-term development program.

BACKGROUND TO CENTRAL TO EVELEIGH PROGRAM

UrbanGrowth NSW is the NSW Government's urban transformation agency. It is a state-owned corporation established in 2013 and integrates the roles of the former Landcom and, under the Development Corporation, takes on the responsibilities of the former Sydney Metropolitan Development Authority (SDMA) and the Redfern Waterloo Authority (RWA).

The Central to Eveleigh Urban Transformation and Transport Program aims to progressively re-develop the three (3) kilometre corridor of government-owned land in and around the rail corridor over the next 20-30 years.

This study area has been identified as an area with the potential to deliver quality housing, jobs and community facilities close to developing transport services for Sydney's rapidly growing population. Fundamental to this process is the need to ensure that the area remains one of Sydney's most desirable places to live, work and visit.

UrbanGrowth NSW is developing an urban transformation strategy for the area that will provide for key elements such as improved community connections, new shops, parks, playgrounds, childcare, community facilities, working spaces, and housing (including affordable housing). The proximity of the area to the CBD means that a mix of medium- and high-density development is planned.

To shape the Urban Transformation Strategy, UrbanGrowth NSW is engaging with community and other stakeholders as part of its planning process. These activities have obtained a broad range of residential, business, stakeholder and community input from across the study area. Origin Communications Australia, as a specialist agency in Aboriginal engagement and research, was employed to help UrbanGrowth NSW communicate with the local Aboriginal communities and get feedback on the Program.

The Urban Transformation Strategy will be exhibited for public feedback in the first half of 2016.

ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES AND PROCESS

Engagement activities were undertaken between June and September 2015 included:

- 6 presentations to advisory panels, inter-agency networks and organisations
- 22 interviews with Elders, community leaders, managers of services and agencies, and organisation representatives
- 12 semi-structured workshops and discussion forums (including general community, women's services, men's groups, aged care, youth services, students, parent groups, schools and local agencies)
- Additional follow-up meetings to provide further information, telephone feedback and informal discussions.

In total, over 100 people participated in the activities.

Engagement activities were undertaken by a team of four (4) experienced Aboriginal facilitators. The team members included a gender balance (2 females and 2 males) and included people from a range of Aboriginal Nations, including those with experience living and working in the study area.

Discussions were structured to provide a brief outline of the Program and then to get feedback on the vision and the most important principles and elements for Aboriginal people in the area.

Instead of strictly formed questions, the interviews and workshops were undertaken using a series of prompts to both build an understanding of the Program and seek feedback on the future of the area. Given the primary place that Redfern and surrounding areas have for Aboriginal people, this more informal approach was most important in garnering the key ideas and perspectives from Aboriginal people. Many aspects of the vision crossed cultural, historical, contemporary and social issues and comments were, therefore, able to be provided according to participant's priorities and viewpoints rather than simply following a rigid Q&A procedure.

The vision for the Central to Eveleigh Transformation program has been shaped by UrbanGrowth NSW with community feedback and reflects what transformation aims to achieve. The vision is expressed under the following four themes to support the urban transformation strategy:

1. Living

This will be a place with a broad supply and choice of homes and active and attractive public places to support social diversity and community connections.

2. Community

This will be a place that celebrates our rich diversity and heritage and gives everyone easy access to community and cultural facilities.

3. Working

This will be a dynamic and popular place to work – a place that connects many types of businesses and offers the right balance and diversity of service, trade, digital, education, innovation and creative industries.

4. Resilience

This will be a place that responds to economic, social and climatic changes in ways that benefit our quality of life and the quality of our environment – a place that harnesses new opportunities to enrich the community.

A summary of the engagement activities with the Aboriginal community undertaken to date is as follows:

- Stakeholders and key organisations within the Central to Eveleigh study area were contacted to arrange presentations and workshops to their respective constituencies and memberships.
- Initial face-to-face meetings and establishment discussions resulted in a high degree of interest and proposed involvement in additional workshops and sessions.
- There has been NO disengagement by key community groups to date and the levels of interest indicate a high level of commitment to establishing long-term engagement processes between UrbanGrowth NSW and the Aboriginal communities and organisations within the study area.
- Major community organisations requested presentations and workshops in line with their meeting schedules and membership activities (e.g. Wyanga Aged Care Elders lunch in August).
- A number of community groups have requested ongoing informal sessions to ensure that the information flow maintains momentum in the community. These sessions will be supported as needed.
- Any additional comments or queries will be submitted to UrbanGrowth NSW as addendum reports.

BACKGROUND

The Central to Eveleigh study area encompasses one of the most important areas for Aboriginal people in Australia. This significance reaches across historical, social and contemporary meanings and, for many individuals, represents the core of cultural struggle, identity and renewal.

The area represents significant country for the Gadigal Clan and broader Eora Nation. This is recognised both within the Aboriginal community and various Sydney region authorities (from NSW State Government to City of Sydney Council to the NSW Heritage Council).

The Central to Eveleigh study area naturally centres on this area of Redfern. It is the centerpiece of the proposed corridor and plays a vital role in framing the meaningful involvement of Aboriginal people in long-term activities associated with transformation of the Central to Eveleigh area.

The very name of “Redfern” has become synonymous with “Aboriginality” in the minds of many Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. It remains the signal location for Aboriginal people visiting or moving to Sydney. Historical and contemporary struggles for rights, recognition and respect have often had their genesis or their culmination in Redfern. The recently resolved protests and court actions regarding The Block provide a clear indication of the complexities and passions which this area engenders.

Whilst many people trace the significance of Redfern to Prime Minister Whitlam providing an initial grant for land purchases on “The Block” in 1973, the area in fact has far more extensive importance for Aboriginal people. This includes the millennia during which the peoples of the Gadigal Clan and the Eora Nation have maintained their connection with and responsibility for the land and waters. The consequences of British invasion in 1788 were initially borne by these same peoples who continue to do so.

During the development of Sydney as a major city this study area was one of the few areas in which Aboriginal people could safely reside (indeed, one of the few areas in which they were *permitted* to reside). As a result, many Aboriginal people from many Aboriginal Nations feel an unmistakable relationship with both the physical landscape and the cultural meaning imbued within it.

The Central to Eveleigh study area encompasses a number of distinct communities and urban areas. In terms of statistical population data this creates some difficulties. Areas such as Redfern have traditionally been identified as discrete Collection Districts (CDs) for the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), however, this excludes the larger populations in Waterloo, Alexandria and similar surrounding suburbs from detailed population data reporting.

This can be seen in the variance between population statistics by different agencies:

- The 2011 Census reported only 294 individuals living in Redfern who were Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.
- The City of Sydney LGA reports an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population of 2,681 individuals.
- Sydney Local Health District which covers much of this area (west to Concord) reports a district population of 6,586 individuals.

In looking at the Central to Eveleigh study area it is important to note that there are large populations of Aboriginal people in Surry Hills, Chippendale, Darlington, Erskineville, Alexandria, Waterloo and proximate suburbs.

The following statistical profile is drawn from Aboriginal Affairs NSW data updated this month (December 2015)¹:

Population: In 2015, 225,349 Aboriginal people resided in NSW, representing 3% of the NSW population and 30.9% of the Aboriginal population in Australia.

Age: In 2011, the median age of the NSW Aboriginal population was 21 years, compared with 38 years for the non-Aboriginal population. 56% of the Aboriginal population was aged 24 years and below, compared with 31.5% of the non-Aboriginal population.

Mixed partnerships: In 2013, 78% of NSW Aboriginal babies were born to mixed partnerships (2013).

Life expectancy: In 2010-12, the life expectancy for Aboriginal people in NSW was 70.5 years for males and 74.6 years for females, compared to 79.8 years for non-Aboriginal males and 83.1 years for non-Aboriginal females.

Infant mortality: Between 2009 and 2013, the rate of infant mortality was 3.9 per 1,000 for Aboriginal infants, compared with 3.6 per 1,000 for non-Aboriginal infants.

Subjective well-being: In 2011-13, 66% of Aboriginal people assessed their own health as good, very good or excellent, compared with 86% of the total population.

Disability: In 2011, Aboriginal people in NSW were nearly twice as likely as non-Aboriginal people to require assistance with daily activities.

Land ownership: In 2009, 0.5% of NSW land was owned by Aboriginal people.

¹ Aboriginal Affairs NSW, Key Data-NSW Aboriginal Profile, Research and Evaluation @ December 2015.

Early childhood education: In 2013, 60% of Aboriginal 4-5 year olds were enrolled in preschool, compared with 72% of non-Aboriginal children. In 2012, 36.7% of Aboriginal children were developmentally vulnerable on school entry, compared with 19.9% of the general population.

Reading and numeracy: Between 2008 and 2014, there was no change in years 5, 7 and 9 at or above national minimum standard in reading or numeracy for both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal children. For year 3, there was no change in reading and the rate of numeracy for both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal children.

Year 12 attainment: In 2011-13, 57% of Aboriginal people in NSW aged 20-24 years had completed Year 12 or higher, compared with 87% of the non-Aboriginal population.

Post-school education: In 2013, 2,200 Aboriginal people commenced university in NSW, compared with 1,000 Aboriginal students in 2004. In 2011, 39% of Aboriginal people and 61% of non-Aboriginal people aged 20-64 had a post school qualification.

Child protection: In 2013-14, Aboriginal children and young people in NSW were the subject of 20% of all child protection reports and represented one-third of all children and young people in out-of-home-care.

Language: In 2011, less than 1% of Aboriginal people in NSW spoke an Aboriginal language at home.

Community safety: In 2014, Aboriginal people in NSW were 3 times more likely to be a victim of assault compared to non-Aboriginal people.

Employment: In 2012-13, 45% of Aboriginal people aged 15-64 years in NSW were employed, compared with 76% of non-Aboriginal people.

Unemployment: In 2011, the unemployment rate in NSW for Aboriginal people and non-Aboriginal people aged 18-24 years was 26% and 11.4% respectively; and for 15-64 years 17% and 5.8% respectively.

Self-employment: In 2011, 8% of employed Aboriginal people in NSW were owner/managers or contributing family workers compared with 17% of the non-Aboriginal workforce. Between 2006 and 2011, there was a 33% increase in the number of Aboriginal employers.

Housing and home ownership: In 2011, 39% of Aboriginal households in NSW owned or were purchasing their home, compared with 67% of non-Aboriginal households.

Household income: In 2011-13, the median weekly household income for Aboriginal households in NSW was \$457, compared with \$890 for non-Aboriginal households.

Incarceration rate: In 2014, Aboriginal people in NSW were 11 times more likely than non-Aboriginal people to be imprisoned. Aboriginal young people were detained at 14 times.

The gentrification of many areas within the study area (not the least of which is Redfern itself), coupled with the new development of the periphery (such as Sydney University and Broadway) creates new challenges for Aboriginal residents and those who hold the area close to their hearts. In the past many authorities and agencies have exercised control or development

responsibility in discrete zones within the study area. These have included the Redfern-Waterloo Authority, the Indigenous Land Corporation, the Heritage Council, City of Sydney and myriad others. Central to Eveleigh necessarily builds upon this chequered past and will need to develop consistent and long-term mechanisms for engaging and involving Aboriginal people from across the social, economic, political and cultural spectrums.

The palpably visceral regard in which this area is held by such a diverse range of people only serves to heighten the sensitivities surrounding *any* development proposals or potential changes to the area. The extensive history associated with the study area includes pre-invasion wetlands and community practice through to later land use for tanneries and market gardens. Perhaps most resonant for many current residents is the importance of housing and the associated community and social structures that evolved across the study area.

The urbanisation and repeated waves of development that have been undertaken in the study area have not diminished the connection to the land itself, its traditional meanings and importance, or the spiritual nature of the area. This last aspect is often regarded as “intangible” in Western terms, however, there is increasing recognition under NSW and national Heritage Legislation of its importance and centrality to development approaches.

