Alexandria: Liveability, Community, and Change

Research conducted as part of the
UNSW Masters of Urban Policy and Strategy

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CITYFUTUREs

Acknowledgement

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Executive Summary

Sydney is the largest city in Australia and underpins the Australian economy. In the next 20 years, Sydney's population will grow by 1.6 million people[1]. In response, planning policies have been promoting high-density development in existing urban areas, including the Sydney CBD and central Sydney suburbs. Delivering infrastructure and services to support the future needs of Sydney's growing population is a key challenge not only for the City of Sydney Council, but also for key NSW and Federal Government agencies.

Rapid population growth and increased urban densities have a significant impact on both existing and new residents as well as people who work in these areas. This is especially apparent in inner-city areas undergoing large-scale urban renewal to accommodate large numbers of new residents and new jobs. Protecting and supporting liveability at the local scale is essential for the health, security, resilience and quality of life of current and future communities.

Alexandria is an interesting case study of a Sydney suburb experiencing significant urban change, with the population expected to increase by approximately 50% over the next 20 years. Alexandria is in close proximity to a number of urban renewal developments, notably Green Square Urban Renewal Area and the Central to Eveleigh Urban Transformation Program, and is in the middle of the key planned economic corridor between Sydney CBD and the airport. In addition, local planning controls are facilitating residential housing development in areas previously used for industrial uses at a rapid pace, including the Ashmore precinct.

The research presented in this report explores Alexandria as a case study for the impact of urban renewal and change on the liveability of local communities. Considerable academic research has been undertaken on liveability and change. Building on this available information, the central focus of this research was to better understand how individuals think about liveability in Alexandria and their priorities in a rapidly growing urban community, and to better understand what needs to be done to improve personal experiences of liveability in Alexandria. The research questions to address this were:

1. How do people perceive liveability in the area?
2. What are the most important features in the local area that make the area liveable?
3. How do people feel about changes occurring in the area as a result of increased development density?
4. What are people's preferences in regards to participation in decisions affecting their local area?
5. For questions 1-4, does this differ for different groups of people?

Approach

The approach taken in researching the questions about liveability and change in Alexandria was developed around undertaking face-to-face surveys with residents and workers of Alexandria at Alexandria Park and surrounding streets. Questions within the survey were linked to introduce, then further explore, respondents' opinions around change, liveability and how they would like to be involved in future decisions about their local area.

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[1] NSW Department of Planning & Environment, *A Plan for Growing Sydney*. NSW Government, Sydney, 2014, p. 4.

The survey was structured around two main types of questions:

- Interactive rank or rating questions about features of liveability in Alexandria and perceptions about future growth and change in the local area.
- Open-ended questions that enable discussion and explanation in addition to the ranking questions. These questions enable further analysis of the choices made by respondents particularly given the subjective nature of the research topic.

Two activity tools were developed for use in conjunction with the survey and included:

- The 'ping pong priorities' activity used to rank aspects of liveability in Alexandria chosen from 16 features listed on ping pong balls.
- A 'rate-o-meter' tool used to help respondents rate Alexandria as a place to live (The rating scale ranged from 1 being terrible and 5 as brilliant) and to re-score Alexandria under the scenario that more people were living in the area.

Key Findings

In total, 89 local residents and workers participated in the research through the face-to-face surveys. Of those surveyed, 61 respondents (69%) were living in Alexandria, 12 (14%) living and working in Alexandria and 16 (18%) working (but not living) in the area. Both established and new residents were surveyed with 32 respondents (44%) living in the area for 5 years or more and 22 (30%) living in the area for less than 2 years. More than half of the surveyed residents lived in apartments.

Important features

In response to the 'ping pong priorities' tool, respondents were asked to identify the four most important features in Alexandria for them and to rank their selected features in order of importance. The top four features identified as most important were:

- Convenience (50 responses);
- Cafes/entertainment (47 responses);
- Public transport (41 responses); and
- Green spaces (40 responses).

