



STRATEGIC DIRECTION 6 

VIBRANT LOCAL COMMUNITIES AND ECONOMIES

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Surry Hills night life

CITY CONTEXT

The City is made up of diverse communities, with diverse lifestyles, interests and needs

The City contains a growing population in diverse communities which are not necessarily defined by geographic boundaries. Communities can be based on place of residence, place of work, ethnicity, cultural background and interests, language, socioeconomic backgrounds and lifestyles.

Over the past five years, almost 20 per cent of the total population growth in the Sydney Region occurred in the City. With this growth and change the City is also a recent temporary home for many people. Over half of the residents in 2006 moved address since 2001 and only nine per cent of those were previous residents of the City. Just under half of residents were born outside of Australia. The City also has a large gay and lesbian population, with six per cent of those living as a couple identified as being in a same sex relationship compared to 0.5 per cent for the rest of Sydney.

A 'City of Villages' of different characters

The residential areas in the City have been characterised as a diverse 'City of Villages' surrounding the City Centre, including Kings Cross, Paddington, Newtown, Surry Hills, Redfern, Erskineville. They are a key contributor to the City's renowned liveability, with each possessing its own distinctive character based on its physical, social and cultural attributes and assets. Sustainable Sydney 2030 proposes a network of Activity Hubs across the City to provide an even stronger focus for the City's Villages and local communities.



City of Sydney

The City's Villages are alive with cultural activities and interface

An important economic and employment role for the Villages

The Villages are also locations for a growing job base. In recent years, some have developed a significant role in the regional and global economy, typically serving more than just local residents' needs. These areas include Surry Hills, Paddington, Chippendale and Ultimo-Pyrmont. In these areas, diverse, inclusive and vibrant urban environments have actually been a driver of economic growth. Small to medium sized enterprises in design, property and other creative industries have flourished. Niche and lifestyle retailing and restaurant and leisure options have emerged. Spin-off businesses from major media, educational and medical institutions are creating clusters and concentrations of high value economic activity.



City of Sydney

Street markets are popular in City Villages

The City's local communities and economies can be even stronger

This Strategic Direction recognises the City's key strengths of diversity, how it hosts communities which strengthen a sense of belonging, and how its Villages provide unrivalled liveability. These City attributes have their intrinsic merit, but they also all contribute to attracting workers and business investment, which strengthens the City's economy. In this way the quality of local community life, the access to services and opportunities it provides and the prosperity of local economies are linked.

Areas of the City and some groups within the City experience entrenched or emerging disadvantage. New social stresses are emerging, for example, among groups or individuals without access to new technologies. Homelessness is an issue for all global cities, including Sydney. It is often linked to mental illness and drug and alcohol dependence. These are major issues for all governments. The City of Sydney has a dedicated Homelessness Unit providing information, advice, accommodation and practical support. Additional stresses can be anticipated in the future in relation to climate change or accessibility to transport given volatile fuel prices.

Strengthening local communities requires a visionary response. The City of Sydney already has a solid social planning framework and Sustainable Sydney 2030 provides the opportunity to put this work in context. The key benefit of taking a big picture view is identifying that a desired geography of the City also provides a framework for improving community infrastructure provision. The idea of Activity Hubs as key locations for community facilities and as a focus for community and City life is suggested, though the role of facilities in other places and non-spatial programs and policies is also highlighted. The City's Villages—particularly the identified Activity Hubs—can also be a focus for additional local economic and business development, providing opportunities for budding entrepreneurs as well as the relatively disadvantaged.



Part of the Oxford Street retail precinct

WHAT THE COMMUNITY SAID

The consultation undertaken for Sustainable Sydney 2030 consistently highlighted the community's desire for a vibrant, inclusive, and accessible City where people feel a sense of belonging.

People want a City...



City of Sydney

WHY ACTION IS NEEDED

Challenges facing the City:

- 1 Reducing the disparity between rich and poor and enhancing social wellbeing
- 2 Meeting the needs of a diverse population
- 3 Ensuring equitable distribution and access to social infrastructure
- 4 Enhancing the distinctive character of Villages
- 5 Providing spaces for small and local businesses
- 6 Ensuring all communities have opportunities to participate

Recent rapid population growth in the City has placed considerable stress on the City’s amenities and its existing social and cultural infrastructure. The diversity of the population heightens demands for responsive, representative and relevant facilities and services. Intervention is needed to address the following issues which challenge the vibrancy and diversity of the Villages:

1. Reducing the disparity between rich and poor and enhancing social wellbeing.

A key challenge in planning for sustained social wellbeing in the City to 2030 is relative equality, which may be roughly defined as the gap between rich and poor and the detrimental effects of the gap. While the detrimental impacts are greater for those most marginalised, large gaps between rich and poor adversely affect everyone. Relative equality is, therefore, a critical driver in general social wellbeing.

Cities with poor relative equality not only have higher mortality rates but also higher rates of morbidity (for example, through heart disease), obesity, teenage pregnancy, mental illness, homicide, drug abuse, imprisonment, hostility, and racism, as well as a poorer education performance of school children (literacy, numeracy and retention rates), and lower levels of generalised trust, social capital and social mobility.¹ Negative social outcomes linked to relative inequality are costly to both communities and government. Addressing the underlying issue of relative equality may be more efficient and effective than pursuing policies that seek to manage the negative impacts of relative inequality.

2. Meeting the needs of a diverse population.

The City is characterised by a number of diverse communities. The vibrancy of City life is directly associated with the diversity of the people in it. Although many people talk about ‘the community’ as if it were one entity, the reality is that affiliations, interests and links to place vary from person to person and group to group. Failure to plan for all communities may slowly increase the marginalisation of some people, leading to social exclusion. Social exclusion can create an increased risk of anti-social behaviours, at high cost. Further, the homogenisation of the City’s communities may dilute the City’s diverse and vibrant edge, a factor that partly underpins its competitiveness as a global city.

The City, like other global cities, has a homelessness issue which has become more visible in recent years. The incidence of homelessness is more concentrated in Inner Sydney and the City in particular, given the available services, amenities and transport opportunities. Homelessness is often linked to personal traumas, mental illness or drug and alcohol dependence, which means that solutions lie as much in psychiatric, counselling and health services, as in the provision of emergency or more permanent accommodation. Aside from the tortured lives and personal pain associated with homelessness, its presence and incidence has an impact on broader wellbeing in communities and among businesses. The quality and strength of the City’s communities depends on a robust approach to dealing with homelessness.

3. Ensuring equitable distribution and access to social infrastructure.

The past 10 years has witnessed considerable population growth in the City. This growth is expected to continue, along with change in the demographic and social profile of the population. For a range of reasons, the City’s social infrastructure is inadequate for the current population and for the anticipated structure of the future population. Without assistance from other levels of government, social services and facilities will be under greater pressure. Levels of provision will continue to be inadequate especially for pre-school children, young people at high school and post school, carers and people with a disability. A key challenge is to ensure that language, social, physical or other barriers do not reduce opportunities to access services.

