

TOWARDS AN INTEGRATED STRATEGIC PLAN



BAYS PRECINCT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY • MARCH 2010

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CONTEXT

In June 2009 the NSW Government opened the door to community input on the future of the Bays Precinct. This included a Community Reference Group (CRG) with around 40 members drawn from local community action groups, residents, business, maritime industries and unions, property owners, local government, the MP for Sydney and public officials.

This decision was very significant. Community groups had been pressing for years for an end to ad hoc development decisions in the Bays Precinct and for engagement of the community in the decision making process. Most members, therefore, saw the CRG as an opportunity that had to be taken and made to work. We did that, and in March 2010 the CRG provided the Government with its advice on future planning parameters for the Bays Precinct. This document summarises that advice which can be read in full at SHFA website details.

The Bays Precinct including White, Rozelle and Blackwattle Bays as well as Glebe Island and the Rozelle Train Yards, is of extraordinary strategic importance to both its local community and to the profile of Sydney.

With the demise of many local industrial activities we have a once-only opportunity to shape the future of 80 hectares of publicly owned land, five (5) kilometres of harbour foreshore and major heritage items with exciting adaptive potential – most notably the White Bay Power Station and the Glebe Island Bridge. The scale is immense.

This is the next major episode in the transition of Sydney Harbour to its 'post industrial' future.

The full potential of this site can only be achieved if:

- planning decisions are made on the basis of a clear, long term vision and respect for agreed planning objectives and principles;
- planning decisions are coordinated; and
- we bring into play the best and most creative ideas for the future use and character of this part of Sydney harbour.

The planning parameters and ideas proposed by the CRG reflect widespread community determination to pre-empt further ill-considered, ad hoc development of the Bays Precinct.

Towards an Integrated and Strategic Planning Framework

The CRG proposes a strategic and integrated planning framework for the Bays Precinct. Much of it reaffirms common sense parameters for good planning. There are, however, some points at which the CRG determined it essential to establish stronger than usual parameters to protect the public good and the potential of this special site.

The CRG identified 11 objectives that were consistent with the emerging future visions for the Precinct and more detailed planning principles to support each objective. Using this framework, it produced some broad brush, preliminary mapping of future possible uses consistent with the objectives and principles.

OBJECTIVES & PRINCIPLES

The Community Reference Group has defined 11 core objectives for the future of the Bays Precinct. Each of these is supported by more specific planning principles – 58 in total.

Objective 1: Integrated Future Planning

- No more one off, ad hoc planning decisions by State Government or other planning authorities.
- All future planning and development decisions relating to the Bays Precinct to be on the basis of the agreed Principles and an integrated strategic plan for the whole Precinct incorporating a long-term (c.20 years) vision.

Objective 2: Priority and Precedence for the Public Good

- Establish public good, not private benefit as the overriding driver for future planning decisions for the Bays Precinct.
- Protect the remaining public ownership of foreshores and harbour from further alienation by sale or long-term lease for private use and restore headlands and heads of bays to the public.

Objective 3: Access, Open space and recreation

- Open much more of the foreshores to the community and provide, wherever possible, continuous foreshore corridors for pedestrians and cyclists.
- Restore the headlands and heads of bays to the public as opportunity arises.
- Maintain safe access to the Bays for passive water based activities (rowing, dragon boating, kayaking, sailing).

Objective 4: Recognition of Heritage

- Recognise the Bays' significant maritime and industrial history in planning decisions.
- Conserve all heritage items and, where feasible, provide for adaptive reuse of significant structures.

Objective 5: Land Uses

- Provide for local distinctiveness and character.
- Given the high residential density of surrounding areas, ensure planning decisions have the minimum possible adverse impact on existing residents and businesses.

Objective 6: Provision for Transport

- Ensure no new activities or developments are approved without simultaneous provision for the necessary transport infrastructure – including public transport.
- Prohibit approval of long term activities that will result in increased traffic congestion within the surrounding suburbs.

Objective 7: Housing

- Exclude private housing from direct foreshore frontage and, except for the Rozelle Train yards corridor, restrict housing to a lower order priority within the precinct.

Objective 8: Built Form and Design

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

Objective 9: Community and Culture

- Create a high profile for cultural and artistic activities as an integral and significant aspect of the precinct's character.

Objective 10: Economic Life

- Maintain a contemporary 'working harbour' character for the precinct and support other employment opportunities including green R&D and creative industries (eg. incubators, artist studio space)

Objective 11: Sustainability and Environment

- Incorporate best practice sustainability principles in all development and ensure that all uses enhance the sustainability of human and physical ecology in waterways and foreshores.

These Objectives and supporting Principles establish reasonable and balanced parameters for the next stage of the Bays Precinct planning process.

