

Mr Dominic Johnson  
General Manager  
Mosman Council  
Mosman Council Civic Centre  
573 Military Road,  
Spit Junction NSW 2088

[council@mosman.nsw.gov.au](mailto:council@mosman.nsw.gov.au)

20<sup>th</sup> July 2022

Dear Mr Johnson,

**Re: Draft Mosman Climate Action Plan  
Resilience and Adaptation Strategy**

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on Mosman Council's *Draft Mosman Climate Action Plan*. Northern Sydney Local Health District (NSLHD) Health Promotion is committed to ensuring that the built environment has a net-positive impact on the health and wellbeing of individuals and the wider community.

Health Promotion commends Council for drafting the *Mosman Climate Action Plan Mitigation Strategy* and *Mosman Climate Action Plan Resilience and Adaptation Strategy*, which comprehensively address a range of physical, social, political and economic issues. In addition, it is pleasing that Council has committed to net zero emissions by 2030 for its operations and has an aspirational target of net zero emissions by 2040 for the Mosman community.

We would like to make further comments and recommendations on these two plans.

## I. Resilient People

Good health is more than the absence of disease. It is a state of complete physical, mental and social wellbeing. Factors contributing to health include social and emotional needs, like sense of purpose, hope, belonging and social connection. It also considers the conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work and age. These are known as the social determinants of health, which are well documented for shaping the health and wellbeing of communities<sup>1</sup>.

### Priority Populations

The impact of acute shocks and chronic stresses are not equally distributed in a population. There are vulnerable groups in our community who are disproportionately impacted and experience greater difficulty in recovering from adversity. These include older people, people living with disabilities, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, the long term unemployed and those experiencing financial or housing stress<sup>1</sup>. Over a third of Mosman's residents are over 50 years of age and by 2036, Mosman is forecast to have an additional 1,725 residents over 50 years of age<sup>2</sup>. Additionally, as raised in the *Mosman Climate Action Plan Mitigation Strategy*, fifteen percent of Mosman's residents speak a language other than English at home. Mainstream communication and engagement strategies may not reach those who have lower English proficiency and so targeted strategies may be required to reach these culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

<sup>1</sup> Healthy Built Environment Checklist. NSW Health. Available at: <https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/urbanhealth/Pages/healthy-built-enviro-check.aspx> (cited 19/07/2022)

<sup>2</sup> .idcommunity website, Mosman Municipal Council Population Forecast. Available at: <https://forecast.id.com.au/mosman/population-age-structure> (cited 18/07/2022)

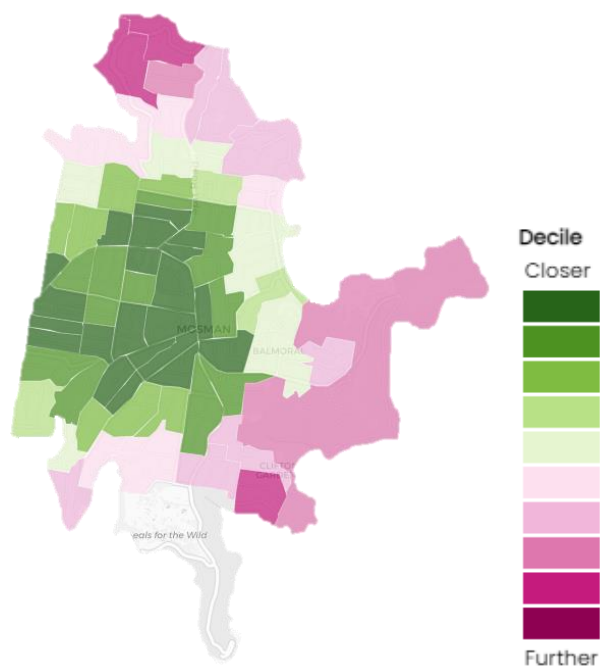
### Recommendations:

