



# Aboriginal Engagement Outcomes Report

Greater Penrith Eastern Creek Place  
Strategy

Department of Planning, Industry & Environment





## Acknowledgment 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.

We extend that respect to the Aboriginal communities within the Greater Penrith Eastern Creek area whose voices we seek to empower through this project. We acknowledge the strength, diversity and resilience of the community. We look forward to hearing their stories and connections to this area and helping to translate what we hear into the Greater Penrith Eastern Creek Place Strategy.

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# Executive summary

## Purpose of this report

GHD Pty Ltd (GHD) and Zion Engagement and Planning (Zion) were engaged by The NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment (DPIE) to undertake engagement with Aboriginal communities and stakeholders to inform the Greater Penrith Eastern Creek (GPEC) Strategic Framework

This report summarises the outcomes of engagement with Aboriginal communities conducted by GHD and Zion. It also provides guidance on how to apply these findings to planning for the GPEC area

## Engagement overview

The objectives of engaging with Aboriginal communities were to:

- Share information about the Strategic Framework and where GPEC is
- Identify priority issues and opportunities of GPEC

The engagement program ran between July and August 2021, with 81 people participating in 67 engagement activities. Several different engagement tools were available throughout the program, however online platforms were prioritised in order to comply with COVID-19 safety restrictions.

## Summary of key findings

Conversations with Aboriginal communities focused on the topics listed below. A broad range of responses were received throughout engagement.

Themes	Outcomes
Country-led	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– Waterways, untouched green spaces, Yarramundi, St Marys, Mount Druitt, Penrith and the Blacktown Native Institute site were identified as important places on Country.</li><li>– Family, employment opportunities, relocation, affordable housing and amenity and character are reasons people live or work in the area.</li><li>– The community, the environment and natural amenity, Dharug Country and Traditional Custodians, and the location itself were identified as unique characteristics of the area.</li></ul>
Community-centred	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– The community was described in different ways including diverse, large, disadvantaged, disconnected, strong, and displaced.</li><li>– The type of support the community needs to grow includes education and training, cultural infrastructure, housing and employment opportunities.</li><li>– Changes that would benefit the community include holistic and cultural appropriate services, cultural support, systems reform, and acknowledgement of Traditional Custodians.</li></ul>
Connected to opportunity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– Untouched green spaces and waterways, cultural hubs and meeting places, employment zones and shopping centres were identified as places the community need to connect to.</li><li>– Public transport is the main method of travel.</li><li>– Community prefer to connect with each other face to face.</li></ul>
Balanced growth in the right places	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– In terms of feedback on St Marys and Orchard Hills, it was identified that there is a need for space, revitalisation, and connectivity.</li><li>– The community highlighted the importance of maintaining social equity when uplifting and improving areas.</li><li>– Untouched green spaces and the Blacktown Native Institute site are areas that should remain the same.</li><li>– Culturally safe spaces and training opportunities are areas that need improvement.</li><li>– Concerns raised related to the area changing include displacement, lack of culturally responsive and affordable housing, population density, and damage to Country.</li></ul>
Opportunities for place-naming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– Returning language to Country</li><li>– Collaboration with Traditional Custodians</li><li>– Seek advice from existing processes</li></ul>

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|--|--|
|  | – Utilise opportunities for naming places or landmarks |
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## Recommendations

The key outcomes from engagement are directly relevant to the strategic planning work currently being undertaken by DPIE for GPEC. These findings have been incorporated into a number of recommendations, as follows: .

- **Structure Plan:** Recommendations to collaborate with Traditional Custodians and Aboriginal communities, and consider waterways, green spaces, social equity, affordable housing and connectivity in the Structure Plan.
- **Strategic Framework:** Recommendations to elevate the voices of Traditional Custodians and Aboriginal communities and acknowledge the story of place in the Strategic Framework.
- **Overarching principles:** Recommendations to incorporate overarching principles that prioritise caring for Country and cultural safety in the Strategic Framework, which will guide future planning and development in the GPEC area.
- **Big moves:** Recommendations for big moves included
  - Promote and re-establish the health of GPEC’s waterways
  - Deliver opportunities for culturally responsive infrastructure and housing
  - Enhance public transport connectivity within GPEC
  - Consider social equity in growth and development

Some of the issues and opportunities raised in the engagement are not in scope for the Strategic Framework currently being prepared, however they may be relevant to future planning work by DPIE and other government agencies. These include:

- **Primary and high school curriculum:** Integrate content including cultural awareness, Aboriginal history and culturally appropriate sexual health education
- **University and TAFE:** Infuse Aboriginal culture across different subjects and teaching material
- **Aboriginal Cultural Support Program:** Provision of Aboriginal cultural support advisors or mentor across all levels of education
- **Aboriginal Training Program:** Link up with existing businesses and service providers to deliver an Aboriginal Training Program to support Aboriginal people of all ages living in GPEC to build their skills and capacity.
- **Transport education:** Provide transport education to Aboriginal youth, specifically regarding fines and debt collection. If possible, consider alternative ways that at-risk or economically disadvantaged youth can pay off transport fines
- **Community transport grants / funding:** Establish a grants program specifically for existing or new organisations that are providing transport services for Aboriginal communities in GPEC. Consider affordable access to public transport
- **Caring for Country Strategy:** Support Aboriginal communities to care for Country in the GPEC area.
- **Aboriginal Research Program:** Provide funding for Aboriginal communities to undertake research into history of the area, language revitalisation, and traditional knowledge (including waterways and water health, caring for Country and land management)
- **Culturally responsive housing:** Collaborate with other agencies to develop an approach and policy position regarding culturally responsive housing.

## Next steps

Key next steps for DPIE to implement the recommendations outlined in this report include:

- Close the loop with stakeholders who participated in engagement activities
- Collaborate with Traditional Custodians and GPEC community representatives to develop and finalise the Strategic Framework

- Share outcomes of engagement and recommendations, and coordinate with other government agencies, to establish a shared responsibility for action and implementation and reduce consultation fatigue
- Continue to build long term relationships with Aboriginal stakeholders and communities in GPEC
- Consider how to implement recommendations and engagement outcomes through future planning phases at GPEC.

# Contents

	Purpose of this report	i
	Engagement overview	i
	Summary of key findings	i
	Recommendations	ii
	Next steps	ii
<b>1.</b>	<b>Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1	Project background	1
1.2	Purpose of this report	2
1.3	Scope and limitations	2
<b>2.</b>	<b>Approach and activities</b>	<b>3</b>
2.1	Internal consultation and collaboration	3
2.2	Engagement objectives	3
2.3	Response to COVID-19	3
2.4	Engagement approach	4
	2.4.1 Early engagement	4
	2.4.1 Wide community engagement	4
2.5	Summary of engagement activities	5
<b>3.</b>	<b>Engagement outcomes</b>	<b>6</b>
3.1	Country-led	6
3.2	Community-centred	7
3.3	Connected to opportunity	8
3.4	Balanced growth in the right places	8
3.5	Opportunities for place naming	9
<b>4.</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>10</b>
4.1	Structure Plan	10
4.2	Strategic Framework	10
	4.2.1 Welcome to Country	11
	4.2.2 Welcome to our Community	11
	4.2.3 The story of this place	11
	4.2.4 Overarching principles	11
	4.2.5 Big moves	12
	4.2.5.1 Implementation	12
	4.2.6 Recommended actions	13
4.3	Other recommendations	14
4.4	Ongoing engagement and coordination	15
<b>5.</b>	<b>Next steps</b>	<b>16</b>
	Country-led	19
	Community-centred	21
	Connected to opportunity	24
	Balanced growth in the right areas	25

