



Caring for Country – Aboriginal Outcomes Strategy

Consultation Outcomes Report

Prepared for the Department of Planning &
Environment

9 November 2022

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Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people across Australia who continue to have a deep connection to the Country we work on. We pay our respects to Elders; past, present and emerging.

Country across the Cumberland Plain has always been of deep value and importance to the Traditional Custodians, the Dharug, Dharawal, and Gundungurra people. For time immemorial they have cared for this Country and have deep connection to the qualities of Country and the Cumberland Plain.

As a more diverse Aboriginal community have begun to call this place home, they have also grown a connection to this Country and the values of the Cumberland Plain. We acknowledge the strength, diversity and resilience of these communities.

We seek to empower the voices of these communities in this report, to understand how they want to be actively involved in the future of the Cumberland Plain through the Caring for Country Strategy.



Executive Summary

The NSW Department of Planning & Environment (the department) has prepared the Cumberland Plain Conservation Plan (CPCP), which aims to support biodiversity protection and conservation in the Western Parkland City as the region continues to grow.

The CPCP commits to supporting economic participation for Aboriginal people and promote Aboriginal culture and knowledge in Western Sydney. The CPCP also includes a commitment to deliver the Caring for Country – Aboriginal Outcomes Strategy (the Strategy) to promote and support economic opportunities and caring for Country for Aboriginal communities.

GHD and Zion Engagement and Planning (Zion) were engaged by the department to undertake Aboriginal community and stakeholder engagement to inform the development of the Strategy.

The engagement approach was informed by previous engagement activities undertaken by the department, and leveraged GHD and Zion's existing networks of contacts across the CPCP area. The engagement was undertaken in stages, which include:

1. Early engagement and establishing our network
2. Targeted stakeholder engagement
3. Broader community engagement

Due to COVID-19 restrictions throughout the engagement period, a digital engagement program was implemented. Engagement activities included a series of phone calls and emails, online meetings, presentations, briefings and a community survey. Across each of these activities, GHD and Zion reached a total of 244 participants in the engagement program.

During engagement discussions, GHD and Zion prepared a presentation that identified four themes, each with 'potential actions' that were developed by the department based on the outcomes of previous engagement. These themes and potential actions were used to guide discussions with stakeholders to gather feedback which would inform the Strategy.

Key outcomes from engagement activities are summarised below:

Partnering with Western Sydney's Aboriginal Community

- Partnerships should be built with organisations and stakeholders based on mutual respect.
- Partnerships enable access to existing networks of community, allowing the benefits of the Strategy to be filtered through
- Establishment of a youth advisory group
- Any advisory or decision-making groups established under the Strategy would require a clear term of reference and promote a culturally safe environment
- Stakeholders agreed that creating a broad communication network would help to deliver greater equity in how opportunities delivered by the Strategy are provided across community

Caring for Country

- Biodiversity stewardship sites and establishment of new reserves were seen as an opportunity for Aboriginal landholders to have adequate funding for managing their land.
- There was seen to be interest from job seekers in working in the environment sector, including in a ranger program
- There was a high level of interest from participants in bush fire management – with some stakeholders citing research that is currently taking place.
- There was discussion around the department providing support to landholders so that the zoning on land holding matches stakeholder priorities for the site

Celebrating culture and heritage

- Place naming is viewed as a way to build greater recognition of Aboriginal culture in public places; however, place naming needs to be undertaken in consultation with the community, particularly Traditional Custodians
- Important to leverage and support existing cultural education programs e.g., Muru Mittigar, Blacktown Arts Centre and Kimberwalli
- Funding for projects that recognise stories and movement through Country. These projects are seen as a way to help build community knowledge of the Cumberland Plain, as well as modern and early cultural heritage, informed through research and consultation.
- High levels of interest from Traditional Custodians to deliver research – this could support the implementation of several actions under the Strategy. Research programs should include support for Traditional Custodians to work within formal research processes.

Growing Aboriginal business and employment in the environment sector

- Stakeholders were supportive of employment opportunities, specifically for local Aboriginal communities in Western Sydney.
- Support for businesses to bid competitively, have all required prequalification's and training
- Support for start-ups and re-established businesses following COVID-19
- Development of an employment Strategy
- Bridging the gap between provision of training to employment opportunity
- Cultural mentorship for young aboriginal people working in the environment sector

Close the loop and interagency engagement

GHD and Zion also undertook close the close the loop engagement activities during with stakeholders. This document was issued to all engagement participants for comment and feedback as part of the 'Close the Loop' stage of the project. The purpose of close the loop engagement was to:

- Determine next steps and handover the relationship with the department to continue the Strategy implementation
- Confirm feedback received during engagement
- Gather final feedback for inclusion in the outcomes report.

Feedback received during close the loop engagement was captured as part of this outcomes report.

A key stage of the strategy development is to socialise the draft strategy with other NSW Government agencies that are operating in the Western Sydney region to:

- Share the outcomes of community engagement and feedback received
- Share the draft strategy, including action items
- Identify opportunities for collaboration and information sharing

Agencies were able to review the draft strategy between 12 August 2022 and 26 August 2022, prior to attending a one-hour virtual workshop session, facilitated by GHD and Zion Engagement and Planning. The workshop utilised a digital whiteboard tool to enable participants to identify 'opportunities for collaboration' and 'challenges' relating to any of the actions within the strategy.

Feedback received from all engagement participants during each engagement phase was used to develop an initial draft of the 'Caring for Country: Aboriginal Outcomes Strategy'.

the department will continue to build upon their networks and if you would like to be informed of future projects then please register your interest at: CPCP@planning.nsw.gov.au.

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1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose of this report

This report summarises the outcomes from GHD and Zion's engagement program and the recommendations will support the department with the development of the Caring for Country – Aboriginal Outcomes Strategy (the Strategy). This report includes the following:

- engagement approach and activities
- what we heard
- recommendations and next steps

1.2 Project Context

The NSW Department of Planning & Environment (the department) has prepared the Cumberland Plain Conservation Plan (CPCP), which aims to support biodiversity protection and conservation in the Western Parkland City as the region continues to grow.

The CPCP area, shown in Figure 1, covers large parts of Western Sydney spanning from Wilton in the south, to Windsor and Kurrajong in the north. There are three major river catchments in the CPCP Area, the Hawkesbury River (North), the Nepean River (West), and the Georges River (East), along with eight Local Government Areas (LGA's) including Wollondilly, Camden, Campbelltown, Liverpool, Fairfield, Penrith, Blacktown and Hawkesbury. The recognised Traditional Custodians in the CPCP area are the Dharug, Dharawal, and Gundungurra nations. The CPCP area also sits across three Local Aboriginal Land Council (LALC) areas; Gandangara LALC, Tharawal LALC, and Deerubbin LALC. A detailed map covering the CPCP area is available in Appendix C or online at [this webpage \(link\)](#).

Cumberland Plain Conservation Plan

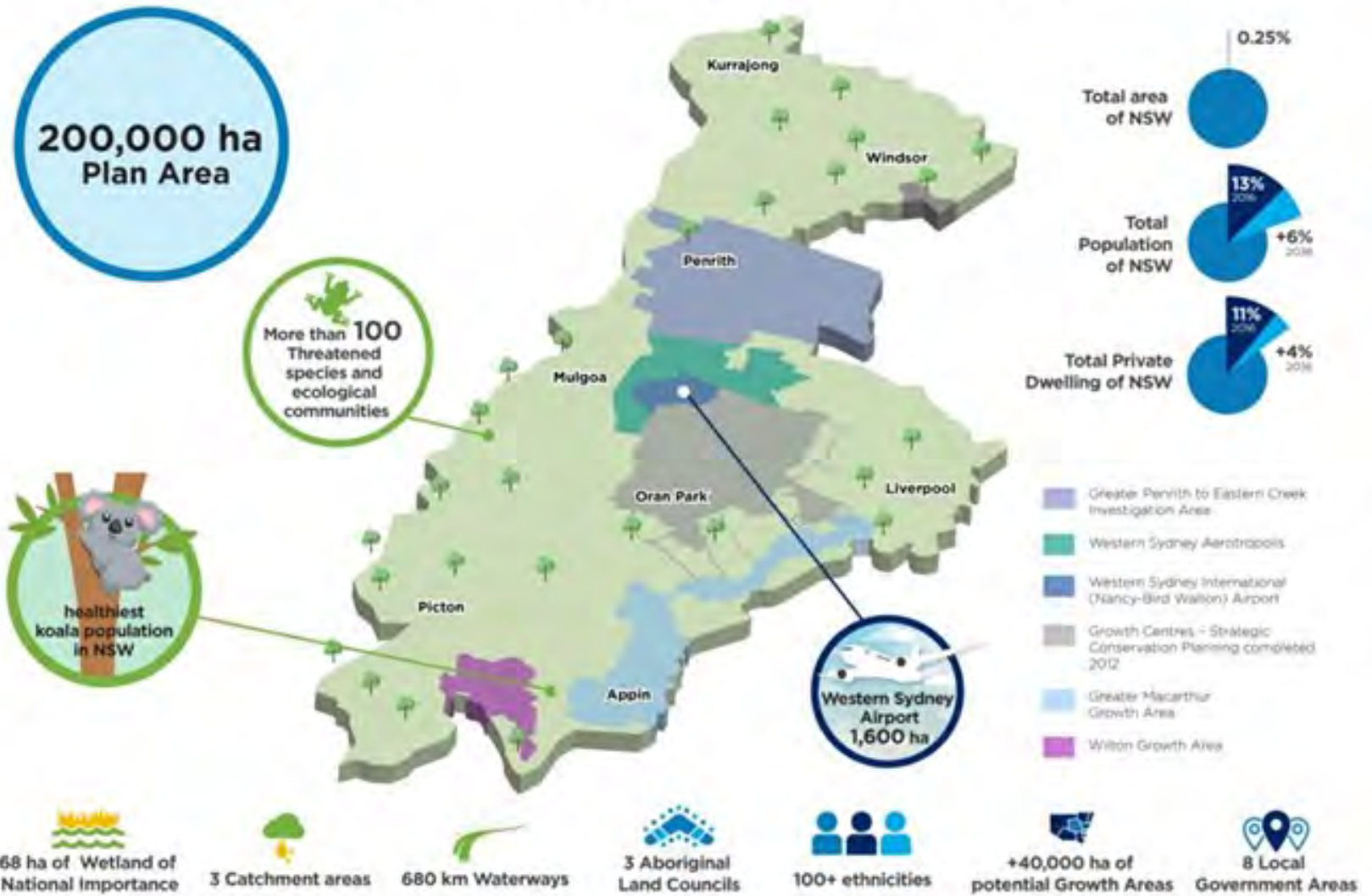


Figure 1 Cumberland Plain Conservation Plan Area

The objective of the CPCP is to deliver biodiversity outcomes and support the ecological function of the Cumberland Plain, improve livability and facilitate urban development in Western Sydney. This objective is supported through the delivery of on ground actions to meet eight outcomes for environmental, social and economic values in Western Sydney. More information about the CPCP's objectives are available [here \(link\)](#).

The CPCP commits to supporting economic participation for Aboriginal people and promote Aboriginal culture and knowledge in Western Sydney. The CPCP also includes a commitment to deliver a 10-year Strategy to promote and support economic opportunities and caring for Country for Aboriginal communities. The need for the Strategy arose out of early engagement Western Sydney's Aboriginal stakeholders and community.

