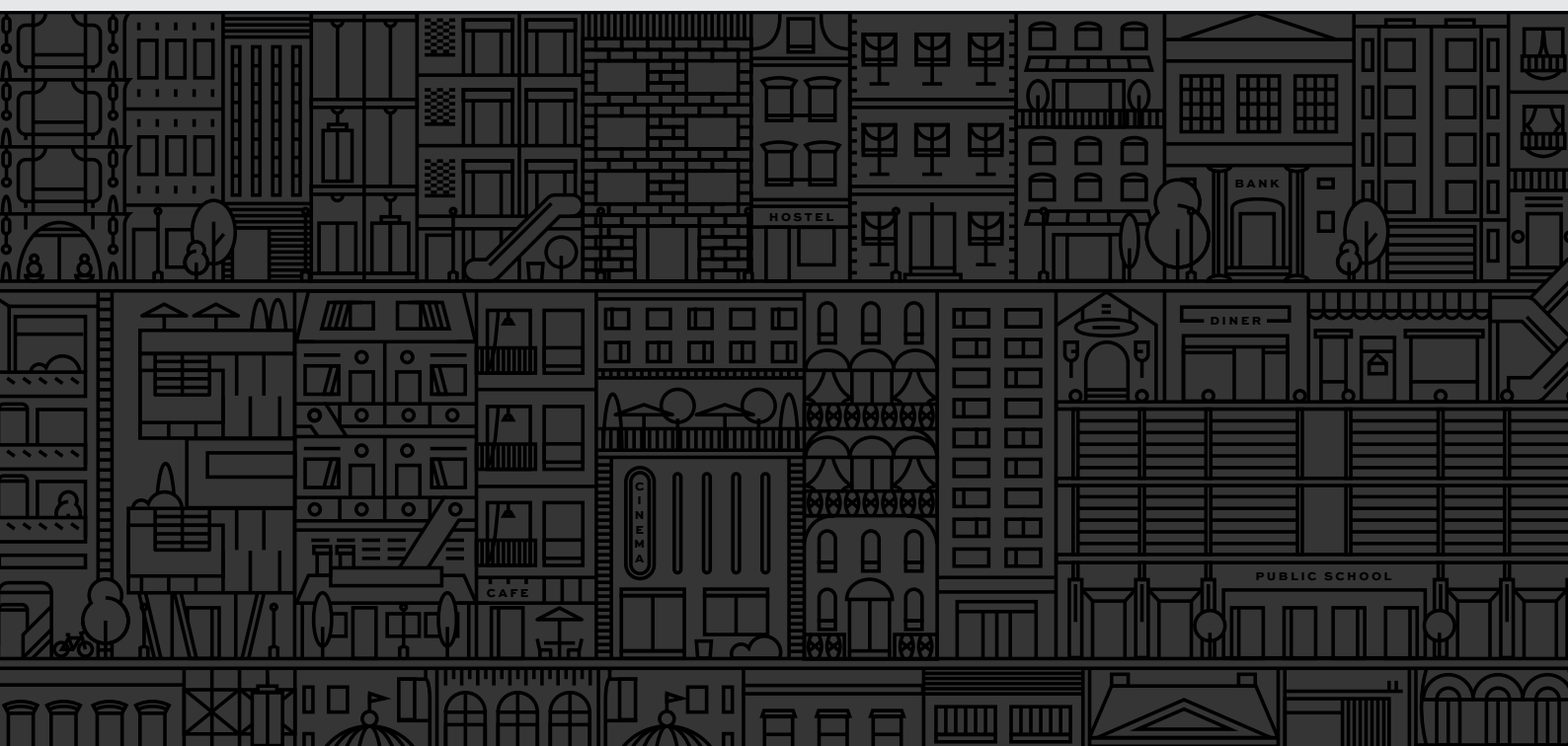


**ALAND**  
LEPPINGTON TOWN CENTRE  
RECIPE FOR SUCCESS



Hoyne  
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Report

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY**

The authors of this document acknowledge the traditional country of the Darug people. We recognise and respect their cultural heritage, beliefs and continuing relationship with the land, and that they are the proud survivors of more than two hundred years of dispossession. We support the NSW Government, Camden Council and Liverpool City Council’s commitment to addressing disadvantages and attaining justice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples of this community.

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# Executive Summary

Today, as throughout its history, Leppington finds itself once again an influential player in the story of a growing Sydney.

Already tens of billions have been invested in the new airport, road network and north-south metro train line. This makes the Western Parkland City a key area for investors to focus on – Leppington in particular.

As the world continues to struggle with a range of crises, there is an increased pressure on those involved in planning – not to mention public and private development – to consider the overall benefits of peri-urban agricultural land and its contribution to building more sustainable and resilient cities.

If Leppington can evolve to supply both an incredible town centre and a superb community that links to the rest of Sydney, it can also help supply much needed housing diversity, thereby narrowing the liveability inequalities Sydney is currently faced with.

According to the 2021 Local Housing Strategy, Camden LGA favours greater dwelling diversity and assumes that, over time, “more people will choose to live in higher density housing located in high amenity areas, well-supported by infrastructure”.

Aland’s vision for Leppington Town Centre is that of a truly magnetic destination, a place where people from all walks of life are drawn to and feel welcome in, and a place that supports the goals of local Council, contributes significantly to the evolution of Greater Sydney, and is part of the future prosperity and wellbeing of the west in general.

By combining state-of-the-art transport infrastructure, quick connections with major employment and activity hubs, high quality residential development, spectacular landscape design, an abundance of local amenity and a unique civic jewel, Aland believes this Town Centre will incentivise individuals and businesses alike to move to, build in, invest in, and grow in Leppington and the Camden LGA more broadly.

George Tadrosse,  
CEO, ALAND

# 01 Leppington, the place



1.1

# Leppington History

*Just under 40 kilometres south-west of the Sydney central business district and located in the local government area of Camden, the area now known as Leppington was traditionally home to the Darug people. Since Colonial times this district has been central to the progress and expansion of Sydney and, in the 21st century, it is clear this tradition endures.*

## PRE-EUROPEAN SETTLEMENT

Leppington is thought to have been home to the Darug people for tens of thousands of years. Archaeological research has revealed a landscape that fulfilled numerous important roles, with some locations designated for everyday activities such as cooking, sleeping and the making and using of tools, while others were set aside for special purposes and possibly ceremonial events. To this end Leppington has been a place of shelter, industry, and community for thousands of years.

To recognise the important influence of these themes and this history, engagement with relevant stakeholders will be undertaken to ensure the vision for the development of Leppington Town Centre is created in alignment with the NSW Draft Design for Country Framework. In this way Leppington can grow as a place that respects and nurtures local country and living Indigenous culture. All planning proposals and subsequent DAs will aim to support this framework.



## 18TH AND 19TH CENTURY LEPPINGTON

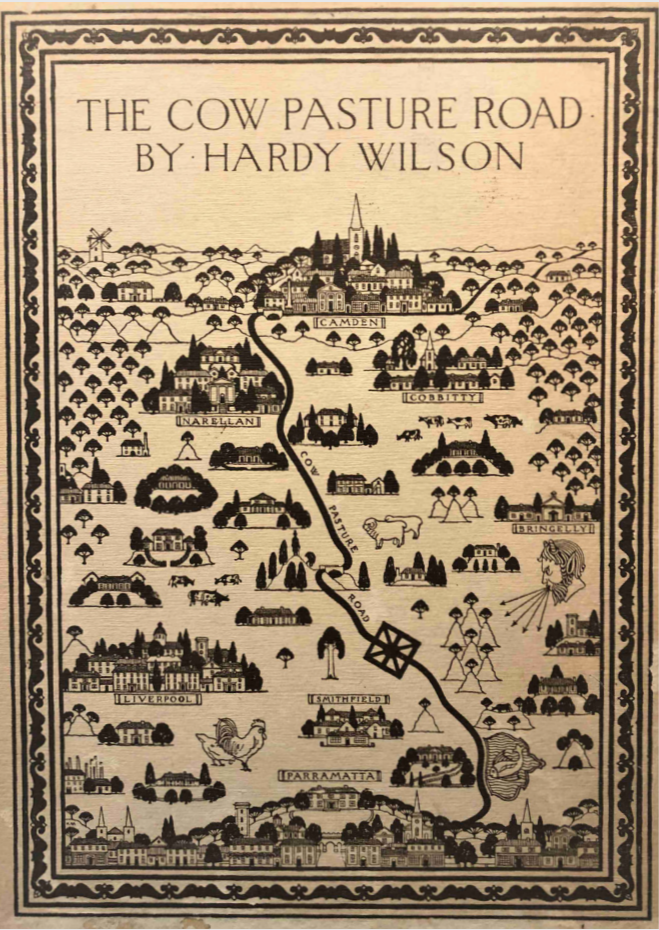
The name Leppington itself serves as a reminder of how prominent the area was in the early days of European settlement. As Liverpool grew, the land surrounding it became more valuable. As such it was granted to a mix of government officials, ex-soldiers, wealthy settlers and emancipist farmers. The size of each grant was often dependent on the standing in the community and the financial situation of the grantee. Members of the colonial elite received large pastoral grants of 400 acres or more, while ex-soldiers, emancipists and native-born people often received smaller grants of 100 acres or less.

This period had a profound influence on the pattern of settlement of the area, forming the boundaries of numerous original land grants and facilitating transport, communication and growth throughout the region. Cowpasture Road was the earliest road in the Liverpool area and formed a significant boundary.

One such colonial elite was William Cordeaux who arrived in the colony in 1817 on the convict transport ‘Friendship’. Tasked with overseeing the provision section of the Commissariat in Sydney, within four years he was granted a substantial tract of land which he named Leppington Park.

Cordeaux’s original homestead, built by convict labour, included a huge two-storey home with its own private ballroom. Convicts also worked in Cordeaux’s fields. During the 1930s the Camden News said: “The situation for such an old homestead is ideal, and commands a panoramic view on either side, such places as the Sanatorium at Wentworth Falls, Sydney Harbour Bridge, Blue Mountains round to The Gib at Bowral are easily picked out.”

The home was destroyed by fire in the 1940s and the army used the site for target practice. The bricks at the base of the outdoor stage at Leppington School came from this building.



**20TH CENTURY LEPPINGTON**

Over time Leppington’s changing physical landscape can also be seen as a cultural landscape; it is a remarkable expression of human intervention based on primary industry combined with two main periods of land sale, one in the early 20th century and another in the mid 20th century.

In 1914 part of Leppington was subdivided as the Raby Estate, named after the Raby property, comprised of around 3,269 acres. This subdivision was developed by Arthur Rickard & Co. Rickard was a high-profile businessman who started his real estate company in 1904 and developed strikingly illustrated advertisements for the sale of land, started a magazine in 1909, Rickard’s Reality Review, and was named by The Sun newspaper as “Sydney’s subdivisional specialist”. People interested in buying a lot would be met by a sulky carriage either at Ingleburn or at the coach crossing at the Water Canal Bringelly Road. Rickard Road – still in use today – in the estate was named after the developer.

In the years immediately before and after WWII the Austral and Leppington districts underwent a major phase of development and agricultural intensification via an influx of new migrant settlers from Europe, particularly from southern Italy and Yugoslavia. These families, many of whom had been farmers or rural workers back home, found a ready local agricultural economy in Austral and Leppington, based on intensive small-scale farming.

Historic subdivision patterns remained substantially intact, and much of the land retained a distinct semi-rural character, with houses flanked by open paddocks, market gardens, and the occasional poultry farm.

From the 1980s, a new wave of migrants from Vietnam and Cambodia contributed to the ongoing success of the market gardening industry in the Austral and Leppington area. These gardens continued to supply a significant proportion of the fresh vegetables consumed by the population of Sydney.

**From the 1980s, a new wave of migrants from Vietnam and Cambodia contributed to the ongoing success of the market gardening industry in the Austral and Leppington area. These gardens continued to supply a significant proportion of the fresh vegetables consumed by the population of Sydney.**



**LEPPINGTON TODAY**

Today, Leppington finds itself once again an influential player in the story of a growing Sydney, located as it is in Camden, one of the fastest growing local government areas in Australia. State government planning data predicts the population here will grow by 83 per cent in the next 20 years.

Leppington, bordered by Austral, Rossmore, Edmondson Park, and Gledswood Hills, features a diverse neighbourhood with some of its residents coming from Italy, China, England, Lebanon and Malta.

Modern Leppington is now part of Sydney’s South West Growth Area (SWGA) which was established by the State Environmental Planning Policy (Precincts - Western Parkland City 2021). The SWGA is designed to streamline the land release process for the delivery of new communities, homes, employment areas, health and education facilities, supported through the provision of adequate infrastructure within greenfield areas. As such, Leppington has the focus of the NSW State Government when it comes to new communities and precincts. Neighbouring areas such as Oran Park, Turner Road, Austral, Edmondson Park, Catherine Field, Glenfield and South Creek West are included in this work.

1.2

# Leppington Town Centre

## CAMDEN LGA

Camden LGA has been subject to significant urban development over the past decade, with the number of homes increasing from nearly 11,000 in 1996 to just over 26,000 in 2016. Camden LGA is forecast to see the largest housing growth of any Greater Sydney council between 2016 and 2036. This housing growth is the result of extraordinary population growth – from 122,926 people in 2021 to a forecast of 233,299 people by 2036.

## LEPPINGTON PROFILE

The age distribution of Leppington is skewed towards a slightly older population at present, with recent data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics listing the median age of residents as 35 years. Of the approximate 4,000 residents, children aged 0-14 comprise 21.2 per cent, while young people aged 15-29 account for 20 per cent of the population. In 2019, the largest industries in terms of employment were construction, retail trade, health care and social assistance, and education and training. With the area’s ongoing residential development, it is anticipated that young families and professionals chasing larger, yet more affordable homes will continue to flock to the area.

As a developing suburb Leppington boasts several newly opened, state-of-the-art facilities, and has proven especially popular with young families and retirees seeking a relaxed style of living. The government is anticipating a high proportion of growth in apartment housing and applications.

Already one of the fastest growing areas in the southwest, an initial stage of rezoning saw new community centres, schools, and upgrades to Camden Valley Way take place. In February 2015 Leppington’s own railway station opened. The new terminus forms part of the South West Rail Link and, since 2019, more concentrated housing has been organised nearby.

In terms of local attractions, Leppington has a main sporting venue called the Leppington Oval and the suburb’s new lifestyle corridor is set to rise along Rickard Road. Currently, residents can shop in nearby suburbs including the Crossroads Homemaker Centre and Costco in Casula. Green Valley, approximately 20 minutes away, also has The Valley Plaza, home to restaurants, a pharmacy, Coles, Woolworths, and a medical facility. In addition, Leppington residents have access to the smaller and more local shops of Willowdale Shopping Centre.

## TOWN CENTRE LOCATION AND CONTEXT

Published in 2021, Camden’s Local Housing Strategy identified Leppington Town Centre as follows: “A strategic Centre in both the Region Plan, the District Plan and the LSPS. It will be connected to the Western Sydney Airport (WSA) via an extension of the existing rail line (identified in Future Transport Strategy 2056). The town centre will form an integral social and economic link between the WSA and South West Sydney, complementing the concept of a 30-minute city.”

The Leppington Town Centre site is on the T2 Airport, Inner West and South train lines. It takes around 45 minutes to reach the Domestic Airport terminal, and around 15 minutes to reach the Liverpool CBD by train from this precinct. Such incredible accessibility means Leppington has the potential to provide new local jobs and connections to economic centres in the CBD, Western Sydney and Sydney’s South West Growth Centre. Accordingly, strategic planning is underway to deliver jobs, community facilities, homes and schools in time with demands of the growing community.

The area is largely serviced by Camden Valley Way and Bringelly Road, both of which connect the suburb to the Sydney CBD via the Western Motorway. While travel via car to the city is an approximate 60-minute journey, transport via Sydney Metro takes a slightly longer 75-minutes. Leppington and Edmondson Park Railway Stations are both closely located to the main areas of the suburb, with access to several different bus routes also available from there.

In March 2013, Leppington’s Town Centre was rezoned for urban development under State Environmental Planning Policy (Sydney Region Growth Centres) 2006, as part of the Austral and Leppington North Precinct. In July 2017, the NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment (DPIE) commenced a review of planning controls for the site, looking at the scope for new homes and jobs close to Leppington Train Station. In November 2019, the NSW Government announced that Camden and Liverpool Councils would lead the Leppington Town Centre Review, which would progress as a Council-led Planning Proposal.

Since the initial rezoning of the Town Centre in 2013 numerous changes have occurred. These include the opening of Leppington Train Station, a commitment to deliver the Western Sydney International Airport, advocacy for the extension of the railway line to the airport and the identification of the Leppington Town Centre as a Strategic Centre by the NSW Government. These changes will have a natural and significant impact on forthcoming rezoning.



# 02 Leppington & Greater Sydney



2.1

# Western thinking: Future Sydney

## A NEW ERA OF TRANSFORMATION

Housing two of the six cities, Western Sydney is a core region in the Six Cities vision for New South Wales. This vision aims to deliver a series of interconnected, dynamic and resilient places, each with its own clear and unique identity. This enhanced connectivity is needed to support and attract new economic industries at a global scale, increase opportunities for housing choice and support overall quality of life.

In its 2022-23 Budget Papers, the NSW Government described its vision for the region in terms of delivering “a once-in-a-generation economic and community transformation of Western Sydney”.

Sydney’s west is enjoying unprecedented levels of investment in infrastructure. Over the next five years this investment will top \$218 billion, with annual spending set to hit \$52 billion by 2023. Most of the investment will be in the transport sector, primarily in road and rail, with transport consuming 80 per cent of all resources according to Infrastructure Australia.

With a growing population, significant infrastructure investments, thriving industries and greater connectivity to other key regions in New South Wales, Western Sydney is well situated to drive the State’s economic expansion.

Nevertheless, it takes more than physical infrastructure to create a prosperous community. It requires adopting a true community lens, including one which deeply understands the evolving community demographic and their needs.

## MASSIVE INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT

As part of NSW’s new state-wide approach to precinct planning, Leppington benefits from a system focused on planning around people, places, public spaces and the environment. In addition, Leppington, as a newly released precinct within the South West Growth Area, will see exponential growth in infrastructure development as part of the integrated planning and city-shaping approach. As such, investors and home buyers will be looking at Leppington and neighbouring Austral as a purposefully designed residential location rarely found in other regions across Sydney.



