

2021

# DISCUSSION PAPER

## BROOKLYN PLACE PLANNING

Want to cut  
to the chase?

Skip to page 30 to  
see the draft vision  
and actions for you  
to consider.

Council recognises the Traditional Owners of the lands of Hornsby Shire, the Darug and Guringai peoples, and pays respect to their Ancestors and Elders past and present and to their Heritage. We acknowledge and uphold their intrinsic connections and continuing relationships to Country.

**Hornsby Shire Council**

ABN 20 706 996 972

**Contact details**

PO Box 37, Hornsby NSW 1630

Phone: 9847 6666

Fax: (02) 9847 6999

Email: [hsc@hornsby.nsw.gov.au](mailto:hsc@hornsby.nsw.gov.au)

Customer service (telephone and online) hours:  
8.30am–5pm Monday to Friday (excluding public holidays)  
[hornsby.nsw.gov.au](http://hornsby.nsw.gov.au)

**Visit us**

Hornsby Shire Council Chambers

296 Peats Ferry Road, Hornsby NSW 2077

Customer Service desk hours:  
8.30am–5pm Monday to Friday (excluding public holidays)

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“ Everyone has the right to live in a great place. More importantly, everyone has the right to contribute to making the place where they already live great. ”

**Fred Kent,  
Project For Public Places**

Image: McKell Park (foreground) Sandbrook Inlet (background)

# Introduction

This discussion paper has been put together to engage the community of Brooklyn early in the place planning process.

Background research on both Brooklyn and place planning has been provided to ensure an informed discussion may be had.

The questions posed through this document are intended to guide your thoughts to help shape the process used to develop the upcoming place plan. Council is interested in getting feedback on two specific areas to help guide the development of the Brooklyn place plan:

## **A clear place vision for Brooklyn**

From Council's perspective, there is no clear, agreed vision for what Brooklyn could or should be – and so it is difficult to make decisions about potential changes to the Brooklyn village centre via a place planning process if we don't have a long-term goal to work towards. As such, Council has used community feedback from the master planning process to create a draft vision for Brooklyn. This draft and associated guiding principles need to be tested with the community.

## **Actions for consideration**

Through this discussion paper, Council also wants to test the community's view on the drafted actions for consideration – to see if we've addressed the big picture actions that need to be undertaken to resolve the functioning of the Brooklyn village centre.

We invite your feedback on these key areas which will help shape the place planning process for Brooklyn.



Image: Parsley Bay

# Our place

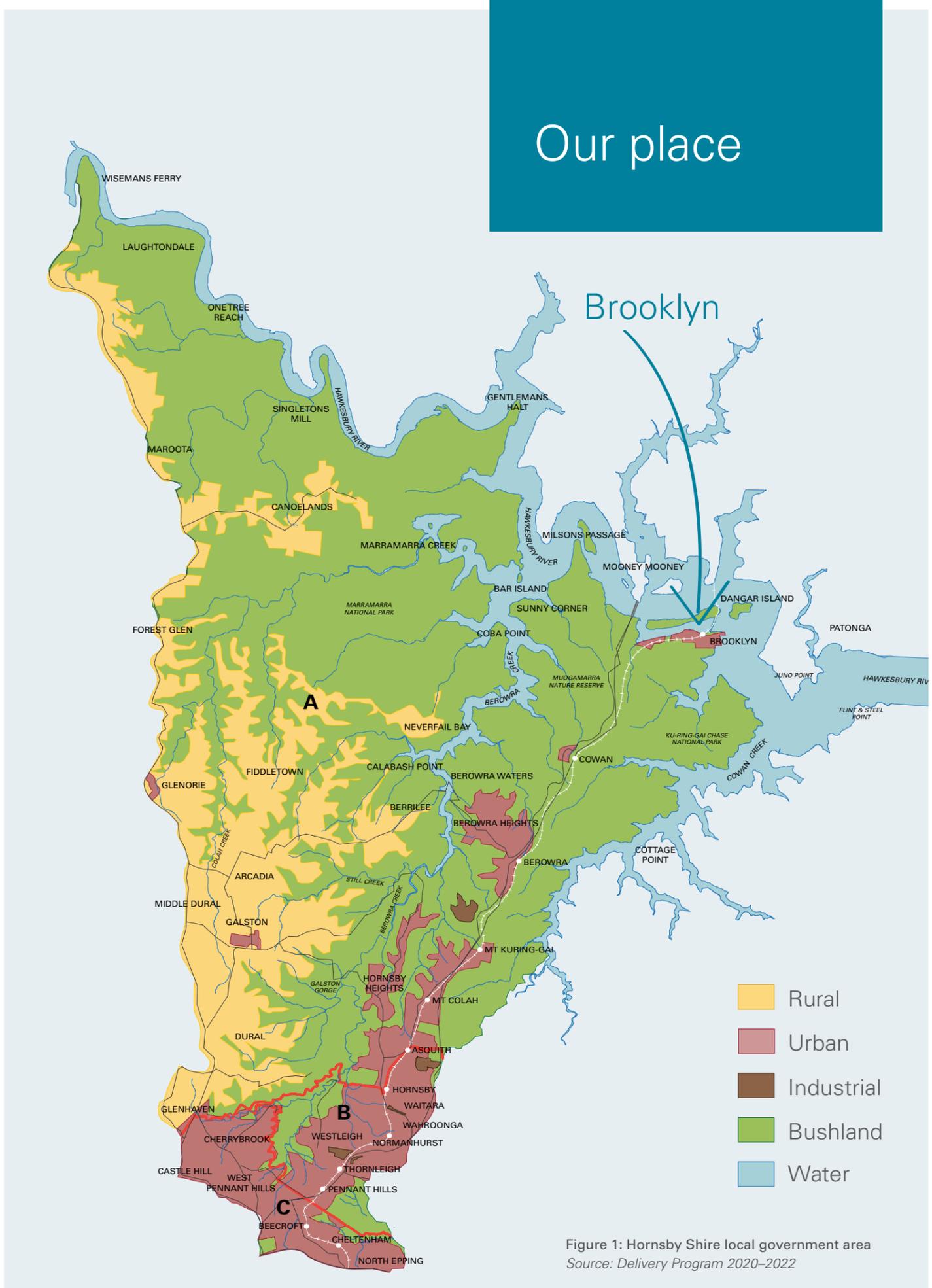
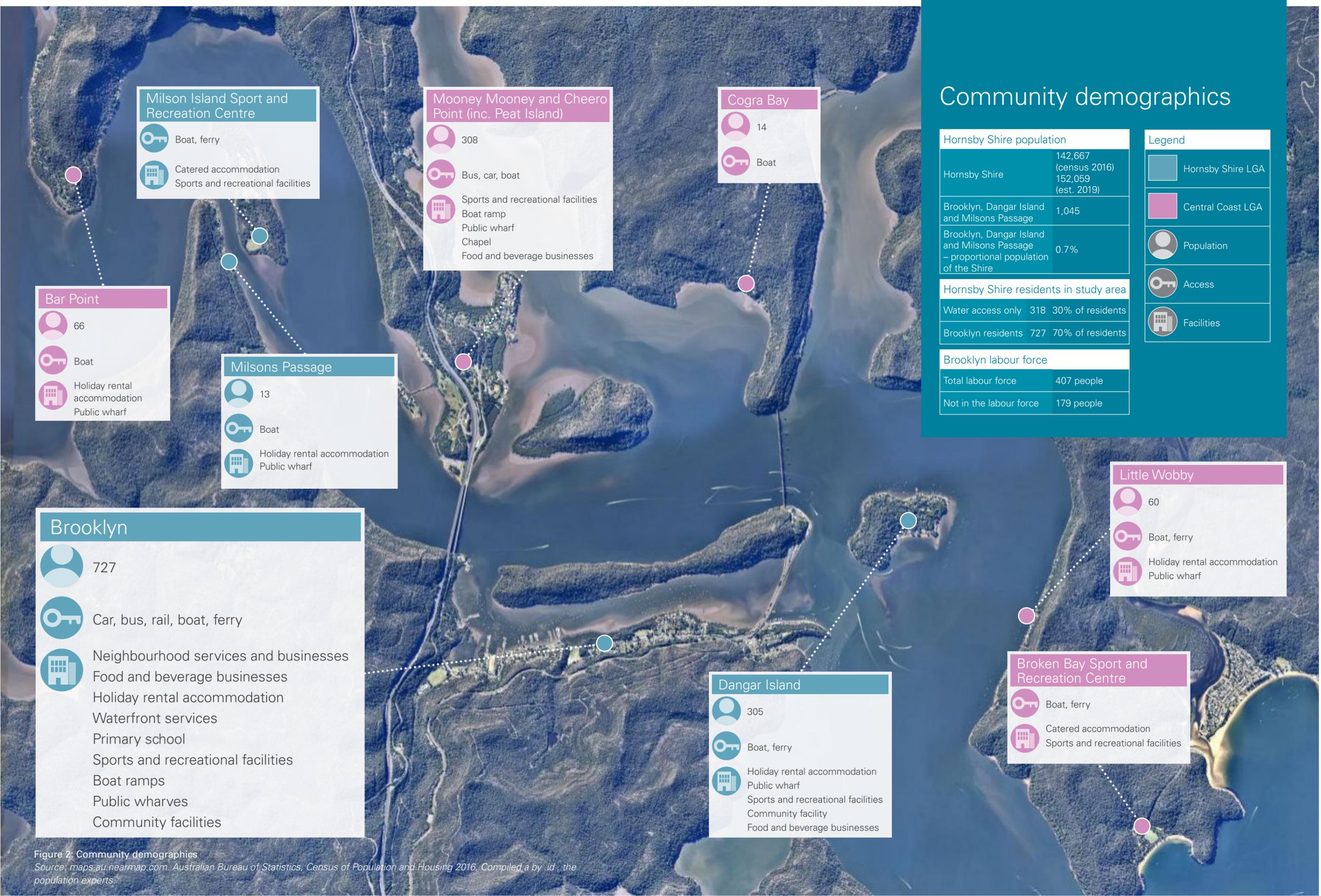


Figure 1: Hornsby Shire local government area  
Source: Delivery Program 2020–2022



# Community demographics

Hornsby Shire population	
Hornsby Shire	142,667 (census 2016) 152,059 (est. 2019)
Brooklyn, Dangar Island and Milsons Passage	1,045
Brooklyn, Dangar Island and Milsons Passage – proportional population of the Shire	0.7%

Hornsby Shire residents in study area	
Water access only	318 30% of residents
Brooklyn residents	727 70% of residents

Brooklyn labour force	
Total labour force	407 people
Not in the labour force	179 people

**Legend**

- Hornsby Shire LGA
- Central Coast LGA
- Population
- Access
- Facilities

**Milson Island Sport and Recreation Centre**

- Boat, ferry
- Catered accommodation
- Sports and recreational facilities

**Mooney Mooney and Cheero Point (inc. Peat Island)**

- 308
- Bus, car, boat
- Sports and recreational facilities
- Boat ramp
- Public wharf
- Chapel
- Food and beverage businesses

**Cogra Bay**

- 14
- Boat

**Bar Point**

- 66
- Boat
- Holiday rental accommodation
- Public wharf

**Milsons Passage**

- 13
- Boat
- Holiday rental accommodation
- Public wharf

**Brooklyn**

- 727
- Car, bus, rail, boat, ferry
- Neighbourhood services and businesses
- Food and beverage businesses
- Holiday rental accommodation
- Waterfront services
- Primary school
- Sports and recreational facilities
- Boat ramps
- Public wharves
- Community facilities

**Dangar Island**

- 305
- Boat, ferry
- Holiday rental accommodation
- Public wharf
- Sports and recreational facilities
- Community facility
- Food and beverage businesses

**Little Wobby**

- 60
- Boat, ferry
- Holiday rental accommodation
- Public wharf

**Broken Bay Sport and Recreation Centre**

- Boat, ferry
- Catered accommodation
- Sports and recreational facilities

Figure 2: Community demographics  
 Source: maps.au.nearmap.com. Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing 2016. Compiled a by .id., the population experts.