The CRG therefore recommends that the Government accepts these Objectives and Principles as the basis for further discussion in Stage 2.



View of Bays Precinct looking south-west with Camerons Cove in the foreground.



View of Bays Precinct looking east with the former White Bay Power Station in the foreground.







FUTURE DIRECTIONS – PRELIMINARY PROPOSALS

Having developed its planning framework, the Community Reference Group explored ideas for future uses that were consistent with its parameters. These addressed four levels of use:

1. **Access and Facilities for the Residents and Visitors**
2. **Access and Facilities for Recreational Boating and Other Users of the Bays**
3. **Providing Commercial and Industrial Precincts**
4. **Providing Necessary Future Infrastructure**

These preliminary ideas on proposed uses are summarised in the following two concept plans for the future of the Bays Precinct.

LEVELS 1 & 2: Access and Facilities for Residents, Visitors and Recreational Boating

COMMUNITY NEED	PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT DIRECTION
 Pedestrian and Cycle Access	Continuous foreshore access by joining and widening the existing paths around the Bays for pedestrians and cyclists. Establish cycle/pedestrian access via Glebe Island Bridge (GIB).
 New Parks and Public Facilities	Develop park areas to provide enhanced view from points and the heads of bays and to link views with existing green areas in Balmain, Glebe and Pyrmont.
 White Bay Power Station Redevelopment	Develop a multi-purpose arts and recreation complex, including a significant art gallery, internal film and television studios, cinema, etc. The large outdoor forecourt area could be used for outdoor activities and for visitors and local exercising and relaxing.
 Heritage Fleet - Water Base	Ensure that an appropriate area for the Sydney Heritage Fleet is retained as one of the 'working harbour' activities. Ensure that the optional locations at Bank Street, White Bay and Blackwattle Bay are fully explored.
 Passive Boat Usage	Ensure that recreational uses (rowing, dragon boating, kayaking, sailing) are preserved in Rozelle and Blackwattle Bays and safe navigation and speed parameters retained.
 Planned Dry Boat Storage	The proposed Sydney Boathouse dry boat storage involves storing some 670 power boats within a building on land adjacent to the water's edge on James Craig Road. Boats are housed in steel racks and launched by a forklift truck.

