

**YOUR VISION.  
YOUR VOICE.  
YOUR IDEAS.  
YOUR PARRAMATTA.**

Let's positively shape the  
Parramatta of tomorrow.



# **PARRAMATTA'S BIG CONVERSATION**

Workshop outcomes report

**July 2017**

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# THE BIG CONVERSATION IN SUMMARY

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## When

Saturday 22 July 2017,  
10:00 am to 2:00 pm



## Where

Western Sydney University  
Parramatta city campus



## Who

67 participants, from across  
the Local Government Area

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## Purpose

To help shape a first draft of the City of Parramatta's Community Strategic Plan and build on the questions asked in Council's online survey, open from 19 June to 10 July 2017. The survey was undertaken by over 700 people, including all participants ahead of the workshop.

## Structure

The workshop consisted of presentations by City of Parramatta representatives and community members, as well as activities covering Parramatta's top challenges and opportunities, vision, and priorities.



For more information, and for the full report, visit  
[www.cityofparramatta.nsw.gov.au/yourparramatta](http://www.cityofparramatta.nsw.gov.au/yourparramatta)



**While a range of opinions were represented at the workshop, several recurring themes arose throughout the day:**



### **Balanced growth**

Most participants were enthusiastic and supportive of new infrastructure for Parramatta as the Central City. However, there was a very clear consensus that the growth of the Central City should not be at the expense of green spaces, abundant natural light and the preservation of valued heritage assets. It was also noted by many that the focus on growing the CBD should not be at the expense of improving the many neighbourhoods that make up Parramatta.



### **Traffic and transport**

Lack of sufficient parking was raised frequently, as was the need for appropriate public transportation and cycling amenities. Residents want to see a more efficient public transport network that not only links suburbs to the CBD, but also allows for easy transit between suburbs without the need to travel to the city. Most participants believed that a better public transportation network would have a beneficial impact on the environment. While public transport was viewed as part of the solution, many people also noted that ongoing road improvements are required to address a number of congestion spots throughout the LGA.



### **Our community is our greatest asset**

Cultivating a sense of community, celebrating diversity and building economic capacity were all seen as instrumental components of an appealing Parramatta. Supporting small, local businesses and investing in job growth across the LGA – not only in the CBD – were some suggestions of ways to invest in people, which participants felt would ultimately help make Parramatta thrive. Similarly, holding festivals and events to celebrate the diverse cultures that make up Parramatta was seen by many as a way to promote the area's unique offering and nurture community cohesion.



### **Creating a lively CBD and liveable neighbourhoods**

While most participants advocated for growth and activation across Parramatta, there was strong support for the development of a lively CBD. Many participants communicated their expectation that the CBD would be lively and vibrant, day and night, and that liveliness would not just be created by having more people living in the CBD. A diversity of businesses, and attractions and events were critical to making the CBD safe and active. There was also a view that while the CBD is a key project for Parramatta, there should also be an ongoing focus on ensuring that Parramatta's distinctive neighbourhoods were attractive, safe and inviting places for local residents.

# 1 About this report

This report provides a summary of all outputs from the City of Parramatta's Big Conversation workshop, which took place on Saturday 22 July 2017.

The aim of this workshop was to help shape a first draft of the Community Strategic Plan, which will be up for discussion with the incoming Council. It built on questions asked in Council's online survey, open from 19 June to 10 July 2017 and undertaken by all participants ahead of the workshop.

This report captures the essence of discussions that occurred across fourteen separate tables over the four hour duration of the workshop. While every effort was made to ensure a broad range of people from across the City of Parramatta was included in the workshop, this report represents a summary of the views of the 67 participants on the day.

Notes on these discussions were recorded by table facilitators in the presence of participants to ensure all views were captured.

Activities included:

- » sharing participants' greatest hopes and fears for the future of Parramatta
- » reviewing the top challenges and opportunities originally raised in an online survey
- » unpacking the vision for Parramatta
- » exploring the long-term relevance of Council's eight priorities.

## What is a Community Strategic Plan?

A Community Strategic Plan is the highest level of plan that councils prepare. This plan identifies the main priorities and aspirations for the community within a Local Government Area (LGA) for the long term – 10 years, or more. All other council plans and strategies must reflect and support it.

The Community Strategic Plan includes a vision statement, strategic objectives for the community and strategies to achieve them. The strategic objectives must address social, environmental, economic and civic leadership issues identified by the community.

## What's the process from here?

The workshop outputs summarised in this report will be used to help shape the City of Parramatta's first Community Strategic Plan.



## 2 Hopes and fears

Participants were encouraged to think about what Parramatta means to them. To help participants do so, each was asked to pick two image cards that respectively represented their greatest hope and their greatest fear for the future of Parramatta.

The word clouds presented in this section provide an overview of the most prominent topics discussed during this activity, although many were discussed.

### Hopes

Hopes commonly noted by participants related to open space, jobs, development, community and heritage. Most participants hope for a city with a **solid network of open spaces and a quality natural environment** for residents and workers to enjoy. An **abundant variety of local jobs** was also noted by many as a key hope for future Parramatta. Many participants also aspire for a city of **well-planned development**, which places the **community at the centre of decisions** and emphasises and celebrates the **unique heritage and cultural** offering provided by Parramatta.