A core factor for any precinct’s growth is the transport infrastructure connecting local, district and metropolitan communities. The \$8.3 billion Sydney Metro Northwest line is now complete, connecting Tallawong to Chatswood. The Federal and NSW State Governments have agreed to fund a \$7 billion north-south rail link to run from St Mary’s in North West Sydney down to Badgerys Creek Airport and later further to Macarthur.

This new rail link is designed to position residents within a 30-minute commute with up to 200,000 jobs across ‘Western Parkland City’ in the next 20 years. An additional South West Rail Link Extension will also connect Leppington Station to the North South Link meaning residents can benefit even more from Greater Sydney’s master plan.

At the same time, \$3.6 billion in road packages include a \$1.6 billion Northern road upgrade, a new \$1.3 billion M12 motorway connecting directly to the M7 motorway from the Western Sydney Airport and an additional \$509 million upgrade to Bringelly road which will form a substantial network to ensure connectivity in the Western City.

Also in the vicinity is the Outer Sydney Orbital M9 motorway which will be built within the same transport “supercorridor” as the north-south airport metro line and the Western Sydney freight line - each to be constructed between the Western Sydney Aerotropolis and St Marys. The Outer Sydney Orbital will stretch from Richmond Rd, Marsden Park in the north to the Hume Motorway near Douglas Park in the south.

Aside from all this highly practical “hard infrastructure”, Western Sydney is also the subject of significant investment within crucial civic built environments, natural landscapes and outdoor assets. From the cosmopolitan buzz and business epicentre that is now Parramatta Square to the beauty, diversity and emerging facilities at both Penrith and Parramatta Lakes, the scope and size of Sydney’s west cannot be underestimated, nor the incredible quality of life it offers for residents of Leppington and beyond.

## A CULTURALLY DIVERSE POPULATION

According to Deloitte findings, Sydney’s west is younger and one of the most ethnically diverse regions in Australia, with 35 per cent of residents born overseas and 39 per cent speaking a language other than English at home. This also makes it one of the most culturally and linguistically diverse places in the country; it is a key arrival point for refugees and new migrants when they first settle here.

The majority of new immigrants (60 per cent) who come to Australia settle in Greater Western Sydney. Over the past decade, half of these arrivals were from Iraq and Sudan. Currently the largest groups include people from Sudan, India, China, Philippines, Lebanon, Korea, Sri Lanka, Fiji, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iran, Hong Kong, Nepal, Vietnam, Malaysia, Turkey, Iraq and Bangladesh.

**A SOCIOECONOMICALLY  
CHALLENGED POWERHOUSE**

As well as being one of the fastest growing populations in Australia, Western Sydney is the third largest economy in Australia behind the Sydney and Melbourne CBDs, producing 31 per cent of Sydney’s Gross Regional Product (\$104 billion).

Despite this rich makeup and dynamism, Greater Western Sydney has traditionally had higher than average unemployment and lower than average salary levels. It also has the dubious reputation for high levels of mortgage stress and rental stress. The region is heavily car dependent, with resulting impacts on air quality, health, quality of life and household budgets.

*Data taken from the Australian Bureau of Statistics Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA) indicates that there are two extremes on the socioeconomic spectrum between eastern/northern and western Sydney:*

**Sydney’s western suburbs have higher levels of disadvantage than its eastern suburbs (placed in the 33rd percentile of disadvantage nationally).**

**Western Sydney has a higher unemployment rate (7.1 per cent) than Greater Sydney (6.0 per cent) (2020).**

**Western Sydney contains the metropolitan area’s most disadvantaged LGA in Fairfield (with a score of 856), while northern and eastern Sydney contains the most advantaged LGA in Woollahra (with a score of 1,115) and Ku-ring-gai in the Northern Suburbs.**

**People from Western Sydney are \$15,000 a year worse off than their colleagues in the eastern city.**

**Factors contributing to the divide between eastern and western Sydney include difficult access in the west to public transport, availability of cultural institutions, and quality educational facilities and institutions.**

**LEPPINGTON – A KEY NODE IN THE NEW WEST**

Leppington, about 40km south-west of the Sydney CBD, is one of the city’s new growth hotspots, one that will benefit from the development of Western Sydney Airport at nearby Badgery’s Creek as well as other surrounding major infrastructure projects. As part of the Metropolitan Plan for Sydney 2036 (prepared by NSW Department of planning), several specialised business centres are destined to emerge throughout Sydney, particularly in an economic arc known as the ‘Global Economic Corridor’, stretching from Sydney Airport and Port Botany in the south through the city centre and North Sydney to Macquarie Park in the north.

The Parramatta to Epping Rail Link, jointly announced by the NSW and Federal Governments in 2010, is the key to providing important planned connections to the Global Economic Corridor, which is also being facilitated by the South West Rail Link between Glenfield and Leppington, servicing the South West Growth Centre.

The vision underpinning the Metropolitan Plan for Sydney sees specialised (employment) centres growing and emerging in response to blossoming business sectors, developing specific characteristics around, for example, research, logistics, education or health science.

Paramount to this vision is the strengthening of Parramatta’s role as Sydney’s second CBD, while seeing Liverpool and Penrith mature and develop a role similar to Parramatta’s within their respective catchments over the medium to longer term. These major centres will cater for, and grow in response to, the expanding and changing population, concentrating major shopping destinations, local jobs and services near homes within subregional catchments.

Subsequently, as one of the major gateways to the Western Sydney Airport, as well as these “major centres”, Leppington is set to become a prominent hub for residential and business activities.



“The diversity of Western Sydney is a local treasure – and it is also a national asset. It enriches our cultural life – and it drives our economic growth. One of the great things about this area, through the generations, is the culture of aspiration and entrepreneurship and innovation. The willingness to work hard and take risks, to start businesses and create jobs. We all benefit from that.”

31ST PRIME MINISTER OF AUSTRALIA, ANTHONY ALBANESE,  
2022 LACHLAN MACQUARIE LECTURE –  
WESTERN SYDNEY LEADERSHIP DIALOGUE, SYDNEY

**WHAT THE NEW RAIL INFRASTRUCTURE  
MEANS FOR LEPPINGTON:**

*41 mins from Leppington Station  
to Parramatta Station*

*51 mins from Leppington Station  
to Central Station*

2.2

# Western Parkland City

To address and prepare for Sydney’s increasing population, the Greater Sydney Region Plan seeks to transform Greater Sydney into a metropolis of three cities – each with its own CBD. (This plan is set to be superseded by the Six Cities Vision in 2023.)

As the population of Greater Sydney is projected to grow to eight million over the next 40 years, and with almost half of that population residing west of Parramatta, rebalancing economic and social opportunities will leverage that growth, delivering benefits more equally and equitably across Greater Sydney.

One member of the planned trio (with the Central River City and the Eastern Harbour City) is Western Parkland City, encompassing the Camden LGA, where a \$5.3 billion investment into Western Sydney Airport (Badgerys Creek) is set to make this Australia’s Aerotropolis city of the future.

It is hoped the airport will transform Western Sydney, creating thousands of jobs and encouraging economic growth and investing in the region.

The Western Sydney City Deal, a partnership of the Australian Government, NSW Government and the local governments of the Blue Mountains, Camden, Campbelltown, Fairfield, Hawkesbury, Liverpool, Penrith and Wollondilly, will be instrumental in delivering on the aspirations of the Western Parkland City.

Already tens of billions have been invested in the new airport, road network and north-south metro train line. This makes the Western Parkland City a key area for investors to focus on, and Leppington in particular, which has one of only two train stations south of the M4 and west of the M7.



This makes the Western Parkland City a key area for investors to focus on, and Leppington in particular, which has one of only two train stations south of the M4 and west of the M7.

# A Polycentric Solution

30

“Having three cities, each with supporting metropolitan and strategic centres, will put workers closer to knowledge-intensive jobs, city-scale infrastructure and services, entertainment and cultural facilities.”

A METROPOLIS OF THREE CITIES, GREATER SYDNEY COMMISSION

3.1

# Sydney’s low density, sprawling past

## WESTERN SYDNEY’S VANISHING PERI-URBAN AGRICULTURAL LAND

Research published in 2022 from Western Sydney University (WSU) shows Western Sydney may have lost as much as 60 per cent of its agricultural land over the past decade. Based on Australian Bureau of Statistics data for land use by mesh blocks (the smallest geographic areas defined by the ABS), WSU found the worst-affected council areas over this period were The Hills Shire, Blacktown, Camden (lost 26 per cent) and Campbelltown.

Such findings are significant because this district has long been seen as the food bowl of Greater Sydney, producing more than three-quarters of the total value of agricultural produce in the metropolitan region. Previously, the city has relied heavily on Western Sydney for livestock, vegetables, eggs, grapes and nuts.

Greater Western Sydney (GWS) is one of the fastest growing peri-urban regions in Australia and, as such, various tensions have emerged in terms of balancing population growth and housing pressures with protecting existing peri-urban agricultural land. The loss of productive land around our major cities is an increasingly urgent issue for our food security. Perishable foods grown close to urban markets not only reduce transport and energy costs, and emissions, but also improve a city’s food security.

The question now is whether urban growth imperatives should continue to take priority over the preservation of agricultural and rural lands, and other natural resources.

Historically, the NSW government has looked to Western Sydney to accommodate Greater Sydney’s growing population. As such attempts have been made to concentrate new development in two designated growth areas – the North-West and South-West – from 2006 onwards. Local councils in these areas have set aside policies to retain productive farmland to accommodate state government growth plans. Satellite imagery for the period between 2015 and 2021 shows slow but steady residential sprawl occurring in suburbs even further than the two designated growth areas.

Sydney is not an outlier when it comes to this scenario. Cities globally have witnessed rapid growth, with the world’s population becoming more urban than rural over the last decade. In Australia, this has led to rapid urban expansion into the peri-urban fringes to provide housing and services for its population. As city regions around the world continue to struggle with a range of crises, there is an increased pressure on those involved in planning, and public and private development, to consider the overall benefits of peri-urban agricultural land and its contribution to building more sustainable and resilient cities.



As city regions around the world continue to struggle with a range of crises, there is an increased pressure on those involved in planning, and public and private development, to consider the overall benefits of peri-urban agricultural land and its contribution to building more sustainable and resilient cities.

SPRAWL WITHOUT SERVICES

In 2019, as then Planning Minister for NSW, Rob Stokes described his government’s vision for development in Western Sydney in terms of having “more jobs locally by focusing on growth in centres, but also having a series of new towns separated by landscape breaks to recognise the rural feel of the place that people have told us is really important.” More recently, in his Cities and Infrastructure role, he doubled down on this, saying new suburbs must avoid the “inefficient sprawl” that characterised much of Sydney’s post-war development.

In 2021 ABC News reported on new suburbs across Australia, and Western Sydney in particular, where key infrastructure was struggling to keep up with rapid housing growth. While government invests tens of billions of dollars in infrastructure across Greater Western Sydney, experts and local politicians were warning a lag in delivery meant “these suburbs [would] have no chance of becoming successful communities”.

Describing the suburb of Austral, a 10-minute drive from Leppington, one resident complained of a “lack of public schools, lack of parks ... no libraries, no community centres, so a real lack of social and community infrastructure”. In the ABC report University of Sydney researcher Jennifer Kent said some residents in the area were doing “extreme commutes” of more than 90 minutes each way every day. She pointed out that schools, shops, services, and green open spaces were required, “then the [houses and] people can come”.

Commutes are just one aspect of sprawl with serious consequences for our communities. In 2019, in an article titled ‘Why Sydney’s urban sprawl is harmful to your health’,

Professor Trevor Shilton, the Heart Foundation’s director of active living, told the Sydney Morning Herald that Sydney’s sprawl was affecting the health of people living in outer suburbs “because long commutes and traffic congestion robbed them of time for recreation and physical activity”. Residents living in poorly planned areas also have less access to healthy fresh foods and fewer opportunities for exercise. “People in these communities tend to have higher body mass index, lower levels of physical activity, higher blood pressure and higher levels of heart disease,” Professor Shilton said.

The Committee for Sydney (2017) found people living in western Sydney were twice as likely to die from cardiovascular diseases like heart failure and stroke as well as high rates of diabetes and obesity, which it blamed on a lack of walkability and access to public transport. The Committee’s chief executive Gabriel Metcalf said greenfield development can be good if it is clustered into compact, walkable patterns and close to good public transport.

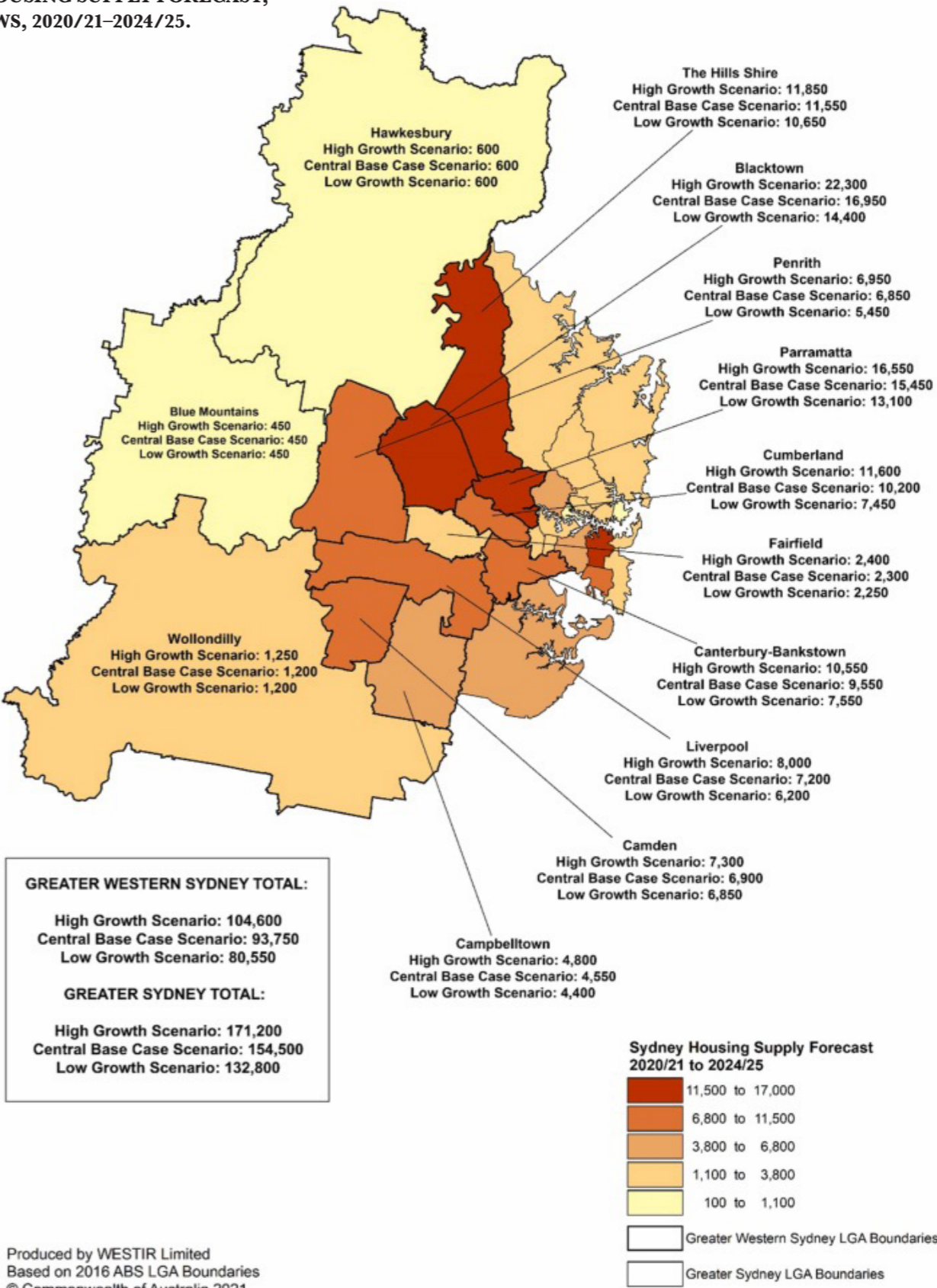
In June 2022 Urban Taskforce chief executive Tom Forrest told the Sydney Morning Herald, “There is a case for house and land packages – but there is also a case for increasing the height and density within existing built-up areas, particularly when they are serviced by public transport, or there is spare infrastructure capacity available.”

The development of well-designed, high-performing and higher-density infill housing can, in fact, protect existing suburbs from the poorer-quality infill that is occurring, while allowing the benefits of an enhanced public realm to be shared.

Cities and Infrastructure Minister  
Rob Stokes is on the record as saying  
new suburbs must avoid the  
“inefficient sprawl” that characterised  
much of Sydney’s post-war development.

SYDNEY MORNING HERALD, 12 JUNE 2022

HOUSING SUPPLY FORECAST,  
GWS, 2020/21–2024/25.



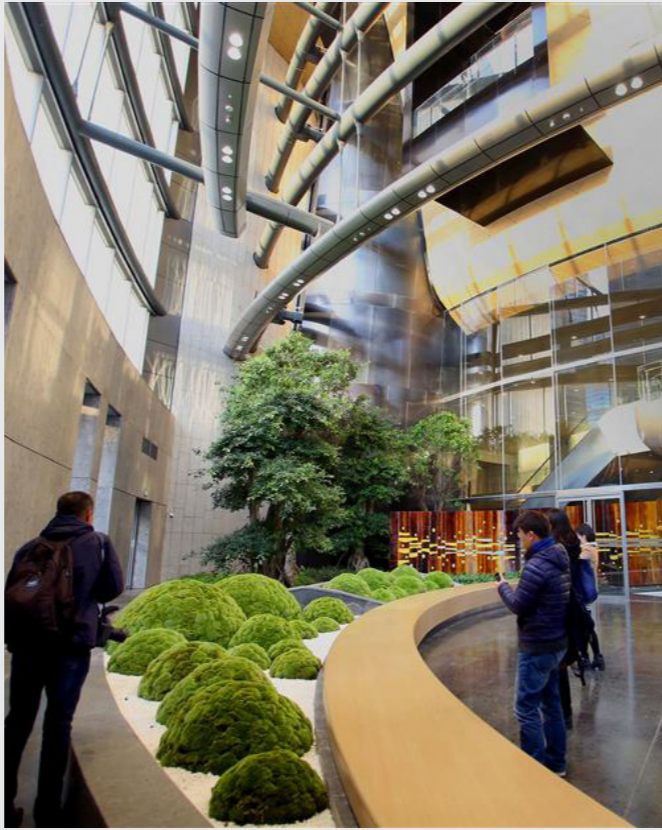
3.2

# The polycentric concept

The era of the traditional metropolis, with a central business core surrounded by rings of decreasing density, may no longer be sustainable. As we approach a new normal for urban density, cities that are best positioned for the future are evolving along a polycentric, multi-nodal model. As it becomes polycentric, a city starts to take on an undulating form, with waves of density rising into a series of peaks across the skyline.