4. Enhancing the distinctive character of Villages.

Character is derived from the physical (built and natural environment) elements of an area and the social, cultural and demographic composition of the people who live, work and visit an area. Growth in the Villages is both inevitable and necessary. However, this growth, if managed poorly, has the potential to weaken the distinctive character of the Villages. Further, the City’s communities and Villages should be able to change and evolve, both physically and culturally, without being unduly constrained by placing more value on what exists now than what they might be like in the future.

From this perspective, the conservation of the built environment should recognise that preservation is not inconsistent with adaptive re-use, and that in many cases this will give a new life to a building that would otherwise be a burden. Poor management is not only confined to changing built form, but also to the handling of the social and economic processes associated with growth. Poor management of these processes has the potential to negatively impact on social and cultural elements of the City’s communities. Essentially this implies that consultation and thorough up front planning for change is required, with wider issues and implications canvassed.

5. Providing spaces for small and local businesses.

The City of Sydney needs to ensure there are sufficient opportunities for start-up businesses, including those required to service the large resident population and those with aspirations for sales to external markets. Hastily redeveloping all precincts, resulting in higher values and rents, tends to crowd out many small businesses that make significant contributions to the City economy. Indeed, overzoning where there is only modest demand can lead to speculation and unrealistic development expectations.

6. Ensuring all communities have an opportunity to participate.

The City of Sydney has well-developed consultation processes and practices. The Local Action Plans were the product of significant local consultation—ongoing forums and consultation are occurring. Consultation for Sustainable Sydney 2030 has been extensive. A further effort will be required in the course of implementing initiatives.

Change is difficult for many people—without a thorough engagement process there is a significant risk of hostility to what might otherwise be worthwhile ideas and actions. Opportunities to participate need to include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, young people, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, people with disabilities and homeless people.

The opportunity to participate is not just about formal consultation and engagement. What is more important for the community are opportunities to participate in the social and economic life of the City. Without these opportunities, there is a heightened risk of social dysfunction and alienation, which can cost society dearly. Interesting places to work, celebrate, meet, shop, learn, exercise, talk or contemplate life provide the best platform for an agenda to address this challenge. Participation also depends on physical access to the City’s amenities and services, so attention to the needs of people with physical disabilities or who are less mobile is critical.



City of Sydney

Street festivals are a feature of City Village life

TOWARDS VIBRANT LOCAL COMMUNITIES AND ECONOMIES

To be a successful and sustainable global city, the City needs to be diverse and inclusive. Residents, workers and visitors need access to and have opportunities to engage in learning and cultural activities, social infrastructure and services and economic opportunities to pursue healthy lifestyle options. While the City is rich in natural and cultural amenities, social capital and quality social infrastructure and services, recent population growth has placed pressure on these assets. For the Villages to remain vibrant places for living and working, the City will work towards infrastructure programs and initiatives to keep pace with the shifting demands of a growing population.

To ensure the City's local communities and economies remain vibrant and diverse and serve equity principles, Sustainable Sydney 2030 has the following objectives:

- | | |
|-----|---|
| 6.1 | Maintain and enhance the role and character of the Villages |
| 6.2 | Create a network of Activity Hubs as places for meeting, shopping, creating, learning and working for local communities |
| 6.3 | Provide a rich layer of accessible community-level social infrastructure, services and programs across the City |
| 6.4 | Develop and support local economies and employment |
| 6.5 | Build opportunities for lifelong learning in new literacies |

WHAT THE CITY OF SYDNEY IS ALREADY DOING

Local Action Plans

The City of Sydney works in close collaboration with its communities. In 2006, the City of Sydney undertook a comprehensive community engagement process to gain a sense of what people believed should be preserved and enhanced in their neighbourhood. These findings informed the development of Local Action Plans for eight identified zones across the City. These zones are:

- City Centre
- City East
- City South
- City West
- Inner East
- Inner South
- Inner West
- North West

Local Action Plans include a list of priority improvement projects for each of the eight zones identified across the City. Many of these local projects are now underway and/or being actively integrated into the relevant City of Sydney programs—current and new—covering the short, medium and long-term.

Shopping Activity Hubs

As part of the City Plan, the City undertakes detailed urban design studies to shape future character of City precincts. Recent studies include:

- Oxford Street Cultural Quarter
- Chinatown Urban Design Study

The Social Plan 2006-2010


The Social Plan 2006-2010 represents the first consolidated social planning strategy for the new City of Sydney as established on 6 February 2004. It sets out the City of Sydney's guiding social principles and identifies priority needs and opportunities within local communities. *The Social Plan* outlines how the City of Sydney intends to respond to local issues in partnership with other levels of government, community-based organisations and City residents, visitors and workers. *The Social Plan* has been divided into two separate volumes to provide one section on the characteristics of the City population, and another that provides an analysis of the eight community target groups and their needs.

Other Relevant Strategies and Plans

- Integrated Community Facilities Plan (under development)
- Homelessness Strategy 2007
- Action Plan for People with Disabilities 2007–2010
- Youth Interagency Strategy and Action Plan, 2006
- Open Space and Recreation Needs Study, 2005
- Library Network Strategy, 2005
- Next Generation and Blueprint for Aged Services and Facilities 2008–2018
- Childcare Needs Analysis 2005
- Safe City Strategy 2007–2012
- Drug and Alcohol Strategy 2007
- Cultural Diversity Strategy
- Youth Skate and Facility Needs Study 2006
- Accommodation Grants Program Policy


Objectives & Actions

OBJECTIVE
6.1 Maintain and enhance
the role and character
of the Villages

**CITY
NOW**  The City of Villages concept has
successfully highlighted the distinct
character of the City's local precincts,
but needs refinement given the new
context of Sustainable Sydney 2030.

The City of Villages concept was developed to better recognise the distinctiveness and diversity of the City's non-CBD residential and commercial areas. These Villages play both independent and support roles in making the City liveable and global.

Sustainable Sydney 2030 suggests that a successful global city includes a City Centre 'heart' plus lively and vibrant surrounding residential and business areas with their own role in community life, but also in the City economy. Additional work is required to further develop an understanding of the potential and character of the City's Villages and what mix of residential, jobs and services is appropriate in each.

**CITY IN
2030**  The City's Villages sustain a mix of
ocal jobs and services and have a
distinct character.

Local sustainability will depend on a viable mix of housing, jobs and services provided in an attractive urban environment and having a modest environmental impact. Each of the City's Villages should include convenience retail and basic personal and business services—as a minimum—within walking distance of the surrounding residential population. Churches, primary schools, post offices, hotels and/or town halls are an appropriate focal point for Villages along main streets.

The Villages are interconnected and make a significant contribution to the City's liveability and therefore its global city status.