My hope for the next 20 years is that people will be made to feel welcome here."

Figure 1 Word cloud displaying participants' key hopes for the future of Parramatta



## Fears

A lack of clear distinction between hopes and fears was evident, with many participants' fears also relating to development, open space, community and heritage. Traffic and transport also featured regularly. Participants commonly flagged a fear of a **city overrun by "big business" and "chaotic"**



...growth should be carefully managed with infrastructure, social amenities, new places and growth"

**and "ugly" development** – growth which places developers' needs ahead of the community and neglects to provide adequate social infrastructure, open space and acknowledgement of heritage. Many participants are fearful that growth and development within Parramatta, including public transport options, will be **CBD-centric** and result in the **loss of the city's cultural identity** and add further congestion to local roads.

**Figure 2** Word cloud displaying participants' key fears for the future of Parramatta



### 3 Challenges and opportunities

Participants were asked to discuss the top challenges and opportunities, which Council has drawn from a range of feedback, since the City of Parramatta was formed.

Topic areas tended to be discussed interchangeably as challenges and opportunities, and discussion on traffic and transport dominated.

#### Top challenges

Most participants felt the **public transport system in Parramatta is currently unable to cater** to the population and therefore presents a challenge for the growing city. Many commented that **planning for transport and other essential infrastructure** has traditionally been reactive and **unable to keep pace with population growth**, and this has proven a challenge in presenting Parramatta as a desirable place to live and do business.

Some participants believed an inadequate public transport system has led to an **over reliance on private vehicles**, and that this presents a challenge when planning for the future the Central City. Some maintain the City of Parramatta should prioritise the provision of more parking because so many rely on cars, whereas others advocate for less of a focus on parking to discourage private vehicle use.

“A proactive city, not a reactive city.”

#### Top opportunities

Most participants found it easy to talk about Parramatta's opportunities, with discussion focusing on realising **Parramatta's role as the Central City for Greater Sydney**. A number of participants identified Parramatta's geographic position as an opportunity for the area to provide north, south, east and west public transport connections. There was also consensus that creating **efficient transport linkages within the LGA** – the neighbourhoods and attractions, particularly through light rail and an extended free shuttle bus route – would assist in reducing congestion by discouraging private vehicle use.

As well as facilitating movement around Greater Sydney, many participants viewed Parramatta's emerging status as the Central City as an opportunity to be known for business parks, innovation hubs and an entrepreneurial spirit. It was also noted that this could lead to a strong base of local employment for an ever **growing and diverse population** in Parramatta.

“A world-class destination for innovative entrepreneurs... for students, tourists and business travellers.”

Most participants also recognised Parramatta's **multicultural population** as an opportunity to bring people together and provide a truly unique offering for those living within and visiting the area through events and festivals.

#### Council's role in meeting these challenges and opportunities

Most participants saw Council's role in meeting these challenges and opportunities as being that of an **advocate and promoter** – representing local concerns at State Government level and promoting the vision and plans for Parramatta as the Central City to government, businesses and industry. There was a big focus on the need for Council to more actively promote Parramatta in an effort to attract the right kind of investment and local employment opportunities for the city's growing population.



Some participants suggested Council **encourage the use of public transport** by providing incentives, such as free parking for train commuters and discounted travel rates for residents travelling locally.

**Table 1 Summary of points raised by participants in discussion of top challenges and opportunities**

Challenge/opportunity	Key discussion points
<b>Traffic and transport</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Current public transport infrastructure is not coping with the population growth and demand</li> <li>» Connectivity of Parramatta CBD to key locations across Greater Sydney and Parramatta's suburbs and facilities is critical – as the Central City, Parramatta needs to have efficient connections in every direction. For example, one group mentioned the 550 bus route from Chatswood to Parramatta should be better serviced</li> <li>» Until connections across Parramatta improve, people will continue to rely on private vehicles as a mode of transport</li> <li>» The slow nature of the planning system means that by the time the infrastructure is delivered it is almost instantly at capacity</li> <li>» Current connections from Epping and Carlingford to Parramatta CBD are poor</li> <li>» Traffic congestion, lack of adequate parking and inefficient public transport connections mean that great facilities and places within Parramatta are not being fully utilised. Some examples of areas mentioned by specific participants as being particularly congested are along Carlingford Road, Victoria Road, along the Olympic Peninsula, and at the Great Western Highway – Woodville Road – M4 intersection</li> <li>» The light rail and an extended free shuttle bus route could help to connect locations across Parramatta</li> </ul>
<b>Infrastructure to support our population</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Population growth is putting pressure on the existing infrastructure</li> <li>» The planning system is not keeping pace with population growth</li> <li>» Provision of infrastructure is reactive, rather than proactive</li> <li>» Current education infrastructure is inadequate, particularly in areas such as Newington, Sydney Olympic Park and Carlingford</li> </ul>
<b>Community and cultural connection</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Preserving and celebrating heritage and history (colonial and Aboriginal) of Parramatta as the 'first city' should be a focus. North Parramatta and the Cumberland Hospital precinct were raised on several occasions as heritage areas that should be protected</li> <li>» Development and new infrastructure should not mean the loss of community facilities</li> <li>» Multicultural diversity is one of Parramatta's key assets – celebrate and promote it widely (the Parramasala event was noted as a great example of this)</li> <li>» Community and cultural events are important in bringing the community together, as well as attracting more people to the area, e.g. a new flower festival in Parramatta Park</li> </ul>