1.2.1 Previous engagement with Western Sydney's Aboriginal communities under the CPCP

the department conducted early engagement with Western Sydney's Aboriginal stakeholders and community to help inform the CPCP's development in 2019. During that time, the department undertook:

- open community events in Western Sydney
- workshops with LALCs
- walks on Country

Consultation was held over a 6-month period between July to December 2019 by Marcia Ella Consulting. Participants included New South Wales Aboriginal Land Council -NSWALC, and Gandangara, Tharawal and Deerubbin LALCs. Broader Aboriginal communities were engaged through a Walk on Country and information sessions hosted in Liverpool, Penrith and Mt Druitt.

Participants were broadly supportive of the aims of the draft Cumberland Plain Conservation Plan, due to its alignment with Aboriginal culture and values, particularly regarding Caring for Country. Community feedback was captured and presented under three key themes, summarised below:

- **Cultural heritage** – There is an important link between land and culture, meaning the protection of land and minimisation of clearing is critical to protecting Country, cultural heritage sites and cultural knowledge
- **Land and environment** – Increasing open spaces with native flora and fauna for urban Aboriginal communities to connect with Country and with one another.
- **Social and economic** – Support for the economic opportunities for Aboriginal people, businesses, landholders, LALCs and other Aboriginal stakeholders in Western Sydney. Opportunities highlighted were employment, local procurement, education and upskilling, business opportunities and revenue generating opportunities.

The Draft Plan was available for public exhibition between August 2021 – November 2021, where community members were encouraged to provide their feedback on the Draft Plan via a formal submissions process.

The connection between culture, Country and the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal communities was highlighted through the engagement. This emphasises the importance of Caring for Country and the involvement of Aboriginal communities being involved in implementing the Cumberland Plain Conservation Plan.

1.3 Caring for Country – Aboriginal Outcomes Strategy

As part of the CPCP, the department has committed to engage with Western Sydney's Aboriginal communities and stakeholders to co-develop the Caring for Country – Aboriginal Outcomes Strategy.

The Strategy will:

- ensure Aboriginal people in Western Sydney benefit from the opportunities arising from the CPCP's delivery
- build partnerships and relationships with Aboriginal stakeholders, Traditional Custodians, knowledge holders and interested Aboriginal people within the CPCP area
- identify how we can incorporate Aboriginal cultural values and knowledge into delivering conservation outcomes under the CPCP.
- deliver Aboriginal economic, environmental and cultural outcomes through the implementation of the CPCP, in partnership with Western Sydney's Aboriginal community and stakeholders.

GHD and Zion Engagement and Planning (Zion) were engaged by the department to undertake community and stakeholder consultation activities to inform the development of the Strategy.

Western Sydney Aboriginal communities are diverse and made up of a range of stakeholders and interest groups. This includes Traditional Custodians, Local Aboriginal Land Councils, local Aboriginal organisations, service providers and broader Aboriginal Communities.

The objectives for engaging with Aboriginal communities and stakeholders for this project will be to:

- share information about the CPCP with Aboriginal communities and stakeholders in the Western Sydney Area
- seek feedback from Traditional Custodians, service providers, Aboriginal businesses, Aboriginal organisations, and community members on potential actions to be included in the Strategy.
- building on outcomes of previous engagement to further test and confirm elements of the Strategy with community and key stakeholders.
- facilitate ongoing relationships between the department and key Aboriginal stakeholders in the region to support the development, implementation of the Strategy and partnership and co-design opportunities.
- seek input to tailor and initiate actions for the Strategy

1.4 Scope and limitations

This report: has been prepared by GHD for Prepared for the Department of Planning & Environment and may only be used and relied on by Prepared for the Department of Planning & Environment for the purpose agreed between GHD and Prepared for the Department of Planning & Environment as set out in section 1.3 of this report.

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Section 2

Engagement Approach & Activities

2. Engagement approach and activities

GHD and Zion worked closely with the department to prepare an Aboriginal Community and Stakeholder Engagement Plan (Engagement Plan) to guide the engagement program. The sections below summarise the engagement approach and activities implemented in line with the Engagement Plan.

2.1 Response to COVID-19

GHD and Zion prepared an Engagement Plan prior to the most recent COVID-19 restrictions in the Greater Sydney area in 2021. This Engagement Plan maximised face to face engagement activities, which are more culturally appropriate when engaging with Aboriginal communities and Aboriginal groups. GHD and Zion revised the engagement approach in response to COVID-19 restrictions to ensure that stakeholders would still be informed about the project and their opportunity to provide feedback. As a result, the following engagement tools required a change in approach:

- face to face discussions took place virtually in the form of video calls
- yarning circles took place virtually in the form of group video calls
- face to face drop-in sessions linked with community activities were postponed or cancelled
- the community survey period was extended to allow more time for comments from wider community.

2.2 Engagement approach

The engagement approach outlined in the Engagement Plan, was informed by previous engagement activities undertaken by the department and leveraged GHD and Zion's existing networks of contacts across the CPCP area. The engagement approach was delivered in stages, summarised in sections 2.2.1 to 2.2.4 and outlined in Figure 2 below.



Figure 2 GHD & Zion's engagement approach and timing

2.2.1 Early engagement and establishing our network

At the start of the project, GHD and Zion undertook a stakeholder identification process as part of the development of a Communications and Engagement Strategy. The stakeholders identified included:

- stakeholders who have existing relationships with GHD and Zion
- stakeholders who are known to operate within the CPCP boundary
- stakeholders who provide services that could be used to support the delivery of the CPCP

These stakeholder groups have been summarised in Appendix D.

The Cumberland Plain is a significant part of Country for Traditional Custodians in Western Sydney.

While a key objective of this engagement program was to build on previous engagement undertaken by the department in 2019, it was also important to inform Traditional Custodians and other key Aboriginal stakeholders who were not involved in previous engagement undertaken by the department to inform the CPCP (Section 1.2.1).

Early engagement meetings were undertaken by GHD and Zion to update these stakeholders on the work taking place to develop the Strategy, and understand how they would like to be involved in the project moving forward.

Early engagement with Traditional Custodians also supported the project objective of building relationships with key stakeholders to support the delivery of the Strategy over the next 10 years.

To do this, GHD and Zion met with Traditional Custodians to introduce the project, answer any questions, and seek early feedback. These meetings were also used as an opportunity to share the engagement approach to inform the development of the Engagement CPCP.

Early engagement meetings were also used a tool to further establish project networks, utilising stakeholder connections to further expand the stakeholder list for the project.

To maximise engagement reach, GHD and Zion also met with local Councils who are located within the CPCP Area and have established relationships with community and key stakeholders. In discussing the project with these groups early, GHD and Zion were able to also identify additional stakeholders who may be interested in discussing the CPCP.

GHD/Zion also met with several established community committees including:

- Western Sydney Koori Interagency meetings (WSKI)
- South-Western Sydney Koori Interagency meetings (SWSKI)
- Families Engaging Families of Aboriginal Heritage (FEFAH)
- Liverpool City Council Community Consultative Committee (CCC)

These committees have strong and established networks throughout the wider Aboriginal community in Western Sydney.

2.2.2 Targeted stakeholder engagement

Stakeholders were identified for engagement based on outcomes of early engagement, previous engagement undertaken by the department and GHD/Zion's existing network. The key groups engaged in this program are outlined below:

- Local Aboriginal Land Councils & Aboriginal Land Councils
- Traditional Custodians & Elders
- Aboriginal organisations and service providers - including education, culture, land management, employment, and community development.
- Committees / reference groups

The department will continue to build upon their networks and if you would like to be informed of future projects then please register your interest at: CPCP@planning.nsw.gov.au

2.2.3 Broader community engagement

The broader Aboriginal community were engaged through the distribution of a project newsletter and a community survey.

Project factsheet – GHD/Zion developed a project newsletter with information about early engagement on the draft CPCP, draft ideas for the Strategy development, and contact details for the GHD/Zion project team. The newsletter was uploaded to the department's website and distributed to the wider community through the networks of key stakeholders. The newsletter was also provided to stakeholders who were engaged as pre meeting information. A copy of the newsletter is provided in Appendix A.

Community Survey – A survey was developed to provide the broader Aboriginal community with an opportunity to participate in the engagement program. The survey was aimed at Western Sydney Aboriginal community members who have an interest in taking part in the development or delivery of the Strategy.

The survey was distributed through networks of key stakeholders, who were identified during the engagement program. The survey was distributed via an online link, however hard copy surveys were also available if required. No hard copy surveys were requested during the survey period. The GHD project team provided a contact number and email address for community members who preferred to complete their survey over the phone.

The survey was opened towards the end of the engagement program for a period of two months between 23 September 2022 and 23 November 2022. A copy of the survey is provided in Appendix B.

2.2.4 Close the loop

A copy of the draft report was distributed to engagement participants via email prior to close the loop sessions and final report will be made publicly available on the department’s webpage and will be before and after the close the loop engagement sessions. Targeted participants will then be contacted to set up a follow up session with the project team. The purpose of these sessions will be to test the outcomes of engagement with participants, to confirm they are aligned with discussions held in earlier phases of engagement.

Outcomes of discussions with these stakeholders were used to further refine and finalise recommendations for the Strategy and confirm interest from stakeholders in being involved in the development and delivery of the Strategy.

2.3 Summary of activities

Engagement activities were undertaken between March 2021 – October 2021. The tools that were used throughout the program to engage with Aboriginal communities and stakeholders are summarised in Table 2.

Table 1 Engagement tools

Engagement tool	Purpose
Phone and email	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – To make initial contact, share information about the project, answer questions and collect feedback. – Schedule meetings with interested stakeholders – Identify additional stakeholders to be engaged
Engagement collateral	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Presentation material was distributed to stakeholders in advance of online meetings to help participants prepare for the engagement sessions
Face to face meetings – early engagement (March 2021 – May 2021)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Prior to COVID-19 restrictions, early engagement meetings with Traditional Custodians took place in person
Online meetings (June 2021 – October 2021)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Meetings were held with stakeholders via MS Teams. – Participants were encouraged to extend the meeting invitation to other members of their organisation or community.
Presentations & briefings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – GHD and Zion presented the project to four committee meetings, and allowed time for attendees to ask questions they had – GHD’s contact information was provided to attendees for follow up discussions – Presentation slides and the newsletter were distributed to attendees as part of the committee minutes – Participants were encouraged to share the newsletter with other networks
1800 community line	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – To manage incoming enquiries

Details on the number and uptake of engagement activities are provided in Table 3

Table 2 summary of engagement activities

Engagement tool	Number of activities	Number of participants
Phone calls	41	41
Email (survey distribution list)	1	23 responses (131 person distribution list)
Online meetings	18	30
Face to face meetings	8	29
Presentations & briefings	4	54
1800 community line enquiries	0	1

Engagement tool	Number of activities	Number of participants
Close the loop engagement meetings	5	10*
Total	77	178

**Note: stakeholders who took part in 'close the loop' engagement meetings had previously been involved in other engagement activities and have not been included in the total 178 engaged stakeholders.*

Details of the stakeholder groups who participated in the engagement activities are outlined in Table 4.

