



***Planning Cultural Infrastructure for the City of
Parramatta: Phase 2 Precinct Report***

**Prepared by the Institute for Culture and Society,
Western Sydney University**

June 2020

WESTERN SYDNEY
UNIVERSITY



The Project Team

Professor Deborah Stevenson, Emeritus Professor David Rowe, Distinguished Professor Len Ang, Associate Professor Liam Magee, Dr Cecelia Cmielewski, Dr Cecilia Hilder, Dr Ryan Van Den Nouwelant, Professor Paul James, Dr Christen Cornell, Vanicka Arora, Simon Chambers, Sarah Nectoux.

Phase 2 Precinct Report Authors: Professor Deborah Stevenson, Emeritus Professor David Rowe, Distinguished Professor Len Ang, Associate Professor Liam Magee, Dr Cecelia Cmielewski, Dr Cecilia Hilder.

Cover Image: Epping Community Centre. Photo: City of Parramatta.

DOI: <<https://doi.org/10.26183/dzp8-hp43>>

To cite this report: Stevenson, D., Rowe, D., Ang, I., Magee, L., Cmielewski, C. and Hilder, C. (2020) *Planning Cultural Infrastructure for the City of Parramatta: Phase 2 Precinct Report. A report to the City of Parramatta Council.* N.S.W.: Western Sydney University. <<https://doi.org/10.26183/dzp8-hp43>>

The report on the first stage of the research can be found at: Ang, I., Arora, V., Chambers, S., Cmielewski, C., Cornell, C., Hilder, C., James, P., Magee, L., Nectoux, S., Rowe, D., Stevenson, D., and Van Den Nouwelant, R. (2020) *Planning Cultural Infrastructure for the City of Parramatta: A Research Report.* A report to the City of Parramatta Council. N.S.W.: Western Sydney University. <<https://doi.org/10.26183/rscg-q587>>.

The third and final stage of the research, the *City of Parramatta Cultural Infrastructure and Investment Strategy, 2021-40* was prepared by: Dr Cecelia Cmielewski, Dr Cecilia Hilder, Dr Ryan Van Den Nouwelant, Emeritus David Rowe, Professor Deborah Stevenson, Associate Professor Liam Magee and Distinguished Professor Len Ang. It will be available online in mid-2021.

DISCLAIMER

This independent research report was commissioned by the City of Parramatta and conducted by a research team from Western Sydney University's Institute for Culture and Society (ICS). The accuracy and content of the report are the sole responsibility of the project team and its views do not necessarily represent those of the City of Parramatta.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

With respect for Aboriginal cultural protocol and out of recognition that its campuses occupy their traditional lands, Western Sydney University acknowledges the Darug, Eora, Dharawal (also referred to as Tharawal) and Wiradjuri peoples and thanks them for their support of its work in their lands (Greater Western Sydney and beyond).

This project was commissioned by the City of Parramatta and conducted by a research team from Western Sydney University's Institute for Culture and Society (ICS). This report comprises the second stage of the three-stage research project. The project team also acknowledges the contributions of the City of Parramatta to its two independent reports and to the *Strategy* produced in consultation with it.

We also express our gratitude to the cultural venue operators, individual artists, creative enterprises, and cultural organisations who participated and shared their experiences in project-related interviews with us. Without their generous insights this research would not have been possible.

Contact details

Professor Deborah Stevenson
Institute for Culture and Society
Western Sydney University
d.stevenson@westernsydney.edu.au

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Phase 2 Research Report of the City of Parramatta Cultural Infrastructure and Investment Strategy 2021 - 2040 articulates the opportunities and needs for arts and cultural infrastructure beyond the immediate CBD and North Parramatta. Its decision making principles are the same as those for Phase 1, being based on the need to address the City's expressed desire to embrace all types of cultural activity and space within its classification framework, and to encompass all the creative value chain dimensions according to its internationally-informed model of the cultural cycle (see elaboration of the framework and model below). The rationale for its priority framework is consistent with Phase 1's aim of turning Parramatta into "a dynamic regional cultural hub, successfully catering and sensitive to the diverse cultural needs and interests of residents, workers, visitors and people from the Greater Western Sydney region" (p. 14). It is founded on the requirement to realise this aim imaginatively, equitably and sustainably, capitalising on Parramatta LGA's growth while securing its future as a major urban centre that attracts and retains a substantial creative workforce making a significant contribution to the local cultural economy.

Whilst the information has been sourced mainly via desktop research, this research report also contains insights based on direct residential/place of work experience and longitudinal observations by members of the research team. This phase of the strategy comments on the following suburbs: Westmead, Sydney Olympic Park, Harris Park, Epping, Rydalmere, North Rocks, Silverwater and Camellia. The Indigenous and settler historical richness of the region continues to be evident in these other areas of the City of Parramatta Local Government Authority (LGA) and need to be kept and developed as cultural resources.

Research into cultural infrastructure needs to consider varying definitions of arts, culture and creative activity. The authors make use of a classification framework that identifies five types of cultural activity and their associated spaces:

- *performance and exhibition* spaces such as concert halls, galleries and museums;
- *commercial and enterprise* spaces such as creative businesses;
- spaces for *community cultural participation* such as community centres and libraries;
- spaces for *practice, education and development* such as art schools and rehearsal facilities; and *festival, event and public spaces* such as parks. (Ang et al. 2016: 40–7)

In addition, the researchers have adapted the conventional industry supply chain model to create a more appropriate set of value chain roles for creative and cultural activity — conceived as a series of interlinked processes — that draw on the concepts of the culture cycle or creative chain as used in major international frameworks. This creative value chain dimension encompasses the five roles of cultural creation, production, dissemination, use and education (Ang et al. 2016: 49-50). Some cultural facilities can play multiple roles (e.g., a theatre can be involved in all five roles), but particular sites (e.g., industrial warehouses used as artist studios or creative manufacturing) will focus on one or two key roles (e.g., creation and production). The LGA needs to service very

different urban spaces – growing residential areas (like Epping, Harris Park), precincts with large-scale public facilities (e.g., Sydney Olympic Park, Westmead) and mostly industrial zones (e.g., Rydalmere, North Rocks, Silverwater and Camellia). Residential development is likely to occur in all of these areas, but at varying speeds and in different forms. We suggest that consideration should be given to all value chain roles when planning cultural infrastructure, but in the industrial areas emphasis will be on creation and production (i.e., creative and cultural industries), while in residential areas the focus will be mainly on dissemination and use (e.g., spaces for cultural consumption).

Findings and Priorities

Outside the Parramatta CBD and North Parramatta there are many opportunities to build on the creative and cultural infrastructure of the LGA. Improved transport infrastructure promises to increase the opportunities for developing carefully located facilities. Following the re-drawing of its boundaries in 2016, Parramatta LGA expanded into parts of Auburn, Hornsby, Holroyd and The Hills, although not into all the areas that it favoured (Parramatta 2015). Incorporating places like Epping and Sydney Olympic Park (SOP) has had significant implications, not least regarding the City of Parramatta Council's cultural infrastructural resources and needs. Previous research in Great Metropolitan Sydney has emphasised the importance of transport links to the locational patterns of arts and cultural practitioners regarding where they work and live, and the relationships between them (Stevenson et al 2017). Transport is also of great importance to cultural exhibition, education, training and performance. Apart from a small pocket near Clyde and Granville, the LGA is to the north of the M4 and is serviced by heavy rail in its south western areas and on its eastern edge at Epping (which is also on the Metro North West line). Bus is the main form of public transport across most of the LGA, which limits circulation capacity.

Improved transport infrastructure in the form of the Parramatta Light Rail development and the future Sydney Metro West link increases the opportunities for developing carefully located facilities. Parramatta Light Rail Stage 1 will run from Westmead, with indicative stop locations at the Cumberland Hospital, through the CBD to Camellia, Rydalmere and onto Carlingford, while Stage 2 plans to connect Rydalmere or Camellia with Sydney Olympic Park (and perhaps Silverwater). With the planned Sydney Metro West link running from Westmead through Parramatta CBD to Clyde, Silverwater and SOP, and then onto the Sydney CBD via the Bays, there will be improved transport across the south-eastern part of the LGA and also with the Eastern Harbour City. Although this public transport connectivity is unevenly spread through Parramatta LGA, it is a key factor in shaping decisions about the location and function of cultural infrastructure. These developments can work in conjunction with current and future community infrastructure facilities, a number of which are detailed in this research report.

In some areas of the LGA there is a tension around land use patterns as they currently exist and potential changes based on anticipated development through population and employment growth and expanded public transport options. The industrial lands provide important services to the region as well as long term opportunities for future residential and social amenity development.

Landowners in the industrial lands express their intention to remain *in situ* to continue to run their businesses (Sustainable East 2020). Some of these are small local manufacturing businesses as well as family-run light industrial services. The importance of the services provided – especially to a growing population – was highlighted by the Greater Sydney Commission in its assessment that included Council’s 2018 proposed Camellia Master Plan:

Supporting this area as clustered, productive, affordable and economically-viable land for businesses, with compatible uses, is considered vitally important to the success of the GPOP Economic Corridor. (Greater Sydney Commission 2019: 48)

The slower pace of changes to land use will benefit Council by providing more time to put in place long-term cultural infrastructure plans, adjust regulations, and to understand the cultural needs of the residents of the LGA. Although it will delay some of the benefits expected to flow from modified land use, it will enable a more considered approach to turning industrial lands into urban areas with highly-desirable, accessible cultural infrastructure.

The social and economic impact of COVID-19 is still being realised at the time of drafting this report. We note recent data on each LGA by *.id The Population Experts*. For the City of Parramatta, *.id* forecasts the following impacts of the pandemic (*.id* 2020):

- “Gross Regional Product is forecast to fall by -10.8% in the June Quarter 2020. This fall was lower than the state average.
- Local Jobs are forecast to fall by -7.7% in the June Quarter 2020. This equates to a fall of 14,331 local jobs.
- If JobKeeper recipients impacts are included then the employment fall is estimated at -11.6% (21,542 jobs).
- The impact on employed residents (-9.1%) was higher than the local job impact.”

All population projections also require caution given the current freeze on immigration, the likely reduction of immigration flows for a period after it is lifted, and the impact of the economic recession due to COVID-19. The predictions from *.id* of 20-year growth patterns will be affected by the likely flattening effect of 2020-22 alone and, due to compounding, may lower the 20-year forecasts by 10-20 per cent or more.

The growth of specific cultural groups (South Asian, East Asian and Middle Eastern) is likely to continue in similar proportions. Much of the demographic growth in Parramatta CBD is predicted to be of a young, more affluent, more educated and often first- or second generation South and East Asian population. This trend applies across the City of Parramatta LGA, yet will be reflected differently across suburbs. For example, Sydney Olympic Park has anticipated average annual population growth of 3.9 per cent to 2041 (SGS 2017: 3) and is predicted to attract a significant proportion of residents of South and East Asian background (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2019). The following section highlights the findings for specific precincts across the LGA.

Westmead

The adoption of the Westmead Arts and Culture Strategy (Cintra 2018) enables opportunities for artists working in the field of arts and health within the new Westmead health precinct development. The Strategy signals the role of art within a major urban development in a suburb that anticipates large population growth. Westmead's cultural infrastructure priorities should, therefore, build on the Westmead Arts and Culture Strategy.

Sydney Olympic Park

Sydney Olympic Park (SOP) has demonstrated significant potential for large and small scale arts and cultural events, as well as providing studio space for practising professional artists. SOP Stadia provide large-scale live events with transport access from a wide range of locations. As both sport and the arts are cultural events, there is an opportunity to follow international examples, such as that found in Barcelona, by including professional gallery-staged exhibitions of important Australian artists within the stadium space.

The Newington Armory Arts and Cultural Precinct has established its credentials in the two decades since the Sydney Olympics. The requests to the NSW government for upgrades to buildings 15, 18 and 20 are modest in comparison to the opportunities that may likely arise. But, until the issues of constrained access and secure production facilities for individual creative practitioners are addressed, the results are likely to be limited. The nearby Newington Community Centre could be adapted as a maker space which would deliver much needed creative space for the LGA, while also including extended programming for other creative projects.

Harris Park

One of the cultural infrastructure priorities for the City of Parramatta is to encourage creative activities in 'unlikely' spaces for impromptu events. Such spaces can be found in Harris Park. This suburb's increasing population includes a high proportion of younger Indian-Australians, including children. It is essential that the Council is aware of their future cultural needs and the best ways to meet them. The residential character of much of Harris Park, and its proximity to creative spaces in the CBD and Rydalmere, presents the possibility of identifying residential accommodation for visiting and local artists as part of larger creative research and development opportunities in the region.

Epping

Epping's cultural infrastructure priorities should build on its strengths as a dynamic and growing community in the City of Parramatta. Cultural infrastructure provision in Epping should support a range of users and serve to enhance community interaction. There is an opportunity to develop a number of mixed-use sites, as well as to retain and refurbish well-used creative hubs such as the

Epping Creative Centre. The recent Community Infrastructure Strategy (2019) notes that one of the main priorities for community infrastructure in the City of Parramatta is to plan and deliver new community hubs at Epping (including a new library and flexible multipurpose spaces). We note the recommendation in the (City of Parramatta 2019d) for a:

new Community Hub with Library and learning space on the western side of the train line, close to Boronia Park of a minimum of 3,250m², including at least 2,250m² of district library space and 1,000m² of community space, and co-located with a civic plaza.

