



Sydney2030/**Green/Global/Connected**



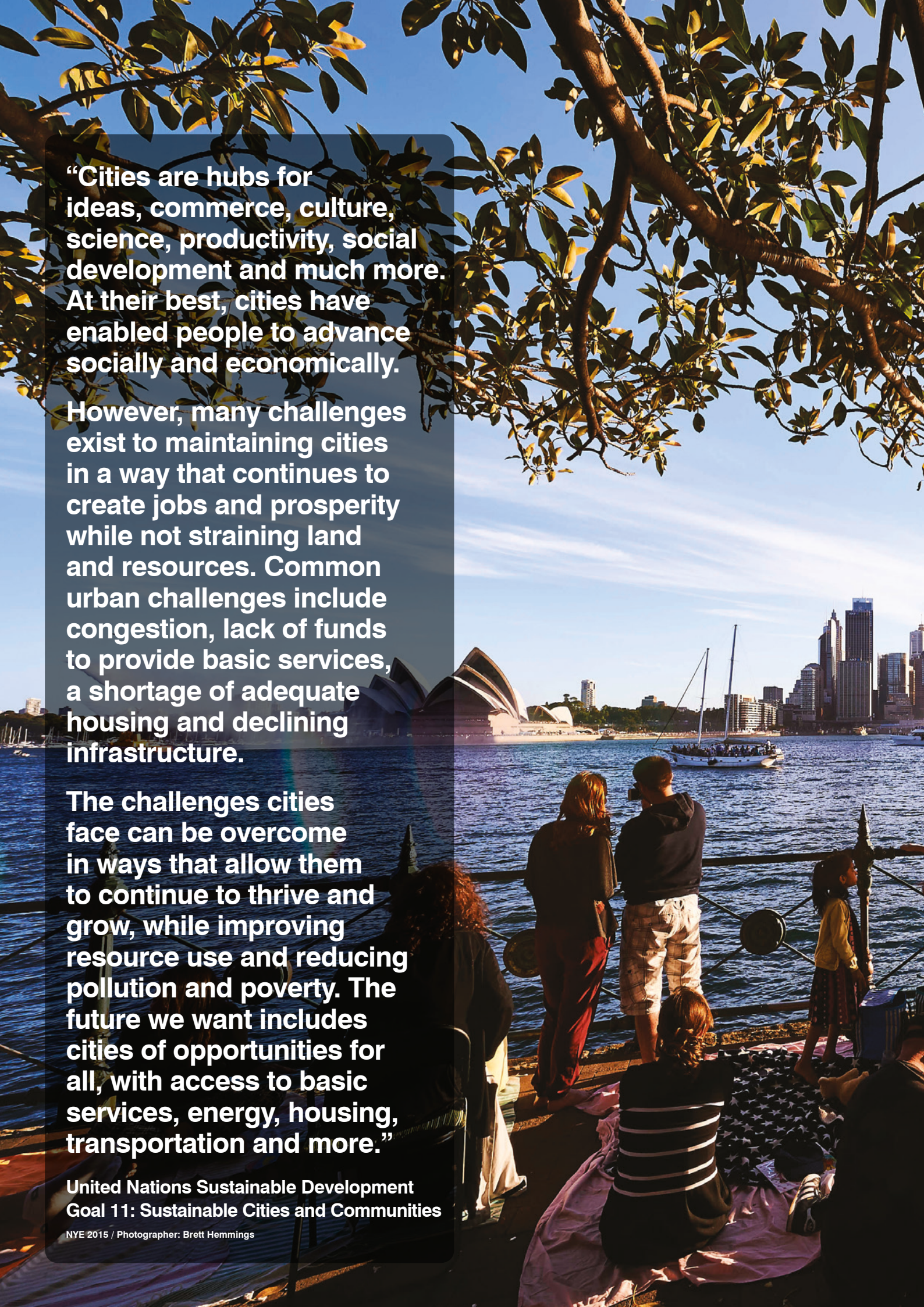
# A City for All

**Towards a socially just  
and resilient Sydney**

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Social Sustainability Policy & Action Plan 2018-2028

*city of villages*



**“Cities are hubs for ideas, commerce, culture, science, productivity, social development and much more. At their best, cities have enabled people to advance socially and economically.**

**However, many challenges exist to maintaining cities in a way that continues to create jobs and prosperity while not straining land and resources. Common urban challenges include congestion, lack of funds to provide basic services, a shortage of adequate housing and declining infrastructure.**

**The challenges cities face can be overcome in ways that allow them to continue to thrive and grow, while improving resource use and reducing pollution and poverty. The future we want includes cities of opportunities for all, with access to basic services, energy, housing, transportation and more.”**

**United Nations Sustainable Development  
Goal 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities**

NYE 2015 / Photographer: Brett Hemmings



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# Lord Mayor's Message



We are renewing our commitment to sustaining Sydney as a city for all. A truly inclusive city. A city where progress is measured in terms of social justice and community resilience. A city that provides ongoing improvements to quality of life and wellbeing for everyone.

These are major challenges at a time when our population is growing fast and large scale urban transformation is underway, including through new rail and light rail infrastructure and new housing developments in the heart of our city.

The decisions we make today – about investing in new parks, community facilities and affordable housing schemes, planting new trees, and supporting communities to achieve their aspirations – will affect our children and our children's children.

Governments have a responsibility to protect the public interest and act on behalf of current and future communities. Yet ultimately, responsibility for our city's future lies with all of us.

This is the essence of sustainability. It is at the heart of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals 2016, to which we have committed through our Sustainable Sydney 2030 strategy. That strategy was initially adopted in 2008 following the largest community consultation in the City's history.

The issues the community raised then are similar to those raised through our recent public consultation on social sustainability – concerns about housing affordability and homelessness, rising inequality, a sense of safety and belonging in our neighbourhoods, access to green space for us and our pets, access to good public transport, and a sustainable natural environment that supports our health and wellbeing.

This Social Sustainability Policy and Action Plan 2018-2028 is the culmination of our work in deeply engaging with communities and our sector stakeholder partners to determine priorities for social progress in our city today and over the next decade.