Importantly, it also serves to eclipse the many communities located on the periphery of Redfern which are *central* to the Central to Eveleigh corridor development. This aspect has highlighted the fundamental resonance of cultural identity and increasing challenges to the ongoing presence of Aboriginal people and families in the Redfern area - not the least of which is Sydney’s burgeoning housing affordability crisis and the parallel pressures on access for those who are not already positioned in the commercial or residential markets.

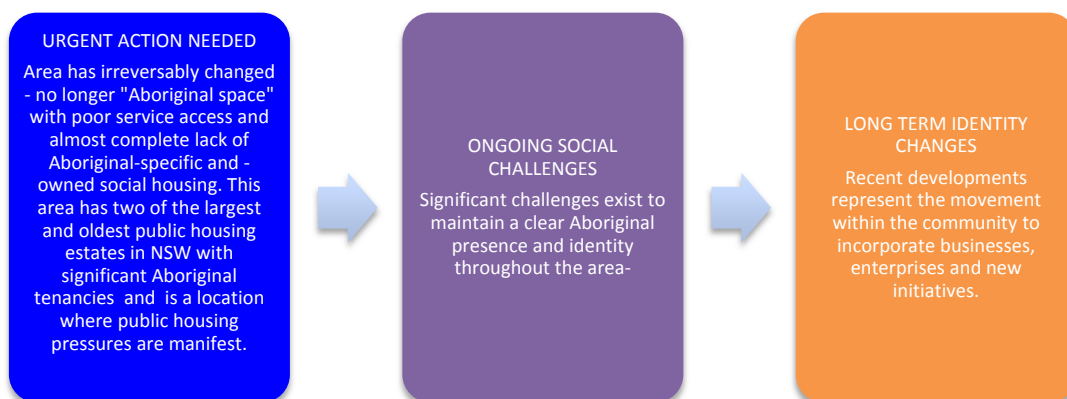
Central to Eveleigh provides an opportunity for these divergent views and opinions to be heard, integrated in planning processes, discussed openly in community forums, and ultimately used to develop a coherent and viable plan for the entire Central to Eveleigh study area which validates, protects and enhances the cultural integrity of the area and guarantees the centrality of Aboriginal culture, practices, people, families and organisations in future development of the area.

SUMMARY OF COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

The understanding of “community” varies widely amongst residents and interested parties. These divergent notions of community will be absolutely vital in addressing design and development approaches for the Central to Eveleigh Program – there is no single definition of the Central to Eveleigh community.

Regardless of proximate residency, length of tenure, nature of cultural connection this sense of community is, for many people, both a core personal identity and a legacy they strive to protect. The special nature of the local community is, therefore, a mix of family history, cultural survival, social struggle and significant achievement.

As with other sections of Sydney there are distinct communities within the geographical footprint, each of which has its own discrete identifiers and characteristics. However, given the historical and contemporary centrality of Redfern to the Aboriginal social and political struggle these characteristics are somewhat intangible. This wide spectrum of community perspectives about “community” can be summarised as follows:



Despite this diversity there are significant areas of *apparent* consensus regarding the important community features that should be retained and those that require active support to maintain resilience through any future development processes. These are discussed further under the various Central to Eveleigh theme headings, however, a snapshot of the community issues and priorities is included below.

Please note: this snapshot is not listed by priority listing – it is a summary of the general feedback areas and suggestions.

HOUSING

Housing was the priority topic throughout discussions. However, this encapsulated concerns well beyond simplistic residential design, broadening to incorporate the range of community integrity, cohesion, living spaces and the environment. The community wanted to find ways of encouraging Aboriginal people to stay in the area and strengthen the community.

Throughout the consultation there was clear demand for more public and social housing for Aboriginal people.

“This was the area where Aboriginal people were allowed to live. No one else would live here but it was good enough for my mum.”

A number of people felt they were being pushed out of the area due to higher rents and examples of “exclusive” private developments where they did not feel welcome or included. Reasons included high rents, private rentals being sold and a reduction in available public housing. Concerns about access to safe and affordable housing area supported by recent studies²:

- 39% of Aboriginal households are home owners (compared with 66% of NSW generally);
- 19% in public housing (compared with 5% of NSW households generally);
- 7.8% of NSW homeless population are Aboriginal people.

“Local people are to be housed first and not be pushed out by people coming into the area.”

There was a general sense that housing options were becoming increasingly limited. A number of people raised that they felt the area was now “all trendy” and this had affected housing affordability. The retention of social housing in the area was also seen as very important to keeping the character of the local area.

The most notable comment regarding much younger grandchildren concerned the need for them to be able to “grow up here close to family” and not have to move away due to costs. There were however a diverse range of opinions regarding the co-location of young and old people with many older residents expressing a desire for a degree of separation due to noise, safety concerns and social ambience whereas others clearly want to be housed near their family, especially those with younger nieces and nephews or grandchildren for whom they are responsible or wish to maintain easy contact).

“Clevo [Cleveland Street High School] had so many local kids through there. Gotta make sure our kids can stay here an’ get the same good education as any other kid.”

Suggestions

- More social and public housing for Aboriginal people.
- Targeted family housing and high-risk family accommodation.
- Large houses and townhouses are required for Aboriginal families.
- *“If family needs a place to stay that’s all there is to that. Doesn’t matter what Housing mob says. Where else should they go?”*
- Clarify who would be responsible for providing Aboriginal housing.

² Data drawn referenced in *Shelter NSW – Housing Factsheet 2013-14*.

- New co-operative housing organisations to broaden the range of social and affordable housing opportunities.
- Priority housing for mums and kids, particularly across the range of social, public and emergency housing portfolios, as family groups are often in the most urgent need yet the most difficult to place in accommodation.
- Clear planning guidelines and modeling to demonstrate long-term viability and access for Aboriginal tenants in differing sectors of the Central to Eveleigh study area.

COMMUNITY AND IDENTITY

There was a strong sense of community expressed throughout all consultations. There was also a pride in the area and a number of people wanted to recapture the sense of community (relevant to both The Block and beyond) and efforts should be made to recognise the history and presence of Aboriginal people. The special nature of the local community is a mix of family history, cultural survival, social struggle and significant achievement.

The fundamental issue expressed was one of continuing recognition of Aboriginal people throughout the Central to Eveleigh precinct. People wanted to find ways to support Aboriginal people to stay in the area in the face of high rents, private rentals being sold, public housing reductions.

“My mum grew up here. Her mum came here.... Just down the corner there. Even though I’m Wiradjuri I have grown (and) walked this land. I’ve raised my kids here on Eora land and they have it in their bones too. Doesn’t matter where we live this is the place we know we can always come home to.”

Associated with this was the fear of some concerning a loss of “community” if changes resulted in non-residents and non-Aboriginal people visiting the area for a “good time” or “cheap shops”. This fear was linked by some to the CBD lock out laws which meant that local establishments were being filled with “piss heads” and “people out for a big night”.

There was recognition that it was a diverse Aboriginal community with differences between areas, for example the old areas west of Redfern Station and the eastern areas around the National Centre for Indigenous Excellence (NCIE).

During the consultation there was a wide range of significant locations and cultural aspects suggested for recognition. When asked what they would love to see, feel and walk through in 30 years’ time, the responses included proud, safe, respected, understood and Koori voices, faces and language.

“Coming to a real Aboriginal proud place. Where everybody is welcome and understand our beautiful culture.”

“Make this a community again.”

There were some, however, who felt that despite these challenges a “sense of pride” and “resilience” would ensure continued presence in the Central to Eveleigh area and surrounding suburbs. It is important to recapture the sense of community in Redfern (“The Block and beyond”) through active support and funding for community events, family-friendly activities, social gatherings, cultural celebrations and so on (specific government and corporate support is essential).

“Our mob fought for everything in the past. Just have to keep doin’ it I suppose.”

There was a strong emphasis placed on supporting cultural expression through all forms of the arts, particularly public displays and permanent installations.

The suggestions listed below would need to be developed in close consultation with Elders, traditional owners and family custodians. It was raised that the community was not equivalent to community organisations.

Suggestions for community included

- Create an Aboriginal brand for local business (like the healthy heart tick).
- Have a clear Aboriginal “brand” or “identifier” for the area.
- Recognition of traditional owners and clear statements regarding the ongoing role for Aboriginal people in the area.
- *“Definitely the Elders of the area and the TO’s [Traditional Owners] who are still alive and who have passed.”*
- *“Have it clearly on signs that you’re driving on Gadigal Land.”*
- Naming of streets and buildings.
- *“Hand the place over to the traditional owners.”*
- *“Be proud and loud.”*
- *“More Kooris and Murris.”*

Suggestions for art and culture included

- *“paintings and murals... our people are visual people.”*
- More sculptures and designs by Aboriginal artists.
- Include Aboriginal artists at Carriageworks – should be a permanent gallery there already.
- Street art and sculptures
“Statues are good but you need to tell people the story behind it.”
- Murals and wall painting for young people
“they have talent but can’t express [themselves] without the gunjis [police] taking them in.”
- Animal figures and creations on the street corners, with the example of Adelaide Mall
- Recognise the importance of sporting fields, especially where Aboriginal players became famous.
- Recognise the importance of The Block.
- A regular program of cultural events.
- An Aboriginal market every week.

“A virtual museum that takes you through stages of history and speak about time before settlement to today. These can be 15 minutes and each stage has a different Aboriginal person who dresses up to meet that era in history. It can be interactive, film with artefacts, and then finally update of today and what we are doing.”

Examples of what’s working

- Barangaroo and Eora Journey for people familiar with these programs Federation Square in Melbourne.
- The NSW Art Gallery.
- Cairns with dance groups performing for tourists.
- The Canberra Museum (Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies and National Museum Campus).

- Memorials such as Myall Creek Massacre (including the community recognition and statements).
- Mt Druitt Hub which has access for community events and non-profit festivals.
- Suggested the railway line transformation (The New York High Line) would be *“fantastic and something we could do all the way from Newtown to Central”*.
- Muru Mittigar based at Penrith and cultural tours
“Somewhere like that we need here. Doesn’t matter who you are people will help you out and it’s friendly and safe.”
- Open art forums on school walls (regional NSW towns such as Bourke); pop up food festivals for community events (Dubbo); and an outdoor ice rink built in Brisbane for winter (free for children).

TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORT

Traffic and public transport was also raised with concerns over current congestion, pollution, noise and safety due to traffic, the number of trucks on Botany Street and the need for wider footpaths. The tensions between non-residents and “shopper tourists” was commonly raised due to parking issues, “buses full of bargain shoppers pulling up”, and a perceived increase in parking fines and enforcement. Several people highlighted the lack of disabled parking for Elders and community members with disability.

“You got all these Get Go [Go Get Car Share] cars on best corner spots but Aunt here can’t even pull up to the shop.”

There were issues raised about public transport. The train was highly used but there were concerns including the accessibility of Redfern Station and more local buses. While it was recognised that Redfern Station needed to be improved, there was concern this would be a “cover for shopping malls or a Town Hall rat run”.

There was also a large percentage of car owners and the main form of transport was driving, with bicycles not commonly used. Walking was common around the suburbs in the Central to Eveleigh precinct but this was most frequently reported for Redfern and Waterloo.

There were still challenges in getting a taxi in Redfern or Waterloo, particularly at night. The possibility of a new Metro station at Sydney or Waterloo was not well known.

Suggestions for traffic and transport included:

- Improve Redfern Station (too small, too tight, too many people trying to exit, cars driving past at speed, thin footpaths, poor lighting etc).
- More lifts at Redfern Station
“long overdue for fixing.”
- Put a bus lane over the railway so people can get into town easy.”
- Local buses for the community
“if you’re not a member of the club you can’t get home”.
- More parking and dedicated family spots.³

“Big families have lots of cars. Need spaces.”

³ This aspect was particularly related to the high density areas of Redfern and Waterloo with most parking being timed and expensive (especially for non-Sydney residents). The issue involves large family gatherings which necessarily entail family car transport from other areas (not residents requiring extra car spaces for personal use).

