

**SYDNEY HARBOUR BAYS PRECINCT COMMUNITY REFERENCE GROUP
TOWARDS INTEGRATED AND CONSULTATIVE PLANNING**

**BAYS PRECINCT PLANNING PRINCIPLES
WORKING PAPER
4th December 2009**

BP CRG and Terms of Reference

The Bays Precinct Community Reference Group (CRG) was established in June 2009 by the then Minister for Planning Kristina Keneally as part of the Government's stage 1 consultation process on the future of the Bays Precinct. Its terms of reference are to:

- Provide advice about community aspirations and needs in relation to the Bays Precinct that will inform future planning processes.
- Advise on current and emerging issues of interest and concern to the community and various stakeholders.
- Encourage and inform community discussion by conveying information on the Bays Precinct to community and stakeholder networks.
- Provide input to matters considered by the NSW Government's Bays Precinct Taskforce in preparing for the first phase of strategic planning for the future of the Precinct.

CRG membership is attached.

The Sydney Harbour Context

The most valuable aspect of this Bays Precinct planning process is the opportunity to develop for the first time an integrated strategic plan for the whole of the Precinct which is an immensely precious part of our iconic Sydney Harbour. There have been prior attempts to create a coherent planning framework for Sydney Harbour. Most recently the Sydney Regional Environmental Plan (Sydney Harbour Catchment) 2005 set out broad aims and principles for the area. The aims and principles set out in that SREP are seen as being broadly consistent with the aspirations set out in this advice to Government. The current process provides a unique opportunity to apply the best and most relevant of these aims and principles to the Bays Precinct in a framework that it is hoped will move beyond rhetoric and actually guide and constrain future planning decisions.

Of necessity, this vision will incorporate existing uses for at least the short to medium term. But it is recognised that the Bays Precinct will undergo major change over the next 20 years and the challenge is to ensure that future planning decisions give priority to the public good. Clearly the CRG will not be constrained from proposing the longer term replacement of existing uses with new uses more consistent with its overall principles and changing local and regional needs. This is of particular importance in relation to the current and future meanings of 'working harbour' activities within the Precinct.

Creating An Integrated Strategic Planning Framework

The core objective of the CRG is to contribute to the development of a strategic and integrated planning framework for the Bays Precinct which reflects community needs and priorities. This approach has long been sought by community groups to provide an integrated vision for the future of this very special area and to protect it from further one-off, ad hoc development decisions. The process also provides an opportunity for community perspectives and values to be given a strong voice in the setting of this vision.

The first step in building this framework is the development of an overarching, integrated strategic plan for the Bays Precinct. This will incorporate planning principles and the broad specification of preferred uses for the harbour, ports and foreshores of the Precinct. The planning horizon will incorporate the long term possibilities as well as the shorter term constraints.

Flowing from this strategic plan, a series of linked master plans will be developed for each definable area and the existing master plans will be reviewed for broad consistency and coherence. New and revised master plans will be consistent with the strategic plan and its planning principles.

Stage 1 CRG Advice

The CRG was given a short timeframe. That, and the lack of basic technical studies for the Precinct sites, has determined what kind of advice it can sensibly generate. Our stage 1 advice is therefore, of necessity, broad-brush and preliminary.

The CRG through its membership has been able to tap into a wealth of community knowledge and expectations, and considerable business and industry expertise. However robust plans for the Precinct and the individual sites clearly require a deal more time and great deal of technical information which has not been available. It is to be hoped that stage 2 of the Government's Bays Precinct consultative process in 2010 will allow for this.

We see these first stage contributions from the CRG as setting reasonable and balanced parameters for the next stage of the Government's Bays Precinct planning process. It is also hoped that the Government will again provide for formal community input to stage 2 through a consultative committee. We look forward to broader community comment on the CRG draft proposals, including our differences of opinion, over the next few months on the Bays Precinct CRG website.

Development in the Bays Precinct During the Transition Period

The purpose of this consultative exercise will be undermined if Government does not respect the value and importance of an integrated approach to planning for the future of the Bays Precinct. (Members are reluctantly providing separate advice on the preferred site for the Cruise Passenger Terminal, without knowledge of other preferred options for any of the possible sites. This is being done to meet a Government timeframe for this decision. The experience exemplifies all the flaws and dangers inherent in unintegrated one-off development decisions.)

