



INCLUSIVE COMMUNITIES

SRG ISSUES PAPER 2017

NORTHERN BEACHES
COUNCIL

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BACKGROUND

THE INCLUSIVE COMMUNITIES STRATEGIC REFERENCE GROUP

11 strategic reference groups were established to assist Northern Beaches Council in the development of the Draft Community Strategic Plan (CSP). In addition to providing input to the draft Vision, Priorities and Objectives for the CSP, the Inclusive Communities Strategic Reference Group (SRG) was also tasked to:

- Acknowledge and support the diversity of our community and enhance their participation in community life;
- Advise Council on community infrastructure programs that remove barriers and are inclusive and accessible;
- Review, consider and recommend “Inclusion” objectives in the CSP;
- Advise Council on ways to increase awareness, education and enhance participation for CSP objectives.

The Inclusive Communities Strategic Reference Group met five times between September 2016 and June 2017 to consider a range of issues relevant to ‘Inclusive Communities’. This work informed the development of the goals and strategies for the Draft CSP 2017.

THE PURPOSE OF THIS PAPER

The aim of this Key Issues Paper is to provide detail to some of the high-level goals and strategies outlined in the Draft CSP. Further to this, the work undertaken by the SRG and the key themes that emerged from a workshop undertaken on April 20 will assist the new Council and the staff to better understand the key priorities for ‘Inclusive Communities’ and how these might be addressed in future planning processes.

MEMBERSHIP

The Inclusive Communities SRG comprised the following members:

Alex McTaggart (Chair)	Implementation Advisory Group
Kay Millar	Local Representative Committee - Social
Vanessa Moskal	Local Representative Committee – Social
Susan Alexander	Mona Vale Chamber of Commerce
Maria-Elena Chidzey	Manly Community Centre & Services Inc.
Mark Daly	Resident – Frenchs Forest Ward
Amanda Farrar	Resident - Curl Curl Ward
Bill Gye	Scotland Island Residents' Association
Julia Hornsby	Warriewood Residents Association
Tania Johnson	Uniting - Ability Links
Greg Jones	Resident – Narrabeen Ward
Elaine Kent	Resident – Manly Ward
Carolyn McKay	NBI (Northern Beaches Interchange)
Yvonne Parsons	Mona Vale Hospital Auxiliary
Kathryn Pritchard	Resident – Curl Curl Ward
Susan Watson	Manly Drug Education & Counselling Centre
Sandie Wong	Resident – Frenchs Forest Ward
Lindsay Godfrey	Northern Beaches Council – Executive Manager Community Services

WHAT IS AN INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY?

There is no universally accepted definition of social inclusion. *The UNESCO definition highlights the value of human rights in a socially inclusive society. Such a society is based on fundamental values of equity, equality, social justice, and human rights and freedoms, as well as on the principles of tolerance and embracing diversity.*¹

Essentially, social inclusion is about people being able to participate in society and creating conditions that enable equal opportunities for all. Social inclusion requires that all individuals are able to 'secure a job; access services; connect with family, friends, work, personal interests and local community; deal with personal crisis; and have their voices heard.'²

An inclusive community is one in which all members feel valued and have the opportunity to fully participate in the life of that community – be it in sport, culture, work or learning. Inclusion is dependent on the extent to which a community supports or impedes the social, economic and cultural participation of the individual.

OVERVIEW OF KEY ISSUES DISCUSSED

The Inclusive Communities SRG had a number of opportunities to consider the key issues and priorities for 'Inclusive Communities' and provide input into the development of the Draft CSP.

In addition, members of the SRG extended their knowledge on issues intrinsic to 'Inclusive Communities' through a series of detailed presentations and discussions.

These included the disability reform agenda and the rollout of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), the Aged Care reforms, the development of Northern Beaches Draft Disability Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP) and challenges facing CALD communities on the Northern Beaches.

The Draft Community Strategic Plan

On September 28, members of the 11 Northern Beaches Council Strategic Reference Groups participated in a combined workshop to provide input to the development of the Northern Beaches Draft CSP. Individual members were invited to identify their priorities to be addressed across the key themes: Social, Economic and Environment as well as give feedback on the draft Vision and the Issues Paper. As part of this exercise any missing key issues or opportunities were identified and captured. For further details please see *Appendix 1*.

¹ UNESCO. *Consultations of the Director-General with Member States. Social Inclusion, Social Transformations, Social Innovation: What role for UNESCO in 2014-2021?* 23 November 2012.

² Social Inclusion Unit, *A Social Inclusion Strategy for Tasmania: A consultation paper 2008*, Department of Premier and Cabinet 2008

Information from the combined workshop was then presented back to the Inclusive Communities SRG at the meeting held on November 3. Further feedback was sought to identify key priorities for 'Inclusive Communities'.

These included:

- Maintaining programs and facilities that build social capital, for example, Libraries, Community Centres and facilities
- Diversity: Supporting people from CALD backgrounds; lack of representation of diversity in the document (Draft Vision and Issues Paper); recognising and celebrating diversity through events and significant sites
- Lack of community knowledge and awareness on how to support the inclusion of people with disability and other vulnerable population groups in community life
- Need for more affordable and diverse housing: for key workers, young people, older people, people with disability and future generations
- Need for inclusion of LGBTIQ+ community
- Increased opportunities for people with disability to experience social/community events
- Maintaining community safety to reduce assaults and violence
- Lack of investment in alternative modes of transport

For full details of this exercise please see *Appendix 2*.

National Disability Insurance Scheme

The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) is a new, nation-wide scheme that will provide lifetime support to people affected by disability based on their individual needs.

The NDIS aims to ensure that people with disability enjoy far greater choice and control over all necessary services and supports. Funding for disability services and supports is allocated to eligible people with disabilities themselves with the introduction of individualised funding packages. To be eligible for the NDIS, a person must be aged between 0-65 years with disabilities that impact on their functional capacity to communicate, socially interact, mobilise and manage their own personal care and affairs.