Table 3 Stakeholder groups engaged

Stakeholder group	Number of groups engaged
Councils	6
Local Aboriginal Land Councils	1
Service providers	7
Committees	4
Traditional Custodians	10
Registered Aboriginal Parties (RAPs)	1
Wider community (survey participants)*	Stakeholder group = 1 - 23 individuals
Total	30

**Wider community has been counted as one community 'group' rather than by the 23 individual count.*

2.4 Engagement content

The department developed a series of themes and potential actions that were based off early engagement outcomes in 2019 and 2020. The items formed the basis of the engagement on the draft Caring for Country – Aboriginal Outcomes Strategy

These themes and potential actions are outlined in Figure 3 below.

GHD used the items outlined in Figure 3 to guide discussions with stakeholders throughout the engagement period. The outcomes from these discussions reflect responses received in relation to each theme and potential action.

Cumberland Plain Conservation Plan

Caring for Country – Aboriginal Outcomes Strategy



Figure 3 Draft themes and potential actions



Section 3

Engagement Outcomes

3. What we heard

The following sections outline the feedback received during discussions with stakeholders during the engagement program.

Discussions were structured around four themes including:

- Partnering with Western Sydney’s Aboriginal Community (3.1)
- Caring for Country (3.2)
- Celebrating culture and heritage (3.3)
- Growing Aboriginal business and employment in the environment sector (3.4)

Underpinning each theme, are several potential actions which had emerged from the first round of engagement undertaken by the department in 2019 and during public exhibition in 2020 (as shown in Figure 3).

It is important to note that while the discussions with stakeholders were structured using these existing themes and potential actions, not all feedback from stakeholder groups aligned with this structure, and some recommendations around amendments to these items were also identified. In some instances, GHD and Zion have assigned feedback from stakeholders to the potential action it refers to.

Feedback from all stakeholder engagement activities, including initial engagement activities, close the loop engagement discussions, and the community survey are captured in the following sections.

3.1 Theme 1: Partnering with Western Sydney’s Aboriginal Community

The department is committed to establishing partnerships with Western Sydney’s local Aboriginal Communities to support the implementation of the Strategy. The Caring for Country – Aboriginal Outcomes Strategy will provide several opportunities for Aboriginal communities, service providers and businesses to be involved in the delivery of the CPCP. This theme identifies potential actions that can be undertaken by the department to support the development of partnerships and to build ongoing working relationships with the Aboriginal community.

This theme looks to identify partnership opportunities between interested parties and the department, as well as identifies existing communication networks, and future engagement preferences, to streamline and simplify information sharing about the Strategy implementation.

Building strong, long-term relationships with delivery partners will support the department in the successful implementation of the Strategy. This theme is seen as a mechanism to help deliver themes two, three and four, as well as the outcomes sought under the CPCP more broadly.

As part of the community survey, stakeholders were asked to prioritise potential actions from highest priority to lowest priority.

Survey participants ranked “Establish an Aboriginal advisory group to provide ongoing advice on the ongoing delivery of the Aboriginal Engagement and Implementation Strategy and the CPCP” as the highest priority potential action.

The actions along with amalgamated feedback from all engagement activities are shown in Table 4.

Table 4 What we heard – Theme 1

Potential Action	What we heard
Build partnerships with Local Aboriginal Land Councils and other interested Aboriginal groups and organisations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Partnerships are seen as a way to streamline the delivery of other elements of the Strategy.– There was interest from several organisations, including Traditional Custodians, employment, environmental, and educational service providers in establishing a partnership throughout the delivery of the Strategy

Potential Action	What we heard
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Partnerships should be built with organisations and stakeholders based on mutual respect. – Many stakeholders acknowledged that in establishing a partnership with them, it would also enable the Department access to their established networks, broadening the reach of the Strategy benefits to the wider community. – During close the loop sessions, stakeholders provided comment on the department’s partnership announcements, building on how the department can build partnerships under the strategy into the future <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnerships should incorporate an element of capacity building for the department’s future partners as well as current partners. The current partnerships that have been announced under the strategy are for well-established organisations. • The department to identify and establish partnerships as part of an equitable and open tender process. • Traditional Custodian groups were interested in opportunities to formalise partnerships with the department under the strategy. Partnerships could involve a % funding commitment, or opportunities for Custodians to have access to Country.
Establish an Aboriginal advisory group to provide ongoing advice on the ongoing delivery of the Aboriginal Engagement and Implementation Strategy and the CPCP.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Advisory groups are viewed as a way to streamline decision making, however stakeholders also provided feedback on how best to manage engagement through this mechanism. This included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • establishing a clear Terms of Reference (TOR) and Expression of Interest (EOI) process so that group members are appointed fairly and reflect the interests of the community • consider remuneration of group members • processes are in place to support a culturally safe environment • there is youth involvement – Some suggested that an advisory group would be difficult to manage given the dynamics within community and it might be best to establish a group to share information rather than make decisions – There was also a suggestion to establish a youth advisory group, which supports the primary group. This suggestion was heard several times across engagement activities, with stakeholders reiterating the importance of youth voices in this project. – Traditional Custodian involvement in an advisory group is important. Important that the department is cognisant of cultural protocols, and decision makers are Traditional Custodians. Also concerns around building accountability into any commitments from Government, commitments are followed through. – Consider implementing a deed of agreement so that all parties involved in advisory group activities have clear understanding of roles and responsibility.
Establish communication networks to engage with Aboriginal communities, organisations, and individuals to support the delivery of the Strategy and CPCP.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Almost all stakeholders advised they have access to a broader network of Aboriginal people in Western Sydney, which could be leveraged to communicate messages about the project. – A broad communication network can help to deliver greater equity in how opportunities delivered by the Strategy are provided across community.

3.2 Theme 2: Caring for Country

This theme refers to opportunities for Caring for Country to better recognise, celebrate and promote Aboriginal culture and heritage in Western Sydney with a focus on natural areas and protecting biodiversity. As stakeholders with significant land holdings in the CPCP Area, Local Aboriginal Land Councils are seen as a key stakeholder for this theme, particularly with opportunities for joint management of conservation areas currently under claimed or owned by these stakeholder groups. Feedback we heard from other community members identified opportunities for involvement of other groups to build knowledge of traditional management of Country practices and highlighted the need to work with knowledge holders.

As part of the community survey, stakeholders were asked to prioritise potential actions from highest priority to lowest priority. Survey participants ranked “Fund the upfront costs of biodiversity assessment and provide training and support to encourage Local Aboriginal Land Councils to establish biodiversity stewardship sites on their land” as the highest priority potential action, followed closely by “Fund Aboriginal ranger positions to support the ongoing management of conservation reserves.”

The actions along with amalgamated feedback from all engagement activities are captured in Table 5 below.

Table 5 What we heard - Theme 2

Potential Action	What we heard
Fund the upfront costs of biodiversity assessment and provide training and support to encourage Local Aboriginal Land Councils to establish biodiversity stewardship sites on their land	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Participants saw opportunities for small businesses to take part in the biodiversity assessment process to support the delivery of this goal – There was support from stakeholders with landholdings for the establishment of biodiversity stewardship sites – Biodiversity stewardship sites and establishment of new reserves to become a place to offset some of the development happening in Western Sydney. – Comment that partnerships to establish biodiversity stewardship agreements help to set out clear requirements around establishment of management plans, clear conservation outcomes, and opportunities for Caring for Country.
Support the speedy resolution of Aboriginal land claims in the CPCP Area under the Aboriginal Land Rights Act 1983 to deliver biodiversity or cultural outcomes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Some participants commented that this goal excludes Traditional Custodians as this Act requires Traditional Custodians to prove their connection to land, which can be challenging due to historic policies (e.g. forced relocations, Stolen Generations). – Comment that this action could be viewed as encouraging development, rather than to support conservation outcomes. – Some stakeholders raised concern about the focus on continuous support for LALCs maintains business as usual, rather than going further to support a range of stakeholder groups who could benefit from the strategy.
Investigate and implement opportunities for joint management of new conservation areas under the CPCP and fund Aboriginal ranger positions to support the ongoing management of these reserves.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – There is a lot of interest from job seekers in working in the environment sector, including in a ranger program. – An existing challenge is the gap between training and realised employment opportunities. – Traditional Custodians to be involved in ranger positions – establishment of a Traditional Custodian ranger program. There could be Traditional Custodians on Country to work with young people in particular reserve areas. Knowledge of places would become embodied in the structure of the CPCP rather than of just a high-level aspiration. – Participants noted challenges surrounding provision of opportunities due to the diversity of groups in Western Sydney – requirement for equal opportunity across all groups. – Participants noted the need for clear communications with stakeholders around roles and responsibilities for operating within the area – There was discussion around the department and local Councils providing support to landholders so that the zoning on land holding matches stakeholder priorities for the site. – Interest from employment stakeholders in maintaining training pathways for ranger positions.
Work closely with Aboriginal Traditional Custodians and knowledge holders so traditional fire management techniques can be applied to conservation lands.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – There was a high level of interest from participants in bush-fire management – with some stakeholders citing research that is currently taking place. – One group noted that bush fire management programs are challenging to implement as it is a high-risk activity with a lot of hoops to jump through. – An existing partnership with the Department of Education on bush fire management was identified by participants. – Participants also commented that there should be Traditional Custodian involvement in traditional land management practices. – Interest in support from the department to delivery bush fire management plans on existing landholdings – Traditional fire management should be founded in research.

Potential Action	What we heard
Other comments relating to Caring for Country	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Comments from Traditional Custodians around working with the department to provide Traditional Custodian access to some land parcels, so community can continue to gather and care for, practice culture on Country. <li>– Participants commented that waterways should be included in actions relating to caring for Country. Any actions around joint management and ranger programs could also incorporate ways to better manage waterways. <li>– Comment from one site owner around the need for support from the department to work with other government agencies to appropriately manage their site in relation to heritage obligations.

3.3 Theme 3: Celebrating culture & heritage

This theme refers to opportunities for Aboriginal Traditional Custodians to play a role in building traditional knowledge of Aboriginal culture and heritage within the CPCP area. Building upon knowledge of culture and heritage through the delivery of the CPCP allows for the sharing and celebration of Aboriginal culture and heritage for the wider Western Sydney community and visitors.

Feedback on this theme identified opportunities for sharing and recognising Traditional Custodian knowledge through place naming, research, education programs and cultural history and storytelling. Stakeholders also identified existing opportunities and initiatives, that could be further enhanced with support from the department.

As part of the community survey, stakeholders were asked to prioritise potential actions from highest priority to lowest priority. Survey participants ranked “Engage with the Aboriginal community to consider culturally appropriate names of conservation reserves, suburbs and streets” as the highest priority potential action, followed closely by “Fund an education program including education officers to provide ongoing biodiversity, cultural awareness, and engagement activities at schools and in the community.”

The actions along with amalgamated feedback from all engagement activities are captured in Table 6 below.