The People's Summit we held during this public engagement process – which brought together 200 community members as representatives of the wider community – clarified our goals for an inclusive, connected, liveable and engaged city. These have become the basis for this plan.

We are excited to set out this shared agenda – an agenda for sustaining a strong and cohesive community that will thrive in the face of challenges and change. We look forward to your feedback and the opportunity to work with you – with other levels of government, businesses, social enterprises, not-for-profit organisations and communities directly – to build a stronger society in our beautiful city.

**Clover Moore**  
Lord Mayor of Sydney



# Acknowledging Aboriginal Sydney – Elder Millie Ingram



Sydney is on Aboriginal land, the land of the Gadigal people. We must acknowledge the thousands of generations before us who have lived here in a sustainable and harmonious way.

The City of Sydney must support a strong Aboriginal presence in Sydney, now and into the future. Aboriginal culture has always been important to our city. Aboriginal people like to share, and we invite all Australians to embrace our culture.

The Gadigal people were the first to feel the impact of colonisation in 1788. They suffered from the imported diseases of the British arrivals. Many tribes were decimated within the first years through disease and poisoned foods and waterholes. Despite these atrocities and because of the resilience of Aboriginal people, there is still a very strong Aboriginal presence in Sydney over two hundred years later.

Redfern's Aboriginal community has always been a leader in Aboriginal affairs. Aboriginal communities in Sydney can continue this trend through good working relationships with the City of Sydney.

There are many ways to strengthen connections to Aboriginal Sydney, ensuring Sydney is a city for all.

It is exciting to see Gadigal language being used in place-naming for streets and parks in our city. We need more. I would like to see the 29 Clans of the Eora Nation recognised across Sydney suburbs through signage. New technology can be used to share this important knowledge about our city. I would like to see public artworks that recognise Bennelong, Barangaroo and other brave Aboriginal leaders.

The City's Barani Barrabugu booklet, which maps Sydney's Aboriginal Journey, shows that Aboriginal people have a very strong contemporary history as well as pre-contact. The City's Eora journey initiative is about celebrating and strengthening our living cultures and our wellbeing into the future.

Local communities can play a role in strengthening connections to culture by getting involved in local events that showcase the work of Aboriginal artists, playwrights and musicians. Aboriginal film festivals are a way for people to enjoy the wonderful movies about Aboriginal stories made by Aboriginal directors, producers and actors.

These initiatives can connect people to each other through Aboriginal culture and foster greater understanding. They will also provide more business, employment and leadership opportunities for Aboriginal people.

The City of Sydney can showcase a progressive and inclusive society by celebrating all of its citizens, with special recognition of the resilience and strength of the living cultures of Aboriginal communities.

**“The City of Sydney can showcase a progressive and inclusive society by recognising the resilience and strength of the living cultures of Aboriginal communities.”**

# Executive Summary

## Introduction to this policy and action plan

*A City for All* – the City of Sydney’s Social Sustainability Policy and Action Plan – sets out a vision and agenda for action to sustain a socially just and resilient Sydney over the next decade.

This plan has been developed in collaboration with stakeholders across the government, private and not-for-profit sectors and the wider community – beginning with large scale consultation on a Discussion Paper in 2016.

*A City for All* responds directly to the United Nation’s (UN) SDGs – the suite of 17 aspirations for progressive societies globally, launched the same year. This plan focuses on those SDGs that will contribute to sustaining Sydney as a city for all: Good Health and Wellbeing (SDG 3), Decent Work and Economic Growth (SDG 8), Reduced Inequalities (SDG 10), Sustainable Cities and Communities (SDG 11), Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions (SDG 16) and Partnerships for the Goals (SDG 17).

We will track our progress against these goals as we implement this plan, measuring our social progress over the next decade.

## Towards a socially just and resilient Sydney

Social sustainability is about strengthening our society to improve our individual and collective wellbeing and resilience.

It is about improving the quality of life our city offers for current and future generations, so that our community flourishes no matter what challenges we face.

Improving wellbeing involves many aspects of our lives, including housing, transport, education, employment, income, governance, health, safety, relationships, sense of identity and belonging, creative expression and the quality of the environment in which we live.

Evidence shows that cities that are committed to social justice and inclusion do better – socially, economically, culturally and environmentally, enabling a thriving community.

## Our vision for Sydney as a city for all

The Social Sustainability Policy on pages 18 to 21 sets out our vision and principles for a city for all.

Our vision for Sydney is a socially just and resilient city where people from all walks of life can live, work, learn, play and grow. It is an inclusive and equitable city that offers all people opportunities to realise their full potential and enjoy a great quality of life.

It is a city that recognises First Peoples first – as the original custodians of the land we now call Sydney, acknowledging the unique contribution of 60,000 years of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander living cultures.

It is a vibrant, dynamic and inspiring city, where creative and cultural expression is valued and celebrated, supporting a sense of identity and belonging for all people.

It is a city where people are socially connected and have a shared commitment to the wellbeing of their community.

It is a city where people recognise that we’re all in it together and can work together for a stronger society.



**Building connections with place and culture**

Green Square sod turning / City of Sydney

### Ten principles for a city for all

Putting people's wellbeing at the heart of our city is the essence of social sustainability. Sustaining a socially just and resilient society is vital to Sydney's progress.

Improving wellbeing requires a holistic approach across social, cultural, political, economic and environmental issues that influence our living conditions and quality of life.

This policy recognises that cities that are committed to social justice and inclusion as a shared vision and shared responsibility are cities that do better. Cities that work towards equity of access to opportunity and reducing the gap between rich and poor are cities where everyone can thrive.

**“Putting people's wellbeing at the heart of our city is the essence of social sustainability. Sustaining a socially just and resilient society is vital to Sydney's progress.”**

The following principles represent our aspirations for a socially sustainable Sydney – a city for all.