The reform incorporates:

- A national framework for the delivery of disability care and support
- A change from block funding of disability service provider organisations by governments, to individualised funding for people with disabilities, that is needs driven rather than rationed funding
- Replacing Australia's old welfare and charity model of disability funding with a legislatively guaranteed "insurance" approach for more stable long term costs and better outcomes
- Choice and control for people with disability
- An interface with mainstream and community sectors.

The NDIS provides eligible people with a flexible, whole of life approach to the services they need to participate in daily life and achieve their individual goals and aspirations.

Discussion: In discussing the NDIS, SRG members drew on several case studies from their personal experiences. The following points were raised:

- The NDIS will not replace the supports and services provided by other mainstream systems such as health, education and transport. Council will continue to have a role to advocate to State and Federal authorities for improved services locally.
- Given that only a limited number of people with disability will have access to funded support through the NDIS there is an increased emphasis on mainstream services and community participation. Council has a role in supporting people and organisations that are not supported through the NDIS. This includes bringing people together, and celebrating abilities and contributions.
- There are a range of challenges associated with access in the public domain and retail areas. Urban design needs to support safety and inclusion, particularly for people with disability and seniors.
- Affordable housing is a particular issue for people with disability in the Northern Beaches.

Aged Care Reforms

Significant changes in aged care are being implemented in three phases progressively over ten years between 2012 -2022. The objective of the reforms is to better enable older people to choose their own care services through a market based system that drives quality and choice and is sustainable and affordable.

The key changes in aged care from the 1 July 2015 include:

- Single gateway based information, needs assessment and service connection point model to help people navigate the system
- The development of the Commonwealth Home Support program, the Home Care Package program and changes to residential aged care
- Government recognition that most people would prefer to remain living at home, supported with appropriate care. The adoption of a consumer directed care model (CDC) means that people will have greater choice, and care will be based on need.

From the 27 February 2017 home care packages changed in the following ways:

- Funding for a home care package will follow the individual, allowing them to direct package funding to the provider that best meets their needs. Previously, home care packages were allocated to approved aged care providers
- A national prioritisation system has been introduced to manage the allocation of home care packages. Individuals will be prioritised based on their relative needs and circumstances and the length of time they have been waiting for care.

Discussion:

The Aged Care Reforms are intended to provide greater flexibility, choice and control for older people in the care and support they need to remain living at home.

The SRG identified a number of challenges and opportunities including:

- The specific needs of older people from diverse backgrounds, including access to information and how to access the system and the availability of culturally appropriate workers
- The principle of “User Pays”- there is an expectation that individuals contribute to the cost of care. This includes a basic care fee and an income tested fee. In the Northern Beaches there are households that are asset rich but income poor. The cost of care may act as a deterrent to some older people accepting support. Likewise, older people on the aged pension and paying for public or private rental may also find the fees a deterrent to accepting care and support
- Concerns that a number of smaller, local providers maybe financially unsustainable in the current climate of competition across the sector.

Disability Inclusion Action Plan

Local government has a significant role to play in supporting people with disability to live meaningful and fulfilling lives.

The NSW *Disability Inclusion Act 2014* requires all public authorities to have a Disability Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP) by 1 July 2017.

The DIAP has four key focus areas for action to improve access and inclusion across the community:

- Developing positive community attitudes and behaviours
- Creating liveable communities
- Supporting access to meaningful employment and
- Improving access to mainstream services through better systems and processes.

The Northern Beaches Draft DIAP has been developed in consultation with a range of community members, including people with disability and carers, service providers, and other stakeholders. The vision for the future and the action plan for each of the four key areas respond to the feedback and suggestions collected during this consultation.

The actions identified in this plan will be integrated within Council’s Operational Plan and Delivery Program.

Discussion:

SRG members were invited to review the Northern Beaches Draft DIAP during the public exhibition and provide comment.

Multiculturalism on the Northern Beaches

With 27.7% of residents being born overseas, the Northern Beaches is home to many culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities which each make a significant contribution to our area. They enrich the broader community, both socially and culturally.

However, with increasing cultural diversity, certain challenges arise, and so a Strategy was developed in 2015, by the former Warringah Council to acknowledge the challenges our CALD population faces.

More than 800 people from various cultural backgrounds were consulted as part of the strategy. As a result, six key strategic directions were identified:

1. Housing
2. Employment, Education and Training
3. Access to Information and Services
4. Identity and Belonging
5. Celebrations and Events
6. Health and Safety

As the Strategy focussed on the former Warringah local government area, there was an opportunity for the SRG to review this strategy and discuss its relevance to the broader Northern Beaches. The SRG members concluded that the Strategy was indeed relevant to the broader Northern Beaches, with the statistical populations being very similar.

The group recommended that Council:

- Consider the inclusion and promotion of a multicultural event/activity as part of either Australia Day, Harmony Day or Social Inclusion Day
- Communicate and showcase CALD communities through local publications
- Encourage and empower multicultural communities to have their own voice.

THE WORKSHOP PROCESS

On April 20 a workshop was held with the Inclusive Communities SRG to build upon the body of work that had been undertaken and to deliver an Inclusive Communities Key Issues Paper as a reference for the incoming Council in September 2017.

The aim of the workshop was to revisit the draft Goals and Strategies identified in the Draft CSP that were most relevant to inclusive communities to provide a further detail and understanding. Members divided into three groups. Each group was allocated a number of goals and strategies to explore and identify any particular 'barriers' and 'opportunities' relevant to these. The notes from the workshop were then circulated to committee members for their review and comment. For further details on the workshop notes please see *Appendix 3*.

Emerging Key Themes

The following key themes for inclusive communities emerged from a review of the workshop notes:

1. Social isolation and community connectedness
2. Access to public spaces and community facilities
3. Access and inclusion
4. Building the capacity of the community.

The themes are explored in detail below.

1. Social isolation and community connectedness

Social isolation was a strong theme that emerged from the workshop, with the SRG identifying that particular groups, including older people, those from culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) backgrounds and people with disability in our community are particularly vulnerable to becoming socially isolated and 'silent'. There were several key issues that contributed to this sense of social isolation and a lack of a sense of connectedness in the community. Not having a strong 'voice' and being 'invisible' within the community can leave people feeling isolated, disempowered and disconnected from others.