Outdoor coffee bars are thriving in the City Centre and Villages

**ACTION
6.1.1** To ensure the City of Sydney
planning policies and programs
support a sustainable City of
Villages.

Each of the City's Villages contain roughly 5,000 to 10,000 people. To maximise access and walkability to the Villages from surrounding residential areas each should have a mix of convenience shopping and local services for this level of population that includes:

- Small supermarket;
- Convenience shops and services including newsagent, café, delicatessen, hairdresser, take away food;
- Bus stop for multiple routes or rail station;
- Pub or hotel;
- Post office;
- Child care services;
- Shop top housing; and
- Local sport and recreation opportunities.

Of course, larger and more substantial institutions or activities may also be present, but these will typically have a wider catchment of users than that for the facilities and assets in the Village.

Actions and initiatives arising from Local Action Plans, local planning activity and rezonings, Business Support Grants and Mainstreet Programs should ensure that this typical mix of activities and services is available in each Village centre. The centre will typically be focused around a church, primary school, post office, hotel, local park or former town hall along the main streets.

Sites and opportunities for residential intensification in and around the Village centre should be investigated.

Create a network of Activity Hubs as places for meeting, shopping, creating, learning and working for local communities

CITY NOW

Lack of identified locations for a more intense mix of activities to provide a focus for new strategic investment in established areas and support local level sustainability.

- The City has traditionally been conceptualised at two distinct levels:
- City Centre, containing higher order business, cultural and tourist activities and services; and
 - Village, or 'main street' and surrounding residential areas.

Recent growth in population and employment in some of the Villages, and a review of community, economic and sustainability imperatives, suggests that there is a need for a 'middle' level of urban place. This middle level includes existing areas or precincts that have come to serve wider needs beyond their local population, such as King Street, Newtown, Crown Street, Surry Hills and Darlinghurst Road, Kings Cross. These places contain greater concentrations of economic, social and cultural activity and infrastructure normally expected in a Village. They are more than service centres for a residential population. They are destinations for visitors and contain businesses and activities that contribute to the City's status as a global city.

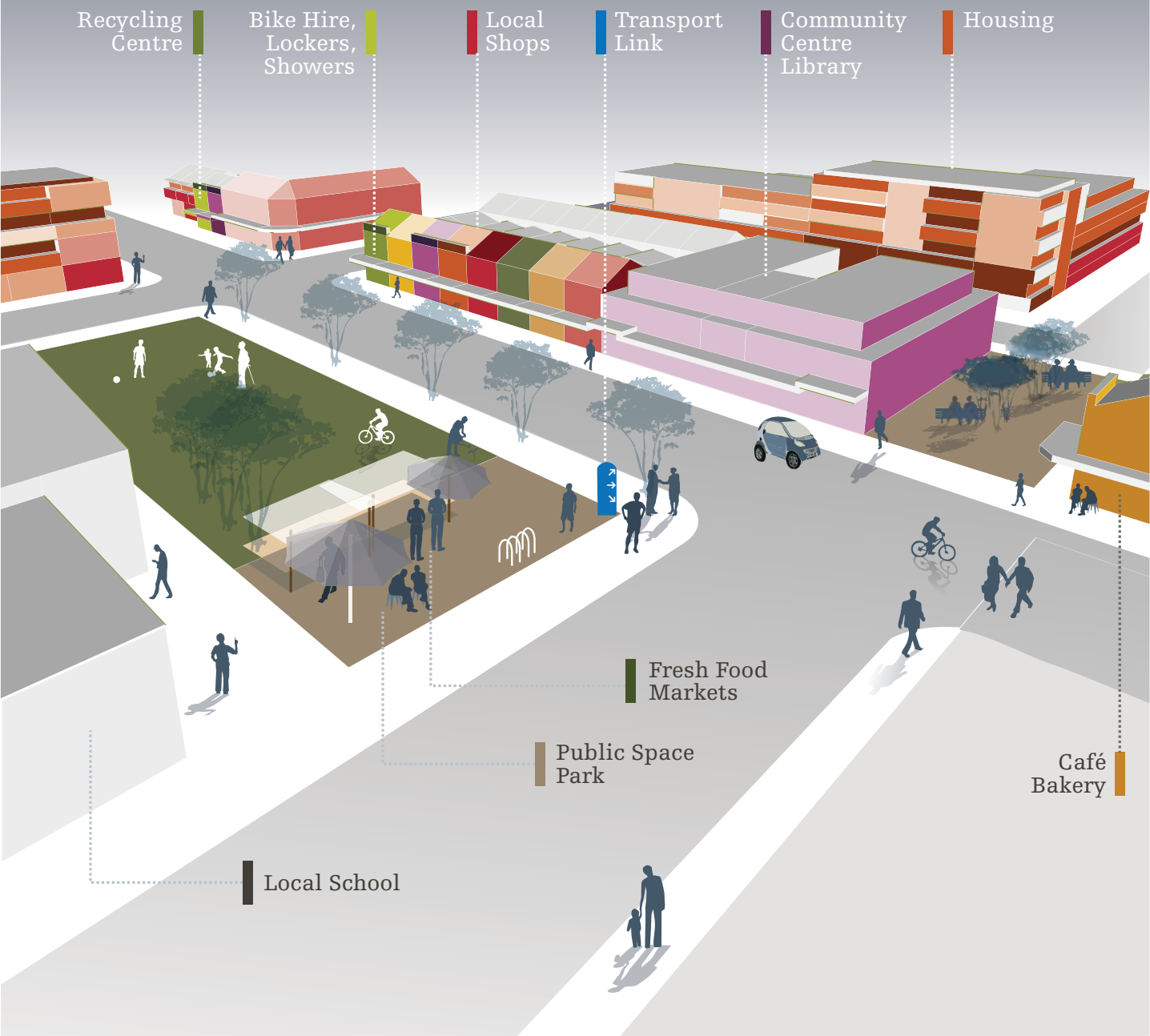
These Activity Hubs have not been formally distinguished or recognised in strategic planning frameworks. Without such a designation there is no broad guide for significant strategic investment by government or the private sector. Importantly there is no focus for investment in stations or interchange hubs for new Inner Sydney transport networks.

Narrow view of the role of the City Centre as Global Sydney.

The most prominent global cities contain a number of economic precincts with different characteristics. While most have a finance and business district with corporate headquarters and the major financial institutions, these are also supported by entertainment, medical, media, arts and shopping districts. In the City, the independent and economic support roles that the surrounding main streets and activity centres play in a strong and diverse economy have been under acknowledged. Places such as Surry Hills, Glebe, Kings Cross, Darlinghurst, Newtown, Ultimo and Chippendale are very strong economies in their own right—whether as host to higher order businesses with national and international clients or as a focus for metropolitan Sydney's residents. A better understanding of and support for the role of these local economies is required.

ACTIVITY HUBS

Core	Support
Transport interchange/hub	Health/medical
Business hub	City of Sydney service centre/ shop-front
Primary school	Fresh food (market)
Library	Bike parking, showers and lockers
Community space	Public spaces
Learning centre	
Wi-Fi hotspot	Recycling centre
Childcare	Community garden
	One-stop governance shop (including other government services)
	Car share pod
	Cultural live sites
	Workshops/studios
	Secondary school
	Places of worship



A recognised layer of Activity Hubs for meeting, shopping, creative activities, learning and working.

