

Charing Cross Precinct Meeting

Lugar Brae Parish Hall
2a Leichhardt Street, Bronte
Wednesday 15 April 2026

1. Welcome and Apologies

Dr Marjorie O'Neill MP for Coogee
Councillor Margaret Merten (Bondi Ward)
Councillor Paula Masselos
Councillor Katherine Westwood
Councillor Ludovico Fabiano
Councillor Lauren Townsend
Councillor Kerri Spooner (Deputy Mayor)
Lachlan (Coogee Electorate employee)

Apologies:
Mayor Nemesh
Steve Bodnar

Conveners: Mia Vaux, Mora Main, Emily Edwards
Attendees: 40+ people

2. Marjorie O'Neill, MP Coogee Presentation and Q&A: State Significant Developments (SSD)

Dr O'Neill advised that she:

- Has made a detailed statement on the Hewlett St SSD in her newsletter
- Understands and appreciates the concerns of the community re Hewlett St Process
- Notes council is three storeys; the developers seek nine, while the original proposal was to reduce 22 apartments to 12 luxury townhouses
- Has reason to believe that the developer seeks to buy additional sites
- Advises that if site scopes change, the approval process starts from scratch
- Notes that the approval process typically takes 9-18 months
- Hewlett St is only an Expression of Interest (EOI), not a formal application
- An EOI is an initial step; the following is a request for the department to provide the Secretary's environmental assessment requirements (SEARS)
- Approved SEARS applications require developers to work with their local council and the Department of Planning
- If/when SEARS is granted, Waverley Council can put in its objections
- Every objection must be responded to by the developer and the Dept of Planning
- The Hewlett Street development meets preliminary SSD and Housing Development Authority (HDA) criteria
- Notes that an HDA recommendation is a first, not a final step to approval
- Notes that the development is not within 800 metres of a mass transport hub and therefore does not meet this criterion

- Hence, something will be built there, not necessarily on the scale of the EOI

Affordable Housing

- Notes her serious concern that Waverley Council changed regulations to permit a reduction in dwellings on a site: argues this should not be possible in a housing crisis
- Affordable apartment blocks must be retained: Waverley Council must reinstate the ban on turning affordable walk-up old buildings into new luxury developments

Q&A

Q: How can the community successfully oppose inappropriate development?

A: Campaign, doorknock the community, build Bronte Community Association, work personally to engage your neighbours, make submissions which clearly outline the concern, why it is inappropriate, engage with councillors and MPs

Q: The two-week window for community submissions to developments is too short, particularly over holiday periods.

Therefore, legislation must be altered to provide for 4-6 weeks, given the significance of these developments

A: Dr O'Neill confirms she will request an extended timeframe and LEP accommodates growth – the EOI is beyond

Q: Andrew, Bondi Heights notes that Waverley is the target of a 15% increase in population over 5 years, an increase of over 11,000 people

Waverley is already the second-most densely populated municipality in Australia

A: The government has funded increased hospital beds at Prince of Wales, a new children's hospital, and increased capacity at Randwick High

Q: This does not assist the school pressure on the Vaucluse area, noting Rose Bay High is at capacity with no increase in funding

A: The government is looking for a new school site; greenfield sites are non-existent, and appropriate sites for purchase are extremely rare

Q: Langlee resident notes that the Department of Planning Website is so difficult to use that it almost prevents the community from making submissions. It requires simplification to provide a genuine platform for community feedback

A: Will take this feedback back to the department, notes that the issue is not urgent, given that submissions are not triggered until the SEARS is granted

Q: The experience that the community had when providing feedback on Waverley College and the War Memorial experience was that community concerns were disregarded in any case.

A: There were in fact a series of approximately eight changes from the EOI to the approved plans, indicating the department is responsive to concerns.

Q: The Community Consultation Committee at St. Catherine's is valuable, can this be legislated for high impact SSDs?

A: This feedback can be provided to the Department

Q: Bronte water quality is a huge problem, with the sewerage system built over a century ago. There cannot be new development without a major upgrade of the entire system

A: The government is investing \$3 bn over ten years in upgrades to the Malabar treatment plant

This is not actually new money; it was part of Sydney Water's Long Term Capital and Operational Plan, announced in September 2024 (see link). The question is how the government plans to deal with the increased pressure that these new dwellings will place on an already broken system. More funding for Sydney Water must be allocated from the budget.

Q: Beach tourism in Randwick and Waverley LGAs is estimated to be worth over \$1 billion per annum, according to [analysts](#). Poo balls are bad for business and bad for public safety. Why is the government going ahead with so much development when the system can't cope?

A: A core issue with water quality is stormwater drainage; runoff that will only be exacerbated by increased hard spaces and further loss of soft landscaping. Better legislated stormwater management is needed, and the Bronte Gully must be returned to a wetland to absorb runoff.

Q: Why is the government targeting BJ and East for such significant growth?

What is being done to address short-term rentals?

A: Waverley Council, in conjunction with the NSW Government, has agreed to a 15% increase in population

The NSW government has a growth target for medium-density housing within 800 metres of public transport hubs

Home ownership is a pillar of economic structure, but 66% of our electorate rents.

Supply is a core lever to increase home ownership

Q: Affordable housing is an issue – why is it only 15 years, not in perpetuity?

A: Permanent affordable housing is being created by the NSW Government in greenfield sites. Permanent build-to-rent is part of the planning in Bondi Junction

Existing public housing sites in South Coogee may be redeveloped

The small, isolated public housing sites in Waverley do not offer as much scope for redevelopment or expansion

The government is seeking a new permanent site for the Men's Shed and is in current discussions with UNSW, in conjunction with federal and state members, Allegra Spender and Kellie Sloane respectively.