The loss of the local 'neighbourhood' was also considered to be a barrier. Members of the SRG cited a number of issues associated with modern life that can have a negative impact, including: lower levels of engagement with neighbours, the increase in the number and design of new housing developments and issues amplified by 'transient populations' that for a variety of reasons may not create connections with their neighbours.

The SRG felt that these factors significantly contributed to a lack of connection between neighbours.

The geography of the Northern Beaches was also mentioned as contributing to social isolation as the Northern Beaches is a large geographical area, which can be difficult to navigate without sufficient public transport. Within such a large geographical area, issues around the clustering of suburbs and communities, which can create a sense of segregation rather than connectedness, may also arise.

The SRG identified that community facilities and public places have a role to play in creating opportunities for people to come together. Sustaining and creating vibrant public spaces that encourage social connection and enable people to participate in public life was raised by the SRG as being a significant opportunity to overcoming social isolation in the community. Creating public places that facilitate informal, spontaneous connections, is likely to increase feelings of connection and belonging to the local community.

Another suggestion was for Council to further develop relationships with community transport providers to help meet the transport needs of the community and reduce levels of social isolation caused by limited access to transport on the Northern Beaches.

Exploring options such as the current Hop, Skip and Jump service which is currently only available in Manly, was also suggested.

Encouraging better social interaction in a neighbourhood setting through technology was also suggested by the SRG. Online tools were suggested as a means of encouraging better social interaction amongst neighbours. For example social media could be utilised to promote social events and activities to a neighbourhood. Council could potentially assist new residents to establish connections within their communities through activities such as neighbourhood programs.

Please see below a detailed list of all the 'barriers' and 'opportunities' identified by the group in relation to this theme:

BARRIERS
<p>Invisibility:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ People in the community are 'invisible'- particularly older people, people with disability, people from CALD backgrounds and Aboriginal people. ▶ Some people in the community are not being 'heard'. ▶ Equity, access and visibility of some members of the community.
<p>Loss of the 'Neighbourhood':</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ People don't know their neighbours. ▶ Those in new developments are often disconnected. ▶ Lack of resources for neighbourhood programs. ▶ Transient populations may have less of an opportunity to make connections within their community.
<p>Geography of the Northern Beaches:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Topography of the area can make it difficult for people to 'connect'. ▶ Clusters of communities develop over the area which can create segregation on the peninsula.

▶ Limited transport options exacerbate these issues.
▶ Busy lifestyles, people are time poor.
▶ Lack of community knowledge about what programs/ services/ opportunities already exist.

OPPORTUNITIES

Shared spaces that create connection:

- ▶ Spaces that bring us together (need to be affordable).
- ▶ Places where people can meet and celebrate.
- ▶ Community gardens.
- ▶ Games in public spaces, e.g. Chess.
- ▶ Exercise equipment for older people to use in parks.
- ▶ Maintain the community infrastructure that already exists.

Neighbourhood programs:

- ▶ Use online tools to facilitate better connections between neighbours.

Transport

- ▶ Council could partner with community transport services to meet transport needs.
- ▶ Potential to extend scope of current Hop, Skip, Jump service.

2. Access to public spaces and community facilities

As mentioned previously, great community facilities and spaces foster opportunities for people to come together and connect. In addition they are ideal places for holding celebrations, recreation and sport, music and art events/exhibitions and a variety of other activities. The SRG felt that the Northern Beaches was fortunate to already possess many great public places and facilities with an extensive program of activities on offer. However they felt that there were some barriers that inhibited these places from being inclusive and accessible to the whole community.

One of these barriers includes the limited opportunity for engagement during the planning phase of building new or the upgrade of existing public infrastructure. It was expressed that the engagement process itself can be overly complicated and the timeframe too tight; limiting the input of many community members. Other barriers discussed related to accessing public places and community facilities. These included: lack of transport to public places, the limited capacity of these spaces to be multi-purpose, the cost to hire community facilities and complicated booking processes.

To ensure that our public spaces are accessible to all members of the community these barriers need to be addressed. One of the solutions offered by the SRG was to improve engagement with the community during the design phase for new and upgraded public spaces. This could be achieved by simplifying the process and by offering extended engagement periods. In particular, creating and making documents available in a variety of accessible formats, including easy read documents. This would enable people with disability and others to easily access the documents. These measures would encourage a greater cross-section of people to become involved in these processes, resulting in more robust community engagement and broader consultation.

The SRG also focused on the opportunities that would be created through the development of new infrastructure and better utilisation of current facilities. Suggestions for future infrastructure included: the availability of gazebos, market stalls, shade shelters and similar items that would allow the community to run their own events with greater ease and lower up-front costs. The SRG felt strongly that any markets would need to complement the environment in which they were situated and have a community development, rather than an economic development focus, ensuring that the markets did not detract from surrounding local businesses. The group also expressed a need for more creative spaces, including: art galleries, outdoor amphitheatres or public places that incorporated an art element. These creative spaces could be built near well-utilised sporting and community facilities, making the arts more accessible. In addition to new infrastructure a number of solutions were offered by the group to increase the utilisation of current community facilities. Such suggestions included: utilising existing sporting clubs and similar facilities for alternative activities, better promotion of current facilities already available, affordable hire rates and the use of simple booking systems.

Please see below a detailed list of all the 'barriers' and 'opportunities' identified by the group in relation to this theme:

BARRIERS

- ▶ Limited engagement with community during the planning stages of public spaces.
- ▶ Some existing places have limited capacity to become multi-purpose.
- ▶ Lack of transport to public places of interest.
- ▶ Cost to hire community spaces and complicated booking processes.

OPPORTUNITIES

- ▶ Ensure that the engagement process is accessible to the broader community.
- Build new infrastructure:
- ▶ Permanent infrastructure such as: gazebos, umbrellas, stages, shade shelters and amphitheatres that make it easier for community run events, markets and festival to occur.
 - ▶ Creative spaces: galleries and public places that incorporate arts and culture. Art spaces could be built in close proximity to sporting facilities which could make them

arts more accessible, harness foot traffic and attract a different clientele to these spaces.