This well-located multipurpose space should be designed to ensure adequate facilities for creative and cultural activities in the community. Its presence would reduce demands on the Epping Creative Centre, which is less accessible by public transport and is at capacity of use by creative and cultural organisations.

We also note the recommendation to deliver a new community hub at the existing library site, with 260m² of community space and approximately 500m² of subsidised space (City of Parramatta 2019d). This space is in the heart of the Epping Town Centre and, therefore, is readily accessible. It should also serve as a mixed-use space for creative and cultural activities.

Rydalmere

Council should build on Rydalmere's role as a significant employment hub and lift the profile of the district as one that recognises its economic production profile, while also building on its cultural amenity. The existing businesses and sizeable working population that use the district each weekday could be better serviced through access to upgraded and well-maintained open spaces. Council could address the lack of amenable public space through the provision of trees for cooling, as well as public art that functions both to cool designated spaces and provides desirable places to gather at lunch times and after work. Council should also build on the existing creative and cultural components of the suburb and encourage greater diversity of businesses. Rydalmere also has a number of cafes that currently service the nearby workers, but which could be supported by Council to feature the work of local artists. Given the suburb's growing transport links through both the light rail and Western Rail link, there is an opportunity to attract people from across Sydney to Rydalmere.

The current Parramatta Artists' Studios facility at Rydalmere was set up as a pilot using NSW Government Stronger Communities funding. A permanent home and consistent resourcing needs to be secured. The facility requires expanded doorways and points of access, suitable ceiling heights, a loading dock, parking facilities on site, appropriate ventilation, and the capacity to deal with mess and noise. Future accessibility will be improved with the light rail access to Rydalmere. The facility needs to be 1,200 sqm and to include a minimum of 12 studios of approximately 45 square metres. The current low-cost rent to cultural workers (\$25-\$35 per week) is a key consideration that continues to attract and keep artists in the LGA.

The state government Pacific Island Museum Collection, which was established in Rydalmere in 2019, is currently only accessible to members of the Pacific Islander community and Pacific Island collection researchers (Australian Museum 2019). Council should consider entering into discussions with the Australian Museum on the viability of wider promotion of this resource and potential access to the public.

The site of the former Macquarie Boys' Technology High School is also in Rydalmere. The site has been in disrepair since its closure in 2009. There are conflicting reports about the future of the site, but the NSW Government announced in October 2018 that plans are in progress for a new purpose-built Kindergarten to Year 12 school (Department of Education NSW 2018). Given this development, it may be possible to integrate mixed-use creative and cultural facilities into the community use designed for the site.

North Rocks

The existing businesses and sizeable working population using the district each weekday could be better serviced through access to upgraded open spaces. As in the case of Rydalmere, Council could address issues such as lack of amenable public space through the provision of trees for cooling, as well as public art that functions both to cool designated spaces and provides desirable places to gather at lunch times and after work.

Despite the limited vacant space available (Sustainable East 2020), Council should look for opportunities to develop creative and cultural multipurpose spaces that complement the light industrial and suburban form of this suburb. Consideration of development of the existing Community Centre in the suburb could also be given in offering more creative and cultural uses.

Silverwater

There are limited opportunities for the development of creative and cultural infrastructure in Silverwater. As an industrial suburb, its character is best suited to continue to serve the City of Parramatta as an economic and industrial hub. Improvements could be made to the public realm, such as by bringing natural features into the precinct and around Holker Reserve. Holker reserve is one of the few open green spaces in Silverwater, and there is an opportunity to connect it to a permeable green link with Newington Market Place, as well as proposed developments in Clyde. Public art or cultural facilities that improve public amenity and incorporate mechanisms, such as multi-purpose public art to help cool the area, are also recommended.

Camellia

The slower 'evolving' development pace proposed for Camellia by the Greater Sydney Commission (2019) gives the City of Parramatta Council the time to consider the area within its arts and cultural infrastructure planning and development. The heritage-listed Sydney Water Pumping Station (either through remediation *in situ* or relocation) has the potential to become a prominent arts centre that would add significantly to the arts and cultural infrastructure of the entire LGA. Eventually, existing warehouse facilities may be amenable for use as studio and storage space, providing that environmental contamination is successfully remediated.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The principal recommendations of this report are that the City of Parramatta Council should:

- secure facilities and resourcing for Parramatta Artists' Studios in Rydalmere;
- expand facilities and resources of the Westmead Arts and Health Strategy into a National Centre for Arts and Health Research;
- identify and allocate funds for dedicated locations for youth-oriented cultural activities in Harris Park and Sydney Olympic Park for the anticipated increase of people of East Asian background;
- establish a working relationship with the Sydney Olympic Park Authority (SOPA) to support the increased presence of arts and cultural activities, especially in the stadia and the Armory;
- secure the Sydney Water Pumping Station at Camellia for future development as a resited or remediated *in situ*, fully-serviced multi-arts centre;
- identify, secure and remediate a number of existing warehouses in Camellia for use as studios and storage for cultural workers;
- stimulate the presence of cafes and attractive public spaces that will contribute to culturally-enriched urban conviviality in the industrial precincts of Rydalmere, North Rocks and Silverwater.

An overall recommendation is that local arts and cultural needs be included as a key driver in all planning processes across the City of Parramatta. The following needs analysis is presented in short (1 year), medium (2-4 years), and longer terms (5-10 years).

Short term

- In Westmead, Council negotiates with the Westmead Health Precinct partners and Multiplex to ensure that the current temporary arts and health site becomes a permanent studio and research facility. Council, in partnership as appropriate with Western Sydney University (WSU), provides support through grant allocations to artists undertaking art and health projects.
- Council liaises with Westmead Health Precinct and WSU to integrate current and post-degree residencies for those in the Master of Art Therapy and the Master of Creative Music Therapy.

- To differentiate infrastructure needs for large-scale sports events and specific cultural events, Council encourages the Sydney Olympic Park Authority (SOPA) to install high-end sound systems to secure these venues as valuable performing arts infrastructure.
- Council encourages the SOPA to house art/cultural museums and spaces in their stadia to show temporary and permanent exhibitions and installations of Australian art and cultural work.
- Council commits to working with SOPA and Create NSW to develop the Murama Healing Space and Dance Ground, which was established in 2019 with support from Create NSW in Armory Building 15. In the short term, community consultation and co-design processes need to occur.
- Council liaises with SOPA and Create NSW to define Council's potential role in upgrading the Armory Buildings 18 and 20.
- Camellia's Sydney Water Pumping Station is secured by Council to become a dedicated Arts and Cultural Centre.
- Council identifies a number of suitable sized warehouses in Camellia requiring less remediation of contaminated soil, for use as studio and storage spaces for cultural workers.
- Council reviews and adjusts planning and events legislation to ensure that it encourages informal, impromptu activities. Harris Park should be included in such adjustments.
- Consultation with Harris Park residents canvassing creative options within a broader range of infrastructure, such as parks and social facilities, taking into consideration the precinct's current profile as a *de facto* 'Little India'.
- Conduct fine-grained, on-the-ground analysis of the creative industries currently operating in Rydalmere, North Rocks and Silverwater to understand better how to nurture this sector in the City.
- Council works towards improving public amenity in the industrial precincts of Rydalmere, North Rocks and Silverwater; for example, by providing public art that allows shading to enhance these precincts as business and employment hubs.

Medium term

- Council secures a cluster of warehouses in Camellia as prime resources for artists and creative producers across the region in beginning the evolution of Camellia into a "higher value precinct".

- Council undertakes consultation with local and state artists and cultural organisations in developing the pace and requirements of the transformation of the heritage-listed Sydney Water Pumping Station at Camellia into one of several cultural centres needed in the City of Parramatta.
- Council works with Harris Park residents and CBD cultural organisations to develop opportunities for informal art and cultural events. Some of these events would be ethno-specific, while others would encourage cross-cultural content involving a diverse range of cultural workers and audiences.
- Council supports SOP to construct, adapt and equip the Murama Healing Space and Dance Ground for visual arts studios; a 'creative development hub' with performance and education facilities; a dance ground; seating and landscaping, and public amenities and signage.

Long term

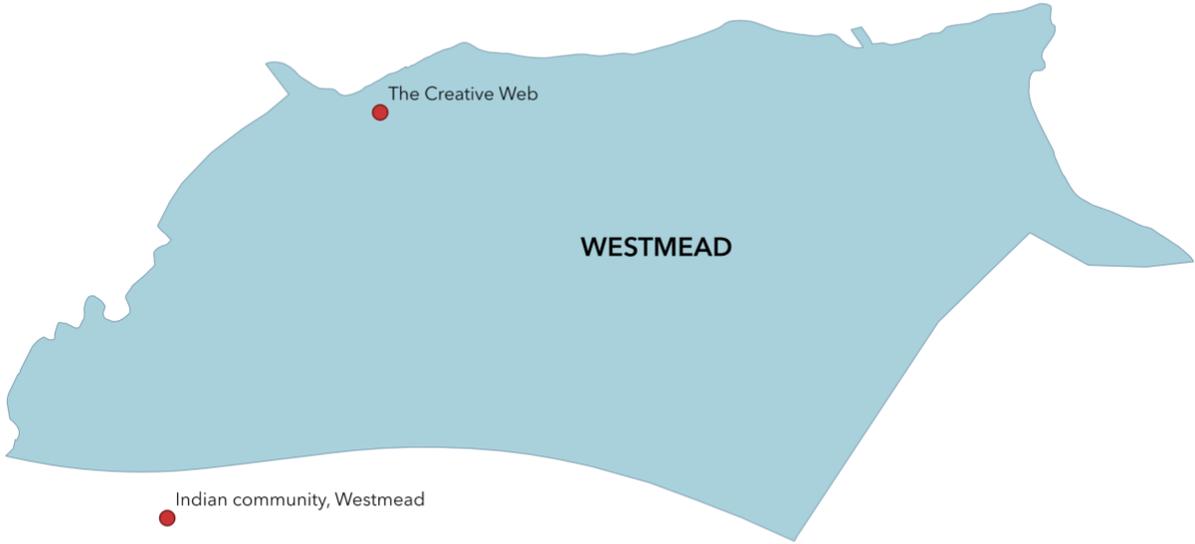
- Council works with Westmead Health Precinct partners, including Western Sydney University, to establish and house the National Centre for Arts and Health that integrates creative projects and practices within hospital, research and residential centres.
- Council develops the Sydney Water Pumping Station into a dedicated Cultural Centre.
- Council develops and expands dedicated cultural spaces which offer youth-oriented cultural project spaces, and creative studios or co-working spaces that encourage incubator-style informal networking and creative/commercial/cross-cultural crossovers, mindful of the specific CALD profiles of these areas.

PRECINCTS of PARRAMATTA

Westmead

Precinct Overview

Westmead is a suburb that is part of the City of Parramatta and Cumberland Council LGAs and is 26 kilometres west of the Sydney CBD, and is to the west of Parramatta CBD and North Parramatta. Its boundaries include Toongabbie Creek to the north, Parramatta River to the north-east, Park Avenue to the south-east and Finlaysons Creek to the west. Westmead was originally part of the domain of Government House in Parramatta. The subdivision of the domain began in 1859, which saw the western meadow become known Westmead and the northern meadow as Northmead (Cintra 2018: 16). Westmead is the western starting of Parramatta Light Rail Stage 1 and of the proposed Sydney Metro West link to Sydney’s CBD.



The Westmead Hospital precinct today sits within the City of Parramatta LGA and defines the identity of the area. Investment in health infrastructure continues apace in Western Sydney and Westmead is attracting investment in training, research and innovation. Western Sydney University has an existing campus at Westmead and with Charter Hall is developing a \$350 million health research and commercial Innovation Quarter there. In November 2018, the University of Sydney partnered with the NSW Government to develop a Parramatta and Westmead campus that will complement the Westmead Hospital precinct. According to City of Parramatta Lord Mayor Cr Andrew Wilson, the development “will build on the work being undertaken by City of Parramatta Council and Health NSW on master planning the Westmead precinct to help it grow into a world-class Innovation District” (City of Parramatta 2018). The other partners in the Westmead precinct development include the Western Sydney Local Health District; Westmead Children’s and Private hospitals; Western Sydney University; and the Westmead Institute for Medical Research and the Children’s Medical Research Institute (Cintra 2018: 7).

In 2019 Westmead had a population of just under 10,000 and was predicted to grow by 70 per cent from 11,832 in 2020 to an estimated 20,105 in 2041 (.id 2019). This projection is likely to be revised downwards by 10-20 per cent due to the impact of COVID-19.

Existing Cultural Infrastructure

The intention to become a ‘world-class’ health education and research district is aided by the Westmead Redevelopment’s arts and culture program, which is coordinated by the Health and Arts Research Centre Inc (HARC). HARC is a not-for-profit organisation founded in 1999 by arts and health coordinator Marily Cintra, who remains its head. The purpose of HARC is to “research, publish, train, create employment for local artists and cultural workers and further advance the synergy between arts, culture and well-being” (HARC 2020). Cintra managed the consultation to develop the Westmead Arts and Culture Strategy, which was adopted by the Westmead Redevelopment Strategy, and includes the ArtsLab initiative.