1. **Sydney is on Gadigal Country: we recognise First Peoples first**
2. **Sydney is a just city that respects human rights and dignity**
3. **Sydney's communities' strengths are valued and supported**
4. **Sydney is a welcoming, socially connected city that embraces diversity**
5. **Sydney is a vibrant city where creative and cultural expression is valued and celebrated**
6. **Sydney is a safe and accessible city for people of all ages and abilities**
7. **Sydney's environment supports health and wellbeing**
8. **Sydney is a democratic city where people can participate and influence local decisions**
9. **Sydney's governance is effective, balanced and accountable**
10. **Sydney is a collaborative city where responsibility for community wellbeing is shared.**



### A liveable city supports health and wellbeing

Sydney Park / Photographer: Katherine Griffiths

## Social Sustainability Action Plan 2018-2028

The Action Plan on pages 22 to 81 sets out the goals and actions across four strategic directions, which together provide a roadmap for a socially just and resilient Sydney.

- **An inclusive city:** social justice and opportunity
- **A connected city:** diverse, cohesive communities
- **A liveable city:** quality places and spaces
- **An engaged city:** good governance and active participation.

The plan delivers on the vision and outcomes of the policy and the strategic framework for action shown on page 29.

Actions range from strengthening our programs and services to piloting projects and implementing new or expanded initiatives in many areas where we and our partners are active.

The evaluation framework on page 82 to 87 outlines how we will measure and monitor the impact of this plan in the context of the City's Community Wellbeing Indicators, which track social progress in the wider community over time.

## An inclusive city: social justice and opportunity

### Vision

An inclusive city offers everyone an equal chance in life through social justice and opportunity, a guiding principle for city governance. All residents see the benefits of economic growth in their own lives and have access to diverse education, training and job opportunities. There are affordable housing choices for people on a range of incomes along with essential services and facilities to support wellbeing and quality of life. There are also affordable opportunities for all people to participate in recreational and cultural activities. Institutions and communities work in genuine partnership to build on communities' strengths and enable them to thrive in good times and grow stronger through tough times.

### Outcomes and action areas

#### Inclusive growth and opportunities

- Lead by example as an employer committed to social justice and inclusion
- Collaborate with businesses to deliver positive local social impacts
- Foster the growth of the local social enterprise sector
- Monitor socio-economic inequality to inform local responses
- Prevent homelessness and reduce rough sleeping
- Improve social housing residents' wellbeing and access to opportunities

## Social Sustainability Policy & Action Plan



**Genuinely engaging communities in issues that affect them builds trust**

Green Square consultations / Photographer: Damien Shaw

### Diverse housing tenures and types

- Increase supply of subsidised social, affordable rental and supported housing
- Increase supply of housing universally designed for people of all ages and abilities
- Improve housing choices for renters

### Affordable services, programs and facilities

- Provide affordable access to City community facilities, programs and services
- Improve low income earners' access to creative and cultural programs and events
- Facilitate low income earners' access to affordable veterinary services for pets

### Strong empowered communities

- Enable community-led solutions to local social issues
- Promote volunteering among local community members
- Improve community wellbeing and health equity
- Reduce food insecurity
- Increase digital literacy and inclusion

### Resilience and adaptive capacity

- Support communities to adapt to the impacts of climate change
- Strengthen communities' resilience in the face of shocks and emergencies

## A connected city: diverse, cohesive communities

### Vision

A connected city is one in which diverse individuals and communities are socially connected and share in common values and aspirations for their city. People live harmoniously – with consideration, tolerance and respect for others. People trust each other and are willing to help each other out in times of need. They feel welcome in their city and a sense of belonging. They feel free to be who they are, inspired to actively participate in their community and contribute to the cultural and creative life of the city, which flourishes as a result.

### Outcomes and action areas

#### Supportive social networks and trust

- Increase social connectedness among diverse communities
- Strengthen social networks in urban renewal areas
- Strengthen social connectedness in social housing precincts
- Improve community safety

#### Sense of belonging and connection to place

- Enhance sense of belonging among diverse communities
- Foster place-based connections among diverse communities
- Embed participatory placemaking approaches to urban renewal



### Creating great places for children and families

Chloe and her daughter Amira / Photographer: Katherine Griffiths

#### Harmony and social cohesion

- Strengthen social cohesion among culturally diverse communities
- Improve social harmony in high density neighbourhoods
- Promote public spaces as shared spaces for all

#### Diverse thriving communities

- Encourage diverse communities' active participation in the cultural and creative life of the city
- Celebrate and promote Sydney as an inclusive global city – a welcoming city for all

#### Vibrant creative life

- Deliver place-based cultural and creative initiatives that enhance local neighbourhoods
- Increase community participation in the design and delivery of creative projects

### A liveable city: quality places and spaces

#### Vision

A liveable city is one that supports high quality of life and wellbeing. It provides great places and spaces designed for people of all ages and abilities, enabling the social life of the city to flourish. Community members have ready access to a range of facilities and services to support their daily lives in vibrant neighbourhoods, including libraries, parks, community centres, theatres, schools and pools. Well-connected public and active transport networks support healthy lifestyles and provide easy access to jobs. People feel safe and secure in the city. They benefit from connecting with a beautiful, healthy natural environment.

#### Outcomes and action areas

##### People focused urban design and planning

- Enhance personal amenity in the public domain for people of all ages and abilities
- Increase the positive social impact of urban development and renewal
- Renew social infrastructure to meet changing community needs and aspirations
- Improve the provision of shared spaces through new development and the public domain
- Enhance placemaking approaches to urban renewal
- Activate public and private spaces to deliver community benefits

##### Accessible places and spaces

- Improve the inclusiveness and accessibility of the public domain
- Collaborate with local businesses to improve their accessibility to people of all ages and abilities
- Enhance local transport choices for people of all ages and abilities

##### Quality natural environment and climate

- Improve local environmental conditions to support health and wellbeing

##### Healthy active living

- Enhance walking and cycling infrastructure to support active lifestyles
- Deliver inclusive sport, recreation, health and wellbeing programs through community facilities



### Safe and secure communities

- Improve community safety in the public domain
- Improve the safety and amenity of social housing precincts

### An engaged city: good governance and active participation

#### Vision

An engaged city is one where people have opportunities to actively participate in shaping their city and community. Government is transparent and trustworthy and operates in the community's best interests, seeking to protect and deliver public benefit. People have the capacity and opportunity to get involved and influence decisions affecting their lives. People participate in shaping the city's future; they share civic values and a sense of personal responsibility. Institutions and communities work through collaboration towards shared goals and aspirations.