Utilise existing infrastructure:

- ▶ Utilise existing sporting clubs and scout halls for community events and activities.
- ▶ Better signage/ promotion of existing facilities.
- ▶ Activate under-utilised spaces.
- ▶ Ensure that spaces for hire are affordable and easy to book to facilitate increased usage by the community.

3. Access and Inclusion

Universal inclusion and access has been a key focus area for the SRG and a central component of the meetings. A series of presentations and discussions on key policy changes in the disability sector were undertaken and updates on the development of Northern Beaches Council's Draft Disability Inclusion Action Plan were given. This emphasis on access and inclusion was also reflected during the workshop process. It was discussed that people within our community, particularly people with disability and those from a CALD background often face significant barriers to inclusion and participation. The barriers identified by the SRG can largely be grouped into three categories: physical barriers, social exclusion and community education. These themes are also inherent in the Draft Disability Inclusion Action Plan as key focus areas for improvement.

Lack of access to our built environment was seen as a barrier for many people in the community, as many of our public places, community and recreation facilities are not universally accessible. Access to sufficient public transport was also raised as a significant issue that affects the Northern Beaches community. This is an issue that is exacerbated by the isolating geography of the Northern Beaches and the subsequent design of transport routes; most bus services are located on trunk routes and main roads, with limited feeder services available. People with disability, older people and those who may not have easy access to private modes of transport are even more disadvantaged by this as they tend to be more reliant on public transport than others.

Social exclusion is often a barrier in the community that was once again more commonly experienced by those from a CALD background and people with disability. It was suggested that people from CALD backgrounds might sometimes experience pressures to conform to perceived 'social norms' and practices in order to be 'accepted' in the community.

One example of this could be the reluctance of some people to display and celebrate their cultural heritage in an attempt to assimilate and 'fit in' with the rest of the community. Exclusion from social and community life is also a barrier that many people with disability encounter. Inclusion in the community is about more than physical access, it includes the opportunity to connect, engage and participate in every facet of community life. The misconceptions, community attitudes and lack of knowledge about disability inhibit the potential for people with disability to be fully included in society. Further, community education and awareness on what constitutes an inclusive society is needed.

The key opportunities identified by the SRG for building an inclusive and accessible community can be categorised into the following: physical access improvements, community education, system improvements and celebrating diversity. Access upgrades to many of our community facilities and public places would ensure greater access and inclusion for people with disability, older people, parents with prams and more. Improvements to Council facilities to ensure improved access will be addressed through Council's Draft DIAP and Capital Improvements Plan. The use of Universal Design Principles was also mentioned as an opportunity for Council to ensure that places can be used by anyone, regardless of their age or ability.

Changing current community attitudes and perceptions of disability and diversity in general is a much greater challenge than altering our physical environments. These embedded attitudes and behaviours will need to be challenged through community education around inclusion and diversity. Education was cited as a key opportunity to assist the community to better understand the barriers that some people in our community may face. Once the community has a better understanding of these barriers and attitudes we can redirect the focus towards building a society that values diversity and difference. Council has a key role to play as a leader and role model in supporting inclusion and access in all aspects of its business.

Recognising and celebrating diversity through community events and celebrations was also cited as an opportunity. During the workshop and the discussion held about multi-cultural communities on the Northern Beaches the SRG expressed that community events were a great way to showcase different cultures and demonstrate the diversity within our community. This could include particular cultural events, like Harmony Day or the inclusion of cultural elements within our current annual events, such as Australia Day.

Please see below a detailed list of all the 'barriers' and 'opportunities' identified by the group in relation to this theme:

BARRIERS

Physical access:

- ▶ Access to community places and facilities can be difficult for people with a disability.
- ▶ Lack of effective and well-connected transport can make access across the Northern Beaches difficult. This issue is exacerbated for people with a disability, older persons, and young people and potentially those who do not have access to private transport modes.

Social exclusion:

- ▶ Those from CALD backgrounds may feel that they have to conform to 'social norms' in order to be 'accepted'.
- ▶ Persons with a disability that includes persons with an intellectual disability and people with mental health condition can often experience social exclusion from everyday community activities and events.
- ▶ Lack of community education.
- ▶ Language, for those from CALD backgrounds can be a barrier.

- ▶ Lack of awareness in the community of issues specific to multicultural communities.

OPPORTUNITIES

Physical access improvements:

- ▶ Wider walkways, accessible paths and bike paths.
- ▶ Accessible community facilities.
- ▶ Use of Universal Design Principles by Council when designing public places so that everyone is included in the design process.
- ▶ Universal design principles implemented in public places, for example picnic tables designed in a way so that people in wheelchairs can also utilise the tables.

Community Education:

- ▶ Educate the community on inclusion.
- ▶ Raise awareness in the community of the issues that people in the community may face.
- ▶ Inclusive communication: provide information in a variety of formats on different platforms.
- ▶ Celebrating diversity- using events to celebrate diversity, particularly the different cultures in the community.
- ▶ Council could endorse a statement that is inclusive of all people.

4. Community Participation and Leadership

The fourth theme that emerged from the workshop was the concept of community participation and leadership. There was a sense that more could be done to drive community participation and encourage more people to become active members of their community. Similarly, the feedback from the workshop suggested that greater opportunities to build community capacity and foster the community leadership were needed. The SRG acknowledged the limitations of Council funding and resources and their inability to meet every need in the community. However through capacity building some of these gaps could be met by the community. Key areas where we could facilitate greater participation and leadership include: volunteering, providing support to meet community needs, community events, programs and activities.

There are some existing barriers that limit community participation and leadership. The Northern Beaches community has a high level of volunteer participation with the volunteer rate at 20.1%³. Volunteering presents an opportunity for individual development, skill building and involvement within the local community as well as supporting many community organisations that are reliant on volunteers. It is important that we continue to provide and promote volunteering opportunities on the Northern Beaches.

³ Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing 2006 and 2011. Compiled and presented by .id , the population experts.