The Activity Hubs concept is about deepening the economic, cultural and community offering available in key locations around the City. The network of Hubs supports the Villages, and will ensure equitable access to services and opportunities, and meet the needs of the City's diverse communities. Each Activity Hub should support 15,000 to 25,000 residents (and therefore encompass two or three Villages of say 5,000 to 10,000 residents).

The development of Activity Hubs means focusing community, business, retail and cultural assets in a cluster, within a walkable area, to service and underpin surrounding residential communities. As the residential population of the City grows it will be necessary to identify additional Activity Hubs, or better distinguish those that might play this role. Already, the City of Sydney has been proactive in proposing a collection of community-related facilities in the Green Square town centre.

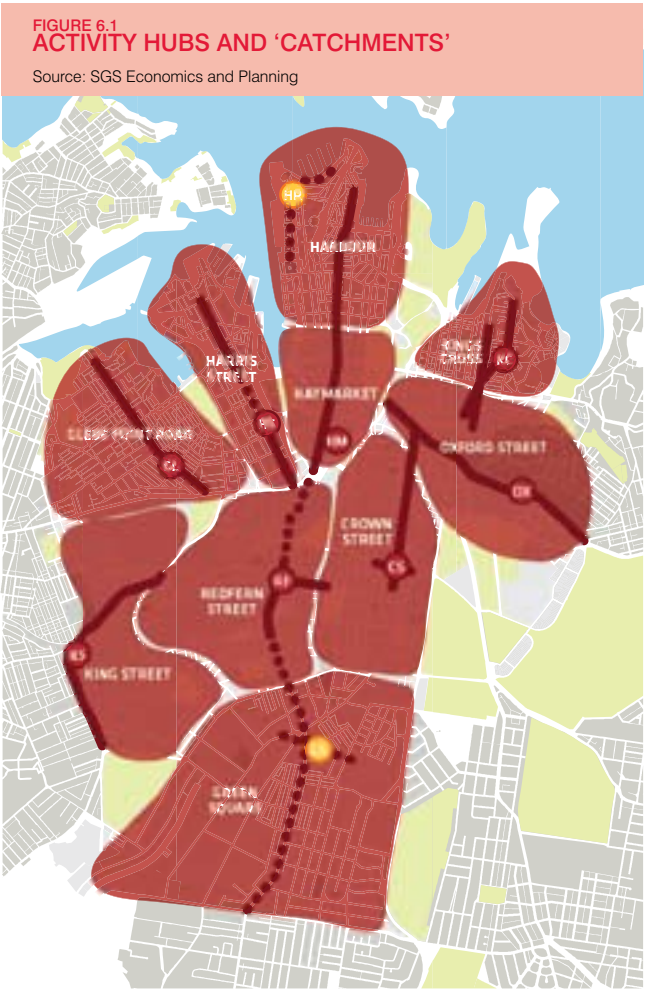
An Activity Hub should be a place for meeting, creating, learning and working. It should be a place for community interaction where all people feel welcome. It should be a place where the principles of Sustainable Sydney 2030 have full expression.

Each Activity Hub should be shaped by the character of the surrounding communities and economic activities. For one, the focus might be on creative activities and enterprise, for another it might be on Indigenous cultures. The business and retail mix should complement the surrounding residential character. Most Hubs would be expected to contain key elements, some in multi-purpose facilities, such as a business hub, primary school, library, community spaces and programs, learning centre, Wi-Fi hot spots, childcare, health-medical services, City of Sydney service centre and fresh food market. They should be the focus for investment in sustainable transport infrastructure such as new metro rail stations and interchange hubs, bike parking and hire, cycling and pedestrian showers and lockers and car share pods.

City Centre, Villages and Activity Hubs for an integrated Global Sydney.

The aspiration for the City is for the traditional Centre to be better integrated and connected with the diverse economies and activities in surrounding precincts. This 'greater' whole of the City Centre and surrounding precincts interacts and trades with the world as Global Sydney. Elements of this concept are already in place; the Centre is already complemented by the strong satellite employment centres of the University, the Australian Technology Park and Surry Hills. The integration of these clusters of activity with the surrounding residential areas, and the roles of the Village economies, has not been sufficiently recognised.

The development of Activity Hubs therefore means better recognising the economic role of the key job centres outside the City Centre and nurturing the conditions for further development.



ACTION 6.2.1

Develop plans for each Activity Hub to support community needs, the role and future character of community life at Crown Street, Kings Cross, Oxford Street, Redfern Street, Harris Street, Glebe Point Road, King Street and Haymarket.

The existing population already sustains a number of Activity Hubs that, given the collection of assets and facilities, can be identified as King Street Newtown (in the vicinity of the Station), Glebe Point Road, Glebe (from around Bridge Road to Parramatta Road), Harris Street, Ultimo-Pyrmont (in the vicinity of William Henry Street), Hay Street, Haymarket (near Paddy's Market), Darlinghurst Road, Kings Cross, Crown Street, Surry Hills (from Foveaux to Cleveland Street) and Oxford Street (in the vicinity of the Paddington Town Hall at Oatley Road).

Redfern Street is already a focus of an established community but significant new development and renewal is proposed, particularly around Wilson Street in the area of North Eveleigh and also at 'The Block'. The City of Sydney has developed a successful Community Centre, upgraded Redfern Street and is renewing Redfern Park. The Redfern-Waterloo Authority has restored and revitalised a number of State-owned properties and sites. Planning for additional cultural and retail offerings, an upgraded railway station and enhanced connectivity and traffic arrangements is required.

The character of residential and social life, and economic activity, in the catchments for these Activity Hubs should be identified through research and consultation. Development plans for each area should be prepared. The Local Action Plans provide an excellent base for this. The key aspect to be included is an economic opportunities and directions component. This would guide physical development, local business planning and promotions and related activities.

ACTION 6.2.2

Plan for new Activity Hubs at Green Square and Harbour (Hickson Road).

New Activity Hubs should also be developed where significant additional future residential population is anticipated. The population in these areas will need to be sufficient to support key elements such as a primary school, community and cultural services and infrastructure and a marketplace with a mix of local shops.

- The City of Sydney is planning for a library, cultural and community centre, child care facilities and multi-purpose recreational facility, as well as shopping and business services, at **Green Square**. This approach anticipates the incoming residential population and can be something of a model for other renewal areas.

A modest residential population is currently being planned for Barangaroo. In combination with Walsh Bay, Millers Point and the Rocks the eventual, anticipated population in this **Harbour** area is currently not sufficient to support anything more than a small supermarket and a few convenience shops (demand from tourists and workers will generate some additional expenditure, though not for community-based services and shopping). To create a sense of community and a sense of place—and a viable Activity Hub—a greater intensity of residential development, including affordable housing, should be considered. Active planning for an array of community and cultural services could then be undertaken.



