

# Outcomes Report

Hornsby Park EIS Communication and  
Engagement

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**Client:** Hornsby Shire Council

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# 1 Project Background

Hornsby Quarry is located within a picturesque bushland setting less than a kilometre away from Hornsby's thriving CBD. The quarry, which is 100 metres deep with steep sides, has been fenced off and disused for decades. As a result, very few have had the opportunity to appreciate its astonishing beauty. In 2015, Hornsby Council announced that they would transform the quarry and surrounding area into a parkland. Importantly, Council also committed to ensuring it would be "designed, owned, used and loved by residents". In 2017, the community was asked to "Plan Your Parkland" by providing their blue sky aspirations for the site. The high level results of the engagement are captured in the graphic below:

## Most popular activities and attractions requested by the community

The graphic displays six categories of activities and attractions requested by the community, each accompanied by a representative image:

- Walking tracks:** A person hiking on a path through a lush, fern-filled forest.
- Picnic areas and open spaces:** A group of four women sitting on a colorful blanket on a grassy field, enjoying a picnic.
- Mountain biking:** Three people riding bicycles on a dirt trail through a wooded area.
- Environmental:** A tall, slender tree in a dense forest with sunlight filtering through the canopy.
- Cafés / restaurants:** An outdoor seating area with a blue awning and greenery, where people are dining.
- Arts / community / historical facilities:** A group of people, including an elderly woman, participating in an art or craft activity at a table.

## 2 Project Context

At the conclusion of the 'Plan Your Parkland' round of engagement, Council embarked on preparing an EIS (Environmental Impact Statement) and Development Application.

An EIS is a publicly available document that provides information on the proposal to create a landform for the parkland. The EIS will address environmental impacts and mitigation measures of the proposal and is used to inform development consent decisions.

The Hornsby Park EIS has been investigating the site's environmental constraints, and will outline the earthworks that will be needed to create landforms and spaces that are safe and flexible for a range of recreational uses. An important aspect of the EIS is to make some recommendations about how to best protect the natural environment of the site, including the Critically Endangered Ecological Communities (CEEC) found on the site.

The EIS will also:

- » investigate environmental constraints and outline the extent of earthworks required to be undertaken to create the landform and space that will be safe and flexible for future regeneration and recreation purposes
- » recommend how to best protect the natural environment of the site, including the CEEC (Critically Endangered Ecological Communities)
- » inform Council investigations into the types of recreation or other activities that may be conceived in various parts of the site and how these sites will be accessible and connected, and
- » inform Council in the development of a parkland that respects and celebrates the unique geology, landform and magnificent bushland surrounds.

## 3 Engagement Snapshot

As part of the EIS and Development Application process, Council is required to consult immediate neighbours. However, Council has expanded engagement to also include the following activities:

### **Communication channels:**

- » Email blast to 40,000 residents
- » Letters and emails to stakeholders
- » Project website updated
- » Community Deliberative Forum & Stakeholder meeting presentations
- » Information boards at Hornsby Mall community Swing-By
- » Social media posts, media release

### **Engagement Activities:**

- » Presentation to Hornsby Shire Council
- » Reconvene the Community Deliberative Forum
- » Stakeholder meeting with Environmental and Bushwalking Stakeholder groups
- » Community Swing-By Session in the Mall

## 4 Engagement Outcomes

As part of the EIS engagement, briefings were given to stakeholders about the EIS process. These briefings consisted of a presentation, followed by a question and answer session. Attendees were also encouraged to ask questions during the presentation. The details of each activity are outlined below

### 4.1 Councillor Briefing

Hornsby Shire Council Chambers

Wednesday 3 October, 5:30pm– 7pm

5 Councillors in attendance

#### **Presentation:**

The presentation included the following information:

- » Recap of 'Plan your Parkland'
- » Site landform overview
- » What type of Park are we creating?
- » Environmental Impact Statement – what is it?
- » Geotechnical Investigations – balancing safety and CEEC
- » The way forward & Next Steps
- » Community Consultation
- » Open discussion and questions