Consequently the CRG strongly recommends that, pending the finalisation of the Bays Precinct Integrated Planning Framework, the Government avoids major planning decisions for the Bays Precinct. If decisions cannot be avoided for legal reasons, any approved development should be consistent with the planning principles put forward in this advice and an approved Master Plan.

It is recommended that:

No new development proposals for the precinct be considered or approved unless they comply with Planning Principles for the Bays Precinct that have been publicly exhibited in Stage 2 and approved, and with an approved Master Plan based on those approved Planning Principles.

Strategic Principles for the Bays Precinct

Current Status

These principles are being developed in an iterative process. This working draft will next be tested against the more site specific work that is underway in relation to the bays and foreshores.

The preferred uses for each of these sites will be brought back to the full group in mid-February so that a complete/integrated map of preferred uses for the Bays Precinct as a whole can then be developed – the completed ‘jigsaw’. It is to be expected that some proposals will be tested at that point of integration as the bigger picture implications of proposals emerge. From a community perspective this is a very important part of the process.

It is also to be expected that the process will lead to a revision of the proposed principles. Once the proposed completed ‘jigsaw’ is in place (or as is likely several versions) we will be able to provide an integrated package of advice to Government –including our final proposed principles- in late February.

Extent of Consensus on Principles

In developing this draft set of planning principles for the Bays Precinct there has been a large degree of consensus on most substantive issues. It is recognised that principles are of necessity generalised and flexible and in practice have often to be balanced against each other. The current level of consensus may therefore be tested as we continue our work on proposed short to long term uses and activities for particular sites and across the Precinct.

One group of 4 members preferred to submit an alternative set of principles. These are attached as *Strategic Planning Principles Bays Precinct Community And Harbour Focus*.

The major issue on which there has been active debate and ongoing disagreement is the meaning, and current and future relevance, of the ‘Working Harbour’ concept for the Bays Precinct. This is not surprising. We have seen the current State Government switch policy twice on Sydney Harbour’s future as a working harbour reflecting contending visions. Clearly, as the Minister acknowledges in her press release ‘The Bays Precinct will be transformed over the next five, 10 and 20 years. It will change from a wholly industrial area to one that is a key part of the modern, vibrant city that is Sydney’ (News Release: *Sydney to Imagine a New Future for Its Western Harbour* 12 June 2009) The implications of this for the Bays future as a working harbour are still the subject of differing emphases within the CRG. Some suggest the changes are already so significant that the term “Working Harbour” is no longer accurate in its implications. Some suggest we would be more accurate if we spoke of a ‘productive harbour’ or an ‘active harbour’.

This debate will continue as the CRG considers short and longer term preferred uses in the Precinct and positions will be tested and clarified. For this draft the CRG Principles refer to the ‘Working Harbour’ Character as a way of flagging a more open transitional meaning.

SUMMARY: BAYS PRECINCT STRATEGIC PLANNING PRINCIPLES

These are the broad planning principles proposed by the CRG. A more detailed set is included in the following section.

Integrated Future Planning

1. All future planning and development decisions relating to the Bays Precinct is to be on the basis of an integrated strategic plan and principles for the whole Precinct.

Priority and Precedence for the Public Good

2. The Bays Precinct, as part of Sydney Harbour, is a public resource, owned by the public, to be protected for the public good. Bays Precinct foreshore lands are to remain in public ownership for the benefit of the local and wider community.

Access, Open space and recreation

3. Public access to the foreshore, including open space corridors for pedestrians and cyclists, is to be maintained and significantly extended as a vital part of the planning process.
4. Foreshore land available for recreational use is to be maintained and significantly expanded.
5. Traditional maritime recreational uses (rowing, dragon boating, kayaking, sailing) are to be preserved and safe navigation and speed parameters retained.

Heritage

6. Ensure future planning recognises the significance of the area in Sydney's maritime and industrial history. This will include conservation of all heritage items and, where feasible, adaptive reuse of the significant structures of the Precinct.

Land Uses

7. Allow for a range of land uses within the Precinct to provide for local distinctiveness and character. Ensure all uses have the minimum possible adverse impact on existing residents and businesses.

Transport

8. All activities and development to be integrated with the timely provision of integrated transport infrastructure including an integrated public transport strategy. Long term uses must not result in increased traffic congestion within the surrounding suburbs

Housing

9. Housing is considered a lower order priority within the Precinct. Any new housing is to be diverse and responsive to the range of community needs. Private housing is excluded from direct foreshore frontage.