Surry Hills Library and Community Centre

ACTION 6.2.3 Plan for development to support the core elements of future Activity Hubs.

Through design review studies and from preliminary work for Sustainable Sydney 2030 a solid idea of development potential and constraints in the different parts of the City is emerging. Further detailed work is required to identify development opportunities that will ultimately support a sustainable city and the core elements in each of the proposed Activity Hubs. As mentioned it is anticipated that each of the Activity Hubs will support 15,000 to 25,000 people. Currently, the proposed hub catchments in the Harbour area, including Barangaroo, do not reach this figure.

Ultimo-Pyrmont is at the lower end of the threshold population and existing and new facilities around Harris Street would be better supported with additional development. Medium to longer term redevelopment around Darling Harbour and in the monorail corridor would support this Activity Hub.

In the longer term, as additional renewal areas are developed and the population continues to grow, additional Hub locations may be required.

ACTION 6.2.4 Plan for community assets, facilities and elements consistent with the future role and character of the Activity Hubs.

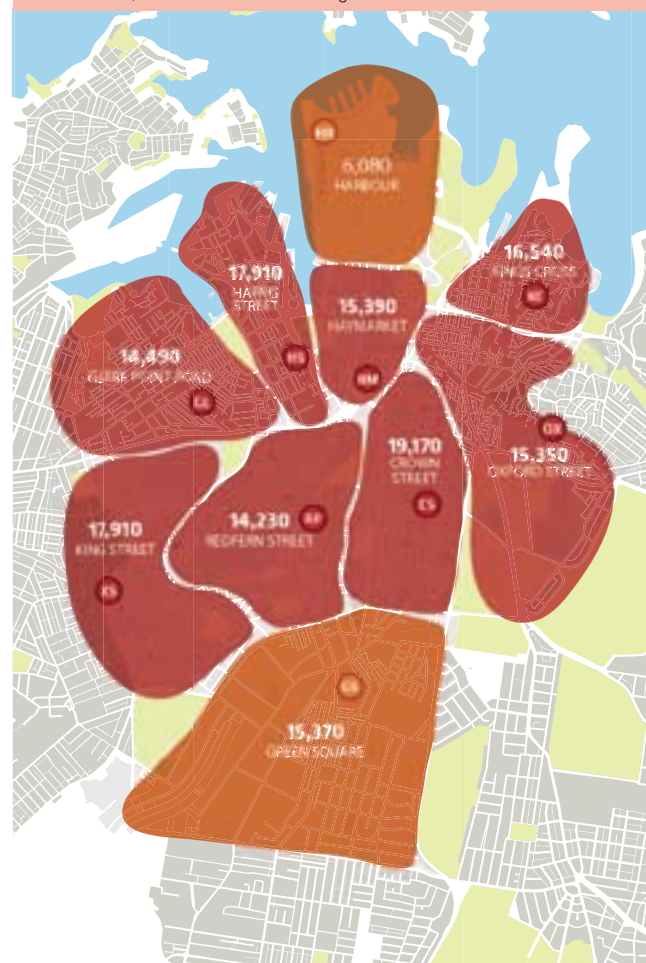
The Activity Hubs and their catchments provide a basis for a review of the geographic distribution of facilities and assets which have a residential community catchment. This includes the City of Sydney's community facilities (see Actions under Objective 6.3), but also education, transport, cultural, business and housing assets and elements. Strategies for development and provision of facilities and services should reflect the desired future role of each Activity Hub, with particular reference to their distinct cultural, economic and residential character. While the mix of facilities in each Hub should reflect their desired future role, there are some common, core elements. Other elements might be considered optional or appropriate for provision following further analysis and evidence of community support. The City of Sydney should not be expected to provide all the core elements, but it should facilitate their provision if possible.

Shopping centres are integral to Activity Hubs



FIGURE 6.2 2006 ACTIVITY HUB CATCHMENT POPULATIONS (PERSONS)

Source: ABS, SGS Economics and Planning



OBJECTIVE 6.3

Provide a rich layer of accessible community-level social infrastructure, services and programs across the City

CITY NOW



Social programs and services typically focus on minority group needs.

State legislation requires the City of Sydney to undertake social planning focusing on the special needs of target groups, including:

- Children (0–11 years);
- Young People (12–24 years);
- Older People (over 55 years);
- Women;
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities;
- People from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds;
- People with a disability;
- Gay, lesbian and transgender people.

While this appropriately reflects the City of Sydney's commitment to the City's diverse population, a broader based approach is also warranted. This broader focus is contained in the City of Sydney's commitment to relative equality for its residents. This requires considering issues of relative access, use and opportunity for diverse groups of residents in other responsibilities of the City of Sydney or State Government, including mainstream planning for transport, access to education and cultural activities, welcoming and high quality public spaces and streets and a diverse and affordable housing supply.

In the past, social planning has been seen as a separate activity concerned with the target groups listed above. Sustainable Sydney 2030, however, is based on a commitment to integrating social planning into the mainstream debates and planning activities covering all the dimensions of City life. In pursuing the integration of social sustainability issues in these activities, the City of Sydney will be active in representing the needs of its residents and visitors to other levels of government, as well as incorporating the principle of intra-generational equity in its own activities.

Furthermore, local social sustainability is not just about addressing minority group needs. It requires development with a modest environmental impact which encourages healthy living, strong community connections and a robust and diverse local economy. It also relates to the sense of trust, belonging and safety that people feel. This means that good social outcomes are inextricably linked to the other dimensions of comprehensive planning.

Social planning needs to be better integrated with other aspects of the City of Sydney's activities.

Consistent with the broad based, comprehensive approach to social planning is the need for better integration of and reference to social aspirations across other City of Sydney planning functions and activities. Without an integrated understanding of the social impacts of the City of Sydney's decisions across the board it will be difficult to achieve the principles of diversity, inclusiveness and equity which are fundamental to Sustainable Sydney 2030.

The aspiration for relative equality in the City is poorly served by uncoordinated inter-governmental responsibilities.

Social planning is not an isolated discipline. All levels of government have responsibilities which impact on social outcomes and quality of life. In the direct social field these different responsibilities include Federal Government transfer payments and health funding; State Government housing, crisis service provision and operational funding; Local Government community facilities and grants programs. Cross council coordination in pursuit of social aims is difficult enough. Ensuring that all levels of government are acting in concert is an even greater challenge.

Fragmented responsibilities are inevitable in any system of governance, but there is an emerging consensus that in Australia it is particularly difficult to achieve social outcomes given the diversity of responsibilities across levels of government. Where there are pockets of disadvantage—for example in Redfern and Waterloo—it has been difficult to get effective coordinated government action to take action. Regeneration initiatives as practised in the UK, for example, which involve outcomes-based planning and cross and intergovernmental cooperation, have not been a feature of Australian urban policy.