## Table index

Table 1	Engagement process undertaken	5
Table 2	Summary of engagement activities	5
Table 3	Stakeholders engaged	5
Table 4	Summary of engagement outcomes	6
Table 5	Summary of engagement outcomes	7
Table 6	Summary of engagement outcomes	8
Table 7	Summary of engagement outcomes	8
Table 8	Big moves	12
Table 9	Implementation with other stakeholders	12
Table 10	Actions	13
Table 11	Other recommendations	14
Table 12	Important places on Country	19
Table 13	Reason for living or working in the area	20
Table 14	Unique characteristics of the area	21
Table 15	Description of community	21
Table 16	Support the community needs to grow	22
Table 17	Changes that would benefit the community	24
Table 18	Places the community need to connect to	24
Table 19	Methods of travel	25
Table 20	Community connection	25
Table 21	St Marys and Orchard Hills	25
Table 22	Focus for growth	26
Table 23	Areas to remain the same	26
Table 24	Improvements	26
Table 25	Concerns about area changing	26

## Figure index

Figure 1	Greater Penrith Eastern Creek investigation area	1
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## Appendices

Appendix A	Detailed outcomes of engagement
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# 1.

## Introduction

### 1.1 Project background

The NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment (DPIE) is currently preparing the Greater Penrith Eastern Creek (GPEC) Strategic Framework. This is the first stage of a strategic planning process, which will be realised over a 20-year timeframe. The GPEC area (Figure 1) covers an area of 18,600 hectares, including Penrith CBD, St Marys, Mount Druitt and Rooty Hill. It is bounded by the Nepean River and The Northern Road to the west, Castlereagh Connection to the north, the M7 Motorway to the east and the Warragamba to Prospect water pipeline to the south. It sits within the Blacktown and Penrith Local Government Areas (LGAs).

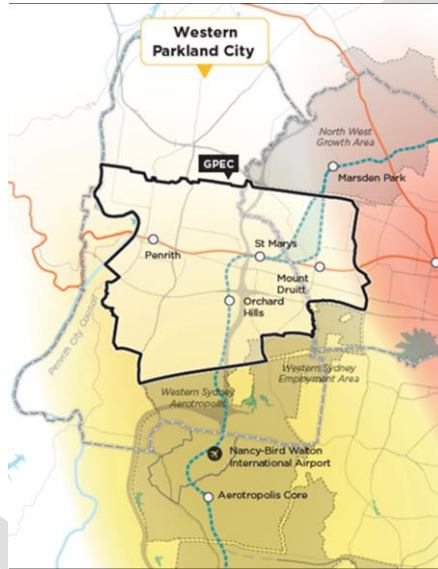


Figure 1 Greater Penrith Eastern Creek investigation area

The GPEC Strategic Framework will guide future strategic planning on a regional scale by identifying areas for change within GPEC and developing an approach and response to different precincts within the investigation area. This includes Designing with Country, strategic transport planning, employment targets, infrastructure and services, and place naming. It will build on work undertaken as part of each local councils' Local Strategic Planning Statements, NSW Government's Place-based Infrastructure Compact and other strategic planning documents.

Aboriginal Engagement is important to understand how the voices of Aboriginal communities in Western Sydney can be recognised and reflected in how GPEC takes shape. GHD and Zion Engagement and Planning (Zion) have been engaged by DPIE as the Aboriginal engagement service provider to undertake meaningful engagement with Aboriginal communities and stakeholders.



## 1.2 Purpose of this report

This report summarises the outcomes of the engagement activities conducted by GHD/Zion with DPIE during June to August 2021. The report includes

- An overview of the engagement approach and activities
- Key outcomes from discussions which focused on opportunities for the GPEC investigation area
- Recommendations for DPIE's consideration in planning for GPEC:
  - A series of recommendations for the Structure Plan
  - A series of recommendations for the Strategic Framework
- Overview of key next steps for consideration by DPIE.

EMM Consulting also engaged with Registered Aboriginal Parties and key Aboriginal stakeholders to inform the Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal Heritage Assessment. These outcomes are not included in this report.

## 1.3 Scope and limitations

*This report has been prepared by GHD for Department of Planning, Industry & Environment and may only be used and relied on by Department of Planning, Industry & Environment for the purpose agreed between GHD and Department of Planning, Industry & Environment as set out in section 1.2 of this report.*

*GHD otherwise disclaims responsibility to any person other than Department of Planning, Industry & Environment arising in connection with this report. GHD also excludes implied warranties and conditions, to the extent legally permissible.*

*The services undertaken by GHD in connection with preparing this report were limited to those specifically detailed in the report and are subject to the scope limitations set out in the report.*

*The opinions, conclusions and any recommendations in this report are based on conditions encountered and information reviewed at the date of preparation of the report. GHD has no responsibility or obligation to update this report to account for events or changes occurring subsequent to the date that the report was prepared.*

*The opinions, conclusions and any recommendations in this report are based on qualitative analysis of outcomes collected during engagement, and the judgement of the project team based on their technical experience.*

## 2.

# Approach and activities

GHD/Zion worked closely with DPIE to prepare and deliver a meaningful engagement program with Aboriginal communities. The methodology and approach to this engagement is outlined in an Aboriginal Engagement Strategy. This section provides an overview of the engagement planning, approach and delivery.

## 2.1 Internal consultation and collaboration

In the early stages of the project, GHD and Zion met with other technical teams and DPIE to understand their project scopes, and identify opportunity for inputs from Aboriginal engagement. This helped to further refine the objectives of the engagement, outlined in section 2.2.

Through initial consultation, it was identified that alignment with the urban design and landscape teams (TZG and JMD) and the heritage team (EMM) would be important to ensure outcomes of engagement were embedded in the Strategic Framework and supporting reports.

Internal consultation and collaboration with other teams was ongoing throughout the project, and included the delivery of a virtual on Country training, facilitated by Dharug Traditional Custodians.

## 2.2 Engagement objectives

A series of internal workshops with DPIE and other technical teams identified that the purpose of engaging Aboriginal communities was to:

- **Share information about the project**, to help community understand what the Strategic Framework is, where GPEC is, and what it could mean for the future of the area.
- **Identify priority issues and opportunities**, aligned with the initial strategic objectives for the area, including:
  - **Country-led** (or landscape-led): to understand more about Country, its tangible and intangible values, and what areas within GPEC needed to be considered in a Country-led approach.
  - **Community-centred** (or people-centred): to understand more about the Aboriginal community living and working in GPEC, what challenges the community faces, and the support the community needs to grow.
  - **Connected to opportunity**: to understanding the places community need to connect to, ways community prefer to travel around the area, and any connectivity challenges they currently experience.
  - **Balanced growth in the right places**: to understand about how community wanted to see St Marys and Orchard Hills change, and how to balance growth and development with what needed to remain the same in the area.
- **Explore opportunities for place naming**, to advise DPIE on ways Aboriginal naming or dual naming can be incorporated into the future of GPEC.