A polycentric city has numerous centres of employment, economic or social activity. The clustering of companies, services and industries closer together aids economic opportunities, partnerships and performance. Localised labour markets and residential zones minimise long commutes and create a sense of place and neighbourhood.

In the polycentric model, people move or flow from one place to another. Employment centres attract this flow and residential areas produce it. In this way a city becomes a collection of locations that interact dynamically, connected by daily commuting flows.



3.3

# Vertical urbanism

When we think of cities, and particularly of the open spaces that make them vibrant and dynamic places, we tend to think of only one level, the ground plane. Yet cities are multi-dimensional places, where people spend time on levels ranging from subways to the topmost floors and even rooftops of tall buildings. Because of this we need to start thinking of our urban fabric in a more encompassing, three-dimensional way. We need to reimagine urbanism and the “intersections” of people and experiences that make a city vibrant in a way that includes the vertical dimension.

Vertical mixed-use towers are both pragmatic and affordable. They make efficient use of space and pull a host of amenities into a single building. The best tenants are attracted to amenity rich, transit-served destinations where the mixed-use “mix” stays fresh, an achievement made possible through curated offerings and 24/7 events.

## VERTICAL CAN BE ABOUT NATURE – THE HIGH LINE

While the idea of vertical urbanism might challenge conventional thinking, it’s much more achievable and relevant than it sounds. A decade ago, no one would have believed that Manhattan had enough available land to support a new 395-acre park on the Lower West Side, without tearing down any existing buildings. And yet, it did: The High Line is now one of the city’s great attractions, located atop an out-of-use rail line. We need to apply similar thinking – looking for other open spaces where we can gather and enjoy the city, its parks and public places – beyond the street level.



## VERTICAL CAN BE ABOUT HERITAGE – THE SHANGHAI TOWER

Undoubtedly one of the most ambitious examples of vertical urbanism is found within the Shanghai Tower (by Gensler), located in an area often dubbed the ‘Wall Street of China’.

One of the world’s tallest buildings, the concept behind the Shanghai Tower was to take the ‘traditional’ Shanghai street - including its mobility patterns, street life, courtyards, and social mix - and transfer it into a vertical form. Each of the building’s ‘neighbourhoods’ rises from a sky lobby at its base – a light-filled garden atrium that fosters community and supports daily life. The sky lobbies bring people together throughout the day in settings that recall the city’s historic landscaped courtyards.

In terms of street life, the tower has a variety of ‘culture zones’ including sky gardens, business and leisure areas, hotel accommodation, as well as a dedicated museum and landscaping on the 37th floor; people don’t have to travel far away, horizontally, to see a museum, they can go vertically instead. The 632-metre tower is also a global financial centre.

The ground floor becomes an open market linked to the subway network but is also accessed from a dedicated bus lay-by (a public transport innovation almost unheard of in these parts).

3.4

# Leppington, perfect for polycentric

## COMMITTEE FOR SYDNEY – TRAINS AND HOUSING

Within the next 20 years, just under half (45 per cent) of Sydney’s population could be living within walking distance of a train station, creating up to 327,000 dwellings in highly accessible locations with great amenities. Sydney’s rail infrastructure boom could shape great precincts and deliver nearly half the city’s housing needs over the next 20 years.

Recently, the Committee for Sydney released a report called ‘Rethinking Station Precincts’, using analysis by SGS Economics and Planning. The report found that major transport upgrades - such as the Sydney Metro and light rail projects - could create multiple miniature city centres, potentially solving Sydney’s housing crisis.

The Committee’s then CEO (and the report’s co-author), Gabriel Metcalf, describes now as a time when Sydney could create “amazing places that will stand the test of time, and grow into much loved neighbourhoods”. But he also says rail infrastructure needs “complementary additional investment, to deliver world-class public domain, open space, active local transport and other health and education community facilities”.

When the current round of rail projects is completed, Sydney will have 338 rail stations. ‘Rethinking Station Precincts’ stated that, done right, this new and powerful network of great station precincts could support a polycentric growth model for Sydney. The report also warned that a failure to support the next wave of station development with appropriate measures could lead to Sydney’s continued sprawl.

## TOO MUCH COMPETITION FOR COMMERCIAL

Underpinning the “three cities” approach championed within the Greater Sydney Region Plan was the goal of achieving 30-minute cities, where the community has access to jobs and services in three largely self-contained but connected regions, resulting in a polycentric Sydney.

With so much of Sydney’s west now being planned and developed as high-profile commercial zones, boasting fit-for-purpose infrastructure and early anchor tenants, the chance for nearby areas such as Leppington to genuinely compete as industry and employment hubs is diminishing. Indeed, to produce the type of interaction needed for a harmonious and prosperous polycentric Sydney, the crucial role for a place like Leppington arguably rests more at the residential level.

## LEPPINGTON NEEDS PEOPLE

The delivery of diverse housing supply in great urban centres based on 30-minute city principles, with key opportunities around new transport hubs, plays an important part in resolving the housing supply and affordability crisis NSW is facing.

More than ever Sydney’s west needs beautiful, busy and vibrant living centres where people can enjoy short commutes to progressive, sustainable employment. As Western Parkland City fulfils its potential, demand for high quality residential centres will steadily rise. As more and more jobs and opportunities emerge in this district, more people will be looking to live nearby, in homes, environments and communities commensurate with the highest quality of living in Australia.

Released in October 2022, the ‘South West Rail Link Extension Report’ (prepared by UDIA NSW and Professor David Levinson at the University of Sydney) said that Sydney’s ability to maintain global competitiveness into the future depends on building access to cities and centres.

The report said “city shaping infrastructure projects” present a critical opportunity to increase accessibility in Sydney’s high-growth LGAs, delivering the housing diversity and density required and bringing jobs and homes closer, maximising public transport use.

Steve Mann, CEO UDIA NSW, said the report showed that “NSW needs to take full advantage of the future transport hub opportunities available in Greater Western Sydney, with a notable example being the proposed South-West Rail Link (SWRL) Extension, linking the Nancy Bird Walton Airport and Aerotropolis to Leppington and through to Glenfield.”

## LEPPINGTON – DELIVERING A BETTER PRICE POINT

Generally land values in western Sydney are lower than other districts. The advantage of this can and should be passed on to local homebuyers. Capitalising on Leppington’s strategic location within the “new west”, with direct links to the aerotropolis, local nodes, the CBD and more, this Town Centre can be positioned to attract and cater for a vast range of modern households. Already a place popular with people newly arrived in New South Wales, and now serviced by superior public transport services, Leppington is perfectly placed to fulfill the needs of a new generation of Australians, providing access to abundant employment opportunities, a great lifestyle and a greater range of price points and housing variations than anywhere else in Sydney.



3.5

# Sydney’s housing crisis

## INCREASED SUPPLY TO RELIEVE PRESSURE

The 2021 Sydney Housing Supply Forecast showed that, despite the impacts of COVID-19, the NSW population would continue to grow, and underlying demand for housing would remain strong. It highlighted the need to continue delivering new housing to meet the needs of a growing and ageing population.

In July 2022 analysis from the Property Council of Australia and Gyde Consulting showed an underlying deficit of housing supply in Greater Sydney. While conversations overall in the media tend to focus on a lack of housing in Sydney generally and in the inner-city particularly, the Property Council’s NSW Executive Director Luke Achterstraat observed that each year the dwelling targets are not met exacerbates deficits and worsens the affordability crisis. He also said that, to keep pace with future demand, “Western Sydney requires the delivery of 25,530 dwellings per year - and we are presently 6,000 homes short of this number.”

Mr Achterstraat called for careful planning and renewal of the region’s town centres, adding that “new housing in existing communities supported by fresh infrastructure and additional services has the opportunity to improve everyone’s quality of life”. Leppington is in the perfect position to assist with Sydney’s wider housing challenges. In general house prices in Western Sydney tend to be more affordable than in other parts. CoreLogic’s ‘Mapping the Market’ (October 2022) showed the median value of Leppington’s house market to be \$1,146,114, a still substantial figure for many new and low-income purchasers. Development in this location, therefore, can play

an essential and meaningful role when it comes to providing affordable housing, essentially changing lives for the better for generations to come.

Leppington can deliver the targeted supply of housing Sydney requires. It can be nuanced to meet specific and genuine community need, responding to and meeting the requirements and budgetary limitations of a broad range of citizens. This is a town centre that can significantly increase supply, using metrics that people can actually afford, whether they are choosing to purchase or rent their homes.

Department of Planning and Environment projections for the next five years show that most Western Sydney councils will not meet the home building targets they agreed with the Greater Sydney Commission by as much as 46 per cent.

Polling in May 2019 released by Ipsos and the Committee for Sydney showed most Sydney locations sat on or below the national average in relation to housing affordability. While rent in the west may be lower overall than in areas closer to Sydney’s CBD, James Hulme, Director of Advocacy for the Committee for Sydney, said the data demonstrated the “pressures on our famed liveability, particularly due to a high cost of housing and congestion.” He also pointed to the “sharp divide between east and west Sydney”. “Whilst housing might be more affordable in the west, access to public transport and high-quality healthcare is more difficult to obtain. As western Sydney grows, it’s vital that we close the gap in these areas to make all of our city much more liveable,” Mr Hulme said.



## MORE DIVERSITY. MORE INCLUSION.

Sydney’s median house price is 15 times more than the average household income, putting it only behind Hong Kong where house prices are 23 times the household income. The 2021 census revealed that the rate of homeownership in Sydney had fallen over the last five years, and one in five of the city’s home loan borrowers was under mortgage stress, despite a long period of record-low interest rates. A recent study by the Urban Reform Institute and the Frontier Centre for Public Policy revealed that Australia’s most populous city is not only the most expensive to purchase a property in Australia but is the second most expensive city to buy a home worldwide. This also has knock-on effects for renters.

Planning for housing needs to consider the type of dwellings required to respond to expected changes in Australia’s household and age structures, and to accommodate people’s financial circumstances. A well-designed home in the right location can allow for more independent living arrangements, increased community connection and access to informal supports, for people of all walks of life but especially those with special needs or the elderly. Across the board Sydney needs to increase more specialised housing stock as well as general housing, to cater for everyone from National Disability Insurance Scheme participants to key workers and those interested in build-to-rent options.

A lack of housing diversity can be remedied through the provision of a more comprehensive range of homes, from single dwellings with granny flats, to dual occupancies and townhouses, low-rise apartments, and larger-scale mixed use developments in thriving local and strategic centres.

Developing amenities and social infrastructure alongside a greater supply of housing is critical to creating quality, equitable places in which people thrive. Our cities need to support people’s access to economic opportunity and amenity, but also a sense of social connection and belonging, plus healthy lifestyles.

*Developing amenities and social infrastructure alongside a greater supply of housing is critical to creating quality, equitable places in which people thrive.*

LEPPINGTON AND APARTMENT LIVING BENCHMARKS

As house prices soar to record levels across capital cities, an increasing number of younger Australians are giving up on the hope of owning a house with a backyard. Raising a family in an apartment is fast becoming the new, compact Australian dream.

On top of the old idea of owning a home on a quarter-acre block now becoming financially unrealistic for many families, there is also an increasing desire to live in walkable suburbs close to amenity, education and employment, in built-up areas. This preparedness to live in more densely populated areas can be seen as an anecdote to urban sprawl which is another recognised problem in modern Australia.

A survey of Australians undertaken by the Heart Foundation found that people considered factors such as proximity to shops and services, access to public transport, and a safe neighbourhood all equally or more important when choosing where to live. The top three features deemed most important were a sense of place, access to healthy food, and housing diversity.

In 2021 about 1.3 million people in Australia were living in apartments, an increase of 1.1 per cent compared to 2016. Today, while single-person households still account for the largest proportion of apartment dwellers, the second largest cohort of households living in apartments is couples with children. Statistics also show more than a quarter of permanently occupied apartments in Australia are occupied by families with children.

As a group, apartment-dwelling, one family households increased by 34 per cent between 2006 and 2016, while the number of total households increased by just 18 per cent over the same time. This means that apartment-dwelling families are not just growing in number but also becoming a larger percentage of all Australian households.

But old attitudes about who lives in apartments is evident in Australia’s existing apartment stock, which has an over-representation of one-to two-bedroom apartments designed with singles and childless couples in mind. Apartment designs that exclude families make it difficult for parents with children to consider these residences as long-term homes.

To meet the needs of people as they move through all stages of life, we require developments comprised of a mix of apartment sizes and layouts, including studios, one, two and three-bedrooms. We also need various indoor and outdoor private and communal spaces, alongside access to amenity such as parks, gyms, and other community infrastructure.

All in all, if Leppington can evolve to supply both an incredible town centre and a superb community that links to the rest of Sydney, it can also help supply much needed housing diversity, thereby narrowing the liveability inequalities Sydney is currently staring down the barrel.

2021 CAMDEN LOCAL HOUSING STRATEGY

Released in 2021, the Local Housing Strategy (LHS) was developed in response to region, district and local planning policy objectives to set a clear plan for housing in the Camden Local Government Area (LGA) over the next 10 and 20 years. It was based on evidence from 2019 Housing Market Analysis.

As stated in the LHS, current housing policy in the Camden LGA favours greater dwelling diversity and assumes that, over time, “more people will choose to live in higher density housing located in high amenity areas, well-supported by infrastructure”.

The Strategy also said that due to the planned delivery of catalytic infrastructure and other external influences on the LGA (including the WSA and Aerotropolis), it is considered important to explore opportunities “to provide medium to long term capacity for apartments in appropriate centres”.

In addition, the Strategy found that, as the population grows and matures, and suburbs move through their life stages, housing demand would be increasingly shaped by new and existing residents – “some of whom will have preference for smaller housing in high amenity locations”. Because of this, neighbourhoods and housing would need to adapt to these changing demands. “This diversity of housing is not currently being delivered in the LGA”, the strategy observed.

The Local Housing Strategy comprises the following five priorities that underpin Council’s vision for housing in the Camden LGA over the next 10 and 20 years:

1. Providing housing capacity and coordinating growth with infrastructure
2. Delivering resilient, healthy and connected communities
3. Delivering the right housing in the right location
4. Increasing housing choice and diversity
5. Addressing housing affordability

“More people will choose to live in higher density housing located in high amenity areas, well-supported by infrastructure”.

CAMDEN COUNCIL’S 2021 LOCAL HOUSING STRATEGY



**Priority 1:**  
Providing housing capacity and coordinating growth with infrastructure

**Objective 1**  
There is sufficient planning capacity to meet forecast housing demand

**Objective 2**  
Precincts in the SWGA are planned and released to align with enabling infrastructure provision



**Priority 2:**  
Delivering resilient, healthy and connected communities

**Objective 3**  
Housing is well-designed and environmentally sustainable

**Objective 4**  
Neighbourhood design supports healthy and connected communities that are better placed

**Objective 5**  
Increase Camden LGA's green cover and urban tree canopy



**Priority 3:**  
Delivering the right housing in the right location

**Objective 6**  
Housing density is strategically located to activate town centres, promote walkability and optimise infrastructure

**Objective 7**  
Housing growth in established areas is incremental, and preserves character and heritage values

**Objective 8**  
Protect Camden LGA's Rural Lands



**Priority 4:**  
Increasing housing choice and diversity

**Objective 9**  
The mix of housing types matches the changing needs and preferences of the community

**Objective 10**  
Housing is inclusive and caters for an ageing population and People with Disability



**Priority 5:**  
Addressing housing affordability

**Objective 11**  
Support housing that encourages affordability across the housing continuum

**Objective 12**  
Facilitate the delivery of affordable rental housing

# Transport-enhanced neighbourhoods

04



4.1

# Transit-oriented development (TOD)

THE HISTORY

Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) was a term coined in 1982 by architect Peter Calthorpe, co-founder of the Centre for New Urbanism, which aimed at establishing a relationship between transportation and land-use. Because New Urbanism advocated for walkable, human-scaled urban design and planning, TOD was seen as integral, producing mixed-use communities that encourage people to live near transit services and to decrease their dependence on driving.

However, the idea that transit or transport would generate settlements is not a new one, as port towns around the world and the boroughs of New York reflect. Even Le Corbusier (1887 – 1965), one of the pioneers of modern architecture, was a proponent for the walkable city. Chandigarh (India), which he designed in 1950 as Punjab’s new state capital following partition, was approached as a metropolis, employing a grid street pattern and European-style boulevards. The blocks Le Corbusier designed for Chandigarh measure 400 x 800m because 800m was seen as the maximum walkable distance to access the nearest public transport.

Likewise, the Garden City model of city planning, theorised, and practised by Ebenezer Howard in the early 20th century, is considered an early precedent of TOD as we know it. Howard focused on creating satellite cities enabled by rail transit access. In retrospect, Le Corbusier, Howard, and Calthorpe all fundamentally advocated for walkable blocks, open greens, and easy last-mile connectivity, although Garden City aimed at being a development-oriented transit, where rail transit acted as the conduit between two developed areas.

In a nutshell the agreed thinking is that, when implemented well, TOD solves a plethora of problems, which include:

- Access to housing for lower-income groups
- Access to cheap/affordable transit to essential services
- Access to a greener, cleaner city.

THE EVOLUTION

Low population densities and suburban sprawl increase infrastructure and maintenance costs and cause additional social costs by requiring people to travel longer distances. The transit-oriented development model can overcome these hurdles via its integrated mixture of housing, office, retail and or other commercial development and amenities.

