

Minutes of the Westmead Community Voice Panel Meeting held at Westmead Domain Community Room, 1 Oakes Street, Westmead on Thursday, 29 June 2023.

1. Open of Meeting and Acknowledgment of Country

The Meeting was opened by Council Officers at 6:11pm.

Acknowledgement of the traditional owners of this land – the Darug People and pay our respects to their elders past, present, and emerging.

2. Record of Attendance and Apologies

In Attendance:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Representing</u>
Shona Porter, Executive Manager, City Strategy Larissa Hubner, Coordinator, Urban Strategy and Planning Richard Howard, Coordinator, Place Liaison and Activation Kaitlin McCaffery, Senior Strategic Planner Will Wang, Senior Strategic Planner Amruta Kumbhari, Strategic Planner Oscar Stanish, Urban Design Consultant, Architectus (Consultant)	Cumberland City Council
Thirteen (13) Community Representatives	Community Voice Panel

Absent:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Representing</u>
Two (2) Community Representatives	Community Voice Panel

3. Confirmation of Minutes

Nil to Report.

4. Conflicts of Interest

No conflicts of interest were disclosed at this meeting.

5. Agenda Items

Update on Current Work and Next Steps

Council Officers provided an overview of Workshop One, outlining key topics that were discussed and action items for Council Officers to respond to.

The action items from Workshop One were:

1. Council Officers to send Conflict of Interest Form to all panel members.
2. Council Officers to seek availabilities and confirm next meetings.
3. Council Officers to review and present demographic information to the Panel about how people are moving in and out of Westmead South and how this is factored into our strategic planning work.
4. Council Officers to upload strategic planning documents alongside workshop minutes.

Council Officers member Larissa Hubner advised that we would be in touch shortly with upcoming workshop dates.

Council Officers outlined the focus of this workshop to be on:

- Demographics and Demand
- Open Space Opportunities and
- Local Character and land uses.

An update was then provided on where Council is currently at in our work program for Westmead South. Council officer Larissa Hubner outlined the timeline of the master planning process and the LEP making processes involved. Ms Hubner highlighted the key stages over the next year and explained the timeframes associated with relevant approvals prior to finalising the masterplan, planning proposal, and placing it on public exhibition. Several questions were raised by the panel regarding the Community Voice Panel's role and the associated timeframes.

A panel member commented to Council Officers that he was not clear about the role of the Community Voice Panel, and what their capacities are. He continued that the Westmead South community have an unclear understanding of the role of the Community Voice Panel, highlighting that there is miscommunication and angst in the community about what is taking place at panel meetings.

Council Officers member Shona Porter asked the panel whether it would be helpful to provide regular updates to the Westmead South 'Have Your Say' webpage on Council's strategic planning work. The panel remarked that this would be appreciated and would clear any confusion in the community about the role of the panel.

Action Item: Council Officers to provide updates on Westmead South strategic planning work and timeframes on the Westmead South and Community Voice Panel 'Have Your Say' page.

Another panel member queried the three to five years process that was mentioned by Council Officer (based on master planning and LEP making process outlined on slide pack) as a long time and provided the example of Council initiated rezoning that took place on Veron Street, Wentworthville. Ms Hubner advised that a significant amount of work was undertaken prior to any public facing decisions taking place, highlighting that almost five years of background work was undertaken for the Wentworthville Town Centre project. At Westmead Council has come to the community sooner to involve them as much as possible as the Master Plan is developed.

The panel member asked Council Officers if there is any political pressure to deliver housing in Westmead South, noting that the Labor Government is currently under pressure to deliver more housing due to the current housing shortage. Ms Porter stated that there is no political pressure from the State Government to deliver our housing targets quickly, however based

on the Local Strategic Planning Statement and Housing Strategy there has been commitments by Council delivering a Westmead Master Plan on these timeframes.

Another panel member asked Council Officers if there will be another opportunity for consultation prior to the report back to Council. Council confirmed that submissions will be accepted at every engagement and exhibition period.

Overview of Westmead South Demographics

Responding to an Action Item from Workshop 1 held on 9 May 2023, Council Officers member Amruta Kumbhari provided a presentation on the demographic makeup of Westmead South and how this has factored into Council's strategic planning work.