"If there was a drop-off on the station this would allow for easy access for commuters and less stressful for children."

Examples of what's working:

Several people had caught the Gold Coast tram (light rail) while on holidays recently and through it was a "Great way to get about. Cheap and simple."

The experience of road closures further east of Cleveland Street into Surry Hills was generally regarded as a positive outcome for local family members.

GREEN AND OPEN SPACE

In future design, people wanted to see more park and grass areas for kids. Parks needed to be accessible (like Alexandria Park), friendly and large enough for groups to gather. More trees were also needed in the area. There was also a desire among many for "bigger" park spaces and "open air" where families could gather and have functions rather than "small little parks with a few swings for the babies".

Parks and ovals in all areas had extensive historical and family connections. Alexandria Park, Abercrombie Park and Victoria Park were raised as an examples of a "good places" that also had with historical importance, with many families visiting the pool in Victoria Park. Prince Alfred Park was also regarded as a gathering spot when the tennis courts were open. Redfern Park and Belmore Park were not regarded as welcoming or accessible spaces.

The sporting ovals were regarded strongly as important historical places where Aboriginal people excelled on the field or in public, and childhood experiences of people at these venues were highly positive and valued. Redfern Oval was regarded as a place of "pride" since the early 1900s. The NCIE gym facility was also highly regarded. There was, however, a perception that some of these areas were not as welcoming as they used to be,

Redfern Oval: "toilets are always shut".

Redfern Park: "people walking through in a hurry" and "rushing to get over the road to the trendy coffee joint".

Playing fields: "private property" due to security and high gates which were often locked.

Suggestions for green space and parks included:

- More trees everywhere.
- Wider footpaths and limits on cafes taking over public walkways.
- Protect unbuilt blocks by turning them into green spaces.
- Create "family" locations and spaces where people can gather and meet up, that are free and accessible
"the only place a black family could go in these days."
- Continue training and exhibition games by Souths NRL team.
- A city beach like Southbank in Victoria Park or canals in southern end of the Program area.
- Parks have an indigenous games area
"Nice equipment but include traditional equipment and consult with the community as to what that might be and how you could create games for the new generation to play when they get there."
- A highline like in New York.

- Work with the City of Sydney rangers to allow families and kids to enjoy the space Rangers should let families have fun and “not shut down kids being kids”.
- More rubbish bins.
- Benches under trees not in shadow or full sun.

Examples of what’s working

- Federation Square in Melbourne a “great place to meet up”.

“It was freezing down there but there were so many people in Fed [Square]. TV screens were huge and they just seem to fit it all in. That would be just deadly if we got something like that down here in Redfern or over near Central.”

PLANNING AND DESIGN

A large number of people did not want high rise buildings. They preferred the terrace style of town houses in the local area. Most common amongst responses was a heartfelt belief that increased heights or densities would only result in further housing affordability pressures for Aboriginal residents.

The pervasive sense surrounding “high-rise” development appears to be based on the current experience of such “apartment-style” developments. Namely, new apartments are deemed too expensive or exclusive and therefore exclude the majority of Aboriginal people. Combined with this sense of exclusion is the lived experience of many Aboriginal people in “units” or “Housing Commish” not designed to facilitate family life or community interaction. There had also been a recent case of a developer promoting that Aboriginal people were moving out of the area which was seen as disrespectful and insulting.

“Too many people come in because it’s all trendy”

There was concern about future buildings, and the fear of creating more Waterloo public housing estate towers, referred to as “suicide towers” as these have outdated designs, poor service access, low amenity, lack of flexibility and intergenerational issues of poverty and poor social capacity.

There was also concern about the amount of growth proposed, and how this would change the character of the area. People interviewed asked for more say in how many people were coming to live in these areas. With the community changing Aboriginal people found it increasingly difficult to afford to live in the area.

Organisations in particular noted that Aboriginal people were represented in all sectors of the housing market and this reality must be reflected in planning approvals and housing releases. In planning for the area, Aboriginal people are comparatively younger when they require assistance for chronic health and age-related conditions. Community support, proximity to family and services and access were important issues for this and additional cultural reasons.

Suggestions for planning and design

- The new design of public housing should avoid the current bad design and safety concerns.
- Plan for older residents being housed in suitable areas close by or linked to younger families.
- Secure rents and tenancies.

- Consider more Alexandria and Waterloo terrace and townhouse style of housing. This aspect is particularly important for families who have moved to these areas precisely because of the housing style and lower densities.

The preferences for home design:

- Open-plan housing and apartments.
- Flexible designs to meet needs for of large families and options for accommodating family members with special needs.
- Extra bedding and family spaces (for visiting families and funerals), particularly in social and public housing developments but also as a design principle for private affordable housing mixes (i.e. mixed floor plans, range of single to family units, options for connecting apartments).
- Pet facilities (especially for Elders and kids).
- Include common BBQ areas and outdoor areas to develop close communities.
- Include baths and “family friendly” facilities in any building approvals and designs (of particular importance to families with large numbers of children and extended kinship arrangements).
- Security, including fencing, particularly for elderly people.
- Inclusion of large balconies and play areas was promoted by many people as a means by which amenity for young families can be incorporated and, most significantly, “we don’t have to worry about where the kids are.”

FACILITIES AND SERVICES

There was extremely strong support for local community based organisations. There was general feedback that future facilities needed a community feel. There was generally a demand for more sporting ovals (outdoor).

“Not too flash, and look the same as everywhere else”

New facilities should be built close to the existing services. There was also the need for more childcare centres and aged care services. Mental health issues were frequently noted as a key challenge for families in keeping people connected and with support networks.

Suggestions

- Build on the strengths and support the work of existing local community based groups.
- An “Indigenous Games arena” where local people could teach traditional games and have things ready for schools.
- Support a local Aboriginal Business Chamber.
- Open up the schools on weekends “like the old days before all these gates”.
- Keep clubs and organisations close to their original places (i.e. proximity and access).
- Social “family” locations where people can “meet up” (non-licensed premises and non-membership facilities).
- Increased child care and aged care services needed (very few options for the community).
- More female sporting facilities.
- Options for family to support and accommodate family members with special needs (e.g. frail, disabled, ill-health, dementia).

Examples of what's working well

- The perceptions of which organisations were “local” and “true” varied markedly, however, they ranged from “grass roots” services such as Wyanga [Aged Care], Mudgin-Gal [Women’s Service], AMS [Medical Service] and Weave [Youth Service] to “corporate ventures” and “government” such as NCIE, Community Centre and Sydney University.

HISTORICAL IMPORTANCE

People interviewed felt that it was important to recognise that this was Eora and Gadigal land. Redfern and surrounding areas were also important with many people having fought for rights and established services.

“Have it clearly that you’re driving on Gadigal land.”

It was also important to recognise our current living Elders (“not just old history”) as well as the important stories of the area. It should be noted that cultural sensitivity will need to be exercised in any approach as many people pointed out that photos of deceased family members are “the family’s business” and there is a wide variation of responses to public displays.

The historical value of Redfern Station was repeatedly mentioned, including the importance for Aboriginal people and the opportunities for educating the wider community.

Suggestions

- Protect existing artworks and murals.
- Heritage listing for the Redfern Station and Flag Wall murals.
- Record important events.
- Memorials to past leaders and family Elders.
- Increase the number of historical walks and tours in the area through links with City of Sydney activities, Eora Journey initiatives and local community groups (e.g. Tribal Warrior).
- Educational plaques and murals to be included as essential elements of any development in the area (both as an educational opportunity and a fundamental recognition process).
- Apps for tourists so they can learn Aboriginal history and contemporary issues (as they walk around the area).
“Just think about it. Every tourist almost comes through this place from the airport. But they never ever stop. Wouldn’t even know we was here.”
- Recognise the importance of Redfern Station.
- Recognise the diverse community
“Many different mobs through here” so all should be recognised.
- Name new buildings after important leaders and people who fought for rights (like that “Barangaroo place ... whitefellas can almost say it right now!”).
- Key families from the area should be acknowledged wherever possible.
- Tours for people to know where famous Aboriginal people stayed.

“Teach young ones their culture.”

EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING

Employment opportunities were a major concern for many people, with the younger community expressing a desire for any job but feeling that there were limited local opportunities. There was a common experience for many where training programs and repeated “pilots” did not lead to a job. This often led to a sense of despair and worry (particularly for those with children of their own). Access to technology for work and education was seen as a major priority.

“If you get a good schooling you can do any job.”

Suggestions

- Create opportunities at the Australian Technology Park.
- Local Chamber of Aboriginal Business to be supported.
- Provide access to computers and internet
“No Kooris have their own computer. The Community Centre has free computers and they are always full.”
- Consider how to employ local Aboriginal people in future developments.
- Investigate opportunities during developments. It was felt the redevelopment of South’s Leagues club had been a missed opportunity.

Examples of what’s working

Examples of positive programs included Tribal Warrior and Metro Experience and programs under the Land Council. There was concern that many training programs and pilots were not linked to employment.

CDEP (Community Development Employment Program) was raised by many people aged over 20 years as being a successful program which was no longer available to the local communities.

CENTRAL TO EVELEIGH KEY THEME #3: COMMUNITY

1.1 How do you feel about the “community” here? What is special about it?

- There has been an extremely strong sense of community expressed throughout all discussions to date.
- Regardless of proximate residency, length of tenure, nature of cultural connection this sense of community is, for many people, both a core personal identity and a legacy they strive to protect.
- There appears to be multiple layers of this community identity, ranging from an intense affinity with “The Block” (the actual land and its historical importance); the wider Redfern area (the historical centrality in Aboriginal history and the myriad of Aboriginal groups who have gravitated here); and a localised diaspora which has moved into the surrounding suburbs such as Alexandria, Waterloo, Chippendale, Glebe, Marrickville and Erskineville (both by choice for access to better housing and services and also by edict when no other alternatives were available).
- The special nature of the local community is, therefore, a potent mix of family history, cultural survival, social struggle and significant achievement.
- *“My mum grew up here. Her mum came here...just down the corner there. Even though I’m Wiradjuri I have grown [and] walked this land. I’ve raised my kids here on Eora land and they have it in their bones too. Doesn’t matter where we live this is the place we know we can always come home to.”*
- *“This place just feels right. Least it used to. Not too sure about things these days.”*

1.2 What are the most important cultural aspects of the Redfern and Central to Eveleigh corridor that MUST be recognised and protected?

- There has been a wide range of significant locations and cultural aspects suggested for recognition, including:
- Community organisations (original “grass roots fighters”)
 - The murals at Redfern Station
 - The walls with community artwork
 - Sporting fields (especially where Aboriginal players became famous)
 - The Block (the entire study area)
 - Significant housing with real heritage value (e.g. Caroline Street).
- *“A virtual reality or museum that takes you through stages of history and speak about time before settlement through to today. These can be 15 minutes each and each stage has a different Aboriginal person who dresses up to meet that era in history. And it can be interactive, film with artefacts, and then finally update of today and what we are doing.”*

1.3 Are there ABSOLUTE GIVENS for you?

- There is a wide variety of ‘absolutes’ expressed, however, the fundamental issue is one of continuing recognition of Aboriginal people throughout the Central to Eveleigh study area.
- This needs to be coupled clearly with a continuing (indeed strengthened) presence on the ground of Aboriginal people in residential, commercial, educational and social contexts.

1.4 How can we best acknowledge cultural aspects for this area?

- Heritage protection.
- “*Cultural Safety Orders*”.
- Naming of streets and buildings.
- Clear statements of ownership.
- Recognition of Traditional Owners.
- Recognition of people who have built the community.
- Memorials.
- Street art and sculpture.
- Art displays.
- Regular program of cultural events.
- Central performance space.

1.5 Who needs to be involved in the process of deciding these issues – Elders, community leaders, families, organisations, youth etc.?