COMMUNITY NEED

Proposed Pedestrian and Cycle Access



Existing Pedestrian and Cycle Access



New Parks and Public Facilities



Existing Parks and Public Facilities



White Bay Power Station Redevelopment



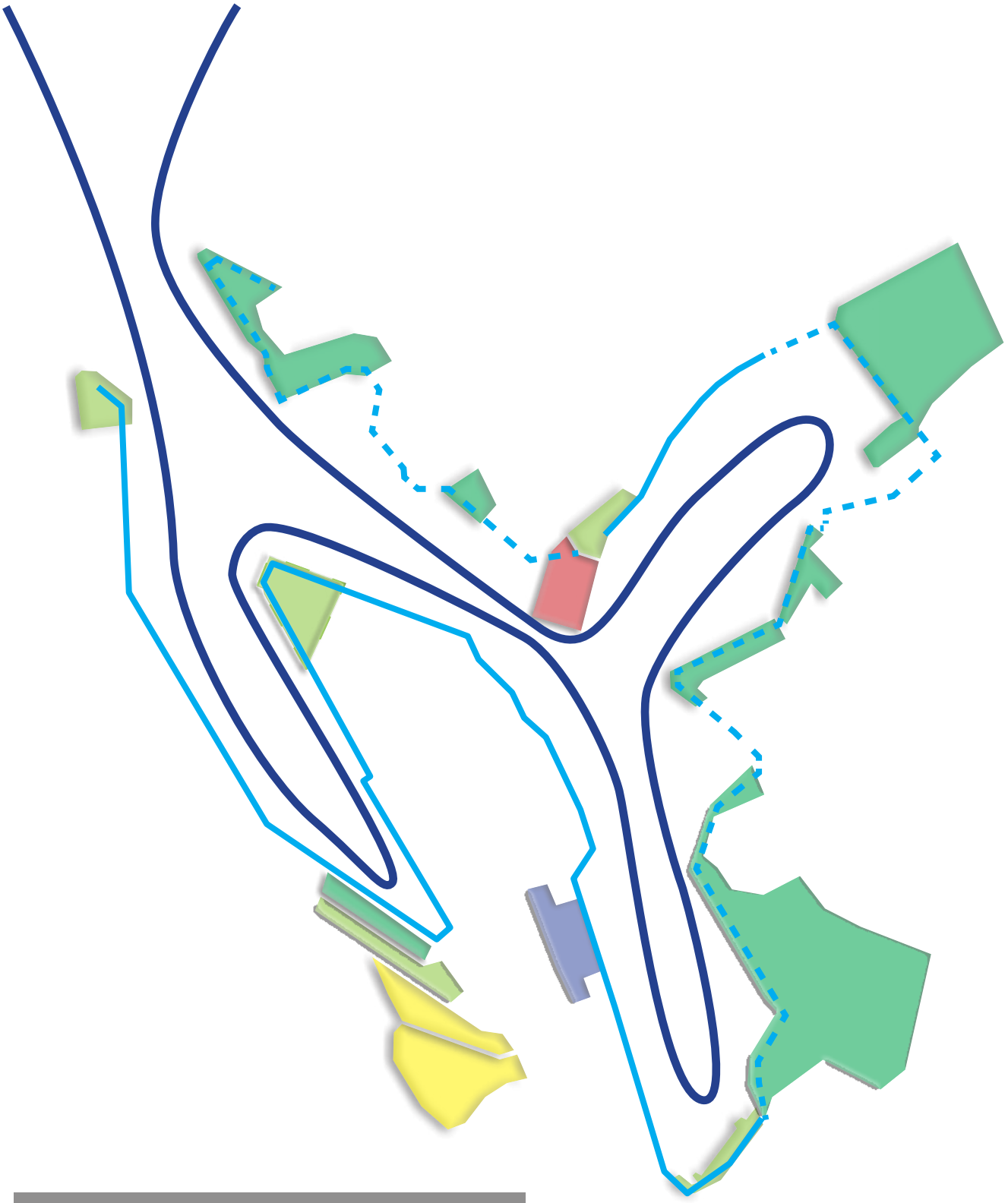
Heritage Fleet - Water Base



Passive Boat Usage



Planned Dry Boat Storage



LEVELS 3 & 4: Commercial and Industrial Precincts with Transport Service Infrastructure

COMMUNITY NEED

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT DIRECTION

Existing Wharves

Continue the use of White Bay as active port facilities serving current users; keep options open for continuation of use for low-impact shipping.

Existing Commercial Area

Development of the Sydney Fish Market enhances the ...? Relocate the two concrete batch plants. Bank Street development maintains foreshore access and water views.

Existing Maritime Industry

Ensure that the sufficient area designated for 'marine contracting' in the master plan is retained as one of the 'working harbour' activities.

Existing Industrial Areas

Retain existing facilities at Glebe Island, including the heritage silos and dry dock development; possible relocation of concrete batch plant.

Cruise Passenger Terminal

Cruise Passenger Terminal maximises opportunities for foreshore activation, including pedestrian/cycle access, multi-purpose terminal building compatible with residential locale.

Planned Mixed Use Development

Redevelopment of the airspace above the Rozelle Railway Yards as mixed light industry/residential development. Blackwattle Bay Master Plan sites B1, B2 and B3 contribute to a high quality public domain and maintain access and views.

High Value Potential

Staged redevelopment of Glebe Island, keeps options open for shipping; does not preclude opportunities for a grand vision public development.