# Principles of place

Hornsby Shire will become place-based by being led by the community, driven by strategy and focussed on outcomes.

We will also provide a feedback loop – reporting on achievements in places and identifying where improvement and further change is needed.

## How this framework will improve our important public places



Place-based principles guide how we will work in places – including Brooklyn.



Image: Upper McKell Park

# What is a place plan?

A place plan is a practical, action-focussed document with clearly defined objectives and processes.

It has a clear purpose: to improve the functionality, appearance and community attachment to a defined area – a town centre, main street or other geographically defined space.

The overarching goal of a place plan is to deliver outcomes in collaboration with the people in a place so it becomes better for everyone who uses it.

## What does a place plan do?

- It shapes the future of the place.
- It develops an agreed vision and guiding principles unique to the place.
- It aligns with existing strategies from all levels of government.
- It's a tool for collaborating with stakeholders to form an agreed action list.
- It informs how resources are allocated.
- It provides a strategic reference point for future actions and priorities.

## Why has Council moved to a place-based approach?

We need to get better at managing and designing our third places – places that we can enjoy outside of home and work – where we can relax, socialise and feel connected to our community- this has proven to be especially important during the pandemic.

We recognise we need to solve some complex, long-standing problems.

This place-based approach is a new way of engaging with our community, stakeholders and partners.

Great places build prosperity. As we work together and join up our thinking, our whole community – and beyond – will benefit for generations to come.

## What is the focus of a place plan?

A place plan focuses on the public spaces open and available for everyone – the shared open spaces between work and home, like parks and main streets.

The public spaces in Brooklyn are a key part of its amenity, identity and history. When we have engaging public spaces, the surrounding businesses and the local economy experience the benefits.

Welcoming and attractive public spaces encourage people to linger and interact, making the shared spaces and community more active and vibrant.

## What is the purpose of this discussion paper?

This paper has been developed as a first step in the place planning process for Brooklyn. We want to engage the community of Brooklyn and surrounds early in this process- collaboration is key.

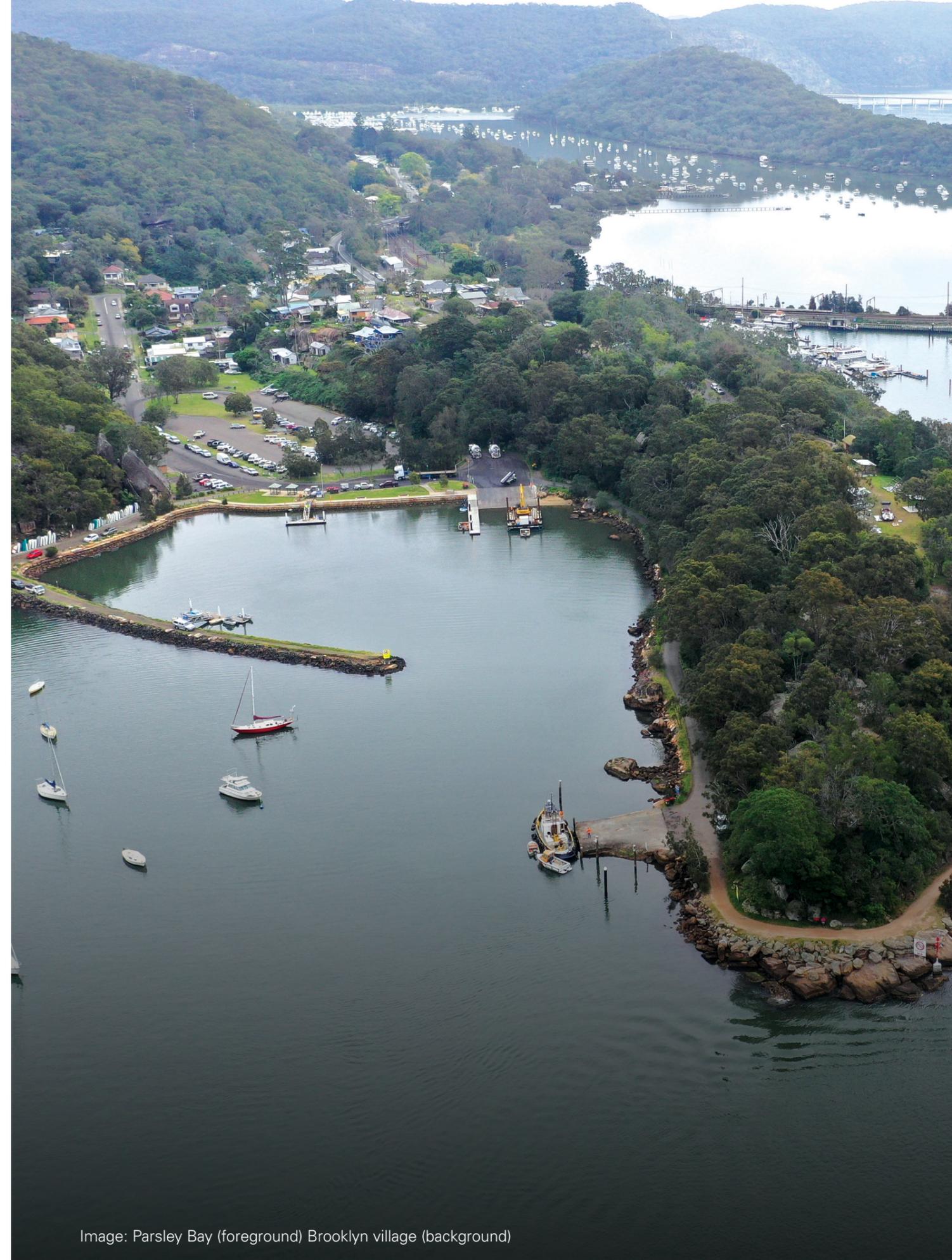


Image: Parsley Bay (foreground) Brooklyn village (background)

# Our focus: Brooklyn town centre

Brooklyn town centre is located in the east of the suburb, at the end of Brooklyn Road, and is a small waterfront village and transport node for river, road and rail.

The town centre has a mix of businesses and services, community facilities, working waterfront, bushland, parks and private residences.

The boundaries for this discussion paper and place plan are the Brooklyn Road railway bridge overpass to the west, Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park to the south, Sandbrook Inlet to the north and the Hawkesbury River to the east.

While this paper and the place plan will concentrate on the town centre, it also considers the broader suburb of Brooklyn and its surroundings.

As we plan for Brooklyn's future, we will ensure decisions aren't made in isolation. Rather, they will reflect and enhance the way our community operates and functions within the broader region.



Figure 3: Locality map  
Source: maps.au.nearmap.com



Image: Brooklyn baths

# Stakeholders

Destinations, town centres and places are typically complex when we look at them from an operational and planning standpoint.

That's why it's important we engage our whole community so the decisions we make together provide an optimal outcome for all of us.

Brooklyn has a diverse range of stakeholders who contribute to and influence the town centre. By joining up our thinking, we can ensure Brooklyn remains an inclusive and valued place for our whole community.

Given their complexity, town centres and other third places require broad engagement to best meet the needs of the community and deliver optimal outcomes. This diagram recognises the range of stakeholder relationships in places — including different levels of government and the variety of users. All place stakeholders need to be taken into account before Council intervenes.

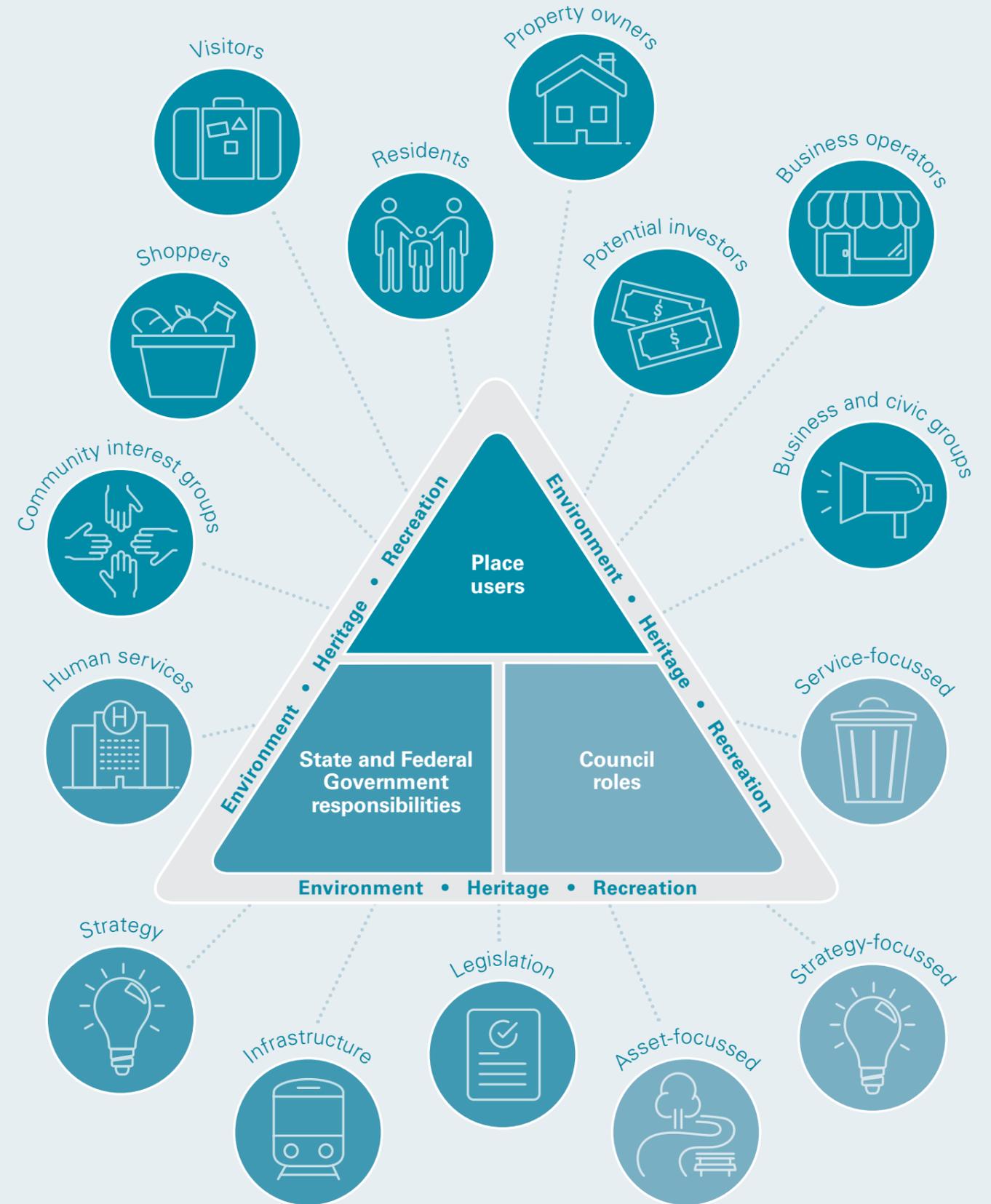


Figure 4: Stakeholders

# Brooklyn considered



- |   |                                       |                                  |  |
|---|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------|--|
| Access to local services                                    | Recreation – picnicking and swimming  | Entertainment and special events | Houseboating, fishing, boating and sailing |
| Transport interchange                                       | Dining and eating out                 | Day trips                        | Exploring local heritage and culture       |
| Retail and shopping   | Parking                               | Rest stop/convenience stop       | Community activities                       |
| Environment and connection with nature – river and bushland | Meeting place                         | Marinas and berthing             | Home/neighbourhood                         |
| Walking and cycling   | Holiday experiences and accommodation |                                  | Working waterfront                         |