## 2.3 Response to COVID-19

GHD/Zion prepared the engagement strategy prior to the most recent COVID-19 lockdown in the Greater Sydney area. This engagement strategy maximised face to face engagement activities, which are more culturally appropriate for Aboriginal communities. GHD/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



## 2.4 Engagement approach

The engagement approach was designed to be flexible and meet the needs and availability of stakeholders and community and to respond to constraints from COVID. The engagement was driven by GHD/Zion's leading practice principles for engagement with Aboriginal communities. The overall engagement approach was delivered in stages:

- Early engagement
- Wider community engagement.

These stages are summarised in the sections below.

### 2.4.1 Early engagement

Early engagement activities were undertaken in June 2021. The purpose of early engagement was to inform key stakeholders about the project, understand more about Aboriginal communities living in the GPEC area, identify stakeholders who should be engaged about the project, and identify any specific engagement activities, key messages, or risks to be included in the strategy. The stakeholders targeted during this stage include:

- Traditional Custodians
- Blacktown City Council
- Penrith City Council
- NSW Land and Housing Corporation
- Aboriginal Housing Office.

It should be noted that Deerubbin Local Aboriginal Land Council and New South Wales Local Aboriginal Land Council were contacted but did not respond to requests to meet with the project team.

GHD/Zion met with these stakeholders via teleconference. Outcomes of engagement include an informed engagement plan, refined key messaging, a refined approach to engaging with communities about the Strategic Framework and future plans for these areas, and stronger relationships.

### 2.4.1 Wide community engagement

GHD/Zion facilitated an engagement period between 12 July 2021 and 16 August 2021. During this time, they contacted a range of stakeholders to inform them of the project, and provided the opportunity to provide feedback. Due to COVID-19 restrictions and limitations on face to face engagement, stakeholders were encouraged to share perspectives as both a member of their organisation and a member of the Aboriginal community. The engagement targeted a broad reach of stakeholder groups to ensure diverse and representative feedback into the GPEC Strategic Framework.

The stakeholder matrix was also updated throughout the engagement period as stakeholders recommended other people to speak to.

## 2.5 Summary of engagement activities

The process that was used throughout the program to engage with Aboriginal communities and stakeholders is shown in Table 1.

**Table 1** Engagement process undertaken

Engagement tool	Purpose
Phone and email	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– To make initial contact, share information about the project, answer questions and collect feedback.</li> <li>– Schedule meetings with interested stakeholders</li> <li>– Identify additional stakeholders to be engaged</li> </ul>
Engagement collateral	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Presentation material was distributed to stakeholders in advance of online meetings to help participants prepare for the engagement sessions</li> </ul>
Online meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Meetings were held with stakeholders via MS Teams.</li> <li>– Participants were encouraged to extend the meeting invitation to other members of their organisation or community.</li> </ul>
1800 community line	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– To manage incoming enquiries</li> </ul>

Details on the number and uptake of engagement activities are provided in Table 2.

**Table 2** Summary of engagement activities

Engagement type	Number of activities	Number of attendees
Phone calls	46	46
Online meetings	21	35
<b>Total</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>81</b>

Details of the stakeholder groups who participated in the online engagement meetings are outlined in Table 3.

**Table 3** Stakeholders engaged

Stakeholder group	Number of groups engaged
Traditional Custodians	5
Local councils	2
Community and education services	11
Businesses and employment services	3



# 3.

## Engagement outcomes

This section provides a summary of engagement outcomes, with detailed outcomes of engagement provided in Appendix A. The structure of each engagement session aligned with the engagement objectives outlined in section 2.2. This section has also been structured to align with these objectives as follows:

- Country-led (or landscape-led) (section 3.1)
- Community-centred (or people-centred) (section 3.2)
- Connected to opportunity (section 0)
- Balanced growth in the right places (section 3.4)
- Opportunities for place-naming (section 3.5)

Due to the nature and topics of discussion, participants often raised issues which crossed across several themes. For the purpose of analysis and reporting, the responses have been allocated to the most relevant theme.

The most common issues that were raised presented at the top of each category.

### 3.1 Country-led

Engagement with Traditional Custodians and the wider Aboriginal community showed the unique and intrinsic value of Country in GPEC, and how we can plan with a Country-led approach in the area.

Table 4 Summary of engagement outcomes

Topics	Responses
Important places on Country	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <b>Waterways and places near water:</b> All waterways and places along the river and creeks are important as they are places of connection, but particularly Wianamatta/South Creek, Ropes Creek Nepean River Reserve, Penrith Lakes, Tench Reserve and Wianamatta Regional Park.</li> <li>– <b>Untouched green spaces:</b> Untouched green spaces allow Aboriginal people to connect with Country, and provide connectivity for flora and fauna.</li> <li>– <b>Yarramundi:</b> The Yarramundi area is significant to Dharug and neighbouring communities.</li> <li>– <b>St Marys:</b> St Marys is a place of shared culture and history for Aboriginal communities living in Western Sydney.</li> <li>– <b>Mount Druitt:</b> Mount Druitt and important places near Mount Druitt including Tregear and Whalan, and the green spaces behind Ropes Crossing and next to Willmot.</li> <li>– <b>Penrith:</b> The Nepean River near Penrith is a place of connection. Other important places in the area include learning spaces in Penrith, Penrith Lakes, parks in Penrith and Tench Reserve.</li> <li>– <b>Blacktown Native Institute (BNI):</b> The only piece of land of the government has returned to Dharug care since colonisation.</li> <li>– <b>All places:</b> All parts of Country are equally important.</li> </ul>
Reason for living or working in area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <b>Family and community:</b> People choose to live and work in the GPEC area to be close to their families and to stay connected to the Aboriginal community.</li> <li>– <b>Employment opportunities:</b> Some community members live in the area due to employment opportunities.</li> <li>– <b>Relocation:</b> Some community members live in the area due to forced relocation, particularly from Redfern.</li> <li>– <b>Affordable housing:</b> Land has been cheaper for purchase, housing is more affordable than other areas, and there is a greater chance of securing social housing.</li> <li>– <b>Amenity and character:</b> The natural amenity of the area, its distance from Sydney CBD and its proximity to the Blue Mountains drive some community to live in the area.</li> </ul>
Unique characteristics of the area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <b>Community:</b> The diversity and size of the Aboriginal community, and the history of how some of them came to live in the area.</li> <li>– <b>Environment and natural amenity:</b> The wildlife, untouched nature of the area, waterways, rivers, the dirt and open space are characteristics that make this area unique.</li> </ul>

Topics	Responses
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <b>Dharug Country and Traditional Custodians:</b> Aboriginal places and the connections of these sites to important people makes the area unique.</li> <li>– <b>Location:</b> Proximity to important areas such as the floodplain, rivers, creeks, and the Blue Mountains; proximity to employment opportunities, services and schools; and the distance that separates the area from Sydney CBD.</li> </ul>

## 3.2 Community-centred

The diversity and size of the Aboriginal community living in GPEC is highly valued. Understanding the strengths and challenges of the Aboriginal community will need to be incorporated into a community-centred approach.