By increasing development density around transit hubs (particularly rail and metro), you can encourage non-car-based methods of travel and capture the value to businesses presented by station users. This can be seen in places like Tokyo where developers have mapped the activities of residents and workers along rail corridors, subsequently establishing assets and businesses that capture a high daily proportion of passenger spend.

But this only scratches the surface of the potential that TOD can present to a city or town. When effectively planned and delivered, it provides a much-needed catalyst to urban development through the creation of well balanced, high density, sustainable communities that provide a significant boost to housing, jobs, mobility, and quality public spaces.

Planning for the use of cars has made many environments hostile to walking and cycling, and people have become accustomed to using the car, even for short trips. Left unchecked this behaviour produces environmental impacts and increases costs to the health of individuals and the community and to the health-care budget. Today, there is increasing support by governments and policymakers for the development of cities that no longer separate land uses, but allow the co-location of transport, employment, housing and services.

One of the top benefits of the TOD urban planning method is the positive environmental impact. Making public transportation, such as a rail system, the top option for residents means there are few to no cars on the road. Fewer vehicles mean lowered carbon emissions. Using subway systems, for example, that run on electricity, makes for a better environment.



4.2

# From TOD to TEN

## THE 21ST CENTURY TRANSPORT-ENHANCED NEIGHBOURHOOD

In recent times it has become clear that what was once thought of as “transit-oriented development” should be reframed. Its planning and approach should begin with neighbourhoods first, placing transit in a secondary role. In this way we move from transport-oriented development to people-oriented development ... TOD to TEN.

In recent decades too many TOD projects were interpreted as the simple placement of a high-rise development over a new railway station and not enough attention was given to the creation of neighbourhoods. This is changing.

In the old model, people ended up travelling somewhere else to find neighbourhood (friends, culture, entertainment, recreation), a situation that flies in the face of the polycentric city.

The Transport-Enhanced Neighbourhood (TEN) of tomorrow must be designed as the kind of place people want to stay close to, the home they love coming home to. When they return from school or work, they should be able to walk out their own front door to fulfil most of their needs and desires.

This includes a neighbourhood of wide-open spaces, plentiful green pockets and access to nature, along with places to sit, play and exercise. It also includes places of cultural significance, places to make art, see exhibitions, hear music, celebrate events and more.

A progressive TEN can deliver high density but not strictly through high rise developments. It can just as easily include four storey residential structures with a mix of wonderful services and retail on the ground floor, everything from shops to music schools, and optometrists to wine bars.

### Case study:

#### FIFTEEN MINUTES IN PARIS

In his book ‘Droit de la cité’ urbanist Carlos Moreno argues that cities should be redesigned through four guiding principles: ecology, proximity, solidarity and participation. This, he believes, will enhance the quality of life within the urban fabric. This is also a response to climate change and pollution.

Moreno’s philosophy is based on making urban areas adapt to humans, not the other way around. In his vision of the polycentric city, he says the seven essential functions of urban experience (work, housing, food, health, education, culture and leisure) should be relocated within a walkable distance. This encourages municipalities to adopt an opposite direction of rapid urbanism and to consider the best use of the public-used square meters that the city offers.

Moreno discusses proximity in terms of both time and space and refers to mixed-use developments and multicultural neighbourhoods as key improvements of the urban experience, enhancing community participation in the planning process.



Moreno is a driving force behind Paris’s 15-minute city plan which is also associated with the city’s mayor, Anne Hidalgo, who has begun successfully implementing this direction. Paris is regaining its public space, reducing traffic and therefore pollution and ensuring better mobility through transit oriented development.

The massive decentralisation of the city is generating new services throughout different neighbourhoods, promoting new economic models that encourage small shops, fabrication labs and community centres that accommodate different functionalities.



**PROVIDING HOUSING WHILE PRESERVING LAND**

More compact cities reduce the pressure for urban expansion, contributing to the preservation of important natural and agricultural land and resources.

Transport-Enhanced Neighbourhoods allow a community to be co-located with amenity and ensures longer-term productivity of agricultural lands, agribusiness and extractive resources which can support local communities and contribute to a state’s economy. In addition, water and energy efficiencies are improved, further strengthening a region’s resilience when in the face of natural hazards and climate change.

Residents and workers in well-designed TENs should have access, within walking distance, to supermarkets or other stores where healthy, affordable fresh food is available. The provision of housing within a TEN environment reduces the pressure to expand housing settlements into prime agricultural land, which is important for supporting local food production.

**TENs FOR DIVERSITY AND ACCESSIBILITY**

Transport-Enhanced Neighbourhoods can offer housing choices that promote inclusivity and diversity. A mix of housing types and tenures can include the provision of affordable housing. TENs also have the potential to accommodate diverse groups and can include areas and facilities amenable to adult residents, children and people with disabilities.

Retail, services and other commercial developments can be co-located in close proximity to the station. Where possible, key social services such as childcare centres and health services should also be nearby, to accommodate transport-dependent working people.

A significant advantage of TENs is better affordability. These neighbourhoods cut down transportation costs drastically for families. Households can save thousands of dollars annually on personal vehicles (fuel, insurance and maintenance) when using handy public transport instead.

The urban design of TENs can improve and support local retail services by having public transport users walk along a shopping area to get to and from the station, thus creating an activity centre where there are people around at all/ most times of the day. This strengthens placemaking and buffers areas of residential development from the noise of a bustling commuter station. It also creates more secure surroundings, no matter the time of day or night.

Fewer cars on the road means more walkable streets for citizens. This benefit promotes inclusivity for various people to patronise businesses in the area. Senior citizens who no longer drive will have an easier time with transportation. People with disabilities will also find a walkable city beneficial because they can eliminate the burden of having to drive somewhere or ask someone to transport them.

**TENs CAN CREATE DESTINATIONS**

Often creating destinations in their own right, the development value of TENs can provide a significant revenue stream to help fund further community assets.

In April 2022 American Express found that 68 per cent of people want to support green-friendly travel options. As interest in green transportation surges, the train station is rapidly becoming the next frontier for retailers, driving a new type of transit design that is no longer tethered to the commuter consumer. The role of stations themselves is evolving as they are reimagined as hubs for commerce, recreation and retail.

As more people seek to rediscover their own backyard, the purpose of train stations will transform. Their prime locations raise them as a city’s central placemaking hub, becoming a space in which lingering is not only permitted but encouraged.

Kowloon station in Hong Kong is probably the world’s most famous example of this “destination in its own right” scenario. But, more recently, we are seeing projects like the new Chencun Flower World station, located in a famous flower trading town within China’s Guangdong province, being positioned (along with two neighbouring stations, Dengzhou and Wanhua) as a destination of ‘flower tourism’, mixed with hospitality and retail elements.

**GENERATIONAL CHANGE**

*Millennials favour urban communities like Transport-Enhanced Neighbourhoods that are vibrant, dense and walkable, providing a sense of social unity and engagement while offering the right blend of services and recreational conveniences. And, as baby boomers set upon retirement (with the last of this generation hitting the age of 65 in 2029) and get older, they too seek the qualities these neighbourhoods espouse, albeit for similar and divergent reasons. Subsequently, developers and planners should plan for inclusivity and employ better design practices to address changing demographic needs.*



“I just can’t see the generation that created the hipster movement embracing “dreary suburbia” as it is. They will have to make it over and create a suburban version of the hipster. And, to be perfectly blunt, they’re running out of time.”

BERNARD SALT, THE AUSTRALIAN, 12 NOVEMBER 2022

4.3

# Transport-enhanced neighbourhood examples



## Green Square Town Centre

*Sydney, Australia*

The completion of the Green Square station in Sydney in 2000, as part of the Airport line, made it a very desirable place for residents, small and medium enterprises (SMEs), and strip retailing. Green Square is situated within Sydney's 'Global Economic Corridor', Australia's dominant area of economic activity and job growth, and is strategically placed to provide housing next to jobs, major health facilities and transport corridors.

A crucial element of the Green Square station project was a vision for Green Square Town Centre (GSTC), a public-private sector partnership to build a neighbourhood with excellent transport connections, active commercial, community and cultural life, with high density living, public spaces, green infrastructure, retailing, and to encourage growth of local industries (such as creative industries).

The new town centre was envisioned as a commercial, retail, entertainment and cultural hub. It was designed to be a place with a minimal environmental footprint and a vibrant and well-connected community where it is easy to: to walk and

cycle, use and enjoy well-connected streets, public spaces, cultural and recreational facilities, use convenient and integrated public transport connections and services, celebrate high quality public spaces as the focus of activity, have access to high quality housing, including affordable housing, plus access to shopping, commerce, services and jobs.

Today Green Square is one of the fastest growing areas in Australia and is delivering on state government housing targets. In 2018 the City completed the key components of the new civic hub at the heart of the town centre – a major community and cultural precinct and a new library and civic plaza which set new benchmarks in adaptive reuse of heritage buildings, facilities integration, sustainability and design innovation. They provide the spaces for community activities and programs run by the City and various organisations. Many new streets, walkways, bike paths and parks have been delivered.

Green Square Town Centre includes 90,000sqm of commercial and retail area and 4,000 dwellings – enough to accommodate 8,000 residents and 6,000 workers. This makes it a highly sought-after precinct, given its proximity to the CBD via train and bus. It is one of the largest urban renewal programs in metropolitan Sydney in recent decades.

## Subi Centro Project

*Perth, Australia*

The award-winning redevelopment of this former industrial land in Subiaco commenced in 1997 and can now be seen as a best practice example of transport-oriented development within Australia. It is a well-integrated mixed-use development with ample public space and pedestrian activity, containing a number of cafes, restaurants and a food market centred around Subiaco station.

According to the Subiaco Redevelopment Authority, some of the early key goals of this project included:

Providing a greenway which was safe and offered a variety of experiences to meet the recreation and leisure needs of the community.

Delivering housing innovation, choice and affordability.

Encouraging investment opportunities, growth and revitalisation.

The Subi Centro redevelopment aimed to be respectful to the existing character of Subiaco. Public art throughout the precinct preserves and reflects local heritage through the re-use and integration of industrial form and materials. Streetscapes were carefully planned to ensure that the green and leafy atmosphere of Subiaco was echoed within Subi Centro. Even lemon trees were planted.

The centrepiece of Subi Centro is the green spine which contributes to the sense of place and social cohesion. This stretch of parks (including a children's play area) is designed as a shared garden to balance the higher densities.

The area now contains a mixture of townhouses and apartments, office and retail spaces with an integrated range of public spaces in a vibrant urban centre. The project is recognised as an exemplar in urban regeneration and transit-oriented development, with a network of bikeways, greenways and civic squares creating a variety of accessible and inclusive connected spaces.



# Assembly Row

Somerville, USA

Assembly Row is a mixed-use, urban environment – complete with a bus and light rail mass transit station - where Greater Boston comes to shop, dine, work, live and play. Phases one and two are complete and feature Sephora, J. Crew, LEGOLAND, AMC Assembly Row 12, several full-service restaurants, residential communities, Mass General Brigham headquarters, a dedicated MBTA station and FITRow, a first-to-market fitness concept. Phase three is nearly complete with the addition of Shake Shack and sweetgreen, Miscela, a 500-unit luxury apartment building, and a 275,000 square foot office building, now home to PUMA’s North American Headquarters.

Notable achievements linked to the Assembly Row project include a commitment to the arts via partnerships with local artists and organisations such as Artists For Humanity, plus the staging of more than 100 events annually, creating a community gathering place where people can relax and recharge.

In its 2021 Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) Report the developer of Assembly Row, Federal Realty Investment Trust, said the project demonstrates how investments with positive environmental and social impact can also deliver positive financial results, benefiting all stakeholders.

Assembly Row unlocked a formerly underutilised waterfront brownfield, transforming a section of the city and creating a transit-oriented neighbourhood and economic growth engine for decades to come. Assembly Row neighbourhood is now inspiring extensive investment by others on adjacent sites.



# Mockingbird Station

Dallas, USA

Located 6.4 kilometres north of downtown Dallas, Mockingbird Station is an urban-chic, mixed-use village linked directly to a Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART) light-rail station via a welcoming pedestrian bridge.

The first mixed-use project in Texas specifically designed and built for a light-rail train station, this project includes 211 upscale loft residences, 13,000 square metres of office space, and 16,722 square metres of space for retail, theatres, and restaurants, plus an enclosed public plaza, all linked to the station.

The station is part of larger plans by the City of Dallas to redevelop underdeveloped land near employment centres, taking full advantage of the expanding DART light rail system, the Dallas Love Field Airport and the Southwestern Medical District.



# New Lynn

West Auckland, New Zealand

New Lynn is located 10km southwest of Auckland, and the town is undergoing significant urban renewal. Higher density housing is located near the railway line, and high-rise apartments are beginning construction in the town centre. The New Lynn TOD, designed by Architectus, is located at the juncture of an established centre and a developing area to the south of the tracks, and forms the hub of a developing TOD. The formation of a trench within the rail corridor enabled the station and associated double tracking to be constructed below grade, whilst a distinctive canopy provides visibility and presence. Multi-modal transport interchange is a priority, with train, pedestrian, cyclist and bus facilities and emphasis is on ease of transfer between modes.

4.4

A world class ‘TEN’

Fast becoming one of the most exciting and sustainable modes of development in Australia, the development of Transport-Enhanced Neighbourhoods (TENs) builds on a positive track record the world over. At Leppington, Sydney has the opportunity to create a world-class community of this type within a strategic growth corridor.

Combining well-designed public transport with complementary, high-quality development can produce lasting and beneficial outcomes that balance living, working, recreation, and commuting. Long-term benefits can deliver generational change and kickstart new opportunities for communities and regions as one.

Maximising the value and impact of investment in transport infrastructure requires strategic planning, progressive and creative thinking, and assiduous, high-quality implementation.

Specific cornerstones are required to support the successful implementation of transport-enhanced development on any site. At Leppington these cornerstones are on the way, including the new town centre’s proximity to emerging major employment hubs such as the Aerotropolis, not to mention Sydney’s CBD.

Designed and delivered to a high standard, transport-enhanced development at Leppington has the potential to:

Improve quality of life
Boost economic activity
Stimulate investment
Attract residents
Expand housing options
Enhance the environment
Create new opportunities socially, culturally, and economically - locally and throughout the district

Designed and delivered to a high standard, transport-enhanced development at Leppington has the potential to improve quality of life, boost economic activity, stimulate investment, attract residents, expand housing options, enhance the environment and create new opportunities socially, culturally and economically - locally and throughout the district.



4.5

A benchmark for polycentric Sydney

Sydney’s challenge now is to create dynamic, characterful residential centres with populations large enough to provide “the flow” of people attracted by its ambitious new employment precincts.

Planned well, Camden – via Leppington Town Centre – could stand as a benchmark in polycentric Sydney. It could provide the level of density required for the district moving forward while also providing a superior quality of life for residents.

Now is the time to initiate and showcase progressive development for Greater Sydney and deliver the highest quality of life possible in the region. For people already building their lives here, for those new to the area and for those looking for a new place to put down roots, Leppington Town Centre living could be a magnet and a game changer. Those involved in bringing this profound vision to life, in both the private and public sectors, have the chance to be part of a supremely positive civic and social legacy for the region - and indeed the country.

Additionally and crucially for this specific, storied area, Leppington Town Centre could increase housing supply, community spaces and amenities without contributing to unwanted urban sprawl. Camden LGA has historically been known as a rural region with highly productive agricultural land. The rural landscapes are highly valued by the community and contribute to the character and identity of the local area. Through the creation of vertical villages and other intelligent designs, the Town Centre can help protect the surrounding landscape and setting, preserving and celebrating local character.

*“The great thing about Leppington is that it’s on a bit of heavy infrastructure ... the government seems to have got that right. But the key link is jobs and whether jobs can be pulled outwards [toward the new suburb]. The effect of [a new airport at Badgerys Creek, about 15 kilometres west] could be critical.”*

*- Dr Bill Randolph, director of the City Futures Research Centre UNSW, SMH, 2015*

4.6

# Public spaces and TENs

*William H. Whyte once said, “It is difficult to design a space that will not attract people - what is remarkable is how often this has been accomplished.”*

Public spaces form the heart of communities and can define the lived experience and wellbeing of everyday life. The careful design, delivery, and management of public spaces is essential to ensure they optimise social and economic benefits. Key to this process is planning for a range of typologies that cater to various functions, and respond to their context.

While large public spaces serve a role in mixed use communities, particularly for sport and recreation, their location within dense, mixed use centres can often detract from the activity of a place by inhibiting walkability and creating ‘dead spaces’. This is of a particular concern in transit-oriented precincts which aim to promote short walking catchments within station vicinities.

Contrary to this, smaller intimate open spaces such as plazas, squares and laneways are well suited to dense TOD precincts because they promote walkability and facilitate activation, eyes on the street and safety in numbers. Smaller urban squares in gateway locations such as those adjacent to transport nodes and with retail edges offer the greatest direct economic benefit to local businesses and greatest social opportunities by mitigating crime and anti-social behaviour to local communities.

According to Jan Gehl, the span of a square should be such that people can perform their activities amongst themselves and, at the same time, can read others’ facial expressions and their emotional state.



Smaller scale. Greater benefits.



TAKUTAI SQUARE, AUCKLAND

<b>Size:</b> 0.2ha
<b>Type:</b> urban square with active edges
<b>Features:</b> primarily hardscape with flexible softscape area
<b>Activation:</b> relaxation, passive socialisation, small events

Takutai Square is the primary public space of the Britomart precinct and, along with Station Plaza, is one of the two major public open spaces within the precinct. Developers Cooper and Company’s original design of this precinct meets with Auckland Council’s goal to “establish an interconnected system of public open spaces, of varying size and pedestrian connections which can cater for a range of appropriate activities, events and support the regional transport interchange function of the precinct”. Council also required that all new and upgraded buildings and public open spaces had to “be designed in accordance with CPTED principles”.

As the main east-west pedestrian link connecting Commerce Street to Britomart Place, Takutai Square has been the focus of many public and private events including music gigs, open air cinema screenings, family activities and functions. The square is bounded by Gore Street to the west and the Ernst & Young Building and Westpac on Takutai Square to the east.

Takutai Square is partly occupied by a 22 x 22-metre square of grass, informally known as Takutai Lawn. Furnished in summer with bean bags and oversized cushions, the lawn is a popular hangout and lunch spot. In the south-eastern corner of the square is the Pipi Beds sculpture and fountain installation. The Square is available to hire as an event venue and is also home to the (Saturday) La Cigale Market.