City of Sydney

City community activities bring people together

CITY NOW



Growth pressures are putting pressure on social infrastructure.

The City of Sydney's *Social Plan* has identified that rapid population growth is a key issue for the City. It notes that 'rapid and sustained urban redevelopment...contributed to increased pressure on existing communities...particularly in relation to equitable access to community services and facilities, such as open space, child care centres, libraries, arts/cultural and recreational facilities'.² Since the *Social Plan* was released the 2006 Census figures have shown continued rapid growth. The population of the City has grown by almost 60 per cent in the last 10 years. Sustained growth is forecast over the next 20 years.

Many facilities are at capacity with stresses evident.

- While the influx of private and work-based childcare has increased the available places in the City, access to childcare for lower income groups is insufficient. This has arisen because of the loss of public and other State provided places in recent years. The City of Sydney should have an active provider role, working in partnership with other agencies to meet this demand.
- The City of Sydney provides an array of innovative services for younger people, though typically for youth at risk. Available services and facilities are often rundown or in inappropriate locations. Attention to more general youth services and programs is warranted.
- Services for older people are typically delivered from single purpose and ageing facilities. The stock of facilities needs review given great diversity in the aged population. Traditional models of delivering aged services also need to be reconsidered.

- There is a nominal shortage of community centres across the City (despite recent investment in new facilities in Ultimo, Redfern and Surry Hills). Experience shows that without a staffing strategy and long-term operational commitments, community centres can be a cost burden, with a lack of clarity regarding their role. Investment in new facilities is required but re-use of existing buildings and multi-use facilities, and most importantly clarity as to aims and objectives of long-term operations, needs to be part of a community centres strategy.

The City of Sydney is developing an integrated Community Facilities Plan, which will be informed by an extended needs assessment.

Community facilities are unevenly distributed across the City and some are in a poor condition.

With a history of amalgamations and boundary changes, and given the difficulties in securing funding, it is not surprising that the City of Sydney's community facilities and assets generally appear inherited or provided in an ad hoc manner.

Without a comprehensive community facilities and strategic plan this is quite often the case for Local Government.

The result is an unevenly distributed collection of community facilities, many in poor condition. Uneven population growth, occasionally poor transport access and the need to fit services into inherited or opportunistically acquired buildings—which may not be appropriate—exacerbates the problem of geographically maldistributed assets.

CITY IN 2030



Community and social planning is broad-based, recognising all the dimensions that contribute to the quality of life.

The City of Sydney has a broad-based community planning approach which works on the premise that local social sustainability is not just about equality of opportunity and equity of access. It is also about living with a modest environmental impact, healthy living, strong community connections and a robust and diverse local economy. Capacity in a broad range of literacies is also fundamental to being able to live a full life.

Strategic social planning and implementation capacity is strong and integrated across the City of Sydney's activities.

The *Social Plan* 2006-10 and the Corporate Plan 2007-10 are significant steps forward in integrating social aspirations and principles across the City of Sydney's activities. Sustainable Sydney 2030, by tackling transport, economy, design, environment, cultures, renewal and development in an integrated and comprehensive fashion, is essentially a social wellbeing strategy.

Ten principles developed in preparing Sustainable Sydney 2030 will be a reference for the City of Sydney across its activities in the future (see STRATEGIC DIRECTION 10: IMPLEMENTATION THROUGH EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE AND PARTNERSHIPS), particularly 'diverse and inclusive', 'equitable' and 'connected and accessible'. Land use planning, planning for facilities provision and policies regarding fees and charges are City of Sydney activities that need a particular social filter.

The City of Sydney is a partner with other levels of government in services provision and multi-disciplinary programs aimed at addressing inequality, social disadvantage and homelessness.

Cross and inter-government programs aimed at meeting social aims will be more regularly initiated. This will involve transport, community service and welfare agencies and strategic planning authorities working together to improve opportunities among particular communities.

Specific standards and guidelines will guide facility and service provision, based on robust research and planning frameworks and public debates.

The City of Sydney's research into community needs will be based on routine surveying and through consultation and debate which ensures that social infrastructure provision is based on contemporary and cutting edge practice. Research will be directed to preparing City of Sydney specific provision standards and guidelines for the spatial distribution, built form and operational requirements for different types of facilities.

Equitable and accessible: Community facilities are provided by reference to the Sustainable Sydney 2030 spatial framework so that Villages and Activity Hubs are the focus for new and redeveloped facility provision.

To ensure there is an equitable and accessible distribution, new or redeveloped community and civic facilities are directed towards or developed in Activity Hubs or Village centres where they are clustered with other facilities and on public transport connections.

Integrated and innovative: The City of Sydney is a leader in new models of social infrastructure provision and delivery.

The City of Sydney will explore new ways to deliver and manage social service provision. This will include the provision of integrated facilities that combine a variety of uses, taking advantage of a diversity of up to date equipment, facilities and flexible-use spaces to respond to changing social needs, including emerging literacy needs, general health and fitness needs, changing leisure preferences, and civic participation processes and skills. The City of Sydney will also seek to deliver social infrastructure through new partnerships and governance structures.

ACTION 6.3.1 Prepare a city-wide Integrated Communities Strategy to ensure services meet local community needs.

An *Integrated Communities Strategy* would extend the *Social Plan 2006-2010*, highlighting the importance of relative equality and the broader dimensions of local sustainability in community life—not just for minority or disadvantaged groups. It could include the following.

- A review of the City of Sydney's activities and policies measured against the aspiration for relative equality, in particular ensuring that the City of Sydney's planning activities, events, pricing structures and civic participation processes do not discriminate against marginalised communities.
- A social infrastructure plan for the City comprising an audit and assessment of current social infrastructure and future provision planning, with reference to the Villages and Activity Hubs spatial framework—the aim being well staffed and resourced facilities equitably distributed across the City offering a range of programs and services.
- An expanded focus on community-level access to transport; to leisure and recreation; to local employment and training; and importantly to education and skills development in financial, IT and social literacy programs.
- A focus on strengthening social sustainability, including building trust, safety, accessibility and community harmony.

ACTION 6.3.2 Establish partnerships and programs to improve social conditions and outcomes amongst particular communities.

Social development and improvement strategies could include actions targeted at general social wellbeing, vulnerable individuals or groups, or in physical areas where disadvantage is concentrated.

The City of Sydney has already prepared a comprehensive *Homelessness Strategy*. Because detection, health, psychiatric, counselling and accommodation services are all part of addressing the issue, key actions require the development of partnerships with many other agencies.

There are some emerging examples of community or area based social planning for community regeneration, such as that undertaken by the *Souths Partnership*.

The City of Sydney should further develop or support these activities. In particular, it can play a leadership role in identifying desirable social outcomes for particular groups or communities and encourage inter and cross government partnerships to work towards them. Some of the social development and regeneration activities in other countries provide a model for these partnerships.

The City supports efforts towards rehabilitation mechanisms and infrastructure to assist including Aboriginal offenders and other offenders released from gaol.