When asked how convenience improved their experience of the area, the majority related convenience to easy access to/from work. Convenience was also related to good access to public transport including being close to Redfern train station.

Rating Alexandria & suggested improvements

When asked to rate the local area using the 'rate-o-meter' tool, there was a tendency towards the higher ratings between 'okay' (3) and 'brilliant' (5); this was particularly the case for those respondents that lived in the area. Interestingly, of the 45 participants that owned their home, all but one rated the local area very highly (scores between 4 and 5). For the 28 renters, the average rating was 3.75 (Ok – good). Apartment dwellers considered the local area slightly less liveable than respondents living in a house or a townhouse. The results indicate that participants' perception of liveability is related to tenure. Notably, the length of time respondents in any dwelling type had lived (or worked) in the area did not appear to correlate with the rating.

When asked to consider what would make the area better, consistent themes for improvement included:

- Improvements in parking, public transport and traffic
- The need for more entertainment (e.g. cafes);
- The need for more social services/infrastructure (e.g. chemists, open space, public toilets, cultural facilities, schools and shops;
- Improved housing affordability; and
- Limiting future residential development.

Responses relating to the density of residential development indicated a perception that new development was contributing to a reduction in liveability. A perception of more people and apartments had a clear nexus with traffic issues and lack of public transport.

Perceptions of change

The survey asked a number of questions related to the changes people have noticed in Alexandria and how these have impacted on people's perceptions of Alexandria as a place to live and/or work.

When respondents were asked to identify what changes they have noticed in Alexandria and how they have been impacted by them, many people identified both positive and negative changes. The negative change mentioned by the largest number of respondents was increased traffic congestion. Other negative changes mentioned included; lack of available parking; the number and/or height of apartment buildings; increase in population; increase in house prices and gentrification; overcrowding on public transport; and loss of green space.

The positive change noticed within the area mentioned most was an increase in the number of cafe/ restaurant / entertainment offerings (identified by 58 respondents). Other positive changes included; an increase in the population and therefore lively atmosphere; increase in house prices; more bike paths; quality of green spaces improved streetscape; enhanced feelings of safety; and better public transport. A number of respondents mentioned that the City of Sydney had made improvements to the public domain of the local area.

These findings suggest the following considerations for the City of Sydney:

- The protection and enhancement of green spaces is an important consideration when planning for an increasing population;
- The exploration of different ways in which high density living can be achieved without large apartment blocks dominating the landscape; and
- Support for small businesses and events that positively contribute to the vibrancy and sense of community within Alexandria.

When asked to identify whether or not an increase in the number of people living in the area would change their rating of Alexandria, 60 respondents (67%) indicated that an increase in population would change their rating. Of those 60 respondents, 39 (65%) indicated the change would be negative, i.e. their rating would reduce, 13 (22%) indicated their rating of would increase and 8 respondents (13%) indicated it would depend. Of those who indicated they would rate living in Alexandria lower with an increase in population, most reduced their rating by 1. Reasons given to explain why their rating would reduce included:

- An increase in traffic congestion;
- Overcrowding on public transport;
- Concern that infrastructure would not keep pace with the increased population;
- More pressure on parking;

- Negative impacts on quality of life; and
- Loss of character / amenity of the area.

These findings suggest there is a need for infrastructure to be delivered in a timely manner to support an increase in population. The responsibility for the delivery of this infrastructure rests with a number of agencies, including the City of Sydney and NSW Government departments. A strong partnership approach is required to facilitate the coordinated delivery of infrastructure and to ensure stakeholder expectations are managed, and are realistic and achievable.

Of those who indicated their rating of living in Alexandria would improve, most increased their rating by 0.5. Reasons given to explain why their rating would improve included:

- Additional services and amenities would be provided for the increasing population;
- Economic benefits;
- Improvements in the number of cafes / bars;
- Enhanced social interaction; and
- A greater sense of community.

Those that indicated any change in their rating "would depend", indicated this was related to whether or not infrastructure and services were able to 'keep pace' with the increasing population.