Table 6 What we heard - Theme 3

Potential Action	What we heard
Engage with the Aboriginal community to consider culturally appropriate names of conservation reserves, suburbs, and streets.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – There was high interest for culturally appropriate place naming throughout the CPCP Area. – Place naming is viewed as a way to build greater recognition of Aboriginal culture in public places, however place naming needs to be undertaken in consultation with the community, particularly Traditional Custodians. – Existing place naming approaches and projects were mentioned as recent examples, including Blacktown City Council & Westlink M7. – Place naming is an opportunity for collaboration between interested Councils and the department.
Fund an education program including education officers to provide ongoing biodiversity, cultural awareness, and engagement activities at schools and in the community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Cultural education is viewed as a way to build cultural awareness for both Aboriginal young people, as well as an opportunity to celebrate Aboriginal culture in the wider western Sydney community. Strong links between this goal, and research goals, with a suggestion to use research outcomes to inform education programs and resources. – Important to leverage and support existing cultural education programs e.g. Muru Mittigar, Blacktown Arts Centre and Kimberwalli – Cultural education programs should be founded in research outcomes. – Comment that Traditional Custodians should deliver any learnings about cultural protocols or Cultural information. – Cultural education should be made to be a genuine experience that people of all cultures can relate to and have an ongoing experience with.
Fund projects to recognise Aboriginal culture in new conservation lands under the CPCP and other important natural areas.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Cultural heritage for both ‘pre contact’ and ‘modern day’ were identified as opportunities for cultural heritage recognition projects. Some examples of ‘modern day’ heritage include the Blacktown Native Institute site (owned by Dharug Strategic Management Group), and the Mulgoa Mission. – Opportunity to fund projects that recognise stories and movement through Country. These projects are seen as a way to help build community knowledge of the Cumberland Plain, as well as modern and early cultural heritage. This would need to be informed by research (outlined below), and further consultation. – Projects to recognise culture in the Western Sydney area through these reserves could help all community members maintain a connection with Country. – Interest in a ceremonial space being incorporated into the strategy – Interest in support for local artists under the strategy. – Interest in delivering cultural tourism opportunities through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation of cultural artefacts

Potential Action	What we heard
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Immersive educational experiences on Country Building community knowledge of the Cumberland Plain
Deliver research to better understand how traditional land management practices can support conservation outcomes in Western Sydney.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High levels of interest from Traditional Custodians to deliver research for several topics including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Foods and medicine Fire management Seed collection Stories and language Whilst Traditional Custodians hold knowledge, they would be interested support through research methodology to deliver a formal research program. This is an existing barrier. Comment regarding research and the challenges with who has an appropriate qualification and who has the knowledge. Research programs should be set up so that the person who has the knowledge is in control and owns the research outcomes. Opportunity for community to revive language and culture.

3.4 Theme 4: Growing Aboriginal business and employment in the environment sector

The CPCP will see significant investment in conservation in Western Sydney to deliver the CPCP outcomes. The department will need the private sector to deliver ecological and land management services and the department want Aboriginal businesses to be at forefront of delivering these works. These actions are to support this.

This theme was viewed by engagement participants as linked with the successful delivery of actions in Themes 2 and 3. Engagement participants were supportive of employment opportunities that benefitted local job seekers and Aboriginal businesses. Partnerships were also identified as a mechanism to streamline procurement processes and make Aboriginal businesses more competitive when bidding for work.

There was also one comment to incorporate ‘training’ into the theme name.

As part of the community survey, stakeholders were also asked to prioritise potential actions from highest priority to lowest priority. Of the participants who answered this survey question, 56% ranked “financial support and start-up funding for Aboriginal-owned businesses” as the highest priority potential action.

The actions along with amalgamated feedback from all engagement activities are captured in Table 7 below.

Table 7 What we heard - Theme 4

Potential Action	What we heard
Provide start-up funding, training, and advice to build capacity in Aboriginal businesses to ensure a minimum of 5% of expenditure under the CPCP is awarded to Aboriginal-owned businesses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stakeholders were supportive of employment opportunities, specifically for local Aboriginal communities in Western Sydney. Provide support for small businesses to build capacity following impacts of COVID-19. Establish partnerships with employment service providers to streamline procurement processes. Suggestion for the department and service providers to also work with local Councils to understand how these local businesses can work with local communities. Provide support to help businesses be more competitive when bidding for work, including implementing a feedback process through leveraging existing support services offered by providers such as the NSW Indigenous Chamber of Commerce. Build capacity of businesses by providing appropriate training and checks (including insurances, relevant police checks, contracts etc.) . Comment that as the Aboriginal business industry continues to grow, there are more established businesses who can mentor and support other start-ups. Connecting these stakeholders could strengthen the industry further.

Potential Action	What we heard
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – There is a need for cultural mentorship for young Aboriginal people wanting to operate a business in the environment and caring for Country sector. – Business and employment opportunities should be going to local Aboriginal businesses. – Engagement of supply nation certified companies under the <u>Aboriginal Procurement Policy</u> to deliver all work under the strategy.
Investigate and fund initiatives that support Aboriginal employment and training pathways in the environmental sector.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Providing employment opportunities for Aboriginal people in the environment sector is a way to support greater connection to Country. – There are existing training opportunities provided through TAFE including some free courses, and Training NSW. – There is existing access to relevant training courses, however there are not necessarily employment opportunities for people once they have completed training. Greater definition of career pathways provided in the strategy is important to mitigate this. – Opportunity to educate businesses and Registered Aboriginal Parties with information about the Country they are working on. – Training opportunities could be widely recognised, to maximise opportunities for the participant. On the job, or in-workplace training could also be a way to maximise uptake, as participants would get paid whilst they are trained. – Establishing a ranger station

3.5 Interagency consultation and feedback

Feedback received from all engagement participants during each engagement phase was used to develop an initial draft of the ‘Caring for Country: Aboriginal Outcomes Strategy’.

A key stage of the strategy development is to socialise the draft strategy with other NSW Government agencies that are operating in the Western Sydney region to:

- Share the outcomes of community engagement and feedback received
- Share the draft strategy, including action items
- Identify opportunities for collaboration and information sharing

Agencies were able to review the draft strategy between 12 August 2022 and 23 September 2022, after attending an one-hour virtual workshop session on 26 July 2022, facilitated by GHD and Zion Engagement and Planning. The workshop utilised a digital whiteboard tool to enable participants to identify ‘opportunities for collaboration’ and ‘challenges’ relating to any of the actions within the strategy.

The department has also attended several meetings with agency stakeholders to further continue discussions on how they can work together to deliver action items identified under the strategy. A summary of feedback received from agencies from the workshop, written feedback, or meetings is highlighted below.

Table 8 Feedback received – interagency

Theme	Comment
Co-developing actions with Aboriginal community through partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – There was support from stakeholders in relation to the establishment of a youth advisory panel. – Opportunity for the department team to tap into existing organisations and networks to progress the actions relating to the establishment of a youth forum. Existing organisations could include, but are not limited to; Murama Youth Summit, Junior AECG, and Kimberwalli. – Importance of reducing consultation fatigue through collaborating with existing Western Sydney Authorities operating within the Cumberland Plain such as Western Parkland City Authority and Greater Sydney Commission, and local government. An audit of existing the department programs was also suggested to reduce consultation fatigue and encourage collaboration across the industry. – Consider establishing a transparent and fair selection process for any panels. Selection of panel members should look to include a balance of gender and representation of Aboriginal communities.

Theme	Comment
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Consider cultural intellectual property, and cultural safety for panel members – Any engagement under the Strategy should be culturally respectful, flexible, and with collateral that is clearly communicates the highly technical information currently reflected in the CPCP and the Strategy. – Risk that the program can get caught up in the technical rather than the cultural. Culture needs to lead the guiding framework and should be led by Traditional Custodians/Owners. – Adopting a wide range of partnership opportunities, with a range of stakeholder groups so all community members are able to benefit from the strategies' outcomes – Consider how the advisory panel will fit/ align and not duplicate outcomes of other Aboriginal advisory groups/panels for NSW Govt strategies such as water values for the Greater Sydney Water Strategy and Coastal Management Plans. Potential for establishment of a group that advises on wider issues – across strategies within the greater Sydney area to help avoid consultation fatigue. – It will be important to ensure communities are provided with sufficient information about all conservation program opportunities.
Caring for Country	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Opportunity for fire management programs to utilise the learnings from existing pilot programs led by Sydney Water with Indigenous Land Use Agreements (ILUA) holders, and with the Cultural Fire Management Unit. Opportunity for the department to collaborate landholders for fire management on their properties. Safety, governance and approval processes for traditional fire management to also be considered. – There is a need to streamline approvals for Traditional fire management. Refer to <i>Fire as a Management Tool Guideline</i> which provides detailed information regarding Cultural burns and pathways to support Cultural burns – Consultation should take place with organisations such as Local Land Services (LLS), Biodiversity Conservation Trust (BCT), LALCs, and National Parks (Gamay Rangers) to help define the ranger program establishment and biodiversity assessments. Consideration should also be given to establishing long term career pathways for rangers, through long term funding of the program, and opportunity for cadetships. – Consider linkages with Sydney Water's role as catchment authority in the Western Sydney Aerotropolis. – Consider incorporating an action or objective to enable continuation and reintroduction of cultural practices within agreement areas. We suggest this is an importance context and action to enabling Caring for Country across all tenure. – Consider the funding opportunities for programs where Aboriginal land managers can shadow ecological staff in the field. Programs could promote science exchange and pathways to dual credentials in Biodiversity Assessment Method (BAM) for Aboriginal practitioners. – Support for opportunities to incorporate bio-cultural monitoring into monitoring activities for biodiversity stewardship sites established on Aboriginal land. – Consider what department support structures can be created to provide positions with background services to enhance operational capacity, employment progression and business support for expansion to other conservation opportunities. – The strategy does not appear to acknowledge the relationship of native title interests to lands that have been successfully transferred under the NSW Land claims process, or the requirement to secure consent from native title interest holders prior to registering Biodiversity Stewardship Agreements (BSAs) on title of land that has been transferred under the NSW Aboriginal Land Rights Act. Suggestion: Crown lands consider a facilitation role between LALCs and Native Title claimants/services
Recognising culture and heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Support opportunities for culturally appropriate Aboriginal place names and renaming. Consideration for appropriate engagement for place naming. Liaison with Geographical Names Board and Local Governments to confirm an approach. Aboriginal naming could also be open to infrastructure so it forms part of the landscape e.g reservoirs, pumping stations etc. – Opportunities to collaborate with organisations such as Botanic Gardens and TAFE for education programs and training opportunities.