Existing demographic snapshot

Population – a young, diverse, and educated population based on the 2021 Census Data

- Westmead had a total population of 21,568 people.
- 135 people identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander
- Approximately 8.6% of all migrants entering Greater Sydney, live in the Cumberland LGA
- 76.1% have completed Year 12 or equivalent
- 33 was the median age
- 70.6% of the population speaks another language at home

Broadly, the Cumberland LGA population is forecast to grow by 30% over the next 20 years to approximately 300,000 by 2036, including Westmead South. Ms Kumbhari explained that this level of growth is based on existing planning controls and current populations, not considering the significant growth that will come from investment by the NSW State Government into the Sydney Metro West, Health and Innovation Precinct, and the broader Greater Parramatta and the Olympic Peninsula (GPOP) area.

A summary of key trends in Census data was provided to the panel, indicating that data has shown:

- An overall need for high quality, accessible parks, open space areas and education facilities as the general population increases over time
- A need for accessible social infrastructure such as health care facilities and aged care provision
- A need for facilities and services that build community connection, such as community centres and recreation facilities

Ms Kumbhari continued, that Council is considering these trendlines in our discussions with stakeholders and in the development of Westmead South Masterplan.

Activity One – Future Character Precincts

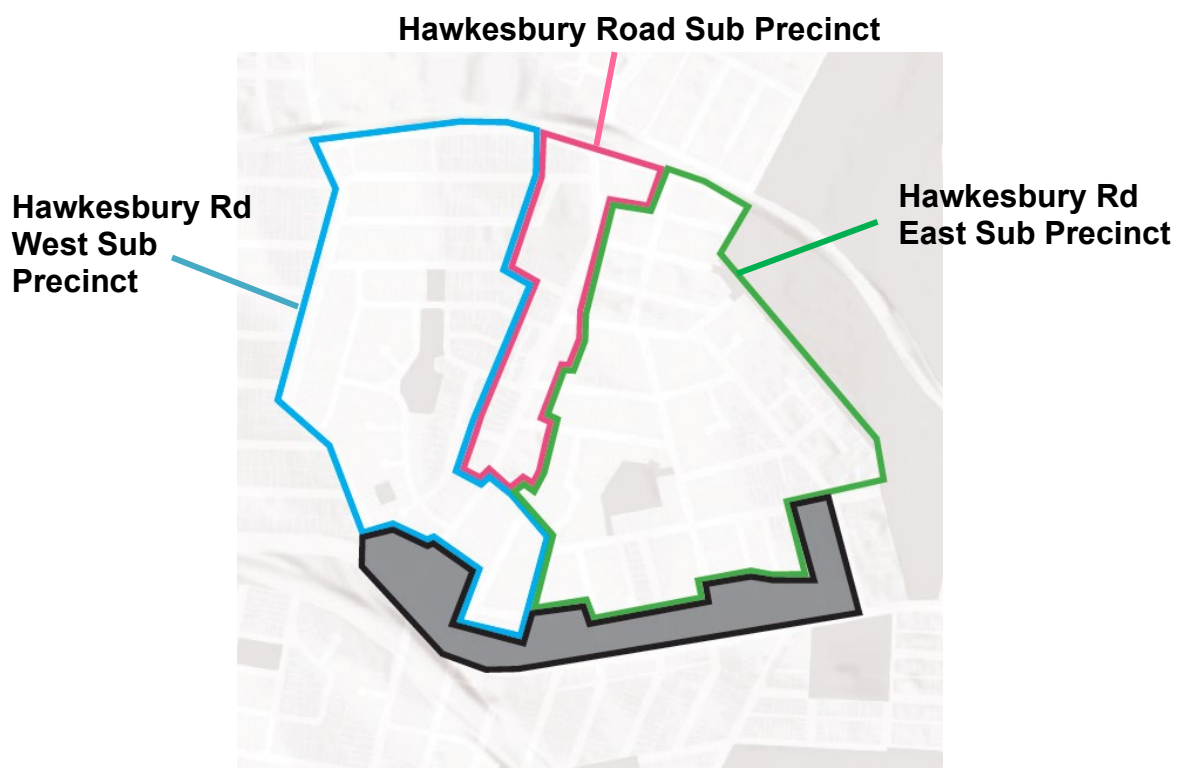
Council Officers began the workshop with the first exercise, focused on future character precincts in Westmead South. Council Officers member Will Wang outlined Activity One, which was broken up into two exercises.

Exercise 1A – Precinct Spectrum

The purpose of this exercise was to understand what the panel believes the current character for Westmead South comprises of and what they envision the future character of Westmead South to be. A worksheet containing four key themes - Land Use, Streetscape, Movement and Heritage & Culture – was provided to each table for members to identify on a spectrum, how they would describe the character of Westmead South now and in the future.