#### Outcomes and action areas

##### Transparent, accountable governance

- Increase open access to City data
- Deliver Council information in a range of accessible formats

##### Balanced and inclusive local decision making

- Increase the use of deliberative and participatory engagement models
- Proactively engage with under-represented sectors of the community
- Engage diverse communities in broad conversations about Sydney's future

### Civic knowledge and skills

- Empower communities to have a say on issues that affect them
- Strengthen young people's civic awareness

### Public participation in civic life

- Enable broad community participation in the civic life of the city
- Increase civic participation among diverse sectors of the community

### Collaboration and partnerships

- Co-design social programs and initiatives with communities
- Strengthen collective responses to complex local social issues
- Collaborate on community resilience agenda across metropolitan Sydney.

# Introduction

## **Social sustainability in the city of Sydney – global, local and deeply personal**

Urbanisation, the growing concentration of people in cities, is one of the defining features of our era. The diversity and opportunity offered by global cities like Sydney makes them deeply appealing. But rising inequality is a grave challenge to Sydney's social and economic progress.

Today we are witnessing inequality driving the fragmentation or polarisation of some Western democracies, and the rise of populist movements responding to the perceived erosion of quality of life, security and opportunities. Many young people in Australia now think they will be less well-off than their parents, questioning long-held assumptions of capitalist economies delivering continuous progress.

### **Social transformation**

In Sydney, the rising cost of living and of higher education and the growing casualisation of the workforce are challenges borne heavily by young people. Above all, the price of housing is driving generational shifts in ownership patterns that may fuel impetus for larger scale structural social and economic transformations. We have yet to see what may come as political power shifts to 'Gen-Yers' and 'Millennials' from the 'Baby Boomers'.

In the immediate term, the current unprecedented rate of population growth and urban renewal in our city requires daily adaptation and resilience. Digital technology is also transforming our patterns of life and work.

### **Social justice and inclusion**

Ensuring the basic needs of growing urban populations for shelter, food, and clean air and water will demand increasingly sophisticated strategies, even in a wealthy city like Sydney. Because meeting these needs demands more than practical approaches: it requires government policymaking to be guided by principles of social justice and inclusion. It requires institutions to protect the public interest.

Access to a safe, secure and comfortable home, to clean air and to affordable fresh fruit and vegetables is already beyond many Sydneysiders. These issues – central to

people's personal experiences of the impacts of rising inequality – are rooted in policy failure: the failure to ensure a just distribution of resources.

### **Wellbeing and resilience**

Stressors on our cities and societies deeply affect our personal wellbeing and our ability to realise our potential. They risk our ability to live harmoniously in increasingly dense communities.

Likewise, the inseparable nature of individual and community wellbeing and resilience means that strong empowered communities provide individuals with a platform to thrive.

### **City as enabler of community-driven change**

Striving for Sydney's future as a city for all requires action at state and federal government levels, as well as grassroots action by communities and by government and non-government partners.

This plan recognises the power of local government to act as a facilitator and enabler of community-driven change. We recognise that this requires deeper dialogue with communities towards ensuring a more equitable, inclusive future for all.

### **Aspirational future**

Today, key global institutions and networks, such as the United Nations and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, are encouraging us to aspire to a future that supports ongoing improvements to quality of life and wellbeing.

This is the true meaning of social sustainability. Because we are social beings: an issue for one is an issue for us all. We need to recognise social justice and equity as basic principles that underpin our future survival.

This Social Sustainability Policy and Action Plan is the City of Sydney's contribution to strengthening the social fabric of our city and delivering on the aspiration of Sydney as a city for all. That is, Sydney as an inclusive global city that delivers the myriad benefits that allow people to enjoy and share their lives, to be healthy and productive, and to truly thrive.

# Background



## UN Sustainable Development Goals

The City of Sydney's *City for All* Social Sustainability Policy and Action Plan responds directly to the United Nation's (UN) SDGs – the suite of 17 aspirations for progressive societies globally, launched in 2016.

Hailed by then UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon as “a universal, integrated and transformative vision for a better world,”<sup>1</sup> the Global Goals address interconnected issues relevant to all sectors of society and its institutions, such as gender equality, economic inclusion, climate justice, responsible consumption and production, and partnership approaches for delivery.

***Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable: SDG 11***

These goals are designed for widespread participation. From national and local governments, to the business and not-for-profit sectors, through to local communities and neighbourhoods. We all have a role to play.

This plan focuses on those SDGs that will contribute to sustaining Sydney as a city for all: Good Health and Wellbeing (SDG 3), Decent Work and Economic Growth (SDG 8), Reduced Inequalities (SDG 10), Sustainable Cities and Communities (SDG 11), Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions (SDG 16) and Partnerships for the Goals (SDG 17).

Connected with these goals, the plan responds to the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights, including Right to Opinion and Expression, Right to Participate in Government, Right to Assembly and Association, Right to Health, Right to Food, and Right to Housing.

We will track our progress against the SDGs as we implement this plan, measuring our social progress holistically over the coming decade.

## UN Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

The *City for All* Policy and Action Plan, together with the City's Reconciliation Plan, embody the City's commitment to the UN Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which codifies “Indigenous historical grievances, contemporary challenges and socio-economic, political and cultural aspirations.”<sup>2</sup>

The City is committed to deliver on the UNDRIP's affirmations and articles adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2007 and endorsed by the Australian Government in 2009, including:

Affirming that indigenous peoples are equal to all other peoples, while recognising the right of all peoples to be different, to consider themselves different, and to be respected as such.

Affirming also that all peoples contribute to the diversity and richness of civilizations and cultures, which constitute the common heritage of humankind.