Table 5 Summary of engagement outcomes

Topics	Responses
Description of community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <b>Diverse:</b> The diversity of people, Country, identity and culture has created a complex layering of community in the area.</li> <li>– <b>Large:</b> The size of the Aboriginal community living in this area is unique and highly valued.</li> <li>– <b>Disadvantaged:</b> The community face structural disadvantage and inequalities such as lack of employment opportunities for locals, lack of affordable housing, lack of transport accessibility, and the high number of Aboriginal people living in social housing.</li> <li>– <b>Disconnected:</b> The community was described as socially disconnected and disjointed, due to the challenges presented by its size and diversity.</li> <li>– <b>Strong:</b> The strong, supportive, resilient and vibrant community is invested in the success of Aboriginal people in the area.</li> <li>– <b>Displaced:</b> Due to government policies and forced relocation, a lot of Aboriginal people living in GPEC were displaced and removed from their own Country.</li> </ul>
Support the community needs to grow	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <b>Education and training:</b> The importance of training was highlighted to enable capacity building and upskilling in community.</li> <li>– <b>Cultural infrastructure:</b> More cultural infrastructure is needed for community to connect to one another (including a place for Elders, a dedicated space for Sorry Business, a culturally holistic wellness centre, Aboriginal nursing homes, and informal and formal places to practise culture).</li> <li>– <b>Housing:</b> More affordable, culturally responsive housing is required across the GPEC area. Houses currently are overcrowded, inaccessible, expensive, and of a poor quality.</li> <li>– <b>Employment opportunities:</b> Community need more employment opportunities and support to access employment.</li> </ul>
Changes that would benefit the community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <b>Services:</b> Holistic, culturally appropriate service provision is needed to break down current silos. Services that are needed include mental health support, youth and family services, cultural mentoring, and education about Country. Funding support is needed for services such as Nepean Community &amp; Neighbourhood Services to increase the availability of programs.</li> <li>– <b>Cultural support:</b> Impacts of colonisation are still challenging communities. The community would benefit from places and services that support learning about Country and culture in the context of Western Sydney.</li> <li>– <b>Systems reform:</b> Revising the business as usual approach to involve Aboriginal people in decision making as much as possible, and identify alternative solutions with Aboriginal people so they do not get left behind.</li> <li>– <b>Acknowledgement of Traditional Custodians:</b> Dharug people would like to be acknowledged as the Traditional Custodians of GPEC by government agencies, local government and key stakeholders.</li> </ul>

### 3.3 Connected to opportunity

Engagement identified places the community need to connect to, how they connect with one another, and the importance of this connection.

Table 6 Summary of engagement outcomes

Topic	Responses
Places the community need to connect to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <b>Untouched green spaces and waterways:</b> Community need these spaces to connect with Country and culture, and wildlife need these spaces to travel where they need to.</li> <li>– <b>Cultural hubs / meeting places:</b> Community needs to connect to cultural hubs and places where they connect with each other and with services.</li> <li>– <b>Employment zones:</b> Community needs to connect to diverse and holistic employment opportunities.</li> <li>– <b>Education:</b> Community needs better connection to schools. University students need better connectivity to other parts of Western Sydney.</li> <li>– <b>Shopping centres:</b> Community connect at shopping centres, such as the Plaza and Westfield in Penrith.</li> </ul>
Methods of travel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <b>Public transport:</b> Community mostly use public transport to travel. However, there are major issues with transport that need to be addressed such as the lack of routes and services, the affordability of tickets, the lack of education about fine systems, and accessibility with prams and wheelchairs.</li> </ul>
Community connection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <b>Face to face:</b> Community connect to one another by spending time with each other face to face.</li> </ul>

### 3.4 Balanced growth in the right places

The Aboriginal community have some concerns around the GPEC area changing, but helped to identify areas that would benefit from growth and development.

Table 7 Summary of engagement outcomes

Topic	Responses
Feedback on St Marys and Orchard Hills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <b>Need for space:</b> Development should be focused on already developed areas, incorporate nature into every development, bushland in St Marys needs to be preserved and flora and fauna connections from these areas need to be maintained.</li> <li>– <b>Re-vitalisation:</b> St Marys main street (Queen Street) is already improving but new development could re-vitalise the area further.</li> <li>– <b>Connectivity:</b> Increased public transport around Orchard Hills could improve connectivity in the area.</li> </ul>
Focus for growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <b>St Marys:</b> Maintaining social equity when renewing and improving areas is important so that all communities including existing residents can benefit from development and change in the local area.</li> </ul>
Areas to remain the same	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <b>Untouched green spaces:</b> Green and open spaces need to remain untouched and should not be seen as an opportunity to develop, renew and upgrade. Aboriginal people need untouched green spaces to connect and listen to Country.</li> <li>– <b>Blacktown Native Institute site (BNI):</b> This site is of high significance to Aboriginal people and a focal point of the area. Any change on this site needs to be led by Dharug people and Dharug Strategic Management Group (DSMG).</li> </ul>
Areas for improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <b>Culturally safe spaces:</b> Improve cultural safety in GPEC's places by integrating artwork, language and cultural interpretation into buildings, stations and wayfinding. Have places represent Country.</li> <li>– <b>Training opportunities:</b> Provide support to help grow Aboriginal businesses, help establish cultural and environmental services in the areas that are ecologically important, a ranger program, and a cultural hub or co-op of Aboriginal businesses.</li> </ul>
Concerns about area changing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <b>Displacement:</b> There is concern that Aboriginal communities will be required to move from the area and will be further displaced.</li> </ul>

Topic	Responses
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <b>Lack of culturally responsive, affordable housing:</b> There are issues with supply and availability of culturally responsive, affordable housing. There is concern about how these issues will impact those seeking safe housing, people sleeping rough, and people exiting the justice system, as well as the impact on general affordability of housing should areas in GPEC be redeveloped.</li> <li>– <b>Population density:</b> Concerns were raised over the new developments leading to an increase in population density, and the impact this could have on overcrowding, parking, the built form and the population moving further west.</li> <li>– <b>Damage to Country:</b> There is concern that changes to the GPEC area will cause further damage to Country, and native wildlife. Country needs to be protected and developers need to commit to reducing damage to Country.</li> </ul>

### 3.5 Opportunities for place naming

Place-naming was identified as an important way to celebrate Aboriginal culture and heritage during engagement. Advice relating to place-naming identified during engagement included:

- Shifting language from ‘place-naming’ to returning language back to Country.
- Place-naming is to be done in collaboration with Traditional Custodians.
- Seek advice from existing processes (such as Blacktown City Council place-naming approach), and apply lessons learned
- Utilise opportunities for naming places or landmarks that may come with the building of infrastructure
- Country should be named for its location, qualities, and values.



## 4.

# Recommendations

Engagement outcomes summarised in section 3 have informed a series of recommendations for DPIE's consideration in planning for GPEC. This includes recommendations for:

DPIE's current planning requirements, such as the GPEC Structure Plan and the Strategic Framework.

- Recommendations that may be outside of DPIE's current planning requirements, but may be relevant for future consideration
- Recommendations that are outside of DPIE's remit, but are for consideration by other government agencies or organisations.

These recommendations are outlined in sections 4.1 to 4.3.

## 4.1 Structure Plan

Engagement outcomes were applied to the Structure Plan prepared for GPEC by TZG and JMD, which led to the following recommendations:

- Ensure Traditional Custodians are included when referring to ongoing consultation or collaboration with Aboriginal stakeholders or groups (particularly when considering traditional knowledge or Country)
- Identify areas for cultural practice in collaboration with community
- A landscape-led approach should be considerate of waterways and the existing work conducted for the Cumberland Plain Conservation Plan, this is especially important in areas of new land development including Orchard Hills. Considering the values of Country and allowing them to inform new structure planning is vital.
- Development should consider social equity and balance uplift across GPEC, not just in the areas of strategic focus
- In order to retain existing green and open spaces in St Marys, development should focus on increasing density, rather than prioritising urban sprawl
- Affordable housing should be embedded into new development, and priority should be given to existing residents to access affordable housing
- Connectivity should consider how Aboriginal communities connect with one another and important places (e.g. east to west, within neighbourhoods)
- Retain and enhance bushland
- Connect hilltop parks with straight green corridors to creeks
- Include BNI site in plans
- Review connectivity of proposed green corridors for flora and fauna (i.e. ensure they are continuous and unbroken for movement of animals)

The Structure Plan was developed in parallel with the engagement program. Outcomes of engagement were also fed into the Structure Plan iteratively as it was developed.

