



Hornsby Community Strategic Plan

For ease of following and understanding the changes being sought by the Civic Trust’s submission the same format has been adopted as used in Council’s draft Plan, using the 4 themes and 8 strategic directions. As these are comments from the Beecroft Cheltenham Civic Trust they necessarily apply to those two suburbs but can also be relevant elsewhere across the Shire.

THEME - LIVEABLE

Strategic Direction	
Connected/ Cohesive	
G1.1	<p>The Plan needs to explicitly demonstrate the cross links between the various themes to demonstrate how support of one theme should not be to the detriment of others. For example this topic is framed as if culture heritage and diversity applies consistently across the Shire. This is contrary to the sense of neighbourhoods referred to in G2 and to the diversity established by other documents like the History Thematic Study. Beecroft and Cheltenham are examples of villages that have grown within the Shire and which needs to be supported as such if the character of these villages will establish cohesion, diversity and encourage people to come to a particular place within the Shire that has unique characteristics.</p>
G1.2	<p>This topic seems to be predicated upon new or repurposed building work in centrally located hubs. It is this logic that lost Beecroft its children’s library some 20 years ago. It is this logic that has resulted in the closest bike ramp being in Cherrybrook. In each of these examples excellent community resources become inaccessible to the young people of Beecroft and Cheltenham. It also means that better ways of utilising existing assets, often without the need for major structural work by Council is ignored.</p> <p>For example: the local community often has trouble using the community centre due to unavailability or being too expensive compared to other facilities such as church or club halls.</p> <p>Or, a number of the present parks (like Fearnley and Lyne Road) are examples of this. If just one of these public spaces was considered then the Village Green needs new equipment that caters for all ages, not just young children. The Village Green is recognised as a valuable community asset that is underutilised with a</p>

	<p>number of 'dead' spots. It is well placed for active equipment as it is surrounded by a railway line and Beecroft Road. Consideration needs to be given to bringing people into the BVG so that it does not feel cut off from the rest of the Village such as by better envisaging the rear of the community centre to incorporate perhaps café facilities or bike hire. A plan of management for the BVG would be very useful.</p> <p>Or, the DCP could be amended for a developer to provide for community facilities in any new retail redevelopment.</p>
G1.3	<p>Consistent with earlier comments this needs to be explicitly linked with, say, G2.3 that talks about the better use of public space or G6 on vibrant and vital places.</p> <p>As a result it is silent on improving the appeal of using a place over longer hours and more days. For example, while the public spaces around the shopping precinct have been improved there is still an opportunity for more to be done by regular maintenance of street plantings and contiguous footpaths, a sustainable approach to street planter boxes, street furniture and lighting that uniquely reflect the heritage themes. Consideration of the better use of Hannah Street including consideration of its closure at the eastern end to connect the north and south retail areas, break the steepness of the hill and expand the village square concept documented in the DCP but not progressed because it is dependent upon single holders of the privately held land not proceeding to develop that parcel. The strategic planning for this site has not therefore been achieved within a decade of the plan being agreed. All parts of the strategic plan need indicators that demonstrate real steps are being achieved to demonstrate that the plan is successful.</p> <p>On a related aspect of demonstrating that specified and desired outcomes are being gained, while community volunteers most definitely contribute one indicator of a connected and cohesive community, concentrating solely upon them as an indicator of community vitality ignores other relevant factors, for example, the need for Council to also contribute, especially where road safety is an issue.</p> <p>To encourage the growth in community activity by the use of public spaces there is also a need to soften the harsh environment along a busy, noisy and grimy Beecroft Rd in front of the Beecroft Place shopping complex and, on the south side, in front of the medical centre down to Toys and Tales. Perhaps large planter boxes, similar to those in Hannah St could be considered.</p> <p>A better measure of community activity might be showing increased usage over seven days a week and into the night.</p>
Inclusive/ healthy living	
G2.1	<p>The urban qualities that contribute to the heritage of Beecroft and Cheltenham and what makes the two suburbs so desirable must be protected by legislation and supporting guidelines, namely the LEP and DCP. This provides the framework or structure within which other elements might flourish. Likewise, all work should be linked and be consistent with the History Thematic Study. Both planning controls need updating urgently as many recent developments adversely impact on the amenity and heritage.</p>