Challenge/opportunity	Key discussion points
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Providing connections between major sites and facilities across Parramatta, e.g. the river, park, restaurants, new stadium and Riverside Theatres, to create a lively social environment</li> <li>» More halls/meeting places in the suburbs, and community led activities like community gardens and composting</li> </ul>
<b>Local employment opportunities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Ensuring the variety and types of local jobs are competitive with those within the Eastern CBD, including opportunities for new graduates and over 55s</li> <li>» Parramatta as the Central City, known for business parks, innovation hubs and entrepreneurial spirit</li> <li>» Attracting large, corporate, leading edge companies and government departments to Parramatta</li> <li>» Build a local tourism economy through promoting and enhancing multicultural and heritage offerings</li> </ul>
<b>Safety in our growing City</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Need for a more pedestrian friendly city, including overhead bridges, more footpaths and crossings</li> <li>» Inadequate street lighting, fighting in the streets and night time public transport issues are holding people back from visiting the CBD</li> </ul>
<b>Housing affordability</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Currently rental and housing prices are too high</li> <li>» Desire for housing options for all stages of life and the vulnerable</li> </ul>
<b>Higher density housing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Design is key</li> <li>» High rise done well includes community facilities, services and shops close by, e.g. a vertical retirement village</li> </ul>
<b>Impacts of population growth on our natural environment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Need for sufficient green space for the growing population, including spaces closer to where people live</li> <li>» Need for better public transportation to green spaces, such as Parramatta Park</li> <li>» Need to conserve what we have and clean up Parramatta River</li> </ul>
<b>Health and impacts associated with urban heat, flooding and pollution</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Plant more trees that keep their leaves all year round</li> <li>» More green infrastructure to keep our air breathable</li> </ul>



## 4 Vision

The vision for the City of Parramatta is:

### **Sydney's Central City: Sustainable, Liveable, Productive – inspired by our communities**

Participants were asked to discuss how each component of the vision for Parramatta resonated with them and whether anything was missing from this vision.

Generally, there was consensus that the vision served to efficiently encapsulate a very dynamic direction for the future Parramatta. However, some participants felt the vision needed to more effectively capture Parramatta's unique offering – its heritage and people.

Some participants also desired more detail on how this vision could be actualised and implemented by Council.

The table below summarises what the vision meant to participants, as well as how it reflected their ideal Parramatta.

**Table 2 Summary of the themes raised by participants in discussion of the vision's components**

Component	Key discussion points
<b>Sustainable</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» A self-sufficient Parramatta, with locally sourced resources</li> <li>» Green energy and design, e.g. solar panels</li> <li>» Design and resources that are reliable, reusable and durable</li> <li>» Incentives to encourage individuals to be more sustainable</li> <li>» Preserving and providing more green space and an efficient network of cycle ways and walkways. One group encouraged the development of more projects like the Subiaco Creek cycleway</li> <li>» More community gardens</li> </ul>
<b>Liveable</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» A vibrant, happy, safe and fun Parramatta</li> <li>» Recreation, parks, shopping, transport, theatre and bars – 24/7 activation</li> <li>» Well connected and planned neighbourhoods</li> <li>» Cultural and demographic diversity</li> <li>» "Being local"</li> <li>» Better access to information</li> <li>» Affordable housing</li> <li>» An accessible Parramatta</li> <li>» A place people want to live in</li> </ul>

Component	Key discussion points
<b>Productive</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Local employment and education opportunities</li> <li>» Everyone contributing to the local economy</li> <li>» Leading edge technology and development</li> <li>» Parramatta as an innovation hub</li> <li>» An efficient and well-planned city that is open 24/7 and attracts a range of businesses, people and jobs</li> <li>» Transit oriented development</li> <li>» Balancing old and new – acknowledgement of Parramatta’s rich history, while at the same time allowing it to grow as Sydney’s Central City</li> <li>» Invigorated night time and tourism economies</li> </ul>
<b>Inspired by our communities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» A place to be proud of</li> <li>» Defined by the diversity of its people. One table mentioned Harris Park as an example of a vibrant, diverse community</li> <li>» Lots of opportunities to be engaged and provide input into decisions</li> <li>» Volunteer/community groups are supported. One table expressed their interest in having more volunteering opportunities in Ermington</li> <li>» Creating and nurturing a sense of belonging. A world class Parramatta for everyone</li> </ul>





## 5 Priorities

Based on extensive community engagement that occurred in 2016, the City of Parramatta developed eight priorities reflecting overarching community concerns and aspirations. The aim of these priorities is to help direct Council operations in 2017 and 2018, and to help inform the upcoming Community Strategic Plan.

It was agreed by participants that the eight priorities will always be relevant for the City of Parramatta. The section below summarises discussions about why the individual priorities will always be relevant, as well as what participants think Council's role is in this and any immediate actions to address these priorities.