Westmead’s new *ArtsLab@Westmead* received a \$50,000 Create NSW grant in August 2018, designed to foster creative opportunities for local artists. The grant was one of nine awarded as part of the Western Sydney Making Spaces program. *ArtsLab@Westmead* was located in construction company Multiplex’s sponsored Westmead Connectivity Centre, near the site of the new Westmead Hospital. Because of COVID-19, Multiplex had to vacate the site to create more space for hospital administration. *ArtsLab@Westmead*, therefore, has to find new accommodation. Local artists, curators and cultural workers will use the space to “build capacity for health arts projects at Westmead”. The funds will be used to support ten artist residencies to create works for the Westmead Hospital, the precinct and local communities. One of the first projects will be the development of a sensory wall for Westmead Hospital’s new aged care behavioural management unit (HARC 2020; Multiplex 2020).

There is little indication of any other cultural infrastructure in Westmead, and there is no reference to social infrastructure in Westmead in Elton’s 2017 audit (Elton Consulting 2017). An adjacent

suburb, Wentworthville, west of Westmead, does have the Reg Byrne Community Centre. It is considered to be well utilised, with 513 sqm floor space separated into meeting and activity rooms, but is ageing (Elton Consulting 2017: 23). The community centre may offer some options for adaptation for arts and cultural activities, but any adaptation or expansion would need to take into account existing building problems that require attention, such as asbestos cladding and electrical wiring. Currently poor access via public transport would also need to be improved.

Cultural Infrastructure Priorities

The adoption of the arts and health strategy for the Westmead health precinct is a clear opportunity for those working in the area of arts, culture and health. The outputs of the strategy, which are to be delivered between 2018 and 2023, provide for a number of artworks across both interior and exterior elements of the new Westmead Hospital development. The artworks are based on aims that emerged from the strategies' consultative process. These are to: provide a healing environment connected to nature; understand and respect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people; embrace diversity and engage local communities; make engaging contemporary art; promote a positive identity for Westmead; see Westmead as a catalyst for healthy living; and sustain a program to keep Westmead vibrant (HARC 2019: 13).

Similar aims resonate across much of the strategic planning in the City of Parramatta. The importance of the Westmead Arts and Culture Strategy is as an endorsed platform of a major urban development in a suburb that anticipates large population growth. Westmead's cultural infrastructure priorities should, therefore, build on the Strategy's long-term vision of establishing a National Centre for Arts and Health that integrates art projects and practices within hospital, research and residential centres. A first step towards realisation of that vision might be to negotiate permanency for *ArtsLab@Westmead*, and also to facilitate an increase in the budgets for artists undertaking art and health projects.

WSU offers two courses in arts and health: the Master of Art Therapy and the Master of Creative Music Therapy. Its students would benefit from placements in the HARC program and the courses' curricula could advantage the Westmead arts and cultural strategy through additional research and delivery capacity. There is a visual arts profile developing through the Westmead Arts and Culture Strategy, and the proximity to the WSU Parramatta campus enables good opportunities for exchange with staff and students in the Communications discipline and social and cultural researchers at the Institute for Culture and Society.

Sydney Olympic Park

Precinct Overview

Sydney Olympic Park (SOP) is a sports and entertainment complex covering 6.63 square kilometres. It is 14 kms west of Sydney CBD, with the Parramatta River flowing through the park. SOP was purpose-built for the 2000 Sydney Olympic and Paralympic Games. It has a major visitation of over 10 million people per year and an increasing residential population. SOP was officially named as a suburb in 2009. Following the most recent LGA amalgamations and boundary changes, it sits within the City of Parramatta LGA and is managed by the Sydney Olympic Park Authority (SOPA). The residential waste and rate collection is the responsibility of the City of Parramatta Council and the Sydney Olympic Park Authority (SOPA) manages the maintenance and cleaning of the parklands and public areas (Sydney Olympic Park n.d.). Its public transport connections include train, bus and ferry, and it is on the Parramatta Light Rail Stage 2 and the proposed Sydney Metro West link to Sydney's CBD.



SOP is on the traditional lands of the Wann-gal People, which follow the southern shore of the Parramatta River between Cockle Bay (Cadi-gal land) and Rose Hill (Burrumatta-gal land). John Blaxland, a landowner and merchant, acquired 520 hectares in 1807 (which he named Newington Estate) and established salt pans along the Parramatta River. By 1827, the area was producing up to 8 tons of salt each week for consumption in Sydney. The Blaxland Family held this land until the 1860s, by which time mills, cattle grazing, logging and coal mining exploration had developed. Part of that estate now forms SOP and of the Silverwater Correctional Complex (Stockburn 2016). Its relative isolation from the growing urban areas led to the establishment in 1882 of Newington as an armory to house gunpowder and explosives. SOPA is “committed to providing the best possible experience to the people that live, work and play” in the Park (SOPA 2019: 6). Alongside its day-to-day cleaning and maintenance responsibilities, therefore, SOPA is also involved in articulating longer-term infrastructure developments.

SOP is now recognised as a major events destination, one of Australia’s ‘homes of sport’ which is expanding into a residential centre:

The approval in July 2018 of the Sydney Olympic Park Master Plan 2030 (2018 Review) has provided a roadmap for the continued evolution of the Park into a vibrant town centre and lifestyle precinct. By 2030 the Park could be home to a daily population of more than 80,000 residents, workers, visitors and students, reinforcing the key role it has in the development of the Greater Parramatta and Olympic Peninsula region. (SOPA 2019: 6)

The Australian Bureau of Statistics estimated the population to be 3,371 in 2019 compared to 1,917 in 2016. The sharp rise is caused by rapid residential development and anticipated increases in employment via new business encouraged into the Park. The long-term prediction is an annual average growth rate of 3.9 per cent to 2041 (SGS 2017: 3):

Sydney Olympic Park is currently home to over 2,500 residents and expected to reach almost 20,000 residents by 2041. The 2016 review of Sydney Olympic Park Master Plan 2030 shows that it has capacity to accommodate 23,500 residents and 34,000 workers. It is intended to offer inner-city style living, additional office, retail and residential development will complement its established sporting and recreation assets. (SGS 2017: 2)

The trend predicted for demographic growth in Parramatta CBD of a young, more affluent, better educated and predominantly first or second generation South and East Asian population is also likely to be seen in Sydney Olympic Park, which currently has a considerable population of East Asian background. In 2016, 22 per cent was born in Australia; 20 per cent in China; 10 per cent in the Republic of Korea (South) and 5 per cent in India (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2019).

The Town Centre has nine precincts which reflect the sports focus and the open recreational setting of the Park. These precincts are the Central Precinct; Central Sports Precinct; Stadia Precinct; Sydney Showground Precinct; Parkview Precinct; Boundary Creek Precinct; Tennis

Precinct; Southern Sports Precinct and Haslams Creek Precinct. Significant events are held in the Central Sports Precinct; the Stadia Precinct; and the Sydney Showground Precinct. The remaining precincts form the residential, retail and commercial hubs, and outdoor recreational areas (SOPA 2018: 10). The Master Plan, however, offers little commentary on cultural infrastructure needs, apart from references to lifestyle and entertainment amenities.

Existing Cultural Infrastructure

Sydney Olympic Park Stadia

8 Australia Avenue Sydney Olympic Park NSW 2127.

Live Music events of significant scale are presented at Sydney Olympic Park stadia, self-styled as “Australia’s Concert Capital and home to the very best in live musical performance”. For example, in 2018 *Make Music Day*, based on the French national day of music Fete de la Musique (held annually in villages and cities across France), was staged at Sydney Olympic Park venues:

It is a unique sonic journey that includes a live cross to the Sydney Symphony Orchestra performing Verdi’s Requiem at the Sydney Opera House and a curated program presenting some of the best of Western Sydney emerging musical talent. (Create NSW 2018)

Newington Community Centre

Corner of Avenue of Europe and Avenue of Asia, Newington NSW 2127.

The Newington Community Centre (NCC), built in 2000, is co-located with the Newington ‘Rage Cage’, a multi-use recreation court suitable for ball sports and other activities. It is readily accessible via regular local buses and has adequate parking. The 485 sqm facility is a multipurpose, flexible space that includes meeting rooms, an 80-seat theatre and a function room that seats 60. The library service appears to be on the decline, as the nearby Lidcombe Branch Library attracts upwards of 57,500 visitors compared to 2,000 at NCC, with additional branches at Sydney Olympic Park and Wentworth Point also serving the area. Otherwise, it is considered a well-utilised and activated centre that includes a community choir, and often hosts fully subscribed programs that generate positive income for Council (Elton Consulting 2017: 53, City of Parramatta 2020).

Newington Armory Arts and Cultural Precinct

Jamieson St, Sydney Olympic Park NSW 2127

Across the road from the Silverwater Correctional Complex is the main vehicle access to the Newington Armory Arts and Cultural Precinct, positioned in the 22 hectares of naval heritage on the southern banks of the Parramatta river. This large pre-World War II armament storehouse:

... offers the Armory Gallery [Building 18], once a WWII explosives store, now transformed into a 500 sqm contemporary art gallery, and Building 20, a 19th Century gunpowder magazine, that presents site-specific installations and smaller exhibitions. (Museums and Galleries of NSW n.d.)

The Armory is set apart from the Olympic precinct and is considered by SOPA to be a “unique arts precinct”. The buildings and surrounding landscape have been adapted to include a theatre, outdoor amphitheatre, several visual artist studios, and exhibition spaces, one of which claims to have the “longest continuous gallery wall in Australia!” (Sydney Olympic Park n.d.). The precinct, opened in 2005, attracts 30,000 visitations annually and is activated through free exhibitions, film festivals, temporary public art and cultural activities, such as workshops, including some dedicated to children (SOPA 2019: 4). There are open space studios used by visual artists and craftworkers, such as ceramicists and weavers, which also host open-studio days (City of Parramatta 2019a). The facilities for the artists-in-residence include exhibition spaces which are claimed to be “unique in Sydney as a public art precinct in which art is both made and displayed” (SOPA 2019: 4).

The Armory site has been the subject of various strategies for arts and cultural activation since the 2000 Olympics, and is experiencing an increase in visitation. Regular annual events assist this profile, in particular the final secondary school year visual arts graduates travelling exhibition, *ARTEXPRESS*. New events and spaces provide distinctive cultural elements that aim to develop over time. In June 2019, the Murama Healing Space and Dance Ground was established with support from Create NSW. Tony Nesbitt, the manager of Events and Activation for SOPA describes it as an:

Aboriginal community-run facility that keeps First People’s culture alive in western Sydney, and also offers opportunities for intercultural exchange, cf. The Ceremony event from September 2019, in which Aboriginal, Uighur, Tibetan and Syrian communities came together in a mini-festival of food and performance at the Armory Dance Ground. (Email correspondence 2 April 2020)

Amongst the 100 heritage buildings in the precinct those known as ‘The Lodge’ are available to business enterprises within the arts and cultural precinct. Leased by the YMCA until 30 June 2019, the SOPA chief executive Charles Moore explains that:

Newington Armory has developed its offering as an important environmental and heritage location with a growing number of commercial activities and community uses. We would like to see Newington Armory become a thriving cultural and recreational hub for greater Sydney. (Commercial Real Estate 2019)

The issues faced by potential tenants also apply to cultural workers and visitors to the precinct. Lack of public road transport is an issue – it is a 20-minute walk from the closest bus stop, which may be too much for some, meaning that many would come by car. The site is accessible by ferry (having its own wharf nearby) but ferries can be cancelled due to tidal issues and are limited regarding the areas that they serve away from the Parramatta River. There is one café at the ferry stop. The population is set to increase rapidly in the area, with anticipated pre-COVID construction of 3,000 apartments in the vicinity over the next several years, which will create additional demand for sporting and recreational space (Commercial Real Estate 2019). In addition, specific issues facing artists and cultural workers include access outside conventional office hours. The lack of Internet access is also a recurring complaint.

Cultural Infrastructure Priorities

SOP stadia provide spaces for large-scale live events with public transport access via train from a wide range of locations. High-end sound systems suitable for live music and performance events would secure these venues as valuable state cultural infrastructure alongside appropriate food and beverage offerings. It is important to be able to differentiate and customise the infrastructure needs for large-scale sports, music and specific cultural events.

As both sport and the arts are cultural events broadly speaking, there is an opportunity to include professional gallery-staged exhibitions of important Australian artists and cultural practitioners. A model could be the FC Barcelona's Museum which presents audiovisual materials and objects about the history of the football club, and much else besides. The museum hosts temporary art exhibitions and a permanent display of artworks by several of Catalonia's renowned artists, including Dalí, Miró, Tàpies and Subirachs (BarcelonaBusTuristica n.d.). Similarly, the Olympic and Sports Museum in Barcelona incorporates many art forms in both its permanent and temporary exhibitions, and in various other of its activities (Museu Olímpic i de l'Esport n.d.)