Marinas and berthing



Community activities



Day trips



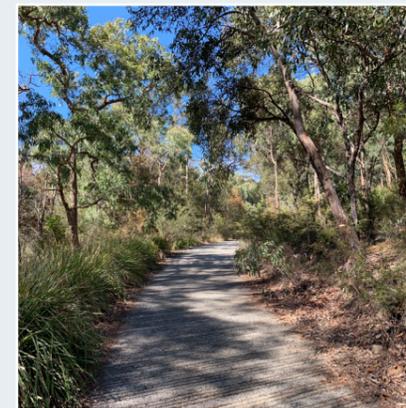
Entertainment and special events



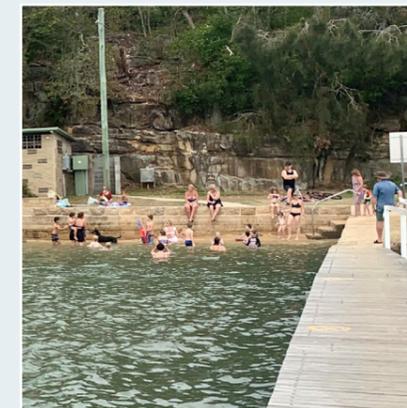
Dining and eating out



Transport interchange



Environment and connection with nature – river + bushland



Recreation – picnicking and swimming



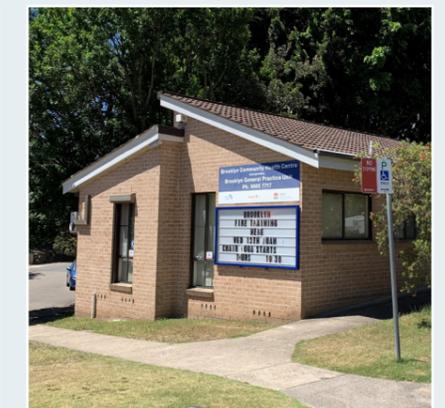
Parking



Meeting place



Retail and shopping



Access to local services



Working waterfront



Walking and cycling



Holiday experiences and accommodation



Rest stop/convenience stop



Houseboating, fishing, boating and sailing



Exploring local heritage and culture



Home/neighbourhood



Image: Riverboat Postman

## Diverse destinations

Brooklyn is a small-scale village centre and visitor destination, plus a transport interchange for river communities.

With a population of fewer than 750 people, Brooklyn is tiny in comparison to other suburbs. What makes Brooklyn wonderful and unique is how it punches above its weight to perform many functions, including as a waterfront interchange and a multi-use destination.

This complexity gives Brooklyn a strong series of community anchors – and the reason for its existence – but it can also be challenging because these multiple uses and functions compete for limited space.

Project For Public Spaces talks about the concept of the Power of 10 and how places prosper and succeed when users have a diverse range of reasons to be there and keep coming back.

Brooklyn has these diverse reasons.

But what it's lacking is a holistic plan to make the most of how this multi-function space is used.

### Let us know:

- What is your favourite place in Brooklyn?
- What is your favourite thing to do in Brooklyn?
- Brooklyn is a visitor destination to many. How could local residents benefit from these visitors?

- Services/business
- Recreation/community
- Transport/connection point
- Parking areas

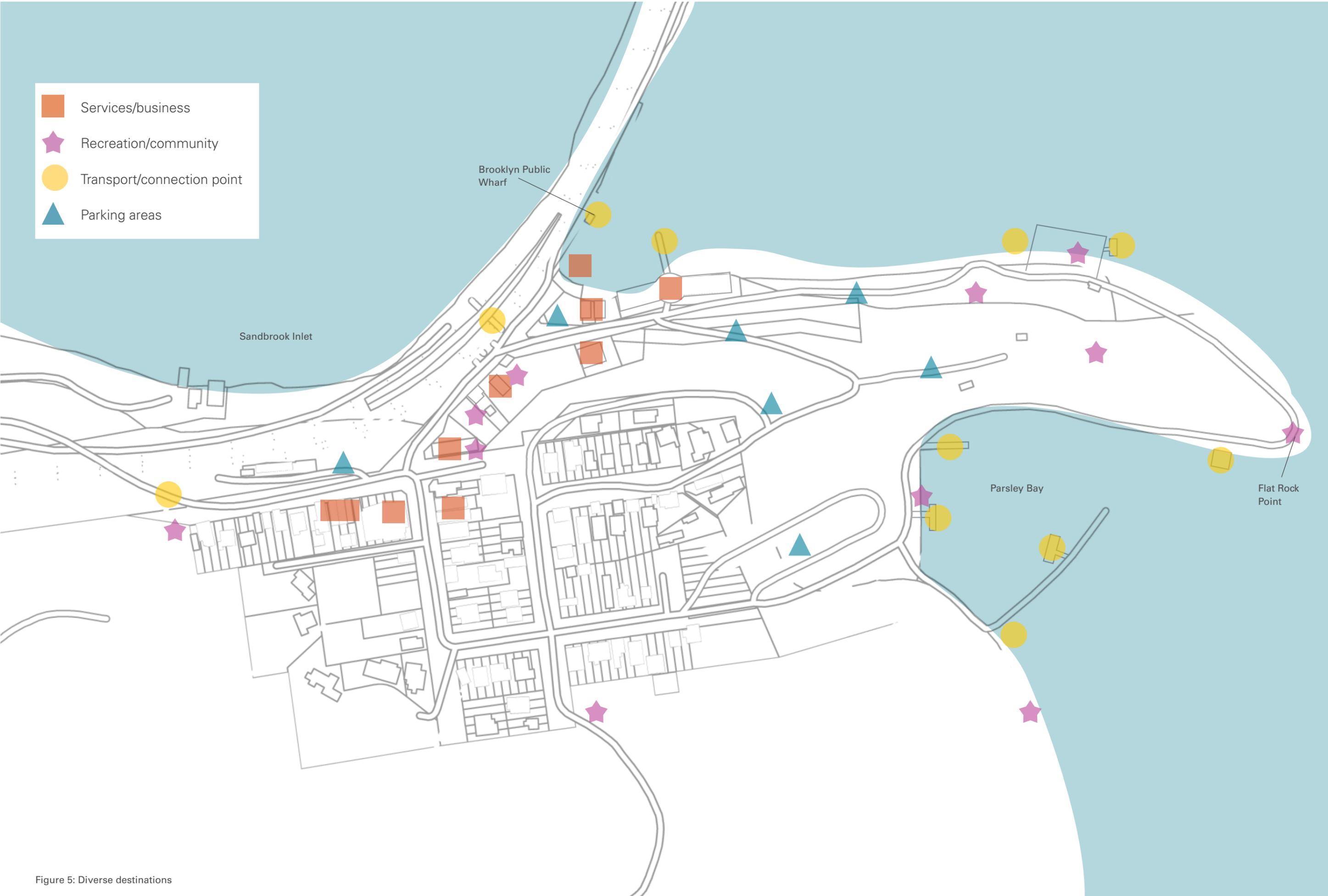


Figure 5: Diverse destinations

# Brooklyn and Council: a turning point

The vision for Brooklyn as an idyllic destination for visitors and residents dates back to 1883, when the Sydney Morning Herald advertised the opportunity to purchase allotments in the newly subdivided town centre.

Early 20th century authorities and the Brooklyn Progress Association recognised Brooklyn's unique natural setting on the river foreshore and created The Railway Reclamation Reserve, now known as McKell Park.<sup>1</sup>

When the area came under Council management in the 1960s, the Shire President, Councillor Tulloch, reportedly said Council had a vision to make Brooklyn an attraction equal to Bobbin Head.<sup>2</sup>

## A long history of debate about car parking

Brooklyn and river residents are a passionate and active community.

But Brooklyn has failed to reach its potential because the town functions as different things for different people – and its physical, geographical limitations and current layout means it can't serve all of these functions successfully.

Decisions made with the community to date have been geared towards supporting Brooklyn's function as a transport interchange.

This means a significant amount of public land is used for parking and boat trailer storage, and this dominates the town centre and areas closest to the river.

## The problem with parking

The parking closest to the transport interchanges is untimed (long-term) or limited to four hours.

It is unusual for Council to provide public space for commuter car parking as this is generally the NSW Government's responsibility. As a Council, we need to consider our role and responsibility here.

Parking is convenient for commuters and river residents but its location in prime areas of foreshore reserve impacts the economic viability of Brooklyn's town centre.

Over the years we have seen many car parking studies and proposals developed which attempt to solve this challenging, long-term issue. But to date interventions have been undertaken in isolation - to respond to a particular stakeholder group, rather than the collective. This has resulted in a piecemeal approach to solving this complex issue. Place planning is about taking a holistic and creative look at town centre functioning to try to solve single issue problems - like parking - within a broader context.

Piecemeal solutions mean the town's existing parking still isn't completely meeting anyone's needs, despite many years of isolated attempts.

River residents say there isn't enough boat and car parking, Brooklyn residents and businesses say there is too much untimed parking and visitors say they have nowhere to park.

It's time to change our approach so we can change the outcome. We need holistic, joined-up thinking.

<sup>1</sup> *Local Colour HSHS*

<sup>2</sup> *The Advocate, 6 April 1966*

## Brooklyn, it's time for joined-up thinking

We acknowledge there has been some disagreement in the community around the preferred uses for Brooklyn's limited space.

Each group within the community has different priorities and expectations for the functions Brooklyn needs to serve.

In the past, Council has been unable to make incremental changes or trial solutions without alienating sections of our community.

This means we still have a Brooklyn town centre with public spaces that don't fully meet anyone's needs.

Collaboration and joined-up thinking will help us unite and develop solutions that enable more wins for everyone to create long-term change and success – not just a few isolated wins that don't have the betterment of the precinct at their heart.

