About Bays Precinct

The NSW Government recognises that Bays Precinct is important to both the local community and the wider population. Future planning for the precinct therefore needs to consider local needs, as well as the protection of Sydney’s maritime economy and the strengthening of Sydney’s role as a global city.

This fact sheet outlines many of the things which need to be considered when planning future uses of Bays Precinct. Some factors like transport infrastructure upgrades may pose practical limitations, while others like foreshore access may provide opportunities for the future.

What needs to be considered?

Sydney’s role as a global city

Sydney is Australia’s only global city, defined by its strong international profile and the range of economic, social and cultural facilities that service local, national and international markets. Global cities are also characterised by their willingness to grow and develop in order to attract investment and become a location of choice for business, residents and tourists.

Bays Precinct presents an exceptional opportunity to strategically review a large expanse of land under NSW Government ownership, close to the Sydney CBD. Once Barangaroo is developed, Bays Precinct will offer the only remaining opportunity for significant expansion of the Sydney CBD, furthering its role as a global city in the Asia Pacific region. This expansion could take many forms and could include uses such as commercial, residential, entertainment and arts.

How Sydney Harbour is used

For many years, Bays Precinct has served as a major transport hub for industries and activities that require a land/water interface. Glebe Island and White Bay still play an important role for industries requiring shipping access, including cement, gypsum and sugar imports and major vessel repairs. Blackwattle Bay is also home to commercial maritime industries, charter and fishing fleets and heavy construction facilities.
In 2006–07, 16.5 per cent of working harbour vessel visits to Sydney Harbour involved dry-bulk activities and 33 per cent related to motor vehicle imports. With the relocation of motor vehicle imports to Port Kembla, the nature of working harbour activities at this location is changing.

Importantly, Bays Precinct is one of the last deepwater berths in Sydney Harbour, and provides an ongoing opportunity for import of materials that require a land/water interface. If these activities ceased, both the economic and transport impacts would need to be considered.

Some water uses will need to continue well into the future. For example, recreational and commercial boating activities will continue in Rozelle Bay, including the super yacht marina and dry boat storage, as will marine contracting, salvage and repair. Additional recreational and community boating facilities are under consideration along the eastern foreshore of Blackwattle Bay, which will also remain home to Sydney’s charter vessel and fishing fleets.

Open space and foreshore access

Open space is an important component of any development, helping to create places that are safe, attractive, accessible and welcoming. Given Bays Precinct’s prominent location on Sydney Harbour, open space, including foreshore access, is an important part of any long-term vision.

Considerations for open space and foreshore access may include:

• providing appropriate public access to the foreshore
• creating a safe environment for all users, including pedestrians and cyclists
• ensuring access to sunlight in open spaces
• maintaining harbour views from public streets and adjacent suburbs.

The character of any open space at Bays Precinct will ultimately depend on future land use. For maritime working harbour uses, for example, the need for security may require harbour access to be restricted to corridors rather than continuous foreshore access. In comparison, commercial development may provide continuous foreshore access.

Traffic and transport

Traffic and transport are major considerations in any future development of Bays Precinct, and any future planning must ensure that the necessary infrastructure is provided.

Current road access to the area is via Anzac Bridge, Victoria Road and City West Link arterial roads, and current traffic levels are high, especially during peak commuter periods. There is limited capacity for the existing road network to accommodate traffic generated by any future development.

Public transport is currently confined to bus routes along Victoria Road and the light rail, which stops at the western end of Rozelle Rail Yards and Rozelle Bay. Victoria Road carries more than 1,000 buses a day. At present, bus routes along Victoria Road are impacted by heavy traffic congestion, despite dedicated bus lanes.

A number of projects are currently planned to improve public transport access to areas in and around Bays Precinct, including the Victoria Road bus lane upgrade and the Sydney Metro. The bus lane upgrade aims to improve the reliability and efficiency of bus movements during morning and afternoon peak periods.

The Sydney Metro will form the spine of a future metro network and will run from Central Station to Rozelle. The Metro will provide a further transport option for residents and workers within and around Bays Precinct.
The environment

Environmental protection is an important factor which needs to be considered for future uses within Bays Precinct. Given that the opportunity for wide-scale redevelopment of Bays Precinct will not occur in the short to medium term, the potential to incorporate ecologically sustainable development (ESD) principles in future developments is exceptional.

It is hard to predict the range or type of environmentally sensitive tools that could be employed for the redevelopment of Bays Precinct. This is a key reason for ensuring any principles developed regarding ESD provide the flexibility for technologies yet to be developed to be used within the precinct.

As much of Bays Precinct was developed at a time when environmental factors were considered less important than they are today, any new developments need to consider possible site contamination.

As the image above shows, the shape of Bays Precinct has changed significantly over the years, with large expanses of land reclaimed from the harbour from the 1830s until 1970. Reclamation works involved the use of large amounts of fill material. As the source of these materials is unknown, they could potentially contain contaminants.

Industries historically located at Bays Precinct included abattoirs, tanneries, soap and candle manufacturers, the rail yards, the power station and timber mills. Before any major redevelopment takes place in the precinct, further investigations may need to be undertaken to determine the extent and type of any contaminants and what, if any, remedial action is required.

White Bay Power Station

White Bay Power Station is a significant example of Sydney’s early industrial history. Construction of the power station commenced in 1912 by the NSW Railway Commissioners and was originally intended to supply power to Sydney’s growing rail network. As demand for electricity increased, the power station began supplying electricity for general use along with other power stations at Pyrmont, Ultimo and Balmain. The White Bay Power Station ceased operations on Christmas Day, 1983, and is now listed as an item of State Heritage Significance.

Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority has had a Conservation Management Plan prepared to guide any future development and ensure that the power station will be preserved for the future. Asbestos has been removed from the buildings, with further investigatory works required to determine whether any further contaminants exist on the site.
The Conservation Management Plan also sets out the following principles for any future development or adaptive reuse of the power station.

- Respect for views both to and from the site.
- Respect the form and elements of the existing buildings.
- New developments to be sympathetic to the existing buildings in terms of height and scale.
- New developments to demonstrate a contemporary design to distinguish them from the original buildings.
- New developments in the vicinity of the power station should consider its bulk, scale and placement in order to respect the visibility and prominence of the power station as a harbourside landmark.

**Urban design**

As this is just the beginning of a multi-stage planning process for Bays Precinct, it is too early to consider urban design issues such as building type and size. However, some broad urban design factors can be considered at this stage, including:

- how the precinct should connect to surrounding areas
- how to provide access to the foreshore
- how to make the precinct lively and accessible to the community
- how heritage features, including White Bay Power Station, can be protected and enhanced.

**Have your say**

A number of factors will need to be considered before deciding how Bays Precinct will be used in the future, including:

- ecologically sustainable development
- traffic and transport
- conservation and heritage
- open space and foreshore access
- recreational, commercial and industrial use of Sydney Harbour
- deepwater berthing
- activation, accessibility and links to surrounding areas.

Considering these factors now will ensure that appropriate options for future land uses can be developed.

To have your say:

- participate in the Bays Precinct Online Forum at www.shapesydneysforeshore.com
- email your comments to baysprecinct@shfa.nsw.gov.au
- send your comments to Bays Precinct Project Manager Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority PO Box N408 GROSVENOR PLACE NSW 1220