Mr Wang explained to the panel that they have each been assigned a precinct within Westmead South –

- Hawkesbury Road
- Hawkesbury Road West
- Hawkesbury Road East



Proposed Sub-Precincts for Activity One

Mr Wang noted that since majority of Great Western Highway has been developed, we will not be considering this area in this exercise.

Each table was provided with dot stickers to place on the worksheet relating to their assigned precinct. Mr Wang provided an example of the spectrum exercise and talked through an example scenario on how to place a sticker on the spectrum based on what you think.

A panel member asked if different views will be represented in the exercise. Mr Wang advised that yes, each member was given a sticker and all views will be represented on the worksheet to show different opinions.

Council Officers provided worksheets with photographs depicting each theme.

All members engaged in discussion in their groups and presented the following outcomes on the spectrum about how they view the current and future character of Westmead South. Following discussion, each table rotated what precinct they were responsible for discussing before moving onto another precinct. Diverse views from different tables were received during the workshop. Council and the consultant team will review and consider the outcome in the master planning process.

A summary of the current and future character outcomes discussed is provided below:

Hawkesbury Road	
<p>Current:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land use – Equal mix between residential and mixed uses • Streetscape – Mostly neutral, with some areas with a village look and others like an urban area. • Movement – Mostly car friendly with some feeling neutral. • Heritage & Culture – Mostly neutral, with a mix between historical and contemporary buildings 	<p>Future:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land use – Mostly mixed use with some residential areas • Streetscape – Mostly an urban environment with areas with a village look. • Movement – Both walking and cycling and car friendly • Heritage & Culture – Mostly contemporary buildings, with some feeling neutral.
Hawkesbury Road East	
<p>Current:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land use – All residential • Streetscape – Equal mix between village look, neutral and urban environment. • Movement – Generally walking and cycling friendly, however mostly car friendly. • Heritage & Culture – Neutral, with some areas historical and contemporary 	<p>Future:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land use – Equal mix of residential and mixed uses • Streetscape – Mix between village look and urban environment, some feeling neutral. • Movement – Predominantly walking and cycling friendly. • Heritage & Culture – Equal mix of feeling neutral and leaning towards a contemporary look
Hawkesbury Road West	
<p>Current:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land use – All residential • Streetscape – Majority feel the precinct has a village look. • Movement – Almost equal split between walking cycling friendly, car friendly and feeling neutral. • Heritage & Culture – Equal split between a historical look and feeling neutral 	<p>Future:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land use – Mostly residential, with some mixed use • Streetscape – Equal split between an urban environment and village look. • Movement – Mostly walking and cycling friendly, with some feeling neutral. • Heritage & Culture – Mostly neutral, with some preferring historical and contemporary uses

Exercise 1B – Potential Uses

Council Officers member Kaitlin McCaffery introduced the second part of this exercise, focusing on potential uses that the panel would want to see in future buildings in Westmead South – residential and non-residential.

Panel members wrote their ideas on sticky notes and placed them into two categories – residential and non-residential on two A0 size boards.

A summary of the suggestions include:

Residential uses in buildings:

- Accessible ground level apartments
- Diverse housing
- Walkable blocks
- Luxury housing
- Aged care retirement villages
- Seniors' day centre
- Childcare
- Apartments for multigenerational living

Non-residential uses in buildings:

- Café
- Community centre
- Supermarket
- Fitness centre
- Youth centre
- Schools – preschool, primary, and high
- Community garden
- Mid-block parks
- Pet day care
- Library

Activity Two – Public Domain Concept Design

Oscar Stanish of Architectus - the Urban Design Consultant who has been engaged by Council to undertake urban design work to support the Westmead South Master Plan, introduced the second activity for this workshop, which focused on providing an overview on the Public Domain Concept Design for Westmead South.

Mr Stanish explained that his role is to ensure that Council can achieve the best outcomes for the community. He added that when places are undergoing change, it is important to consider open spaces. Particularly in suburbs like Westmead with established places and homes, there may not be opportunities to create new spaces, but there is an opportunity to improve our existing spaces.

Mr Stanish then provided an overview of the NSW Government’s Open Space Guidelines, highlighting that Westmead South performs reasonably well against these targets, with the exceptions being north of the railway etc. and parts of the southern portions of the precinct.

Moving onto Council’s role in delivering open space, Mr Stanish highlighted that the Westmead Open Space Strategy plans to deliver new open space and recreation facilities that:

- meet the needs of the community.
- increase quality and capacity of existing space.
- support inclusion and participation by the diverse community.
- protect our natural environment and
- increase resilience.