**“The new agenda is a promise by leaders to all people everywhere. It is an agenda for people, to end poverty in all its forms – an agenda for the planet, our common home.”**

Ban Ki-moon, former UN Secretary-General, 2016 <sup>3</sup>

Affirming further that all doctrines, policies and practices based on or advocating superiority of peoples or individuals on the basis of national origin, racial, religious, ethnic or cultural differences are racist, scientifically false, legally invalid, morally condemnable and socially unjust.

Reaffirming also that indigenous peoples, in the exercise of their rights, should be free from discrimination of any kind.

Recognising that respect for indigenous knowledge, cultures and traditional practices contributes to sustainable and equitable development and proper management of the environment.

### **Sustainable Sydney 2030**

*A City for All* delivers the social agenda established through Sustainable Sydney 2030 – the City’s overarching community strategic plan. Adopted in 2008 following extensive community consultation, SS2030 sets out the community’s vision and the City’s commitment to the sustainable development of our city – encompassing broad goals for the physical environment as well as Sydney’s economy, society and culture.

Social sustainability is core to this vision of a “green, global and connected” Sydney, and this plan directly delivers on a number of strategic directions for SS2030 including: A globally competitive and innovative city (SD 1); Resilient and inclusive local communities (SD 6); A cultural and creative city (SD 7); Housing for a diverse community (SD 8), and Implementation through effective governance and partnerships (SD 10).

The plan also delivers on the goals for community wellbeing and resilience established for metropolitan Sydney through the Rockefeller Foundation’s global 100 Resilient Cities initiative.<sup>4</sup> The City is committed to the aims of 100RC through hosting the initiative, which involves

the metropolitan councils of Sydney, NSW Government, business and community partners.

The plan aligns with the Greater Sydney Commission’s *A Metropolis of Three Cities* - the Greater Sydney Region Plan which aims to rebalance growth and deliver its benefits more equally and equitably to residents across Greater Sydney through the four dimensions of infrastructure, liveability, productivity and sustainability.<sup>5</sup>

*A City for All* delivers an agenda for strengthening the ability of local communities to survive, adapt and thrive in the face of uncertainties, shocks and stresses – aligned with the program’s goals of helping cities worldwide build resilience to the growing social, economic, and physical challenges of the 21st century.

### **Social Sustainability Discussion Paper**

*A City for All*, the Social Sustainability Discussion Paper published in March 2016 with a background research paper, can be read alongside this Policy and Action Plan.

These documents set out the evidence we gathered on the challenges Sydney is facing and ways we might respond – “we” being government, businesses, community organisations and all community members.

The Discussion Paper showcases examples of how other global cities have responded to similar issues to those in Sydney, and suggestions or comments from local community members on how we can respond or are already responding.

The paper is based on extensive research into best practice nationally and internationally; guidance from an expert social sustainability taskforce of sector representatives and academics, and wider stakeholder and community engagement.



**Fostering cultural vibrancy was a key issue raised by the community**

Green Square Welcome Party / Photographer: Katherine Griffiths

We published the Discussion Paper and the Social Sustainability Policy to seek feedback on the aspirational vision, principles and proposed strategic framework for sustaining a socially just and resilient Sydney – a city for all.

### Public engagement process

Our Social Sustainability Policy and Discussion Paper were publicly exhibited from March to May 2016.

The public engagement process was wide-ranging and included activities to gather the views of specific and under-represented sectors of the community. Engagement channels included a formal briefing and a sector forum for key stakeholders.

At the culmination of the public engagement period we hosted a “people’s summit”, a deliberative democracy-style forum attended by some 200 residents, who were randomly recruited as representatives of the broader community. They came together to prioritise actions and make suggestions for implementing the plan.

More than 2,400 people participated in the consultation. We received more than 470 responses through surveys and written submissions by organisations and individuals.

Analysis of this feedback enabled us to finalise the policy and develop this action plan.

### Public engagement outcomes

The feedback we received through the public engagement process overwhelmingly endorsed the vision, principles and strategic directions set out in the policy and discussion paper. It also provided clear guidance on actions to strengthen the social wellbeing and resilience of our communities, through a framework of shared responsibility.

A range of issues emerged during public consultation that were seen as fundamental to a socially sustainable Sydney: housing affordability; sustaining social and economic diversity; sense of safety, respect and belonging; equity and fairness; fostering cultural vibrancy; providing accessible public spaces; safeguarding a healthy natural environment, and providing green, open spaces that support quality of life.

The responses indicated strong support for the actions the City is already taking to deliver on the vision.

They advised that this plan should focus on expanding our existing activities through partnerships with stakeholders and the wider community, and investment in initiatives with long-term impacts.

This work also draws on more than 8,000 residents’ responses to the City’s Community Wellbeing Survey 2015, reported through the City’s Community Wellbeing Indicators.<sup>5</sup>

### A dynamic plan

This is a dynamic plan, which we will update to meet the changing needs and priorities of our communities.

We will regularly report on our progress, including providing annual updates on achieving our targets and identifying trends.

We will assess priorities annually based on the outcomes achieved and as new information on the needs of our communities becomes available.

We will undertake a review of the plan at the midpoint, and a full review in 10 years.

# Social Sustainability Policy

## Introduction

### Purpose of this Policy

This Policy sets out the City's aspirations for a socially sustainable City of Sydney.

It has been prepared in response to the critical challenges and opportunities facing the community as our city undergoes a period of significant urban transformation.

It recognises the imperative to seek to strengthen society in the face of change through deliberate policies and strategies.

The policy outlines our vision, guiding principles and role in strengthening the wellbeing and resilience of the community – the people who live, work, study in, and visit our local area.

### Towards a socially just and resilient Sydney

Social sustainability is about strengthening our society to improve our individual and collective wellbeing and resilience.

It is about improving the quality of life our city offers for current and future generations, so that our community flourishes no matter what challenges we face.

Improving wellbeing involves many aspects of our lives, including housing, transport, education, employment, income, governance, health, safety, relationships, sense of identity and belonging, creative expression and the quality of the environment in which we live.

Evidence shows that cities that are committed to social justice and inclusion do better – socially, economically, culturally and environmentally, so everyone can thrive.