Shared E-Bikes Regulation

- Shared bikes (LIME, Hello, et al) started a decade ago, with a completely unregulated environment – no helmet, registration, insurance, etc
- This year, the first regulation was introduced
- New legislation will require bike providers to ensure that there is a helmet with the bike

- Current issues being addressed include parking and dumping of bikes. The government intends to legislate for bike parking on-road, in designated places, locked in, where bikes are continuously charging users unless they are parked in a designated spot, and will not be parked on footpaths
- This is a council planning issue now – most roads are council, not state, thus councils must allocate where they want the parking
- Waverley Council has advised that it is currently identifying geofencing areas. The European precedent is one every 200 metres
- Community is encouraged to engage with councils re parking spots and make suggestions

Private E-Bikes

- New legislation is required to apply to bikes to destroy them if caught speeding or with tampered speed limiters etc
- Illegal motorbikes, those with no pedal assist, throttle only, will be banned, taken from users and destroyed (Fat boy bikes)
- E-bike wattage will be reduced from 500 to 250 watts.
- Suppliers will be given a two-year grace period to change.
- Police will pursue aberrant riders
- Police will have the ability to test bike power with Dyno tests
- Age limits on who can ride an e-bike are being legislated (12-16)
- Accidents with illegally converted e-bikes with fires sparked by lithium batteries, crashes, and failure to wear a helmet
- Separated cycle lanes help safety
- Antisocial behaviour and safety start with family discussions
- Breath testing for bikes is already possible
- Confirms that food delivery drivers are subject to compliance and food delivery employers will be responsible for driver training

Community Comments

- Mill Hill Rd resident notes that the riders disregard road rules and also ride on the footpath
- Bronte resident comments that in the Netherlands, public education campaigns are prolific and constant
- The convenors and community thanked Dr O'Neill and Lachlan for their time and effort in listening to feedback and providing detailed responses in relation to SSDs and e-bikes

3. Previous meeting minutes and matters arising

Motion 1

It was moved that the minutes of the March meeting be approved.

Proposed by: Kerri

Seconded by: Mia

Adopted: Unanimously

4. Charing Cross Streetscape

Report from Nick Prell, Project Manager

- Civil works will be finished by late April, weather permitting

Preliminary Electrical Works:

- The Contractor has removed all except the two most northern poles within Charing Cross.
- Council is working closely with Ausgrid to have the remaining poles removed on 01 May 2026.
- The Community will be notified via notification letter in the coming days.

Civil Works:

- The Contractor has recommenced works to complete all section sections of footpath that were impacted by the presence of an Ausgrid pole.
- They will be working from south to north in isolated locations and completing areas one at a time.
- The estimated completion date for these works is the first or second week of May, pending the above mentioned Ausgrid outage to remove the remaining poles on 01 May 2026.

Community Comments

Vince, Café Sorrell owner, calls on Waverley Council to conduct a community outreach exercise to discuss issues related to the upgrade including:

- 24 months of business disruption, loss of regulars, loss of foot traffic
- Where is the promotion of the completed precinct?
- Where is the support for the businesses to reinvigorate the precinct?
- Council Rangers/compliance officers are over-policing local businesses, attempting to issue fines for breaches that have not occurred
- The placement of the bus stop and pedestrian crossing outside the Robin Hood creates an ongoing risk, where pedestrians are not visible until on the road
- The new concrete is cracking in places, and its light colour makes any dirt highly visible
- The new plantings are not surviving well in many areas and have become a dumping ground for rubbish
- The contractor has dumped concrete into the planting area, which means the plants cannot survive/thrive
- Contractors hold responsibility for watering during the installation phase.
- The footpath outside Robin Hood is a mess, with trip hazards near the bus stop and high levels of foot traffic. These irregularities risk accidents and consequent claims against the Council.
- It was noted that the lump in the road asphalt still has not been resolved and has just moved around

- Concern for the cracking in the new concrete was expressed, where the quality of the project can be readily contrasted with similar upgrades in Surry Hills
- Council advises that the footpath will be made good.
- Councillor Masselos noted that the three-month free footpath permit has expired before the completion of the project, preventing businesses from utilising outdoor dining opportunities. This must be extended. Cr Masselos will bring to Council seeking a vote to extend the free permit period
- Councillor Masselos advised that she address these issues at council
- The Charing Cross Festival is on Saturday, 30th May

Motion 2

It was moved that the precinct calls on Waverley Council to allocate a regular cleaning crew to manage litter and footpath hygiene and plant watering

Proposed by: Vince

Seconded by: Howard

Adopted: Unanimously

Motion 3

It is moved that Waverley Council is requested to urgently provide the agreed quality pavements to the footpaths outside the Robin Hood Hotel, which serves two important bus stops.

Proposed by: Howard

Seconded by: Adrian

Adopted: Unanimously

Actions

- Convenors agreed to seek a second walk-around inspection of works before the conclusion of the project
- Convenors will request that the project manager ensure the contractors water the trees and undertake maintenance of all new works

5. St Catherine's School

- No update

6. Waverley College

- No update
- It was noted that despite their initial commitment to attend each precinct meeting, no representative from the school has since attended to engage with the community

7. General Business

- Anzac Day Dawn services will be held at:
Waverley Cemetery, Stone of Remembrance, hosted by Bronte RSL, and North Bondi, hosted by North Bondi RSL at 6 am

Meeting closed: 9 pm.