	<p>The design and construction of new residential dwellings should reflect the latest construction standards. Also it is recommended that the design excellence panel should comment on all DA s in the heritage precinct.</p> <p>The use of private certifiers <u>must</u> be controlled by Council and not the current arrangement, by the applicant. Council as the consent authority should maintain a panel of Council approved certifiers that applicants can choose from and they should be classified into categories such as residential, high rise, commercial and industrial.</p> <p>Perhaps an advocate could be appointed to assist in identifying and addressing these critical issues.</p> <p>This use of planning tools available to Council needs greater emphasis within this plan to ensure this comprehensive and interconnectivity that the plan is designed to achieve.</p>
G2.2	<p>Support for diversity of housing without maintenance of heritage considerations can unnecessarily lead to the two being seen as in conflict. While the Trust has commented previously that townhouses may be acceptable in small specifically identified locations outside the heritage precinct, even then it is often the case that such spot rezonings tend to be contrary to sound planning principles. Council’s decision to concentrate additional population density in the Hornsby CBD precinct is therefore supported.</p> <p>Subdivision of lots that leave little curtilage (especially at the rear of an existing house) leads to a degradation of the heritage features and assumes that a heritage conservation area is being maintained if the new development is not readily seen from the street. Heritage properties need large rear curtilages in order to maintain that essential spatial element that is so characteristic of Beecroft and Cheltenham. Small rear yards also creates long term problems associated with garaging being forced to be located in the front curtilage and the inability to restore tree canopy avenues that traditionally have remained along rear fence lines. Rear yards maintain the amenity of the heritage house and therefore its long term maintenance and retention.</p> <p>In the past Beecroft and Cheltenham regularly won garden competitions promoted by newspapers. Many of these prize winning gardens consisted of unusual varieties of shrubs such camellias and azaleas. Currently there is no protection for these valuable mature shrubs and they are not being assessed for their heritage value when a DA is submitted. This can be so even when there are heritage orders on the garden. Often the new landscape plans ignore the existing garden and shrubs and simply provide a plan with generic species. As a consequence the two suburbs are slowly losing a noticeable variety and quality of vegetation that has been a contributable element of the suburbs’ heritage in the past. This needs addressing in the planning controls.</p> <p>Following on from the loss of existing vegetation is the issue of lack of compliance with approved landscape plans attached to an approved DA. This non-compliance can also relate to neglecting to remove weed infestations on site when there are conditions specifically requiring such an action.</p>

	<p>Senior housing and child care has been extremely contentious in Beecroft and Cheltenham. The Trust would like both to be prohibited in the heritage precinct. The latest Housing SEPP that includes senior development currently has a prohibition moratorium in heritage precincts. This prohibition should be made permanent. The current SEPPs for seniors and child care effectively permit medium density development in low density areas. Council needs to be advocating for this to be reconciled.</p> <p>Likewise the steady loss of tree canopy on private property needs to be stopped through tighter planning controls. Battle axe lots must be increased in size. Parramatta City Council has increased the size of battle axe lots for this reason.</p> <p>The gradual increase in the size of dwellings leaves no room for mature trees. This vegetation loss has adversely impacted on suburban wildlife corridors and loss of biodiversity.</p>
G2.3	<p>During the Covid shutdown the bushland reserves were extensively used and that increase in use is likely to continue. While Beecroft and Cheltenham have a limited number of recreational parks, the only dog leash free area is at Lyne Rd. Not only is it not centrally located but is also the only off-leash park within the Shire that is not fenced from the road. There are many dog owners in the suburb so there is probably a need for another dog area but more centrally located. Suggestions are that consideration could be given to Booth Park, Fearnley Park and Lyndon Way reserve.</p> <p>The bushland walking tracks which extend outside the Hornsby LGA should be reviewed and where lacking in functionality should be upgraded in partnership with the adjoining council.</p> <p>As noted elsewhere in this submission, open space needs to be better utilised by the inclusion of equipment to enhance and update what is there for children, add equipment for physical exercise of adults (especially those working from home) and bike ramps for adolescents.</p> <p>Open space available in public schools is now totally fenced off rather than a more creative solution negotiated to meet everyone's needs. Advocacy, started by inclusion in this plan, to change the current policy of prohibition by the State government needs to be included. If plans (like the DCP) currently allow for the changed future use of private land a similar approach can be adopted for the changed future use of public land.</p>