## 4.2 Strategic Framework

Based on the engagement outcomes, we recommend the following content is considered for inclusion in the Strategic Framework:

- Welcome to Country
- Welcome to our community
- The story of this place
- Overarching principles
- Big moves and accompanying actions

The following sections provide more detail for each recommendation.





## 4.2.1 Welcome to Country

To reflect the importance of acknowledging the Traditional Custodians of the GPEC Country, we recommend including a Welcome to Country or Acknowledgment of Country at the beginning of the Place Strategy. This would ideally be drafted by, or in collaboration with, Traditional Custodians.

A Welcome to Country will also invite the readers and users of this document to start with Country when reflecting on the content and implementation of the Place Strategy.

## 4.2.2 Welcome to our Community

During engagement, it was clear that the diversity and size of the Aboriginal community living in GPEC is highly valued by Aboriginal people living and working there. We therefore recommend that alongside the Welcome to Country which is provided by Traditional Custodians, an Aboriginal community representative is engaged to help draft a section of the report that acknowledges this diversity.

The Welcome to our Community would also need to be developed in consultation with Traditional Custodians to make sure that there is no content that conflicts with their values or beliefs, or impacts the cultural safety of the document in any way.

## 4.2.3 The story of this place

As we heard during engagement, the importance of the GPEC area is not only because of its resilient Dharug Traditional Custodians and Country, but because of events that occurred post contact. The Strategic Framework should provide an overview of the story of this place, including:

- Information about the Traditional Custodians and area pre-contact
- Events post-contact
- Contemporary events (e.g. forced relocation policies)
- Overview of the Aboriginal communities living there today
- Important places and spaces

It is recommended that GHD and Zion collaborate with the project team to draft this content, and then have it reviewed by Traditional Custodians and community representatives.

## 4.2.4 Overarching principles

The GPEC Structure Plan includes guiding principles for future development of GPEC. GHD/Zion has provided feedback on these principles, summarised in section 4.1. Based on engagement outcomes reported in section 3, the following overarching principles should be considered in the Strategic Framework, to guide future planning and development in the GPEC area:

- **Let Country be Country:** where possible, leave remnant vegetation and green spaces untouched. Open spaces do not require landscaping, and are valued for their amenity as natural green spaces.
- **Don't just plan for people:** Plan for Country, for flora and fauna equally
- **Develop the already developed:** Favour density over urban sprawl to minimise further impact on Country
- **Embed culture in places and spaces:** to foster cultural safety in existing and future built form in GPEC

## 4.2.5 Big moves

Based on outcomes of engagement, we have recommended one big move under each theme. These are summarised in Table 8.

Table 8 *Big moves*

Theme	Big move
Country-led	<b>Promote and re-establish the health of GPEC's waterways</b>
Community-centred	<b>Deliver opportunities for culturally responsive infrastructure and housing</b>
Connected to opportunity	<b>Enhance public transport connectivity within GPEC</b>
Balanced growth in the right places	<b>Consider social equity in growth and development</b>

### 4.2.5.1 Implementation

To realise the full potential of these big moves, we recommend that DPIE collaborate with other key stakeholders and government agencies that are also working in the GPEC area. This has been outlined in Table 9.

Table 9 *Implementation with other stakeholders*

Stakeholder	Big move			
	Promote and re-establish the health of GPEC's waterways	Deliver opportunities for culturally responsive infrastructure and housing	Enhance public transport connectivity within GPEC	Consider social equity in growth and development
Penrith City Council	X	X	X	X
Blacktown City Council	X	X	X	X
Sydney Water	X			
Transport for NSW			X	
Sydney Metro			X	X
NSW Land and Housing Corporation		X		X
Aboriginal Housing Office		X		X
Western Parkland City Authority	X	X	X	X
Greater Sydney Commission		X		X
Cumberland Plain Conservation Plan team (DPIE)	X			X
Other DPIE teams	X	X	X	X

## 4.2.6 Recommended actions

Based on the engagement outcomes, we have recommended actions to support the implementation of each big move. These are summarised in Table 10. These actions are currently out of scope of the Strategic Framework, but should be considered at later planning stages.

Table 10 Actions

Theme	Big move	Actions
Country-led	Promote and re-establish the health of GPEC's waterways	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Increase public access to waterways</li> <li>– Explore opportunities to fund and embed research into traditional waterway health for Traditional Custodians</li> <li>– Implement standards in construction and new developments to manage impacts on waterways</li> <li>– Implement flood buffer of at least 300 metres for major river corridors to protect cultural values and heritage items</li> <li>– Understand and embed cultural values of water, cultural knowledge, and aspirations of community about waterways</li> <li>– Consider impacts of projects on groundwater sources and stormwater management</li> </ul>
Community-centred	Deliver opportunities for culturally responsive infrastructure and housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Implement target for culturally responsive housing in future housing developments</li> <li>– Invest into research regarding culturally responsive housing</li> <li>– Increase targets for social and affordable housing across GPEC</li> <li>– Embed informal and formal meeting places for gathering throughout suburbs</li> <li>– Create cultural hub with dedicated spaces for Elders and Sorry Business</li> <li>– Support research into an Aboriginal nursing home</li> </ul>
Connected to opportunity	Enhance public transport connectivity within GPEC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Explore opportunities to provide more public transport services to locations community need to connect to (including Penrith, St Marys, Mt Druitt, Erskine Park, Marsden Park and Liverpool)</li> <li>– Provide services to connect people travelling from east to west</li> <li>– Provide public transport services that connect local neighbourhoods to each other, to reconnect communities</li> <li>– Encourage public transport to be within walking distance (400 metres) of social housing entry and exit points</li> <li>– Support existing community transport services</li> </ul>
Balanced growth in the right places	Consider social equity in growth and development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Identify opportunities for community outreach and programs through construction of new social infrastructure in GPEC</li> <li>– Ensure a strategic approach to allocating affordable housing to existing community</li> <li>– Collaborate with Council and other key stakeholders to consider opportunity to upgrade and enhance existing infrastructure through development contribution plans</li> <li>– Engage Aboriginal communities at the neighbourhood level to understand what they would like to see improved as a result of development contributions.</li> <li>– Focus growth in St Marys where existing community can benefit from new opportunities provided through new development</li> <li>– Any planning that directly or indirectly affects the Blacktown Native Institute site, must involve collaboration with the Dharug Strategic Management Group</li> </ul>

## 4.3 Other recommendations

Some engagement outcomes were not directly relevant to the Strategic Framework, but may still be relevant for future consideration by DPIE. There are also a number of outcomes that may not be in scope for DPIE, but could be delivered by, or in partnership with, other government agencies. This should also consider existing initiatives and programs to avoid duplication. We have made recommendations about which stakeholders should be involved of the delivery of each strategy or initiative.