- There is a wide variation of ideas regarding precisely who should be involved in these decisions, however, the inclusion of Elders, Traditional Owners, community leaders and young people were commonly raised.
- The internecine community politics (no different from any other community other than the highly public nature of disagreements) indicates significant levels of distrust for different groups, depending on allegiances, history and assumptions of motivations.⁴

1.6 How can we best protect sacred and non-public information in this process?

- This is a clearly sensitive issue and will need to be developed in close agreement with Elders, Traditional Owners and family custodians.
- A clear set of principles is required with a case-by-case approach the most frequently suggested.

1.7 What about art, painting, sculpture?

- As for 1.4 above and with a strong emphasis on supporting cultural expression through all forms of the arts, particularly public displays and permanent installations.

⁴ Suggestions for on-going governance frameworks and engagement processes are included in later section of this report.

-
- The current work being done by the Barangaroo development and Eora Journey was supported by those who were familiar with these projects.
 - *“Like the National Institute of Dramatic Arts. The community would love to see their own Drama University in the area. This can be a place for new and aspiring actors [and] producers so we can target mainstream television to have on our commercial TV stations.”*
 - An Aboriginal “Black Market” selling goods every Friday or Saturday “like Paddy’s market in the city ... artists can come along and sell their art every weekend.”

1.8 Are there any examples you know of which did this cultural part well?

- The variety of opinions on this aspect were highly variable and highly personal.
- Potential models or inspiration included the following (although each of these had both supporters and detractors):
 - Federation Square in Melbourne
 - The NSW Art Gallery
 - Cairns with Dance Groups performing for tourists
 - The Canberra Museum (AIATSIS and National Museum Campus)
 - Memorials such as Myall Creek Massacre (including the community recognition and statements).

1.9 PROMPTS: Stories, families, events, significant places, people, struggles, sites...

- *“Definitely the Elders of the area and the TO’s [Traditional Owners] who are still alive and who have passed.”*
- *“People who have made a major influence in the area and Sydney as a whole.”*
- *“Statues are good but you need to tell people the story behind it.”*
- *“Paintings and murals ... our people are visual people.”*
- *“I grew up round there. Everyone knew everyone and we looked after each other.”*
- *“People like Mum Shirl ... I knew her when she was just Aunty Shirl. Everyone plays their part.”*

CENTRAL TO EVELEIGH KEY THEME # 4: ENVIRONMENT

3.1 Do you have a favourite open space or park here?

- Alexandria Park commonly reported as a favourite park.
- “Alex Park” regarded as important for many Aboriginal families as this was a well-known area and one which many current parents grew up attending.
- Redfern Oval was noted as an important space but there was considerable variation in how well it was used following the redevelopment over the past decade.
- The Redfern Oval tradition with the Souths Rabbitohs NRL team was positively regarded and one which should be maintained.
- The prior “community ownership” of the Redfern Oval ground was felt by many people to now be lacking as the ground is formal, not used by kids and the “toilets are always shut”.
- The adjacent Redfern Park area was generally considered as open space but it was more “people walking through in a hurry” and “rushing to get over the road to the trendy coffee joint”.
- Prince Alfred Park (“Central Railway Park”) on the northern end of the study area was rarely used by participants due to the regular building works and “fences going up and up”.
- Several people recalled Prince Alfred Park being a “gathering spot” when the tennis courts were open, including past community members training there.
- Belmore Park on the northern edge of Central Railway Station was now regarded as the “backpackers” and “full of whitefellas” due to the increasing numbers of tents and homeless people living in the park.
- This change was broadly bemoaned as previously “Kooris would stop down there and then be chased off. Now just because they’re there in a tent it’s OK. That’s just plain racist there!”
- Victoria Park on the western edge of the study area was widely regarded as a “good place” and one with strong historical importance due to Yabun Festival and numerous protest groups setting up in the park.
- Many residents used the pool in summer with their “kids and grannies”.
- National Centre for Indigenous Excellence (NCIE) was one location which prompted a divergence of opinions, ranging from those who loved it for access and being a contemporary community place to those who loathed it for representing a form of cultural commercialism and not in keeping with community values or history.
- The NCIE gym and pool was highly regarded by most people but this was separate to the organisational and other business components of the centre.
- Abercrombie Park [Charles Kernan Reserve] was also mentioned as a good location but needed “more greenery”.
- The playing fields and space (other than the gym) were widely regarded as being “private property” and “not for us local blackfellas” due to security and high gates which were often locked. This highlights a key issue in terms of perceived rights

and ownership of what were previously open-access sites (i.e. prior to NCIE transition). Any development changes that either overtly or inadvertently restrict long-standing access (or the perception of access)⁵ will require specific communications by UrbanGrowth NSW to explain and promote consistent messages.

3.2 What makes it so special/good?

- The parks were regarded as “free” and “the only place a black family could go in these days”.
- The sporting ovals were regarded strongly as important historical places where Aboriginal people excelled on the field or in public.
- Family experience and familiarity with spaces are very important.
- The childhood experience of Aboriginal people at these venues was generally reported as highly positive and highly valued (including the importance of continuing association with and use of these areas with younger generations).

3.3 How long have you and your family been going there?

- Parks and ovals in the area all had extensive historical and family connections.
- Generally speaking, residents had used these spaces for sport, picnics, outings, family days and “running around” since the earliest days of their families arriving in Redfern.
- Many families had resided in Alexandria and Waterloo “since the eighties and nineties” which seems to have embedded the parks there in family experience.
- Redfern Oval was regarded as a place of “pride” and historically a venue where Aboriginal people could gather and celebrate on the sporting field since the “early 1900s” and “way back when the bunnies first started”.
- This reverence for key locations was particularly strong for the football heritage areas such as Redfern Oval.
- Continued training and exhibition games by Souths NRL team at Redfern Oval were strongly supported as this was felt to be a clear continuation of the long tradition (and was also an opportunity for informal meetings with star players).

3.4 Seen any new public spaces or parks that you like?

- Several people noted the Federation Square in Melbourne as being a “great place to meet up”.
- Recent trips to the NRL State of Origin Game for many had exposed them to Melbourne sporting facilities and open spaces. Overwhelmingly, these Victorian examples were highly regarded and in many case envied.

⁵ A similar response was seen throughout many Sydney communities (regardless of culture or background) when NSW Education Department began security fencing many school properties and ovals, as this was perceived as reducing public access, changing long-standing ad hoc sporting arrangements, and was often seen as reducing the use of public assets. Even though NCIE is a private entity and the area was purchased under the auspices of the Indigenous Land Corporation (ILC) it remains a central hub for many people in the local area and, for many people (but not all), an example of the ‘privatisation’ or ‘stratification’ of Aboriginal sites and areas.

-
- *“It was freezing down there but there were so many people in Fed [Square]. TV screens were huge and they just seem to fit it all in. That would be just deadly if we got something like that down here in Redfern or over near Central.”*
 - Several people expressed support for a “city beach” like the Southbank water park on the Brisbane River. Potential locations suggested included Victoria Park (replacing the duck ponds) and the canals on the southern end of the study area (Eveleigh/Alexandria).
 - Numerous people with family members in western Sydney praised the Mt Druitt Hub which has access for community events and non-profit festivals.
 - *“Somewhere like that we need here. Doesn’t matter who you are people will help you out and it’s friendly and safe.”*
 - NAIDOC activities in Hyde Park were widely attended and the large numbers of people (both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal) was thought to be a successful sign. *“We need more of that kind of thing around here. But no one comes down this end of town. Too many black faces here.”*
 - One artist had recently traveled with family to New York and suggested the railway line transformation (The NY High Line) would be “fantastic and something we could do all the way from Newtown to Central”. *“It was so peaceful and beautiful but I was in the middle of the biggest city on the planet!”*
 - Several people raised the issue of Muru Mittigar based at Penrith which is apparently facing closure after many years holding cultural tours and even a cultural food garden.
 - Other new spaces included open art forums on school walls (regional NSW towns such as Bourke); pop up food festivals for community events (Dubbo); and an outdoor ice rink built in Brisbane for winter (free for children).

3.5 What things do you think your kids and grandkids will need for sporting ovals, facilities, green space, trees, grass etc.?

- More sporting ovals (outdoor).
- Strong support for more trees and “nature” throughout the neighbourhoods.
- The NCIE gym and Tony Mundine’s boxing gym were highly praised and potential models for other sporting centres.
- There was an apparent need for female sporting facilities in the southern Sydney area since “if you don’t play basketball you can’t even get a court”.
- Several people suggested an “Indigenous Games arena” where local people could teach traditional games and have things ready for schools (younger children felt to be missing out on opportunities to participate in these activities).
- There was also a desire among many for “bigger” park spaces and “open air” where families could gather and have functions rather than “small little parks with a few swings for the babies”.
- *“Have Aboriginal games focusing on how our kids played before European settlement. So, not merry-go-rounds but traditional games with signs on how to play and what to do.”*

-
- “Nice equipment but include traditional equipment and consult with the community as to what that might be and how you could create games for the new generation to play when they get there.”
 - Specific topics such as “sustainability”, “environmental resilience”, “healthy lifestyles” and the like were rarely raised in discussions as stand-alone issues. The only times this type of terminology was specifically used was a number of Aboriginal students attending local university campuses who had a specific interest in environmental issues.
 - It is important to note that many people described *activity-based* and *functional* uses of the environment or the urban environment (e.g. sport, BBQs, walking). Whilst not overtly using mainstream environmental jargon the overwhelming responses encapsulated the need for places to “walk on the grass” (rather than concrete); “keep the trees” (notionally natural or unplanned treescapes rather than planned boulevards; “places for kids to play safe” (that are not walled in or surrounded by roads or fences).
 - Embedded within many of the community contributions was an *implicit* assumption that any changes and planning would necessarily entail sustainability questions and automatically improve the urban lived environment.
 - This would naturally flow on to “healthy lifestyles” but, as the Aboriginal Medical Service notes, Aboriginal health is holistic in nature and conceptualisation. It is more than simple physical activity (e.g. a bike path) -it encompasses spiritual, emotional and physical well-being across a wide spectrum.
 - There are significant elements of the local and national Aboriginal communities who are actively engaged in land care activities, Caring for Country programs, Land Care activities or regeneration programs⁶ and these should be included in UrbanGrowth NSW activities not only under a “cultural” banner but an “environmental” and “expert land use” banner (i.e. ensuring not to pigeon-hole Aboriginal issues solely in a historical or heritage stream.
 - There were a number of pointed comments regarding the previous destruction of wetlands (Eveleigh) and the changes to wetlands (Centennial Park) – primarily as reminders of poor practice.
 - There was little discussion regarding reclamation of open space or reversion to natural environments but this is likely a result of a clear understanding of the urban realities and long-standing experience of Aboriginal people being excluded from land use decisions, particularly in CBD and highly urbanized areas.
 - The notion of offsets and parceling of land use is commonly raised in other forums such as Land and Heritage and National Parks activities but in the Program area it will require specific exemplars and inclusive planning to ensure engagement occurs.⁷

⁶ The Metropolitan Local Aboriginal Land Council, La Perouse Local Aboriginal Land Council, and many other community organisations with a specific remit for environmental or land issues have a number of programs and ongoing input into environment discussions.

⁷ The Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH) and National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS NSW) both have extensive Aboriginal networks and environmental expertise and could be considered in Phase 2 activities as potential technical and practical experts (even though much of their work has previously been on the periphery of Sydney or related to specific harbour or waterway locations).

3.6 What things in public areas do you NOT like?

- Common response was ‘concrete’ and ‘cold concrete’.
- Outdoor cafes taking up walkways and encroaching on what people regarded as ‘people’s space’ were widely criticised.
- *“It’s like a rat maze down past the AMS every morning. Every man and his dog waiting for their \$5 coffee fix.”*
- Lack of rubbish bins was commonly referenced.
- Older people noted that seats and benches ‘are always in shadow or full bright sun. Never under nice trees where you can just sit.’
- However, this was countered by others who complained vehemently about the poor state of public seating and park benches, particularly when ‘covered in bird shit’.
- The ‘open’ public space in areas such as the paved Redfern RSL concourse is a ‘people corridor’ not a space where people are able to congregate and play. This differentiation will need to be made depending on each group’s experience and expertise.