‘Takutai’ means ‘foreshore’, reflecting the area’s origins as reclaimed land. Auckland’s foreshore used to run along Britomart Place (originally called Breakwater Road) and Fort Street (originally called Foreshore Street).



ROUSE HILL, NSW

<b>Size:</b> 0.08ha
<b>Type:</b> urban square with active edges (plazas ‘fingers’ extend from central open space)
<b>Features:</b> hardscape
<b>Activation:</b> passive socialisation, alfresco dining, small events

Rouse Hill Town Centre is the commercial, retail, transport and social hub of Sydney’s northwest. This lively and green town centre comprises a diversity of buildings, including apartments, retail and commercial. The masterplan was specifically designed to create cool shaded environments, supported by integrated transport, schools and parks, and medium and high density living.

Underpinning the masterplan plan is a canvas of streets, public spaces, laneways and public buildings. There are two linear elements in the scheme: the transit centre to the west and Caddies Creek running through the centre of the site. The masterplan places the town centre between these two elements, and housing on either side, followed by a layer of “green fingers”. These form the armature for the streets and open spaces, connecting all parts of the site.

Winner of the 2010 AILA National Landscape Architecture Award of Excellence: Urban Design, Rouse Hill Town Centre is particularly notable for the spatial shaping of key plazas and detailing of the pedestrian circulation spaces with a bold planting palette and clever, custom-designed elements. It is particularly innovative for the fundamental attention paid to integrating climate control measures, reduction of water use and energy consumption.



MARKET STREET PARK, MELBOURNE

<b>Size:</b> 0.19ha
<b>Type:</b> linear urban park
<b>Features:</b> hard and softscape
<b>Activation:</b> relaxation, passive socialisation, waterplay

Opened in late 2020, Market Street Park is the first urban park in the central city since City Square was completed in the 1980s. It creates 1900 square metres of new public open space, including 1300 square metres of former road space.

Features include lawn areas to accommodate park users, wide bluestone paths, seating, space for programmed events and activities, improved pedestrian access to public transport, and bicycle lanes and bicycle parking. The park also features a wide variety of trees and water sensitive urban design elements to reduce stormwater runoff. Its design has been guided by the City of Melbourne’s Open Space, Urban Forest and Nature in the City Strategies.

The abutting development site, Collins Arch, includes a collection of residences, commercial offices, a 5-star hotel (W Melbourne) and publicly accessible laneways and large amphitheatre.



UPTOWN DISTRICT, OHIO, USA

<b>Size:</b> 0.32ha
<b>Type:</b> open plaza
<b>Features:</b> hard and softscape
<b>Activation:</b> passive socialisation, art interaction, small events

Uptown District in Cleveland, Ohio, is the redevelopment of a corridor linking art, educational, and health care institutions with surrounding neighbourhoods. It is a sustainable, transit-oriented development located at a convergence of neighbourhoods four miles east of downtown. Bookended by two cultural institutions, Uptown District features outdoor gathering spaces, retail shops and restaurants, student and market-rate housing, and public transit connections.

Hero of the district is Toby’s Plaza, a public space featuring public art installations as well as programs and events that draw people to the district and reinforce its emerging identity as the community’s “living room.”

Uptown District in Cleveland revitalised formerly vacant land into a mixed-use space. The redevelopment turned a “no-man’s-land” into a destination.

# When bigger does not mean better



**YAGAN SQUARE, PERTH**

*Lack of footfall costs millions and discourages vendors*

**Size:** 0.85ha

**Type:** open plaza

**Features:** hardscape

In October 2002 it was announced that The WA government would be spending “millions of dollars” revamping Perth’s Yagan Square in a bid to revitalise the lifeless area. The square, which cost \$73m to build, was meant to be the heart and soul of Perth city but it failed to bring in visitors, causing many vendors to close their doors for good. Now officials are throwing \$7m into free public events and venue funding to attract people and new business to the area.

The Yagan Square Market Hall precinct, the crown jewel in Western Australia’s \$360 million CityLink project, opened to much fanfare in 2018, as part of the Barnett government-era project to sink the city’s rail line and connect the CBD with Northbridge.

By 2021 vendors were complaining the place had become a “ghost town”, with a lack of foot traffic and poor design forcing many to close their doors on what was sold to them as a unique business opportunity. Lands Minister John Carey acknowledged the “previous model” of Yagan Square had not worked, and the precinct had failed to live up to its potential.

Among criticism levelled at the design of Yagan Square is that the playground is too small, there is too little shade, and the amphitheatre is too big for community events but not big enough for proper ticketed events.



**MILE END, UK**

*Park redeveloped to create smaller, safer spaces*

**Size:** 0.19ha

**Type:** linear urban park

**Features:** predominantly softscape

Mile End Park is located in the London Borough of Tower Hamlets. A huge linear park, it was neglected by local government, so pockets became overgrown, with dense shrubbery and foliage imparting a general air of neglect. Vandalism and graffiti went unchecked. Locals felt unsafe to walk their dogs.

Work on restoration started in 1999. A lot of attention went into opening exits and creating “desire lines”, so that people would feel at ease when walking through the space. This improvement has enabled pedestrians to enjoy twenty-four-hour access, with lighting throughout the main part of the park.

Mile End Park now consists of a number of elements (running north–south): The Play Arena - for children, The Ecology Park - including a lake, an ecology building, wind turbine and climbing wall, The Arts Park, The Green Bridge, The Terraced Garden, The South Park, Adventure Park, Sports Park - including the Mile End stadium, Kirk’s Place and The Children’s Park. Nearby are an extreme sports centre and an electric Go kart track.

The different management regime has resulted in cost savings, although the introduction of new facilities has increased management costs overall. The park’s redevelopment has, however, drawn considerable inward investment into the surrounding area.



**VICTORIA SQUARE, ADELAIDE**

*Too big for community use*

**Size:** 2.22ha

**Type:** urban park

**Features:** hard and softscape

In 2016 the South Australian State Government was forced into talks with the Adelaide City Council about a funding partnership to fix the “completely failed” layout of Victoria Square. At the time the City of Adelaide’s Minister John Rau said the central square was “a completely failed piece of design” and he was open to the idea of co-funding a transformation of the park worth about \$20 million.

Criticisms levelled at Victoria Square included the idea that it looked like a large roundabout or a big traffic island. Today the Square is also known by the Indigenous name of Tarntanyangga but it continues to cause consternation. Tanya Court, Senior Lecturer and Co-ordinator of Landscape Architecture at the University of Adelaide, says the city’s seemingly endless dissatisfaction with the Square points to a fatal flaw. In 2019 she said it remains too big. “Compared to public squares in Europe, which are bounded by buildings and much more densely populated, it’s basically a big roundabout,” she told Adelaide’s ‘CityMag’. Court went on to say the Square only works when activated by the city for major events but it “doesn’t really function with authentic community-driven activities”. Refurbishments in 2014 such as new space for large events, shelters, a central plaza, and seating infrastructure didn’t seem to help ... the furniture used more for skateboarding than sitting.



*“Fairly disappointing ... For a major square it has no atmosphere to it at all and doesn’t seem to serve any purpose. Should have restaurant/cafes street performers etc to draw crowds and create a more warmer atmosphere for people to want to go to the area. Poorly planned with no direction to it, very disappointing, give it a miss.*

*Trip Advisor review May 2021, Jason S, Melbourne, Australia*

4.7

# Urban schools in mixed use precincts

There are a growing number of examples of schools successfully integrated into urban settings, in Australia and elsewhere. The results combine a superior schooling environment with state-of-the-art facilities and spaces and strong community connections.

## KIPP ACADEMY, USA

KIPP Academy Boston in Mattapan is built directly abutting a busy commuter rail line.

The design team strategically positioned the school to both mitigate the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) impact and knit the school into the surrounding urban fabric.

The gymnasium and cafetorium are located next to the tracks to buffer the noise from key educational spaces.

Adjacent public pavement and community garden with kiss and drop



## FITZROY GASWORKS, VIC

Victorian vertical school integrated within mixed-use Fitzroy Gasworks precinct including 11 residential towers and flexible commercial/retail space.

Includes rooftop sports court, terrace and future multi-use sports centre for community use

Enabling local community access to high-quality education for 650 students.

Adjacent small scale urban linear park



## SOUTH MELBOURNE PRIMARY SCHOOL, VIC

Victoria's first vertical school, located within Fishermans Bend Urban Renewal Precinct

Open design inviting community in with no fences separating school from surrounds

Named Future Project of the Year 2016 at World Architecture Festival

Open space exists within school curtilage only, with none adjacent

## ARTHUR PHILLIP HIGH SCHOOL, NSW

NSW's first public high-rise school located in the heart of the new Parramatta business and education precinct.

Refurbishment and adaptive reuse of all existing heritage buildings.

Innovative, connected outdoor spaces that enable play and collaborative learning.

Open space exists within school curtilage only, with none adjacent



## PRAHRAN HIGH SCHOOL, VIC

Spans five levels and includes a library, gymnasium, theatre space, specialist teaching spaces, outdoor spaces, and adaptable learning environments

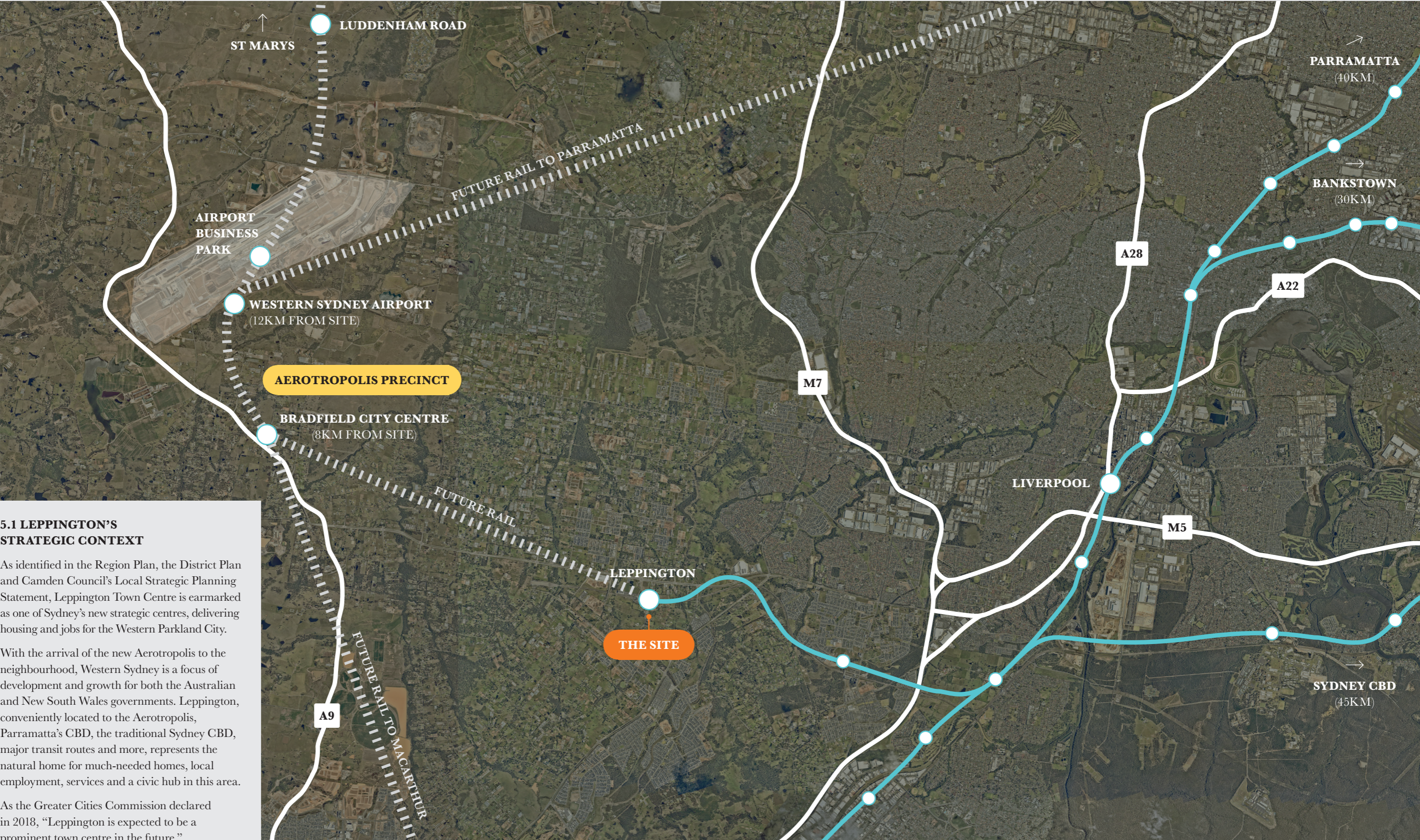
Features a void through the building for natural light and unique learning spaces

Outdoor oversized balconies for wellbeing, teaching, and learning with adjacent open green space

# 05

## Leppington Place Vision





**5.1 LEPPINGTON'S STRATEGIC CONTEXT**

As identified in the Region Plan, the District Plan and Camden Council's Local Strategic Planning Statement, Leppington Town Centre is earmarked as one of Sydney's new strategic centres, delivering housing and jobs for the Western Parkland City.

With the arrival of the new Aerotropolis to the neighbourhood, Western Sydney is a focus of development and growth for both the Australian and New South Wales governments. Leppington, conveniently located to the Aerotropolis, Parramatta's CBD, the traditional Sydney CBD, major transit routes and more, represents the natural home for much-needed homes, local employment, services and a civic hub in this area.

As the Greater Cities Commission declared in 2018, "Leppington is expected to be a prominent town centre in the future."

5.2

# A connected town centre with magnetic appeal

Aland’s vision for Leppington Town Centre is to create a truly magnetic destination, a place that people from all walks of life are drawn to and feel welcome in and a place that contributes significantly to the evolution of Greater Sydney, and the prosperity and wellbeing of the west.

Instrumental in the progress and expansion of Sydney since the 1800s, and with a non-colonial story that reaches back far earlier than that, Leppington’s next era should continue to celebrate the area’s history and accentuate its unique character.

Delivering all the modern benefits of urban living to its community, Leppington Town Centre will not fall into the trap of being a bland, unoriginal place in which to live and work. Indeed, as a torchbearer for transport-enhanced neighbourhood development in Australia, it will be envied and imitated for its smart design, inclusive community, distinct culture, and commercial performance.

On top of all the requisite planning, landscaping, quality architecture, forward-focused infrastructure and clever connections needed for Leppington to thrive, the new Town Centre will have a distinguished personality. This will be achieved via the built environment, celebrations of nature, thoughtful and vibrant programming and through a unique constellation of public and private facilities and spaces, cultural assets, design features and activity centres that tap into bold and distinctive themes.

By combining state-of-the-art transport infrastructure, and quick connections with major employment and activity hubs, high quality residential development, spectacular landscape design, an abundance of local amenity and a unique civic jewel, Aland believes this Town Centre will incentivise individuals and businesses alike to move to, build in, invest in, and grow in Leppington and the Camden LGA more broadly.



Leppington Town Centre

# A place with an appetite for life

While people may no longer think of Camden as a primary food bowl for Sydney or New South Wales, agriculture has not been forgotten in forward planning for the district. Indeed, Western Sydney may yet play a new and exciting role in the “food economy” of the future.

5.3

# From food growers to food lovers

## BIRTH OF AN AUTHENTIC CITY BRAND

In places such as the U.S., Asia, parts of Europe and Latin America, cities are increasingly becoming “choice” destinations. People want to live, work, and play in them, resulting in “lifestyle revolutions.” In days gone by work was the main reason people gravitated towards cities. Today the overall brand of a city can influence people’s choices. A city’s brand is defined by what that city offers in terms of additional program elements. It’s about how it can support life beyond work.

Historically the Camden region was known as the birthplace of Australia’s wool, wine and dairy industries, and remained largely agricultural until the end of the 20th century when Sydney’s urban footprint began to spread west beyond Campbelltown. Since the early 1900s the Austral and Leppington districts have welcomed new migrant settlers - adventurous, resourceful people who adapted to the local agricultural economy, often embarking on small-scale farming. Migrants from Vietnam and Cambodia took up market gardening, supplying a significant proportion of Sydney’s fresh vegetables.

An important early employer in the district was Ingham’s poultry farms. Wally Ingham opened his first poultry farm at Casula in the 1940s. By 1972 Ingham Enterprises owned 1,970 acres including farms at Austral and Leppington.

In the 21st century, as Leppington Town Centre attracts new residential growth to the district, food can once again be “the vital ingredient” and a crucial part of the new city brand.



## CAPITALISING ON SYDNEY’S NEW AGRIBUSINESS PRECINCT

The NSW Department of Planning and Environment says around 1,560 hectares of land have been set aside for “industrial-scale agriculture purposes” as part of the future Western Sydney Aerotropolis which is located 10kms from the site under discussion in this Placebook. A proposed agribusiness precinct could generate 10,000 jobs and “continue to provide food security and supply to Sydney”. The government’s new agritourism policy has also cut tape to allow farmers to diversify their income through ventures like farm stays and cafes.

Ambitions for the Agribusiness Precinct are grand and include the development of new markets and the enhancement of export capabilities for farmers nearby and from connected regional areas. Overall, the vision is to produce a world-leading Agribusiness Precinct for the production of value-added high-quality produce and pre-prepared consumer foods.

In 2017 KPMG and NSW Farmers looked at the potential for the development of a world-leading Fresh Food Precinct (FFP) as part of a future Western Sydney Airport (WSA). The ‘Think Big Think Fresh: A Fresh Food Precinct for Western Sydney Airport’ report found that Western Sydney suburbs are well placed to support such a precinct because of its food production capabilities and skills. The report estimated that up to 12,000 jobs could be created in a range of sustainable roles, such as in cutting edge food technology and logistics. Increased government investment in agricultural high schools could dovetail with the proposed food precinct, producing jobs for students and a live laboratory on the doorstep for research and training.