22 of the 31 respondents (71%) who had lived in Alexandria for less than two years indicated either a positive change, or that their rating would not change with an increase in population. 24 of these respondents (77%) were renting. These findings suggest that the newer residents of Alexandria were more open to change and saw an increase in population as being positive for the area. There was no other apparent link between the findings for different demographic groups.

Preferences regarding participation

Respondents were asked whether it was important for them to be involved in future decisions affecting the local area, and why. These questions were designed to determine the relative importance given by residents and workers to participating in local decisions made by the Council, state agencies, developers and others in their local area. The majority of respondents, 51 (57%), considered it important to be involved in future decisions affecting their local area. A further 28 respondents (13%) put qualifications on the importance of their future participation such as "only for big decisions that directly impact" them. Notably, only 15 of 37 (41%) of respondents living in the area who rent rather than own their home considered it important to be involved in future decisions affecting their local area.

Respondents were asked how they would like to be involved in decisions affecting their local area. A greater proportion of respondents aged between 18 and 39 prefer internet based tools such as social media, websites and email, whereas those aged over 60 prefer letters / newsletters and meetings / community forums. The results from this question highlight that for an engagement strategy to be successful it must incorporate a range of communication styles and forms to match the preferences of a diverse community.

Summary conclusions about liveability in Alexandria

Residents and workers in Alexandria perceive convenience, cafes/entertainment, public transport and green spaces as key aspects of liveability. Aspects to improve liveability that were consistently identified included parking, public transport and traffic themes. Changes in Alexandria were largely perceived negatively with common themes continuing such as increased traffic congestion.

The survey found residents of Alexandria to be an informed and engaged community. Respondents expressed satisfaction with the work that the City of Sydney is doing in Alexandria, which affirms the City of Sydney's existing policies and strategies to protect and enhance liveability in Alexandria.

Recommendations

City of Sydney can directly shape outcomes Alexandria by:

- Incentivising diverse commercial uses such as 'cafes/entertainment' in the local area, including stimulating the night-time economy.
- Dedicating some Section 94 development contributions towards 'green spaces' in the local area which would be 'good for pets', 'good for kids', 'exercise' and 'familiarity'.
- Organising community events and activities celebrating and showcasing the 'diversity' of the population in the local area. Such events and activities should provide opportunities for local communities to meet 'the people' and enhance 'familiarity'.
- Mandating targets for affordable rental housing supply in the local area (such as in 'Investigation Areas' in the Southern Employment Lands) and support these targets with planning policies to strengthen 'diversity', 'the people' and 'value for money'.
- Providing dedicated public places in the local area that are 'good for pets' such as off-leash dog parks with bag dispensers.
- Continuing to work with the community to address the 'safety' and security issues of people who live, work or visit the local area.
- Consulting or engaging children in the design of public places so that 'green spaces' and the public domain in the local area would be 'good for kids'.
- Continuing to use a variety of methods and media to keep the local community informed of activities in the local area including changes and future development.
- Strengthening citizen participation strategies to engage workers and renters in the local area.
- Expanding or replicating the Green Square Placemaking Framework to include Alexandria. Tailor place-making strategies to strengthen place attachment to the local area by different user groups including workers and renters.

City of Sydney does not directly control but could influence outcomes in Alexandria by:

- Advocating for and working in partnership with State Government agencies for public transportation infrastructure to enhance 'public transport' in the local area e.g. light rail through the area to Green Square, increase train and bus services, priority and capacity.
- Advocating for and working in partnership with State Government agencies for more schools in the local area so that Alexandria is 'good for kids'.
- Advocating for and working in partnership with State Government agencies to retain government subsidised housing in the local area to strengthen 'diversity' and 'the people'.
- Increasing financial subsidies to and working in partnership with community housing sector to expand non-market affordable housing in the area to strengthen 'diversity', 'the people' and 'value for money'.
- Advocating for and working in partnership with State Government agencies for dedicated cycleways in the local area to encourage 'cycling' and 'exercise'

Actions for Immediate Benefit

- Provide public toilets at Alexandria Park that are not closed or locked during the day. (Note: There are many users of Alexandria Park including its children's playground and picnic areas).