Newington Community Centre presents an ideal opportunity to be adapted as a maker space which could deliver much needed creative space across the LGA, and could include extended programming for other creative projects. The proximity to the Armory could provide another local link for artists and cultural workers wishing to establish an exhibition profile and to increase audiences for Armory programs. The Newington Precinct's arts and cultural projects and programs sit within the Place Activation and Strategy Business Unit of SOPA, while the Newington Armory Arts and Cultural Precinct Arts Strategy includes a modest request to increase the infrastructure capability for arts projects and cultural events at the Armory. An Expression of Interest (EOI) Grant Funding program was launched by The Armory in 2019. The EOI invites community, cultural, arts and event production individuals and companies to activate the Newington precinct. The Armory will also continue the programs which have been established over recent years. Nesbitt outlines the principles for the precinct's direction in the coming years:

Three cornerstones of the newly-evolving Events & Activation Strategy (which will include art and cultural initiatives) are our Reconciliation Action Plan (endorsed by Reconciliation Australia last year), our Events and Activation Charter (in development) and an ambitious Disability Inclusion Action Plan. (Email correspondence 2 April 2020)

In its submission to Infrastructure NSW, SOPA describes Newington Armory as the “de facto” cultural centre for the region, as it sits in a perceived “neutral” zone between eastern and western Sydney (SOPA 2019a: 3). There are four areas identified for attention – Buildings 15, 18 and 20, and wi-fi connectivity. Upgrading Armory Building 18 (Main Exhibition Hall, which is the refurbished Explosives Store) and establishing it as a professional standard regional gallery requires climate control, security systems and additional exhibition infrastructure. In addition to the submission requests, appropriate lighting, sound treatments, professional equipment and enhancement of the entrance to the venue are also required. Armory Building 20, originally the 1897 Powder Magazine, requires completion of the heritage assessment underway and also fundamental upgrades such as accessibility, dual exits and public amenities. These modest adjustments will improve the amenity and make the building more attractive to external hirers; they will also expand the types of cultural event that can be programmed.

The Murama Healing Space and Dance Ground sits adjacent to the river in Armory Building 15 and presented its first cross-cultural event in 2019. Murama aims to employ Western Sydney-based Aboriginal people in arts and cultural work. As the SOPA strategy argues:

There will also be a strong focus on bringing generations together to share cultural memory and understanding and to celebrate the importance of maintaining knowledge of the Indigenous cultural history of the Darug (and particularly the Wann-gal) Peoples (SOPA 2019a: 6).

SOPA has deemed the building, operational personnel and seed funding to Murama. The site requires investment to make it fully functional, involving: community consultation and co-design processes; adapting and equipping of visual arts studios; establishment of a “creative development hub”, with performance and education facilities; construction of a dance ground; seating and landscaping; and public amenities and signage.

The requests to the NSW government for upgrades to buildings 15, 18 and 20 are modest in comparison to the opportunities that are likely to arise. But, until the issues of constrained access and secure production facilities for individual practitioners are addressed, the results are likely to be limited. The upgrade of Internet and wi-fi capacity across the whole site is required both for enhanced connectivity and to establish 20 interactive smart nodes in the Armory precinct and river foreshore. Upgraded wi-fi infrastructure will enable arts and cultural content involving, for example, augmented reality, as well as more familiar wayfinding and marketing tools.

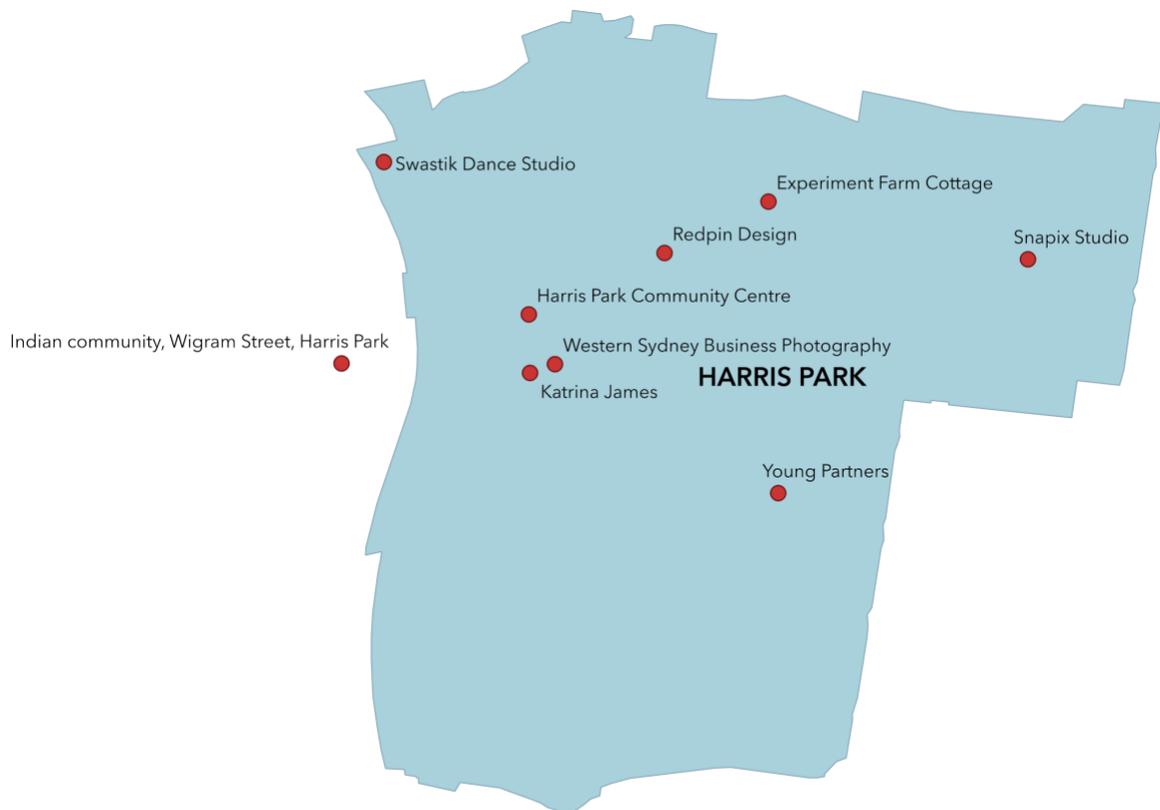
The Sydney Olympic Park site has significant potential for large- and small-scale arts and cultural events, as well as studio space for practising professional artists and creative workers. The

Newington Armory site, though, faces challenges relating to public transport access and limited retail and hospitality offerings.

Harris Park

Precinct overview

Harris Park is a small one square kilometre suburb adjacent to Parramatta CBD and is 23 kilometres west of the Sydney CBD. The boundaries to the north are Clay Cliff Creek, Hassell Street and Parkes Street; to the east Alfred, Weston and Good Streets, A'Beckett Creek to the south and the railway to the west. It is on the Main Western Rail Line and Parramatta Light Rail Stage 1.



The fertile soil and river system of the Parramatta region provided bountiful food and shelter for the Boromedegal people (alternative spellings include: Burrmattagal, Burramattugal and Boora me di-gal). Harris Park is named after John Harris, a surgeon who was granted land in 1793 and 1805, and who bought the Experiment Farm in 1775 and built a cottage which still stands as part of Australia's colonial heritage. Experiment Farm was the first private farm developed in 1791 by James Ruse, the first convict to be granted land, and on which European wheat first grew. Other historic colonial sites in the area include Elizabeth Farm, which was established by graziers John and Elizabeth Macarthur in 1793, and Kenilworth, built by Arthur McCredie (Office of the

Environment and Heritage n.d.). Between 1927 and 1998 Kenilworth housed the Australian International Performing Arts School, which is now located in Glebe, near Sydney's inner west.

Harris Park has a distinctive residential profile, being the home of many migrants from India, although it also has older Lebanese, new Chinese and other non-Indian South Asian populations. Harris Park has a growing demographic of "young Indian families", consisting of a large number of young adults, infants and primary school-aged children, many of whom are likely to be of Indian heritage (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2016). In 2016, 46.4 per cent of residents were born in India and 44.8 per cent practised Hinduism (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2019).

Despite undergoing considerable densification, the population forecast for Harris Park is modest in comparison to Parramatta CBD and others in the region, with estimated population growth of 7.2 per cent from 6,429 in 2020 to 6,892 by 2041 (NSW Government 2020). This modest forecast is not borne out by the suburb's location adjacent to the CBD with a dedicated rail link and a new light rail stop, suggesting that it should be one of the higher-growth suburbs in the LGA. The many mid-size redevelopments underway in the past five years and the approval of high-rise apartment development to the value of \$49.9 million, reinforce the likelihood of a higher population prediction than has been forecast (NSW Government 2020).

Existing Cultural Infrastructure

Harris Park is marketed by the City of Parramatta as "Sydney's Little India" and described as a "thriving, dynamic, multicultural hub" (City of Parramatta 2019b). Much of the cultural dynamism is found in the South Indian and Pakistani restaurants and cafes that line Wigram Road. Clothing stores, such as The Saree Shop and New Maharaja Fashion and Beauty, attend to the practical needs of the suburb's residents and add to the ambience for visitors. *ParraMa*, an online mapping and tour project by arts organisation Information and Cultural Exchange (I.C.E), engagingly captures how to encounter the area, including the Harris Park locations of specialist Indian grocery shops which sell hard-to-find spices and condiments (Information and Cultural Exchange n.d.). There are few, if any, arts and culture enterprises located in Harris Park. However, there are eight graphic design firms for commercial web and print products (Creative West n.d.). These firms may be, like informal creative practice training services, run from residences.

The three main colonial heritage buildings in Harris Park are promoted online and featured in a self-guided 2.4 kilometre walk that follows the Parramatta River eastwards (City of Parramatta 2019b). The James Ruse Reserve Water Playground encompasses heritage buildings, as well as skateparks and water play features, and is the main public space in Harris Park.

Harris Park Community Centre

Albion Street, Harris Park.

There is a staffed, 120 sqm Community Centre in Harris Park in good condition that provides fully accessible multipurpose spaces. The Centre is limited by a lack of access to open space and an almost invisible entrance down a laneway off Wigram Street. However, it is well-located close to public transport and is co-located with other community services and organisations. The range of regular users include playgroups, yoga classes, a local Burmese group and the food rescue organisation OzHarvest. A small space is available for hire and includes a kitchenette. The centre has a high occupancy rate and may not immediately be suitable for expansion into arts and creative programs (Elton Consulting 2017: 45).

Informal spaces

Car parks and similar informal spaces are emerging in Harris Park as areas where impromptu cultural cuisine and live music events occur. The most important informal 'community centre' is in Rosella Park, between Harris and Wigram streets. Up to 100 people gather there on weekends to eat buffet food, gather and converse. Local advertising promotes Indian music and Bollywood cinema, suggesting that there is a community desire for lively Indian popular culture, and not only in residential lounge rooms. These types of event, in spaces that are often dedicated to other functions, contribute significantly to the cultural identity and life of the precinct.

The first stage of the North Granville Facilities Master Plan included Rosehill, Harris Park and North Granville residents in the consultation phase. Investment in the social and spatial elements of the adjacent F.S. Garside Park aims to provide a more active, safe and connected local area for different generations. Specific creative or cultural uses were not mentioned, nor presented as options, in the draft planning process (City of Parramatta 2020). Rosella Park, which is widely used by Harris Park residents, is also not mentioned in the Master Plan.

Cultural Infrastructure Priorities

The immediate priority for the City of Parramatta Council is to support the seemingly unlikely spaces where impromptu creative events occur and are highly valued by locals and passers-by alike. It is important that Council acknowledges the range of informal activities that take place in parks and residential areas, and which qualify as 'culture' without any evident infrastructural, spatial or other forms of support. The City needs to review planning and events legislation to ensure that they do not discourage this activity. Future consultations with community residents could also canvass creative options across a broader range of infrastructure, such as parks and social facilities. Most importantly, Council needs to work closely with residents to understand where it can support the community's emerging needs, particularly those of adolescents and young adults.

Rather than any specific building for creative expression *per se*, Harris Park may be able to extend its moniker of a "Little India" consisting mainly of ethno-specific restaurants, to a distinctive cultural precinct which also hosts unexpected creative events, some of which may be ethno-specific and others may be more cross-cultural or cosmopolitan, and so of interest to broader, diverse

audiences. Current and upcoming generations of Indian–Australians require a more informed awareness of what their cultural needs might be when they reach their teens and early adulthood, and how those needs might best be met.

Given the demographic profile of the area, key developments should include dedicated cultural spaces, youth-oriented cultural offerings, studio and co-working spaces. More targeted planning of Bollywood and South Asian cinema and music productions could be expanded to cater specifically for the LGA’s culturally diverse population. The dance studio, DVD shop and food outlets in the area could be supported to expand dedicated spaces and events involving South Asian culture. The cultural and creative options for young adults, teenagers and children could be developed to reference their interests such as digital gaming and sport. Studio/co-working spaces where graphic designers, app developers, artists and other cultural practitioners can congregate and collaborate could be supported to build on currently limited start-up, incubator-style informal networking, especially among those interested in creative/commercial crossovers.