One of the barriers to recruiting volunteers is the lack of promotion and the limited information available online about current opportunities. People from CALD backgrounds face even greater challenges when attempting to obtain a volunteer position. Volunteer positions are particularly valuable for those who have recently migrated to Australia as they offer an opportunity to build skills and experience in the workforce which can assist them in gaining future employment. Some of these challenges are linked to proficiency in English and the ability to produce references.

Unmet needs in the community and lack of knowledge about current supports and services available to meet these needs were identified as barriers to participation. While there are a number of support services on the Northern Beaches such as: disability support services, aged care services, domestic and family violence services, children and youth services, it seems there are still gaps in the services on offer and more could be done to meet this need. Equally, the community can experience difficulty obtaining information about the services, programs and facilities currently available and how to access them as needed. When individuals face barriers to accessing support services, whether due to lack of knowledge or gaps in services, it affects their capacity and ability to fully participate in their community.

Community events are a great way for people to come together and celebrate. The Northern Beaches boasts a wide variety of annual events and regular community activities such as: markets, food and wine events, music events, art and craft events and more. The majority of these events are organised by Council, local schools, community groups and sporting clubs. Some of these organisations can experience obstacles when trying to organise local community events. The SRG raised that Council systems and processes can be prohibitive when organising a community event. Depending on the nature of the event, this can include: permission requests, booking sites or facilities, purchasing public liability insurance, risk assessments, traffic management plans, development applications, licensing applications and more. These requirements are in place to minimise risk and ensure public safety, however for some smaller events, community organisations can be overwhelmed by the process and therefore not go ahead with the event.

Although there are some existing barriers to building the capacity of the community there are a number of opportunities that would enable greater community participation and the development of community leaders. Volunteering is an important part of community life on the Northern Beaches not only because it supports various local volunteer organisations but it also provides an avenue for community members to build their skills and contribute to their community. To maintain the high level of volunteer participation on the Northern Beaches a more streamlined and coordinated approach to promoting volunteer opportunities could be developed. This could include online promotion, partnering with other volunteer organisations to promote opportunities or sourcing funding to provide dedicated resources, such as a volunteer coordinator. In the past Council has harnessed the opportunity to promote volunteer organisations at existing Council community events and activities, for example the Pittwater Food and Wine Fair- Volunteer Expo. This activity has proved successful for both volunteer organisations in terms of promotion and recruitment as well as for individuals looking for opportunities.

There are further opportunities that could be explored to address the barriers associated with individuals accessing appropriate support services. Better promotion and awareness of available services and how to access them is needed to educate members of the community and encourage them to seek support when needed. This could be achieved through community information sessions, better online information and promotion of the services available on the Northern Beaches. To better address service gaps Council has an opportunity to advocate on behalf of the community for increased support services on the Northern Beaches. There are however limits to Council's ability to address every need in the community and therefore there is an opportunity for the community, with the support of Council and other organisations to address these gaps. For example, Council recently hosted an NDIS Expo in conjunction with local community organisations and groups.

Community events and celebrations support people to participate and connect. It is therefore important to remove any barriers, where possible, to enable community members and organisations to continue to run local events and activities. One way to ensure that a variety of community-led events continue to be held is to simplify the approval process. This could be achieved by Council minimising 'red tape' where possible and by improving some of our current booking processes. There could also be opportunities for the community to take part in some existing Council events, where appropriate; this would add value to the events and remove some of the barriers associated with costs, public liability and promotion. Alternatively, there could be an opportunity for Council to lend some of its event equipment to community groups and organisations, reducing their costs. Council could also assist community groups by building their skills and capacity to run events; this could be achieved through information kits.

Please see below a detailed list of all the 'barriers' and 'opportunities' identified by the group in relation to this theme:

BARRIERS

Volunteering opportunities:

- ▶ Not widely promoted, lack of information in the community.
- ▶ Can be difficult to obtain if you have recently migrated to Australia and come from a non-English speaking background.

Community service system:

- ▶ Gaps in services.
- ▶ Lack of understanding around service system- community does not know what is available.

Community events:

- ▶ Prohibitive nature of the systems and processes needed to go through to run a community event.
- ▶ Lack of knowledge around what already exists- current opportunities.

OPPORTUNITIES

Volunteering:

- ▶ Promote current volunteer opportunities, for e.g. on Council's website.
- ▶ Work with volunteer organisations to deliver better outcomes for volunteering on the

Northern Beaches.

- ▶ Volunteer expos provide a great opportunity to promote organisations and current opportunities. This could be coupled with current Council community events to capture a wider section of the community, e.g. Pittwater Food & Wine Fair.
- ▶ Funding for a volunteer coordinator at Council.

Capacity building:

- ▶ Build the community's knowledge of service system.
- ▶ Build the community's capacity to meet service gaps, where appropriate.
- ▶ Council could assist the community to build skills which would enable them to run their own programs/activities.

Community events:

- ▶ Community led events, that way the community has 'ownership' and buy-in to the event.
- ▶ Value-add to existing events, for example inviting community groups to take part in a larger Council event.
- ▶ Council could lend equipment to community groups to run their own events.

CLOSING COMMENTS

The intent of this Key Issues Paper was to summarise the work of the Inclusive Communities SRG in identifying the key priorities for Inclusive Communities on the Northern Beaches. Further this has resulted in a resource to inform the incoming Council.

The following emerging issues for inclusive communities have been explored in this paper:

1. Social isolation and community connectedness
2. Access to public spaces and community facilities
3. Access and inclusion
4. Community participation and leadership

The SRG identified a number of opportunities for Council's consideration to address the barriers identified in each of these emerging issues.