Theme	Comment
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Support for research programs to understand flora and fauna, water and fire management. Use of Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property (ICIP) protocols to also be incorporated into research programs. – Partner with educational institutions to enable prior recognition of Aboriginal caring for country competencies in awarding formal qualifications. – Consider opportunities to build on existing education programs, such as the BCT Education Program and Conservation Champion partnerships. Developing and delivering curriculum approved education products and learning on Country. – Map opportunities in department, other agencies, corporates, not for profits, for trainees and recruits as ‘Caring for Country’ ambassadors, trainers, and practitioners, individuals, co-ops, community businesses – Importance of creating opportunities for Aboriginal people of Western Sydney to practice culture
Growing businesses, training and employment in the environment sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Alignment of the Caring for Country Strategy with the NSW Government Aboriginal Procurement Policy (APP) and Close the Gap initiatives, as well as other agency Reconciliation Action Plans, to identify training and employment pathways for community. – Consideration into how the department can support long term smaller business engagement to deliver services under the CPCP as part of their procurement panel. Publicisation of a dedicated resource to upskill smaller businesses to build capacity. – The department to consider a place-based approach to employment opportunities, as well as opportunities for mature aged people / people looking for a career change. – Bespoke tender application opportunities that allow smaller businesses to apply for work, without the significant strain on resources for procurement. Alternatively, financially support smaller businesses to engage with services that look to build this capacity for Aboriginal owned businesses (NSW ICC and other employment organisations) – Will a future CPCP procurement policy apply to delivery partners such as the BCT? If so, will be important to get input from those partners in development of the policy.
Other items	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Opportunity for the Caring for Country Strategy governance to determine how to elevate Aboriginal voices at the highest level of decision making rather than simply receiving the benefits of the strategy. – The strategy should provide a clearer link with the department’s ‘Our Place on Country’ Strategy. – Risk that the program can get caught up in the technical elements rather than the cultural. Culture needs to lead the guiding framework and should be lead by Traditional Custodians/Owners. – Consider the role ICIP may play in this work on engaging and partner to deliver the Strategy – Non-Aboriginal people should have a cultural awareness training before be working in collaboration or participating in meetings with Aboriginal advisor or members of communities in working groups, panels or committees. – Importance of agencies coordination of engagement with Aboriginal communities of Western Sydney to avoid community fatigue and to share knowledge and value of collaboration.



Section 3

Recommendations

4. Recommendations

The engagement outcomes summarised in Section 3 have informed a series of key recommendations and other actions to support the department's development of the Caring for Country – Aboriginal Outcomes Strategy.*

4.1 Key recommendations

4.1.1 Ongoing engagement and revision

Meaningful implementation of recommendations made in Section 3 will require ongoing engagement with Aboriginal communities and stakeholders in the CPCP Area, as well as coordination with other key stakeholders and agencies. Ongoing engagement with Aboriginal communities and stakeholders will assist with:

- building awareness of the CPCP and the Strategy
- identifying additional stakeholders who may want to be involved in the Strategy over time
- tailoring the implementation of each recommendation to the needs of different stakeholders
- identifying opportunities for refinement of actions in the Strategy
- keeping Aboriginal communities in Western Sydney informed on how the Strategy is progressing

Ongoing engagement with Aboriginal communities should be coordinated across government agencies and local government operating in the CPCP Area. This is expected to help to reduce consultation fatigue and provide integrated project outcomes (refer to Theme 1, Section 3.1). An internal review of the Strategy should be undertaken by the department at intervals throughout the 10-year delivery period, to track progress in achieving the potential actions, identify opportunities for improvement. Internal reviews should be informed by outcomes of ongoing engagement with Aboriginal communities.

4.1.2 Conduct an internal program and consultation audit to understand existing projects relating to Aboriginal communities in Western Sydney

An audit of existing programs delivering Aboriginal outcomes and consultation with Aboriginal community and groups in Western Sydney. An audit will identify opportunities for internal collaboration and resource sharing. It will also help to duplication of activities delivered by the department and strengthen stakeholder and community relationships by helping to reduce the risk of consultation fatigue within community.

The following could be considered when undertaking this program audit:

- Existing projects in the region
- Future projects in the region
- Established consultation mechanisms / groups
- Feedback already received on other projects
- Other project teams within the department with touch points with key Aboriginal stakeholders.

4.1.3 Collaborate with relevant teams in the department to understand relevant projects and avoid duplication

Collaboration across the department will help develop a streamlined approach to communication and engagement with Aboriginal communities and stakeholders across Western Sydney.

* The recommendations listed in this section are based on the feedback received as part of the engagement for this project. They have not taken into consideration the department's existing programs, commitments, funding, and resourcing. The department's commitment to implement any of the activities outlined in this section of the report will form part of the Draft and Final Caring for Country – Aboriginal Outcomes Strategy.

Opportunities for collaboration could include:

- Regular meetings with representatives from both teams to share projects currently in progress and areas where duplication can be avoided
- Identification of land in the CPCP Area that has been identified for other planning and infrastructure projects is also under investigation for other planned projects (e.g. Greater Penrith Eastern Creek, Greater Macarthur Growth Area, Western Sydney Aerotropolis, Sydney Metro Western Sydney Airport)
- Identification of common actions and development of an overarching approach to achieve best outcomes for Aboriginal communities

4.1.4 Continue to build relationships with participants and leverage their networks to streamline communication

There is a need for the department to strengthen its relationships built through this stage of engagement and gain access to a broader network of Aboriginal communities. Establishing these networks will simplify and streamline communication to stakeholders about the Strategy progress and opportunities. Tasks could include:

- Continue conversations with stakeholders already engaged in this process. It is also helpful to have these conversations with stakeholders outside of a project context to help build meaningful relationships.
- Regular attendance at committee meetings to provide project updates
- Provide project updates that can be easily distributed by key stakeholders to their existing networks
- Establish a project mailing list to streamline distribution of project information moving forward, depending on topic of interest

4.2 Other considerations

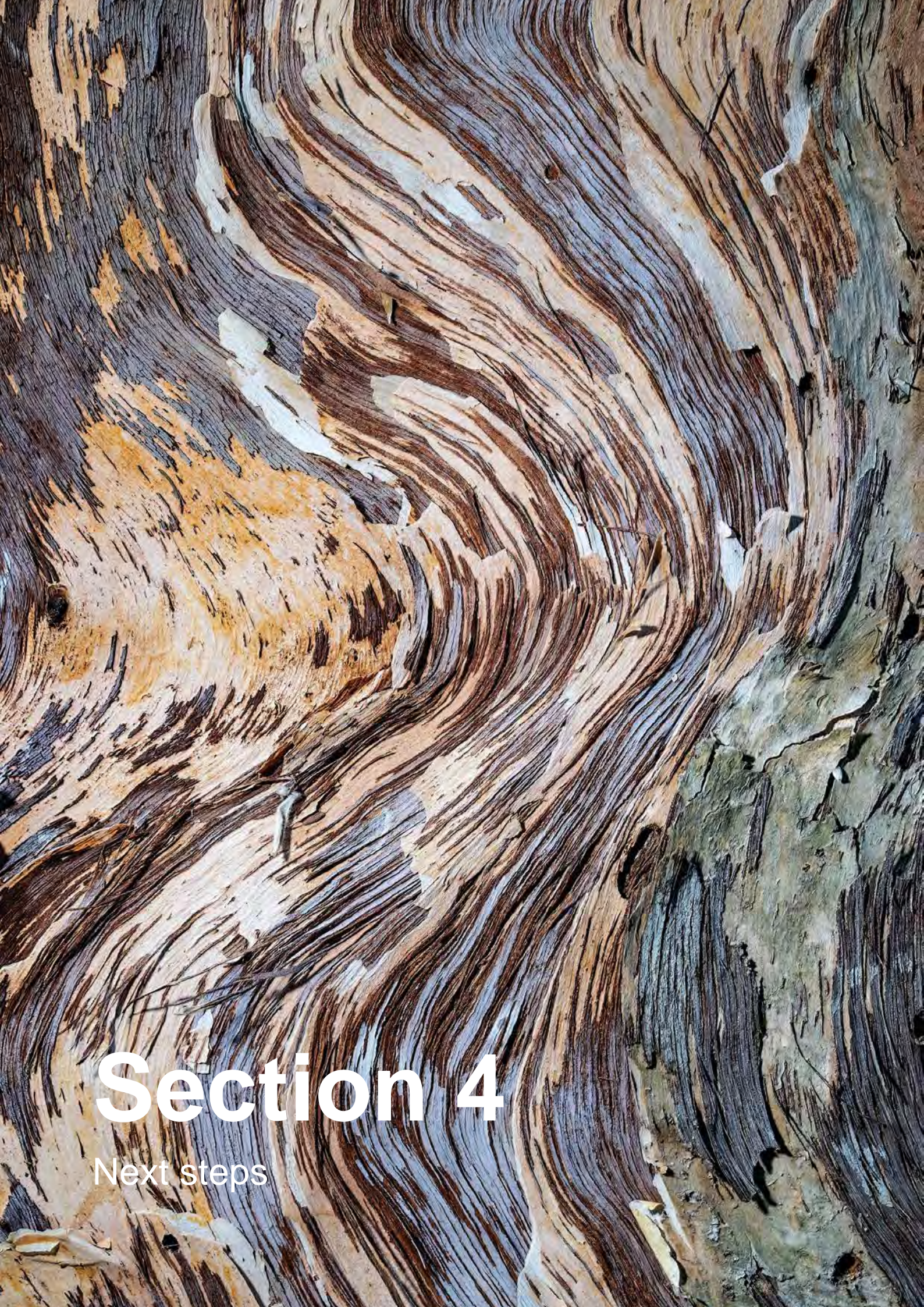
GHD and Zion identified the following additional considerations from the consultation outcomes that could be incorporated into the Strategy by the department.

Establish a youth advisory panel - For Aboriginal youth to provide advice from a youth perspective and build capacity in the Aboriginal youth of Western Sydney.

Establish a knowledge sharing panel - A knowledge sharing panel would provide a platform to disseminate project information to community representatives. The panel would also identify opportunities for DPIE to work with the Aboriginal community and stakeholders in Western Sydney.

Identify co-led research and mentorship - To foster an environment that promotes learning about Country from a research perspective, and to provide opportunities for Traditional Custodians to contribute knowledge and/or be mentored along the way. **Establish a cultural knowledge group** - A cultural knowledge group could provide guidance, support and input into matters relating to naming, signage and research.

Develop an Aboriginal employment & procurement strategy - Under the CPCP, the department has committed to a minimum 5% of expenditure under the CPCP to be awarded to Aboriginal-owned businesses. To reach this goal, an Aboriginal Employment and procurement strategy is required to identify opportunities for employment and procurement as part of the Implementation Strategy



Section 4

Next steps

5. Next steps

An indication of timing for the delivery of the Implementation Strategy is outlined in Figure 3 below:

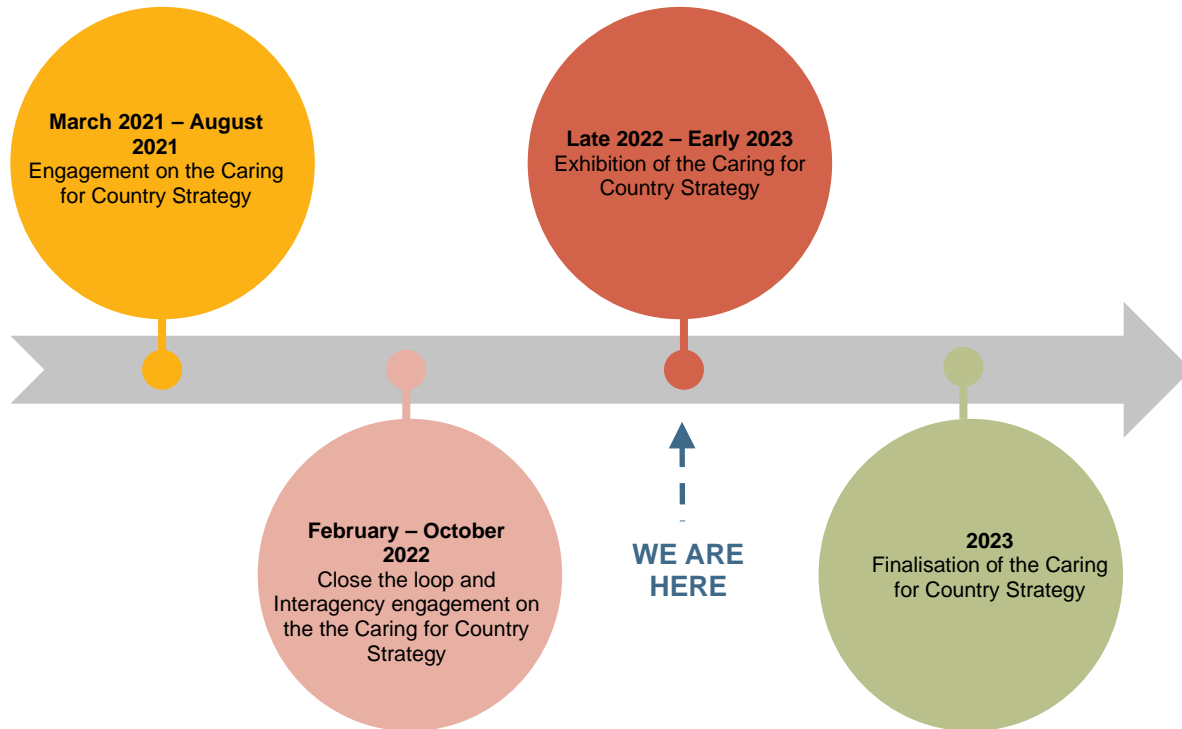


Figure 4 Implementation Strategy - next steps timing

Based on the recommendations provided in Section 4, we recommend the following key next steps for the department:

- Collaborate with Traditional Custodians and other Western Sydney Aboriginal community representatives to finalise and implement the Strategy
- Consider culturally sensitive engagement activities to support the public exhibition of the Strategy
- Continue to build long term relationships with Aboriginal stakeholders and communities in Western Sydney
- Work with stakeholders identified as potential partners to refine actions
- Coordinate internally and with other government agencies for future engagement opportunities, to reduce consultation fatigue for Aboriginal communities in Western Sydney

The department will continue to build upon their networks and if you would like to be informed of future projects then please register your interest at: CPCP@planning.nsw.gov.au

Appendices

Appendix A

Community Factsheet

August 2021

Aboriginal engagement for the Cumberland Plain Conservation Plan's 10-year Aboriginal Implementation and Engagement Strategy



We are engaging with Western Sydney's Aboriginal communities and stakeholders about the Cumberland Plain Conservation Plan to inform its 10-year Strategy for Aboriginal Implementation and Engagement.

The NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land on which this Plan takes place. We would like to acknowledge and pay our respect to Elders past and present of the Dharug, Gandangarra and Tharawal nations.

The Cumberland Plain Conservation Plan (the Plan) acknowledges more than 60,000 years of continuous Aboriginal connection to the land that makes up Western Sydney. Aboriginal peoples hold deep connection with, knowledge and understanding of, obligation to, and custodianship of the landscape.

About the Cumberland Plain Conservation Plan

As Western Sydney continues to grow, it is important that it develops with consideration for existing environments and Country. The Plan will strategically manage, protect and enhance the biodiversity in Western Sydney while facilitating development in Western Sydney such as the new Western Sydney Aerotropolis. The department is developing the Plan, a draft of which was exhibited in August and November 2020. The department is currently considering submissions received during public exhibition to finalise the Plan in 2021.

The area covered by the Plan

The Plan covers a large area of Country that includes almost 200,000 hectares in Western Sydney. It extends from Richmond in the north to Picton in the south and also spans to the start of the Blue Mountains in the west and follows the Georges River in the east. Western Sydney is home to a variety of native plants and animals that are unique to the area.

A map of the plan area is available over the page. For more information, visit the [Cumberland Plain Conservation Plan webpage](#).

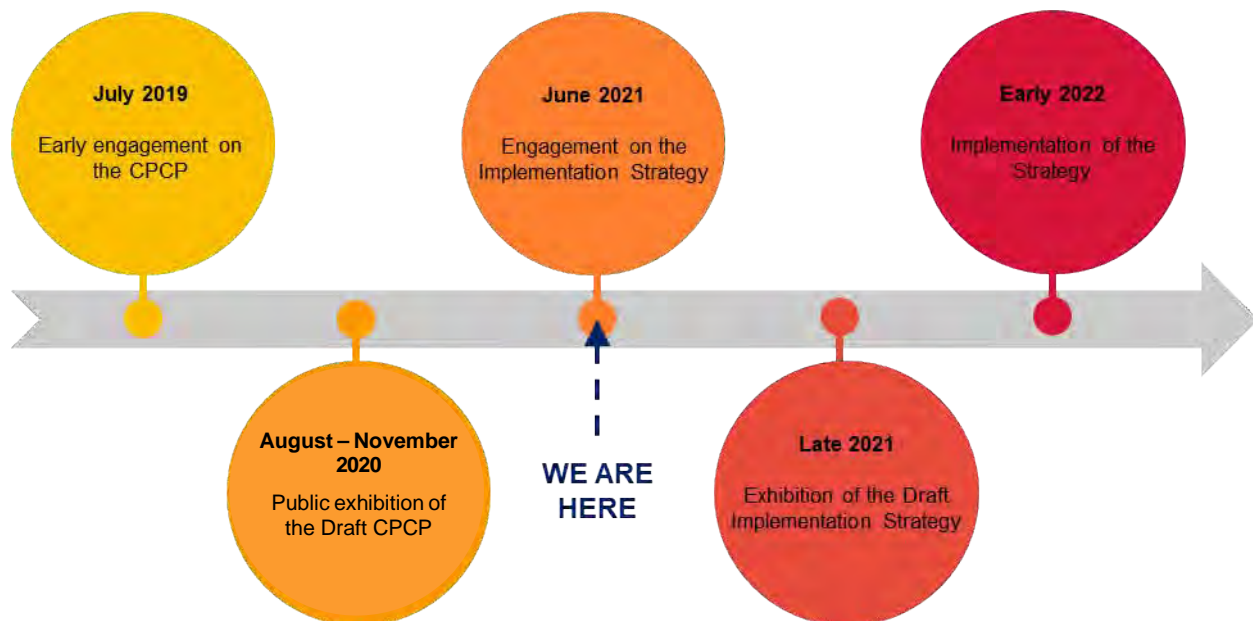


Figure 1 Project timeline

About the Aboriginal Implementation and Engagement Strategy

The Aboriginal Implementation and Engagement Strategy is one of several actions to which the department has committed under the Plan. The strategy will include a series of actions to be implemented over the life of the Plan.

The strategy aims to:

- ensure Aboriginal people in Western Sydney benefit from the opportunities arising from the Plan's delivery
- build partnerships and relationships with Aboriginal stakeholders, Traditional Custodians, knowledge holders and interested Aboriginal people within the Plan area
- identify how to work together to incorporate Aboriginal cultural values and knowledge into delivering conservation outcomes under the Plan.

How we have engaged to date

The department conducted early engagement with Western Sydney's Aboriginal stakeholders and community to help inform the Plan's development in 2019 and 2020.

During that time, the department undertook:

- open community events in Western Sydney
- workshops with Local Aboriginal Land Councils
- walks on Country.

How the strategy will be developed

The department, with the support of GHD and Zion Engagement and Planning is engaging with Aboriginal communities and stakeholders during June and August 2021 to collaboratively develop the strategy.

Through initial engagement with Aboriginal stakeholders and community we identified some potential actions to inform the focus of the strategy. These cover 4 key themes, as outlined in the next section.

This current engagement will aim to test, discuss and, if appropriate, further develop and refine these themes and potential actions to inform the development of the strategy.



Figure 2 – Community information session

How you can be involved in the development of the strategy

If you are an Aboriginal community member, service provider, business, or organisation in Western Sydney, we would like to hear from you.

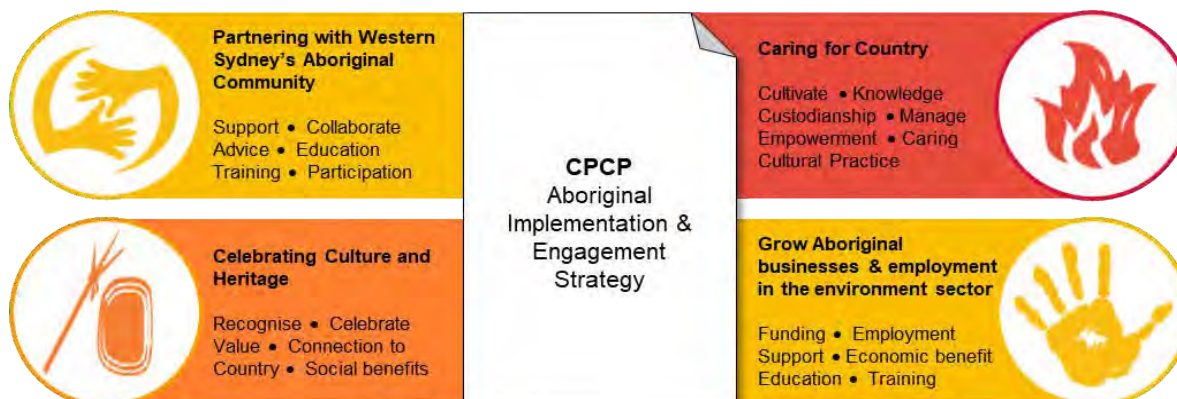
Our team is looking forward to meeting you and hearing your feedback. If you are interested, please contact us to arrange a meeting or to find out more ways you can be involved.