#### **Open discussion and questions:**

During the presentation and following it, the following points were raised by the Councillors:

#### **Geotechnical investigations**

- » Councillors were interested in understanding in more detail the types of engineering interventions that would be used

#### **Consultation**

- » Councillors requested to see the Communications and Engagement strategy

#### **Future design**

- » Councillors were keen to start thinking about what type of activities could be enjoyed at each of the Park's location

## 4.2 Community Deliberative Forum

Hornsby Shire Council Chambers

Saturday 27 October, 11am – 1pm

6 CDF members in attendance

The Mayor and 2 Councillors in attendance

The Community Deliberative Forum consisted of a presentation where attendees were encouraged to ask questions throughout, followed by an open discussion plus a dedicated questions and answer session. Attendees were very interested in hearing about the work that has been undertaken, and asked many questions throughout.

### **Presentation:**

The presentation included the following information:

- » Recap of 'Plan your Parkland'
- » Site landform overview
- » What type of Park are we creating?
- » Environmental Impact Statement – what is it?
- » Geotechnical Investigations – balancing safety and CEEC
- » The way forward & Next Steps
- » Community Consultation
- » Open discussion and questions

### **Open discussion and questions:**

During the presentation and following it, the following points were raised by attendees:

#### **Filling of the quarry**

- » Participants were curious about the type of fill, when it will be finished and the visibility of the diatreme

#### **Accessible path**

- » Support was expressed for the accessible path and there was a general discussion about its proposed route

#### **The EIS**

- » One participant asked for clarification regarding the studies that are being undertaken

#### **Environmental considerations**

- » One participant was interested to know if the impact on the EEC will be managed through an offset program. Council staff confirmed this would be the case, but the details are yet to be worked out.

#### **General Comments**

- » All participants were very supportive of the work that has been undertaken as part of the EIS process
- » All participants are enthusiastic about the next steps of designing the park and being actively involved through their membership of the CDF

- » One participant noted that communication through Social media is very important to promote all engagement activities
- » It was suggested that Hornsby South Public School would be a good place to engage with the community during drop off and pick up times as there are a lot of people around.
- » A general reflection was made by all participants of the long term nature of the project, and how it will be funded.

## 4.3 Stakeholder Briefing – Environmental and Bushwalking groups

Hornsby Shire Council Chambers

Tuesday 30 October, 6:30pm – 7:30pm

6 participants in attendance

The Mayor and one Councillor in attendance

### **Presentation:**

The presentation included the following information:

- » Recap of 'Plan your Parkland'
- » Site landform overview
- » What type of Park are we creating?
- » Environmental Impact Statement – what is it?
- » Geotechnical Investigations – balancing safety and CEEC
- » The way forward & Next Steps
- » Community Consultation
- » Open discussion and questions

### **Open discussion and questions:**

During the presentation and following it, the following points were raised by attendees:

#### **Geotechnical investigations**

- » Attendees were curious about both local and global stability resulting from mining operations and were satisfied with the investigations that have been undertaken as part of the EIS

#### **Environmental factors**

- » Attendees were interested to know that the blue gum forest that needs to be removed for safety reasons is of low quality. They were also interested to hear about the amount and location of the mapped blue gum forest. A question was raised about the likelihood of environmental offsets, and the group were told that this would probably be the case, but details are yet to be finalised.

#### **Access**

- » All attendees were very interested and supportive in the accessible pathway and how it will link with other pathways, and look outs

## Earthworks

- » Attendees were interested to hear that the earth works will be starting in 2020 and are expected to last for almost two years. They were also happy to hear that the diatreme wall will still be exposed

## Funding

- » Attendees were interested in how the park will be funded over time and were pleased to hear the state governments initial \$50 million is available for the park's development.