Harris Park, like much of Parramatta LGA, is a predominantly residential area. However, its proximity to Parramatta’s CBD and good public transport links suggest that it would be a good location to provide spaces for visiting artists as part of larger creative research and development opportunities across the LGA. Residential opportunities for visiting artists would complement the work of Parramatta Artists’ Studios in the CBD and nearby Rydalmere, and the possibility of additional warehouse space for studio practice in neighbouring Camellia Park (see the section on Camellia Park below). By providing low-cost or subsidised rent to visiting artists, Council can attract a wide range of creative practitioners who can also work alongside locally-based artists and cultural workers. Artspace, a contemporary arts centre in Woolloomooloo, for example, includes a residential program for visiting artists and is always in high demand. Council should undertake consultation with the Harris Park residents and creative practitioners regarding the establishment of an artists’ village or cluster of residencies, perhaps with a specific brief of cultural diversity regarding both local and international visiting artists.

Epping

Precinct Overview

The suburb of Epping is located within the City of Parramatta and is 18 kilometres north west of the Sydney CBD. Epping is bounded by the Hills (M2) Motorway in the north, Terrys Creek in the east, the suburb of Eastwood (Pearl Avenue, Epping Avenue, Mobbs Lane and Valley Road) in the south, and the suburb of Carlingford (Freeman Place, Cottee Drive, Pennant Parade, Ross Street, Eyles Avenue, Pennant Parade, Lyndelle Place and the waterway) in the west. (.id 2019).

Until 2016, parts of Epping were managed by three different LGAs: Hornsby Shire, the City of Ryde and the City of Parramatta. Following a review of local government boundaries in 2015, Epping was amalgamated entirely into the City of Parramatta. Although it has generally good public transport links to other parts of metropolitan Sydney, Epping is not well connected to other parts of the LGA, notably to Parramatta's CBD, and will remain so after the abandonment of the planned Parramatta to Epping Rail Link (PERL).



Epping, as a transport hub, is undergoing significant growth and renewal, both in population and form. It is recognised as a high-growth area in the Parramatta LGA (City of Parramatta 2019d). In 2014, the NSW Department of Planning and Environment rezoned the Epping Town Centre. The resultant changes cover 54 hectares and include provision for building heights of 8 to 22 storeys for mixed commercial and residential use within a 400-metre radius of the railway station, and about 3,750 additional homes within 800 metres of it (Department of Planning and Environment NSW 2019). Epping is moving from being an established low-to-medium density residential area to increased high-density development located close to the town centre. The City of Parramatta Community Infrastructure Strategy notes the significant projected growth in dwellings, from 8,700 to add another 8,800 by 2036 to a total of approximately 17,500 dwellings (City of Parramatta 2019d).

In 2019, Epping had a population of just under just over 28,000 and its forecast 2020 population is 29,964. The suburb is estimated to grow to 39,245 by 2041, an increase of almost 31 per cent (.id 2019).

Existing Cultural Infrastructure

Existing cultural infrastructure in Epping is limited. Several venues are classified as community infrastructure, but these are not exclusively dedicated to the specific purpose of creative and cultural activity. This section will first set out the limited cultural facilities in Epping and then detail the community infrastructure venues (based on information from the City of Parramatta's Community Infrastructure Audit (2017) and subsequent Community Infrastructure Strategy (2019d)), in identifying where there is potential to develop mixed-use facilities in this high growth suburb.

Epping Creative Centre

The 650 sqm Epping Creative Centre, located at 26 Stanley Road, is utilised by more than 30 different arts and crafts groups, and serves the community beyond the City of Parramatta (Appendix 1). Most users are regular hirers of the facility. Previously, it had been a ladies' bowling club and reception centre (Elton Consulting 2017). Situated near the soon-to-be developed Epping Aquatic Centre at Dence Park (City of Parramatta n.d. Dence Park Masterplan), the Creative Centre provides recreational space for the community with an emphasis on cultural, educational and related leisure activities. It has a 100-person hall and smaller meeting rooms. A former kitchen has been converted into a room for sculptors and other arts-and-crafts groups (Elton Consulting 2017). The Centre is at capacity and now turns away bookings from some cultural endeavours, such as creative writing groups, because of the demand for space (Email correspondence 12 June 2020). While storing materials is not encouraged, storage is adequate but in high demand (Email correspondence 12 June 2020). The Centre is managed as an Incorporated Body (Epping Creative Centre Inc.), with the lease having been renewed in late 2019 for 2 years. This model enables the body to retain its independence and come to Council with any building issues and requests (Email correspondence 12 June 2020).

Commercial creative industries in Epping

Some commercial creative work is conducted in the area (Creative West n.d.). For example, digital media company, Vivid Media (Vivid Media n.d.), specialises in website 'solutions', online shopping websites, social media promotions and management, search engine optimisation, video marketing and motion graphics.

Community Infrastructure

There are several community infrastructure facilities in Epping that could be repurposed or serve as mixed-use creative and cultural infrastructure facilities:

Epping Community Centre

Formerly known as the School of Arts, the 1200 sqm Epping Community Centre is located in the centre of Epping at 9 Oxford St and is, therefore, highly accessible. Built in 1909, the building is heritage-protected and recognised as an historic centrepiece (Elton Consulting 2017). The Centre has a number of flexible multipurpose spaces and includes a large, ground-level foyer, main hall with stage, meeting rooms and full kitchen. The Theatre has a capacity for 300 people and 200 for functions (City of Parramatta n.d.). There are also several other spaces, including two smaller meeting rooms and two mirrored halls making them suitable for dance classes (City of Parramatta n.d.).

Epping Library

The 2017 Elton Consulting report noted that, at peak times, demand for library services and study spaces at the Epping Library at Chambers Court significantly exceeded supply. The building does not have any meeting rooms and offers only limited study and programming space (Elton Consulting 2017).

Epping Leisure and Learning Centre

The Epping Leisure and Learning Centre, located beneath the Epping library in Chambers Court, while in the heart of Epping and highly accessible by public transport, is in poor condition and lacks pedestrian and cycling access. There is also inadequate parking (Elton Consulting 2017). The facility has a capacity for 110 people and a full kitchen and a large open space for seating or general activities (City of Parramatta n.d.). The Centre is used by many community groups and is a popular venue for social gatherings and birthday parties.

Epping YMCA

The Epping YMCA is located next to Epping West Public School and West Epping Hall. It lacks access to public transport and there is limited parking. The YMCA is a large (3,500 sqm), purpose-built recreation facility offering a gym, basketball courts and several specialist rooms for gymnastics. As well as a variety of sports and recreation facilities, the building offers a crèche and a small meeting room that is available to hire for strata meetings, club AGMs and community meetings. It is also used for birthday parties (City of Parramatta n.d.), and is owned by Council and leased to the YMCA at a subsidised rate.

West Epping Hall

The 530 sqm West Epping Community Hall is located behind Epping West Public School, West Epping Preschool and the Epping YMCA. This flexible multipurpose space is well utilised, but only

two users make the majority of bookings — the adjoining preschool and a local dance school. The preschool contributed \$70,000 to construct the adjoining playground. The hall is also used on weekends for children’s birthday parties and similar functions (Elton Consulting 2017).

Cultural Infrastructure Priorities

Epping’s cultural infrastructure priorities should build on its strengths as a dynamic and growing community that is a core suburb of Parramatta. It is closely linked to other parts of Sydney both by road (the M2) and with rail links to the Sydney CBD (Northern Line), the northern and north western suburbs of Sydney (the Metro Line) and the Central Coast and Newcastle (Central Coast and Newcastle Lines). However, as noted, its public transport connectivity with the rest of the LGA, especially to Parramatta CBD, is not strong. There is an opportunity for the development of further creative and cultural infrastructure in Epping and a clear opportunity to nurture the life of this dynamic suburb. As with other parts of Parramatta, the rapid high-density changes in Epping also means that increasing numbers of people are living in apartments, and so need facilities closely located for creative, cultural and community activities. Cultural infrastructure provision in Epping should support a range of users and serve to bring them together. While Epping has an older population compared to the Parramatta LGA overall, it also has a large population aged between 12 and 24 (City of Parramatta 2019d: 581).

In particular, there is an opportunity to develop a number of mixed-use sites, as well as to retain and refurbish well-used creative hubs such as the Epping Creative Centre. The recent Community Infrastructure Strategy notes that one of the top priorities for community infrastructure in the City of Parramatta is to plan and deliver new community hubs at Epping (including a library and flexible multipurpose spaces). The report argues that delivering community infrastructure that meets the needs of an increasing community and connects both the new and existing populations of Epping will be important (City of Parramatta 2019d). A key means of addressing the lack of creative and cultural infrastructure in Epping is to combine these facilities with planned community infrastructure. We note the recommendation in the Community Infrastructure Strategy (2019d) for a:

new Community Hub with Library and learning space on the western side of the train line, close to Boronia Park of a minimum of 3,250m², including at least 2,250m² of district library space and 1,000m² of community space, and co-located with a civic plaza.

This well-located multipurpose space should be designed to ensure adequate facilities for creative and cultural activities in the community. It would reduce demand on the Epping Creative Centre, which is less accessible by public transport and at capacity use by local creative and cultural organisations.

We also note the recommendation to deliver a new community hub at the existing library site, with 260m² of community space and approximately 500m² of subsidised space. This space is in the

heart of the Epping Town Centre and, therefore, is readily accessible and can serve as a mixed-use space for creative and cultural activities.

Industrial Parramatta — Rydalmere, North Rocks, Silverwater and Camellia

The industrial precincts in the Parramatta LGA of Rydalmere, North Rocks, Silverwater and Camellia are critical to the economic life of the Central City. While all have an evident business, manufacturing and services component, they have distinctive characteristics and opportunities for creative and cultural development. The recent draft report, *Future Directions for Industrial Lands. Rydalmere. Silverwater. North Rocks*, prepared by Sustainable East (2020) for the City of Parramatta, notes that, while there has been considerable previous research and strategy on the future of industrial precincts in Rydalmere, Silverwater and North Rocks, this is the first time that all three precincts have come under City of Parramatta's control. It is also the first time that they have been fully embedded within employment lands planning for the LGA. Prior to 2016, North Rocks was part of The Hills Shire, while Silverwater was part of the former Auburn Council (Sustainable East 2020: 8). Camellia is not included in the Industrial Lands Study but is addressed in this Phase 2 research report because of its industrial character.

The Industrial Lands Study highlights important changes in the City of Parramatta, including “the development of the creative supply chain and understanding of creative manufacturing” (Sustainable East 2020: 20). Across the three precincts “there is an emergence of cultural activities with direct links to manufacturing and thus have been designated ‘creative manufacturing’” (Sustainable East 2020: 20). The Industrial Lands Study study draws on the work of Warren and Gibson (2013) and Grodach, O'Connor and Gibson (2017), noting that:

Unlike traditional manufacturing industries that compete on cost or volume, small manufacturers and cultural production firms alike compete on innovative design, product differentiation, and specialize in customized production (Warren and Gibson 2013). As a result, these firms tend to be highly place-bound and locally-integrated.

The report provides data on the creative supply chain in the three industrial precincts, which is driven by the number of manufacturing businesses which produce ‘creative products’ and are part of the supply chain (Sustainable East 2020: 51). A total of 51 buildings was identified in the creative supply chain across the three precincts: 15 in North Rocks, 12 in Rydalmere and 24 in Silverwater. The total floor area is 78,393 sqm, with a median size of the area being 411 sqm: 22 buildings were dedicated to direct creative uses, while 29 buildings were back-of-house, such as production or manufacturing in the creative sector (Sustainable East 2020: 51). The report notes that the total creative supply chain is likely to be significantly larger, as a number of buildings allocated for other uses have rented space for creative uses. The study further highlights the growing demand over the past ten years for smaller artisanal products, which is consequently changing food and beverage production and small-scale manufacturing (Sustainable East 2020: 19). It argues that “industrial precincts require more nuanced thought in terms of floorplate and infrastructure needs” (Sustainable East 2020: 20).

The report notes that, in mapping out the creative supply chain in each precinct, there is a “diversity of both direct and indirect creativity” (Sustainable East 2020: 89). The report also acknowledges that the land use survey “only captures permanent businesses and does not capture significant cultural activity occurring in the precinct” (Sustainable East 2020: 89). In noting the current trend towards creative uses in industrial areas, the report calls for a ‘deep dive’ into current and possible activities, and support in land use planning. Our report on Cultural Infrastructure in these precincts in the City of Parramatta supports this approach. It provides further information on the current creative activities occurring in these precincts, while also advocating for the need for further in-depth research to develop a more fine-grained understanding of potential creative activities in each of these precincts.

In identifying future directions for the precincts the Industrial Lands Study emphasises the need to “support[ing] the development of creative industries and the night time economy” (Sustainable East 2020: 68). The rationale here is that “Creative industries foster [the] night-time economy, the arts, social capital and cultural harmony” (Sustainable East 2020: 68). The report notes that “[c]reative industries require flexible space, lower rent and a supply chain and have a natural propensity to industrial lands” (Sustainable East 2020: 68).

The following sections examine the distinctive creative and cultural dimensions of the industrial precincts of Rydalmere, North Rocks, Silverwater and Camellia, proposing ways to develop cultural infrastructure in these precincts. While the development of creative businesses which are compatible with existing industrial uses is a major priority, broader aspects of these precincts need to be considered – not just as industrial lands but also, to some extent, as residential precincts and places where workers spend large amounts of time and seek public amenity. Employee retention and business confidence flowing from improved public amenity contribute to the improved performance of such precincts as hubs of the City’s industrial economy (see the discussion in Sustainable East 2020: 70).