THEME – SUSTAINABLE

Strategic Direction	
Resilient/sustainable	
G3.1	The planning controls and their supporting mapping must be regularly reviewed and updated (especially in the light of the consequences of Climate Change) with

	<p>the latest construction standards, including not only in terms of bushfires, heat waves and floods but the recognition of water flow through urban subdivision leaving public footpaths dangerously muddy and mossy. Council's modelling for extreme weather events also needs urgent revision. There may be areas of existing development that will not be appropriate within 10 years. This needs planning now.</p> <p>Even small changes to the DCP will make a difference to the amenity and lifestyle in 10 years. Matters such as light coloured roofs, solar panels , community energy grids, increased setbacks in yards for large trees and more street trees to recreate the loss of wildlife corridors in residential areas and enhanced areas of shades for temperature control. Associated changes to be considered include greater controls over the keeping domestic dogs and cats.</p> <p>Incremental change is not being addressed (and is clearly considered irrelevant in the deliberations of the Land and Environment Court as its decisions demonstrate that it considers its statutory framework confined to the merits of an application for a particular land parcel) and so a regular review, by for example, a community advocate would provide useful advice to Council to re-jig current approaches where the aggregate impact of (sometimes) small changes has not been recognised.</p>
G3.2	<p>All stakeholders should be leading by example, from community through to Federal level. Last year the Trust strongly recommended more than the one EV charger Council was proposing to install in its carpark next to the fire station. EV chargers should be in shopping centres and close to all transport nodes like train stations.</p>
G3.3	<p>It is essential that residents get in the habit of recycling but also recycling properly. This requires stakeholder support and continual education at all levels. This includes more planning going into how residential, commercial and industrial waste can be recycled. Beecroft shop keepers with the support of the local community should be given an opportunity to increase their level of recycling.</p>
G3.4	<p>New dwellings, including unit complexes should be constructed with the latest technology, such as electric charging points and circuitry to meet these demands. As this strategy provides a framework for the next 10 years all new construction should be designed to anticipate likely energy requirements during that timeframe.</p> <p>As discussed with Councillors last year all new residential, commercial and industrial complexes should be designed now to have approved charging stations. In turn, all new building structures should be assessed for solar panels.</p>
natural environment	
G4.1	<p>The bushland around Beecroft and Cheltenham clearly adds value to the suburbs.</p> <p>Weed management should be better managed through greater education and promotion of more volunteers to assist in its management. Byles Creek is special not just because of its provision of a corridor into the suburb but also because of what it currently contains, its topography and its feeder role into the neighbouring park. Continued protection with the proposed E4 zoning is supported. But its biodiversity has to be properly managed in conjunction with limited opening up to</p>

	<p>the public as set out in the recently exhibited plan. Council should consider using E4 zonings elsewhere in the suburbs.</p> <p>Development, especially in battle axe blocks that abut or cross creek beds needs unique controls especially to deal with times of heavy rain. This is in addition to the maintenance of corridors.</p> <p>Due to population pressure the surrounding bushland is constantly in use. There are still some pockets of degraded land that could be rehabilitated and opened up to the public to increase bush without needing to acquire new land. Sections of Booth Park and Lyne Rd reserve (Crown Land) have potential to be made more accessible. With respect to Lyne Rd reserve there is a substantial area of crown road that has no value to the State government that could be better managed by Council and opened up to the public.</p> <p>The bushland within the M2 boundaries require management. Council should plan to develop a partnership arrangement with Transurban.</p>
G4.2	<p>More gross pollutant traps are required to collect litter and minimise weed growth.</p> <p>Council should plan a partnership with Pennant Hills Golf Club in order to manage the weeds in Devlins Creek. There is approximately 2ha of private open space along the creek line that has been neglected by the golf club. This valley has significant biodiversity potential. A team of bushcare volunteers have been transforming a part of this area back to its natural state but it requires formal agreement with the golf course for its future maintenance and protection.</p>
G4.3	<p>While there are no longer rural lands in Becroft and Cheltenham these planned actions are supported.</p> <p>Having made this point, consideration does need to be given to the loss of rural activities, such as nurseries, across these suburbs as a case study of how micro planning and development leads to the loss of entire occupations and community amenity.</p>

