

Brooklyn Community Association
Submission
Director's Report: CE15/21
Community and Cultural Facilities Strategy



The Brooklyn Community Association (BCA) wish to convey our concerns regarding the recommendations of the Community and Cultural Facilities Strategy

Executive Summary & Recommendations

We are pleased the meeting room is no longer considered a viable facility for the community, and the proposed Parsley Bay Centre has been noted in the strategy as per below:

Brooklyn – the amended recommendation promotes consolidation of existing facilities into a consolidated multi-purpose centre of 100-200sqm; however, no longer specifies that this should be the existing Brooklyn Meeting Room. Further, the analysis section for the north east district in the draft Strategy has also been updated to note the Lower Hawkesbury Aquatic and Recreation Association's (LHARA) proposal for a new facility in Parsley Bay and community support for such

Throughout our participation in the Brooklyn Place Plan, we have been advised that the Place Plan will be developed under approved Hornsby Shire Strategies. We have found this problematic with new strategies developed in parallel with the Place Plan.

Our primary concern is centres upon specific decisions that are being made regarding Brooklyn before the issues can be discussed, tested and finalised in the Brooklyn Place Plan. Therefore, to continue in the spirit of collaboration and to assist the community to maintain faith in the Place Plan process, we ask the Council to consider the specific recommendations relating to Brooklyn in the Community and Cultural Facility Strategy **be deferred** until they can be addressed as a component of the Brooklyn Place Plan.

Following are a few points that illustrate issues and concerns not mentioned or considered in the Community and Cultural Facility Strategy that can be addressed competently through the Place Plan process.

General Comments

- **Dangar Road Activation:** Under the heading Actions to proceed with (Business Paper Page 6) Council states "*in testing a path forward in the Brooklyn place planning process*" ... "Action 4. *Dangar Road activation strategy*" the BCA remain unclear on what Council's intent is. Brooklyn's Place Planners provided the response below;

*'an active Dangar Road is about, what is the culture of Brooklyn and how is it expressed on Dangar Road? What uses should that space have? What do people want to see and experience given that it's the first thing that you see when arriving in the village? From a practical perspective - what does an activated Dangar Road look like? **That is a question for the community as we move through our process!***

The BCA requests that Council provides formal confirmation of the statement above and therefore confirms that work related to the Dangar Road activation strategy (i.e. how to best use the Council owned assets on Dangar Road to deliver on the place principles and vision for Brooklyn) will be part of the ongoing collaborative process to deliver the Brooklyn Place Plan.

- **Number 10 (The Cottage)** – The BCA considers that the Cottage operates as a community, arts, cultural and visitor’s centre. Since it opened its doors, we have had over 3000 people visit The Cottage for numerous reasons. Volunteers over each weekend (when Brooklyn isn’t in lockdown) provide many visitors from the Shire and beyond with a wide variety of information relating to the area, history, and the current art exhibition. The artists are local and Shire wide, including one show with the Brooklyn Public School children. The exhibitions are changed every six weeks. Community Markets are held quarterly. The market stallholders are locals from Mooney Mooney, Cheero Point, Wobby, Dangar Island and Brooklyn. Regular groups include our knitting/crocheting group and book clubs. Workshops range from meditation, beeswax making, kids holiday crafts and more. We have also held special events such as poetry reading, pie bake-offs, Halloween events and more. We have created a community space where people of all ages connect, and it is already a treasured space in Brooklyn. To date, the BCA have paid \$1550 to the Council from our commercial sales. The partnership is remarkably successful between the Hornsby Council, the BCA, and our community. The focus of Number 10 (the Cottage) and these fantastic results are not included in this report.

Notwithstanding the above, it is incredibly disappointing that it is recommended that the Council ‘consolidate Number 10’. The Cottage is an example of how a connected community can work well and increase the community’s wellbeing. To suggest eliminating this community service is not community-focused and appears to be based on monetary reasons; and Council’s recommendation is inconsistent with information provided to the BCA by Council’s Place Planners and the spirit of the Place planning process.

- **Baden Powell Hall** is also recommended for consolidation. It is the only facility that can host a Playgroup in the Lower Hawkesbury area. Parents come from Brooklyn, Bar Point, Wobby, Mooney Mooney, Cheero Point and Dangar Island. It is built for purpose with small toilets, a fenced-in playground and is next to the oval. Previously, there was a preschool operating from Baden Powell Hall and currently, the community-run daycare is considering utilising this building for a new preschool. Removing this hall without providing proper facilities in place would result in the closure of our only Playgroup in the area and isolating new parents when they need this service the most.
- **The Community and Cultural Facility strategy** still contains errors in the information regarding the Brooklyn Facilities. We recall a Councillor stating the reports from consultants should go out to the public unredacted. However, when errors are pointed out in submissions, they should be corrected in the report that is to be approved by the Councillors. Our population is not 670 or 650 used in the report and can be confirmed with both the ABS statistics and the Place plan document at 727. Additionally, as established with the Place Plan and submissions, our community includes all communities living on the river, approximately 1500 people.

These nuances of how our community works and connects in Brooklyn are not reflected in this Community and Cultural Facilities Strategy and recommendations. The BCA is apprehensive that the recommendations in the report do not reflect the consultation with the community and will allow the consolidation of assets before we finalise the Brooklyn Place Plan, leaving our community without the facilities needed to maintain our wellbeing and connected community.

To close, we draw attention to the quote in the Place Plan, ‘*Placemaking refers to a collaborative process by which we can shape our public realm in order to maximise shared value...paying particular attention to the physical, cultural and social identities that define a place and support its ongoing evolution.*’ Project for Public places.

Any decisions regarding community facilities should actively involve the community, and this can be accomplished through the Brooklyn Place Plan process.



Di Bowles
President Brooklyn Community Association