## Get the balance right by working together

While the situation is complex, there are also great opportunities within Brooklyn's town centre.

When we look at other successful town centres, we see they have a diverse mix of uses and activities.

We have an opportunity to build on Brooklyn's unique location and create a vibrant and active town centre everyone can enjoy.

Through creative planning and cooperation, we have a chance to find a solution that addresses the town centre's needs, as opposed to individuals.

The only way we'll realise a better Brooklyn, is to put aside our differences and learn to compromise.

### Let us know:

- How can Council and the community collaborate to develop solutions for a better Brooklyn?



Image: Lower McKell parking

# Brooklyn's identity

To shape Brooklyn's future identity and purpose, we need a clear vision and set of guiding principles.

That's because Brooklyn means different things to different people.



## My port

It's a place to transition from water to land or vice versa.



## My interchange

It's somewhere to move through, rather than a destination in its own right.



## My livelihood

It's harnessing the visitor economy and marine-based business opportunities.



## My home

It's where people live, have fun and work.



## My destination

It's where people enjoy leisure activities, in and around the water.

There's easy access to the Hawkesbury River for houseboats, beautiful bushwalking tracks in the surrounding Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park and Great North Walk, and – of course – the fish and chips.

## We need to work together to change Brooklyn for the better.

Using the same thinking and the same approaches will only get us the same results, and we won't resolve the long-term, systemic issues that exist in the Brooklyn precinct.

Instead, we are proposing a strong vision and guiding principles to drive positive change for all of us and for the future of Brooklyn.

We have developed a draft vision, informed by community engagement during and following the Brooklyn masterplan development.

Please give your feedback through the consultation process for this discussion paper because a robust, shared vision will be the best guide for all future decision-making.

Being compelled by vision will ensure it's not the loudest voice that wins in the future.

Instead, vision and principles will enable us to take a considered approach, taking in the views of all stakeholders and making decisions based on best practices proven to influence the success of a place.

See our draft vision on page 30 and have your say.

# Engagement and actions to date

Brooklyn is the first location for a place-based approach within Hornsby Shire.

During a three-month period in 2016, we ran several community engagement sessions with the community of Brooklyn as part of a master planning process.

Together, we identified priority issues we need to resolve so Brooklyn can reach its full potential as an active and vibrant town centre.

The matters raised by the community during this process were more aligned to a place-based approach, rather than a development masterplan. Master planning is focused on rezoning and development and place planning does not assume that development is an outcome.

One of the priorities we identified was developing a vision to guide future decision-making and resolve long-standing issues.

Later, in 2019/20, we consulted our community through strategic planning work as we developed the Local Strategic Planning Statement.

Everyone we spoke to was very clear about their views - and their views were diverse. We certainly listened.

## How we engaged with community organisations to develop this discussion paper

- Brooklyn Community Association (BCA) – multiple conversations, meetings and village tour with elected members of the BCA and presentations on place management and updates on the place planning process for Brooklyn
- Dangar Island League (DIL) – presentation on place management and meeting with DIL representatives to discuss the Dangar Island Survey 2020
- Lower Hawkesbury Aquatic Recreation Association (LHARA) – Parsley Bay Centre proposal

- Lower Hawkesbury Estuary Management Committee – presentation on place management
- Lower Hawkesbury River Residents Association (LHRRRA) – boat tour of offshore settlements
- Brooklyn Village Alliance – town centre improvements and Parsley Bay
- Local businesses contacted us about their needs to promote their offerings

## What we did to prepare for this place planning process

Hornsby Shire Council came into this project knowing a place plan is a significant body of work.

We are ready for it, and are committed to working with all of the Brooklyn community to achieve a place plan that aligns with a single vision and brings greater functionality to the town heart.

In formulating the discussion paper and getting ready for the place plan we analysed, advocated and actioned.

## Analysed

- Researched the area's history and landscape, including a detailed literature review of documents, strategies and historical files and previous Council studies, reports and surveys including the Draft Report Brooklyn Improvement Masterplan Constraints Analysis 2016.
- Completed a review of transport planning and car parking analysis from 1991–2020.
- Conducted a strategic gap analysis of asset management and servicing by Council of Brooklyn town centre.
- Identified and investigated property across the town centre to determine ownership, management responsibilities and planning controls.
- Identified restrictive covenants, leases and licences on Council owned or managed land and opportunities.
- Visited sites across key town centre destinations (in winter and summer) over school holidays, public holidays, weekends, weekdays (early morning, midday, commuter periods, evening).
- Completed a place assessment, to further understand how the place operates and performs.

## Advocated

- Worked and advocated with Transport for New South Wales project staff and residents, in relation to the upgrade of Hawkesbury River Station – in particular, upgrading the pathways linking the station to the public wharf and bus stop to ensure integration with the adjacent Dangar Road precinct.
- Held preliminary conversations with State Recreational Trails Coordinator from Crown Lands regarding partnership opportunities for Great North Walk with National Parks and Wildlife Service.
- (NPWS) and advocated for new GNW signage at the Hawkesbury River Station.
- Developed a submission to NPWS discussion papers for Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park in relation to partnership opportunities for the Great North Walk.
- Participated in internal (Council) project control groups relevant to Brooklyn – Public Domain and Signage Strategy, Local Strategic Planning Statement and Car Parking Management Study.

## Actioned

- Renovated the heritage (arts) cottage and facilitated the activation of 10 Dangar Road with the Brooklyn Community Association.
- Commenced discussions with the Brooklyn and Mooney Mooney Marketing Collective regarding improvements for wayfinding signage in the area.
- Identified and instigated over 100 requests for service on Council assets across the suburb.

## Common issues raised through engagement

Follow up engagement in 2019/20 after the master planning process, the community made it clear that our priority should be to measure and address Brooklyn's car parking issues.

As a consequence, the community were afforded input into the scope of work for the Car Parking Management Study to ensure we measure the right things given the complexity of the village centre functions and impacts across the suburb. This was the number one issue on everyone's lips so we made sure their needs could be reflected in the brief given to the technical consultant.

Generally, we identified three main themes from community engagement – the town centre, accessibility and preservation.

*Our number one priority? Resolving village centre parking for cars and boat trailers.*

Village centre	Accessibility	Cultural and natural heritage
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Resolving centre parking for cars and trailers</li> <li>Combining community aspirations with providing community facilities</li> <li>Supporting local businesses and encouraging diverse offerings in the town centre</li> <li>Revitalising, activating and upgrading existing public infrastructure in and around the town centre for everyone</li> <li>Maximising the contribution that public open space makes to the livability of the town centre</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensuring accessibility for river residents and for pedestrians and cyclists accessing the town centre and moving between destinations</li> <li>Community campaigning for an accessible Hawkesbury River Station – successfully completed</li> <li>Improving access, activation and infrastructure elements in Parsley Bay to diversify user groups and incorporate local priorities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Honouring and celebrating our rich cultural heritage, history and atmosphere</li> <li>Preserving our precious natural environment – bushland, river and waterways</li> <li>Advocating to ensure that future growth and related impacts associated with development on Peat Island and in Mooney Mooney do not adversely impact upon Brooklyn and surrounding neighbourhoods</li> </ul>

# Moving forward

Brooklyn has significant, foundational strengths we can build on to provide a strong base for focus and future actions.

## Brooklyn's strengths

- The natural environment – proximity to national parks and waterways
- Human scale – built environment, very walkable
- Rich history, sense of place and village atmosphere
- Significant areas within the town centre are publicly owned land
- Active and engaged community of residents and businesses
- Accessible with strong transport connections to road, rail and water
- Attractive destination for visitors
- Proximity to Sydney and Central Coast

As we plan Brooklyn's future, it's equally important to recognise the challenges that are likely to influence how we progress future actions.

## Brooklyn's challenges

- Brooklyn is a contested place that performs multiple functions without adequately serving any single function well.
- Stakeholders have disparate views on key issues and differing ideas around potential solutions with no united voice.
- It's evident now the town centre requires review - a business as usual approach will not resolve long-term functionality issues within the precinct.

- We find ourselves in a position where we are balancing competing priorities - businesses, visitors, river and Brooklyn residents. However, funding opportunities are limited given the community's desire to establish infrastructure improvements without higher density development.
- We know we are missing a consolidated vision with guiding principles to lead future decision-making and know long-term solutions to key issues will require compromise.
- We realise there has been a history of mistrust of Council in the community.

Despite the fact there are challenges, Council is proud to be working with stakeholders and the community to overcome them.



Image: Arts cottage

# Testing our vision and guiding principles

Place-making never happens in isolation.

Instead, it needs to begin and continue to be guided by an agreed, shared vision and principles.

We have drafted these for the community's feedback and review.

## Our proposed guiding principles

Based on community feedback, the community of Brooklyn and surrounds wants a town centre that:

- is walkable, integrated, connected and active
- functions as a transport interchange
- supports local businesses
- is a vibrant and welcoming visitor destination with an active spine along Dangar Road
- maximises benefits from visitors for locals
- incorporates an appropriate community facility as a hub
- celebrates and preserves its connection to the river, the environment and its heritage
- is well maintained, attractive and with community custodianship.

## Our proposed vision

The draft vision for Brooklyn to be tested with the community is:

“ *The Brooklyn town centre protects its unique natural environment and celebrates its rich heritage and waterfront village atmosphere.* ”

*It functions well as a transport interchange between river, road and rail, while supporting local businesses and maximising the benefits of its visitor economy for the local population.*

*The Brooklyn town centre has a vibrant spine linking McKell Park and Bridge Street along Dangar Road.* ”

We have drafted guiding principles and a vision based on what we've heard.

Now, it's up to you – the Brooklyn and surrounds community – to test, assess and approve these.

These will guide decision making moving forward.

### Let us know:

- Do you agree with the draft vision and guiding principles?
- If not, why?

# Actions to consider

The following potential place planning actions have been identified during the development of this discussion paper and respond to the community feedback and draft guiding principles and vision for Brooklyn.

Many of the challenges and issues for Brooklyn are interrelated and require joined-up thinking.

It's important to note this action list is not exhaustive or final.

As we continue to engage with our community, these actions will be considered, discussed, prioritised and debated. Any plan or action list needs to be adaptable – priorities and actions may evolve over time in response to changing needs and influences.

This paper sets up a process pathway for resolving issues and formulating a place plan for Brooklyn.

## Our aim

- Engage with stakeholders to form agreed priority actions adopted by Council, which will be linked to the Delivery Program and Operational Plan.
- Prioritise and assign a timeframe to each action.
- Specify what requires further detailed consultation, debate, discussion, research or advocacy.

Several actions have been suggested as essential in order to respond to our understanding of the community's initial feedback on priorities. Other, further actions arising from technical inputs will assist in decision-making.

As a new initiative, many of the actions in this paper put forward for consideration are not funded. Funding for the majority of unfunded actions will need to be prioritised through Council's annual budgetary processes – via the Delivery Program and Operational Plan.

In the event that funding cannot be secured, only the actions identified as being within existing budgets and resources or funded by grants will be progressed.

## Place plan themes

The actions for consideration have been categorised into four overarching themes.