### PARTNERING WITH THE NEIGHBOURS

Western Sydney Parklands (Horsley Park urban farm), less than a 25-minute drive from Leppington, is growing its urban farming precinct with the vision to one day turn the area into a bustling farm gate trail. While the precinct is currently centred around Horsley Park, approximately five per cent (264 hectares) of the entire Parklands has been set aside for farming with a plan that includes greenhouses, small produce farms, market gardens and orchids. As Western Sydney's population grows and the construction of an airport generates a buzz of activity, planners have high hopes the urban farm will become a hive of recreational, agricultural and economic activity. The precinct's farming partners will be encouraged to develop direct connections with consumers through agri-tourism experiences, with the aim of adding to their farm gate sales.

The Western Sydney Parklands vision is to expand the Farm Gate trail, allowing locals and visitors to buy fresh produce directly from local growers. People will be able to cycle or stroll to market gardens along a planned network of new paths and trails. There is also the potential for a community farming hub and cafe.

Partnering with Fairfield City Council, Western Sydney Parklands is doing preparation work in the urban farming precinct to allow for new tracks and street tree planting. The tracks will be adjacent to roads that connect into the existing Parklands walking and cycling network and the M7 shared path.

**“We want to preserve the heritage of western Sydney as a food bowl but also take it into the next century.”**

**JENNIFER WESTACOTT, CEO AUSTRALIAN BUSINESS COUNCIL,  
THE DAILY TELEGRAPH'S FUTURE WESTERN SYDNEY FORUM 2022**



5.4

# Leppington town centre – food for thought

The relationship between the Agribusiness Precinct and Leppington looks set to be significant. The new precinct will generate a multitude of skilled and unskilled jobs, employing residents in nearby communities, the Camden LGA included.

Cooking, eating, dining, harvesting – across the board places, programs and events linked to gastronomy and food contribute to what Project for Public Spaces describes as the “five important features defining quality of place: diversity, liveliness, innovativeness, creativity and openness/tolerance”.

By embracing both its legitimate heritage as Sydney’s home of fresh produce along with the incredible new “foodie” neighbourhood Leppington finds itself part of, the new Town Centre could set itself apart from other Sydney residential hubs in a deliciously different way.

With an influx of agri and food production businesses to the surrounding area, the opportunities to generate a halo effect, building commercial, cultural and training partnerships, attracting allied investors and entrepreneurs and instilling a love of food – fresh produce and nutrition, specialty products, accessible and affordable staples, education and training, markets, festivals and dining – into the Leppington “brand” offers a pathway to social and economic prosperity for generations to come.

5 KEY OPPORTUNITIES:

- 1 Fresh food and gourmet markets
- 2 Festivals and pop-up events
- 3 Eat Streets and dining precincts
- 4 Education and culture
- 5 Health and wellbeing

## 1

## Fresh food and gourmet markets

As ‘Domain’ reported in 2020, fresh food markets can “provide a meeting place for locals, a meaningful connection between country and city, and a sense of community that can add tangible value to a suburb’s real estate.” Tim McKibbin, chief executive of the Real Estate Institute of NSW, said, “They add something to the fabric of a community which has a positive impact on the value of your property.”

In a world of soulless supermarkets, fast food chains, Uber Eats and protein shakes, food has become disconnected from the natural cycle of daily life. In some urban centres this is driving a movement back to this idea of the Market City, with markets acting as catalysts for neighbourhood centres that have lost their sense of place.

Market Cities (and Market Towns) have always been places with strong networks for the distribution of healthy, locally produced food. Their large central markets act as hubs for the region and function as great multi-use destinations, with many activities clustered nearby. They also generate small corner grocers, weekly farmers markets, produce carts, and other small-scale distribution points. Market Cities are, in essence, places where food is one of the fundamental building blocks of urban life, not just fuel that you use to get through the day.

Markets can also be anchors of “healthy food hubs,” where health-related activities are clustered together to encourage visitors to take a more proactive approach overall to their own well-being. Some markets include allied facilities such as health clinics, fitness classes, nutrition information, or classes that teach healthy living principles.

### THOUGHT STARTERS

*Inner city markets can take all kinds of forms, indoors and out or somewhere in-between, within permanent structures or comprised of flexible, temporary elements. They can be set up in new buildings, existing buildings, or they can share spaces in school grounds and the like.*

*“The spin-off benefits of public markets are numerous. From increasing access to fresh, healthy food to providing important revenue streams, markets positively impact local businesses, governments, and residents. But perhaps most importantly, public markets serve as public gathering places for people from different ethnic, cultural, and socioeconomic communities—markets are our neighbourhoods’ original civic centres.”*

– *Project for Public Spaces*



### Prahran Market, Melbourne

Like Leppinton, historically the inner Melbourne suburb of Prahran was famous for its small farms and market gardens, and goods were sold or bartered locally or carted into “town”. What was needed was a central marketplace in the municipality of Prahran and, in 1864, Melbourne’s oldest Market was born. Today it brings together a community of highly skilled traders and specialty stores and works closely with local communities to collaborate and **host many ‘foodie’ events and ‘food theatre’**. It features **visible preparation areas** and **spaces where shoppers can sit, soak up the atmosphere and enjoy a bite to eat and something delicious to drink**. Co-located at the market is The Essential Ingredient, known for its extensive range of specialty foods, cookware and culinary books, as well as a highly respected cooking school.



### Carriageworks Farmers Markets, Sydney

Located within the Carriageworks Cultural Precinct, the largest contemporary multi-arts centre of its kind in Australia, this market has a charter: “To become a destination for the communities of Sydney and national and international visitors to engage with diverse fresh seasonal produce and handmade foods and to **build supportive relationships with the NSW/ACT farmers, chefs and artisans** who grow, rear or prepare them”.

### Central Market, Adelaide

With **over 70 traders under one roof**, the Adelaide Central Market is one of the largest undercover fresh produce markets in the southern hemisphere, offering fruit, veg, fish and meat, plus cheeses, bakery, smallgoods and health foods, along with some of Adelaide’s most popular cafes and eateries. Attracts over 9 million visitors every year.



### Time Out Market, New York

Attracting around 4.1 million visitors annually, this is New York’s destination for eating and drinking, **featuring the city’s top chefs, most-talked-about restaurants, and the buzziest bars, including a rooftop terrace**, and the latest in arts and culture. The food hall can **accommodate groups big and small**, from a 12-person dinner up to a 200-person reception. Part of Time Out’s mission is to **promote and market new local talent** and attract investment in these people.

# 2

## Festivals and pop-up events

Community food festivals have been growing exponentially across Australia. As well as celebrating, showcasing and sampling local, rural and native produce, they also provide an opportunity to bring communities together over a love of food, encouraging understanding and tolerance and helping revive traditional food knowledge and maintain traditional cultures.

It is argued that such festivals build social capital by developing community resources, strengthening social connections and networks within the community, promoting social cohesiveness, and providing communities with the opportunity for public celebration. Australian examples include Darwin Laksa Festival, NT, Ngarku’adlu (First Nations chefs), SA, Melbourne Italian Festa (formerly Lygon Street Festa), VIC, and Paniyiri Greek Festival, QLD.

More permanent spaces or places can produce similar results, including themed ‘eat streets’, specialty culinary enclaves or mini-precincts, dedicated cooking schools, culinary museums, libraries and more.

Murals and public artworks in and around Leppington Town Centre could commemorate the district’s food bowl heritage, bringing together stories and artworks from Indigenous Australians, Cambodian, Greek and other specific relevant groups.

### THOUGHT STARTERS

*The Little Food Festival, Federation Square, Melbourne*

Aimed to **connect the dots for kids between our food, its supply chain and its relationship to the health of our bodies and the planet**, the Little Food Festival brings a jam-packed program of workshops, performances and demonstrations to the heart of Melbourne’s CBD. For two days, Federation Square is the destination for family-friendly foodie activity within The Farm, The Hub, The Grocer, The Table and The Compost, with each activation zone dedicated to an element of the food system; production, distribution, retail, consumption and waste. Well-known foodies take to Fed Square’s main stage to demonstrate fun and easy ways to celebrate food, while kids are encouraged to scribble down their rambles, big ideas or drawings about the future of food on giant colouring poles. Melbourne Farmers Markets’ stallholders are also there with produce stalls, and local food vans serve dishes throughout the day.



*Brisbane City Markets, Reddycliff Place*

**The country comes to the CBD** when one of Brisbane’s best farmers’ markets pops up in Reddycliff Place from 8am to 6pm on Wednesdays, with farmers and producers selling fresh produce and pasta, cheese and jams, meat, seafood and more. Reddycliff Place is in the heart of Brisbane’s CBD, it’s a public space that plays host to community markets, pop-up events and also acts as an arts pace. The area also provides free 24/7 Wi-Fi access.



*South City Square, Woolloongabba, Brisbane*

South City Square is a residential, retail and lifestyle precinct in Woolloongabba. For the past couple of years it has played host to a semi-regular sprawling market setup that resembles a **European-style market hall, with a mix of stalls and food trucks, plus live music, interactive workshops** (such as floral arrangement tutorials) and face painting and balloon twisting for kids. Visitors to this **pet-friendly market** can browse their way around a collection of stalls selling items such as clothes, jewellery, ceramics, plants, pots, homewares and art.

*Night noodle markets, Melbourne*

The Melbourne Night Noodle Market takes place at Birrarung Marr, on the north bank of the Yarra River next to Federation Square. Co-presented by Citi and Optus, this much-loved **open-air street food festival** runs for 18 nights in spring. As well as a variety of food at **hawker-style stalls**, there’s **live entertainment**. Sibling events also run in Sydney and Brisbane.

## 3

## Eat Streets and dining precincts

Appealing neighbourhoods with great hospitality credentials – bars, restaurants, cafes, places to eat with children etc. can attract other residential developers (and hotels) as well as businesses who want/need quality amenities to lure employees and clients alike. They can also attract food-related/hospitality businesses to set up outposts, surrounded by “on-brand” food culture.

Beyond places that provide dining options for patrons, such precincts can also become home to local food production or wholesale businesses, from breweries and distilleries to local bakers, proponents of specific ingredients or designers and makers of cooking/serving utensils, even famous chefs returning to their roots.

### THOUGHT STARTERS

#### *Eat Street Northshore, Brisbane*

Northshore is Queensland’s largest urban waterfront renewal project. Over the next 20 years, this 304-hectare site will be transformed from a historic wharf into a premier waterfront suburb that blends tradition with tomorrow. In an effort to get Brisbanites thinking of Northshore as something very different from its original roots as a port-turned-industrial site, Economic Development Queensland (EDQ) has supported initiatives like Eat Street Northshore, where, since November 2013, **repurposed shipping containers have been transformed into an international food and wine destination.** Originally taking place over Friday and Saturday nights, Eat Street attracts around one million visitors of all ages a year. The market serves up dishes created by local chefs but also offers live bands and entertainment, a moonlight cinema, bars, ATMs and more.

Much of Northshore’s remit is to add cultural depth and diversity to Brisbane, a key requirement for a city bent on competing globally for everything from infrastructure and industry investment to immigration and tourism.

The Northshore Activation Strategy devised by EDQ has **encouraged people to visit, stay longer and spend money in the precinct from its earliest days.** This creates advocates for the destination which in turn increases land value.

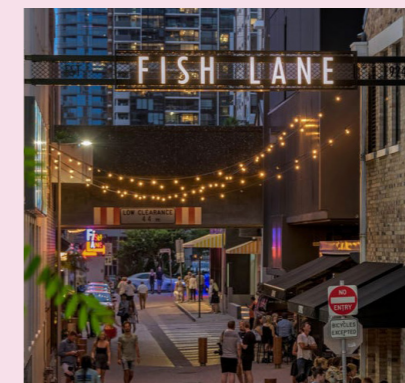
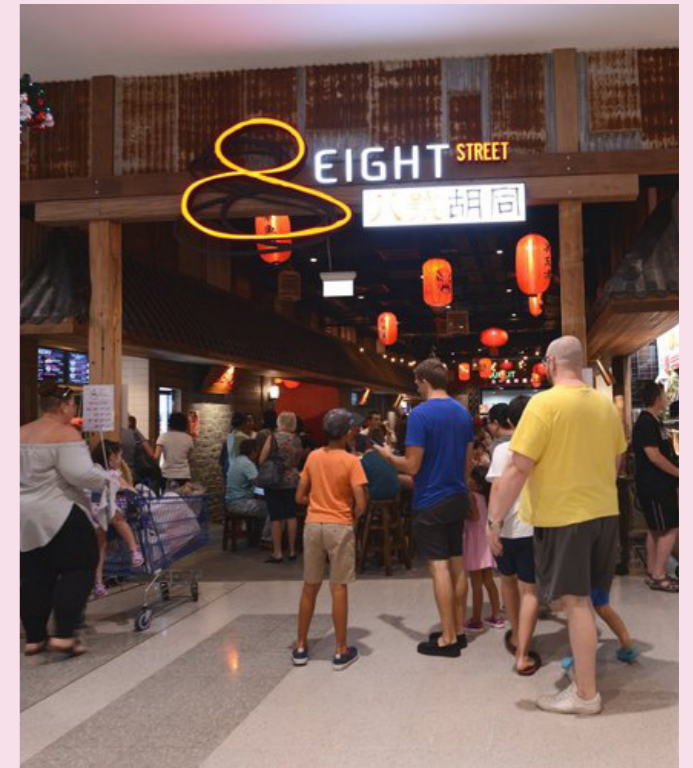
The success of Eat Street Northshore enables EDQ’s development partners, including Frasers Property Australia, Alcyone Hotel Residences and Brookfield Residential Properties, to capitalise on the increased visitation and Northshore brand awareness throughout evolving urban renewal activities.



#### *8 Street, Mt Gravatt, Mount Ommaney, Biggera Waters QLD*

Capturing traditional Asian architecture and design, 8 Street is an **Asian style hawker street food precinct combined with a beer garden.** In three separate urban locations, 8 Street’s distinctive laneway style layout mimics the vibrant atmosphere of an Asian marketplace and features diverse and authentic take-away restaurants. Open style kitchens allow shoppers to see their food being made to order. In true hawker market style, the stores are compact and each store has their own unique finishes and signage.

The organiser’s vision is not only to bring authentic, traditional, and mouth-watering Asian cuisines to Australia, but to spread awareness about Asian culture and bring it into the mainstream. At Mount Gravatt’s Westfield Garden City outpost **18 compact stalls offer up a different style of cuisine to try, with plenty of kitchen theatre** to entice tastebuds and drum up some belly rumbles. Foods on offer include dim sum, spicy Thai curries, Vietnamese soups, Korean bibimbap, Japanese teppanyaki and Chinese-style rolls. An on-site bar stocks a range of beer, cider, wine, Japanese sake and Korean saju.



#### *Fish Lane, Brisbane*

An epicentre for hip local and out-of-town restaurateurs and hospitality entrepreneurs alike, Fish Lane is largely the work of a single developer called Aria Property Group, headed up by Tim Forrester, Founder and Managing Director. Since 2014, Aria has worked in conjunction with Brisbane City Council to re-develop this skinny, disused laneway, once best known to dumpster and service vehicles drivers.

This precinct is the emerging new heart of Brisbane’s drinking and dining scene. Aria is very specific about the brands it invites in and about the art it introduces to the site. **Public works of art soar across the sides of buildings in and around Fish Lane.**

Most of the bars and restaurants in and around Fish Lane **occupy the ground floors of Aria-developed apartment buildings who help them set up with gorgeous fit-outs and rent-free periods.** When presenting to investors Forrester pulls out sales results showing Aria’s two-bedroom apartments on Fish Lane rising \$185,000 in value when “every other new building, completed at the exact same time in the exact same market, had devalued”.

## 4

## Education and culture

Successful Town Centres need culture as well as food at their heart. The 2018 Culture, Value and Place report, commissioned by the New South Wales Government's Department of Planning and Environment, noted that cultural vibrancy, heritage, preservation and a strong local identity are important as cities seek to attract and retain people and activities. At the end of 2022 The Sydney Morning Herald reported that the last detailed analysis of arts spending across Sydney (Deloitte's 2015 Report, 'Building Western Sydney's Cultural Arts Economy - A Key to Sydney's Success') revealed western Sydney, home to about one in 10 Australians, attracted just one per cent of federal arts funding and less than six per cent of state government arts and cultural funding.

Western Sydney represents the unique identity of Australia: distinctive people, histories, culture, diversity and creativity - and with this, its arts community is defined as dynamic, risk-taking, self-reliant, diverse and experimental. Yet Western Sydney University's 2017 report, 'Recalibrating Culture: Production, Consumption, Policy' unveiled "a feeling of frustration and disappointment in the current lack of cultural facilities in the Greater West Sydney region" by artists living and working in the west. The report found that many artists ended up working in their bedroom or on the kitchen table, so they talked about wanting "usable spaces" such as studios, workshops, storage, exhibition, teaching and performance spaces. Despite this, many of the artists interviewed had made a conscious choice to live and work in the west because of the area's "sense of community and artistic freedom".

As stated in the 2020 Arts + Culture Strategy Consultation Report (prepared by Artificer for Western City and Aerotropolis Authority), there is a clear lack of purpose-built cultural infrastructure in Western Sydney. The region has a high reliance on government to fund cultural projects. New kinds of partnerships and business models are needed.

Western Sydney is a region in transition. Initiatives such as the relocation of the Museum of Applied Arts and Science's Powerhouse Museum to Parramatta present significant opportunities for the region but are only the start. Smaller scale, grass roots cultural lynchpins are also key.

Leppington can be a natural magnet for relevant private, commercial and public institutions. By stamping itself as the food capital of Sydney's west Leppington could attract venues and organisations with culinary/ food/science/hospitality links. Crucially, it could also look to the heritage of the area for artistic and cultural flare and connections while connecting with new industries and investors who will emerge in tandem with the aerotropolis.

### THOUGHT STARTERS:

#### *New Cultural Centre, Madrid*

As Madrid's population continues to expand, its suburban areas are becoming more and more popular with those looking for affordable housing outside the city limits. However, these neighbourhoods, while more economically practical, have long been plagued with the cookie cutter design. Now this is changing. About 20 kilometres from the centre of Madrid, the city centre of Pozuelo de Alarcon was bland. Located on and around Padre Vallet Square, this New Cultural Centre (NCC), with architecture by FÜNDC, has managed to turn a run-of-the-mill plaza into an extraordinary community landmark that certainly separates this town from its all-too-ordinary neighbours.

One of the main objectives for FÜNDC was to utilise as much space as possible, so they created **movable floor decks that modify the main hall into an exhibition hall or a large auditorium**, depending on the event or exhibition taking place.