- Expand community events and activities currently focused in the Green Square area to other parts of Alexandria, such as Alexandria Park, celebrating and showcasing the 'diversity' of the population in the local area. Such events and activities should provide opportunities for local communities to meet 'the people' and enhance 'familiarity'.

Future research and engagement approaches

All the surveys of this research were carried out at Alexandria Park. Respondents lived or worked possibly within a 10- to 15-minute walk from the park. The high rating for 'green spaces' and 'good for pets' could be related to locations where the surveys were carried out. It is recommended that the same survey be carried out of a random sample population and compare the findings. Alternatively, carry out the same survey for a different targeted area within Alexandria and compare the findings.

This research focused on features in the local area that are most important to the respondents. Finding out what aspects of the local area respondents consider require the most improvement may provide insight into aspects they perceive to be unliveable. It is recommended that further research finds out the four least liveable aspects of the local area and compare the findings.

This research focused on respondents aged 18 and above. 12.5% of the population in Alexandria were under the age of 20 in the 2011 Census. In the next 20 years, this age group is forecast to increase in Alexandria. It is recommended that future research include specific engagement approaches for children and young people to better understand liveability considerations in the local area for this demographic group.

The 'ping pong priorities' tool and 'rate-o-meter' were visual tools that generated interest as the research team walked around Alexandria Park. A number of respondents said that they were willing to participate in the survey because they were curious about the interesting and unusual survey tool. Consequently, there was a high response rate when approaching potential respondents. It is recommended that future research use creative methods similar to the 'ping pong priorities' and 'rate-o-meter' tools to encourage high participation in surveys.

1. Introduction

Background

Sydney is the largest city in Australia and underpins the Australian economy. In the next 20 years, Sydney's population will grow by 1.6 million people[2]. These new residents need to be accommodated, putting pressure on existing communities and infrastructure. This has implications for land supply and impacts on an already strained housing market. In response, planning policies have been promoting high density development in existing urban areas, including the CBD and central Sydney suburbs. Delivering infrastructure and services to support the future needs of Sydney's growing population is a key challenge not only for the City of Sydney, but also for key NSW and Federal Government agencies.

Sydney's popularity and success as a city has been based in part around lifestyle attributes and vibrant neighbourhoods that make up the city[3]. Careful planning is required to ensure that the city will continue to be a liveable place as the population increases in future decades. Protecting and supporting liveability in the city is essential for Sydney to maintain or improve its competitiveness compared to other world cities internationally.

These rapid changes have a significant impact on both existing and new residents as well as people who work in these areas. This is especially apparent in inner-city areas undergoing large-scale urban renewal to accommodate large numbers of new residents and new jobs. Protecting and supporting liveability at the local scale is essential for the health, security, resilience and quality of life of current and future communities.

Alexandria is one such area that is undergoing urban renewal to cater for an increasing population. The City of Sydney is seeking to understand how these changes influence residents and workers perceptions of liveability, as it is essential that Sydney continues to build on its competitive strength of being a liveable city. In order to maintain that strength, policymakers and planners need to plan for and respond to unprecedented residential densities in the city that introduce new complexities and challenges. The aim of this research project is to identify perceptions about liveability amongst residents and workers of Alexandria.

Policy relevance

Planning for Liveability
In order for communities to thrive, they need access to places that they feel connected to. This sense of belonging to a place and community is important to facilitate social sustainability and personal wellbeing. Already the City of Sydney has identified some key objectives to support liveability in areas of urban renewal and high density living through their social sustainability activities. These include:

- People focused urban design and planning
- Accessible places and spaces
- Quality natural environment and climate
- Healthy active living
- Safe and secure communities

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[2] NSW Department of Planning & Environment, *A Plan for Growing Sydney*. NSW Government, Sydney, 2014, p. 4.
[3] Hu, R Hu, Blakely, E. & Zhou, Y, 'Benchmarking the Competitiveness of Australian Global Cities: Sydney and Melbourne in the Global Context', *Urban Policy and Research*, Vol. 31, No. 4, 2013, pp. 435–452.