Built Form and Design

10. All built form is to be of excellent design, on a compatible scale with the adjacent neighborhoods and to contribute to a high quality public domain
11. Views, including views to landmarks, are to be conserved and where possible , expanded.

Community and Culture

12. Ensure cultural uses, including the celebration of indigenous and contemporary culture and publicly accessible art, are an integral part of the Precinct.

Economic Life

13. Maintain the 'working harbour' character of the Precinct in conjunction with support for other employment opportunities including green R&D and creative industries(eg incubators, artist studio space)

Sustainability and Environment

14. Incorporate best practice sustainability principles in all development and ensure that all uses enhance the sustainability of human and physical ecology in waterways and foreshores. This will include a whole of catchment approach to water management.

BAYS PRECINCT STRATEGIC PLANNING PRINCIPLES

The CRG has over a number of drafts added important detail to the broad principles for the Bays Precinct. The following is the current detailed version.

Integrated Strategic Planning

- 1** Develop an integrated strategic plan based on a set of strategic planning principles for the whole of the Bays Precinct.
- 2** Underneath this strategic plan, develop a series of linked specific Master Plans for each definable site. They are to be consistent with the integrated strategic plan and principles. Existing Master Plans are to be amended where they are inconsistent with the strategic plan or its principles.

Priority and Precedence for the Public Good

- 3** The Bays Precinct (as a part of Sydney Harbour) is to be recognised as a public resource, owned by the public, to be protected for the public good.
- 4** The Bays Precinct foreshore lands are to remain in public ownership for the benefit of the local and wider community.
- 5** Leases on publicly owned lands and buildings are to be limited to medium term (c25 years) except where the lease is with a public entity providing for public use
- 6** The public good has precedence over the private good whenever and whatever change is proposed for the Bays Precinct or its foreshore (as a part of Sydney Harbour)
- 7** Protection of the natural assets of the Bays Precinct (as a part of Sydney Harbour) has a high priority

Heritage

- 8** Recognise the significance of the area as part of Sydney's maritime and industrial history including by:
 - Incorporating reference to and the creative interpretation of the Precinct's maritime and industrial history into any redevelopment.
 - Conserving and adapting, where feasible, the significant fabric of the Precinct, including all heritage and other structures

Land Uses

- 9** Allow for a range of land uses within each definable site and within the whole Precinct focusing on activities that will provide their own distinctiveness and character and which take into account a balanced response to regional, state and national needs
- 10** Prioritise land for activities that are dependent upon a foreshore location in preference to those which are simply enhanced by that location.
- 11** Ensure the plan responds to the existing geography and built forms, points, headlands, valleys, cuttings, bridge structures etc.
- 12** Encourage maritime related land uses throughout the Precinct
- 13** Ensure all uses have a minimum possible adverse impact on existing residents and businesses. Give consideration to creating 'buffer zones' between residences and any active use that may impact on those residences.
- 14** Concentrate existing heavy industry land uses in appropriate locations to allow opportunities for other sites to be redeveloped for more sensitive land uses.
- 15** Maximise public access and activation of the foreshore through a range of land uses that will enhance public safety through both the day and at night.
- 16** Ensure that land uses and their population intensity are appropriately integrated with public transport accessibility and overall transport infrastructure

Transport

- 17 Develop an integrated public transport strategy for the Precinct that guides future development and includes the following:
 - Prioritise sustainable transport opportunities, including walking and cycling, by maximising access to public transport and nearby centres and activity hubs.
 - Extend the light rail system.
 - Maximise opportunities offered by the existing heavy rail access to the Harbour to achieve efficient cargo transportation and support the 'working harbour'
 - Provide a heavy transport road corridor from the port areas to the adjacent arterial road system to avoid impact on the suburban road system.
 - Maximise opportunities created by the planned Metro if it is completed
 - Create a high quality pedestrian environment taking precedence over vehicles.
 - Minimise the provision of car parking after consideration of the accessibility of public transport and services.
 - Consider the introduction of ferry services to the area
- 18 Integrate continuous pedestrian and cycle ways with foreshore activities and the surrounding area.
- 19 Ensure that the long term uses do not result in increased traffic congestion within the surrounding suburbs
- 20 Coordinate any ferry services with the location and timing of local water based recreational activities
- 21 Support car share as a transport mode throughout the precinct

Housing

- 22 Housing is considered to be a lower order priority within the Precinct.
 - Ensure location of housing considers compatibility with ongoing and proposed maritime uses and adequate provision of open space.
 - Ensure housing locations do not impair provision of working harbour uses or public open space and amenity nor enable private ownership of land with direct foreshore frontage.
- 23 Ensure any housing is diverse in type, size, form, and design, providing for both market and affordable housing and a range of housing needs, including aging in place, affordable housing, social housing, families, students and adaptable accessible housing.