If you would like to discuss the project with a member of our project team, please contact us at:

- Phone: 1800 810 680

- Email: CPCP@planning.nsw.gov.au

Potential actions



Theme 1: Partnering and working with Western Sydney's Aboriginal community

- Build partnerships with Local Aboriginal Land Councils and other interested Aboriginal groups and organisations
- Establish an Aboriginal advisory group to provide ongoing advice on the ongoing delivery of the Aboriginal Engagement and Implementation Strategy and the Plan
- Establish communication networks to engage with Aboriginal communities, organisations and individuals to support the delivery of the strategy and Plan



Theme 3: Caring for Country

- Fund the upfront costs of biodiversity assessment and provide training and support to encourage Local Aboriginal Land Councils to establish biodiversity stewardship sites on their land
- Support the speedy resolution of Aboriginal land claims under the *Aboriginal Land Rights Act 1983*
- Investigate and implement opportunities for joint management of new conservation areas under the Plan and fund Aboriginal ranger positions to support the ongoing management of these reserves
- Work closely with Aboriginal Traditional Custodians and knowledge holders so

traditional fire management techniques can be applied to conservation lands



Theme 2: Celebrating Aboriginal culture and heritage

- Engage with the Aboriginal community to consider culturally appropriate names of conservation reserves, suburbs and streets
- Fund an education program including education officers to provide ongoing biodiversity, cultural awareness and engagement activities at schools and in the community
- Fund projects to recognise Aboriginal culture in new conservation lands under the Plan and other important natural areas
- Deliver research to better understand how traditional land management practices can support conservation outcomes in Western Sydney



Theme 4: Grow Aboriginal businesses and employment in the environmental sector

- Provide start-up funding, training and advice to build capacity in Aboriginal businesses to ensure a of minimum of 5% of expenditure under the Plan is awarded to Aboriginal-owned businesses
- Investigate and fund initiatives that support Aboriginal employment and training pathways in the environmental sector

Aboriginal Implementation and Engagement Strategy

Fact sheet

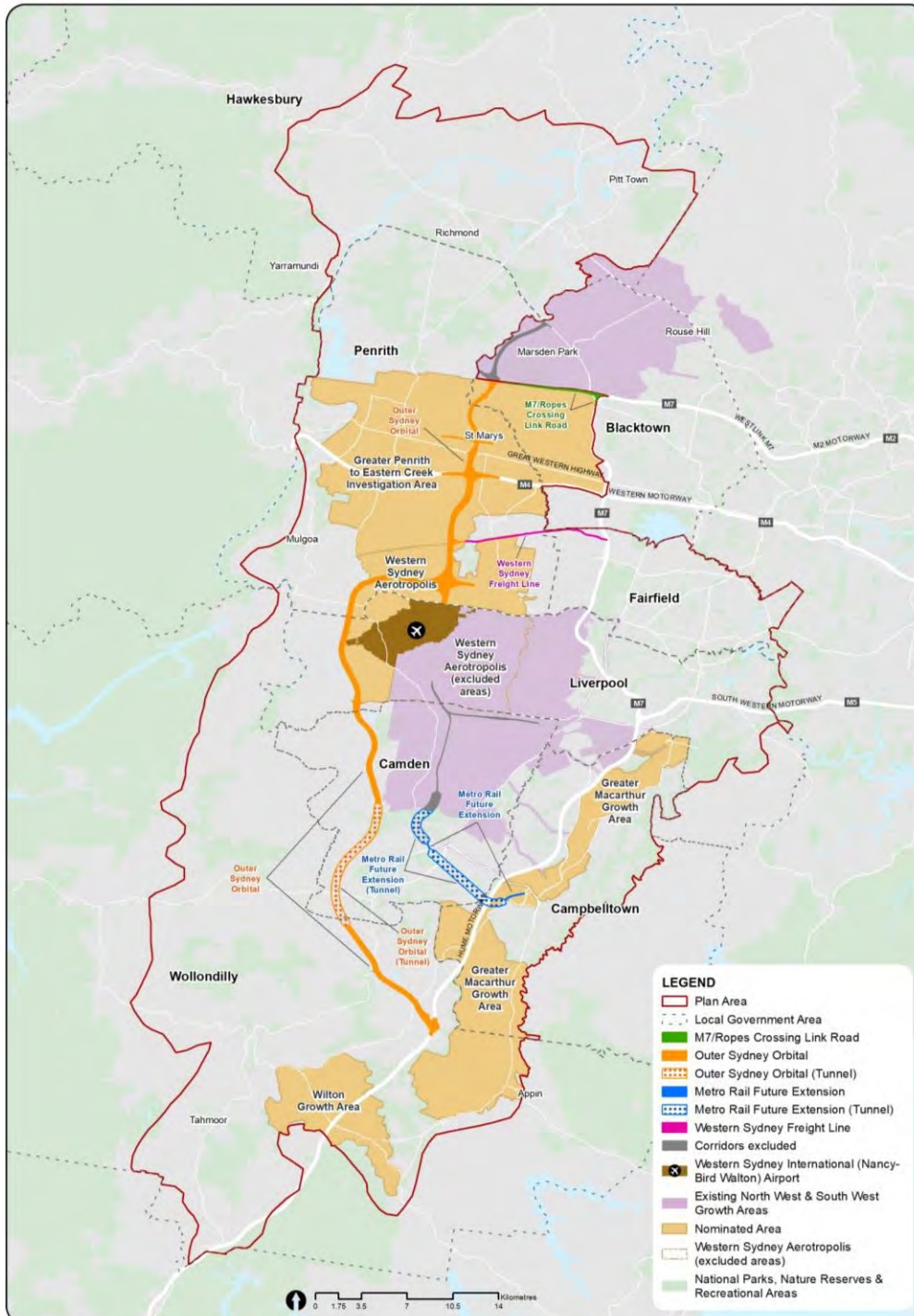


Figure 3 – Cumberland Plain Conservation Plan Project area map

© State of New South Wales through Department of Planning, Industry and Environment 2021. The information contained in this publication is based on knowledge and understanding at the time of writing (August 2021). However, because of advances in knowledge, users are reminded of the need to ensure that the information upon which they rely is up to date and to check the currency of the information with the appropriate officer of the Department of Planning, Industry & Environment or the user's independent adviser.

Appendix B

Community survey

Cumberland Plain Conservation Plan - Aboriginal Implementation & Engagement Strategy

Introduction

Thank you for taking our survey!

GHD and Zion Engagement and Planning are working with the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment to engage Aboriginal communities across Western Sydney about the Cumberland Plain Conservation Plan. We want to understand how Aboriginal stakeholders and communities would like to be involved in the implementation of the Cumberland Plain Conservation Plan over the next 10 years.

More information about the Cumberland Plain Conservation Plan and its key initiatives can be found here: <https://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/cumberlandplainconservationplan>

This survey is open to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members and stakeholders in Western Sydney. If you do not identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander please visit the link above to learn about other opportunities for community consultation.

If you would like GHD/Zion to help you complete this survey over the phone, please call us on 1800 810 680.

* 1. Do you identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander?

Yes

No



Cumberland Plain Conservation Plan - Aboriginal Implementation & Engagement Strategy Existing Knowledge - Cumberland Plain

2. Before this survey, had you ever heard of the Cumberland Plain?

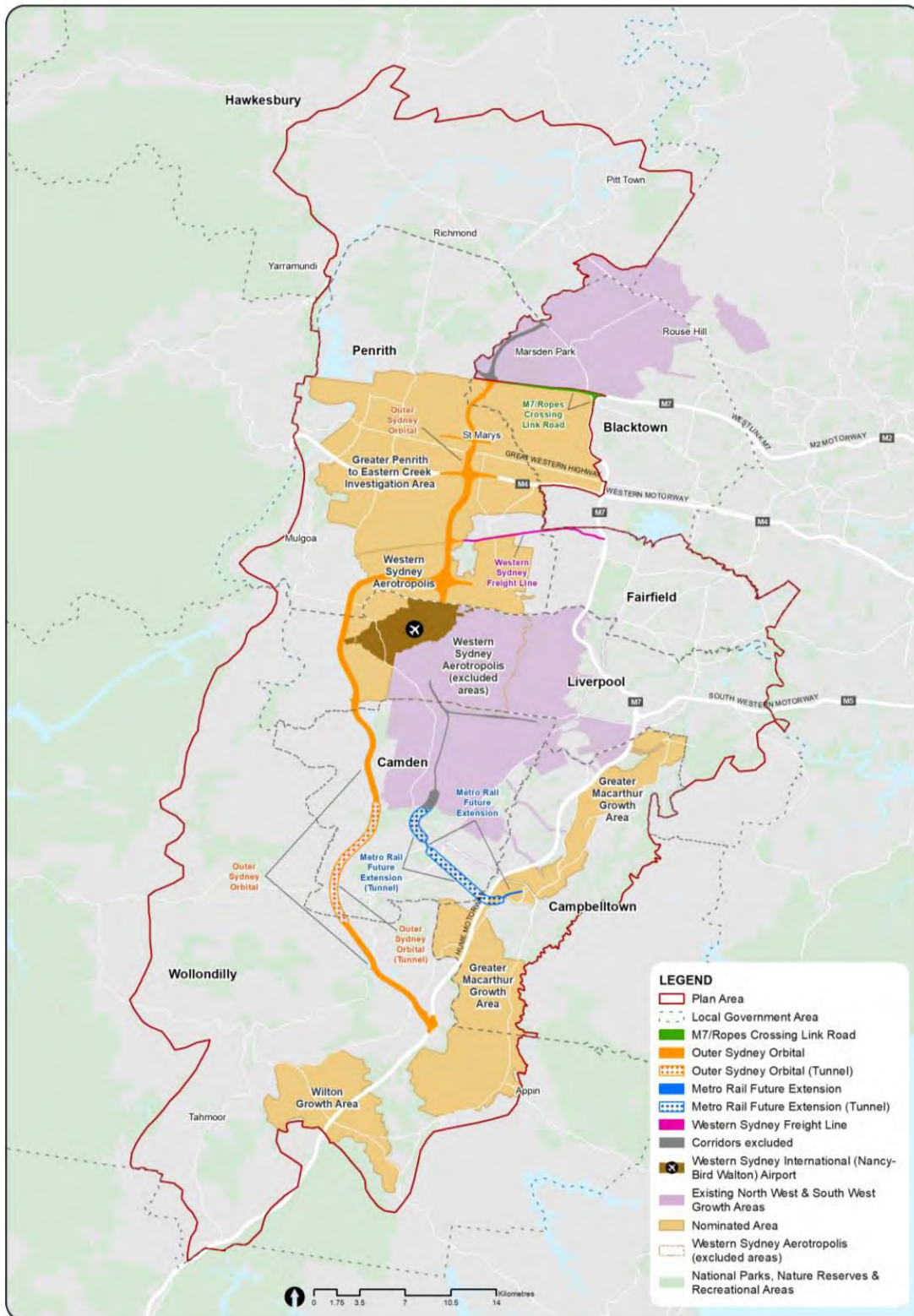
Yes, I have heard about the Cumberland Plain

No, I have never heard about the Cumberland Plain before

Not sure

The Cumberland Plain is a large area of Country in Western Sydney that covers over 200,000 hectares. The region extends from Richmond in the north to Picton in the south. It also spans to the start of the Blue Mountains in the West and follows the Georges River in the east. The Cumberland Plain is home to a variety of native plants and animals that are unique to Western Sydney. A map of the plan area is in the image below.

Map - Cumberland Plain Conservation Plan Project Area



Cumberland Plain Conservation Plan - Aboriginal Implementation & Engagement Strategy

Existing Knowledge - Conservation Plan

3. Have you heard about the Cumberland Plain Conservation Plan?

Yes, I have heard about the Cumberland Plain Conservation Plan

No, I have never heard about the Cumberland Plain Conservation Plan before

Not sure

The Cumberland Plain Conservation Plan will help to strategically manage, protect and enhance important biodiversity such as threatened plants and animals as Western Sydney grows. More information about the Cumberland Plain Conservation Plan and its key initiatives can be found here: <https://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/cumberlandplainconservationplan> or by clicking on this link to watch a short video: <https://youtu.be/Wpyc7-CBTgM>

Cumberland Plain Conservation Plan - Aboriginal Implementation & Engagement Strategy

Aboriginal Implementation and Engagement Strategy

To help develop the Cumberland Plain Conservation Plan, the Department of Planning undertook early Aboriginal community and stakeholder engagement.

From this engagement, they received feedback from participants about the need for an Aboriginal focused Strategy to help implement key goals and action in the Conservation Plan.

The Department of Planning are currently seeking feedback to help develop the Aboriginal Implementation and Engagement Strategy alongside the Aboriginal Community of Western Sydney.

We have identified four key themes and potential actions based on what we've previously heard from Western Sydney's Aboriginal community. We would like to seek your feedback on each of these themes and potential actions outlined below: For more information on each of these potential actions, please see our project factsheet, which is available [here](#).