3.7 How can we recognise, maintain and promote Aboriginal culture and people in public space areas and places?

- There was a widely held view that Aboriginal recognition needed to move beyond simple ‘lap laps’ and ‘boomerangs’ to feature ‘Kooris of all shapes and colours’.
- The trading and cultural links between local communities and other Aboriginal nations was also thought to be highly valuable and worth promoting (in both historical and contemporary contexts).

3.8 What about naming and recognition of places with Aboriginal cultural heritage, language or some public display?

- Clear placement of local clans and language groups on signage.
- *“Have it clearly on signs that you’re driving on Gadigal Land.”*
- Many people wanted streets and location names to have an accompanying Aboriginal name or original reference (one example provided was ‘Werriwa. That’s Lake George down Canberra. Not an old English king but that was our name for it.’)
- Cultural sensitivity will need to be exercised in any approach as many people pointed out that photos of deceased family members are ‘the family’s business’ and there is a wide variation of responses to public displays.
- The use of a local Aboriginal brand or sticker to highlight places of importance was suggested by some.
- The development of a smart phone app to explain significant places and stories was strongly supported.
- *“Just think about it. Every tourist almost comes through this place from the airport. But they never ever stop. Wouldn’t even know we was here.”*
- The historical value of Redfern Station was repeatedly mentioned, including the importance for Aboriginal people and the opportunities for educating the wider community.

3.9 What would you love to see, hear, feel, walk through in 30 years' time?

- See: "Blackout" (i.e. majority of Aboriginal people); clean and safe areas; recognition of past events and important people; "the flag flying on every building no matter if it's Aboriginal or not".
- Hear: "Koori voices"; language; laughing, "kids having fun"; music; "birds in the trees"; "small things like back home"; "no sirens".
- Feel: "Proud"; "Safe"; "It's ours"; "Respected"; "Understood".
- Experience: "Coming to a real Aboriginal, real proud place. Where everybody is welcome and understand our beautiful culture."

3.10 Prompts: "How do we feel about connecting all the green spaces between the stations with green streets to form a corridor of new and existing public open space?" "How would it feel if we could walk from [x] to [y] under trees and have kids able to run on grass all the way?"

- Most people expressed a strong desire to have more green areas and grassed areas, however, there was a high degree of uncertainty regarding how this would be achieved or maintained.
- *"What if we get more of this rain? Can't walk in the mud."*
- *"If you blocked off Abercrombie from the pub down to the school [Darlington] you'd have a huge area for kids and families every day. They're always digging it up anyway."*
- *"All that road works up near the school. It's all flash new buildings for the university. How come they don't have to keep some grass there? They got plenty of money so what about thinking about the community for a change?"*

CENTRAL TO EVELEIGH KEY THEME # 2: WORKING

4.1 What are your TOP 5 current work and transport issues?

- Parking spaces limited and few options for when family members visit or stay. This was a major issue as families reported many times where family members were booked during a visit.
- Access at Redfern Station is limited for older or disabled family members. There is an ongoing need for lifts at the station to assist older community members and “anyone with kids and a stroller” to access the station.
- Lack of local short-haul community transport buses (particularly after hours).
- Difficulty in getting a taxi in Redfern or Waterloo at any time (*“Just try getting a taxi down near the RSL on a Thursday night.”*).
- Heavy road transport transiting the Central to Eveleigh suburbs and major roads was repeatedly raised due to congestion, pollution, danger, traffic, noise and a perceived sense of irrelevance to the local communities.

4.2 What are the MOST important work and job needs for YOU?

- Employment was a major priority for many people, with younger community members expressing a desire for “any job” and “nothin’ ‘round here if you’re like me”.
- There was a common experience for many where training programs and repeated “pilots” did not lead to a job. This often led to a sense of despair and worry (particularly for those with children of their own).
- Local jobs were not necessarily a priority (i.e. within the immediate study area) but many people felt that the fact that they lived in Waterloo or Redfern made it almost impossible to get an interview.
- The Technology Park and building projects were seen widely as potential employment opportunities.
- Experience at work for young people was varied but programs under the Land Council, Tribal Warrior and Mentor Experience (AIME) were thought to be good models and successful for those lucky enough to get a place.

4.3 What are the MOST important work and job needs for YOUR KIDS?

- There was an almost unanimous chorus that a “good education” was what children needed.
- *“If you get a good schooling you can do any job.”*
- Access to technology for work and education was seen as a major priority.
- *“No Kooris have their own computer. The Community Centre has free computers and they’re always full.”*
- Promotion of Aboriginal people working in a range of jobs was thought to be essential for younger Aboriginal children to understand the options and “the chances they now got”.

4.4 What are the MOST important work and job needs for YOUR GRANDKIDS?

- Broadly speaking the needs for grandchildren were included with those of children due to family size and structure.
- The most notable comment regarding much younger grandchildren concerned the need for them to be able to “grow up here close to family” and not have to move away due to costs.
- *“Clevo [Cleveland Street High School] had so many local kids through there. Gotta make sure our kids can stay here an’ get the same good education as any other kid.”⁸*

4.5 What works well for you currently?

- There was extremely strong support for local community based organisations.
- The perceptions of which organisations were “local” and “true” varied markedly, however, they ranged from “grass roots” services such as Wyanga [Aged Care], Mudgin-Gal [Women’s Service], AMS [Medical Service] and Weave [Youth Service] to “corporate ventures” and “government” such as NCIE, Redfern Community Centre and Sydney University.⁹
- There was a wide variety of opinions regarding service provision and appropriateness, however, local community initiatives were generally felt to be under-resourced and expected to perform regardless of funding cut-backs.

4.6 Anything that used to be good but has changed in the past few years?

- CDEP (Community Development Employment Program) was raised by many people aged over 20 years as being a successful program which was no longer available to the local communities.
- The Tribal Warrior initiative was mentioned by several people but there was not a high degree of clarity regarding the program or opportunities today (as compared with the original program).
- The Souths Leagues re-development was widely thought to have been a missed opportunity due to local Aboriginal people not being employed or trained despite promises and plans.

4.7 Discussion re. transport modes of train, shuttle, fast rail, tram, car, bus, bike, walking, other...

- Train was a highly used transport mode.
- Very few people had experience of the light rail.
- Several people had caught the Gold Coast tram (light rail) while on holidays recently and thought it was a “Great way to get about. Cheap and simple.” This led

⁸ Cleveland Street High School is now an Intensive English High School, however, many generations of local Aboriginal students were educated at Cleveland Street. It is indicative of how many residents view the restrictions placed on public access, in this case education, in the local area. Similarly, Sydney Boys High and Sydney Girls High are both academically selective.

⁹ This notion of “community-based” or “government” is a highly complex and somewhat esoteric concept. Many individuals have a clear personal belief defining what they regard as ‘true’ community-based organisations but this is a wide spectrum and there will necessarily be a wide range of opinion.

them to suggest it as an option for Alexandria to the city with options for Newtown “instead of King Street traffic jams”.

- There was little awareness of plans for Waterloo or Sydney University Station options and this will require specific (physical models, on-ground education and displays, targeted marketing etc.) for the local community to become fully engaged with this option.
- The majority of people either accessed a personal car or had use of a family member’s vehicle for any trips that were not solo journeys (i.e. involving children or family members).
- Walking was common around the suburbs in Central to Eveleigh study area but this was most frequently reported for Redfern and Waterloo.
- Bicycles were not commonly raised other than several people who daily rode to work in the CBD and Glebe areas.
- Bikes were also regarded as unsafe by many (cars, accidents, lack of space on local roads) and there was also the common experience of being harassed by police for lack of safety helmets (which reportedly resulted in less use).¹⁰

4.8 How can we best meet the needs of these local Central to Eveleigh communities while balancing Sydney’s transport planning as a global city?

- The experience of road closures further east of Cleveland Street into Surry Hills was generally regarded as a positive outcome for local family members.
- However, limited road access made “life hell” for people attempting to transit the area.
- *“Ever tried to get into Maccas at Alex of an evening time? Joke city.”*
- The tensions between non-residents and “shopper tourists” was commonly raised due to parking issues, “buses full of bargain shoppers pulling up”, and a perceived increase in parking fines and enforcement.
- *“Just because hipsters want to come in here and be all trendy and shit doesn’t mean they should get extra rights. We live here an’ can’t even get a parking space no more.”*
- *“Global city? This is our land. We only get noticed when they have some famous person want to meet a blackfella.”*

4.9 Any major transport types or locations that cause you problems now?

- The Botany Road area and Cleveland Street locations were commonly raised as simply being “parking zones”.
- Lack of disabled access at Redfern Station was seen as highly problematic and “long overdue for fixing”.
- Several people highlighted the lack of disabled parking for Elders and community members with disability.

¹⁰ The issue of bikes, helmets and enforcement has a sad history in the area with the most commonly noted incident involving the death of TJ Hickey in Redfern in 2004. For further background on this issue refer to the following submission to the Inquiry Into Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage 2008 (Submission No. 39).

-
- *“You got all these Get Go [Go Get Car Share] cars on best corner spots but Aunt here can’t even pull up to the shop.”*

4.10 What ifs... “How do you feel about the possibility of a new Redfern Station that provides better connectivity between Redfern and Darlington and becomes more of a centre for community interaction?” “How would this work and feel?” “How can we make sure there is a good community feel as well as workers and business?” “How do we feel about managing through traffic to improve the feel of local streets and make it easier to make local trips by walking or cycling?”

- The notion of a “new” Redfern Station was not discussed in any depth by participants – there was a far greater focus on improving the current station and keeping its central role in the Redfern community.
- Many people who work in the Central to Eveleigh corridor or commute into the area suggested that “any improvements” would be good.
- The general tone of comments regarding the station recognised that there are real problems with the current design (too small, access points too tight, too many people trying to exit, cars driving past at speed, thin footpaths, poor lighting etc.), however, there was a genuine sense of nostalgia and history associated with Redfern Station regardless of whether people lived nearby, used the trains or simply valued the murals and sense of place associated with the station itself.
- There was a pervasive sense of mistrust when expansion of or changes to the station itself was raised with many people assuming that this would simply be “cover” for “shopping malls” or a “Town Hall rat run”.
- Associated with this was the fear of some concerning a loss of “community” if changes resulted in non-residents and non-Aboriginal people coming into the area for a “good time” or “cheap shops”.
- This fear was linked by some to the CBD lock out laws which meant that local establishments were being filled with “piss heads” and “people out for a big night”.

4.11 PROMPTS: Redfern Station upgrading; public thoroughfares and walkways, car parking, bike lanes, local vs. commuter transport needs, bus lanes and access, community-based transport options, transport for families, Elders and aged community member’s needs, young people and youth needs over the next 30 years...

- Similar comments to above in 4.10 and current focus on car transport, parking and aged care transport.
- One of the local preschools indicated a desire to move into the area so they could get more exposure and target mainstream and Aboriginal people who work in the city. The locality would allow them to increase their price and become more viable and ensure diversity in the area.
- *“If there was a drop-off on the station this would allow for easy access for commuters and less stressful for children.”*
- *‘Major attraction [for] international and domestic visitors. Have a commercial building above the platform of Central Station as this is a major meeting point.’*

CENTRAL TO EVELEIGH KEY THEME #1: LIVING

5.1 How do you look at housing in these communities currently?

- Housing was the single most reported and discussed issue for local communities and families.
- Housing significantly outweighed all other issues in discussions to date.
- The strength of feeling and passion evoked by the housing issue is evidenced in the following quote:

“If we don’t get some decent housing back here for Kooris there’s no point talking about jobs and shit. Koori people have been here forever. Now it’s just trendy and shit so people expect us to just slip away. I can tell you this little black duck’s not going anywhere!”