## Vision

### Our vision for Sydney is a city for all

It is a socially just and resilient city where people from all walks of life can live, work, learn, play and grow. It is an inclusive and equitable city that offers all people opportunities to realise their potential and enjoy a great quality of life.

It is a city that recognises First Peoples first – as the original custodians of the land we now call Sydney, acknowledging the unique contribution of 60,000 years of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander living cultures.

It is a vibrant, dynamic and inspiring city, where creative and cultural expression is valued and celebrated, supporting a sense of identity and belonging for all people.

It is a city where people are socially connected and have a shared commitment to the wellbeing of their community. It is a city where people recognise that we're all in it together and can work together for a stronger society.

## Principles

Putting people's wellbeing at the heart of our city is the essence of social sustainability. It recognises that sustaining a socially just and resilient society is vital to Sydney's progress and global competitiveness.

Improving wellbeing requires a holistic approach across social, cultural, political, economic and environmental issues that influence our living conditions and quality of life.

This policy recognises that cities that are committed to social justice and inclusion as a shared vision and shared responsibility are cities that do better. Cities that work towards equity of access to opportunity and reducing the gap between rich and poor are cities where everyone thrives. The following principles represent our aspirations for a socially sustainable Sydney – a city for all.

## Ten principles for a city for all

### **Sydney is on Gadigal Country: we recognise First Peoples first**

The Gadigal of the Eora Nation are the traditional custodians of this place we now call Sydney. The strength and resilience of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities' living cultures is acknowledged and celebrated. By recognising our shared past and shared future, we lay the groundwork for a city for all; a community based on mutual respect and shared responsibility for our land. By respecting and contributing to the social, cultural and economic success of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, we all progress.

### **Sydney is a just city that respects human rights and dignity**

Sydney is a socially just and respectful city that enables everyone to thrive. People's fundamental human rights and dignity are respected and protected. The city provides inclusive education and job opportunities, diverse affordable housing options, affordable services, facilities and events, and targeted support for people doing it tough. Equitable access to our city's resources and opportunities means that everyone can enjoy a great quality of life and reach their full potential.

### **Sydney's communities' strengths are valued and supported**

People are recognised as experts in their own lives and their unique strengths, interests and aspirations inform our programs, services and facilities. Local communities are empowered to take greater control over their futures through access to information, skills and resources. Valuing and building on people's strengths enables them to make positive changes in their own lives and in their community.

### **Sydney is a welcoming, socially connected city that embraces diversity**

Sydney is an open and tolerant city where everyone feels part of the community. People know their neighbours and support each other in times of need. People of all ages, abilities, incomes, cultures, languages, sexual orientations, gender identities, religions and lifestyles are welcomed. Our diverse communities are an asset that enriches the city's social fabric and enhances its vitality. Rich and diverse relationships and social networks build the city's social capital and strengthen our community's resilience.

### **Sydney is a vibrant city where creative and cultural expression is valued and celebrated**

Sydney's diverse communities can access and contribute to the city's cultural life. Opportunities for creative and cultural expression enable people to share their ideas and values, to come together, to tell their stories, and to shape their city and community. The city's diversity brings opportunities for rich cultural expression and celebration, supporting social connection and sense of belonging and identity in everyday life.

### **Sydney is a safe and accessible city for people of all ages and abilities**

Everyone has the right to use the city and to be safe and active in their daily life. People of all ages and abilities have the same opportunities to access the city's buildings and places, use local services, get information and take part in community life. Everyone feels safe, and is safe, in their homes and while out and about in the city. A safe, accessible Sydney enables everyone in our community to lead enriched, fulfilling and contributing lives.

### Sydney's environment supports health and wellbeing

The urban environment supports people's wellbeing and quality of life. It brings opportunities for people to live healthy, active and connected lives. The natural environment is able to flourish, and green open spaces offer recreation, relaxation and respite. The city provides protection from the impacts of climate change and extreme weather events.

### Sydney is a democratic city where people can participate and influence local decisions

Everyone in our community has the opportunity to have their say in, and influence, decisions that affect their lives and their community. People's views are genuinely considered and they can see and understand the impact of their participation. Genuine dialogue and transparent, inclusive and balanced participation improves local decision-making and builds a more informed and engaged community with a shared commitment to Sydney's future.

### Sydney's governance is effective, balanced and accountable

Sydney's growth and development is supported by good governance. Institutions that govern the city are efficient and effective. They act honestly, ethically, fairly and transparently. Good governance increases public trust and confidence in governments, strengthens democracy, and upholds people's rights and responsibilities, contributing to Sydney's resilience.

### Sydney is a collaborative city where responsibility for community wellbeing is shared

Sydney's future is recognised as a shared responsibility. Everyone has a role to play in improving wellbeing in our city – governments, businesses, community organisations and individuals alike. A collaborative Sydney means we work together on shared issues so our resources are used more efficiently, services are better coordinated and social outcomes for our community are improved.

### The City's roles

The City has an important role in strengthening the wellbeing and resilience of our communities through our commitment to social justice and inclusion. Our local operations, activities and engagement means we are well placed to understand and respond to the particular needs and interests of our communities.

All local governments, including the City of Sydney, have specific responsibilities under the *Local Government Act 1993 (NSW)*. These include providing local services and facilities that meet community needs, and representing the interests of our community.

As a capital city government, we also seek to strengthen our city's social sustainability in the interests of improving Sydney's global competitiveness and resilience.

We will work to ensure Sydney is a city for all by taking or continuing to take the following actions.

#### Leadership

We will lead by example through socially responsible operations, coordinating and facilitating place-based initiatives, and demonstrating innovative solutions to social issues.

#### Social programs and services

We will continue to provide social services and support, including childcare services, homelessness services, support and lifestyle programs for young and older people, community transport, food services, diversity programs, support for international students, education and training programs, and other funded social activities.

#### Strategic advocacy

Advocacy is important to us. We will advocate on behalf of our community to other levels of government, statutory authorities and other agencies on shared issues, such as transport and affordable housing.

## City government's spheres of influence



### Policy development

We will produce policies, strategies and action plans that draw on evidence and international best practice to deal with local social issues, such as inclusion of people with a disability and homelessness.