Table 11 Other recommendations

Topic	Strategy / Program	Opportunities	Relevant government agency and organisations
Education	Primary and high school curriculum	Investigate opportunities to integrate the following content into primary and high school curriculum as appropriate: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Cultural awareness skills and training</li> <li>– Aboriginal heritage and history</li> <li>– Culturally appropriate sexual health education</li> </ul>	Department of Education Local public and private schools Penrith Council Blacktown Council
	University and TAFE	Seek opportunities to infuse Aboriginal culture across different subjects and teaching material to increase cultural awareness. This will help to show how Aboriginal culture and knowledge can be embedded and applied across different disciplines.	University of Western Sydney TAFE NSW Australian Catholic University
	Aboriginal Cultural Support Program	Consider a student mentor program that would provide students with an Aboriginal cultural support advisor or mentor, across all levels of education including University and TAFE. This can be a resource for all students, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal.	Department of Education University of Western Sydney TAFE NSW Australian Catholic University
Training	Aboriginal Training Program	Encourage existing businesses and service providers to deliver an Aboriginal Training Program to support Aboriginal people of all ages living in GPEC to build their skills and capacity. Training programs could be delivered by existing service providers or community organisations. Specific training programs that have been identified by community include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Licensing: Support for gaining light and heavy vehicle drivers licensing</li> <li>– Traditional land management</li> <li>– Procurement processes and business</li> <li>– Culturally sensitive first aid training</li> <li>– Mental health support</li> </ul>	Local businesses and service providers TAFE NSW
Transport	Transport education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Consider providing transport education to Aboriginal youth, specifically regarding fines and debt collection.</li> <li>– If possible, consider alternative ways that at-risk or economically disadvantaged youth can pay off transport fines</li> </ul>	Transport for NSW
	Community transport grants / funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Advocate for the establishment of a grants program specifically for existing or new organisations that are providing transport services for Aboriginal communities in GPEC.</li> <li>– Consider affordable access to public transport</li> </ul>	Transport for NSW Penrith Council Blacktown Council

Topic	Strategy / Program	Opportunities	Relevant government agency and organisations
Environment	Caring for Country Strategy	Investigate initiatives to support Aboriginal communities to care for Country in GPEC area, including both landscaped open space (such as parks), and areas of untouched green space. This could include full-time or part-time employment opportunities for Aboriginal people to care for Country in GPEC, and should consider supported accommodation to enable workers to live on Country. This process should be led by Traditional Custodians.	Penrith Council Blacktown Council NSW Parks and Wildlife DPIE (particularly CPCP team)
Research	Aboriginal Research Program	Explore funding opportunities for Aboriginal communities to undertake research into: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– History of the area</li> <li>– Language revitalisation</li> <li>– Traditional knowledge (including waterways and water health, caring for Country and land management)</li> </ul> Research would inform future initiatives and strategies for the GPEC area, including place-naming and ongoing land management.	DPIE (particularly CPCP team) Department of Aboriginal Affairs
Housing	Culturally responsive housing	Collaborate with other agencies to develop an approach and policy position regarding culturally responsive housing	DPIE Land and Housing Corporation Aboriginal Housing Office
Engagement		Strategic planning and engagement – coordinated approach	DPIE LAHC Penrith Council Blacktown Council

## 4.4 Ongoing engagement and coordination

The recommendations made in sections 0 and 4.3 will require ongoing engagement with Aboriginal communities and stakeholders in the GPEC area, as well as coordination with other key stakeholders and agencies.

Meaningful implementation of recommendations should involve engagement with Aboriginal communities at the neighbourhood level in GPEC. This will assist with understanding how each neighbourhood would experience development and change, and help to tailor the implementation of each recommendation to the needs of different communities.

Aboriginal communities in GPEC should be kept informed of the how the Strategic Framework progresses, along with the progress of other major projects in the area (eg Sydney Metro). There should be a targeted Aboriginal engagement program to support the involvement of Aboriginal communities in future planning phases of GPEC and other major projects and initiatives.

Engagement with Aboriginal communities should be coordinated across agencies and councils operating in the GPEC area. This will help to reduce consultation fatigue, and provide integrated project outcomes.





## 5.

# Next steps

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

- Close the loop with Aboriginal stakeholders engaged during this project by sharing engagement outcomes and key recommendations going forward
- Collaborate with Traditional Custodians and GPEC community representatives to develop and finalise the Strategic Framework
- Engage with other government agencies to share outcomes of engagement and recommendations, and establish a shared responsibility for action and implementation
- Continue to build long term relationships with Aboriginal stakeholders and communities in GPEC
- Consider how to implement recommendations and engagement outcomes through future planning phases at GPEC, such as precinct planning and master planning
- Coordinate with other government agencies for future engagement opportunities, to reduce consultation fatigue for Aboriginal communities in GPEC

# Appendices

# **Appendix A**

**Detailed outcomes of engagement**

# Country-led

Table 12 Important places on Country

Places	Summary
Waterways and places near water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Retain and preserve waterways and places near waterways. All waterways and places along the river and creeks are important as they are places of connection.</li> <li>– Waterways and places near water that are particularly important include:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wianamatta</li> <li>• Ropes Creek</li> <li>• Nepean River Reserve</li> <li>• Penrith Lakes</li> <li>• Tench Reserve</li> <li>• Wianamatta Regional Park</li> </ul> </li> <li>– Concern was raised these areas are currently not appropriately cared for</li> </ul>
Untouched green spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Need to preserve bushland and have designated green corridors for Aboriginal communities living in GPEC, and the flora and fauna of the area. Past development has pushed wildlife out of the area.</li> <li>– Untouched green spaces allow Aboriginal people to connect with Country, which was reported to have important physical and mental health benefits. If community are not able to sit and connect in these spaces, it can impact their health and wellbeing.</li> <li>– Important green spaces identified during consultation included:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wianamatta Regional Park</li> <li>• Green spaces attached to school grounds</li> <li>• Tregear and Whalan bushland</li> <li>• Green spaces behind Ropes Crossing and next to Willmot</li> </ul> </li> <li>– Some areas of bushland may need a cultural burn to regenerate them</li> <li>– Community also identified the need to retain places for Country to be Country and limit public access. Traditional Custodians desire places to go and be with Country without sharing the space with the wider community.</li> </ul>
Yarramundi (north-west of GPEC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– The Yarramundi area is significant to Dharug people and neighbouring communities.</li> <li>– Concerns were raised over its current management i.e. waste management, littering.</li> </ul>
St Marys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– St Marys is a place of shared culture for Aboriginal communities living in Western Sydney.</li> <li>– It is important as a crossing point to the Blue Mountains.</li> <li>– Important places in St Marys include:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The green corridor between St Marys and Orchard Hills</li> <li>• The main street of St Marys and the Bora rings (ceremonial grounds).</li> </ul> </li> <li>– St Marys is valued for both its natural and urbanised areas.</li> </ul>
Mount Druitt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Mount Druitt and important places near Mount Druitt including               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Werrington, Tregear and Whalan</li> <li>• The green spaces behind Ropes Crossing and next to Willmot</li> <li>• The mall</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Places	Summary
Penrith	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– The Nepean River near Penrith is a place of connection.</li> <li>– Other important places in the area include:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learning spaces in Penrith</li> <li>• Penrith Lakes</li> <li>• Parks in Penrith</li> <li>• Tench Reserve</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Blacktown Native Institution (BNI) site	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– The BNI site is of high importance as it holds 65,000 years of history, it is important as a place of recognition and understanding of Country.</li> <li>– This site is the only piece of land of the colonial government has returned to Dharug care since colonisation.</li> <li>– The healing of the BNI site is key to healing Country.</li> </ul>
All places	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– All places are considered significant, important and unique. Not one place is considered more important than another.</li> <li>– Community members questioned the need to identify places that are more significant than the other. Country should be viewed holistically.</li> </ul>