Rydalmere

Precinct Overview

Rydalmere is a suburb of the City of Parramatta and is 21 kilometres north-west of the Sydney CBD. Rydalmere is to the east of Parramatta CBD, bounded generally by Calder Road, Bennetts Road West, Kirby Street, Ronald Avenue and Ulm Street in the north, Silverwater Road in the east, the Parramatta River in the south, and the railway line and Vineyard Creek in the west. The Indigenous people of the area are the Burrumattagal clan of the Darug Nation. The area that is now Rydalmere, Ermington and Dundas was called 'The Ponds' by British settlers due to the natural features around Subiaco Creek. 'The Ponds' later became known as 'Field of Mars', with the parish reaching from Parramatta to West Ryde, and up to Carlingford and Eastwood. Rydalmere was named by local landowner Thomas O'Neill.



Rydalmere is on the new Parramatta Light Rail Stage 1, and today is a mix of service industries and light manufacturing industry and residential. The area between Victoria Road and the Parramatta River is primarily commercial, with a large Western Sydney University campus on its western fringe, while the area between Victoria Road and Kissing Point Road is mainly residential. It is also home to the heritage-listed 'Truganini' House at 38 South Street (Office of Environment & Heritage NSW, n.d.). The 2019 Estimated Resident Population for Rydalmere is 7,424, with a population density of 20.81 persons per hectare. Since the previous year, the population has grown by 1.80 per cent, while population growth in Greater Sydney was 1.67 per cent. The 2020 population forecast for Rydalmere is 7,332, and is forecast to grow to 10,686 by 2041, a change of 45.75 per cent (.id 2019).

Existing Cultural Infrastructure

Rydalmere is a curious mix of industrial activity, world-class education and unique creative and cultural facilities, including the Parramatta Artists' Studio and the Australian Museum's Pacific Cultural Collections Centre (Australian Museum 2019).

Parramatta Artists' Studios

The Parramatta Artists' Studios (PAS) at Parramatta CBD and Rydalmere offer affordable non-residential/residential studio and exhibition space to emerging and established contemporary artists (Sydney Business Chamber, 2018). PAS Rydalmere was opened in 2019 and is currently at an industrial warehouse at 22 Mary Parade. It is a cross-arts professional production facility with art studios, workshop facilities, wet/dry areas, collaboration between old and new technologies, and with increased scope for public programming. The space consists of 6 studios ranging in size from 25 to 45 square metres. These studios are larger than those in the Parramatta CBD and are used by more mature artists (City of Parramatta n.d.).

Western Sydney University

Rydalmere is the site of the Parramatta South campus of Western Sydney University (WSU). WSU teaches a number of creative courses across its campuses, including Architecture, Design (Visual Communication), Creative Industries, Communication, Game Design, Industrial Design and Screen Media (Creative West n.d.). It also teaches a number of related courses in the Humanities and Social Sciences.

Margaret Whitlam Galleries and the Whitlam Institute

The Margaret Whitlam Galleries are located on the WSU Rydalmere campus in the west wing of the Female Orphan School, which also houses the Whitlam Institute. The Galleries provide public space for temporary art and exhibitions, attracting local and national exhibitions that explore elements of Australia's social, cultural and democratic history (Whitlam Institute n.d.). The Galleries were funded through the restoration of the west wing of the Female Orphan School following a grant from the Federal Department of Environment, Water and Heritage. The Galleries were officially named by then Prime Minister Julia Gillard in 2012 to pay tribute to the significant contribution of Margaret Whitlam in supporting arts and culture in Australia. The Galleries are hubs for the cultural and intellectual life of Western Sydney, with regularly changing exhibitions. Gallery entry is free and open from 10am-4pm Wednesday to Friday, from and 11am-4pm on the first Saturday of each month (Whitlam Institute, n.d.). At present the site has limited parking and public transport access, with buses serving Victoria Road to the north of the campus, while a planned ferry wharf on its southern river side was never built. Access to the site will be considerably enhanced when the light rail currently under construction is completed.

Australia-China Institute for Arts and Culture

The Parramatta South campus of WSU also houses the Australia-China Institute for Arts and Culture (Western Sydney University ACIAC 2020), which includes a small gallery space. The Institute seeks to be engaging, inclusive and distinctive, and its focus areas are:

- Research & Graduate Programs;
- Community Engagement through Art Exhibitions and Public Lectures;
- International Collaborations in Arts and Cultural Exchanges;
- Online/Digital Resources Centre.

It consolidates and builds on a wide range of existing teaching and research expertise in Chinese literature, translation, interpretation, music composition and history within the Institute for Culture and Society, School of Education and School of Humanities and Communication Arts. The Institute is supported by Research and Postdoctoral Research Fellows, key researchers and professional staff.

Australian Museum Cultural Collections Centre

Relocated to Rydalmere in July 2019 from the Australian Museum's William Street site in central Sydney, the Australian Museum's Cultural Collection Centre is a specifically-equipped facility Centre to house Australia's largest collection of cultural objects, artworks and archaeological material from the Pacific, including Melanesia, Micronesia and Polynesia (Australian Museum 2019). There are meeting rooms for research, cultural workshops and Pacific dignitary visits. To improve access to this collection and increase communication between the Australian Museum and Pacific communities, the former has established a new five-member Pacific Cultural Collection Advisory Panel drawn from the NSW Pacific community. The collection is accessible to the community and researchers by appointment.

Creative industries

There are several small manufacturing businesses in Rydalmere that are part of the cultural and creative supply chain (Sustainable East 2020). In Rydalmere, there are currently 15 such businesses that include "much of the production and services to support creative industries including set production, filming, media and event catering" (Sustainable East 2020: 51). There is limited vacant space in Rydalmere according to the Industrial Lands study: 13 buildings were counted as vacant or unknown, and 5,706 sqm or 1.2 per cent of the cumulative building area of the precinct was recorded as vacant; 10 buildings were under construction, and at least 142 out of 324 businesses were recorded as containing multiple activities.

Sustainable East (2020) also noted an emergence of new construction of office space attached to manufacturing activities, highlighting the changing land use of this industrial area. Rydalmere is an example of an advanced manufacturing precinct in transition. At present, it is heavily oriented towards product manufacturing and servicing, with a significant component of mixed industrial (products and materials). There are also some smaller commercial creative businesses in

Rydalmere (Creative West n.d.), including Dreamvision Design — Designers and Printers (Dream Vision n.d.) and Ahboo Publishing (Ahboo Publishing n.d.), which offer inbound marketing, media, content, consulting, design and development. There are further smaller creative venues available for art classes, such as Hue Art Studio at 90 Calder Road, Rydalmere (Hue Art Fine Art Studio, 2020) and private music studio rehearsal spaces for hire as advertised on Creative Spaces (Creative Spaces 2020). The change towards new industrial uses, including cultural and creative, is anticipated to accelerate.

Community Infrastructure

Wesley Aunties and Uncles – Rydalmere

There is limited community infrastructure in Rydalmere. The main facility is the 154 sqm Council-owned Wesley Aunties and Uncles Centre on the corner of Park Road and Pike Street, which is leased to Wesley Aunties and Uncles. This facility, accessible by public bus along nearby Victoria Road, lacks integration with other services and a flexible multipurpose space (Elton Consulting 2017).

Cultural Infrastructure Priorities

The focus on the industrial nature of Rydalmere overlooks the creative life and cultural infrastructure that exists in the suburb. Council should build on Rydalmere's role as a significant employment hub and lift the profile of the precinct as one that recognises its economic contribution, while also building on its cultural amenity. In addition, the existing businesses and sizeable working population that use the district each weekday could be better serviced through access to upgraded open spaces. The recent Industrial Lands study noted that:

The quality and amenity of the public realm is of highest importance to Rydalmere businesses. Businesses are particularly keen to see an improvement of overall cleanliness and maintenance. (Sustainable East 2020: 40)

Council could address issues such as lack of amenable public space through the provision of trees for cooling, as well as public art that functions both to cool designated spaces and provide desirable places to gather at lunch times and after work. This improvement in amenity need not entail a significant escalation in the cost of 'doing business' in the area. The study also found that:

There is [...] a desire for a more diverse range of businesses in the precinct, specifically creative and cultural uses and more complementary uses such as cafes. Some respondents also identify opportunities for moving towards a more mixed use precinct with activities such as lighter manufacturing and residential. This is supported by general

support for planning controls which can accommodate flexibility. (Sustainable East 2020: 40)

Despite the limited vacant space available (Sustainable East 2020), there is scope for Council to build on the existing creative and cultural components of the precinct and encourage greater diversity of businesses. Rydalmere also has several cafes that are currently functional in terms of servicing the nearby workers, but which could be supported by Council to feature the work of local artists and cultural practitioners to enhance the liveability of the area. Given the suburb's growing transport links through both the Parramatta Light Rail Stage 1 and the proposed Sydney Metro West link to Sydney's CBD, there is an opportunity to attract visitors from across Sydney.

The current Rydalmere facility of the Parramatta Artists' Studios was set up as a pilot using NSW Government Stronger Communities funding. A permanent home needs to be secured. The facility requires expanded doorways and points of access, suitable ceiling heights, a loading dock, and parking facilities on site, appropriate ventilation and the capacity for mess and noise. As noted, future accessibility will be improved with the new light rail that will go through Rydalmere connecting it to the Parramatta (and the other Artists' studios), while the planned Phase 2 will link it to Sydney Olympic Park. The facility needs to be 1,200 sqm and include a minimum of 12 studios of approximately 45 square metres. There is no current resource allocation for this purpose. Applications to arts funding agencies are in process, but these are extremely competitive, especially in a difficult funding climate. The current low cost rent to artists (\$25-\$35 per week) is a key consideration that continues to attract and keep the artists in the LGA. The PAS is mentioned as an immediate, short term-cultural infrastructure priority in the Greater Sydney Commission's (GSC's) draft pilot for the GPOP region.

The NSW Government's Pacific Island Museum Collection, which was established in Rydalmere in 2019, is currently only accessible to the Pacific Island Community and to researchers (Australian Museum 2019). Council should consider entering into discussions with the Australian Museum on the viability of wider promotion of this resource and potential access to the wider public.

The site of the former Macquarie Boys' Technology High School is also in Rydalmere. There are conflicting reports about the future of the site, which has been in disrepair since its closure in 2009, but the NSW Government announced in October 2018 that plans are in progress for a new purpose-built Kindergarten to Year 12 school (Department of Education NSW 2018). Given this development, it may be possible to integrate mixed-use creative and cultural facilities with community uses designed for the site.

North Rocks

Precinct Overview

North Rocks is a suburb that is part of the City of Parramatta and The Hills Shire LGAs, and located 26 kilometres west of the Sydney CBD. North Rocks is to the north of Parramatta CBD and North Parramatta. bounded by the Hills Motorway (M2) in the north, generally by Gossel Grove, Jennie Place, Ebony Avenue, Freestone Avenue, Yalding Avenue and Balaka Drive in the east, Hunts Creek, the northern boundary of The Kings School and North Rocks Road and Darling Mills Creek in the west. Part of the suburb of Northmead is located in The Hills Shire.



North Rocks was originally the place of the Burrumattagal clan who were part of the Darug Nation (Kohen 1993). North Rocks was part of land originally reserved in 1789 by Governor Phillip and named after the large sandstone rocks that dominated the area. Sandstone rocks from the district

were later used in the building of Parramatta Gaol. North Rocks today is predominantly residential, with a small shopping centre, an area of light industry of almost 90 buildings (Sustainable East 2020: 54) and green space along the creeks to the south, west and M2 corridor in the north. The 2019 Estimated Resident Population for North Rocks is 8,074, with a population density of 17.31 persons per hectare (.id 2019). The 2020 population forecast for North Rocks is 9,986, and is predicted, perhaps surprisingly, to fall to 9,936 by 2041 or by -0.5 per cent (.id 2019). Our report principally covers the part of North Rocks that is inside the Parramatta LGA boundaries.

Existing Cultural Infrastructure

There is limited cultural infrastructure in North Rocks, which has several small manufacturing businesses that are part of the cultural and creative supply chain (Sustainable East 2020). In North Rocks there are currently 12 such businesses. For example, East Coast Animation Pty Ltd is a professional digital production studio Incorporating Castle Hill Web Design & Turbo Creations digital studios, this firm delivers premium digital content creation services, technology, animation and design solutions (East Coast Animation n.d.).

The Industrial Lands study noted that North Rocks contains a significant number of compatible uses such as churches, gyms and creative spaces which seem to cohabitate in the precinct. The land use recorded floorspace vacancy of 3.2 per cent when also factoring in all unknown uses (Sustainable East 2020: 51). There are also art classes available during school term at the North Rocks Public School (Seraphic Creations n.d.).

Community Infrastructure

As listed below, North Rocks has a range of community infrastructure that could be repurposed/serve as mixed use creative and cultural infrastructure facilities.