### Strategic planning

Our planning controls and guidelines must balance our community's social needs with economic, environmental and cultural considerations in local development. We will continue to protect this balance.

### Community infrastructure

We will provide community facilities such as community centres (called 'City Spaces'), libraries, childcare centres, aquatic and leisure centres, along with parks, sporting fields and playgrounds.

### Affordable housing

We will work on policy, advocacy, planning controls and guidelines, land use, property and levy programs to aid the delivery of affordable housing in the city.

### Grants and sponsorship

We will provide financial and accommodation support for a wide range of community services, social and cultural programs, festivals and events.

### Sustainable procurement

We will honour our commitment to the sustainable and socially responsible procurement of goods and services, directly and through our supply chain.

### Events and festivals

Major annual events and celebrations run or supported by the City – such as New Year's Eve, Chinese New Year, NAIDOC Week, and Sydney's Gay & Lesbian Mardi Gras – will continue to receive our backing.

### Community health and safety

We will continue to provide initiatives and programs to keep people healthy, active, safe and well. Areas we cover include exercise classes and programs, harm minimisation initiatives, emergency preparedness, crime prevention campaigns, road safety and environmental health regulation.

### Public domain programs and public art

We will make streets, CBD laneways and pedestrian walkways attractive, green and liveable, using living colour floral displays and public art.

### Community engagement

We will provide information, customer service, community consultation and stakeholder engagement about our work and local social issues.

### Research and monitoring

Our research, analysis and monitoring of community wellbeing will be ongoing. We will also continue seeking evidence about effective models.

### Capacity building

Part of our job is providing information, education and resources to build capacity in individuals and the community to sustain positive social change. We will continue in this role.

### Collaboration

We will always have formal and informal partnerships with government agencies, businesses and community organisations.

# 2018 – 2028 Strategic Priorities





VILION ON GEORGE

citisuper  
ASIAN GROCERY MARKET

Bathurst St  
123 - 109A

ONE  
WAY  
←

BOOK NOW  
STATE THEATRE

**Our city's future prosperity depends on us  
tackling rising inequality today**

Social sustainability public engagement campaign / City of Sydney



**Richard Denniss**  
The Australia Institute

### **Foreword**

The fact that we can't see the future clearly, nor anticipate the passions or priorities of future communities, doesn't prevent cities making decisions today that enhance our collective tomorrow. A tomorrow that will be shared by current communities and new arrivals alike.

The city of Sydney's population has more than doubled over the past 20 years to around 200,000, and by 2030 it will likely have grown by almost another 40 per cent. While no one knows who those new residents will be, where they will come from, or what they will want, history tells us they will be diverse, engaged and keen to make Sydney an even better place to live.

It is much easier to worry about the future than it is to plan for it. And when planning it is much easier to think about the big problems like where will people live than confront hard problems like 'how will people live'? But a city is so much more than the roads and rails that connect its homes and shops. A city is a culture, a community and a constantly evolving way of life.

Just as no one in 2004 could have pictured millions of commuters reading 'the papers' on their smart phones and skyping into video calls with their colleagues in Asia, no one today can picture clearly the way that driverless cars, 3D printing and a growing population will transform the way we commute, work, shop and live.

But not knowing which products will emerge to change our lives, or which industries will, like video stores and photo development labs, slip slowly from our streetscapes doesn't mean a city cannot make plans today that help it not just cope with tomorrow, but revel in it.

### Resilience through relationships

All relationships, whether between families, communities, councils or companies, can be strengthened by crisis, or they can be torn apart. Not all friendships survive testing times, but those that do emerge stronger than they began.

How a city copes with change, or copes with a crisis, will not just be determined by its plans and procedures, but by the strength of the relationships that have already been built. Planning a resilient city begins with building a strong sense of community.

No matter what the world's economy or climate throws our way we already know what the city will need to cope. Sydney doesn't just need jobs for those who are looking for them and services for those in need of them, Sydney needs to bring its diverse cultures and villages together in a shared sense of tomorrow. Only then can it take advantage of the opportunities that are hurtling its way and cope with the unavoidable challenges beyond its control.

While Sydney is a global city, its playgrounds and community centres are quintessentially local. A city can't be open to the global economy unless it is accessible to every resident. No matter how large a city's population gets everyone wants good neighbours.

**“How a city copes with change, or copes with a crisis, will not just be determined by its plans and procedures, but by the strength of the relationships that have already been built. Planning a resilient city begins with building a strong sense of community.”**

Luckily, good neighbours, and engaged neighbourhoods, are the building blocks of a thriving city.

The fact that suburbs are held together by roads, rails, pipes and wires not only means that all of Sydney's citizens are connected to each other, it means that for the City of Sydney to move forward, as a culture, a community and an economy, it must move forward together. While the benefits of growth can be captured by a part of the city in the short term, in the long term the costs of increasing inequality are borne by the citizenry as a whole.

### Equity supports growth

Ensuring that jobs, income, and housing are distributed fairly across a city is not just good for social cohesion, it is good for the growth of a city as a whole. While there are no simple solutions for ensuring housing is affordable and the distribution of opportunities equitable, the simple fact is that cities that turn their backs on such problems will not just cause harm to the most vulnerable members of the community, but to the strength, resilience and prosperity of the city as a whole.

Planning for the future is not about predicting it, or managing it, but preparing for the inevitable while building the trusting and resilient relationships needed to cope with the unforeseeable.

## Sustaining Sydney as a city for all

### Roadmap for a socially just and inclusive city

As people who are living, working and studying in Sydney, or are simply visiting, we face the big challenges as well as the heady opportunities common to many global cities today.

Over the next decade our wellbeing will continue to be challenged by rapid population growth and change and intensifying urban development, which are increasing pressure on infrastructure and services – and on social cohesion.

From both personal and community perspectives, we understand that quality of life cannot be measured in purely economic terms and that our wellbeing is affected by so many aspects of urban life.