Each theme broadly reflects the Project for Public Spaces (PPS) spectrum of the four key attributes associated with successful places:



functionality – access and linkages



economic viability – uses and activities



governance – sociability



management – comfort and image.

You can read more about the PPS fundamentals as to what makes a great place on page 42.

## Sequencing

High priority – 1-2 years

Medium priority – 3-4 years

Low priority – 5+ years

Ongoing - underway

## Indicative project costs

\$ – within existing budgets and resources

\$\$ – up to \$100,000

\$\$\$ – \$100,000 +

# Council and community actions

## High priority

Actions 1 - 5 set up a process pathway for resolving issues and formulating a place plan for Brooklyn using joined-up thinking.

1. A clear place vision for Brooklyn			
	Collaborate with stakeholders (with the assistance of an independent facilitator if required) to review the draft vision and guiding principles for Brooklyn village centre to steer, inform and prioritise future actions.	\$	Funded
2. A functionally laid-out village centre (Brooklyn Urban Design Footprint)			
	Design and draw a plan of the consolidated vision for the Brooklyn village centre considering all adopted strategic elements.	\$\$	Unfunded
3. An economically sustainable and resilient village centre			
	Evaluate the economic sustainability of the Brooklyn village centre to understand the economic tipping points for viability.	\$\$	Unfunded
4. Dangar Road activation strategy			
	Consider opportunities to activate Council's property holdings on Dangar Road within the context of the Brooklyn Urban Design Footprint.	\$\$	Unfunded
5. A resolved approach to village centre parking			
	Within the context of a functionally laid-out village centre and using the best practice principles adopted by Council as a starting point, resolve an approach to managing parking within Brooklyn village centre.	\$\$\$	Unfunded

**Why?**  
Because we need to know where we are headed.

**Why?**  
Because we have heard that the layout of the village centre needs to change.

**Why?**  
Because we have heard that locals want amenity and convenience in the village centre.

**Why?**  
Because the community have said that they want an active and well-maintained precinct.

**Why?**  
Because resolving village centre parking is front of mind for everyone.

## 6. An integrated and well-functioning transport interchange

	<i>Under way</i> Advocate to Transport for New South Wales to provide adequate commuter car and bicycle parking for customers of the public transport network – rail and ferry. Investigate partnership opportunities to deliver an integrated, sustainable solution using surplus government-owned land.	\$	Funded
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## 7. An active and engaged community

	<i>Under way</i> Encourage the community to report asset maintenance issues as they occur, with Council to respond to and action in a timely manner.	\$	Funded
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## Medium priority

### 8. A resilient and sustainable community

	Build capacity within the community to be able to respond to shocks and stresses.	\$\$	Unfunded
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### 9. A walkable town centre

	Finalise audit of travel paths (prioritising pedestrian and cycle links), to improve foreshore and town access, and complete missing links between key destinations. (see appendix pp.56-60)	\$\$\$	Unfunded
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### 10. A navigable town centre

	Prepare a signage strategy for the town centre including wayfinding, directional, regulatory, tourist and interpretive signage.	\$\$	Unfunded
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### 11. An attractive public domain for the town centre streetscape

	Incorporate a public domain improvement program, including opportunities for streetscape beautification, within the context of developing the Brooklyn Urban Design Footprint for the town centre.	\$\$	Unfunded
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### 12. A safe and walkable town centre at night

	Undertake a night audit to identify areas within the public domain that require strategic lighting enhancements to improve pedestrian safety and comfort. Link with night-time economy opportunities and Brooklyn Urban Design Footprint.	\$\$	Unfunded
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## Low priority

13. Place activation			
	Explore, plan and develop community-driven events and activations designed to celebrate the unique qualities of the area and stimulate the local economy (Shire-wide).	\$\$	Unfunded
14. Public art program			
	Explore opportunities for public art on private and public land to further articulate and celebrate Brooklyn's identity.	\$\$	Unfunded
15. Destination management plan*			
	Develop a sustainable tourism destination management plan for Brooklyn and river destinations.	\$\$	Unfunded
16. Increased trading hours*			
	Investigate the means by which Council can help encourage or facilitate the development of extended hours of trading.	\$\$	Unfunded
17. Town centre vibrancy*			
	Explore partnerships and programs with property owners and real estate agents for vacant property pop ups and activation opportunities.	\$\$	Unfunded
18. Support and enhance water based recreational opportunities			
	Review and update Council's Sustainable Water Based Recreation Facilities Plan	\$\$	Unfunded

\*These items have been included on the basis that they have arisen due to community feedback, evaluation through the place assessment and general principles arising through Council's draft Economic Development and Tourism Strategy and the NSW Government's North District Plan. Sequencing and \$\$ are to be confirmed, subject to the adoption of the strategy.

## Ongoing

19. Advocate to ensure the development of the Peat Island precinct will integrate with and enhance Brooklyn and surrounds			
	<i>Under way</i> Advocate to Central Coast Council to analyse the economic and practical impacts of the Peat Island Planning Proposal on Brooklyn's infrastructure.	\$	Funded
20. Improve access and maritime infrastructure on the Brooklyn foreshore to cater for current and future demand			
	Advocate to Transport for New South Wales for an integrated approach to Brooklyn foreshore and improvements to public maritime infrastructure to enhance functionality, access, amenities and opportunities.	\$	Funded

### Let us know:

- Do the suggested actions address the highest priority needs?
- If not, why?



Image: Brooklyn baths

## Appendices

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## Brooklyn locality

The land that encompasses the Hornsby Shire was a 'place' long before the Shire of the Council of Hornsby was established in 1906.

The Aboriginal heritage of the Hornsby Shire region was at least 15,000 to 20,000 years old by the time European settlers arrived in 1788. Connection to country was, and still is, strong for Aboriginal people. The Hawkesbury River, called Deerubbin, was central to their way of life. Yams, a staple food, grew plentifully along the riverbanks, and men and women fished for fish, eels, and shellfish within the river.

Bark canoes were used to travel along the rivers and creeks, which provided efficient transport routes for the Darug and Guringai peoples, plus neighbouring groups like the Darkinjung people to the north of Deerubbin on the Central Coast.

Many of the local names reflect this longstanding connection to water, such as Deerubbin that means wide, deep water, and Cowan that means big water.

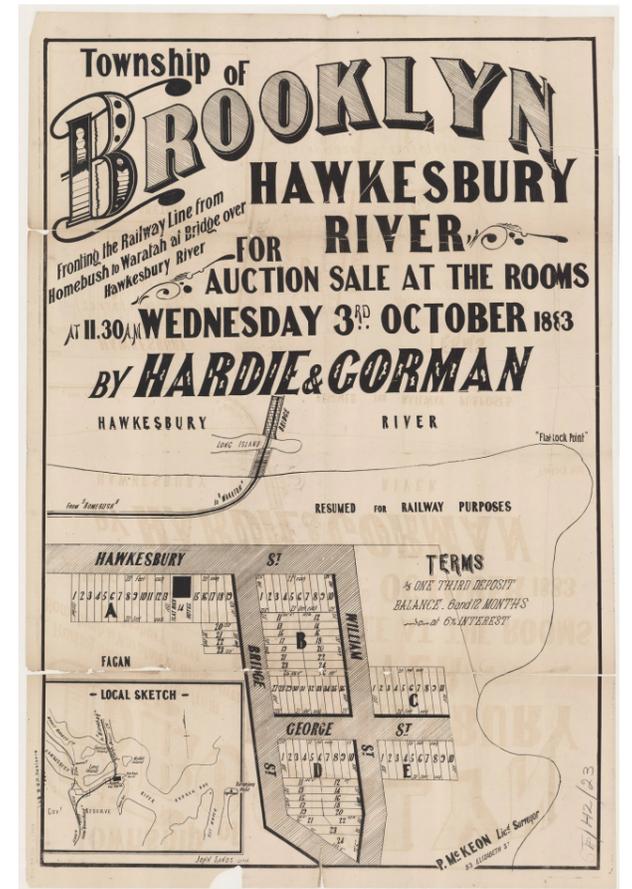
Aboriginal people continue to live in Hornsby Shire, still caring for Country.

*Source: Local Strategic Planning Statement 2020*

The first European voyage up the Hawkesbury River reached Brooklyn in 1788, when Governor Phillip arrived at an island, which he named Mullet Island – now Dangar Island.

The earliest recorded settler on this part of the Hawkesbury River was George Peat, who acquired property on Mooney Point in 1831 and received a grant of 50 acres (20 hectares) in 1836. In 1862, Vincent William Seymour became the first landholder on the Brooklyn side. James Cole and James Ross were other early settlers at Brooklyn.

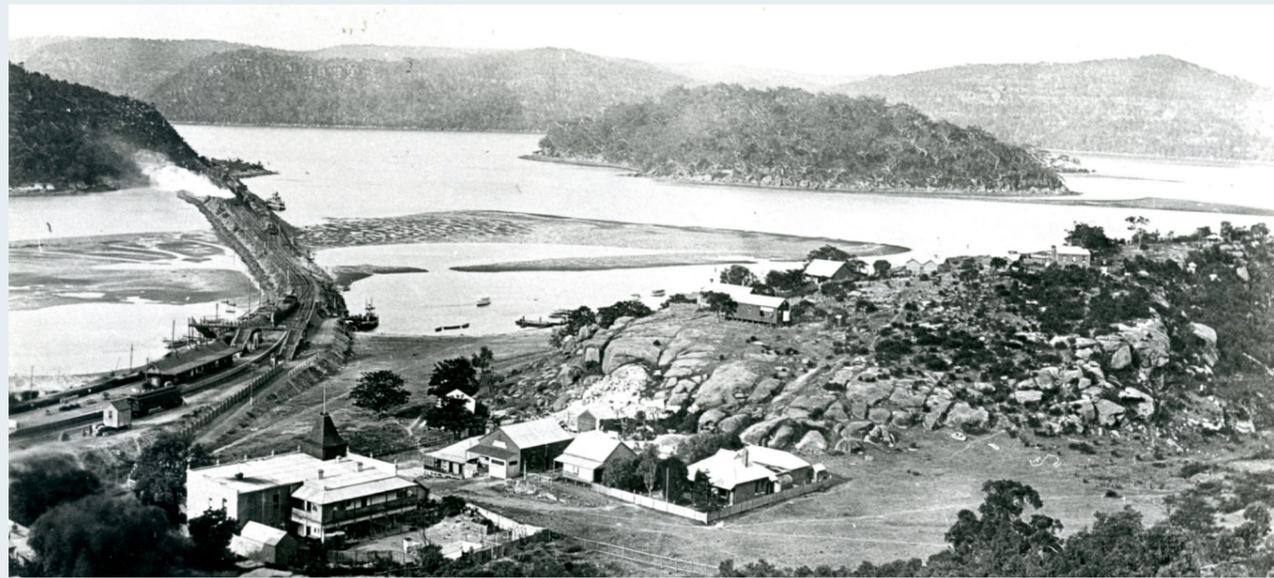
The name Brooklyn first appeared in print in 1883 when the Sydney Morning Herald advertised the opportunity to purchase freehold allotments within the newly subdivided township, land owned by Peter and William Fagan who had bought 100 acres at the site in 1881.