Don Moore Community Centre

The Don Moore Community Centre at North Rocks Rd and Farnell Ave is a 1,600 sqm centre that provides a range of different spaces for various activities. It includes a large commercial kitchen attached to the main hall for use during large functions. The Centre adjoins a variety of outdoor spaces, including an enclosed play space for small children, a larger playground for older children, and the wider North Rocks Park and Tennis Centre. The Community Centre links to other community services and facilities, including the Tennis Centre, the North Rocks Senior Citizens Centre and a childcare centre. There is a bus stop directly outside the facility and adequate parking is available on site. Various not-for-profit, community group and commercial hirers use the facility (Elton Consulting 2017).

North Rocks Senior Citizens Centre

The 601 sqm North Rocks Senior Citizens Centre is located behind the Don Moore Community Centre and includes a large main hall surrounded by smaller rooms, including a billiards room and a kitchen. It has regular bookings from a variety of groups, including the Senior Citizens Club, church groups, cultural groups, dance schools and other local groups. The Centre has a range of storage and locker options which enable different groups to use the space. There is adequate parking and access, but the Centre is not easily seen by passers by and is in poor condition (Elton Consulting 2017).

Don Moore Meeting Room

The 168 sqm Don Moore Meeting Room on Tiernan Road is located within the Don Moore Reserve next to the North Rocks Public School, which has an enclosed playground. While small in size, the meeting room is flexible and multipurpose, and includes a small kitchen. It is suitable for playgroups and children's birthday parties, and has adequate parking and is serviced by public bus (Elton Consulting 2017).

Cultural Infrastructure Priorities

A recommendation from the Industrial Lands study is to enhance the public realm and to investigate opportunities to improve the look and feel of the public realm, such as providing spaces for workers to relax during lunch breaks (Sustainable East 2020: 51). As is the case with Rydalmere, the existing businesses and sizeable working population using the district each weekday could be better serviced through access to upgraded open spaces. Council could address issues such as lack of amenable public space through the provision of trees for cooling, as well as public art that functions both to cool designated spaces and provide desirable places to gather at lunch times and after work. Despite the limited vacant space available (Sustainable East 2020), Council should look for opportunities to develop creative and cultural multipurpose spaces that complement the light industrial and suburban form of this suburb.

Silverwater

Precinct Overview

Silverwater is part of the City of Parramatta and is located 20 kilometres west of the Sydney CBD, to the east of Parramatta CBD and North Parramatta. Silverwater is bounded by the Parramatta River, Silverwater Road, Wilson Park and Blaxland Riverside Park in the north, Jamieson Street, Holker Street, the suburb of Newington and Henricks Avenue in the east, the Western (M4) Motorway in the south, and the Duck River in the west. While there are some small residential pockets, Silverwater is predominantly an industrial suburb, with a number of small-to-medium enterprises, as well as a number of large businesses. It is also home to the Silverwater Correctional Centre, in the Auburn LGA, which contains Newington House and other heritage-listed buildings, including the Administrative Block, Newington Chapel and the former Superintendent's House (NSW Heritage Register n.d.). The Correctional Centre is adjacent to Sydney Olympic Park and the Newington Armory. The 2019 Estimated Resident Population for Silverwater is 4,661, with a population density of 17.30 persons per hectare. The population is predicted to grow by 70 per cent from the estimated 11,832 in 2020 to 20,105 in 2041 (.id 2019). Parramatta Light Rail Stage 2 is likely to pass through or near Silverwater en route to SOP, although its stops are yet to be determined.



Existing Cultural Infrastructure

There are several creative businesses in Silverwater that are part of the creative supply chain (Sustainable East 2020). These include a digital printing company, some marketing and advertising service companies (BsMedia, Ovato Creative Services) and a landscaping design company. There is limited cultural infrastructure in Silverwater, but the precinct plays an important role as an economic hub and is an important connector between the City of Parramatta and Greater Metropolitan Sydney. As noted in the 2019 Greater Sydney Commissions GOP Draft Strategy – *A City Supported by Infrastructure Place-based Infrastructure Compact Pilot*:

The Rydalmere, Camellia Industrial, Auburn, Lidcombe and Silverwater Precincts form a high-value cluster of employment and urban services lands for the Central City. (Greater Sydney Commission 2019: 48)

Its location on the Parramatta River means Silverwater is central to the place of the LGA as the Central River City as set out in the NSW Government’s Cultural Infrastructure Plan 2025+ (Create NSW 2018: 58).

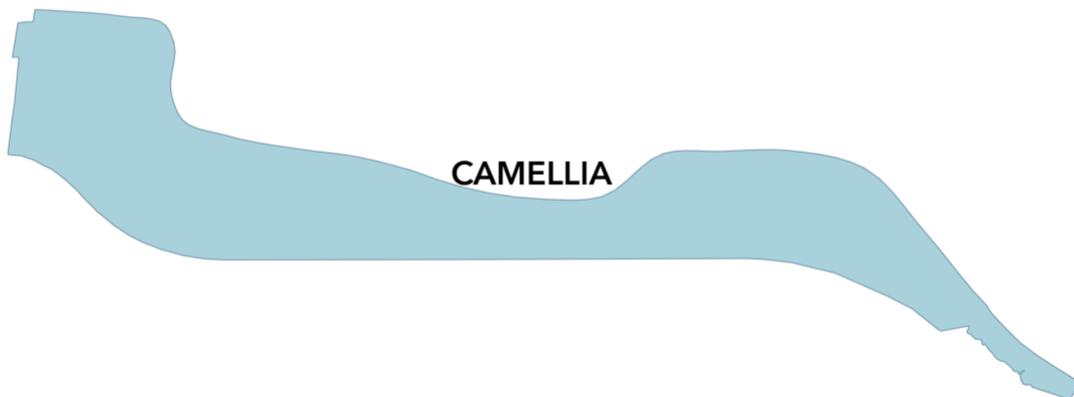
Cultural Infrastructure Priorities

There are limited opportunities for the development of creative and cultural infrastructure in Silverwater. As an industrial suburb, its character is best suited to continue to serve as an employment and industrial hub. We note, however, that the recent *Future Directions for Industrial Lands Draft Report* for the City of Parramatta (Sustainable East 2020) recommended the investigation of improvements to the public realm, such as restoring nature-based features to the precinct and around Holker Reserve. This is one of the few open green spaces in Silverwater and there is an opportunity for it to connect to green links and to Newington Market Place. It may include public art or cultural facilities that improve public amenity and incorporate mechanisms, such as trees and multi-purpose public art to cool the area. The Draft Report also recommends that “small retail and/or cultural land uses around Holker Reserve could be supported” (Sustainable East 2020: 81). Therefore, both creative production and consumption can be fostered by encouraging cultural activities with various value chain roles that enable residents, workers and visitors to Silverwater to benefit from better cultural and environmental amenity without stimulating the process of urban displacement caused by gentrification.

Camellia

Precinct Overview

Camellia is a small one square kilometre industrial suburb which lies 23 kilometres west of Sydney CBD and 5 kilometres east of Parramatta CBD. Camellia has boundaries of the Parramatta River to the north, the Duck River to the east, the suburb of Rosehill and Grand Avenue in the south, and James Ruse Drive to the west. Duck River may have functioned as the agreed boundary between Burrumattagal country and the neighbouring Wategora clan. Charles Williams (alias Christopher Magee), originally transported for theft and claiming to be knowledgeable about animal husbandry, was the first settler to be granted land in Camellia in the early 1789. The area of 30 acres (12 hectares) was on the southern bend of the river en route to Parramatta (McClymont 2008). It was consolidated by John Macarthur and passed onto his sons, after which a fruit tree plantation and camellia farm was established, which gave the area its name. The industrial history of this small area is one of boom and bust, but also includes long-term users like galvanising company Lysaght, Anschau's Tannery, and Australian Kerosene Oil and Mineral Company. Ford Motor Company, Stauffer Chemical Company, Goodyear Tyre and Rubber Company have all been active in the area, while the presence of asbestos cement products manufacturer James Hardie Company between 1916 and 1996 has left the affected land languishing due to the need for stringent remediation.



Camellia is currently identified by the City as a post-industrial site for major urban renewal that is poised to create a “new riverside town positioned alongside the Parramatta Light Rail route” (City of Parramatta 2019) flowing its inclusion in Stage 1. However, the Greater Sydney Commission

has recommended that this significant renewal project be put on hold until remediation and flood mitigation concerns are addressed, and that Camellia remains a service suburb for the time being (Greater Sydney Commission 2019: 8). The Australian Bureau of Statistics found a zero population in Camellia in 2016 (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2017), while in 2019 it had a population of 5 (.id n.d.).

Existing Cultural Infrastructure

There is no existing arts and cultural infrastructure in Camellia. The Sydney Water Pumping Station (SP0067), which was built in 1931 and functioned for 70 years, is listed as a heritage item in the *Draft Camellia Town Centre Master Plan*. It also suggested SP0067 as “a potential community facility or other adaptive use” (Department of Planning and Environment 2018: 23). The Pumping Station:

greatly improved the public health of Parramatta and paved the way for the continued urban expansion of the region. Aesthetically, it is an impressive example of an industrial utility building designed in the Federation Free Style and is noteworthy for the extensive use of tuck pointed brickwork, which is indicative of the public importance of the station at the time. (Office of Environment and Heritage n.d.)

Whilst the aesthetics and structure of the Pumping Station commend it as a potentially excellent arts or cultural centre with mixed use studio potential, research by the GSC has determined that it is too costly to transform the existing Camellia-Rosehill precinct and the Camellia industrial zone into residential suburbs or employment hubs (Greater Sydney Commission 2019: 8). The GSC proposes that Camellia is amongst those precincts which maintain their existing services use and that its potential be reviewed “over time”. This finding reflects the high cost of housing a new resident or employee, and the environmental constraints (GPOP 2019: 10). The industrial and urban services provided in Camellia, Rydalmere, Silverwater, Lidcombe and Auburn will continue, it states, to support “local employment, innovation, manufacturing, construction, energy and waste management” (Greater Sydney Commission 2019: 23).

Cultural Infrastructure Priorities

In the immediate decade Camellia is unlikely to see much targeted residential, employment or infrastructure development apart from the Parramatta Light Rail Stage 1, which is still planned to have at least one stop there. The expectation is that Camellia and surrounds will leverage current services to transform and integrate water, waste and energy for the future needs of the growing Central City, and to reduce negative environmental impacts (Greater Sydney Commission 2019: 54). The precinct is expected, nonetheless, to “evolve over time as they [suburbs such as Camellia] modernise into higher value precincts, supporting local innovation, creativity and

productivity” (Greater Sydney Commission 2019: 48). The major issue of contaminated soil remediation, though, is a significant barrier, but will eventually need to be dealt with regardless of land use zoning. The notion of evolution in this area of otherwise anticipated rapid urban development holds some value for arts and cultural infrastructure, in that these concerns can now be actively included in a timely manner within all future planning strategies. Council’s intention to turn Camellia into “a thriving, connected community on the doorstep of Sydney’s second CBD” that includes bridges, walking and cycling tracks and “13 hectares of new public open spaces” (City of Parramatta 2019), is a considerable distance from being realised.

Given this hiatus regarding residential development of Camellia, the immediate action for the City of Parramatta Council is to consult with creative practitioners as to whether some existing warehouses in areas requiring less remediation of contaminated soil might be used as studios and storage facilities for artists and cultural workers. There are several barriers that need to be taken into account. The area is frequented by heavy trucks, has problems with dust and strong odours (there is waste recycling at the end of Grand Avenue), and currently is lacking in accessibility and in other amenities (such as supply stores, retail, hospitality etc.). In the longer term, should these challenges be resolved, a cluster of warehouses could be secured by the City to offer prime resources for artists and creative producers across the region, and to begin to realise the evolution of Camellia into a “higher value precinct”. The arrival of Light Rail is likely to provide some of the necessary impetus, alongside substantial site remediation.

The Water Pumping Station is a stand-out heritage building which would add significantly to the arts and cultural infrastructure of the entire Central City. One evaluation suggests that the station will need to be relocated due to flood mitigation and soil remediation requirements (Greater Sydney Commission 2019: 40). We suggest that the station should be immediately designated by the City to become a dedicated arts and cultural centre, and that its preservation, development, and re-location (if necessary) as such is undertaken over the coming decade. Effective consultation with local and state artists and cultural organisations should be undertaken urgently to finesse help determine the pace and requirements to develop the Pumping Station into one of the several arts and cultural centres needed in the City of Parramatta.

The slow moving development that is, it appears, now planned for Camellia could be turned to advantage by Council in unfolding its arts and cultural infrastructure strategy. Acquisition of cultural infrastructure developments should be secured within the next two years and fully realised within the next fifteen, even – perhaps especially – if the Pumping Station needs to be relocated.

CONCLUSION

This report should be read in conjunction with the extensive Phase 1 Cultural Infrastructure Parramatta Research Report, developed by ICS for the City of Parramatta in 2020. The Phase 1 Research Report, in focussing on Parramatta CBD and North Parramatta, makes clear the challenges and opportunities for the City and its development as a leading creative and cultural centre. This Phase 2 Research Report, in addressing other precincts in the LGA that extend to its

borders, demonstrates additional opportunities of developing creative capability and cultural amenity across the LGA. It also identifies, especially, spaces that are beyond the rapidly developing Parramatta CBD, but could nonetheless enhance the City's reputation as a thriving cultural destination for both producers and consumers.