- Ensure vulnerable population subgroups (e.g. elderly, disabled) are supported and connected during crises, by forming street or neighbourhood ‘care’ volunteers, who would look out for those in need.
- Under Actions (*Mosman Climate Action Plan Mitigation Strategy* p.25), include the dot point ‘strengthen social connectedness’, by organising ‘get to know your neighbour’ street gatherings. This will support improvements in mental health, anxiety and social isolation as priority climate-related stresses.
- Under Actions, use appropriate liveability and population health indicators available from sources such as the [Australian Urban Observatory](#), [Healthstats NSW](#) and the [Public Health Information Development Unit](#), to guide the Climate Action Community Consultative Committee in developing a resilience toolkit.
- Scope opportunities to enhance pet-friendliness for Mosman residents, including pet friendly public spaces and off leash dog parks to support mental wellbeing.
- Maintain the Mosman Climate Action Plan Mitigation Strategy and Mosman Climate Action Plan Resilience and Adaptation Strategy, as ‘living documents’ so that Council can continue to engage with the community post-exhibition period and address emerging concerns from residents throughout the duration of the Plans.

### Food Security and Healthy Eating

Whilst the majority of Mosman residents have sufficient access to supermarkets and green grocers, some neighbourhoods close to the foreshore are up to 2km from a healthy food outlet<sup>3</sup>. Figure 1 highlights the disparity in access to healthy food options across the LGA. Increasing the proportion of healthy food stores, such as supermarkets and greengrocers, can lead people to buy more fruit and vegetables. Neighbourhood shops which supply fresh food and basic supplies have become invaluable during recent COVID-19 lockdowns. Vulnerable groups who do not have access to cars, internet or smartphones for online shopping, may be dependent on their local neighbourhood shops for food supplies.

Figure 1: Average distance to closest healthy food outlet



Source: Australian Urban Observatory

<sup>3</sup> Australian Urban Observatory website, RMIT University. Available at: <https://auo.org.au/> (cited 18 July 2022)

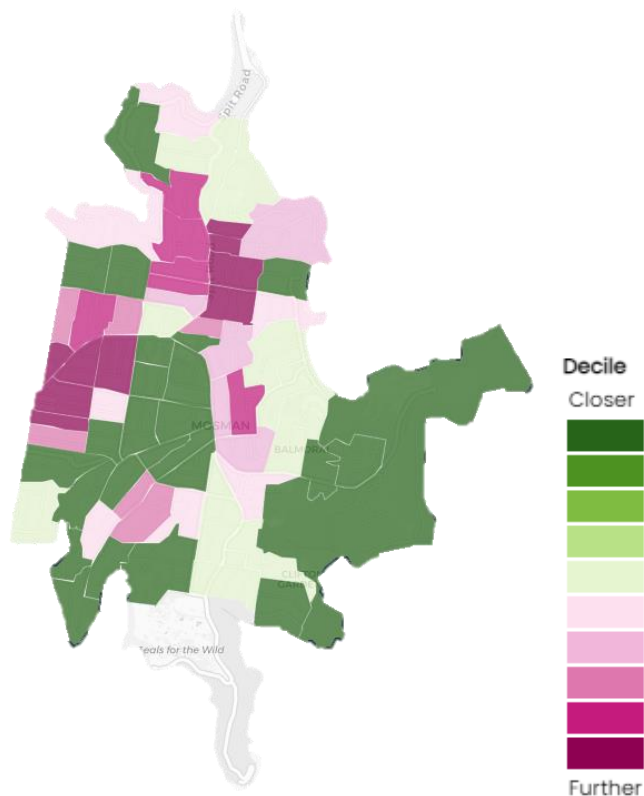
### Recommendations:

- Prioritise mixed use developments with retailers that provide quality fresh fruit and vegetables and ensure they are adequately distributed throughout all neighbourhoods.
- Encourage farmers' markets, which will provide an additional supply of fresh produce and stimulate social connectedness.
- Encourage community gardens, which provide an additional source of fresh produce and support community engagement.

## II. Resilient Urban Open Space

The Australian Urban Observatory also highlights the disparity of access to public open space within the Mosman LGA<sup>4</sup>. Figure 2 indicates that dwellings along particular sections of Spit Rd/Military Rd are the furthest away from public open space compared to all Australian Urban Centres. Greener and more resilient public spaces are key features in DPIE's Public Space Charter<sup>4</sup>. Public spaces that are softer, greener and more connected to nature can cool towns and cities, providing relief and respite and reduce the impacts of extreme weather conditions. Public spaces can also provide a network of essential hubs that bring communities together and provide refuge and escape, while building our capacity to withstand shocks during times of crisis.