**Table 13** Reason for living or working in the area

Reason for living or working in area	Summary
Family and community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– The presence of family and connection to the Aboriginal community in the area drives people to live and work in the GPEC area.</li> <li>– The area is also well connected to western NSW, where a large proportion of the Aboriginal community in GPEC are from or have family</li> <li>– Some organisations work in this area due to the presence of community. Being located within the same area as the people they work with makes it easier for community to get in touch and access the services of these organisations.</li> </ul>
Employment opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Community live or work in the area because of local employment opportunities, or because the workplaces of family members are in the area.</li> </ul>
Relocation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Some community members live in the area due to forced relocation eg from Redfern.</li> <li>– Other families relocated to the area due to a personal choice</li> <li>– Some expressed concern of the next wave of forced relocation given the plans for GPEC.</li> </ul>
Affordable housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Land has been cheaper to purchase in the area, housing is more affordable than other areas, and there is a greater chance of securing social housing.</li> </ul>
Amenity and character	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– The natural amenity of the area, its distance from Sydney CBD and its proximity to the Blue Mountains drive some community to live in the area.</li> <li>– Parts of GPEC are considered well looked after, peaceful and spacious.</li> <li>– The area is within proximity to the express line train, which is an important connection for some businesses and local residents.</li> <li>– The area offers urban amenity such as entertainment and retail spaces.</li> </ul>



Table 14 Unique characteristics of the area

Characteristic	Summary
Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– The area is unique because of the diversity and size of the Aboriginal community, and the history of how some of them came to live in the area.</li> <li>– The large Aboriginal community living in GPEC includes Traditional Custodians and people from off Country who have been living in the area for generations.</li> <li>– As many Aboriginal families were forced into the area and were displaced, the area has become a place of belonging.</li> </ul>
Environment and natural amenity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– The wildlife, untouched nature of the area, waterways, rivers, the dirt and open space are characteristics that make this area unique.</li> <li>– Connectivity to water, the Blue Mountains and distance from the city of Sydney are drawcards to the area, as it's still urban with a 'country feel'.</li> <li>– The traditional Country is a floodplain area, and the untouched Country that remains also makes the GPEC area unique.</li> </ul>
Dharug Country and Traditional Custodians	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Important Aboriginal sites and the connections of these sites to important people makes the area unique.</li> <li>– Both untouched Country and parcels of land that hold historical significance are in need of protection.</li> <li>– There is a need for Dharug people to be acknowledged and recognised as the Traditional Custodians of the area.</li> </ul>
Location	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– The area is unique because of its proximity to:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Floodplain</li> <li>• Rivers</li> <li>• Creeks</li> <li>• Blue Mountains</li> <li>• Wildlife</li> <li>• Open space</li> <li>• Employment opportunities</li> <li>• Services</li> <li>• Schools</li> <li>• Social housing</li> <li>• Penrith</li> </ul> </li> <li>– The area is also unique because of the distance that separates the area from Sydney CBD.</li> </ul>

## Community-centred

Table 15 Description of community

Description	Summary
Diverse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– The community was described as diverse, and includes the Traditional Custodians who still remain on Country, and the large number of Aboriginal people that have come to live in the area.</li> <li>– The diversity of people, Country, identity and culture has created a complex layering of community in the area.</li> </ul>

Description	Summary
Large	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– The size of the Aboriginal community living in his area is unique and highly valued.</li> <li>– There is a strong sense of connection to the area and community from the generations of people living in the area from off Country.</li> <li>– The size and diversity of the community also presents some challenges including:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are sensitivities and disagreements in communities, and due to the size of the community living in the GPEC area, it is challenging for all community to agree. There can sometimes be disagreements between the Traditional Custodians and the wider Aboriginal community living in the area.</li> <li>• Some people have different beliefs and practises which can complicate some situations. Culture and connection to Country means different things to different people</li> <li>• Youth are growing up off Country and some are becoming disengaged from culture.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Disadvantaged	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– There is structural disadvantage and inequalities in community which is seen through the lack of employment opportunities for locals, lack of affordable housing, lack of transport accessibility, and the high number of Aboriginal people living in social housing.</li> <li>– Over time this social and structural disadvantage has led to feelings of stress and powerlessness in the community.</li> <li>– It has also contributed to a poor perception of the area from people living elsewhere in Greater Sydney. Some people feel they are treated differently.</li> </ul>
Disconnected	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Challenges associated with the size and diversity of the community has resulted in some people feeling the community is disconnected and disjointed</li> <li>– Some people feel a sense of segregation and fragmentation in the community due to past disagreements and differences of opinion.</li> <li>– Geography and lack of transport connectivity between the Luxford, Cranebrook and St Clair precincts contributes to feelings of segregation.</li> <li>– There was a strong desire for unity and connection, noting that the community does often come together for a united cause or event.</li> </ul>
Strong	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– The community in the area are strong and supportive.</li> <li>– They are resilient and vibrant, and described as high achievers.</li> <li>– The community is invested in the success of Aboriginal people in the area.</li> </ul>
Displaced	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Due to government policies and forced relocation, a lot of Aboriginal people living in GPEC were displaced and removed from their own Country. This has caused feelings of trauma, and intergenerational trauma from those who experienced forced relocation before them.</li> </ul>

Table 16 Support the community needs to grow

Support the community needs to grow	Summary
Education and training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Training is important to enable capacity building and upskilling in community.</li> <li>– Areas of training that would help support the community to grow:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Licensing (heavy vehicle and driver’s license)</li> <li>• Traditional land management</li> <li>• Procurement processes and business</li> </ul> </li> </ul>



Support the community needs to grow	Summary
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Culturally sensitive first aid training</li> <li>• Mental health support</li> <li>• Sexual health and education for young people</li> </ul> <p>— There is a need for more education and training in school, university and TAFE about Aboriginal culture, heritage, and history.</p> <p>— Culture needs to be infused across different subject areas, to increase the broader community's cultural awareness.</p> <p>— Cultural programs could be embedded in schools to support both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students.</p>
Cultural infrastructure	<p>— More cultural infrastructure for community to connect to one another.</p> <p>— Recommendations for culture infrastructure included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A place for Elders</li> <li>• Dedicated space for Sorry Business</li> <li>• Culturally holistic wellness centre</li> <li>• Aboriginal nursing homes</li> <li>• Informal and formal places to practise culture</li> <li>• Meetings places and places to gather</li> <li>• Aboriginal cultural hub</li> <li>• Cultural centres</li> </ul> <p>— Cultural infrastructure needs to be located throughout the area, close to Elders so they can access easily.</p> <p>— All places need to be culturally safe for all Aboriginal people to feel welcome there.</p> <p>— Access to green spaces for cultural activities is important.</p>
Housing	<p>— More affordable, culturally responsive housing is required across the GPEC area.</p> <p>— Houses are currently overcrowded, inaccessible, expensive, and of a poor quality. This impacts community's feelings of pride in their neighbourhood, and fuels a negative perception of the area.</p> <p>— These issues are also contributing to a large and growing homeless population.</p> <p>— Traditional Custodians cannot afford to live or die on their own Country.</p> <p>— Culturally responsive housing would provide space for people to sit inside and outside, suit different lifestyles, support intergenerational living, and accommodate the changing needs of a family over a 10 to 15 year period.</p>
Employment opportunities	<p>— Provide more employment opportunities and support for local community to access through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More apprenticeships</li> <li>• More employment opportunities in caring for Country</li> <li>• Connections to Parks and Wildlife to encourage long term sustainability</li> <li>• Programs about work and life skills to better equip people for the workplace</li> <li>• Opportunities for people without university degrees</li> <li>• Affordable commercial spaces to accommodate start-up Aboriginal businesses.</li> </ul>