This report sets out a number of Cultural Infrastructure Priorities in each of the precincts of Westmead, Sydney Olympic Park, Harris Park, Epping, Rydalmere, North Rocks, Silverwater and Camellia. We recommend the following immediate priorities for the City of Parramatta Council to consider in the above-mentioned precincts:

- secure facilities and resourcing for Parramatta Artists' Studios in Rydalmere;
- expand facilities and resources of the Westmead Arts and Health Strategy into a National Centre for Arts and Health Research;
- identify and allocate funds for dedicated locations for youth-oriented cultural activities in Harris Park and Sydney Olympic Park for the anticipated increase of people of South and East Asian origin;
- establish a working relationship with the Sydney Olympic Park Authority (SOPA) to support the increased presence of arts and cultural activities, especially in the stadia and the Armory;
- secure the Sydney Water Pumping Station at Camellia for future development as a resited or remediated *in situ*, fully-serviced multi-arts centre;
- identify, secure and remediate a number of existing warehouses in Camellia for use as studios and storage for cultural workers;
- stimulate the presence of cafes and attractive public spaces that will contribute to culturally-enriched urban conviviality in the industrial precincts of Rydalmere, North Rocks and Silverwater.

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PRINCIPAL RESEARCHERS

Professor Deborah Stevenson

Professor of Sociology and Urban Cultural Research, Institute for Culture and Society

Deborah Stevenson is a Professor of Sociology and Urban Cultural Research in the Institute for Culture and Society whose research activities and interests are focused in particular on arts and cultural policy, cities and urban life, and place and identity. She has published widely on these topics including the recent books, *The City (Polity)*, *Cities of Culture: A Global Perspective* (Routledge) and *Tourist Cultures: Identity, Place and the Traveller* (co-authored, Sage). In addition, she is co-editor of the *Research Companion to Planning and Culture* (Ashgate) and *The Australian Art Field: Practices, Policies, Markets* (Routledge). She is the co-author of *The City after Dark: Cultural Planning and Governance of the Night-time Economy in Parramatta*. Professor Stevenson is an editor of the *Journal of Policy Research in Tourism, Leisure and Events* and a member of the editorial boards of leading journals, including the *International Journal of Cultural Policy*. Her research program has been supported by external funding from a range of sources, and she has been a Chief Investigator on numerous successful ARC grants with her recent projects being *Recalibrating Culture: Production, Consumption, Policy, UNESCO and the Making of Global Cultural Policy*, and *Australian Cultural Fields: National and Transnational Dynamics*. Professor Stevenson has worked as an advisor and consultant to all levels of government including serving as a member of the Ministerial Reference Group for the NSW Arts and Cultural Policy Framework.

Emeritus Professor David Rowe

Emeritus Professor of Cultural Research, Institute for Culture and Society

David is a Fellow of the Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia and the Australian Academy of the Humanities; Honorary Professor, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Bath; and Research Associate, Centre for International Studies and Diplomacy, SOAS University of London. Formerly he was Director of the Cultural Institutions and Practices Research Centre, The University of Newcastle and the Centre for Cultural Research, Western Sydney University. Author of over 200 chapters and refereed journal articles, his latest books are *Sport, Public Broadcasting, and Cultural Citizenship: Signal Lost?* (co-edited, 2014) and *Making Culture: Commercialisation, Transnationalism, and the State of Nationing in Contemporary Australia* (co-edited, 2018). David's work has been translated into Arabic, Chinese, French, German, Italian, Korean, Spanish, and Turkish. His translated 2011 work *Global Media Sport: Flows, Forms and Futures* was an Outstanding Book Selection of the National Academy of Sciences, Republic of Korea in 2018. He has been a research consultant and advisor to many public and private organisations, including Newcastle, Sydney, Maitland, Inner West and Parramatta City Councils; New South Wales Office of Liquor, Gaming and Racing; and Arts (now Create NSW). David has been a Chief Investigator on 10 Australia Research Council projects and was 2015 Researcher of the Year in the Vice-Chancellor's University Awards. A frequent expert media commentator on social and cultural matters, in 2018 he received the *Australian Sociological Association Distinguished Service to Sociology Award*, was named Top Researcher in the Field of Communication, *The Australian's 2019 Research Magazine* and in 2020 received the

International Communication Association Sport Communication Interest Group Legacy Award for lifetime scholarly achievement.

Distinguished Professor Ien Ang

Professor of Cultural Studies, Institute for Culture and Society

Distinguished Professor Ien Ang was the founding Director of the Institute for Culture and Society. She is one of the leaders in cultural studies worldwide, with work dealing broadly with patterns of cultural flow and exchange in our globalised world. Her books, including *Watching Dallas*, *Desperately Seeking the Audience* and *On Not Speaking Chinese*, are recognised as classics in the field and her work has been translated into many languages, including Chinese, Japanese, Italian, Turkish, German, Korean, and Spanish. Her most recent books include *The Art of Engagement: Culture, Collaboration, Innovation* (University of Western Australia Press, 2011, co-edited with Elaine Lally and Kay Anderson) and *Chinatown Unbound: Trans-Asian Urbanism in the Age of China* (co-authored with Kay Anderson, Andrea Del Bono, Donald McNeill and Alexandra Wong). Professor Ang is the recipient of many Australian Research Council grants, including a prestigious ARC Professorial Fellowship (2005-2009). Her current ARC research projects are entitled *The China Australia heritage corridor* (with A/Prof Denis Byrne) and *Civic Sinoburbia: New Chinese migrants and Everyday Citizenship in Sydney* (with A/Prof Shanthi Robertson and others). She has produced numerous commissioned research reports and collaborated with a range of organisations, including the Australia Council, the Australian Council for Learned Academies, NSW Migration Heritage Centre, The Art Gallery of New South Wales, The Special Broadcasting Service (SBS), the Museum of Contemporary Art, the City of Sydney, Inner West Council, Penrith City Council and Blue Mountains City Council. She currently serves as a member of the research working group for *A New Approach (ANA)*, a new independent think tank championing effective investment and return in Australian arts and culture.

Associate Professor Liam Magee

Institute for Culture and Society

Liam's research focuses on the connections between advanced computational technologies and social systems, including cities, universities and media environments. His doctoral dissertation, completed in 2010, examined the importance of social structures on interconnected knowledge systems such as the Semantic Web. He has extended those interests through projects examining information systems in urban development, disaster management, youth and wellbeing, and environmental sustainability. He has worked with a wide range of partners, including World Vision, Save the Children, Google Australia, nbnco, Dimension Data, Microsoft Australia, Riot Games and Westpac. He is Chief Investigator with three current Australian Research Council projects, *Antarctic Cities and the Global Commons: Rethinking the Gateways*, *The Geopolitics of Automation* and *Intersectional Autonomy? Mobilising Autonomous Technologies for CaLD Communities Living with Disability*.

Dr Cecelia Cmielewski

Research Officer, Institute for Culture and Society

Cecelia completed her doctorate in the Institute of Culture and Society (ICS) in 2018. Her thesis researches the relationship between the experiences and practices of artists of non-English speaking backgrounds (NESB) and key arts policies through a consideration of the roles of creative and organisational leadership. Her research interests address inclusion in the creative sectors with a focus on the relationship between creative production and multicultural policies. Cecelia is a research officer at ICS and Program Manager of the Cultural Infrastructure research program. She is a contributing researcher on the ARC project *UNESCO and the Making of Global Cultural Policy: Culture, Economy, Development*. She was the project manager and contributing researcher on the ARC'S funded project *Recalibrating Culture: Production, Consumption, Policy*, and was a principal investigator on the ARC funded *Large Screens and the Transnational Public Sphere*. Cecelia held senior roles at the Australia Council, the Federal Government's arts funding and advisory agency between 1998 and 2011. She is also a curator, including curating *metanarratives* for ISEA2015 in the UAE. She also holds an MBA (University of Adelaide), Bachelor of Design (University of South Australia) and a Bachelor of Arts (Flinders University).

Dr Cecilia Hilder

Researcher, Institute for Culture and Society

Cecilia holds a PhD from the Institute for Culture and Society, Western Sydney University. Her PhD research studied Australian youth-led activist organisations and the ways everyday practices shape political subjectivities in the digital age. Cecilia's research interests centre on the ways everyday political practices surface in the digital age and the affective dimensions of political engagement. Cecilia supports a range of research projects at the Institute for Culture and Society and has previously worked in investor relations and government relations, with extensive experience in infrastructure provision and commercial property.

Dr Ryan Van Den Nouwelant

Lecturer in Urban Management and Planning, School of Social Sciences, Western Sydney University

With a background in social and design sciences, Ryan studied and worked in Southeast Asian natural resource management before becoming an urban planner. He worked as a strategic planner in local government before completing a PhD in urban development and planning at UNSW. He currently lectures in land-use planning and planning law, as part of the undergraduate and postgraduate planning degrees at Western Sydney University. Ryan also worked as a full-time researcher at UNSW's City Futures Research Centre for eight years, partly while completing his PhD. Previously, he worked in local government strategic planning. Ryan's PhD concerned neighbourhood planning, particularly the community conflict associated with the mixed land uses in higher-density neighbourhoods. Other qualitative research has examined community opposition to affordable housing and emerging housing typologies like build-to-rent, community housing, boarding houses and secondary dwellings. Ryan has experience in local planning policy, including urban renewal and land-use planning, as well as in research involving extensive policy and legislation analysis. He also has a strong track record in quantitative research, examining property, financial and demographic data in relation to central city low-income workers, the

distribution of needs for social housing, and costs and feasibility of build-to-rent and social housing developments.

Professor Paul James

Institute for Culture and Society

Paul's work includes the issues of community resilience and urban sustainability. This research has gone in two directions. One major research project in Papua New Guinea resulted in changes to the way in which that country approaches community development. The research has subsequently been written up in a book called *Sustainable communities, sustainable development: other pathways for Papua New Guinea* (2012). The second direction has been in the area of urban sustainability. This currently involves ongoing work with Metropolis and other organisations to develop an alternative model of urban development called 'Circles of Sustainability'. It is elaborated in a book called *Urban sustainability in theory and practice: circles of sustainability* (2015). He has been an advisor to a number of agencies and governments including the Helsinki Process, the Canadian Prime Minister's G20 Forum, and the Commission on Reception, Truth and Reconciliation in East Timor. His work for the Papua New Guinea Minister for Community Development became the basis for its Integrated Community Development Policy. He was Director of the United Nations Global Compact, Cities Programme (2007–2014).

Dr Christen Cornell

Researcher, Institute for Culture and Society

Christen received her doctorate in 2017 from the University of Sydney on Contemporary Chinese Art and the City: Beijing Art Districts. Her skills are as an interdisciplinary and collaborative researcher who is experienced in report writing, grant writing and project management. She has sophisticated communication skills, including fluency in Chinese (Mandarin) and extensive experience in research and analysis in university and government contexts. Christen has been a Research Associate with the Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute (AHURI) in the School of Architecture and Planning at the University of Sydney and has recently commenced work as research fellow at the Australia Council.

Vanicka Arora

PhD Candidate, Institute for Culture and Society

Vanicka is a doctoral candidate at the Institute for Culture and Society, Western Sydney University. Vanicka's PhD examines Post-Disaster (Re) Construction of Cultural Heritage: Negotiating Value, Authenticity and Acceptable Change in Kathmandu Valley, Nepal.

Simon Chambers

PhD Candidate, Institute for Culture and Society/MARCS Institute

Simon Chambers is a data consultant at the Australasian Performing Right Association (APRA) and doctoral candidate co-supervised across both the Institute for Culture and Society and MARCS Institute, Western Sydney University.

Sarah Nectoux

Master of Research Candidate, Institute for Culture and Society

Sarah Nectoux is a Master of Research student at the Institute for Culture and Society, Western Sydney University. She is interested in focusing her research on cultural planning and the subjective mapping of arts/culture as a decision-making tool.

APPENDIX 1

Epping Creative Centre User Groups

A Good Yarn	Epping Lace Group	Quilt NSW
Astronomical Society NSW	EMRCI - Epping Model Railway Club Inc	Siege the Hills
Audiophile Society of NSW	Epping Quilters Inc	SCMRA - Southern Cross Model Railway Association
ATASDA - Australian Textile & Surface Design Association	EWES - Epping Weavers, Embroiderers & Spinners	Sydney Audio Club
Australian Sewing Guild Carlingford Group	Knitters Guild NSW Epping Crochet Group	Tatters Guild of Australia NSW Branch
Castle Hill RSL Pipe Band	Knitters Guild NSW Epping Group	The Society for Creative Anachronism (Rowany) Sydney Branch
Computer Pals for Seniors - Epping	Leatherworkers Guild of NSW Inc	Smocking Arts Guild of NSW Inc
Epping Creative Machine Knitters	Macknit	The Sydney Woodcarving Group
Enthusiastic Epping Toastmasters	Macquarie Community College Embroidery Class	TiSHUG - Texas Instruments Home User Groups
Epping Bridge Group	NMRA - National Model Railway Association (sub-branch)	Wushu & Tai Chi NSW

Source: City of Parramatta (unpublished, 2020)