### 5.1 Council's role and what can be done now?

#### **Building a stronger, more innovative council for our community's future**

Generally, participants agreed that essential to building a stronger and more innovative Council is **meaningful consultation and engagement** in planning for the future of the area.

Suggestions for what could be done now to address this priority included exploring the use of **technology to open more accessible avenues for input**, for example, suburb Facebook pages and live streaming of Council decisions. It was noted these methods need to be balanced with traditional consultation techniques, such as ongoing consultative and advisory committees. It was also suggested that Council be more **proactive about engaging with different community groups**.

The sentiment from many participants was that Council should **always be striving for improvement** and should look to world class examples to guide this progress. However, some participants were concerned that **true innovation could only be achieved with large budgets**, and other wondered whether innovative methods would lead to a more progressive, but not "stronger" Council.

The importance of **a strong governance framework** including ongoing measurement, evaluation and improvements, and the regular revision of plans was also highlighted as an important factor in planning for the future of Parramatta.

#### **Managing growth and transport**

When it comes to transport, some participants felt it essential for Parramatta to be more **globally competitive**, and saw this being achieved through **coordinated planning** between the NSW Government and stakeholders, highlighting the need for **Council to play an advocacy role**.

Key issues for the future of the area were focused on finding a balance between private vehicle use, public transport and minimising congestion. Most participants viewed this as a priority to address now. On a local level, there were suggestions of implementing a **congestion tax**, **improving commuter car parking** and support for **reliable, regular and affordable public transport services**. In particular the opportunity to better **connect the Parramatta CBD with surrounding suburbs** via light rail or increased bus services was noted as a way of relieving congestion.

Opportunities for improved active transport (**walking and cycling paths**) were identified and some participants felt the **diversification of business and growth centres** may also support the management of growth and transport in Parramatta.

## Promoting green spaces and the environment

Opportunities to **enhance green space particularly around the CBD** were seen by many participants as essential to balancing development and population growth, providing not only **improved mental and physical health** but an enhanced overall experience of Parramatta. Discussions regarding this theme raised ideas such as:

- » Improved solar access and tree canopy in public spaces and streets
- » Mandatory floor space to open space ratios for all new developments
- » More green roofs, pocket parks, wall gardens and interior gardens



Vibrant, safe and green – a new model of modern buildings with exceptional open spaces that draw people to the area... supported by great transport and facilities.”

It was also suggested by a few participants that **maps clearly identifying open spaces and facilities** could also be developed to address this priority in the short term. It was felt by some that this would make for improved awareness of these spaces in the community.

In addition to ideas relating to the CBD, participants identified other immediate opportunities to enhance the environment and green space in the broader Parramatta area, including:

- » Sports grounds
- » Community gardens
- » Community education on recycling
- » Bush and river care and tree planting programs (involving local schools and community service programs)
- » Beautification of railway lines
- » Improved wildlife and green corridors. Opportunities raised in one discussion were tree-lined corridors through backs of blocks, along Oaks Road and at the back of Swanes Nursery.



## Providing opportunities for recreation and leisure

The majority of participants maintained that as Parramatta grows and densifies **opportunities for recreation and leisure become more important** and need to be facilitated by Council.

Participants noted these opportunities must be **suitable to a variety of age groups and family types, and spread out across Parramatta**. For this reason, many participants stressed the importance of wide consultation and effective communication via a variety of channels.

Some ideas raised by participants to address this priority immediately included:

- » Inclusive and accessible playgrounds
- » Lunchtime sports for workers
- » Bikes for hire in the CBD
- » Swimming pool/aquatic centre
- » Paddle boats on the Parramatta River
- » Space for meditation and yoga
- » Film and/or light festivals
- » A mobile library
- » Shows in different languages at Riverside.



...a 24-hour city with places to go, things to see and jobs to do, suitable for all ages – not just pubs and clubs for people in their 20s and 30s, but places for older people to enjoy live music, a drink and food.”

A link was also made between this theme and the importance **of green space for leisure and recreation**, as well as **public safety** issues such as lighting.

## Creating a strong economy with a strong city centre

Drawing together other key themes from this activity, such as creating quality transport and connectivity, and developing recreational and leisure opportunities, many participants felt that **Parramatta’s location at the geographic centre** of Greater Sydney needs to be realised.

Attracting the **investment of new and larger companies in Parramatta**, as well as **supporting small businesses** were seen by some participants as essential to this growth. The importance of mixed use developments was highlighted by some, as well as the role that developers can play in **bringing the right kind of jobs** to the area. The strong role that the **NSW Government has in setting the agenda** for Parramatta, was also acknowledged by a few participants, for example relocating offices to Parramatta.



A city full of opportunity, where others are willing to come and invest”

In addition, most participants felt that **effective marketing** of Parramatta and the **promotion of the area’s tourism offering** were also important factors in creating a strong economy and city centre, and tied in with the promotion of leisure activities such as festivals, post work options and suggestions for the **rejuvenation of Church Street**.

Other suggestions included the creation of **specialised schools** in the area, **cheaper rent in the CBD** to attract residents and businesses, and the creation of **knowledge hubs** around the LGA.