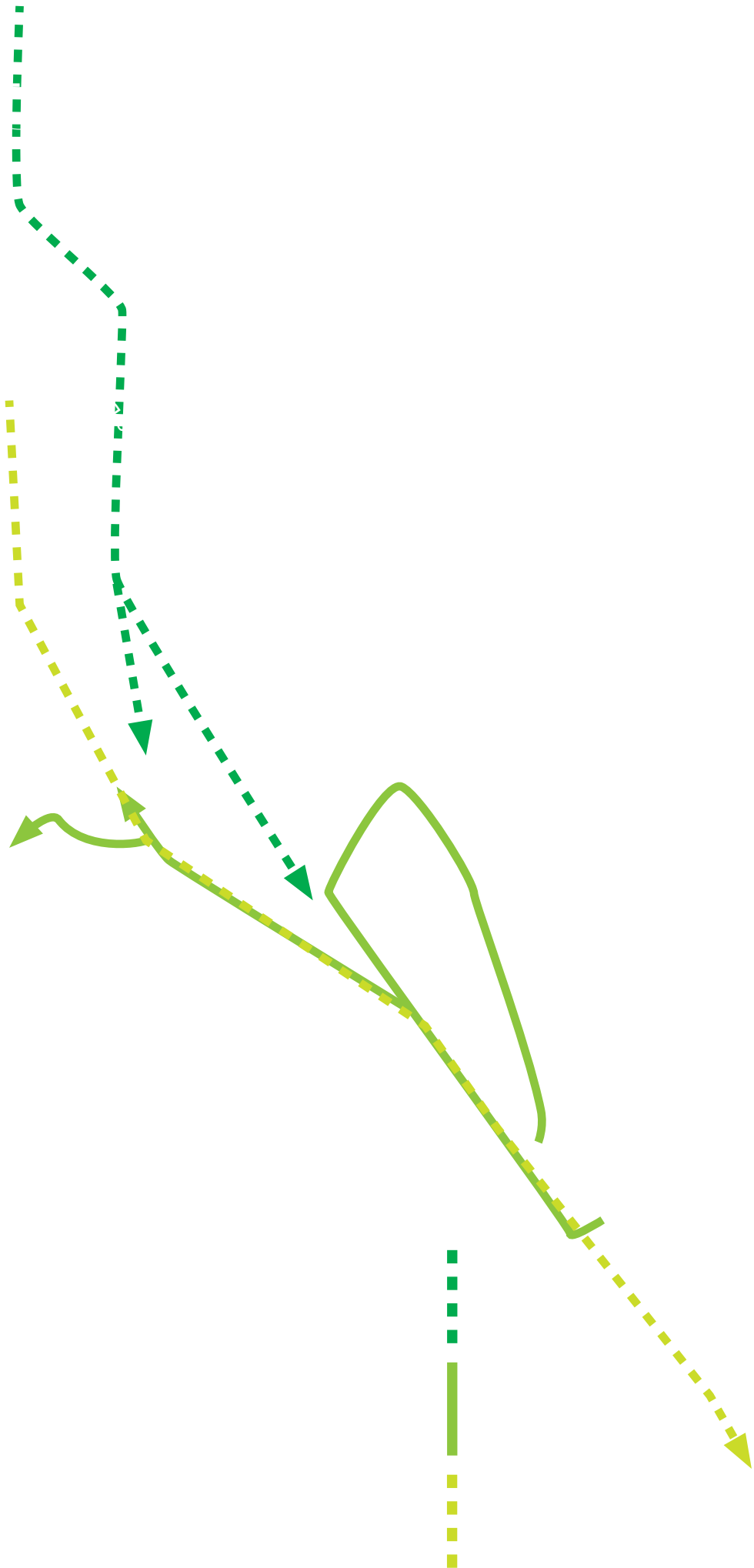
Luxury Yacht Berths

Ensure that the sufficient area designated for luxury yacht berths in the master plan is retained as one of the 'working harbour' activities.

Transport Infrastructure



Extension of Light Rail to service Cruise Passenger Terminal.
Provide new roadways to service Glebe Island development.
Provide ferry services to Barangaroo and Circular Quay.



THE NEXT STEPS

This Community Reference Group framework emerged from the expertise of the group and the work of numerous community organisations. It provides a sound basis and checklist for community groups and stakeholders in future debates about the future of the Bays Precinct.

The Government has indicated that there will be a Stage 2 Bays Precinct process to finalise the planning principles and draw up land use options. The CRG strongly recommends the Government commits to full and open community participation in this second stage.

Community members have ongoing concerns that Government will continue one off, uncoordinated developments before options for the Precinct are properly explored and a long-term strategic plan agreed and approved.

There are master plans in existence for parts of the precinct and legitimate expectations from some stakeholders that complying developments be allowed. However, these master plans were not developed within a coordinated strategic framework and are dated. If the future potential of the Precinct is not to be compromised by short-sighted development, a transitional protective strategy is essential.

The CRG strongly recommends that, pending the finalisation of the Bays Precinct Strategic Planning Framework, the Government, wherever possible, avoids major planning decisions for the Bays Precinct.

A major impediment to coordination across the Bays Precinct arises from the large number of agencies (currently 16) with responsibilities for various parts of it. Whatever their intent, multiple agencies tend to get caught in their own silo perspectives and diverted by competing agendas. The CRG strongly recommends the Government establishes a dedicated Bays Precinct authority to achieve the needed coordination of planning and development.

View of Bays Precinct looking west with White Bay grain silos in the foreground.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1

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

2

The Government approves the broad Objectives and Principles developed by the Bays Precinct Community Reference Group as the basis for the draft planning principles to be exhibited in Stage 2 of the Bays Precinct planning process.

3

To overcome the current fragmentation of responsibilities, the Government establish a dedicated authority to co-ordinate and manage the Bays Precinct within Sydney Harbour. This authority should have relevant expertise and community representation. It should be publically accountable and its powers should be subject to relevant planning, heritage and environmental legislation and its decisions subject to appropriate appeal mechanisms.

4

The NSW Government maintains its current commitment to community participation in the Bays Precinct Planning Process into Stage 2 and establishes a range of mechanisms to include a broad range of interested people. This should include the establishment of a formal and adequately supported community advisory committee with balanced representation from the precinct as a key part of this consultation process. It is recommended that there be an effective direct linkage between this committee and the Bays Precinct Task Force.

The Bays Precinct Community Reference Group was established by the NSW Government in July 2009 to:

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