THEME – PRODUCTIVE

Strategic Direction	
Integrated/ accessible transport	
G5.1	<p>With the increased use of ebikes there will be a demand for more dedicated cycleways where traffic safety is an issue.</p> <p>The Pennant Hills to Epping cycleway is fully supported and additional State support and funding should be requested to create a graded and safe cycleway that can be incorporated into the Sydney regional network. This is likely to require use of the rail corridor to Pennant Hills and a bridge (or underpass) next to the rail line spanning the M2. There should be more bike storage facilities at transport</p>

	<p>nodes. The storage facilities must be secure and vandal proof as ebikes are presently expensive and so liable to theft.</p>
G5.2	<p>In planning to improve traffic and transport, traffic lights at Beecroft Rd and Kirkham St is not only a road safety issue but it will also promote and encourage pedestrian movement. In making this comment, the Trust would also like to see the brush box next to the tennis courts retained. Planning for this needs to recognise that the State government will be a decision-maker.</p> <p>Road improvements and footpath construction needs to be consistent with the village aspect and heritage. Trees are protected during construction but heritage footpaths should be protected too, in say, York St, Sutherland Road (between Malton and Wandeen) and Copeland Road East. Likewise vista need to be preserved in Chorley, Fiona, Kenwick and other locations.</p> <p>There should be thought given to multiple use of sites eg kiss and ride to occur in taxi ranks.</p>
Vibrant/ viable places	
G6.1	<p>Again this appears to be aimed at the creation of two hubs (Hornsby and Pennant Hills) with scant regard for planning elsewhere – even when consistent with the two hub concept.</p> <p>The historical ad hoc development of Beecroft shopping precinct is a major constraint on the precinct’s long term viability. The topography and central traffic spine impacts further to its viability. The northern side of Hannah St supports the majority of trade while the south side has struggled over the last few decades. The current DCP has many good guidelines however due to the historical fragmented ownership pattern many of the intentions in the DCP fail to materialise and demonstrate a failure in planning that does not result in the desired and explicit outcomes.</p> <p>There is no easy solution but the Trust requests that the DCP is reviewed in order to see how it might try and overcome or minimise these constraints or what other alternate approaches might achieve these outcomes. While there will be opportunities available such as the recent development approved at 5 Wongala Cres, further thought is needed now to review the DCP in the light of changed large development sites since it was approved by Council.</p>
G6.2	<p>The 30 minute city concept should incorporate dedicated cycle ways where appropriate. In ten years there will be a significant number of ebikes, with people needing to commute and store bikes at transport nodes. The regional cycleway from Pennant Hills to Epping is also supported and should be explicitly included as part of this plan – as are other related plans.</p>
G6.3	<p>The rural sector should be protected and supported. Providing some form of subsidy to support marginal agricultural production may assist in slowing or halting urban creep into the rural lands.</p> <p>Senior housing in the rural zones has never been supported. its prohibition in the latest Housing SEPP for seniors is therefore supported.</p>

THEME – COLLABORATIVE

Strategic Direction	
Open/engaged	
G7.1	The Trust has been representing the local community since 1964 and intends to continue in that role. In addition to uniform dissemination of information by Council through its web site more targeted information also be adopted such as by specifically supplying information to Trusts, Chambers of Commerce and service groups. This will supplement to efforts of Council and allow for impacted Communities to be better informed.
G7.2	The Trust is continually seeking various ways of connecting with the local community. The plan seeks to identify stakeholders and partners and yet does not separately refer to such community bodies.
G7.3	The Trust will continue to work with all levels of government in a professional, transparent and apolitical manner. The plan seeks to identify stakeholders and partners and yet does not separately refer to such community bodies.
Smart/innovative	
G8.1	The Trust will continue to seek a professional and transparent working relationship with Council and assist with its budgetary requirements. The plan seeks to identify stakeholders and partners and yet does not separately refer to such community bodies.
G8.2	This needs to be re-worded to support and enhance local knowledge in villages and neighbourhoods. The Trust will continue to work with all elected councillors and also continue to seek representation on Council’s various committees and panels for the benefit of all stakeholders. The plan seeks to identify stakeholders and partners and yet does not separately refer to such community bodies.
G8.3	There should be more support for the development of commercial space that can enhance people working from home but which will also bring small numbers of workers into retail areas. Developments often make allowance for commercial space in addition to retail space but with little inducement for commercial activity to flourish. This may be an incentive for developers to provide a community facility or shared commercial space through the DCP.
G8.4	The Trust will strive to remain innovative in this rapidly changing environment. The plan seeks to identify stakeholders and partners and yet does not separately refer to such community bodies.