- This level of mistrust and concern will be a key aspect for UrbanGrowth NSW to address in Phase 2 of the Program – it not simply a matter of providing rationales or academic explanations, many members of the local area remain to be convinced that they, as Aboriginal residents, will have a continuing place and role.
- There were strong and repeated recommendations for more public housing to be built as part of any development.
- Again, the importance placed on accessible and affordable housing for Aboriginal people was placed repeatedly in a historical context with contemporary impacts:

“This was the area where Aboriginal people were allowed to live. No one else would live here but it was good enough for my mum.”

- Recent examples of Aboriginal people being moved out of the area need to be recognised and impacts acknowledged (e.g. Redfern Housing Company on The Block, 2000 Olympics resulting in public housing changes in Chippendale and Ultimo, FACS selling public housing in The Rocks).
- More social housing to be provided along with intergenerational leases to provide security of tenure.¹¹
- More community housing and diversity of cooperative housing organisations in the Central to Eveleigh communities.
- Clarify WHO is responsible for housing in different areas – wide variety of housing types and situations from public housing (Waterloo) to private rental (Chippendale) to private ownership (Alexandria).
- Priority housing needs to be provided for mothers, families with children and, in particular, safe place options for women escaping violent partners and dangerous family situations. This type of housing was seen as an urgent need.

¹¹ The complexity surrounding public and social housing arrangements when the primary lease holder passes away is well recognised but continues to require focus and clear policy directives. Given the higher proportion of Aboriginal families in social or rental housing, coupled with the markedly lower life expectancy rates, this element is a critical one for guarantees in future developments and security of tenure for families.

-
- *“If you got to leave your place for your kid’s sake you shouldn’t have to leave all your family. All your schools, people you know, just everything is here. Why should you have to give it all up and start over?”*
 - Prevention of “exclusive” developments where Aboriginal families are not welcome or not included was highlighted. This was specifically commented on regarding recent Deicorp apartments where advertising stated that Aboriginal people no longer lived in the area (and felt to be emblematic of the attitudes towards Aboriginal people in the local community).
 - The fact that Deicorp are one of the Redfern Housing Company’s development partners reinforced the sense that Aboriginal housing needed concerted support and protection.
 - The fundamental issues concerning housing are captured in the following quote from a community member:

“Local people are to be housed first and not be pushed out by people coming into the area.”
 - This sense that Aboriginal people are vulnerable to development pressures and changes to residential criteria and cost is wide spread and deeply felt across the area.
 - It also presents significant challenges in terms of perceptions amongst community members regarding *where* Aboriginal people can afford to live and *what* type of accommodation is available.
 - The fears of being pushed out of the area due to affordability or access are well founded¹²:
 - 39% of Aboriginal households are home owners (compared with 66% of NSW generally);
 - 19% in public housing (compared with 5% of NSW households generally);
 - 7.8% of NSW homeless population are Aboriginal people.
 - Importantly, many past efforts at providing affordable social or public housing have resulted in a “ghetto effect” due to insufficient attention to design principles, support services and residential diversity.
 - This is exemplified in the stark comments describing the Waterloo Towers as “suicide towers”.
 - Affordability is only one aspect of this conundrum (albeit THE fundamental concern). Also requiring attention is:
 - The location of social housing (i.e. not relegated to the periphery away from services and community hubs);
 - The style of housing (i.e. accommodating of larger and extended families);
 - The design of housing (i.e. baths, balconies and living areas);
 - The security of housing (i.e. desire for older residents in particular for fencing and security aspects to be incorporated in designs so that high crime areas such as lower levels of tower developments are avoided);

¹² Data drawn referenced in *Shelter NSW – Housing Factsheet 2013-14*.

- The residential mix (i.e. there is a diverse range of opinions regarding the co-location of young and old people with many older residents expressing a desire for a degree of separation due to noise, safety concerns and social ambience whereas others clearly want to be housed near their family, especially those with younger nieces and nephews or grandchildren for whom they are responsible or wish to maintain easy contact);
- Focus on youth accommodation (i.e. younger population¹³ and specific needs of children or teenagers).

5.2 What are the issues, problems, solutions, ideas for housing around at the moment?

- *“Who can afford all these rents, eh? I don’t have rich parents!”*
- Chippendale UTS student accommodation building advertising promoted rents for units at “only” \$400 per week. This was felt to be completely inappropriate.
- Pervasive sense that university students got more respect because “they got credit cards” or “come from overseas and pay up big”.
- Access to housing was seen as becoming more difficult as “Aboriginal people are last on the list”.
- *“Now they want you to throw down a deposit on the spot. Before you even put in your references it’s all over. Just not fair.”*
- *“Landlords hide behind all this as [an] excuse to kick Aboriginal people out.”*

5.3 Which of these are useful or appropriate in your view?

- Increased social housing providers and stock is required.
- Targeted family housing and high-risk family accommodation.
- Large houses and townhouses are required for Aboriginal families.

5.4 How do we look at Social Housing, Community Housing, Rental Market, Home Ownership, and ALL OTHER types of housing in this area?

- There was a general sense that housing options were becoming increasingly limited and once families moved out of one location there was almost no way they could stay in the area.
- Organisations in particular noted that Aboriginal people were represented in all sectors of the housing market and this reality must be reflected in planning approvals and housing releases.
- Social and public housing were seen as a priority across all areas and the perceived risk of losing these elements would change the character of local communities and reduce Aboriginal presence.
- *“If family needs a place to stay that’s all there is to that. Doesn’t matter what Housing mob says. Where else should they go?”*

¹³ ABS 2014: 36% of the Indigenous population aged 0-14 years (compared with 18% for non-Indigenous Australians) and median age of 22 years for an Aboriginal person (compared with 38 years for a non-Indigenous person).

-
- *“The place my cousin is in is a shit heap. They got the balls to charge him full rent when the place is just a hole. If he complains they don’t care.”*

5.5 How do we feel about new medium and high-rise buildings in and around stations and along the corridor?

- There was almost no support for increased height buildings regardless of proximity to the rail corridor.
- Most people feel that increasing heights would “destroy all that’s left of this place”.
- Most common amongst responses was a heartfelt belief that increased heights or densities would only result in further pressures against Aboriginal residents.
- The assumption of most people was that very few Aboriginal tenants or owners could afford a new property in a high rise (regardless of size).
- Several people commented on the area at Rosebery [near the Supacentre] as being “ugly”, “ghetto city” or “flash slum”.
- Older residents expressed consistent fears about lifts in high rise properties not working (and them being trapped as a result due to infirmity or safety concerns).
- Consideration will need to be given in design and residential mix planning for older residents being housed in suitable areas which are close by or linked to housing areas for younger families. This will be an essential element for many Aboriginal families both in terms of cultural and family practice but also recognising the larger sizes of Aboriginal families generally.
- A key issue to include in planning for Aboriginal families is the comparatively younger age at which Aboriginal people, on the whole, require assistance for chronic health conditions and age-related complications¹⁴:
 - Median age of death for Aboriginal males in NSW = **58.5 years** (compared with 78.9 for non-Indigenous Australian males).
 - Median age of death for Aboriginal females in NSW = **66.2 years** (compared with 85.0 for non-Indigenous Australian females).
- There were no examples of high-rise residential developments suggested as good models for the Central to Eveleigh area.
- Indeed, there was a vehement response from many as this high-rise and high-density option was viewed as a subterfuge or “excuse” for changes to the community.
- This is perhaps the most challenging aspect facing Central to Eveleigh – until the options and suitability of higher-density residential designs are made more practical and discernable the notion of high-rise will remain an almost pejorative concept for many Aboriginal people and stakeholders in the study area.
- Physical displays, virtual walk-throughs, model study areas, discussion forums – all of these will be required in order to develop a clear sense of what is planned for the area and how it will be appropriate for Aboriginal families and community life.

¹⁴ AIHW “Age at Death” data from ABS analysis, 2014.

- The pervasive sense surrounding “high-rise” development appears to be based on the current experience of such “apartment-style” developments. Namely, new apartments are deemed too expensive or exclusive and are, therefore, exclusionary to the majority of Aboriginal people.
- Combined with this sense of exclusion is the lived experience of many Aboriginal people in “units” or “Housing Commish” which are hardly designed to facilitate family life or community interaction (quite the opposite given the range of views expressed thus far).
- Inclusion of large balconies and play areas was promoted by many people as a means by which the young family amenity can be incorporated and most significantly “we don’t have to worry about where the kids are” (which is an ever-present concern for many given current accommodation options and social realities).
- This experience is a demonstrable reality within the study area and will require specific attention in Phase 2 development planning to garner support, foster understanding and develop a sense of true potential for future Aboriginal residents and families.

5.6 What if they are designed to minimise overlooking and overshadowing of surrounding low-rise buildings, terraces and houses?

- The issue of overshadowing was not the major concern for people to date.
- Instead it was the potential for change in character, “feel” and “community spirit” which would result from these approaches that people strongly objected to.
- There were a number of comments from Aboriginal home owners (in Alexandria and Erskineville) that the issue was not land values but that they chose those suburbs “because of the community and space”.

5.7 What are the MOST important housing and living needs for YOU?

- Secure rents and tenancies was a common theme.
- Support services for aged and people with a disability prioritised.
- Mental health issues were frequently noted as a key challenge for families in keeping people connected and with support networks.
- Larger housing and open plan designs which work well for large and extended families.
- Having close by spaces and parks for children to run and play.
- *“Less stress. Can’t keep worrying about having to make the rent or move.”*

5.8 What are the MOST important housing and living needs for YOUR KIDS?

- Common desire for children to have a range of options to stay in or near the local area.
- Maintenance of contacts and cultural connections.
- Options for family to accommodate family members with special needs (e.g. frail, disabled, ill-health, dementia).

-
- Choice to stay in the local area was seen as a fundamental issue for the younger generation, along with the possibility of leaving to pursue work or study and then returning.
 - Safe housing options.
 - Refuges for young mothers and children.
 - *“Places where our young men can come back to after been in jail. That’s the only way they can keep connected. But Housing won’t let you look after your own kids.”*

5.9 What are the MOST important housing and living needs for YOUR GRANDKIDS?

- As above for 5.8.
- Additionally, hope that grandchildren will be able to “have a better start” and “maybe even buy a place”.
- However, this was not seen as a realistic hope for most.
- The “what if” nature of this question is particularly difficult as many people find it challenging imagining an alternative reality in which their children or grandchildren are not facing the same sort of daily obstacles of rent, disease, isolation, and other social pressures.
- This does offer Central to Eveleigh a clear opportunity to develop a coherent vision in which the grandchildren of Aboriginal people currently living in the area (or who grew up in the area) are able to see a future and be secure in this new development approach.

5.10 How do you see the type of living here developing over the next 20 years – 50 years?

- General sense that the community would continue to change and become less connected.
- Assumptions by many people that the Aboriginal community would simply “shrink” over coming decades because of housing costs and lack of options.
- There were others, however, who felt that despite these challenges a “sense of pride” and “resilience” would ensure continued presence in the Central to Eveleigh area and surrounding suburbs.
- *“Our mob fought for everything in the past. Just have to keep doin’ it I suppose.”*

5.11 If you had to summarise the most important issues affecting Aboriginal people and families in these Central to Eveleigh areas what would they be?

- Housing (beyond all other issues).
- Employment opportunities.
- Local transport and parking.
- Need for more local community organisations.
- Facilities and schools need improvement.
- Open space and parks to be increased and “more green”.

5.12 Building types, styles, heights and locations...

- As per 5.5 comments.

5.13 Needs of Aboriginal families and communities in this area over the next 30 years?

- People expressed a consistent opinion that the housing and social needs of Aboriginal families will not change in the next 20-30 years.
- If anything they generally thought that the pressures would increase and the nature of the local community come under increasing pressure.
- *“Blackfellas aren’t just going to stop having kids. Big families just what our mob have, eh?”*
- The social and historical importance of Redfern in particular was thought to remain central to the sense of community identity and the wider sense of Aboriginal struggle across Australia.