ACTION 6.3.3 Establish standards and guidelines for the form and nature of community facilities needed to meet emerging social needs in the City, based on analysis and research.

General standards for facilities provision are generally available. These identify the number of libraries or childcare places or senior citizens centres that should be provided for a population with particular characteristics and of a particular size. They may be a useful reference point, but are typically not applicable without taking into account local circumstances.

City of Sydney specific standards and guidelines should be prepared. These will identify rates of provision for libraries, community centres, senior citizens services, youth services, childcare places and recreation centres and swimming pools for different levels of the population, and how the facilities and services are to be configured. It may be that single multi-purpose facilities can be used for community needs, senior citizens and youth services, but this needs explicit testing. Private providers may also meet many needs, but again this needs to be tested.

Systematic surveys and research and public debates (via seminars or talks) should provide evidence for the standards and guidelines.

ACTION 6.3.4 Prepare a Future Community Facilities Plan to direct investment in new or redeveloped community facilities in the Villages or Activity Hubs.

The City's community facilities have often been inherited or opportunistically provided rather than delivered via a comprehensive strategic plan. This has resulted in unevenly distributed facilities, many of which are ill-suited to their primary purpose.

The existing *Social Plan* acknowledges the need for a facilities strategy. The spatial framework of City Centre, Villages and Activity Hubs provides guidance for future City of Sydney investment in facilities. As facilities are reviewed or renewed the opportunity should be taken to consider an Activity Hub location for them. This will require working with private owners or developers, or seeking multi-use opportunities in, for example, existing schools or church buildings, or using surplus government or City of Sydney-owned land in or near the Activity Hubs to provide these facilities.

OBJECTIVE 6.4

Develop and support local economies and employment



Niche retail in the City

CITY NOW



Unrealised potential for Villages to accommodate niche businesses, start-ups and diverse retailing.

Small and niche businesses make significant contributions to the economy. Current redevelopment processes in the City favour larger businesses that can occupy large floor plates. This has resulted in fewer opportunities for start-up businesses and for existing small business. Speculatively planned and developed precincts result in higher values and rents and tend to crowd out many small, yet important, businesses. Further, large-scale redevelopments have tended to ignore the elements of many of the Villages that give them their vibrancy and competitive advantage.

Role of robust local economies in global economy not sufficiently recognised.

Over the past 10 years some of the Villages have developed important economic roles in the City. These Villages serve not only the needs of the local community, but also serve a regional catchment. Most importantly they are tapped into the global economy.

The importance of integrating local economies with surrounding residential areas and the existing City Centre has yet to be recognised. Concentrations of economic activity in areas such as Surry Hills, Ultimo-Pyrmont and Newtown are yet to be physically connected to the City Centre. The City has been slow to provide supportive frameworks and initiatives for Village economies to flourish and mature.

CITY IN 2030



Villages and Activity Hubs encourage and foster entrepreneurial spirit and employment growth.

The City of Sydney will improve economic opportunities to encourage local economic development and entrepreneurial spirit by protecting and enhancing the competitive strengths of Activity Hubs and Village economies. Urban design, planning controls, economic development strategies and local governance strategies will be used. Part of the success of business in many hubs relates to the subdivision, ownership and leasing patterns that allow many businesses to 'have a go'. Supporting the economic role of Villages will mean supporting and enhancing the built form and grain of the Hubs. Activity Hubs and Villages will be vibrant places of commerce and exchange and will reflect the physical, social and cultural character of the area. Existing business concentrations will be nurtured, while new and emerging sectors will be encouraged.

Villages and Activity Hubs integrated into Global Sydney.

A redefined conception of the City, which includes the City Centre, Villages and Activity Hubs, will interact and trade with the world as 'Global Sydney'. The City of Sydney will develop and implement mechanisms, frameworks and initiatives that support the economic role of the Activity Hubs that will allow employment to grow, business to flourish and will enhance the connectedness of the Hubs into the global economy and the traditional City Centre.

ACTION 6.4.1 Investigate economic development strategies for Activity Hubs.

The development plans for each of the Activity Hubs (and their catchments) should have a strong focus on business and economic development. This will require research and consultation that reviews:

- Local economic drivers;
- Tenants and businesses;
- Support infrastructure;
- Physical planning issues; and
- Strengths and weaknesses in the local economy.

Recommendations and actions to build on strengths and address weaknesses should be developed.

ACTION 6.4.2 Include initiatives for work and training for local unemployed and disadvantaged people in Activity Hub Development Plans.

The Social Plan includes actions addressing employment and training for high needs groups. The Activity Hubs development plans provide a platform, and potentially particular opportunities in identified projects, for including work and training initiatives for those in need. The imperative should be to identify such opportunities associated with a new private or public investment that are intended to develop an Activity Hub.

ACTION 6.4.3 Investigate the establishment of a Sydney Employment Mentoring Program.

Despite a strong labour market, many young people in the City remain marginalised from the opportunities of living in a global city. Unemployment among young Aboriginal people in particular remains persistently high. A commitment to sharing the benefits of global city status across all communities, including access to job opportunities, is required.

The City of Sydney, in collaboration with local Aboriginal communities, training providers such as TAFE and private sector partners, will investigate the establishment of a Sydney Employment Mentoring Program targeting disadvantaged young people. International experience suggests that the program needs strong leaders from within the community itself, rather than relying on outsiders. The program will build on recent employment initiatives in construction and hospitality industries commenced by the Redfern-Waterloo Authority.

The Sydney Employment Mentoring Program could involve:

- Design of a mentoring program for young managers to prepare them for mentoring disadvantaged young people.
- The training of mentors to support young unemployed people to develop work readiness skills, including one-on-one relationships based on respect, trust and advice regarding work and training pathways.
- Development of partnerships with the private sector, such as finance and business services, creative industries and hospitality, hospitals, construction firms and community organisations to place work ready participants in employment-related experiences.
- Placement of work experienced participants in long-term job opportunities within the City.



Multi-racial interface a feature of Redfern

City of Sydney

ACTION 6.4.4 Support initiatives to expand job opportunities for Indigenous people.

Sustainable Sydney 2030 promotes building partnerships with others to address and overcome endemic social and economic problems in local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. Recent creative industry initiatives hosted by the Redfern Community Centre such as supporting Indigenous actors and encouraging musical talent are important stepping stones. The Redfern-Waterloo Authority initiatives to increase Aboriginal employment in the construction and hospitality industries are showing how solutions can be found.

Redfern-Waterloo Initiatives for Aboriginal Enterprise and Employment

The Redfern-Waterloo Authority has developed a number of initiatives to encourage increased Aboriginal employment and enterprise development, including employment and training in major development projects, expanding cultural industries through means such as design production, assisting with export opportunities, and a vocational training centre with disabled access within the North Eveleigh precinct. The centre will provide the unique experience of training in both hospitality and the cultural significance of Indigenous cuisine, and provide students with on-site work experience.