Cumberland Plain Conservation Plan - Aboriginal

Implementation & Engagement Strategy

Theme Specific Questions

Theme 1 : Aboriginal Employment & Business

The Implementation Strategy has a role to play in supporting economic opportunities for Aboriginal people under the Plan by creating new Aboriginal employment opportunities and growing Aboriginal businesses in the environmental sector.

Based on previous engagement, DPIE have drafted some actions relating to growing Aboriginal business and employment in the environment sector.

4. Please rank the actions that need to be taken to grow Aboriginal business and employment in the environment services sector? (1 - Highest priority, 4 - lowest priority)

<input type="checkbox"/>	Financial support and start-up funding for Aboriginal-owned businesses
<input type="checkbox"/>	Training and capacity building for Aboriginal-owned businesses
<input type="checkbox"/>	More Aboriginal traineeships
<input type="checkbox"/>	Supporting initiatives that fund Aboriginal employment opportunities

5. Other suggestions relating to employment and business.

Theme 2: Using Caring for Country practices

The Department of Planning aims to recognise Aboriginal people have cultivated, managed and cared for Country within the Cumberland Plain for more than 60 000 years. Embedding caring for Country practices in the Implementation strategy is one way to ensure traditional practices are continued and maintained.

Based on previous engagement, DPIE have drafted some actions relating to Caring for Country.

6. Please rank from 1-5 the ways Caring for Country practices could be included in the Cumberland Plain Conservation Plan? (1 - highest priority, 5 - lowest priority)

- Fund the upfront costs of biodiversity assessment and provide training and support to encourage Local Aboriginal Land Councils to establish biodiversity stewardship sites on their land
- Support the speedy resolution of Aboriginal land claims under the Aboriginal Land Rights Act 1983
- Investigate and implement joint management opportunities for conservation areas under the plan
- Fund Aboriginal ranger positions to support the ongoing management of these reserves
- Work closely with Aboriginal Traditional Custodians and knowledge holders so traditional fire management techniques can be applied to conservation lands

7. Other suggestions relating to Caring for Country

Theme 3 : Celebrating Culture & Heritage

This theme identifies opportunities to better recognise, celebrate and promote Aboriginal culture and heritage in Western Sydney with a focus on natural areas and protecting biodiversity.

Based on previous engagement, DPIE have drafted some actions relating to celebrating culture & heritage.

8. Please rank from 1-4 the ways in which The Department of Planning can celebrate Aboriginal culture and heritage through the implementation of the Cumberland Plain Conservation Plan? (1 - highest priority, 4 - lowest priority)

- Engage with the Aboriginal community to consider culturally appropriate names of conservation reserves, suburbs and streets
- Fund an education program including education officers to provide ongoing biodiversity, cultural awareness and engagement activities at schools and in the community
- Fund projects to recognise Aboriginal culture in new conservation lands under the Plan and other important natural areas
- Deliver research to better understand how traditional land management practices can support conservation outcomes in Western Sydney

9. Other suggestions relating to celebrating culture and heritage.

Theme 4: Partnering with Western Sydney's Aboriginal Community

In order to successfully implement the Cumberland Plain Conservation Plan, the Department of Planning needs help and support.

The Department of Planning would like to establish ongoing partnerships with different organisations and service providers to support the delivery of different elements of the Cumberland Plain Conservation Plan over the next 10 years.

Based on previous engagement, OPIE have drafted some actions relating to Partnering with Western Sydney's Aboriginal Community.

10. Please rank from 1- 3 the ways in which The Department Could successfully partner with Western Sydney's Aboriginal Community to deliver the Cumberland Plain Conservation Plan.

- Establish an Aboriginal Advisory group with a range of stakeholders to ongoing advice on the ongoing delivery of the Aboriginal Engagement and Implementation Strategy and the Plan
- Create partnerships with service providers and other interested organisations to support the delivery of the plan.
- Ongoing engagement with the wider community throughout the life cycle of the plan.

11. Other suggestions relating to partnering with Western Sydney's Aboriginal Community.

Cumberland Plain Conservation Plan - Aboriginal Implementation & Engagement Strategy
Register Interest

12. If you could describe your connection to the Cumberland Plain in one word, what would it be? If you are unsure, how would you describe your connection to Country more broadly?

13. How old are you?

Under 18

45-54

18-24

55-64

25-34

65+

35-44

14. Do you belong to any of the following groups? (tick all that apply)

I own an Aboriginal-owned business

I work in the environmental sector

I am a community member

I am a member of a community group or organisation

I am a student

Other (please specify)

15. How would you like to be involved in the Aboriginal Implementation & Engagement strategy moving forward?

I would like to register to receive updates as the Strategy progresses

I would like to be involved in community engagement throughout the strategy

I would like to register my business for future opportunities under the strategy

I would like to be considered for a role on an advisory committee

I would not like to be involved moving forward

Other

16. Please provide your contact details so our team can get in touch with you.

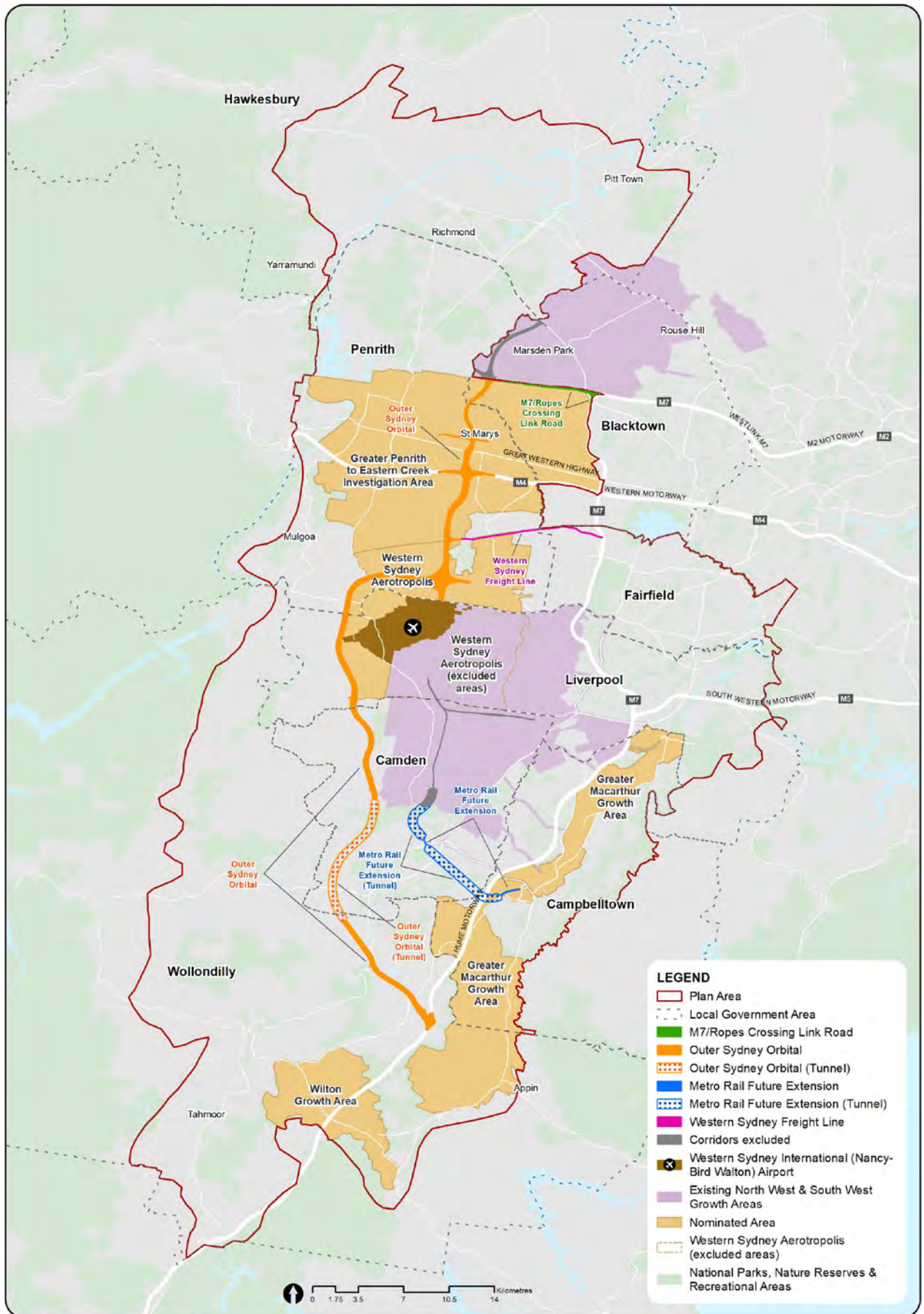
Name	<input type="text"/>
Company	<input type="text"/>
ZIP/Postal Code	<input type="text"/>
Email Address	<input type="text"/>
Phone Number	<input type="text"/>

(Note that this information is subject to GHD's Privacy Policy, and will only be used for the purpose of this project. The details you provided will be passed on the NSW Government, and will then be removed from GHD's system. A copy of GHD's Privacy Policy can be found here:

<https://www.ghd.com/en/privacy-policy.aspx>)

Appendix C

Cumberland Plain Conservation Plan Area



Appendix D

Stakeholder Definitions

GHD and Zion met with a variety of stakeholder groups throughout this engagement period. These stakeholder groups have been summarised below:

Traditional Custodians	A 'Traditional Custodian' (also called Traditional Owner, however some communities have specific preferences about which term to use) is an Aboriginal person or group of Aboriginal people who have ongoing traditional and cultural connections to specific geographical areas or 'Country'. They have a cultural association with that Country, which derives from the traditions, observances, customs, beliefs or history of the original Aboriginal inhabitants of the area. Traditional Custodians may opt to represent themselves as individuals, or as part of a representative group.
Knowledge holders	Knowledge holders are defined as Aboriginal people who are engaged in maintaining and, in some cases, reclaiming Indigenous Knowledge traditions. Indigenous knowledges, sometimes called traditional or local knowledges, refers to the understandings and practices developed by Indigenous peoples through thousands of years of experience. Indigenous knowledge systems are characteristically holistic, relational, and rooted in a strong and continuing connection with the land, sky and waters. Knowledge is often passed down orally and can be collectively owned. It can include or be embodied in language, song, story, ritual, lore, and customary practices. (University of Melbourne, n.d.).
Local Aboriginal Land Councils	Local Aboriginal Land Councils are autonomous bodies which are governed by Boards elected by local Aboriginal community members every four years. LALCs oversee community development, operations of land acquisition, land use and management, Aboriginal heritage, financial stewardship and management of property and rights for Aboriginal communities. They are meant to represent the community not just Traditional Owners or those people who have a connection to the Country they govern.
Broader Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community	The broader Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community refers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as a collective who live in or have interests in an area. The broader community may include Aboriginal people who have cultural obligations and connections to that Country (such as Traditional Custodians) as well as Aboriginal people who may have moved to the area from other Countries, but still hold strong connections to community, culture and place.
Aboriginal service providers / businesses	These are Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal owned and operated businesses and services which offer targeted services and facilitate opportunities for Aboriginal communities. These service providers and businesses are often very well connected to Aboriginal communities and stakeholders.



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