Original subdivision plan for Brooklyn town centre from 1883. Hornsby Shire Recollects.



Australian £5 note 1913. Reserve Bank of Australia Museum.



Looking north, Brooklyn, Hawkesbury River. William Henry Broadhurst. Circa 1905.

The village hosted the ship *Lucinda*, on which the constitution of Australia was drafted in 1891. It also welcomed the Duke and Duchess of York in 1901, when the royal yacht anchored off Juno Point.

By this time, Brooklyn was a well-known spot, acknowledged when a view looking over the old Sanatorium Hotel was used on the first £5 note issued by the Commonwealth Government in 1913.

The settlers at Brooklyn were in a remote location on the river because the main settlement was around Bar Island. But the construction of the railway changed this and Brooklyn developed as an important railway town. It became a base for the tourist and fishing industries, as the railway provided a fast method of transporting produce to the city markets and allowed easy day excursions from Sydney to the Hawkesbury River.



H. Langford Bakery and W. Buie's General Store, Brooklyn. William Henry Broadhurst. Circa 1905.



Hawkesbury River Railway Station, Brooklyn. Circa 1922. Hornsby Shire Recollects.



Brooklyn Hotel. Henry King as is part of the James R Tyrell collection. Circa 1890s.



Panorama of the approach to Brooklyn from the railway embankment near Hawkesbury River Railway Station, Brooklyn. Date taken 1919. Copyright held by the Mitchell Library.



The same viewpoint today, image captured from the railway causeway in April 2020. Note the avenue of palms have grown somewhat over the past 100 years.

Unless otherwise noted, images and text (edited) by Local Studies Collection Hornsby Shire Council.

## Place-making in action

“Place-making refers to a collaborative process by which we can shape our public realm in order to maximise shared value... paying particular attention to the physical, cultural, and social identities that define a place and support its ongoing evolution.”

– Project for Public Places

### Arts Cottage – 10 Dangar Road

In late 2018, the Brooklyn Community Association (BCA) approached Council with a proposal to occupy the vacant commercial property at 10 Dangar Road, following several years of it being untenanted.

The goal of the project is to act as a catalyst to create an active and vibrant spine linking McKell Park and Bridge Street along Dangar Road.

The Dangar Road precinct provides the public face of Brooklyn as they are some of the first buildings viewed when arriving at the town centre.

Council completed a renovation of the heritage building, installed an art hanging system, interior and exterior painting, removed asbestos and installed a kitchenette.

### Outcome

The BCA celebrated the beginning of their activation of the heritage property with a market and art exhibition in October 2019. Prior to COVID-19 restrictions taking effect in late March 2020, it hosted an eclectic mix of art and cultural workshops, markets and other activities including poetry reading and meditation.

Prior to COVID restrictions, the community activation of this cottage has seen more than 1,500 visitors through the doors enjoying the exhibitions by local artists and exploring the rich, local history displays.

The activation by the community has seen the unmaintained and inactive frontage transformed visually through an improved streetscape and the many interactions and experiences people have had at the cottage.

Of particular note is social connection – with new opportunities for elderly and socially isolated residents to share experiences with the younger generation and visitors to the village.

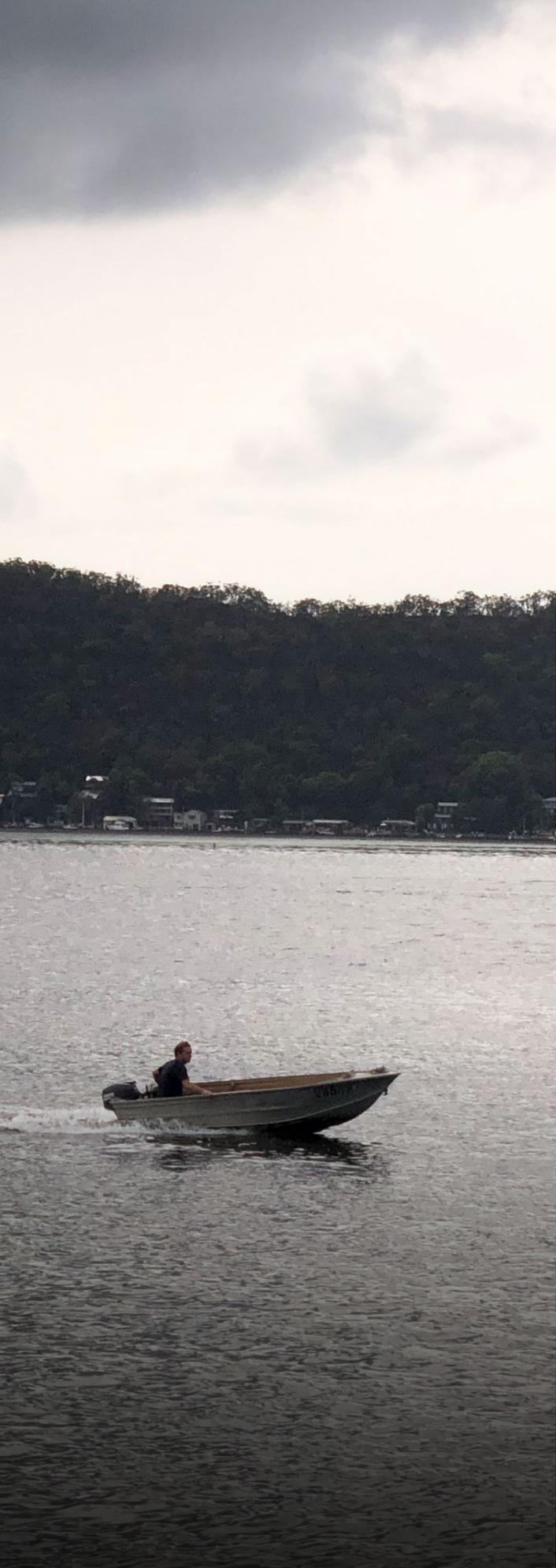
The BCA have a busy schedule of activation planned for the cottage for 2021.



Arts Cottage, November 2016



Arts Cottage opening event, October 2019



# What makes a great place?

There are fundamentals as to what makes a great place from a design perspective.

Agencies like Project for Public Spaces, the Institute of Place Management, various other commercial providers and thinkers like Jan Gehl have score cards for what makes a good public space.

There is significant overlap between a variety of these tools and ideas.

In this regard, place management is about making sure places in the Shire have as many of these key contributing factors as possible.

This can be thought of as place livability elements – having the foundations of good public places so they function and address baseline requirements for a successful place.

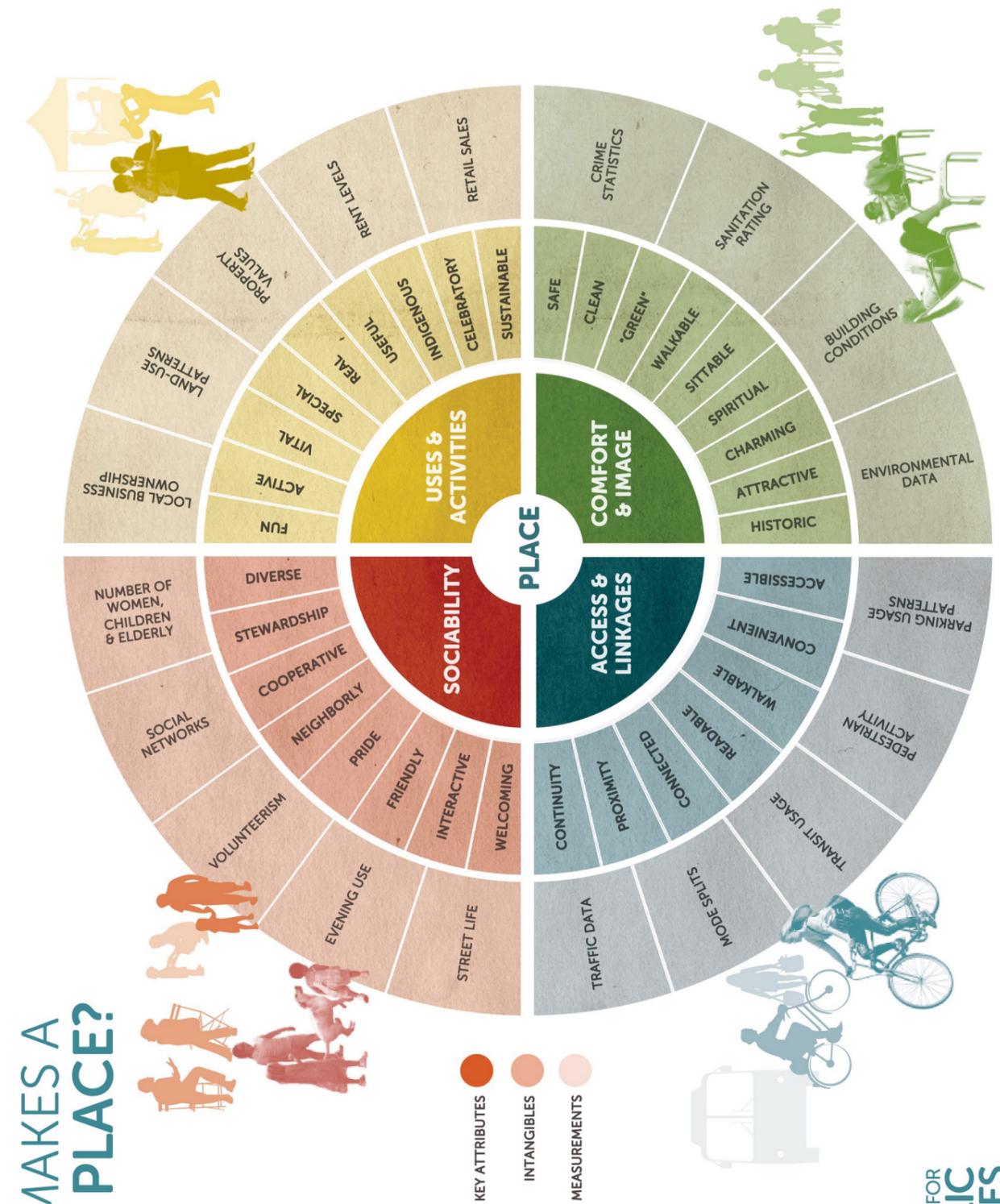
## Place Diagram

Successful places tend to have four key attributes.

“ They are accessible; people are engaged in activities there; the space is comfortable and has a good image; and finally, it is a sociable place: one where people meet each other and take people when they come to visit. ”

– Project for Public Spaces

## WHAT MAKES A GREAT PLACE?





# Place data and indicators

## Hornsby hybrid place assessment matrix

Place plans seek to increase the economic viability, livability and lovability of places. To ensure its place plans deliver this, Council has developed a hybrid assessment matrix that reflects several leading place agencies, including the Institute of Place Management 25 key factors influencing town centre vitality and viability and What Makes a Great Place? from Project for Public Spaces.

Opposite are the top five influences for town centres from the Hornsby hybrid place assessment matrix. With limited resources, we should focus intervention in these areas.

### Measuring success: place data and indicators

While there are common contributing factors to successful town centres, measuring the impacts of any individual interventions and their success will be different in each place.