Access, Open space and recreation

- 24 Maintain and extend public access to the foreshore, including open space corridors for pedestrians and cyclists along the waterfront, wharves, the planned CBD Metro, the White Bay powerhouse and the Rozelle railway yards, as a vital part of the planning process. This will include:
 - Publicly accessible open space strategically located at specific locations around the Bay, extending and connecting existing adjoining open spaces.
 - Provision of public open space for both passive use and active /sporting recreational uses
 - Maximisation of public access to the foreshore for pedestrians and cyclists having regard to the occupational health and safety issues associated with any active uses.
- 25 Access for people with disabilities should be integrated into all aspects of planning in line with relevant standards and guidelines.
- 26 Ensure 24 hour access to the foreshore except where 'working harbour' functions require occasional or permanent restricted access. Co-locate these functions wherever possible to minimise the areas of restricted 'working harbour' foreshore access

- 27 Maximise opportunities for waterfront and water-based recreational activities by limiting structures on the water that impede water surface activities
- 28 Preserve traditional and compatible maritime recreational uses (rowing, dragon boating, kayaking, sailing) and retain safe navigation and speed parameters. This should include ensuring that maritime activity is characterised by low wash, low frequency, low use of the space with limited early morning activity.
- 29 Coordinate open space locations with the public transport network and key public access points and reflect environmental sustainability principles.
- 30 Reconnect green corridors using endemic native plants where possible,.

Built Form and Design

- 31 Ensure development manifests design excellence by:
 - developing/redeveloping at a compatible scale at its interfaces with the adjacent neighborhoods
 - ensuring the bulk, scale and location of buildings consider local views into, over, through and from within the Precinct, and conserve and, where possible extend, significant views
 - implementing principles of ‘view sharing’ where relevant
 - contributing to a high quality public domain
 - Developing diverse architectural responses, with buildings having a diverse design, fine grain and pattern, with active frontages and articulated elevations.
 - Using design competitions for key site locations
- 32 Allow for the ongoing sustainable use and reuse of buildings.

Community and Culture

- 33 Ensure cultural uses and the celebration of indigenous and contemporary culture are an integral part of the Precinct.
- 34 Provide for publicly accessible art to be incorporated in the Precinct making reference to the water base environment and the area’s maritime history.
- 35 Integrate appropriate and adequate community and education facilities within the Precinct.
- 36 Provide for maritime education and training activities to occur within the Precinct.

Economic Life

- 37 Maintain the ‘working harbour’ character of the bays Precinct considering current and future needs within the Precinct
- 38 Ensure continuing commercial port use within the Precinct is supported together with the consideration of future port related uses.
- 39 Ensure other non-trading maritime commercial activity (eg.vessel repair, lay-up berthage, bunkering, space for harbour related construction works and other support services) are supported as currently vital to the effective functioning of the Harbour.
- 40
- 41 Encourage ‘Green’ R&D industries in the Precinct.
- 42 Identify opportunities for the beautification and development of open foreshore space for public use and amenity as an economic benefit to the City
- 43 Identify opportunities for supporting creative industries (eg. provision of incubators, artist studio spaces)
- 44 Provide for economic growth and job opportunities for the future of the local and regional area

Sustainability and Environment

- 45** Ensure all uses enhance the sustainability of the human and physical ecology in the immediate and neighbouring waterways and foreshores
- 46** Ensure all uses comply with relevant environmental guidelines and controls.
- 47** Ensure development takes a ‘whole-of-catchment’ approach to water cycle management through:
 - integrating the provision of open space with opportunities for water sensitive urban design that manages water onsite, reduces pollutants flowing to the harbour and improves waterway health and reduces potable water use
 - creating a water conservation and harvest scheme for the whole Precinct that deals with collection, treatment and reuse.
- 48** Design roads to provide for a high quality pedestrian and cycling environment.