Because the pedestrian space is the original focus of this project, the area of the Plaza del Padre Vallet incorporates what the architects refer to as "**urban furniture**," which provides illumination, resting areas, and a few scattered green areas throughout the plaza. The implementation of "**mega-tree-pots**" allows specific mid-sized trees to grow above the double-deck parking lot located underneath the plaza. These large structural pots also provide the underground parking with light and ventilation.



#### *East Sydney Community and Arts Centre, Sydney*

The East Sydney Community and Arts Centre (formerly Heffron Hall) can be viewed as part of a continuous public domain running from the Albert Sloss Reserve at the north, to the newly restored Burton Street Tabernacle Theatre at the south. The space is designed for performing artists preparing for production, training or building their creative practice, and it's also a **venue for hire for performances, events, classes and workshops**. An exciting custom-designed "Metropolis" play tower enhances the park and playground connected to the Centre.

The Centre is also home to a wonderful public artwork called S(w)ing which could well be described as "artwork at play". Three illuminated pendulum discs swing in a choreography of colour, light and movement. The installation is both interactive and performative. The discs glide as their cables are pulled by children playing in the centre below. As the acrylic discs swing they throw neon light onto the street.



#### *The Culinary Institute of Savannah, USA*

Part of Savannah Technical College, the Institute is already well known for its Bistro Savoir program, where **students make and sell products to the public**. The Institute, one of the top four culinary programs in America, is now going a step further having just purchased a new downtown location for an expansion of its Culinary Arts program. The street level, or main floor, will house a bakery and teaching kitchens with a grab-and-go counter that will be open for lunch and dinner, pastry/finishing showroom and a culinary and baking kitchen. The second floor will include two teaching labs: a culinary arts teaching lab and a bakery and pastry teaching lab. A **demonstration kitchen** on the third floor will be **fully open to the public**, allowing visitors and groups that come into Savannah to take classes and learn skills like rolling sushi or baking a wedding cake from students. A **seminar room** and **herb library** (adorned with a living herb wall) and a **garden balcony** will accompany the demonstration kitchen. The basement will include a **wine bar, wood-fired oven** and a **theatre kitchen**. The Institute previously ran a café in downtown Savannah but turned the space back into classrooms as student numbers increased.



#### *Korean Cultural Centre (KCC), Sydney*

In April 2011, the KCC opened in Sydney to commemorate the 50th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Australia and Korea. Since then it has been introducing the appeal of Korean Culture to all people in Australia with the mission to connect our two countries by deepening our cultural bond. Throughout the year, the KCC offers a variety of cultural programs which include **education programs for kids/youth** along with cultural classes and events for the general public. KCC's activities also include **art exhibitions, film screenings, culinary events** and numerous **performances** for anyone who is interested in Korean culture to become more familiar with Korea.

# 5

## Health and wellbeing

From connecting to nature to connecting to others, Leppington’s Town Centre will be designed to enrich quality of life, socially and physically.

Green and gorgeous, it will be influenced by the idea of ‘biophilia’ - the instinctual need of humans to be close to the natural world – which is known to enhance our mental and physical health, helping us reach our optimum potential. Biophilia is changing the way we work, live, and operate within the built environment, and can be defined as humanity’s innate need to connect with nature and the natural environment.

Community gardens are one element of the biophilia toolkit that can grow food and improve health simultaneously. Whilst gardening is the focus, community gardens are generally community hubs for a range of activities – learning and education, playgroups, arts and creative activities, preparing and sharing food, community events, celebrations and social enterprise.

Social and active, Leppington’s Town Centre will feature numerous places and spaces for people of all ages and capabilities to gather, socialise, exercise and more. Throughout the world town and city squares are finding new roles, and in many cases, they’re being rejuvenated to ensure they provide a useful and enjoyable municipal space to be enjoyed by everyone. Whether they provide a space to hold events, meetings, markets or other community projects, town square development is now having a measurable and discernible impact on people’s wellbeing in built-up areas across the world.



*“According to the latest research, a deficit in contact with nature contributes to the incidence of depression, weakening of immunity or concentration. Direct and active contact with nature which can be ensured, among other things, by community gardens established more and more often in cities today, is priceless in this context. It is difficult to resist the impression that the “local approach” and the issue of “community” are currently the best antidotes to the various problems of modern cities - ranging from economic to educational and social problems.”*

*Jacek Majchrowski - Mayor of Kraków*

### THOUGHT STARTERS:

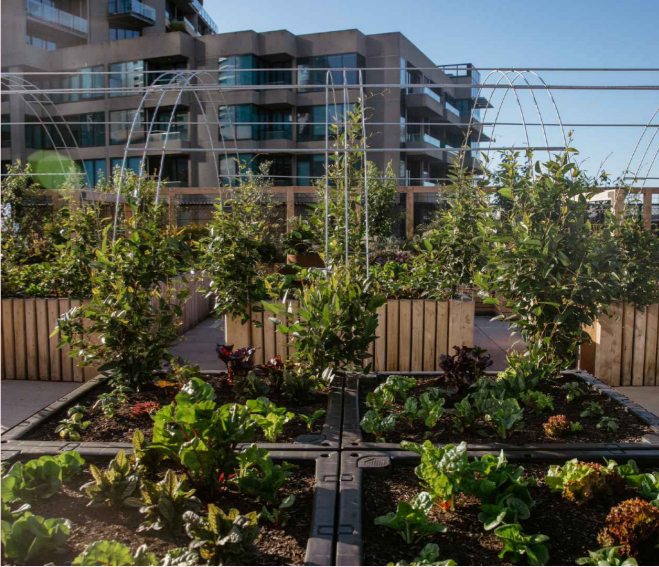
#### *Melbourne Skyfarm, Melbourne*

New technologies and materials mean soon anyone can build an urban farm on a rooftop, in a carpark or any underutilised city space very quickly, transforming city spaces into productive food growing spaces within days. One very high profile example is Melbourne Skyfarm overlooking the Yarra River in the heart of Melbourne’s CBD. Melbourne Skyfarm transforms a 2000 square meter former carpark into a thriving community space, producing large volumes of fresh produce for charity, and hosting education, a café, bar, events space and rooftop nursery. The farm is a great example of integrated sustainability – **taking a disused rooftop carpark, and transforming it into a community space that incorporates urban cooling, urban biodiversity, community access, urban farming** and much more.



#### *Francis Street Community Garden, Enmore*

A **pocket park conversion**, this oasis is close to the busy intersection of Enmore and Edgeware Roads, and acts as a living example of community concern for engagement, the environment and urban food growing. Occupying the rear half of a park, and featuring **artworks painted by local children**, Francis Street Community Garden is accessible to the public during the day. Unfenced and organic, it is maintained via large weekend working bees (tidying up of garden beds and mulching) that occur as seasons change. The garden features **shared common plots, a water tank, a Gaudi-esque mosaic pathway, exotic fruit trees, olive trees, an abundance of herbs and a birdbath** for the local blue wrens.



#### *The Burcham, Rosebery*

The landscape design for The Burcham apartments in the Sydney suburb of Rosebery expresses a consistent language throughout all areas. The design provides secluded ground floor courtyards in the “Wrigley Common” with screening plants providing privacy and a vegetated connection to the green open areas of the communal spaces beyond. The common areas of the site provide **relaxing, multi-functional activity spaces, including edible community gardens, two rooftop community outdoor kitchens, and a cinema screen**. Ultimately The Burcham’s ‘landscape’ is broken into **private courtyard streetscapes, deep soil planting areas, common internal courtyards, and the communal rooftop garden**.



Urban Farm Program, Arizona

In Arizona an **Urban Farm Program** began in 2012 with the first installation at the St. Vincent de Paul Human Services Campus in downtown Phoenix. Since then, the program has grown to encompass three urban farms throughout the Valley. Each farm is tied to one of the organisation’s five dining rooms in Maricopa County. **The farms support St. Vincent de Paul’s dining rooms and central kitchen.** In addition, the farms provide **volunteer opportunities** and access to educational enrichment for the community. Each farm incorporates spaces where the community can relax, reflect, and take in the healing energy of the environment.

One of the three farms, the Mesa Urban Garden, aims to create a community gathering space in the heart of Mesa’s downtown. Its mission is to inspire sustainable urban living through gardening opportunities, **education, community involvement** and **creative cooperation** to strengthen families and enhance and beautify the community. When you rent a bed in this garden you get everything you need to start: timer, drip, soil, fertiliser, compost and have access to free classes, free tools and shade screens. This garden is open to the public and a number of **community events** are held there throughout the year.



Pavilia Farm residential development, Hong Kong

The Pavilia Farm will set a new standard in urban-pastoral living, according to design and industry experts. Architecture studio Snøhetta has designed an **urban farm surrounded by three clubhouses** for the Pavilia Farm residential development in Tai Wai, Hong Kong. Informed by the mountainous surroundings and the nearby Shing Mun River, Snøhetta designed the project to be a calm and serene sanctuary that would provide a close link to nature in the bustling city. The architects say more people live in cities than ever before, and that trend is likely to continue to increase in the future, so we need to build in a way that can make it sustainable, both environmentally and socially.

The Pavilia Farm includes a **stepped aquaponics farm**, inspired by Satoyama and Hong Kong’s first one-of-a-kind integrated landscaped aquaponics system. Along with **outdoor waterfalls**, an **outdoor play area** immerses children in nature with a series of play facilities, including a giant two-metre slide. The Pavilia Farm is a low-carbon living environment and provides residents with a new lifestyle of exceptional wellness. With the introduction of the microclimate concept, The Pavilia Farm is set to redefine sustainability standards in residential architecture.



OUTDOOR GYMS IN THE CITY

More and more cities around the world are helping keep citizens fit by providing free-to-use, public outdoor gym spaces. Here are some examples:

Waterline Park Gym, Brisbane

Waterline Park **Gym**, Brisbane, sets the bar high. Located **underneath** the Riverside **Expressway**, directly in front of well-known CBD skyscraper 1 William Street, it includes **vibrant and edgy street art**, far removed from the concrete jungle car park decor it heralded from.



The Mount Washington Community Sports Park

The Mount Washington Community Sports Park is a fitness court that’s part of a \$6 million-dollar recreational destination. The site features **six full size multi-purpose fields, two playgrounds, a one-mile walking trail, and a dog park.** The court is part of a national program rolling out in the USA in cities, schools, parks and trails by a group called National Fitness Campaign. The Fitness Court model being used is an **innovative outdoor bodyweight circuit training centre** designed to improve the quality of life in cities, schools, parks and trails across America.

Waratah Wynyard Council, Tasmania

Waratah Wynyard Council, Tasmania, is designed to provide appeal, fun and challenge to children of all ages and abilities. With castle theming the **playspace** provides a sense of adventure. It is **divided into areas for different age groups with central elements bringing all children together.** A key feature of the playspace is the Castle Tower. Apart from its significant presence, the Tower provides play value at every level and every turn. The elevated rope bridge helps children to build courage while providing visibility over the magnificent coastal surroundings, while the enormous yellow spiral tube slide provides nostalgic reference to a key feature of the previous playground.



# A note on magnets

## Activations and local magnets

Leppington’s new Town Centre will have a distinguished personality. This will be achieved via the built environment, celebrations of nature, thoughtful and vibrant programming and through a unique constellation of public and private facilities and spaces, cultural assets, design features and activity centres that tap into bold and distinctive themes.

**A MAGNETIC TOWN CENTRE CHECKLIST:**

- A unique built environment and distinct design signature*
- Celebrations of nature*
- Thoughtful and vibrant programming*
- Clusters of public and private facilities and spaces*
- Cultural assets linked to heritage, stories, communities and the arts*
- Activity centres with bold and distinctive themes*



## St James’s Market

London

**GOAL**

To deliver an authentic sense of place and belonging, drawing from a specific locality and its story.

**CONTEXT**

In London, St James’s Market has formed a new public square linking the Haymarket with Regent Street. Key to the regeneration is a celebration of the area’s cultural heritage which is based around high quality craftsmanship.

**PROJECT**

A three-dimensional interactive exhibit at the Pavilion, featuring some of the old, modern and present-day history that has made St James Market a one-of-a-kind area of London. At the centre of the exhibition lies a map of St James’s. By interacting with this map, visitors trigger an associated cabinet to light up and reveal an artefact and unique story related to the area.

- ✓ **A unique built environment and distinct design signature**
- ✓ **Cultural assets linked to heritage, stories, communities and the arts**



## Bikini Berlin

Berlin

**GOAL**

To create spaces that can flex to the evolving needs of the residents, giving them reasons to keep coming back.

**CONTEXT**

This is a development in an urban centre, comprising a hotel, cinema, shopping mall (Bikini Berlin), and offices. The area includes a landscaped terrace garden of approximately 7,000 square meters on the rooftop of a newly built concept mall open to the public. The terrace is accessed via a stadium-like flight of stairs on the inside and a large open flight of stairs leading from the forecourt from the outside. The spectacular views from the terrace have attracted thousands of visitors since its opening.

**PROJECT**

Bikini Berlin is home to the world’s first concept shopping mall. Consistently differentiating itself from regular shopping centres, the mall sees itself as a compilation of carefully curated and coordinated boutiques and gastronomic offers. Bikini Berlin is also home to modular pop-up boxes, which can be rented temporarily, to launch a new product or introduce aspiring young designers to the public.

- ✓ **A unique built environment and distinct design signature**
- ✓ **Clusters of public and private facilities and spaces**



## The Porch

Philadelphia

**GOAL**

To create a new public space atop a former parking lot at Amtrak’s doorstep. This was a neglected space outside Philadelphia’s 30th Street Station - previously 33 parking spaces – transformed into a vibrant public space.

**CONTEXT**

A series of unique parklet ‘stacks’ with tables and chairs were arranged on traditional porch decking platforms, with turf areas offering opportunities to lay out and lounge in the sun, and raised planter beds for vines to grow up and into. The space is rounded out with large, colourful porch swings and a one-of-a-kind over-sized dominoes set.

**PROJECT**

Today The Porch is one of Philadelphia’s premier public spaces. It features lunch from rotating food trucks, pop-up performances, lush landscaping, outdoor drinks in warmer weather, and plenty of places to relax. It went from a barren site to a dynamic public space that draws thousands of visitors every year.

- ✓ **Celebrations of nature**
- ✓ **Thoughtful and vibrant programming**

# Leppington place attributes

*The Aland team is committed to seeing the development of a landscape-led, people-oriented precinct with a range of places and activations for visitors and the local community. Inspired by best practice transport-oriented neighbourhood design, Leppington Station Sites aim to deliver the following attributes to catalyse growth of the new town centre while building a connected, cohesive, prosperous community.*

# A welcoming heart

*A town centre notable for its striking civic heart, an open space for community gatherings and social interactions*

Welcoming and playful, Leppington’s civic heart will be the great ‘uniter’ of the Leppington Station site, a place for passive, everyday interactions, as well as community events and social gatherings. A car-free zone, it will offer safety for children to play, it will be a place to linger and the centre of social activity.

**CHARACTERISTICS:**

A civic space come urban square, with water fountains and play infrastructure

Connected directly to the public transport hub

Edged by buildings with mixed purposes, including commercial, retail and community uses

A landmark entry statement to welcome people to the precinct and act as a beloved and notable reference or meeting point



**EXEMPLAR**

## Civic Space Park

*Arizona*

Located in the heart of Phoenix near Arizona State University’s (ASU) downtown campus, Civic Space Park is a public park that provides the community with a vibrant amenity and relief from extreme summer temperatures. Using a combination of shade trees and undulating shade structures, the design will shade 70 per cent of the site at full maturity. The park features a huge, illuminated net sculpture called ‘Her Secret Is Patience’ by Janet Echelman, as well as a sunken eating area with movable chairs and tables, vibrantly lit water walls, chess and game tables, lawn areas, and a covered stage. Within the park is also a restored historic building with a public community room on the top floor.

The park has light rail lines on either side of it and sits directly north the Central Bus and rail station in Phoenix. The Taylor Street Pedestrian Mall connects to the park on the East side and runs through ASUs Downtown Campus. This mall connects the Park to the Arizona Center, the largest retail area in downtown Phoenix. There is no vehicle parking at or adjacent to the park, it’s only accessible by foot, bike or transit.

Civic Space Park reduces air temperatures in the park by an average of 1.8°F compared to a typical urban landscape. It attracts an average of 559 visitors on a weekday morning in the low summer season and hosts an average of 43 free public events per year, including movie screenings, concerts, art galleries, and wellness events like community yoga.

# A delicious character

*A diversity of retail offerings and a ‘destination’ market*

Offering a series of retail, entertainment, and hospitality experiences, the hall will operate from early morning to after dark. A welcoming experience for everyone, it will be connected seamlessly and attractively to surrounding parks and public realm and will provide an emphasis on healthy lifestyle and outdoor living.

**CHARACTERISTICS:**

Market style hall celebrating the district’s heritage as Sydney’s food bowl

A celebration of diverse cultures

An anchor supermarket for local conveniences

A fine-grained retail precinct with independent stores

A place that is both practical and entertaining



**EXEMPLARS**

## Tramsheds Harold Park *Sydney*

Originally the second largest depot in the Sydney tramway system, the abandoned Rozelle Tram Depot was lovingly restored in meticulous detail by Mirvac Retail. The iconic building was transformed from its derelict state into a European-style food hall that brings together some of Sydney’s most iconic restaurants and cult food providers. Other amenities include a community centre, community garden and a flexi-space, dubbed Artisan Lane, which comes complete with an industrial sized kitchen and communal sitting area. For day to day residents of Harold Park there is also a supermarket, hairdressers, gym and medical centre.

## Foodhallen *Amsterdam*

Foodhallen, Amsterdam, is a compact indoor food court located in the west of Amsterdam. Opened in 2014, it was loosely inspired by international food markets such as London’s Borough Market and Madrid’s Mercado de San Miguel. It contains a central bar plus around 20 different stands from local food businesses and entrepreneurs. Every Friday and Saturday there is the Beats & Bites, an event featuring live music or DJs. The De Hallen complex also contains Hotel De Hallen and its bistro-restaurant Remise47, TV studios, FilmHallen (a nine-screen cinema), a small public library (OBA) with café and a few shops/boutiques.