Table 17 Changes that would benefit the community

Changes that would benefit the community	Summary
Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Service provision is currently delivered in silos, and it needs to be more culturally appropriate and holistic i.e. a collective approach and impact model.</li> <li>– Community identified gaps in existing service provision that could help support and benefit the community including:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mental health support</li> <li>• Youth and family services</li> <li>• Cultural mentoring</li> <li>• Education about Country</li> <li>• More funding for existing organisations such as Nepean Community &amp; Neighbourhood Services to increase the availability of programs</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Cultural support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Impacts of colonisation are still challenging communities living in the GPEC area. Aboriginal people are faced with competing priorities and need to learn to walk in two worlds.</li> <li>– Community would benefit from places and services that support learning about Country and culture in the context of Western Sydney.</li> </ul>
Systems reform	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Involve Aboriginal people in decision making as much as possible, and identify alternative solutions with Aboriginal people so they do not get left behind.</li> </ul>
Acknowledgement of Traditional Custodians	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Dharug people would like to be acknowledged as the Traditional Custodians of GPEC by government agencies, local government and key stakeholders.</li> <li>– It is hard for community to unify and move forward when there is still a lack of acknowledgement, as it promotes respect to other Aboriginal people and stakeholders in the area.</li> </ul>

## Connected to opportunity

Table 18 Places the community need to connect to

Places	Summary
Untouched green spaces and waterways	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Untouched green spaces and waterways are places community need to connect with Country and culture. These places are also needed so that wildlife can travel where they need to.</li> <li>– Community expressed concern around the development of land, as soon people won't be able to connect to Country as they once did.</li> </ul>
Cultural hubs / meeting places	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Community needs to connect to cultural hubs and places where they connect with each other and with services.</li> </ul>
Employment zones	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Community needs to connect to diverse and holistic employment opportunities. Specific places the community need to be connected to include:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Marsden Park</li> <li>• Penrith</li> <li>• Eastern Creek</li> <li>• Liverpool</li> <li>• Mount Druitt</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Places	Summary
Education	– Community needs better connection to schools. University students need better connectivity to other parts of Western Sydney.
Shopping centres	– Shopping centres, such as the Plaza and Westfield in Penrith

Table 19 *Methods of travel*

Method	Summary
Public transport	<p>– Community mostly use public transport to travel however there are major existing issues with transport including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of routes and services</li> <li>• Affordability of tickets</li> <li>• Lack of education about fine systems</li> <li>• Accessibility with prams and wheelchairs</li> </ul> <p>– These issues are creating a barrier for communities accessing employment, essential services, and connecting with each other.</p> <p>– More services were specifically requested for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mamre Road</li> <li>• Elizabeth Drive</li> <li>• Northern Road</li> <li>• East to west connectivity</li> <li>• Outside of peak times to accommodate shift workers</li> <li>• Entertainment venues</li> </ul>

Table 20 *Community connection*

Community connection	Summary
Face to face	– Community connect to one another by spending time with each other face to face.

## Balanced growth in the right areas

Table 21 *St Marys and Orchard Hills*

St Marys and Orchard Hills	Summary
Need for space	<p>– Development in St Marys and Orchard Hills should focus on already developed areas to maximise the remaining open space.</p> <p>– Incorporate nature into every development.</p> <p>– Bushland in St Marys needs to be preserved and flora and fauna connections from these areas need to be maintained.</p> <p>– Green space should be functional and usable, but not all Country has to be completely disturbed and re-created.</p> <p>– Public transport around Orchard Hills is very limited. More frequent services and more routes could improve connectivity in the area.</p>
Re-vitalisation	– St Marys main street (Queen Street) is already improving but new development could re-vitalise the area further.



Table 22 Focus for growth

Area	Summary
St Marys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Importance of maintaining social equity.</li> <li>– Growth focussed in St Marys where the existing residents could benefit from the uplift and improvements.</li> <li>– St Marys used to be a centre for community, and investment has since focussed on Penrith and Mt Drutt.</li> <li>– Developing St Marys into a new centre would complement the existing ones in the area.</li> </ul>

Table 23 Areas to remain the same

Areas	Summary
Untouched green spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Green and open spaces should remain untouched, rather than opportunities to develop and upgrade</li> <li>– Aboriginal people need places that are quiet, where people can listen to Country, listen to the wildlife.</li> </ul>
Blacktown Native Institute site (BNI)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– The BNI site is an area of high significance to Dharug and Aboriginal people, a focal point of the area, and important for recognition and understanding of and healing of Nura (Country).</li> <li>– Any change on this site needs to be led by Dharug people and Dharug Strategic Management Group (DSMG).</li> </ul>

Table 24 Improvements

Improvements	Summary
Culturally safe spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Suggestions to improve cultural safety in GPEC by:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Integrating artwork and cultural interpretation into buildings and stations</li> <li>• Integrating language in signage and wayfinding</li> <li>• Using design and interpretation for truth telling</li> </ul> </li> <li>– There is recognition that while progress can't be stopped, it is important to embed culture in infrastructure and have buildings and place designs represent Country.</li> </ul>
Training opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Opportunities to provide:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support to help grow Aboriginal businesses</li> <li>• Support to help establish cultural and environmental services in the areas that are ecologically important</li> <li>• A ranger program to facilitate cultural learning for Dharug youth.</li> <li>• A cultural hub or co-op of Aboriginal businesses</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Table 25 Concerns about area changing

Concerns	Summary
Displacement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– There is concern that Aboriginal communities will be required to move from the area and will be further displaced.</li> <li>– Aboriginal communities also need help and support so they can learn to adapt to the changes taking place.</li> <li>– Some community members suggested the need to have a contract or legal obligation for ensuring people were not moved on and housing was allocated for their family and needs as change occurs.</li> </ul>

Concerns	Summary
Lack of culturally responsive, affordable housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— There are issues with supply and availability of culturally responsive, affordable housing.</li> <li>— There is concern that change and development will make the availability of affordable housing worse.</li> <li>— Few Aboriginal people are able to afford to buy houses currently, so there is concern that the development will further increase housing prices.</li> <li>— There are also concerns that the issues with housing affordability and availability are going to impact those seeking safe housing, people sleeping rough, and people exiting the justice system.</li> </ul>
Population density	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Concerns were raised over the new developments leading to an increase in population density, and the impact this could have on:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overcrowding</li> <li>• Parking</li> <li>• Built form</li> <li>• The population moving further west</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Damage to Country	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— There is concern that changes to the GPEC area will cause further damage to Country, and native wildlife.</li> <li>— Country needs to be protected and developers need to commit to reducing damage to Country.</li> </ul>



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