Appendix 1 - Notes from Joint Meeting held on 28 September 2016

http://www.northernbeaches.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/Joint_Strategic_Reference_Group_Meeting_-_Vision_Session_Notes_-_workshop_results.pdf

NOTES

INCLUSIVE COMMUNITIES STRATEGIC REFERENCE GROUP MEETING

held in the Manly Chambers, Belgrave St, Manly on

THURSDAY 3 NOVEMBER 2016

**Notes of the Inclusive Communities Strategic Reference Group Meeting
held on Thursday 3 November 2016
in the Manly Chambers, Belgrave St, Manly
Commencing at 5.00pm**

ATTENDANCE

Members

Alex McTaggart (Chair)	Implementation Advisory Group
Kay Millar	Local Representation Committee - Social
Vanessa Moskal	Local Representation Committee - Social
Susan Alexander	Mona Vale Chamber of Commerce
Maria-Elena Chidzey	Manly Community Centre & Services Inc.
Mark Daly	Resident – Frenchs Forest Ward
Amanda Farrar	Resident – Curl Curl Ward
Bill Gye	Scotland Island Residents' Association
Julia Hornsby	Warriewood Residents Association
Tania Johnson	Uniting
Greg Jones	Resident – Narrabeen Ward
Elaine Kent	Resident – Manly Ward
Carolyn McKay	NBI (Northern Beaches Interchange)
Amanda Parkinson	Sydney North Health Network
Yvonne Parsons	Mona Vale Hospital Auxiliary
Kathryn Pritchard	Resident – Curl Curl Ward
Susan Watson	Manly Drug Education & Counselling Centre
Sandra Wong	President – Frenchs Forest Ward

Council Officers

Beth Lawsen	Deputy General Manager Public Affairs
Lindsay Godfrey	Executive Manager Community Services
Lynne Jess	Secretariat

Visitors

Alison Kellett	Research Officer
Louise Hardy	Research Officer
Fiona Winter	Senior Social Policy Researcher

1.0 ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

DISCUSSION

Alex McTaggart gave an acknowledgement of Country.

2.0 APOLOGIES

DISCUSSION

That apologies from Bill Gye be received and noted.

3.0 DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY AND CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

DISCUSSION

Alex McTaggart gave an overview of the effects of the Pecuniary Interest and Conflict of Interest and the importance of declaring.

4.0 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

4.1 INTRODUCTIONS AND ROLE OF STRATEGIC REFERENCE GROUP – ALISON KELLETT

DISCUSSION

A McTaggart introduced staff and former Councillors Kay Millar and Vanessa Moskal to members and gave a brief overview of the proposed structure of elected Council come September 2017. He noted the importance of strategic planning and inclusiveness into the Community Strategic Plan.

Louise Hardy, Research Officer introduced herself and advised members of fire exits, facilities and details of parking availability.

4.2 PROFILE OF NORTHERN BEACHES – ALISON KELLETT

DISCUSSION

Alison Kellett, Research Officer gave a presentation (*Attachment 1*) and highlighted the following points:

- Strategic Reference Group Protocols and Guidelines
- Local demographic
- Context within the Greater Sydney Commission
<https://www.greater.sydney/>
- LGA (Local Government Area) population
- Housing Implementation

Lindsay Godfrey, Executive Manager Community Services introduced himself to members and gave a brief overview of his professional experience.

Members briefly discussed growth in the local area and noted the Northern Beaches was not experiencing the speed of growth of other areas such as Western Sydney.

ACTION: Clarify Greater Sydney region boundaries.

<https://www.greater.sydney/>

ACTION: Clarify the definition of the community profile for employment and how it is defined.

<http://profile.id.com.au/northern-beaches>

5.0 COUNCIL UPDATES

5.1 OVERVIEW OF CORPORATE STRATEGIC PLAN AND PLANNING PROCESS – LOUISE HARDY

DISCUSSION

L Hardy discussed the Community Strategic Plan (CSP) and the priorities that have been identified, and noted the following points: (*Attachment 1*)

- CSP will be prepared in readiness for election of the new Council
- Council will begin work on the delivery program in July 2017
- Followed by the operational plan in 2018

L Hardy noted that all three former councils are still working on their previous delivery programs, which will continue to be the case until the new Council is elected in September 2017.

A McTaggart noted that the three former councils CSP's can be viewed online at the following links:

<http://www.warringah.nsw.gov.au/your-council/plans-and-reports/community-strategic-plan>

http://www.pittwater.nsw.gov.au/council/documents/Strategic_Documents/community_strategic_plan

<http://www.manly.nsw.gov.au/council/publications/publications-archive/>

5.2 REVIEW OF ISSUES PAPER – LOUISE HARDY

DISCUSSION

SRG members participated in a workshop to identify their priority issues that need to be addressed across the key themes: Social, Economic and Environment..

A summary of the workshop is attached (*Attachment 2*)

L Hardy reiterated to members that they need to focus on strategic issues, and not operational matters.

5.3 NATIONAL DISABILITY INSURANCE SCHEME – FIONA WINTERS

Fiona Winter, Senior Social Policy Researcher provided members with some background on the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). She gave a presentation (*Attachment 3*) and highlighted the following points: (*Attachment 3*)

- What is the NDIS
- How is NDIS funded
- NDIS Framework – three key pillars underpin the NDIS design (ask the people what they want)
- Reasonable and Necessary Supports
- Individual Budget –
- My Plan
- Local Area Co-ordinators
- Early Childhood Intervention Support – did not want to be identified
- Funds Management

K Millar raised several points and discussed the need for Council to support people and organisations that are not supported under the NDIS. K Millar gave several examples of case studies.

NOTE: Members unanimously agreed to extend the meeting by ten minutes.

6.0 GENERAL BUSINESS

Nil

7.0 PARKING LOT

- Does the new playground at Newport Beach have a 'security' fence to keep children off main road?;
- Re-instate Braille on Shelly Beach walkway signs to silver sculptures;
- Sister Cities programs – school exchange (overseas and local); and

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held in February 2017. Details will be circulated shortly.

SUMMARY OF ACTIONS

ITEM	ACTION	RESPONSIBLE OFFICER
4.1	Clarify Greater Sydney region boundaries.	Research Officers
4.1	Clarify the definition of the community profile for employment and how it is defined.	Research Officers

The meeting concluded at 7.15pm

*This is the final page of the Notes comprising of 6 pages
numbered 1 to 6 of the Inclusive Communities Strategic Reference Group
meeting held on 3 November 2016.*

Places for People

Goal 7: Our well –designed public spaces inspire social interaction and inclusion and support health and wellbeing.