Because each place is unique, establishing a set of indicators or place data should be based on the place vision.

For example, if one of the priorities for a town is to improve the diversity of the retail offering, this may be measured through the range and types of businesses on offer in the town centre before and after any interventions.

Once the vision and guiding principles are agreed upon, we will need to determine relevant data sets and identify sources specific to Brooklyn, which will assist place-based monitoring and ongoing planning based on the agreed vision for the village centre.

## Hornsby hybrid place assessment matrix

**Key:**

- Economic viability
- Governance
- Management
- Functionality

Place: Brooklyn					
Hornsby Shire place-making model	Place Plan theme	Project for Public Spaces (PPS) What makes a great place – four key attributes	Institute of Place Management (IPM) 25 key factors influencing town centre vitality and viability	Component factors (IPM)	Place assessment notes
Functionality		Sociability	Activity hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Opening hours</li> <li>■ Footfall</li> <li>■ Shopping hours</li> <li>■ Evening economy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Truncated opening and shopping hours</li> <li>■ No evening economy (excluding pub)</li> <li>■ Limited footfall outside of peak lunch time period</li> </ul>
Functionality		Uses and activities	Retail offer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Retailer offer</li> <li>■ Retailer representation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Limited retail experience</li> <li>■ Access to essentials only</li> <li>■ Limited food and beverage offerings – specialising in seafood</li> </ul>
Place marketing		Sociability	Vision and strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Leadership</li> <li>■ Collaboration</li> <li>■ Area development strategies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Divergent and conflicting priorities and vision for different user groups</li> <li>■ No adopted or agreed strategic direction for town centre</li> <li>■ Strong community connection to place – active and engaged residents</li> </ul>
Activation		Comfort and image	Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Centre image</li> <li>■ Service quality</li> <li>■ Visitor satisfaction</li> <li>■ Familiarity</li> <li>■ Atmosphere</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Strong water-based recreation destination and relaxed waterfront, historical village character</li> <li>■ Disconnected pedestrian and cycling experience</li> <li>■ Tourist experience is confusing - lack of signage to key destinations</li> </ul>
Asset management		Comfort and image	Appearance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Visual appearance</li> <li>■ Cleanliness</li> <li>■ Ground floor frontages</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Inactive and vacant ground floor frontages</li> <li>■ Minimal litter, areas with poor quality and poorly maintained public domain</li> <li>■ Streetscape and waterfront dominated by parked cars</li> </ul>

# Place assessment

These are our key observations from the Brooklyn place assessment.

## Positives

- Complex transport connections – river, rail and road
- Historical, character buildings
- Compact and (mostly) level
- Beautiful vistas
- Prime location surrounded by river and national park
- Renowned fresh seafood
- Village atmosphere
- Rich heritage
- Minimal litter

## Negatives

- Inconsistent, and in some parts, low quality public domain
- Car dominated landscape
- Limited retail offerings
- Poor maintenance in the public realm
- Few people outside peak periods
- Inadequate wayfinding signage for visitors
- Vacant and inactive frontages
- Limited activation and trading hours outside of lunch period
- Missing pedestrian and cycle connections



Dangar Road



Bridge Street



Brooklyn Road



Entry – Lower McKell Park



Lower McKell Park



Baths - Lower McKell Park



Upper McKell Park



Parsley Bay



George Street



Hawkesbury River Marina

# Maps

## Land use

A variety of land uses in a town centre is an important component for a sustainable and active town centre. Brooklyn has a high proportion of land being used for static or inactive uses like car parking.

An action for consideration in this discussion paper is to undertake an evaluation of the economic sustainability of the Brooklyn town centre in order to understand capacity and scale issues and opportunities.

Proximity to public transport nodes is a significant advantage for successful town centres and Brooklyn has strong transport connections with access via road, rail and river. Regionally, it is ideally situated half-way between Sydney and the Central Coast.

Category	Area (m2)	%
Community services	2,107	1.32%
Made park	9,469	5.91%
Natural area	42,042	26.25%
Residential	49,659	31.01%
Retail/business	6,191	3.87%
Car parking/road	50,666	31.64%
<b>Total</b>	<b>160,134</b>	<b>100%</b>

- Community services
- Made park
- Natural area
- Residential
- Retail/business
- Car parking/road

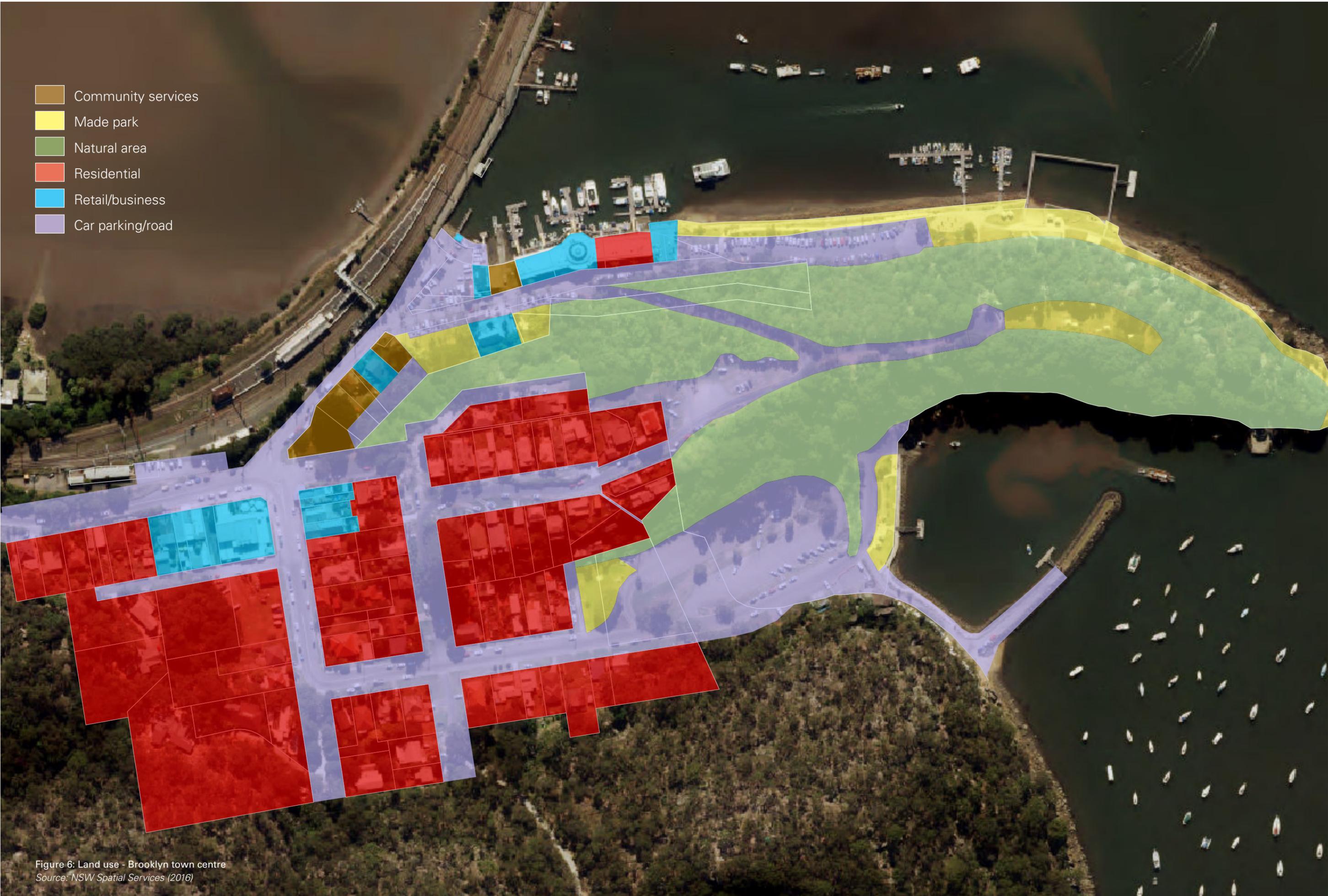


Figure 6: Land use - Brooklyn town centre  
 Source: NSW Spatial Services (2016)

## Land ownership

Significant portions of land within the Brooklyn town centre are publicly owned and managed by government agencies: NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment (Crown Lands), Hornsby Shire Council and Transport for NSW.

This provides a great opportunity for scoping creative solutions and taking a holistic approach through collaboration and partnerships.

These partnerships and joined-up thinking will be central to moving forward and implementing any agreed key actions in order to resolve long-term functionality issues.

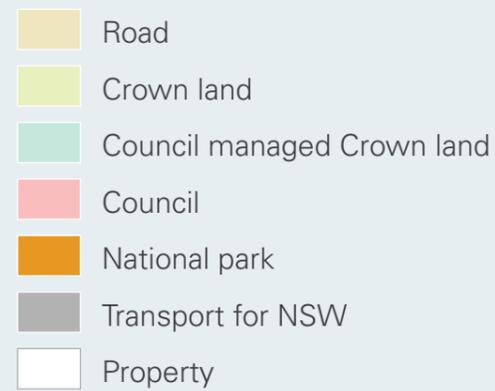


Figure 7: Land ownership  
Source: NSW Spatial Services (2016)

# Land zoning

Land zoning and development controls provide a framework for the way land can be used. Local Environmental Plans (LEPs) are the main planning tool to manage land uses and the Hornsby LEP aims to facilitate development that creates progressive town centres, thriving rural areas and abundant recreation spaces connected by efficient infrastructure and transport systems.<sup>1</sup> Each zone has objectives and the LEP outlines land uses that are permitted and prohibited within the particular zone. Brooklyn town centre has a unique mix of zoning which predicated what uses are permissible.