Figure 2: Percentage of dwellings within 400m or less of public open space



Source: Australian Urban Observatory

<sup>4</sup> NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment website, NSW Public Spaces Charter. Available at: [https://www.dpie.nsw.gov.au/premiers-priorities/great-public-spaces/festival-of-place/public-spaces-charter#:~:text=The%20NSW%20Public%20Spaces%20Charter%20\(PDF%207.3MB\)%20has%20been,space%20experts%20and%20community%20members](https://www.dpie.nsw.gov.au/premiers-priorities/great-public-spaces/festival-of-place/public-spaces-charter#:~:text=The%20NSW%20Public%20Spaces%20Charter%20(PDF%207.3MB)%20has%20been,space%20experts%20and%20community%20members) (cited 19/07/2022).

### **Recommendations:**

- Use Draft Greener Places Design Guide<sup>5</sup> when reviewing and updating Council's LSPS, LEP and DCP documents.
- Incorporate performance indicators as an ongoing reporting requirement of Mosman's Climate Action Plan Resilience and Adaptation Strategy, including tree canopy cover percentage across urban areas.

### **Sustainable transport and connecting our community**

Despite public transport being relatively accessible for many residents in Mosman, as stated in the Mosman Climate Action Plan Mitigation Strategy, less than a third of employed residents catch public transport to work. The benefits of active travel and increased use of public transport extend beyond the health of the community, as the subsequent reduction in emissions improve the health of the environment. Active travel and public transport infrastructure also support more equitable access to recreational facilities, employment centres and essential services by a range of users, not just those who own private vehicles.

### **Recommendations:**

- Introduce measurable targets such as increasing the number of travel trips by walking, public transport or cycling.
- Prioritise active transport and reduce car dependency through traffic management e.g. reducing pedestrian wait times at traffic signals.
- Ensure new residential and commercial block layouts are permeable, to encourage walking and cycling.
- Collaborate with schools to provide active transport routes and infrastructure, which will encourage active transport to and from schools.

## **III. Resilient Natural Environment**

Mosman LGA's tree canopy coverage is currently higher (33.9%) than the Greater Sydney average and we encourage Council to continue working towards the Greater Sydney Commission's target of 40% coverage<sup>6</sup>. An Australian study of 46,786 adults indicated that exposure to 30% or more tree canopy was associated with a lower incidence of psychological distress<sup>7</sup>. In addition, studies have shown that trees can also play a role in stress recovery or restoration and that an outlook on green space improves hospital patient recovery time. In addition to maintaining the quality of our natural environments, local bush care groups can play a role in enhancing social connectedness through volunteerism.

### **Recommendation:**

- Prioritise street tree planting to improve amenity and provide shade, which reduces urban heat stress, helps prevent skin cancer from UV radiation and encourages walking<sup>8</sup>.
- Acknowledge and promote the mental health benefits of trees for the community and the positive health impacts of engaging with nature.
- Promote and support the recruitment of residents to local bush care groups.

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<sup>5</sup> NSW Government Architect, Draft Greener Places Design Guide. <https://www.governmentarchitect.nsw.gov.au/policies/greener-places> (cited 19/07/2022)

<sup>6</sup> Greater Cities Commission website, Urban tree canopy is increased. Available at: <https://greatercities.au/metropolis-of-three-cities/sustainability/city-its-landscape/urban-tree-canopy-cover-increased> (cited 19/07/2022).

<sup>7</sup> Astell-Burt, T. and Feng, X., 2019. Association of Urban Green Space with Mental Health and General Health Among Adults in Australia. JAMA Network Open, 2(7), p.e198209.

<sup>8</sup> NSW Shade Working Group, Shade - A planning and design priority to help prevent skin cancer. December 2019. Available at: <https://www.cancer.nsw.gov.au/getmedia/be5ca26a-3755-4487-a698-fa843cfaf023/WR-MR0010096-A4-ShadePlanning-CI-0002-01-20.pdf> (cited 19/07/2022)

NSLHD Health Promotion thanks Mosman Council for the opportunity to comment on the *Draft Mosman Climate Action Plan*. Should you have any queries about this submission please contact David Morrissey at [david.morrissey@health.nsw.gov.au](mailto:david.morrissey@health.nsw.gov.au). We look forward to continuing our work with Council to support projects that benefit the health and wellbeing of the community.

Yours sincerely,

Paul Klarenaar  
Director Population and Planetary Health  
Northern Sydney Local Health District