## Having a community focus

All participants maintained that City of Parramatta will always need to have a community focus because the **community's needs are varied and always changing**. For participants, this priority was about social inclusion, safety, cohesion and placing the **community's needs at the centre of all decisions** that concern the LGA. Many participants noted that this means the City of Parramatta is a place where people come together in celebration of diversity, and "being human comes first".

At the centre of having a community focus for all participants, is ensuring Council is committed to **ongoing community consultation** and **transparent communication**. Participants are keen for Council to use **multiple communication channels** (digital and traditional) to ensure everyone has the opportunity to get involved in city life and decisions. A suggestion was made for Council to have an information centre near Parramatta Train Station.

Building a sense of community and encouraging **a city of 'good neighbours'** was something that most agreed upon as important in achieving this priority. Some participants felt that Council could facilitate this now through coordinating:

- » a strong base of community volunteers, particularly to service the vulnerable and those with disability, but also to provide an educative function (e.g. heritage bushwalks, storytelling for youth)
- » event spaces and meeting places that host regular events and activities (day and night)
- » 'Parramatta Pride' – sharing positive stories within the community
- » Festivals and markets that move around the suburbs.  
One table expressed an interest in having markets in the suburb of Sydney Olympic Park.



How do individuals connect with each other? How do people make new friends and connections? Council could initiate and facilitate connections by hosting interactive activities for individuals to connect, e.g. interactive activities for seniors to meet, for singles to make friends, similar interests etc."

## Supporting arts and culture celebrations and destinations

Many participants agreed this priority is relevant and necessary in developing a **sense of local pride** and **attracting people** from outside the LGA – if Parramatta has a solid arts and cultural offering (day and night) this will also contribute to **a safer, more activated city**.

Discussion spanned **varied interest points** – arts and crafts, theatre, food, music, tech, cultural diversity, heritage, aboriginal culture – and encouraged many to think creatively about the kind of activities and events they would like to see in Parramatta. Examples of how to address these now included:

- » Exhibitions
- » Heritage bus tours
- » Aboriginal cultural walks
- » Lunchbreak activities for workers
- » A MONA equivalent – "something to be known for"
- » More events like Parramatta Lanes, Art Express and Symphony in the Park
- » Expand on the Riverside Theatres offering
- » Streaming of outside events in major spaces across Parramatta.



...full of green spaces, a healthy arts community, a museum celebrating our heritage, a vibrant social life, and jobs."



Many participants felt Council has a role to play in **providing dedicated spaces in the CBD and neighbourhoods** to support this priority. Similar to discussion in across other priority areas, participants maintained that Council needs to actively promote these spaces and events through a **range of communication channels**.

**Incentives for locals to use community facilities and attend events** was noted by a few participants to also help support this priority in the short term. Examples discussed include free parking for residents using Riverside Theatres, more parking and a later running ferry schedule.

### Creating vibrant neighbourhoods and precincts

The general consensus from participants was that if Parramatta has vibrant neighbourhoods and precincts and strong social connection, the area will **attract more people to the area – both to live and visit**. A sense of belonging and a culture of **'knowing your neighbour'** is a theme that has emerged across a number of the priorities and was similarly a focal point when discussing this priority. When it comes to creating vibrant neighbourhoods and precincts, participants felt this is about Parramatta being a place that **fosters inclusiveness and cohesion**, while also **celebrating diversity**.

The majority of participants noted the importance of living in **a community that cares for each other** and one which **comes together regularly** – informally at playgrounds, parks and local hubs, as well as formally at street parties and through volunteer programs and local committees. Some participants were keen for Council to help local people meet each other through organising online forums such as a Facebook page dedicated to individual neighbourhoods. Another suggestion was for **local residents to play an active role in shaping their own neighbourhoods** and precincts through the establishment of location specific committees.



## 5.2 Is there anything missing from this list of priorities?

Participants were asked to reflect on the list of eight priorities and identify any areas of interest that were missing from the list. The following themes emerged:

### **Heritage**

Greater emphasis on Parramatta's rich local history and heritage buildings was identified by many participants as a necessary priority. It was suggested by some that heritage buildings should not only be preserved, but repurposed for contemporary use by the community. Many participants valued Parramatta's history and believed it could be better promoted as a tourism attraction.

### **Celebrating diversity**

Celebrating Parramatta's unique cultural identity was regarded by many as another key priority in achieving community cohesion. Cross-cultural learning and interaction was linked by a few to a greater overall emphasis on education and learning across all ages and cultures.

### **Inclusivity**

Further focus on providing a Parramatta for everyone was important to many participants. This included developing opportunities for the elderly, homeless and disabled to become more active in the community through shared, accessible meeting spaces and better support networks.

### **Technology**

Investment in technology was seen by a number of participants as an important way of supporting business growth and planning for the future. Ideas included a technology hub within Parramatta's CBD and linking up Western Sydney University students with local businesses to encourage innovation.

### **Safety**

Further emphasis on improving safety was identified by some participants, specifically in terms of addressing crime rates and creating safer public spaces.

### **Facilities and amenities**

Easier access to services and facilities within the LGA was viewed by some participants as an advantage to the community, who would benefit from not having to travel for jobs, healthcare, education, recreation and green spaces.