5.14 Top 10 suggestions to make this area a great place to live and look after your family...

- More parks and outdoor areas.
- *“Free places for families to get together and play.”*
- *“More Aboriginal businesses.”*
- *“Get rid of trucks.”*
- Increased housing availability and security for Aboriginal families.
- *“Special houses for Aboriginal families. Just for local mob.”*

5.15 Prompt: “How can we make this a GREAT/DEADLY place to live in the future?”

- *“Hand the place over to the traditional owners.”*
- *“Let people who have lived here for long time have first spot in line.”*
- *“Be proud and loud.”*
- *“Teach young ones their culture.”*
- *“More Kooris and Murris”.*
- *“Make this a community again.”*

Suggestions for long-term engagement mechanisms and governance frameworks

The planning challenges outlined in this report are significant but by no means insurmountable.

The Aboriginal communities affected by development in the Central to Eveleigh area are diverse and there is no single governance authority mechanism by which the entire corridor can be engaged.

The complexity of cultural, political and social networks in the area places a high degree of responsibility on UrbanGrowth NSW to actively foster engagement and maintain avenues for information exchange and discussion with the diverse Aboriginal community.

This report summarises an extremely diverse range of community and stakeholder opinions, but the core principle of cultural authority and governance is paramount. UrbanGrowth NSW cannot address all cultural, community or organisational differences – what it is able to achieve is a transparent and inclusive framework for gathering, providing and analysing information throughout the 20-30 year life of the Program.

There are a wide variation of ideas regarding precisely who should be involved in planning process, however, the inclusion of Elders, Traditional Owners, community leaders and young people were commonly raised.

The issue of protecting sacred and non-public information was also raised, a sensitive issue that will require a clear set of principles that are applied with a case-by-case approach.

In terms of established panels and governance mechanisms, the City of Sydney's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Panel would appear the most relevant group with whom UrbanGrowth NSW has an established relationship. This panel includes many members from various community and government sectors. It is important to note, however, that the panel's function is specifically related to the City of Sydney and is advisory in nature.

The main elements through which ongoing engagement may be achieved can be visualised as follows:



Under this framework existing networks could be leveraged and cultural inclusion maintained. Other than specific-issue or unplanned announcements this framework would equate to approximately 12 face-to-face briefings or updates across a year (or roughly one meeting per month). Additionally, the e-newsletter and updates to organisations and community leaders could be on a six-monthly basis and primarily utilise existing UrbanGrowth NSW materials.

Major Governance Principles

A major challenge facing UrbanGrowth NSW during the next phase of Central to Eveleigh planning revolves around the need for the following principles to be manifest in activities, communication and actions:

- Transparency regarding HOW the process is developing.
- Clarity regarding WHAT is proposed and when it will be occurring.
- Honesty regarding the nature of proposed development (especially density).
- Consistency regarding information, terminology and timeframes.
- Care to ensure that multiple stakeholders are valued and involved.
- Openness regarding discussions and engagement.

Cultural Commitment

It is recommended that these principles be enacted with a clear cultural commitment in which:

- Cultural integrity is at the heart of all processes undertaken.
- Cultural respect continues to inform and permeate UrbanGrowth NSW's approach.
- Cultural safety is a necessary precursor for meaningful engagement.

Elders

- There is no single Elders Council or group covering the entire study area other than the Gadigal Elders who are recognised as Traditional Owners.
- This presents some major challenges (much like any LGA where there are multiple stakeholders and viewpoints) but fundamental to the process must be a recognition of cultural authority and Elders.
- The nature of the Central to Eveleigh study area (and Redfern in particular) means that there are several "layers" to community Elders and these will need to be addressed through the established mechanisms such as Metropolitan Local Aboriginal Land Council (who have a statutory responsibility under the NSW Aboriginal Land Rights Act) and locally-recognised Elders who, whilst not Gadigal Elders, have authority to speak on behalf of the local community (and in many cases are officially recognised through groups such as MLALC).

Suggested mechanisms:

- ✓ UrbanGrowth NSW could host a twice-yearly (six month interval) morning tea at Redfern Town Hall or Souths Leagues Club (or similar neutral location) specifically for Elders and community leaders to come together and be updated on plans and actions.

-
- ✓ Highlights of updates should include local initiatives and physical examples of plans or design elements (i.e. NOT PowerPoint presentations).¹⁵
 - ✓ This would be informal in style but include tangible records of activities and plans (such as a quarterly newsletter or update summary).
 - ✓ Maintain a regular and predictable engagement with Elders and senior community decision-makers (i.e. without the need for decisions to be made at such events unless the Elders themselves wish to express a decision or approach on Central to Eveleigh).¹⁶

Community leadership

- The community leadership in the Central to Eveleigh study area is diverse and will require UrbanGrowth NSW to engage across a range of locations and venues.
- Many of the community leaders will be included in the above “Elders” component or via one of the following sectoral groupings.

Suggested mechanisms:

- ✓ UrbanGrowth NSW could offer a locally-based quarterly update session on the Program at the Redfern Community Centre for any interested community leaders.
- ✓ Ideally this would occur early in the week and be a one-hour session with refreshments provided to ensure busy leadership schedules can be accommodated.
- ✓ This would be more of a snapshot update on activities and future key points to inform leaders and maintain engagement with the Program.
- ✓ The Redfern Community Centre has an established schedule of events and booking arrangements can be made in advance through the City of Sydney.
- ✓ Promotion of this event would ideally be through the Redfern Community Centre notice board, email reminders to local agencies, inclusion in Redfern Inter-Agency Network agenda, inclusion in Koori Radio (Gadigal Information Service) events notification (e.g. *Blackchat*).

Statutory authorities

- The Central to Eveleigh study area is covered by a multitude of statutory authorities, many of which include membership and representation from many of the aforementioned leadership and Elders groups.
- Many of these authorities and agencies are already included in Central to Eveleigh mechanisms but there will be varying levels of engagement for each of these with

¹⁵ There is a commonly held assumption amongst many Aboriginal communities, based on well-established experience, that “government” tend to present pre-determined decisions as an end-stage “consultation” exercise (known as the “tick box approach”). While PowerPoint presentations are useful tools they must be part of the communication repertoire for UrbanGrowth NSW. The emphasis placed on direct and personal interactions as the engagement mode thus far is highly appropriate and should continue. The noting of ‘physical’ plans is important, in that many residents or stakeholders may prefer a tangible map or outline rather than a verbal list which assumes some pre-existing knowledge or familiarity. The ‘physicality’ could be in terms of models, large maps, videos, 3D computer modeling or ‘walk-throughs’.

¹⁶ Redfern Community Centre, Wyanga Aged Care Service and other local services hold regular Elders’ lunches or gatherings. These would also be a good opportunity to engage in a more informal gathering to maintain connections with diverse sections of the community.

Aboriginal people, organisations and issues. UrbanGrowth NSW may consider developing an overarching agreement with partner agencies to ensure consistency.

- In this way gaps can be identified (as many individuals within these authorities will change position over the 20-30 year life of the Program).
- The main approach for Central to Eveleigh should be one of maintaining a “cut through” approach so that the various levels of statutory responsibility, jurisdictional cross-over and geographical delineations are clearly enunciated and openly discussed.
- The major statutory group related to the Central to Eveleigh study area remains the City of Sydney Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Panel. This important panel has a dedicated advisory function to the City of Sydney and they will be a critical group to maintain connection with and update regularly.
- Other statutory authorities with likely involvement or consideration include Sydney Catchment Authority, Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority, Office of Environment and Heritage, Environment Protection Authority, Heritage Council of NSW, Aboriginal Housing Office, Ombudsman’s Office.
- It is important to note that the NSW Aboriginal Land Rights Act (1983) provides the NSW Aboriginal Land Council, as the peak body, significant public statutory responsibilities but they are not a representative of the Crown in the same manner as the above established authorities. Under the Act these functions are undertaken with the Local Aboriginal Land Council (in this case, Metropolitan LALC) but their role is a complex one where they act as an advisor to, and negotiate with, governments and stakeholders with the fundamental goal of preserving Aboriginal land rights.

Suggested mechanisms:

- ✓ UrbanGrowth NSW could host a twice-yearly (six monthly) early evening update event with City of Sydney Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Panel members.
- ✓ This City of Sydney event would be an informal style opportunity for Panel Members to engage about specific issues related to Central to Eveleigh planning and develop relationships with UrbanGrowth NSW representatives.
- ✓ The City of Sydney Panel meets on a bi-monthly basis and it is advisable that UrbanGrowth NSW establish a standing agenda item for the provision of a six (6) monthly update and review with the entire Panel in their official capacity.
- ✓ Scheduling would be through City of Sydney mechanisms supporting the Panel and included in Appendix B.
- ✓ A facilitated half-day workshop could be convened at Yaama Dhiyaan or NCIE to enable the breadth of statutory bodies to provide their perspectives and receive updates from UrbanGrowth NSW.
- ✓ The facilitation could be along lines already demonstrated to work by Central to Eveleigh representatives and enables an open forum approach for an exchange of information and ideas.

Community Organisations

- The Central to Eveleigh area is replete with community organisations not all of which are Aboriginal organisations.
- This aspect of community representation in the study area must be addressed as there will be differing levels of authority and cultural knowledge.

-
- The “community” nature of this element would include local education facilities and institutions such as UTS, Sydney University, Eora TAFE.

Suggested mechanisms:

- ✓ Provide a quarterly e-newsletter and hard copy version to community organisations in the area.
- ✓ Focus on key elements of the Central to Eveleigh Program and any major decisions or approaches (in six monthly periods).
- ✓ Dissemination could be via the Redfern Aboriginal Inter-Agency, NCOSS and peak government departments (e.g. Health, Education, Housing) as included in Appendix B.

Major Aboriginal Organisations

- As with other community organisations there are many diverse Aboriginal corporations and businesses within the Central to Eveleigh study area.
- UrbanGrowth NSW must develop a clear distribution list for Aboriginal organisations within and related to the Central to Eveleigh study area for receipt of information.

Suggested mechanisms:

- ✓ UrbanGrowth NSW to distribute the quarterly newsletter in hard and soft copy versions to Aboriginal organisations in the study area.
- ✓ A CEO or Chairperson’s Update would be a useful way of encapsulating key developments on a quarterly basis so that decision-makers are regularly included and provided with the opportunity for further discussion (content would be similar to the previously mentioned e-newsletter).
- ✓ Organisation listing is included in Appendix B.

Local networks

- The Redfern Aboriginal Inter-Agency is currently operating and is a monthly/ bi-monthly meeting of interested parties and agencies.
- Schools, preschools and community services will also be appropriate engagement opportunities for Central to Eveleigh updates as they may not be in a position to attend formal events.

Suggested mechanisms:

- A representative of UrbanGrowth NSW could attend at least every second Redfern Interagency meeting in order to table updates and inform attendees of upcoming initiatives or events.
- The previously mentioned quarterly newsletter can be distributed via this network (in both hard and soft versions).
- The responsibility for the Interagency currently rests with Metropolitan Local Aboriginal Land Council and contact details are included in Appendix B.

Stakeholder groups

- The diversity of the Central to Eveleigh communities means that advocacy groups, support agencies, tenancy groups and other consumer organisations should be regularly informed of Central to Eveleigh business.

-
- This will be essential to mitigate against “surprise” decisions or the perception of decisions being made without consultation.
 - Given the level of development in the Central to Eveleigh study area and the competing priorities for many residents it will be essential to maintain such an additional non-organisational information channel for those people not regularly involved with organised community agencies or activities.
 - The turnover of staff and senior management in many stakeholder groups makes the regularity of contact absolutely essential.