## Car parking

- » Attendees were keen to start thinking about car access to the future park and the areas where cars will be able to parks

# 4.4 Swing-By Session

Hornsby Mall

Saturday 3 November

11am - 2pm

220 people engaged

The Mayor and one Councillor in attendance

To engage and inform as many Hornsby residents as possible about the EIS, an informal Swing-By Session was held in the mall. The Swing-By was attended by three members of the project team, and two Elton Consulting staff who actively spoke to people explaining the EIS process. A number of AO presentation boards were on easels displaying information about the project and acted as a cue for further questions and discussion with team members. Copies of these boards are included in the appendix.

The Swing-By was promoted to residents through Councils communications channels, including:

- » Email to 40,000 residents
- » Social media posts
- » Messaging on the Hornsby Station Footbridge digital display
- » Media coverage in the Hornsby Advocate dated Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> November 2018

The overwhelming majority of people engaged were very supportive of the proposed EIS, and excited about the future of the park. Of the 220 people actively engaged, less than 5 people expressed a negative reaction. These were not about the EIS itself, but rather the site's vexed history.

The following comments reflect the general sentiment expressed by the vast majority of people engaged:

"That's a good idea"

"It's a great use of the land"

"As long as it can be multi-purpose"

"Walkways and bushwalks"

"So many people will be able to enjoy this"

"I'm glad I'm not the only one who wants spaces to relax and hang out"

"It's good that something is finally being done, so people can use the space"

"Link it with other trails" (the earthworks to create the paths)

"Great for the younger generation of Hornsby"

"That's great to hear you will be creating an amphitheatre"

"How much fill.... so it's almost completed"

"The accessible path is cool!"

"Thanks for the explanation"

## 4.5 Consultation with Neighbours

GHD's EIS project team established communication channels with the residents surrounding the quarry site to inform them about the EIS studies being undertaken, and the EIS process moving forward.

### Communication channels

A letter with an accompanying fact sheet was distributed to approximately 600 immediate neighbours. This was a statutory requirement before the EIS is finalised. The letter provided a number of communication channels for the local community to discuss the project with the EIS project team. This included an email address and telephone number, and advertised two information drop in days at Council Offices. These drop in days provided an opportunity for residents to discuss the work with the EIS project team in person. These community drop in days were held at Hornsby Council Offices on Wednesday 17 and Monday 22 October 2018. In addition to these sessions, two residents also requested a meeting which was conducted with the project team on 1 November 2018.

During this consultation period, the project team received feedback from 10 individuals. This feedback was collected via the following channels:

- Community drop in sessions – 6 individuals
- Meeting – 2 individuals
- Phone calls – 2 individuals
- Emails – none received

### Comments collected

Comments gathered during this period have been collated together below. Similar to the Swing-By Session held at Hornsby Mall, many of the comments and feedback provided did not apply directly to the EIS or the earthworks project but rather to the future park or earlier NorthConnex works. Of the comments provided and identified to specific sections of the greater project, 22 related to NorthConnex, 25 to the concept design and operation of the future park, and only 13 to the Earthworks for rehabilitating the park.

We have listed the comments relating to the EIS below by topic:

#### Visual amenity

- "Intrigued by the changing shape of the Quarry"

#### Vegetation and Environment

- "Happy that wildlife impacts have been taken into account"

#### Noise

- "New works will be less noisy and lower impact than current works but might be worse for others"
- "EIS didn't involve local receivers of noise"
- "Noise and Vibration – no requirements to do dilapidation report. Why only public buildings?"

#### Safety

- "Steep road into site"
- "Both north and south sides of the site are unstable"
- "Safety cannot be driven by the community, Safety is paramount"

#### Inadequate consultation

- "Found letter scary, wants to know what is being hidden"
- "Upset about the existing engagement process for the project"

- “Advocate (Newspaper) is no longer delivered to their areas – concerns they have been excluded from the entire process”

### **Dust and air pollution**

- “EIS didn’t involve local receivers of Dust”