## 6 Thinking big

Participants were given the opportunity to individually record any ideas and opinions that had not previously been covered in the table activities. Responses were written on a feedback form provided to all participants and can be viewed in Appendix A.

This section provides an outline of the ideas and opinions captured in this activity.

### 6.1 What is your one big idea for Parramatta?

Participants provided a wide variety of responses when invited to share their 'one big idea' for Parramatta, with almost **no two ideas exactly the same**. With the common desire for a positive outcome for the City of Parramatta, ideas focused on the creation of a thriving centre of **culture, community, jobs, tourism and activity**.

Some participants indicated that **large-scale events or festivals** could encourage the local community to come together and showcase Parramatta more broadly, with specific suggestions including running, walking or cycling festivals featuring the Parramatta River. Other ideas focused on creating a **cultural scene**, including art galleries, cultural landmarks, exhibition centres, iconic architecture, museums, restaurant strips and live music for all ages, all year round. Many ideas with a cultural flavour indicated the importance of social interactions between people – and cultures – in Parramatta, and the **importance of social connection**.

Several participants shared ideas to **generate or preserve Parramatta River and open green spaces** in and around the CBD, whereas other ideas sought to enhance the environmental sustainability of the area with **improved public transport connections** – or both, with one idea for open space along a 'sunny boulevard between the station, ferry wharf and the river'.

Other big ideas centred on **creating employment**, with innovation hubs, convention centres and tertiary and secondary education institutions.

### 6.2 What will a great Parramatta in 20 years' time look like to you?

Participants described a place where 'new and modern stands side-by-side with historic and cultural' assets; a great place with 'liveable suburbs and places for the nourishment of creativity and leisure'; a **'liveable, accessible and sustainable city'** that is economically booming and celebrates its history and culture whilst offering world-class recreation and entertainment facilities and a booming CBD'.

Seeing Parramatta become a vibrant, lively, growing world city is important to many participants, with a 'great Parramatta' for them characterised by **efficient transport connections, diverse industries** – including innovation and a culture of entrepreneurship – **green space and social responsibility**.

Where some participants focused on technological changes in the next two decades, such as electric cars, most sought a city that offers a **'better quality of life'**, a 'socially responsive LGA that **caters for all citizens (permanent and transient)**' and one that 'looks locally to solve social problems' and ultimately a **cosmopolitan city** that will 'improve the world'.

# Appendices

A      Thinking big activity outputs



# A Thinking big activity outputs

## What is your one big idea for Parramatta?

### Events

- » Connection – There are lots of festivals and events for families to attend, but how do individuals connect with each other? How do people make new friends and connections? Council could initiate and facilitate connections by hosting interactive activities for individuals to connect e.g. interactive activities for seniors to meet, for singles to make friends, similar interests etc.
- » A running or cycling festival with large scale participation
- » Have an annual event walking along the Parramatta River
- » Facilities for a running event, with hot showers, get the basics right. Not having to drive 20 mins outside the LGA to get to the facility. Facilities for all ages

### Facilities and amenities

- » Turn Parramatta Prison into a homeless facility or give them a roof, bed, food, toilet access – homeless people sleeping on our streets is shameful
- » A world class swimming pool complex with indoor and outdoor swimming pods, a gym and group exercise classes for different fitness levels
- » Improving the night life economy and improving recreational social activities
- » To cater for those of us who want a 24 hour city with places to go, things to see and jobs to do, suitable for all ages – not just pubs and clubs for people in their 20's and 30's but places for older people to enjoy live music, a drink and food
- » A cultural centre which would attract leading large and small art organisations such as the Aco, Brandenburg, overseas orchestras and ballet companies, linked with a rejuvenated Riverside complex and rejuvenated Roxy for arthouse films
- » A cultural iconic landmark where cultural events are hosted
- » An art gallery incorporated into one of the new buildings or a historic building
- » A museum of Parramatta/Western Sydney
- » Provide an exhibition space in the CBD which regularly changes allowing office workers something to do at lunch or after work

### Infrastructure

- » Vibrant, safe and green – a new model of modern buildings with exceptional open spaces that draw people to the area supported by great transport and facilities
- » Enhancing the infrastructure for expected growth projections
- » A wide sunny boulevard between the station and the river and another going between the park and ferry (similar to Melbourne CBD) – this will help to achieve the community, culture and economic gains Council aspires to achieve

- » The best city to live, work and visit, Parramatta must grow towards becoming a role model city for Australia and the world, by importing infrastructure and sustaining green spaces
- » Turn north Parramatta into a Chapel Street (Melbourne) of Sydney: shops and bars
- » Managed & Reasonable growth – it is understood that people will want to live and work in CBDs and therefore must accept some population growth but growth should be carefully managed with infrastructure, social amenities, new places and growth
- » An over 55's vertical retirement village in Parramatta CBD (not all old people want to live by the seaside watching flying unicorns & fairies all day long) I want to live (also in my old age) in a vibrant city and grow old disgracefully
- » A deceased worker memorial park e.g. the National Deceased Workers Memorial Forest Adelaide
- » Be tougher on developers
- » Green space, higher density does not mean high rise

## **Environment**

- » Keep green spaces
- » Provide plenty of accessible open space for passive and active outdoor activities
- » Improve water quality of Parramatta river and explore opening an area for public swimming
- » Make the old David Jones car park an open space that can be enjoyed by the locals, keep the river bank clear and plant more trees in Parramatta Park and places to rest
- » Clean the river to facilitate green areas (no use putting a park next to a sewer!)