Strategy 7a: Develop urban design requirements that support the health, wellbeing, safety and inclusion particularly for seniors and people who live with a disability.

Note: This group was facilitate by Janine Curtis

Barriers

- Older people not being tech savvy
- Voice not being heard (Perception vs reality by older people) – some older people perceive that they are invisible to society and that their voices are not heard i.e. a silent sector of the population
- WHS/ safety concerns/ regulations/ litigious – we live in a society that is particularly litigious and concerned with safety and regulations. Sometimes this can prevent fun public spaces being developed as designers are afraid of people hurting themselves or of being sued for damages
- Physical access (transport, users) – Some public spaces can be difficult to access due to their physical location, and physical access for some users (e.g. people with physical disabilities)

Places for People

Goal 7: Our well –designed public spaces inspire social interaction and inclusion and support health and wellbeing.

Strategy 7a: Develop urban design requirements that support the health, wellbeing, safety and inclusion particularly for seniors and people who live with a disability.

Opportunities

- Online engagement better online engagement in design so that residents get to decide on what the infrastructure will look like (e.g. playgrounds, select three designs and have the community pick their favourite)
- Exercise equipment suitable for older people in parks
- Games in public spaces, e.g. chess
- Sensory gardens.
- More community gardens- make them easier to set up – build it & they will come – Council could take a lead role in creating more community gardens as there is too much effort required on individuals to get them up and running
- Better maintenance of public parks/ reserves/ spaces (grass mowing, paving)
- Clever design to minimise maintenance issues
- Appropriate lighting to activate late night spaces + safety
- Wider walkways + paths + bike paths
- Universal design of picnic tables etc. so that people in wheelchairs can also sit at tables
- Design permanent gazebos/ umbrellas/ stages/ shade shelters for market stalls and events- three phase power amphitheatre – use funding to create more public infrastructure that makes it easier for community events, markets and festivals to occur such as ...
- Floating stage on the water e.g. Carmen <https://www.viator.com/tours/Sydney/Opera-Performance-on-Sydney-Harbour/d357-2554HARBOUR>

Places for People

Goal 7: Our well –designed public spaces inspire social interaction and inclusion and support health and wellbeing.

Strategy 7b: Collaborate with the community to design public open spaces and neighbourhoods that cater for a wide range of uses and social interaction

Barriers

- Getting the community to focus on the details- ask specific questions not so many open ended questions. – Stick to yes/no type consultations- pick one of three designs. (as per previous page / playground designs)
- Council needs to build in more time of planning/ roll out phase of project Some projects seem rushed to get them completed, allow more time in the planning stage for more community engagement

Places for People

Goal 7: Our well –designed public spaces inspire social interaction and inclusion and support health and wellbeing.

Strategy 7b: Collaborate with the community to design public open spaces and neighbourhoods that cater for a wide range of uses and social interaction

Opportunities

- Engagement on final designs e.g. choose one of these three designs on playgrounds.-Gives community a vision of how it will look.
- Continue to provide many platforms/channels for consultation e.g. your say, Manly Daily
- Council to use designs submitted by tech-savvy residents e.g. urban design students (through CAD) design and tech students
- Rotundas/ stages/ waterways for floating stages. Have a series of events that rotate
- More galleries and creative spaces e/g/ Warringah Creative Space
- Use rugby/soccer clubs, scout halls & activate these vacant spaces

Places for People

Goal 8: Our community is healthy, active and engaged with the Northern Beaches lifestyle and various recreational opportunities

Strategy 8c: Encourage a broad range of activities that enable social interaction, stimulate wellbeing, and support people at each stage of their life.

Barriers

- Existing physical limitations of open spaces, some spaces too small to be multi-functional or to retrofit

Places for People

Goal 8: Our community is healthy, active and engaged with the Northern Beaches lifestyle and various recreational opportunities

Strategy 8c: Encourage a broad range of activities that enable social interaction, stimulate wellbeing, and support people at each stage of their life.

Opportunities

- Making attractive public spaces that can incorporate arts and culture, music, performance spaces
- Spaces that bring us together- make them more affordable
- Sport- broaden sporting opportunities for older people- less expensive e.g. yoga/tai chi in public spaces and have wet weather option indoors as a back-up
- Council to facilitate easier access of groups to use public spaces (no/low cost) less formal booking process.
- Art galleries next to sports fields- attracts different clientele/ intergenerational. E.g. Curl Curl netball courts, soccer and baseball fields next to the Curl Curl Creative Space, great for attracting passing traffic
- Incorporate more public art e.g. Shelly Beach sculptures along the walkway
- Sign post Aboriginal heritage walks on North Head – low cost exercise but very informative and meaningful
- Sign post bush walks e.g. bush tucker, plants, “did you know?” at Warriewood escarpment/ Narrabeen Lake Walk.
- Better signage/ promotion of existing facilities Some residents may not know of the vast array of facilities that Council provides
- Better communication online of playgrounds/facilities/parks etc.

Community and Belonging

Goal 9: Northern Beaches culture is stimulated through the arts and a variety of cultural and creative events.

Strategy 9b: Expand cultural activities, events and creative opportunities, including safe nightlife opportunities across the area.

Note: This group was facilitate by Hannah Schulz-Fulham

Barriers

- Alcohol- its negative effects on safety and behaviour.
 - Needs to be controlled.
 - Can effect cost of events.
- Mona Vale Carols used to be a good community event- however we have now lost the focus. Focus is not on families/socialising. Now focus is about alcohol.
- Lack of lighting at events can be a barrier.
- Lack of transport to and from event.
- Safety is a barrier.
- Not knowing and understanding target audience for events and activities.
- Community not having ownership of event.
- Need to manage community expectation.

Community and Belonging

Goal 9: Northern Beaches culture is stimulated through the arts and a variety of cultural and creative events.

Strategy 9b: Expand cultural activities, events and creative opportunities, including safe nightlife opportunities across the area.