<sup>1</sup>Hornsby Local Environmental Plan (2013)

- B2 – Local centre
- E1 – National parks and nature reserves
- E2 – Environmental conservation
- E3 – Environmental management
- IN4 – Working waterfront
- R2 – Low density residential
- RE1 – Public recreation
- SP2 – Infrastructure
- W1 – Natural waterways
- W2 – Recreational waterways

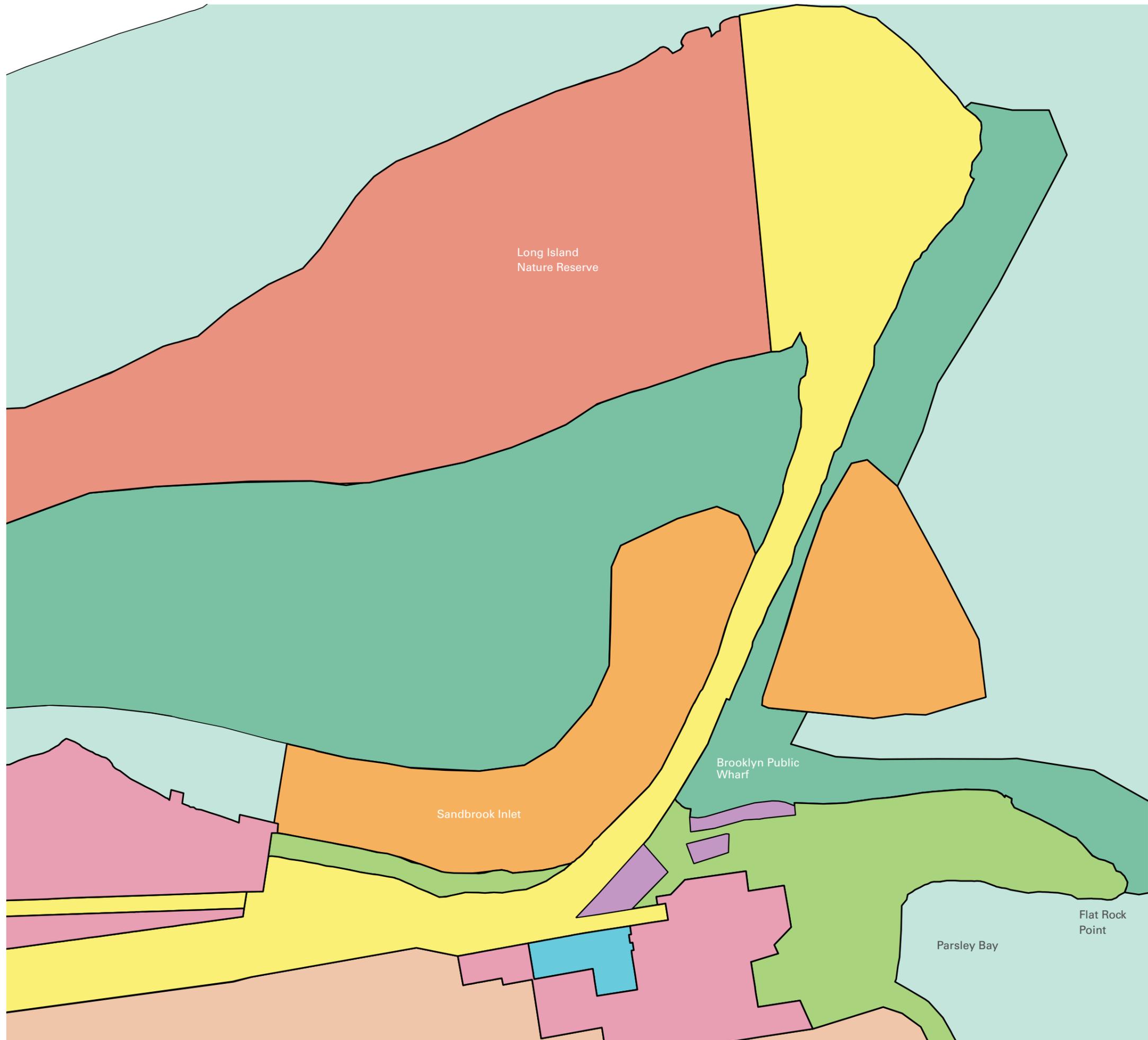


Figure 8: Land zoning  
 Source: Hornsby Local Environmental Plan (2013) and NSW Spatial Services (2016)



Image: Brooklyn Road

# Vibrant streets

## Active frontages

A vibrant and active town centre has many contributing factors. Streetscapes where there is visible activity both on the street and within the adjacent buildings are often referenced as one of the major influences for successful places.<sup>1</sup> Higher levels of activity where the public space meets the private space creates a more dynamic and engaging place. People on the streets improves casual surveillance and perceptions of safety. Community connectiveness is improved by spontaneous interactions between friends, neighbours and users of the place.

## Outdoor dining

Outdoor dining benefits town centres by providing opportunities for patrons to “people watch” and socialise within the unique place setting and environment – taking in waterfront vistas, views and experiencing a connection to the locality, adding vibrancy and energy to the streetscape. Well-designed outdoor dining spaces provide a seamless transition between indoor and outdoor – engaging with the street, park or river.

## Hours of operation

The spread of hours of operation for retailers or businesses in a town is also a key principle for influencing the vitality, with the spread of trading hours linked to activation of the building and the adjoining public realm.

## Current uses

Diversity of offerings - the type and range of retail businesses and services provided within a town centre is an important indicator for the local economy. A variety of retail and services encourages people to shop locally and support neighbourhood businesses and workers.

<sup>1</sup>Gehl, 2010

- High activity – open all day from morning and into the night most days of the week
- Medium activity – open most days
- Low or inactive frontage – restricted hours/days open
- Food and beverage
- Retail
- Service
- Community
- Other use/vacant
- Outdoor dining/activation



Figure 9: Vibrant streets  
 Source: [maps.au.nearmap.com](https://maps.au.nearmap.com)

## Pedestrian and cycle improvements – Brooklyn

9. A walkable town centre: Finalise audit of travel paths (prioritising pedestrian and cycle links), to improve foreshore and town access, and complete missing links between key destinations- action for consideration (unfunded).

Heritage walk circuit – Kangaroo Point

Shared pathway and boardwalk – Kangaroo Point to Seymours Creek

Brooklyn Road shared path/on road cycling – Sandbrook Inlet to Brooklyn village

Brooklyn village centre – see map for more details

Figure 10: Pedestrian and cycle improvements – Brooklyn  
Source: [maps.au.nearmap.com](https://maps.au.nearmap.com)

# Pedestrian and cycle improvements – Brooklyn village centre

9. A walkable town centre: Finalise audit of travel paths (prioritising pedestrian and cycle links), to improve foreshore and town access, and complete missing links between key destinations - action for consideration (unfunded).



Figure 11: Pedestrian and cycle improvements - Brooklyn Village centre.  
Source: [maps.au.nearmap.com](https://maps.au.nearmap.com)

# Pedestrian and cycle improvements - Brooklyn village centre

## Map notes

1. Great North Walk track head entry and access from railway bridge. Access is via private property, behind a guardrail.
2. Stairs linking Brooklyn Road shops to railway bridge. Not accessible, existing street levels on Brooklyn Road will not permit a ramp. Review option by Sydney Trains to relocate footpath to opposite side of bridge to facilitate continuous, accessible path into town centre from Government Road to Dangar Road. Pedestrians using prams, motorised scooters and wheelchairs forced to use road carriageway to gain entry into town centre.
3. No footpath/accessway along frontage of Transport for New South Wales (TfNSW) commuter carpark to link to station or Dangar Road.
4. Stairs Bridge Street — community complaints around design — accessibility and safety. Recommend alternative design be considered and costed based on stakeholder consultation.
5. Review condition of asphalt footpath Brooklyn Road — replace, perhaps with concrete. Review condition of stairs linking William Street and Brooklyn Road.
6. Improve pedestrian link between McKell Park/ Hawkesbury Marina and Hawkesbury River Station on Dangar Road. Review opportunity for footpath widening/shared zone.
7. Improve stairs and install handrail for stone steps linking Lower McKell Park and William Street (underway 2021). Consider treatment for William Street path at top of stairs to Brooklyn Road stairs and to Upper McKell Park.
8. Foreshore path/boardwalk from end of Dangar Road to Hawkesbury Marina.
9. Accessible path linking Dangar Road to Brooklyn Public Wharf. TfNSW confirmed Sydney Trains will complete this upgrade of the access road in two stages. Stage one (completed 2020) includes sealing of the access road and pedestrian pathway to the ferry wharf from Dangar Road. Stage two scheduled to be completed in 2021 includes sealing of the access road north of the ferry wharf to Long Island.

10. Consider pedestrian link along William Street connecting Upper McKell Park with stairs to Lower McKell Park and Brooklyn Road.
11. Consider foreshore link to Hawkesbury Marina to provide a continuous waterfront path from Dangar Road through to Parsley Bay. Consultation and agreement with private property owners required.
12. Crossing/pedestrian link between footpaths on opposite sides on the road in Lower McKell Park.
13. Installation of handrails on existing sandstone stairs linking Upper and Lower McKell Park (completed 2020).
14. Formalise compacted gravel pathway along waterfront to accessible, shared concrete pathway. Brooklyn Baths to Parsley Bay loading dock.
15. Improvements to existing sandstone steps linking Federation Point to lookout (completed 2021). Improve pathway through bushland from Upper McKell Park to WWII gun placement and lookout.
16. New pedestrian link — stairs and handrail linking Upper McKell Park and Parsley Bay.
17. Consider improvements to access path linking Parsley Bay to Deadhorse Bay (sailing club).
18. Consider improvements to Great North Walk track head (NPWS and private road).
19. Review bus circulation (or lack thereof) in the town centre, specifically Dangar Rd around the train station and transport node.
20. Review of the crossroads — main intersection of Brooklyn Road, Dangar Road and Bridge Street. Specifically for pedestrian movements and improving accessible pedestrian paths of travel at this junction. E.g. pram ramps, review traffic island.
21. Shared zone opportunity for whole of town centre (from railway bridge). Priority area for Dangar Road/ Lower McKell precinct.
22. Improve pedestrian connection through Parsley Bay from foreshore area to George Street.
23. Enhance pedestrian and recreational opportunities along Parsley Bay seawall.



Image: Parsley Bay pelicans

# References

The following documents, studies and reports were reviewed and considered as informing bodies of work in addition to the actions outlined on pages 27-28.

- Our Greater Sydney 2056 North District Plan – connecting communities (2018) Greater Sydney Commission
- NSW Maritime Infrastructure Plan 2019 – 2024 (2018) Transport for New South Wales
- Draft Report Brooklyn Improvement Masterplan Constraints Analysis (2016) prepared for Hornsby Shire Council by McGregor Coxall (Sydney)
- Sustainable Water Based Recreation Facilities Plan (2012) prepared for Hornsby Shire Council by @ leisure
- Brooklyn's Future A Community Survey — Summary of Response Report (2015)
- Heritage Register, Hornsby Shire Council
- Local Character and Place Guideline (2019) NSW Department of Planning and Environment

# Citations

p4

“Everyone has the right to live in a great place. More importantly, everyone has the right to contribute to making the place where they already live great.” Fred Kent “Celebrating 75 years of Fred Kent, and 50 years of placemaking” Project For Public Spaces 2017 <https://www.pps.org/article/celebrating-75-years-fred-kent-50-years-placemaking>

p24

McKell Park Brooklyn, Tom Richmond OAM, A to Z of Hornsby Park, Local Colour: Journal of Hornsby Shire Historical Society, Vol. 6 No. 18 (no date)

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Letter to the Editor, Brooklyn “eyesore” claim: plans for new boatshed, Gordon French, Brooklyn. The Advocate – 6 April 1966

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“What Is Placemaking?” Project For Public Spaces, Project for Public Spaces 2018 [www.pps.org/article/what-is-placemaking](http://www.pps.org/article/what-is-placemaking)

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“What makes a successful place?” Project For Public Spaces, <https://www.pps.org/article/grplacefeat>

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“High street changes update 25 factors.” Institute of Place Management <https://www.placemanagement.org/news/high-street-changes-update-25-factors/>

p52

Hornsby Local Environmental Plan (2013)

p57

Cities for People Jan Gehl 2010

# List of figures

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Figure 6: Land use

Figure 7: Land ownership

Figure 8: Land zoning

Figure 9: Vibrant streets

Figure 10: Pedestrian and cycle improvements - Brooklyn

Figure 11: Pedestrian and cycle improvements - Brooklyn village centre



Image: Brooklyn Dam