Suggested mechanisms:

- ✓ Informal and relaxed engagement opportunities which build trust and rapport with UrbanGrowth NSW representatives are essential.
- ✓ The Redlink initiatives in the Waterloo Towers study area will have regular forums and community meetings. These forums could be utilised as a standing opportunity to inform residents and the agencies supporting tenants in these locations.
- ✓ In addition, the McKell Tower has recently undergone refurbishment to enable community activities to be based on the ground floor access areas. It would be a good location for residents to ask questions (rather than passively attend a forum or workshop).
- ✓ Once the newsletter or update approach is established a regular slot with BlakChat on Koori Radio (Gadigal Information Service) would be a key mechanism to keep the broader community informed of what has happened, the types of activities that UrbanGrowth NSW are regularly maintaining, and ensure that the Central to Eveleigh Program develops a broad familiarity within the local community. This will ideally involve a specific and dedicated UrbanGrowth NSW representative (for consistency) and opportunities for leaders and agencies involved with the Program to provide their perspectives (and a community view).
- ✓ UrbanGrowth NSW could assist in hosting regular BBQs with various sectors of the community through established organisations and programs in conjunction with established panels such as Redlink.
- ✓ Appendix B contains relevant contact details.
- ✓ Key amongst these would be:
 - Redlink
 - Tribal Warrior
 - Wyanga Aged Care
 - Mudgin-Gal Women’s Service
 - Weave Youth Service
 - Souths Juniors NRL Club
 - NCIE gym
 - Alexandria Park P&C
 - Wunanbiri Preschool

Longer-term engagement

- The diversity and complexity of community engagement required for the Central to Eveleigh Program is a challenging aspect of the planning process.
- Once Phase 2 designs are developed as DRAFTS or POTENTIAL CONCEPTS these must be taken out to the community via the above sector mechanisms.
- This will necessitate a facilitation approach to ensure information is presented and unpacked in a culturally appropriate method but also to enable queries and concerns to be appropriately captured and referred.
- This long-term approach will require the establishment of at least an annual event for all community members and organisations to attend. The Block or Redfern Park provide the most ideal locations for such an event as it can bring disparate groups together and provide the opportunity to experience the Central to Eveleigh plans, touch the designs, view maps, create areas (on interactive screens) and ensure that Central to Eveleigh becomes a genuine part of the community and something to which people truly feel a sense of engagement, ownership and empowerment.
- There are many recurring events happening in the Central to Eveleigh study area, although specifics for events and locations will require regular contact and vigilance.
- Key amongst these activities are:
 - NAIDOC Week (July annually)
 - Harmony Day (March annually)
 - Sorry Day (26 May annually)
 - Reconciliation Week (May-June annually)
 - Koori Football Knockout (October annually)
 - Redfern Aboriginal Interagency meetings (quarterly)
 - Various Programs and Events held at Redfern Community Centre (including film screening, art programs, children's activities, community lunches) throughout the year
 - NCIE (various event and annual celebrations)
 - Eora TAFE open days (various)
 - Alexandria Park, Erskineville and Darlington Schools (various P&C and community events throughout the year).

CONCLUSIONS AND NEXT STEPS

UrbanGrowth NSW has made it clear that increased density and urban redevelopment are fundamental principles for the Program. However, it is vital to provide *specific and concrete* examples of development options for community members to peruse and assess (not simply notional height restrictions or numerical density patterns). The study area is already a ‘dense’ urban environment but there are major differences between the Waterloo Estate and Alexandria which need to be considered when consulting communities about development plans.

There is a clear difference between the viewpoint of many Aboriginal community members on issues such as housing access, type and affordability and the ability of UrbanGrowth NSW to mandate or secure such assurances for the study area. This will, however, be THE KEY DEFINING ISSUE for the Program as it goes directly to central issues of presence, maintenance of connection, respect and trust in the government process.

There are a range of suggested activities and mechanisms outlined in this report to ensure that UrbanGrowth NSW can maintain connection with and effective communication with the various Aboriginal communities, stakeholders and representative groups in the area. Most essential will be the allocation of clear accountability mechanisms within UrbanGrowth NSW to undertake these discussions and communication activities. The maintenance of relationships will be critical and to this end it is advisable for UrbanGrowth NSW to establish a core team who are responsible for ongoing engagement with the various elements of the community outlined. Ideally, this team should include both female and male representatives, incorporate a degree of technical and community skills, and demonstrate the requisite seniority so that statements and discussions can be held “at level” with appropriate authority and clarity.

The City of Sydney Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Panel has been identified as a key stakeholder and early in 2016 it is important to request scheduling of a brief presentation to the panel members to provide an overview and garner their recommendations for ongoing engagement activities and roll-out.¹⁷

A plain-language summarised version of the major findings of this report – a key facts sheet or topline summary – would be a critical component to receive official approval for dissemination.

¹⁷ The Origin Communications team would be pleased to assist in this presentation if required (part of the normal feedback process for this type of project and ensures that issues can be directly addressed or placed in context).

Appendix A – Line of Inquiry and Prompt Questions

CENTRAL TO EVELEIGH KEY THEME #3:

COMMUNITY

- | | |
|-----|--|
| 1.1 | How do you feel about the “community” here? What is special about it? |
| 1.2 | What are the most important cultural aspects of the Redfern and C2E corridor that MUST be recognised and protected? |
| 1.3 | Are there ABSOLUTE GIVENS for you? |
| 1.4 | How can we best acknowledge cultural aspects for this area? |
| 1.5 | Who needs to be involved in the process of deciding these issues – Elders, community leaders, families, organisations, youth etc.? |
| 1.6 | How can we best protect sacred and non-public information in this process? |
| 1.7 | What about art, painting, sculpture? |
| 1.8 | Are there any examples you know of which did this cultural part well? |
| 1.9 | PROMPTS: Stories, families, events, significant places, people, struggles, sites... |

Due to the high degree of cross-over in responses to these topics the reporting combines both the community and heritage/historical aspects.

- | | |
|-----|---|
| 2.1 | How do you know heritage in this area? Is it a sense of place, a location, a building, a place, a memorial, land, waterways, open spaces, old areas, special places...? |
| 2.2 | What do you regard as “heritage”? Is it old stuff, new stuff, cultural elements that remain unchanged, practices and responsibility for places...? |
| 2.3 | Where are the MOST important heritage areas or places in the C2E areas? |
| 2.4 | Any good examples of heritage being acknowledged, protected and promoted? |
| 2.5 | How should we NOT do heritage aspects in the C2E project? |
| 2.6 | Who do we need to include on heritage aspects? |
| 2.7 | What are your TOP 10 heritage ideas or places we need to know about? |
| 2.8 | What are the stories and histories we need to include and hear about? |
| 2.9 | PROMPTS: Traditional Owners, cultural responsibilities for this land, good stories, history of this place, Aboriginal people’s struggles and achievements, memorials for important events, remembering our Elders and family members... |

CENTRAL TO EVELEIGH KEY THEME # 4: ENVIRONMENT

- 3.1 Do you have a favourite open space or park here?
- 3.2 What makes it so special/good?
- 3.3 How long have you and your family been going there?
- 3.4 Seen any new public spaces or parks that you like?
- 3.5 What things do you think your kids and grandkids will need for sporting ovals, facilities, green space, trees, grass etc.?
- 3.6 What things in public areas do you NOT like?
- 3.7 How can we recognise, maintain and promote Aboriginal culture and people in public space areas and places?
- 3.8 What about naming and recognition of places with Aboriginal cultural heritage, language or some public display?
- 3.9 What would you love to see, hear, feel, walk through in 30 years' time?
- 3.10 Prompts: "How do we feel about connecting all the green spaces between the stations with green streets to form a corridor of new and existing public open space?" "How would it feel if we could walk from [x] to [y] under trees and have kids able to run on grass all the way?"

CENTRAL TO EVELEIGH KEY THEME # 2: WORKING

- 4.1 What are your TOP 5 current work¹⁸ and transport issues?
- 4.2 What are the MOST important work and job needs for YOU?
- 4.3 What are the MOST important work and job needs for YOUR KIDS?
- 4.4 What are the MOST important work and job needs for YOUR GRANDKIDS?
- 4.5 What works well for you currently?
- 4.6 Anything that used to be good but has changed in the past few years?
- 4.7 Discussion re. transport modes of train, shuttle, fast rail, tram, car, bus, bike, walking, other...
- 4.8 How can we best meet the needs of these local Central to Eveleigh communities while balancing Sydney's transport planning as a global city?
- 4.9 Any major transport types or locations that cause you problems now?
- 4.10 What ifs... "How do you feel about the possibility of a new Redfern Station that provides better connectivity between Redfern and Darlington and becomes more of a centre for community interaction?" "How would this work and feel?" "How can we make sure there is a good community feel as well as workers and business?" "How do we feel about managing through traffic to improve the feel of local streets and make it easier to make local trips by walking or cycling?"
- 4.11 PROMPTS: Redfern Station upgrading; public thoroughfares and walkways, car parking, bike lanes, local vs. commuter transport needs, bus lanes and access, community-based transport options, transport for families, Elders and aged community member's needs, young people and youth needs over the next 30 years...

¹⁸ "Work" as theme will be broadly defined to include volunteer, full-time, part-time, trainee, study, casual, contract, in-area, out of area etc.

CENTRAL TO EVELEIGH Key Theme #1:

LIVING

- 5.1 How do you look at housing in these communities currently?
- 5.2 What are the issues, problems, solutions, ideas for housing around at the moment?
- 5.3 Which of these are useful or appropriate in your view?
- 5.4 How do we look at Social Housing, Community Housing, Rental Market, Home Ownership, and ALL OTHER types of housing in this area?
- 5.5 How do we feel about new medium and high-rise buildings in and around stations and along the corridor?
- 5.6 What is they are designed to minimise overlooking and overshadowing of surrounding low-rise buildings, terraces and houses?
- 5.7 What are the MOST important housing and living needs for YOU?
- 5.8 What are the MOST important housing and living needs for YOUR KIDS?
- 5.9 What are the MOST important housing and living needs for YOUR GRANDKIDS?
- 5.10 How do you see the type of living here developing over the next 20 years – 50 years?
- 5.11 If you had to summarise the most important issues affecting Aboriginal people and families in these Central to Eveleigh areas what would they be?
- 5.12 Building types, styles, heights and locations...
- 5.13 Needs of Aboriginal families and communities in this area over the next 30 years?
- 5.14 Top 10 suggestions to make this area a great place to live and look after your family...
- 5.15 Prompt: “How can we make this a GREAT/DEADLY place to live in the future?”

Appendix B – Contact Listing

Please note:

The following contact listing is not prioritised in any specific order, other than the inclusion of the City of Sydney Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Panel as the nominated key contact point for UrbanGrowth NSW in relation to the study area and program.

Many individuals do not wish to have private details in a public document. For future activities please advise Origin Communications Australia and contact can be made directly with these community members to ensure they are informed of activities or events.

Similarly, many key stakeholders have multiple roles and responsibilities across organisations and community representative groups. This listing is intended as a basic engagement framework not an exhaustive listing of each individual’s affiliations.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Panel, City of Sydney
Aboriginal Disability Network Incorporated
Aboriginal Housing Company, Redfern
Aboriginal Medical Service Co-Operative
AbSec - Aboriginal Child, Family and Community Care State Secretariat (NSW)
Alexandria Park Primary School
Babana Men’s Group
Benevolent Society
Black Theatre Redfern
City of Sydney
Eora Journey c/- IDAIA
Eora TAFE
Family and Community Services Housing NSW - Sydney District I Redfern and Glebe Tenancy Team

Gadigal Information Service
Gardener’s Lodge Cafe
Jawun Association (Also at NITV)
Koori Centre, University of Sydney
Kurranulla Aboriginal Corporation
Metropolitan Local Aboriginal Land Council (MLALC)
Mudgin-Gal Aboriginal Corporation (Women’s Service)
NCIE
Redfern Community Centre
Redfern Police
SLHD - Research - Drug Health Services
St Vincent de Paul
Tribal Warrior Association
University of Technology Sydney
Wuranbiri Preschool
Wyanga Aboriginal Aged Care
Yaama Dhiyaan c/- NCIE