Opportunities

- Need to have more ‘family friendly’ activities/ events.
- Activate empty/ under-utilised spaces.
- Provide better lighting
- Timing is important in controlling an event/crowds, i.e. an earlier/day time event for families may have less incidence of alcohol related problems.
- Value-add to existing events instead of re-inventing the wheel.
- Target parts of the community for events- age appropriate events.
- Cultural events would assist to showcase different cultures.
- Utilise community groups to deliver events.
- Community needs to ‘own’ an event.
- Council could lend equipment to community groups to run an event, thus lowering the cost to the community group.

Community and Belonging

Goal 11: Our community is open and friendly, providing social and cultural opportunities for everyone.

Strategy 11a: Facilitate a strong sense of community by encouraging community groups and volunteer opportunities.

Barriers

- Social barriers- people feel invisible, particularly difficult for those from CALD backgrounds, for e.g. have to conform to 'dress codes', social norms.
- Lack of communication and education for the general community.
- Those from CALD backgrounds have difficulty obtaining volunteering opportunities as they don't have any references.

Community and Belonging

Goal 11: Our community is open and friendly, providing social and cultural opportunities for everyone.

Strategy 11a: Facilitate a strong sense of community by encouraging community groups and volunteer opportunities.

Opportunities

- Utilise existing events to showcase volunteer groups- for e.g. Volunteer expo @ Pittwater Food & Wine Fair.
- Council could assist with references for those from CALD backgrounds when trying to obtain volunteer positions.
- Volunteer expo's make huge difference in promoting organisations and their volunteering opportunities.
- Council could work more closely with Community Connect to deliver better outcomes for volunteering on Northern Beaches.
- List volunteer organisations and opportunities on our website.

Community and Belonging

Goal 11: Our community is open and friendly, providing social and cultural opportunities for everyone.

Strategy 11b: Enable all people- irrespective of age, gender, identity, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, mobility or cultural background- to participate in community life by breaking down institutional and social barriers.

Barriers

- Group queried whether terminology of these groups is a barrier in itself?
- Safety
- Language

Community and Belonging

Goal 11: Our community is open and friendly, providing social and cultural opportunities for everyone.

Strategy 11b: Enable all people- irrespective of age, gender, identity, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, mobility or cultural background- to participate in community life by breaking down institutional and social barriers.

Opportunities

- More funding for volunteer coordination at Council.
- Council should endorse a statement that is inclusive of all of these groups.

Community and Belonging

Goal 10: Our community feels safe and supported.

Strategy 10a: Enable our community to feel safe and supported through the provision of quality services.

Note: This group was facilitated by Fiona Winter.

Barriers

- Equity, access and visibility of some members of community. Some communities have a low profile/visibility across the Northern Beaches e.g. Aboriginal community,
- A voice for particular groups (lack of).
- Resources limited.
- Gaps in services, we need to know what's needed.
- Lack of awareness of multicultural issues
- Lack of understanding of service system- some members of the community (individuals and specific communities) may have limited knowledge of what is available, and how to access services. Council cannot provide everything- there are limits in what is reasonable to expect Council to provide. Many services are provided by community organisations.
- Lack of transparency in eligibility for services.
- Limited transport connections in some areas.

Community and Belonging

Goal 10: Our community feels safe and supported.

Strategy 10a: Enable our community to feel safe and supported through the provision of quality services.

Opportunities

- Council has a role to advocate/ lobby and provide a voice for needed services/resources
- There is a willingness on the part of Council to work with the community. Amalgamation has brought about a change in culture.
- Northern Beaches Council is representative of the whole of the northern beaches and can advocate for the community.
- Transparent communication- knowledge of processes/systems.
- Community infrastructure in the northern beaches is strong
- Transport - Council has the potential to partner with transport providers e.g. EasyLink, potential to extend Hop Skip & Jump type service to other areas of the northern beaches.

Community and Belonging

Goal 10: Our community feels safe and supported.

Strategy 10b: Promote social inclusion through neighbourhood programmes.

Barriers

- Resourcing- lack of both human and financial resources
- People are not necessarily aware of what already exists Fragmentation - Identified that there may already be many things on offer but that people are not aware of them.
- Lack of sense of community
- People not knowing their neighbours. People are often time poor due to patterns and hours of work and travel being unaware of opportunities/activities
- Changing demographics in some neighbourhoods. E.g. Retirees downsizing and younger families moving into suburbs.
- Feelings of disconnect in new developments
- Transient populations in different areas of NBs Manly and Avalon identified as suburbs where there is percentage of the population that is transient.
- Permits/requirements to host an event- prohibitive
Processes involved in getting Council approval to host an event such as a street party are bureaucratic/time consuming and act as a barrier to staging different neighbourhood programmes
- Places where people can meet and celebrate. There are a limited number of places where people can meet casually and hold activities.

Community and Belonging

Goal 10: Our community feels safe and supported.

Strategy 10b: Promote social inclusion through neighbourhood programmes.

Opportunities

- Engagement opportunities already exist (fragmented info).
- Use of Council resources e.g. community engagement/ events team as a resource for people wanting to host programs. Council staff may act as a resource to assist/support community members to host an activity, including compliance with any Council requirements. Capacity building role.
- Advertising opportunities – to promote what is currently on in different communities.
- Online platforms to promote neighbourhood events e.g. “Tinder”. Scotland Island uses social media successfully to promote events/activities to their community.
- Streamline administrative processes to host activities. Make it easy.
- Create “Bump in” places to meet informally/congregate. Relates to identified barrier.

Community and Belonging

Goal 10: Our community feels safe and supported.

Strategy 10c: Build stronger communities where neighbours know and support each other.

Barriers

- Limited places to meet.
- Topography- series of small clustered communities.
- Time limitations (people working/ travelling/ long hrs).
- Transport limitations – getting to and from activities

Community and Belonging

Goal 10: Our community feels safe and supported.

Strategy 10c: Build stronger communities where neighbours know and support each other.

Opportunities

- Small communities have a strong sense of community to build upon. E.g. Off shore communities such as Scotland Island have a strong sense of community, developed through different strategies including social media, regular events, established groups such as art, bushcare, RFS, Island Players.
- Partnerships with others e.g. Easy Transport/ Hop Skip & Jump extended/ sporting facilities.