## **Technology**

- » Turn the Camellia wasteland into an innovation hub and convention centre, supported by local universities and medical and business communities, providing facilities for business incubators etc.
- » Modern and high-tech but liveable and community focused
- » Use the Internet of Things in Parramatta across houses, roads, commercial buildings, cars, public transport, weather forecast system, the Council – everything/everyone should be able to communicate with each other and be really "smart"
- » A world-class technology hub, smart city, a city that people will be proud of working and living in that will attract big multinational companies (Google and Amazon) to set up their headquarters in Parramatta (rather than in Chatswood, Macquarie Park or Sydney CBD)
- » A world-class education/university – why are the best private schools dominated in the North Shore? What if Parramatta has more high-performing schools?

## **Community and people**

- » To see Parramatta become the leading CBD in terms of culture, community, jobs, tourism and activity
- » To be an enjoyable place to live for people of all ages and financial backgrounds
- » Parramatta should be lively, vibrant, colourful, multicultural, environmentally friendly, safe and secure
- » A great city to live in
- » Include social and civic responsibility as an ethical duty of LGA and its inhabitants
- » A visitant, dynamic, safe, responsible and sustainable city

- » Safe and clean neighbourhoods
- » A successful multicultural city, catering for population growth
- » Genuineness of celebrating our multi-cultural – Parramatta does it well. Not just geographically central
- » That it recognises the “diversity” of the community and that its wants and needs may not always align with the City of Parramatta’s directions and views
- » That Parramatta is an area that concerns all the community not just one of the suburbs or CBD alone so that everyone benefits from all the Council can do for us to create a happy, healthy area to live and work in
- » Make Parramatta a “world-class” city to attract “world-class” businesses and educational institutions. Don’t forget our heritage

### **Employment**

- » Create a platform using new technologies for university students to connect with local businesses

### **Transport**

- » Improved public transport across council areas
- » Better transport linking to major population growth
- » Make Parramatta accessible by public transport – the light rail to Carlingford only duplicates what already exists If it does not help DO IT NOT BUILD IT
- » Public transport linking all the areas centralising all functions in Parramatta CBD but having satellite centres in the smaller suburbs

### **Tourism**

- » Positive image promotion on a world level to promote Parramatta as a desirable place to visit to bring tourist dollars to local businesses
- » Create a landmark for Parramatta that will make Parramatta instantly recognisable to the rest of the world
- » Focus on making Parramatta attractive to tourism and then employment, business opportunities, etc. will naturally follow
- » A world-class destination
- » Having better connections, having little heritage (old-styled) shops to promote tourism
- » Parramatta needs a drawcard that will make people actually want to travel out here and attracts local and international tourists. At the moment, we’re basically Sydney’s little sister that everyone ignores. A world-class multi-use arts/cultural/entertainment precinct would go a long way
- » A world-class destination for innovative entrepreneurs, restaurants, a world-class destination for students, tourists and business travellers

# What will a great Parramatta in 20 years' time look like to you?

## Events

- » A community running festival e.g. Blacktown Running Festival, Western Sydney Marathon
- » Bigger, new events, cultural events – October Fest, Parramatta Marathon

## Facilities and amenities

- » A range of options for entertainment and employment to make Parramatta relevant, lots of small/medium businesses and public facilities and preservation of heritage
- » Markets every week, parks, activities and facilities. Nightlife and weekday business hustle and bustle
- » There should be an iconic landmark specially designed in Parramatta e.g. same as we have in the Opera House, there should be an observation deck at the top of the tallest building to have a full 360 view of the city and can be called "Parramatta Peak"
- » A great Parramatta LGA with liveable suburbs and places for the nourishment of creativity and leisure
- » A place where the new and modern stands side-by-side with the historic and cultural. People out enjoying exercise, cultural activities and everything Parramatta offers. Also mingling with tourists visiting our many tourist attractions – especially the North Parramatta heritage precinct
- » A vibrant city, premium shopping district and good mix of commercial/residential buildings and modern transport hubs
- » A liveable, accessible and sustainable city that is economically booming and celebrates its history and culture whilst offering world-class recreational and entertainment facilities and a booming CBD
- » A balance between the new and the old amazing new buildings with a backdrop of Parramatta's heritage and peaceful gardens, parks, greenspaces, festivals and theatres
- » A world-class destination
- » Citizens can easily access whatever/wherever places that they wish to go, not being limited/constrained to their accessibilities and abilities
- » A lively, vibrant growing city, supported by state of the art infrastructure, transport, education, work facilities, fine-dining, shopping and healthcare and festivities, without compromising on the heritage which makes Parramatta what it is famous for
- » Infrastructure that connects to neighbourhood hubs and precincts and the LGA where people want to live or visit and not to move elsewhere. Self-contained in terms of facilities and services
- » Specialised shops, nice arty place that's set against heritage sites, attractive to visitors. Appreciate local arts and culture and bring to life existing sites e.g. the river
- » A good blend of residential/commercial living that is clean, modern, innovative and safe
- » Vibrant city with 24/7 facilities, including medical, cafés, chemists, transport and a vertical retirement village
- » Easily accessible, smooth connection, bus lines. Celebrating what we already have – heritage buildings – and create new attractions i.e. "Parramatta as a destination". Capitalise on our geographical location. (West & East link)