A panel member raised the question that, if Council is rezoning the whole precinct, why can’t new open spaces be created as well. Mr Stanish explained that while this can be done, there are complexities around new spaces of meaningful size, and new spaces will mean Council will have to acquire significant amounts of land. Further adding that there are spaces to improve in Westmead South, but there are limitations in terms of how this can be done.

Council Officers member Mr Wang introduced a case study for discussion – Sydney Park, Alexandria. Mr Wang described the different functions and facilities provided at Sydney Park, and how it caters all users in the community – leading into the next activity, open space opportunities.

Activity Three – Open Space Opportunities

Each table was allocated a key space within Westmead South:

- The Oakes Centre
- Sydney Smith Park
- MJ Bennett Reserve

Panel members were to discuss the opportunities of their allocated park, with consideration of five different user groups and their needs:

1. Children
2. Youth
3. Seniors
4. Families with Kids
5. Workers
6. Visitors

Each table nominated a speaker to discuss the outcomes of their discussion.

Table One – The Oakes Centre

All users	Bike racks, shade protection, public art, podiums, lighting to create ambiance and provide safety.
Children	Playgrounds

Youth	Chill out areas with bean bags to sit, chess squares and/or outdoor games
Seniors	Easy access, outdoor areas to relax, toilets, public amenities, signage in different languages for wayfinding
Families with Kids	Cafes, outdoor games
Workers	Spaces to relax
Visitors	signage in different languages for wayfinding

Table 2 – Sydney Smith Park

All users	Improved lighting around the park
Children	Playground equipment for all ages
Youth	Skate ramp, cricket pitch
Seniors	Easy access, outdoor areas to relax, toilets, public amenities, signage in different languages for wayfinding
Families with Kids	Cricket pitches for all ages
Workers	-
Visitors	-

Table 3 – MJ Bennett Reserve

Children	Playgrounds, space to run, access to water fountains, toilets, cycle track
Youth	Cricket pitch, places to play
Seniors	Easy access, toilets, public amenities
Families with Kids	Cafes, seating, barbecue and picnic facilities, community garden, canteen, first aid
Workers	Lighting, seating, meeting rooms, running tracks, parking
Visitors	Public art, exercise tracks, visitor information map, transport to and from the park

Q&A and Discussion

Council Officers member Ms McCaffery put forward the following question to the panel for discussion:

How would you feel about changing some of the parking around the Oakes Centre with useable open space?

Feedback raised from the panel include:

- Generally supportive
- Current parking facilities are used by cars from the adjacent service station centre.
- Supportive of removing shop level parking, but keeping road level parking on Hawkesbury Road
- Should provide timed parking so that surrounding business owners/staff aren't the primary users – should prioritise visitors and retail customers.
- Overall reduction of parking in this area will have flow on effects to neighbouring streets.
- Landscape verge will have to be significant considering how busy Hawkesbury Road is.

- Residents that currently live there will be displaced and that needs to be mitigated.
- Parking should remain but it should be better managed – such as providing timed parking.
- Alternatively, keep the shop level parking but remove the road level parking on Hawkesbury Road
- Safer parking configuration that does not back onto Hawkesbury Road.

Q&A and Open discussion

Council Officers concluded the workshop with a Q&A session for the panel to ask any questions they may have about the Community Voice Panel and future sessions.

A panel member asked how the future planning feeds into the reduction of private open space, considering the mix of residential housing. Council Officer Ms Porter stated that strategic planning doesn't interact with it at all.

A panel member asked Council, when it comes to community voice being listened to, what has the most impact, as members of the community are wondering how we can put our perspective forward in a way that will be listened to.

Ms Porter advised that the best way is by making submissions and highlighting the value of local knowledge. Submissions are most impactful during the exhibition period, noting that the most impactful way is multiple submissions from different households, as opposed to a petition. Another way to advocate for changes is through elected officials, as they also have local knowledge of their ward. Ms Porter noted that their details are available on Council's website.

The panel overall stated that the Concept Land Use plan has painted a very unfair picture to the community, and it needs to be better described to the community.

Action: *Council Officers explore ways to better communicate the Concept Land Use Plan to the community.*

Wrap up and Next Steps

Council Officers wrapped up the workshop with a timeline of future Community Voice Panel sessions throughout the year and what they aim to cover. This was followed by an overview of ongoing and upcoming work for the development of the Westmead South Master Plan.

Ms McCaffery will be sending out potential dates in September and minutes will be uploaded onto the Westmead Community Voice Panel Have Your Say page.

6. Next Meeting

Date to be confirmed.

7. Close of Business

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8:45pm.