The importance of the South Sydney Rugby League team to local Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal residents, and the commitment of the South Sydney Leagues Club to support the Indigenous community through *Souths Cares*, the *David Peachey Foundation* and the *South Sydney Business Community Forum*, are other important mechanisms for local social and economic revival. The Club runs a number of mentoring programs with young people, is looking at ways of reinvigorating the Club with cafés, and entertainment. The Club is supporting local jobs for Aboriginal people in the café in the redeveloped Redfern Park.

The location of Channel Seven at the Australian Technology Park and CarriageWorks at North Eveleigh provide further opportunities to create employment and learning opportunities (and exchange) for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residents, particularly in cultural and creative industries.

The City of Sydney will work with the Aboriginal community and other government agencies and businesses to establish a new Aboriginal Employment Partnership. The Partnership will:

- Undertake primary surveys of risks to identify attributes and creative skills.
- Coordinate employment initiatives between businesses and other employing organisations.
- Support the mentoring Program of the Aboriginal Employment Service emphasising cultural respect and providing job and learning experiences for young Indigenous residents at risk.
- Simulate employment experiences through the Redfern Community Centre and other City of Sydney facilities.
- Provide referral services and advice on emerging occupations, particularly in creative fields, for local Indigenous residents, again working with the Aboriginal Employment Service.

OBJECTIVE

6.5

Build opportunities for lifelong learning in new literacies

CITY NOW

✕

Lack of opportunities to meaningfully engage with ‘new literacies’.

Literacy was once only about reading and numeracy. A basic skill set could now include IT literacy (the capacity to use information technology in order to obtain information and interact with most agencies) and financial literacy (for example, as superannuation is deregulated, credit card and mortgage marketing is targeted to include people on the fringe of financial capacity).

Beyond these basics, a rewarding level of participation in society also increasingly requires visual literacy (a capacity to read visual messages and represent ideas visually) and cultural literacy (knowledge of cultural practices and mores, presence of ease with cultural diversity, capacity to be sensitive to the practices and mores of other cultures).

For an ageing population there will be the issue of keeping up. For marginalised groups and people with a disability there are the issues of simple barriers to acquiring literacies, such as language, location and price. While expanding the services and skills of staff offered in its libraries, the City of Sydney has not necessarily adopted the cause of providing opportunities for communities to develop skills in the new literacies.

CITY IN 2030

➡

A City with command of the new literacies.

The City will be a city of learning and creativity, ensuring all communities have the opportunity to access life-long learning and develop cultural confidence. Access to learning tools and resources will become more widespread and accessible. Free Wi-Fi, libraries which are increasingly community learning centres, and cultural live-sites in Activity Hubs will provide platforms to encourage greater participation and enliven local cultural life. Activity Hubs will be a gateway to facilities that can provide opportunities to develop skills in information technology, financial, visual and cultural literacies.



City of Sydney

Information accessibility in City libraries

ACTION

6.5.1

Establish and promote an accessible information literacy program in every Activity Hub.

The Activity Hubs should also become known as information and knowledge centres. While knowledge is increasingly dispersed and decentralised through the Internet, there remains a role for places where information is provided. Information on opportunities for cultural programs, continuous learning, and access to training should be provided in facilities focussed in the Activity Hubs and widely promoted.

ACTION

6.5.2

Establish free Wi-Fi networks in all City libraries and ensure City libraries offer access to global communications.

As part of promoting the new literacies, City libraries should provide free Wi-Fi access, though the ultimate intention is that all Activity Hubs have Wi-Fi (or its next generation equivalent).





PROJECT IDEA

➔ NEW MOVES FOR NEWTOWN

Building on the creative hub

LOCATION

King Street, Newtown

VISION

King Street is Newtown's great public asset and its strongest urban element—a fine-grained and sinuous retail strip that traces the ridge-line. It is a socially diverse, public promenade, serviced by two train lines (Newtown and Erskineville stations) and multiple bus routes. The consistent narrow frontages with relatively few large retail tenancies, create a collage of interesting retail, fashion, restaurant and entertainment venues reflective of the local cosmopolitan community and its role as a regional attractor. The future of these streets should elevate pedestrians, enhance public space and improve the links between the railway station and Australia Square. Ideas to encourage spaces for small businesses, fresh food markets and creative activities should be explored.

AIMS

- ➊ Create a new major public open space at the heart of Newtown. Integrate redevelopment of Newtown Tram Sheds into the Activity Hub by redesigning 'Newtown Square', ensuring connections with Newtown Station, Enmore Road and Erskineville Road.
- ➋ Work with local residents, businesses, artists and community and cultural groups to develop a community and creative hub, retail or fresh food market in the station precinct.
- ➌ Offer a variety of experiences by amplifying connections from King Street to existing, larger scale public spaces, redevelopment and reuse of heritage tram sheds and improved pedestrian amenity.
- ➍ Improve and integrate public transport interchange at Newtown Station with proposed station upgrades to improve pedestrian amenity and safety at the King Street/Enmore Road intersection.
- ➎ Integrate redevelopment of Newtown Tram Sheds into the Activity Hub.

IMPLEMENTATION

- ➊ Partnership between City of Sydney, Marrickville Council and State Government.
- ➋ Integrated with upgrades to transport interchange at Newtown Station.

BENEFITS TO THE CITY

- ➊ Enhances the unique character by creating a cohesive cultural hub with a variety of potential uses.
- ➋ Greater open space and recreational assets.
- ➌ Increases permeability and improves pedestrian safety.
- ➍ Provides potential for adjacent affordable housing at Newtown Square along Erskineville Road.

IDEAS

THE IDEAS BELOW ARE INITIAL SUGGESTIONS FOR BUILDING ON NEWTOWN AS A CREATIVE HUB. EACH IDEA REQUIRES FURTHER INVESTIGATION WITH KEY PARTNERS.

- ➊ **Create a new major public open space at the heart of Newtown Hub linked to the tram sheds by redesigning 'Newtown Square', ensuring integration with Newtown Station and Enmore Road.**
- ➋ Adapt the heritage tramsheds to include community uses such as markets, library and learning, studio spaces, galleries and cafés, as part of a tramshed redevelopment.
- ➌ **Create a pedestrian-oriented intersection with increased footpaths connecting to a potential cross-City transit line at the centre of the Hub.**
- ➍ Provide a strong connection from King Street to Camperdown Memorial Park and St Stephens Cemetery.
- ➎ **Extend the landscape quality and vibrancy of Erskineville Village across King Street to Camperdown Memorial Park by transforming Erskineville Road into a landscaped retail street.**
- ➏ Use Newtown School oval for shared use with the public, and the pedestrianisation of small streets linking King Street and Camperdown Memorial Park.
- ➐ **Transform Erskineville Road as a new park spine—wider on the sunny north-facing side—amplifying the existing leafy character of the Erskineville Village Centre and improving connection between Erskineville and Newtown.**

NEWTOWN ACTIVITY HUB