We need to keep adapting in ways that strengthen our society, benefitting individual and collective wellbeing and boosting resilience. Responding to change positively relies on a shared vision and aspirations for a socially just and inclusive city – a city for all.

This document sets out our roadmap towards this goal. It is a road we will traverse with our government and non-government partners and the wider community.

This Social Sustainability Policy and Action Plan represents our renewed commitment to maintaining the wellbeing and resilience of the community from 2018 to 2028.

## Our approach

### Structure of this plan and action areas

We have designed this action plan to deliver on the vision and principles outlined in our Social Sustainability Policy. We have set out activities under four strategic directions – for an inclusive, connected, liveable and engaged city.

There is a chapter for each direction, suites of actions to deliver on the vision and desired outcomes, and the evaluation framework for measuring and monitoring their impact.

Actions align with the objectives set out in the strategic framework shown on page 29. They range from strengthening our programs and services to piloting projects and implementing new or expanded initiatives in many areas where we and our partners are active.

### Approach to implementation

The concept of shared vision and shared responsibility is central to delivering this plan – as it is to social sustainability.

We are heartened by the support this proposal received during the consultation process for the policy and discussion paper. Many organisations and individuals expressed their desire to partner with us directly to realise this vision.

Four principles underpin the implementation of this plan:

- Collaborating closely with government and non-government stakeholders and the wider community to co-design and co-deliver the plan
- Using a strengths-based approach to delivery, recognising that community members are experts in their own lives and empowering them to engage directly in local initiatives
- Engaging with under-represented sectors of the community, including those who face language, accessibility or other barriers to participation
- Balancing the delivery of services and programs that are universally inclusive with those targeted at specific communities or at people who face barriers to social inclusion.

### Outcomes focus: four strategic directions

#### Inclusive city: social justice and opportunity

**See pages 30 to 43**

An inclusive city offers everyone an equal chance in life through social justice and opportunity, a guiding principle for city governance. All residents see the benefits of economic growth in their own lives and have access to diverse education, training and job opportunities. There are affordable housing choices for people on a range of incomes along with essential services and facilities to support wellbeing and quality of life. There are also affordable opportunities for all people to participate in recreational and cultural activities. Institutions and communities work in genuine partnership to build on communities' strengths and enable them to thrive in good times and grow stronger through tough times.

#### Connected city: diverse, cohesive communities

**See pages 44 to 55**

A connected city is one in which diverse individuals and communities are socially connected and share in common values and aspirations for their city. People live harmoniously – with consideration, tolerance and respect for others. People trust each other and are willing to help each other out in times of need. They feel welcome in their city and a sense of belonging. They feel free to be who they are, inspired to actively participate in their community and contribute to the cultural and creative life of the city, which flourishes as a result.

#### Liveable city: quality places and spaces

**See pages 56 to 69**

A liveable city is one that supports high quality of life and wellbeing. It provides great places and spaces designed for people of all ages and abilities, enabling the social and cultural life of the city to flourish. Community members have ready access to a range of facilities and services to support their daily lives in vibrant local neighbourhoods, including libraries, parks, community centres, theatres, schools and pools. Well-connected public and active transport networks support healthy lifestyles and provide people with easy access to their jobs. People feel safe and secure in the city. They benefit from connecting with a beautiful, healthy natural environment.

#### Engaged city: good governance and active participation

**See pages 70 to 81**

An engaged city is one where people have opportunities to actively participate in shaping their city and community. Government is transparent and trustworthy and operates in the community's best interests, seeking to protect and deliver public benefit. People have the capacity and the opportunity to get involved in and influence the decisions that affect their lives. People choose to participate in shaping the city's future because they share civic values and a sense of personal responsibility and agency. Institutions and communities work through genuine collaboration towards shared goals and aspirations.

## Measurement and evaluation

### Measuring progress – community wellbeing indicators

Social progress is not the inevitable result of economic growth and it is important to track changes in society across a broad range of factors that contribute to community wellbeing and resilience.

The City tracks social progress through a suite of 100+ Community Wellbeing Indicators, ranging across four domains:

- Healthy, safe and inclusive communities
- Culturally rich and vibrant communities
- Democratic and engaged communities
- Dynamic, resilient local economies.

This framework reflects a broad range of factors that contribute to wellbeing, quality of life and material living conditions, including health, housing, work, income, education, social connections, safety and the quality of the physical and natural environment.

### Evaluating the impact of this plan

Measuring the outcomes and impact of this Social Sustainability Action Plan will enable us to gauge our progress with regard to our population-level community wellbeing indicators and in realising the vision and principles of a socially sustainable Sydney – a city for all.

We will use Results-Based Accountability (RBA) to measure the action plan's impact. RBA asks three simple questions: "How much did we do? How well did we do it? Is anyone better off?"

Our evaluation framework is provided on page 82 of this plan and we will publish the results of this assessment to inform the ongoing development of this work.

**“Innovative, whole system approaches to tackling old problems – such as intergenerational poverty and poor health and wellbeing – are only possible where communities are willing and able to collaborate with a variety of partners from different sectors – voluntary, statutory and private – at all levels. This requires confidence from and confidence in the community as equal partners in change.”**

The Rank Foundation and Winston Churchill Memorial Trust, UK<sup>7</sup>

# Strategic Framework

## A city for all: a socially just and resilient Sydney

### Inclusive city



**Social justice:  
inclusive growth  
and opportunities**

**Diverse housing  
types and tenures**

**Affordable services,  
programs and  
facilities**

**Strong empowered  
communities**

**Resilient adaptive  
communities**

### Connected city



**Supportive social  
networks and trust**

**Sense of belonging  
and connection  
to place**

**Harmony and social  
cohesion**

**Diverse thriving  
communities**

**Vibrant creative life**

### Liveable city



**People-focused  
urban design and  
planning**

**Accessible places  
and spaces**

**Quality natural  
environment  
and climate**

**Healthy active living**

**Safe and secure  
communities**

### Engaged city



**Transparent,  
accountable  
governance**

**Balanced and  
inclusive local  
decision-making**

**Civic knowledge  
and skills**

**Public participation  
in civic life**

**Collaboration and  
partnerships**