- » A well-connected, clean and vibrant city with plenty of community spaces and culture precinct. A balance of residential, commercial and recreational elements that is properly integrated. A proactive city, not a reactive city
- » More suburban nature of people and business – that can be used day and night – rather than commercial hub that is not fully utilised
- » Green spaces with build environment. Housing for all stages of life to be affordable
- » Modern. Vibrant. Happy with its accomplishments

## **Infrastructure**

- » Like a mix of Hollywood & Bollywood Village/City
- » Crystal Towers with trees on their balconies, electric cars along streets past parklands, beautiful streetscapes, high rise in the CBD, midrise and houses in suburbs
- » A city which is green to look at, with established tree lined streets, beautifully maintained parks and a diverse range of cultural and leisure activities that reflect the diverse culture activities that live in the Parramatta LGA
- » Better than today if you can implement the bulk of measures we have discussed – means retailing open space and not a high-rise tower adjoining the heritage in the vicinity
- » Like Singapore! Large scale outdoor parks alongside well designed, high amenity transport
- » Like current Parramatta but bigger
- » All cities of any significance have connecting hubs
- » The “Number One Place” in the Sydney Metro
- » Public transport running regularly during the week & weekend (10-15min) till midnight then until 7am

## **Environment**

- » Fusion reactor, ethical resource consumption
- » Cooler (literally less heat)
- » Hopefully not too much high rise, lots of green spaces/community spaces
- » An Area – not a City – with good public transport (fast, reliable) with beautiful parks, both “wild” and developed
- » If preserving and delivering greenspaces is adopted as a priority, it will probably lessen population growth but better quality of life
- » Less concrete more green spaces the ideal, cool sinks for each neighbourhood. At a minimum net losing and green space currently exciting to development

## **Technology**

- » A great Parramatta central city with vibrancy and innovation
- » A smart city that is able to “talk” with its people and evolve on a continual basis
- » A smart, innovative city which utilises technology to improve residents’ and employees’ lives
- » Technologically advanced, safe and diverse city for residents as well as tourists

## Community and people

- » A city that has grown and will keep growing – a vibrant city supporting culture, growth and a safe environment
- » A unique place to live, work and study, with convenience – the people who live here really love this area and feel proud
- » A city where industry goes beyond Westfield, a city with values that go beyond money
- » A city full of opportunity where others are willing to come and invest
- » A vibrant, diverse community
- » A safe and vibrant community of diverse cultures which attract knowledge workers and sports personalities from all over the world who work and reside in Parramatta and the neighbourhood
- » In 20 years' time I would like to see a very diversified Parramatta in terms of age as well as culture. I would also like to see a city that embraces disruptive technology and excites people
- » Keep on developing at the same rate and you will up as the best city in the world
- » Well balanced and growing
- » A civil, socially responsive LGA that caters for all citizens (permanent and transient) that looks locally to solve social problems, then exports this knowledge and expertise to improve the world
- » Let people do what they want! Not a nanny state – encourage art, performance, accessibility for all the weird and wonderful things people do
- » One of the greatest cities of Australia
- » A community focused LGA, caring for all the residents
- » Dynamic – in terms of being diverse, stylish with people living here being doers
- » Be inclusive so that everyone can contribute and own the community (multilingual communications), a city that residents will be proud of living/working here
- » Sense of belonging to a space and more VOC – Voice of the customer
- » A world-class city
- » One that is bustling and vibrant and smooth-running
- » It will be a bustling metropolis; a big mess still trying to find it's identity
- » One with a lot green space, good, vibrant communities and good educational communities
- » Full of Green Spaces, a healthy arts community, a museum celebrating our heritage, a vibrant social life, and jobs
- » Able to support community in all aspects: work, shopping, activity and interesting
- » A cosmopolitan city, very vibrant and creative
- » If it carries on the way it is now it will be cold soulless place. Parramatta needs to discover that people who come here to live and work need to be enjoyed in the wider community – my hope for the next 20yrs that people will be made to feel welcome here

## Employment

- » More "grass-roots" entrepreneurs and innovation engaged with the local community
- » Be like big cities around the world such as Kyoto, Tokyo, Oakland, San Francisco. Parramatta has the culture next to Sydney but with jobs as well

## **Heritage**

- » A place where people can live and enjoy the spaces, safely, and where heritage areas are protected
- » A lively vibrant GPA, with a mix of heritage (tourist destination), community and social centre

## **Transport**

- » A city with excellent, fast transport options, remember people want to get to and from work quickly, meaning fast connections and services. Use the assets you have (park, river, cultural diversity, geographic centre) to your advantage
- » Being the centre of Sydney in terms of a linkage between Sydney CBD and the new airport.