# An active spirit

## Connections that promote people-centric, active movement

Embraced by Aland’s vision, Leppington can become one of Western Sydney’s most lively and vibrant precincts, with an eclectic mix of streets and public spaces that compel people to spend time outdoors, interacting with others. New comfortable connections for movement will be integrated with spaces for relaxed lingering, creating the kind of flexibility that supports spontaneous and unplanned activities. The result will be dynamic experience of public life for all who visit and live here.

**CHARACTERISTICS:**

Links between the two sites, together with an integrated pedestrian prioritised street network

Fine-grained laneways with food and beverage outlets, specialty provedores and cafes

Connections to the green and blue grid to encourage active recreation

Reduced vehicle movement via station parking relegated to the edges of the town centre

A northern entrance to the site to create a grand statement

Framed views from outdoor food and beverage spaces into public spaces to create opportunities for ‘people watching’.



**EXEMPLAR**

## Kings Cross

### London

King’s Cross is a mixed-use, urban regeneration project in central London that is also a major transport hub for the city. Located on the site of former rail and industrial facilities, the 27-ha redevelopment involves restoration of historic buildings as well as new construction, with the entire plan organised around internal streets and 10.5 ha of open space to form a new public realm for the area. Principal uses include office space, residential units, and leisure space, a hotel, and educational facilities. The site is served directly by six London Underground lines, two national mainline train stations, and an international high-speed rail connecting to Paris.

The outcome to date is that many new businesses have moved into the area – the number of firms roughly doubled to 800 between 2010 and 2021. The most notable amongst them have been Facebook, Universal Music, Havas, AutoTrader and Google. In addition, the number of jobs increased from 8,000 to 27,000 between 2011 and 2019 (noting that some of these jobs moved from elsewhere in London). As a measure of growing demand, estimated office rents in King’s Cross more than doubled in value, going from 48 per cent below the London city centre average in 2010, to 19 per cent above in 2022.

The success of King’s Cross has also gone beyond economic measures, as many thousands of residents have moved in. In 2020 there were 12,200 residents that lived in and around the site – up from 7,900 a decade earlier. It has also been a success from a design and public realm perspective, with numerous buildings and public spaces on site being nominated for or winning design and architecture awards.



## Brent Cross Town Centre

### London

The existing tube station will be complemented by a new rail station at Brent Cross West, providing access to central London in just 12 minutes. The town sits adjacent to the M1, making cities like Cambridge, Oxford and Birmingham easily accessible. More locally, new walking and cycle networks will connect the town with surrounding neighbourhoods.

# A supportive soul

*Places for community connection, education, participation and tangible support*

Leppington Town Centre will offer a range of places for a diversity of people — including new migrants to Sydney. Extending a warm welcome to all, Leppington will ultimately lead the community into a new era of discovery and growth. It will be shaped by people, and in turn, help shape its community.

**CHARACTERISTICS:**

Community facilities such as a gym, medical practitioner, and daycare

Childcare and nursery

Aquatic and recreation centre

Multipurpose library and community centre

English language support and employment services

Micro-university study facilities connected to Western Sydney tertiary institutes



**EXEMPLARS**

## Skilling and Employment Centre, Lendlease

*Jordan Springs*

Skilling & Employment is a local community initiative funded by Lendlease to assist job ready people in the Ropes Crossing, Jordan Springs and surrounding areas. The aim is to encourage people to be independent and motivated in their job search and to find appropriate work. The Centre works with a variety of partners, including local community stakeholders, who provide jobseekers assistance in building their job skills and capabilities. To assist job seekers the Centre offers regular courses on resume and cover letter preparation, interview techniques and computer skills. And its jobs page is regularly updated with local job and traineeship opportunities. In 2016 Lendlease also commenced a construction employment initiative, building a network of local employers to identify the skills needed to support the construction boom in Western Sydney. Job seekers are provided with pathways into civil construction, trade services and apprenticeships as well as gaining access to industry training.



## U City

*Adelaide*

One of South Australia's most sustainable buildings, U City is a new addition to the Adelaide skyline that is bringing community back to the central business district. While its striking façade blends in visually with its inner-city surroundings, the 20-storey tall building is by no means just another office tower or apartment block. This is a vibrant, integrated community that brings together residential, social, commercial and community services to establish a sustainable, inclusive and thriving community in the heart of the city.

The building, which has achieved a 6 Star Green Star Design and As Built rating, is a mixed-use development, offering a range of services scarcely found in the inner city, including retirement residences, specialist disability accommodation, a social services hub and commercial spaces. Owned and operated by not-for-profit service provider Uniting Communities, the design vision was to create a connected community where people of all ages and abilities can flourish. Through bringing together a broad range of services, uses and people, U City demonstrates the organisation's values of diversity and inclusivity in one inner city, vertical village.

The multi award-winning U City is South Australia's first Certified Carbon Neutral Whole Building, developed by SA's first Certified Carbon Neutral organisation. U City's central location also mitigates the risk of older populations being pushed out of urbanised areas to more isolated regions.

# A playful nature

*A network of open spaces that blend active and playful social activities with places more suited to contemplative or passive relaxation.*

Exciting, social and accessible, Leppington Town Centre will provide the community with public spaces designed to develop long-term neighbourhood bonds and an eclectic, diverse community. Creating a true and authentic sense of belonging for all its residents, this will also be a place designed to welcome and gratify the broader community and be a magnet for the west.

**CHARACTERISTICS:**

- Waterplay features and water-based landscaped elements
- A series of playgrounds catering to various ages and abilities
- Accessible public fitness stations
- In-built celebrations and reminders of the fertile history of the area via public artworks and themed landscaping
- Spaces allocated for community gardens, for both children and adults, and an environment that champions fresh produce



**EXEMPLARS**

## Woodlea

*Victoria*

Developed by Mirvac, the Woodlea community is widely regarded as representing a benchmark in Australian urban living. Its approach to community development is revered by the LGA, studied by QUT and has contributed deeply to the fabric of the place. Core to its success is its open space, teeming with an enviable array of modern sports and recreation facilities, an asset for both the local community and the surrounding district.

Thirty per cent of this masterplanned community is dedicated to green open space as evidenced by the 13 parks dotted throughout, including a world-class adventure playground, dog park and picnic facilities. Other assets include a walking trails, waterplay and protected woodland, along with modern sports facilities and sporting fields, plus tennis, swimming and netball courts.



## Adventurescape

*Western Australia*

This multi-award-winning \$3.5 million space is part of the Austin Lakes development in South Yunderup, approximately 15 minutes from Mandurah or an hour south of Perth. Adventurescape is a large farm-themed playground with a huge range of unusual attractions, including two full-sized tractors that have been sunk into the ground so that kids of all ages can climb aboard. Near to both are a range of life-sized fibreglass farm animals from cows to sheep to pigs, some grazing in the open grassy space, others in and around the woodchipped playgrounds. You can climb on them all.

The focal point of the playground is the 8.5m tall windmill slide, set high on a peak. Its metal tube slide carries sound remarkably well and you can hear conversations from kids at the top like they're standing next to you.

The playground has been expertly designed to encourage self-development and interaction through team building, imagination and challenges. The playground also features a large open lawn, which allows space for group activities and a safe family environment. Winner of an Australian Institute of Landscape Award in the Play Spaces category, judges said Adventurescape “exhibits strong attention to detail as it successfully embraces the character of the area”.

# A wild side

*Naturalised places where people can connect to nature*

Leppington is located on Country where, for tens of thousands of years, the Darug people lived, and where flora and fauna thrived. In less than two centuries the landscape was transformed, rearranged, and re-engineered, with few natural features visible today. By taking a considered approach to landscape design that responds to Country, the precinct will reveal its blue and green landscape, enhance people’s connection to nature, and result in a more sustainable place.

**CHARACTERISTICS:**

- Green links and active trails that connect to the train station and to homes alike, while also linking to the wider blue-green network
- Integrated historic and cultural storytelling within the landscape, celebrating unique stories linked to place
- A target of 30 per cent tree canopy across the precinct, achieved through a variety of opportunities, including vertical greening and green roofs where appropriate
- Streets and places that provide thermal comfort and wind mitigation through canopy cover, awnings, and plantings
- Opportunities for people to playfully connect with water



**EXEMPLARS**

## Kings Park Naturescape

*Western Australia*

Uniquely and positively contributing to a local and regional sense of place, Kings Park Naturescape supports Kings Park and Botanic Garden’s vision for a community that is environmentally sustainable into the future. The space helps children to understand the sensitive Western Australian ecosystem and is focused on connecting children with nature and learning about the Western Australian environment, local Aboriginal culture and natural sciences.

Providing children with a real ‘bush’ experience in the middle of the city, an experience not common for children in urban environments, the Naturescape comprises 60,000sqm of native bushland and trails located within the 400 hectares of Kings Park. Children can play in mud, climb on logs, build cubbies and paddle in water. A wheelchair accessible trail links different areas and trained volunteers and Kings Park Naturescapers assist children and parents to get the most out of the unique natural experience.



## Gosford Leagues Club Park

*NSW*

The revitalisation of the CBD and Gosford’s urban domain was the catalyst for the Gosford Leagues Club Park redevelopment. The new regional park weaves into the new civic space, providing an inclusive regional recreational space for the community.

The parkland is flexible in function and character, facilitating sport, play, gathering and environmental stewardship within its 2.4ha zone. The park’s design draws inspiration from the cultural and heritage values of Gosford, in particular the narrative of the Darkinjung people, the traditional custodians of the land, and the history of land reclamation that reformed the shoreline resulting in the landscape as it is presently. The waters of the adjacent bay are reintroduced to the landscape through a Tidal Terrace playspace, offering a unique element of play that reconnects the space to the landscape’s most iconic element, Brisbane Waters.

# A cooling effect

## Reducing urban heat and improving community wellbeing

In 2021 the University of New South Wales (in a report titled ‘Spatiotemporal variation in urban overheating magnitude and its association with synoptic air-masses in a coastal city’) analysed how large weather patterns interact with urban overheating in Sydney. Researchers looked at temperatures in the Sydney CBD and in western Sydney and found that, during extreme heat events, the mean daily maximum temperature was between 8 and 10.5°C hotter in western Sydney, despite the fact the CBD is far more built-up. The need to mitigate heat and increase comfort in Western Sydney generally and Leppington Town Centre specifically is vital for all new development and planning.

CSIRO and Bureau of Meteorology projections estimate the average number of days over 35 could increase by up to five times without strong climate policies from a historical average of 11 up to 52 days by 2090. Extreme heat events present a risk to critical infrastructure including road, rail and electricity generation. In the densely urbanised environment of Western Sydney, power failure alone can lead to serious health risks, with many homes and workplaces reliant on air-conditioning to maintain safe temperatures. Extreme temperatures also pose a risk to the health and safety of workers in many industries and has a major impact on productivity and economic activity.



Urban overheating occurs from a combination of factors, including heat fluxes linked to human activity and air pollution. What’s more, artificial materials used to build roads, roofs and other urban architecture absorb solar radiation and release it slowly, further heating the air, in a way that trees and other vegetation don’t.

When designing Leppington’s Town Centre, a key element will be optimising access to parks and open spaces, increasing tree canopy to reduce urban heat, and empowering greater community wellbeing. Considering that the preservation of waterways and rivers is part of an overall natural system that contributes to cooling, the use of water features and waterplay will also play a role.

**CHARACTERISTICS:**

Waterplay features and water-based landscaped elements
Urban billabongs
Maximised tree canopy throughout the precinct
Green roofs
Maximised ‘soft scaping’
Small clusters of green areas to help distribute cool air

**EXEMPLARS**

## Gary Comer Youth Centre

Chicago, USA

Safe, friendly environments for after-school programs like the Gary Comer Youth Centre’s are precious few in Grand Crossing, a low-income community on Chicago’s South Side. Rarer still are secure, inviting outdoor spaces like the Centre’s green roof, a garden atop a two-story gymnasium where local children and teenagers learn to cultivate organic vegetables, herbs, and flowers. Glass-walled classrooms and corridors overlook the garden on all sides, keeping everyone at the Centre in touch with their on-site, working farm. Ambient heat from the upper story, warmth from the gym and café downstairs, and solar energy puts the sheltered planters into a more temperate climate zone than the surrounding neighbourhood.



## Hyperlane Linear Sky Park

Chengdu, China

Hyperlane is a 2.4km multi-level linear sky park, youth culture and lifestyle destination at the heart of the Sichuan Conservatory of Music University in Chengdu, linking the local transportation hub with the university community and campus in Chengdu. It includes a network of connective walkways planters and multidirectional social seating that act as a fringe and buffer to the main road. The project is defined with a signature tree, one that is native (indigenous) to the area, and which produces an evergreen canopy which can produce dense shade at ground level for people to gather and rest from the strong summer temperatures. The Sky Park connects in every direction, creating a barrier free sky park and pedestrian network which stretches over 2.4km, linking the new Chengdu fast train station to the university while allowing for direct north / south permeability from the student accommodation to the university campus.



## Sky Park at One Melbourne Quarter

Melbourne, Australia

Suspended above Collins Street and accessible via a dramatic staircase or the glass lifts located nearby, the Sky Park features lush green landscaping that allows visitors to soak up the sun in a wind protected environment. The Park is currently open to the public during business hours, Monday to Friday. When the second stage is complete, the Sky Park’s numerous seating options will create opportunities to linger a little longer, with the added benefit of high speed public Wi-Fi, power outlets and USB charge points.

# Conclusion

# 7

*Aligned with local and state strategic priorities, Aland's sites at Leppington can help provide the housing Sydney needs for future generations, alongside world-class experiences and opportunities for the western fringe of Sydney's growth corridor. The success of the new Town Centre would be built on remarkable foundations, including integrated transport, and proximity to the emerging Western Sydney Aerotropolis.*

## ALAND'S RECIPE FOR SUCCESS AT LEPPINGTON

Combine state-of-the-art transport infrastructure, quick connections with major employment and activity hubs, high quality residential development, spectacular landscape design, an abundance of local amenity and a unique civic jewel.

Create a place based on three-dimensional thinking, where urbanism and the "intersections" of people and experiences are reimaged and supported in vibrant, vertical ways.

Add the area's legitimate heritage as Sydney's home of fresh produce to the potential of a new "foodie" neighbourhood and 'agri' district.

Introduce well-designed, high-performing, and higher-density housing with spectacular public realm that is shared by all.

Develop amenities and social infrastructure alongside a greater supply of housing to create quality, equitable places in which people thrive.

Give Leppington the kind of high-quality residential appeal required as part of a high-functioning, harmonious and prosperous polycentric Sydney.

Support people's access to economic opportunity and amenity as well as social connections, belonging, and healthy lifestyles

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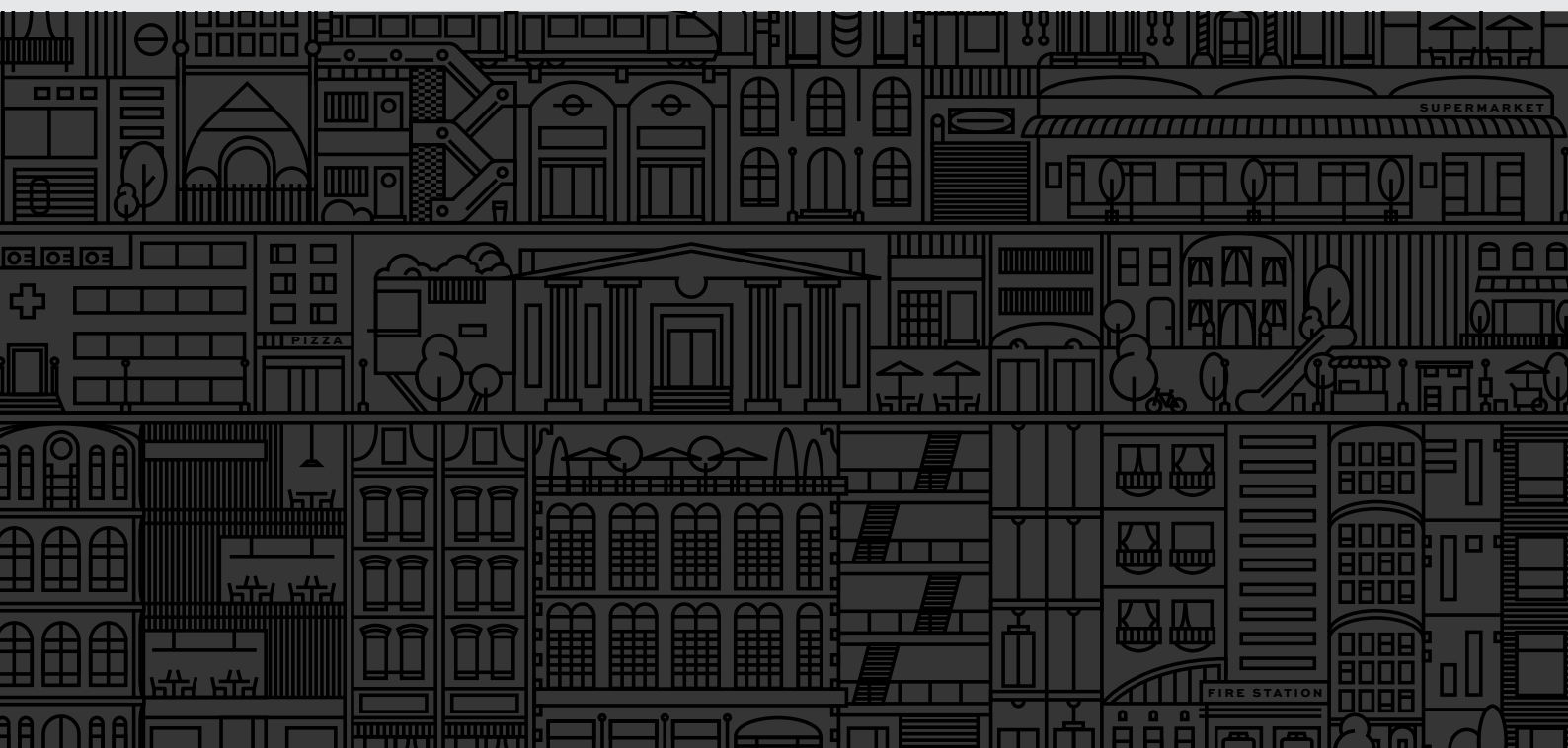
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