This research has tested these concepts with a broad cross-section of community members in Alexandria including hard to reach people. To date, a lot of information has been collated about the impact of high density development on service and infrastructure provision. There is also some information available about the nature of social cohesion amongst residents of high density residential developments. What has been missing is in-depth information about community perceptions of liveability and in particular the personal experiences and expectations of residents and workers and their priorities in regards to liveability.

Planning for Change

There is also a need to provide these increased residential densities in a way that will be accepted by both the existing and future communities in these areas. This will entail planning for change that engages the community in the process. This research has gathered evidence to help plan for change. Specifically, it has considered whether people are aware of the changes occurring in the local area, their priorities in regards to this change, and their perceptions about their ability to participate in shaping the future of their city and community.

Research Aims and Objectives

The aim of this research project was to identify perceptions about liveability amongst residents in Alexandria. In particular, it focused on how the changes occurring in the area are experienced and perceived by residents.

The research questions to address this aim were:

1. How do people perceive liveability in the area?
2. What are the most important features in the local area that make the area liveable?
3. How do people feel about changes occurring in the area as a result of increased development density?
4. What are people's preferences in regards to participation in decisions affecting their local area?
5. For questions 1-4, does this differ for different groups of people?

The objectives of this research were to improve understanding of how people think about liveability in their local area, including the relationship of the physical environment to liveability. Understanding the priorities of residents in a rapidly growing urban community was also an objective, together with understanding what needs to be done to improve the personal experiences of liveability. Developing and testing an innovative research method to encourage participation by members of the community who may not typically respond to conventional processes was the final objective of this study, to assist in future research.

This research is intended for a wide audience within the City of Sydney Council, including staff with responsibility for social planning, strategic planning, environment, infrastructure planning, place making and development. It is also relevant to State Government agencies responsible for planning and infrastructure, including but not limited to Department of Planning and Environment, Transport for NSW, Department of Education and Communities, UrbanGrowth NSW, Department of Family and Community Services, Department of Finance, Services and Innovation. The local community, including those individuals who participated in the study, local interest groups and other social researchers, particularly those with an interest in liveability, neighbourhood and research methods to engage hard to reach communities, may also have an interest in the research.

The research contained in this report is focused on improving the understanding of liveability in a local context. Chapter two of the report provides an overview of urban renewal projects that are underway

within the City of Sydney, together with a media review of articles related to Alexandria and urban renewal. Chapter three provides a summary of relevant State and local policies and Chapter four is a literature review which identifies different concepts of liveability in the context of urban renewal, compact cities and place-making.

The methodology for the research undertaken is outlined in Chapter five and the survey results are presented in Chapter six. This includes an analysis of the findings and an overview of respondents' perceptions of liveability and change. Conclusions and recommendations are then provided, including opportunities for further research on this topic.

2. Current urban renewal context

Introduction

Alexandria is an inner suburb of Sydney in close proximity to a number of urban renewal developments, notably Green Square Urban Renewal Area and the Central to Eveleigh Urban Transformation Program, and is in the middle of the key planned economic corridor between Sydney CBD and the airport. In addition, local planning controls are facilitating residential housing development in areas previously used for industrial uses at a rapid pace, including Ashmore precinct. The population of Alexandria is expected to increase by approximately 50% over the next 20 years. As such, Alexandria provides a particularly interesting case study of the impact of urban renewal and change on liveability of local communities.

This Chapter describes the urban renewal processes and planned outcomes for the Green Square Urban Renewal Area, the Central to Eveleigh Urban Transformation Program and Ashmore precinct, providing a context for the urban renewal processes shaping Alexandria. These areas of current and future intense redevelopment, identified in Figure 1 below, surround and overlap with the Alexandria area. A summary of recent media articles about urban renewal in the Alexandria follows, enabling some insight into public sentiment around the changes occurring in Alexandria.
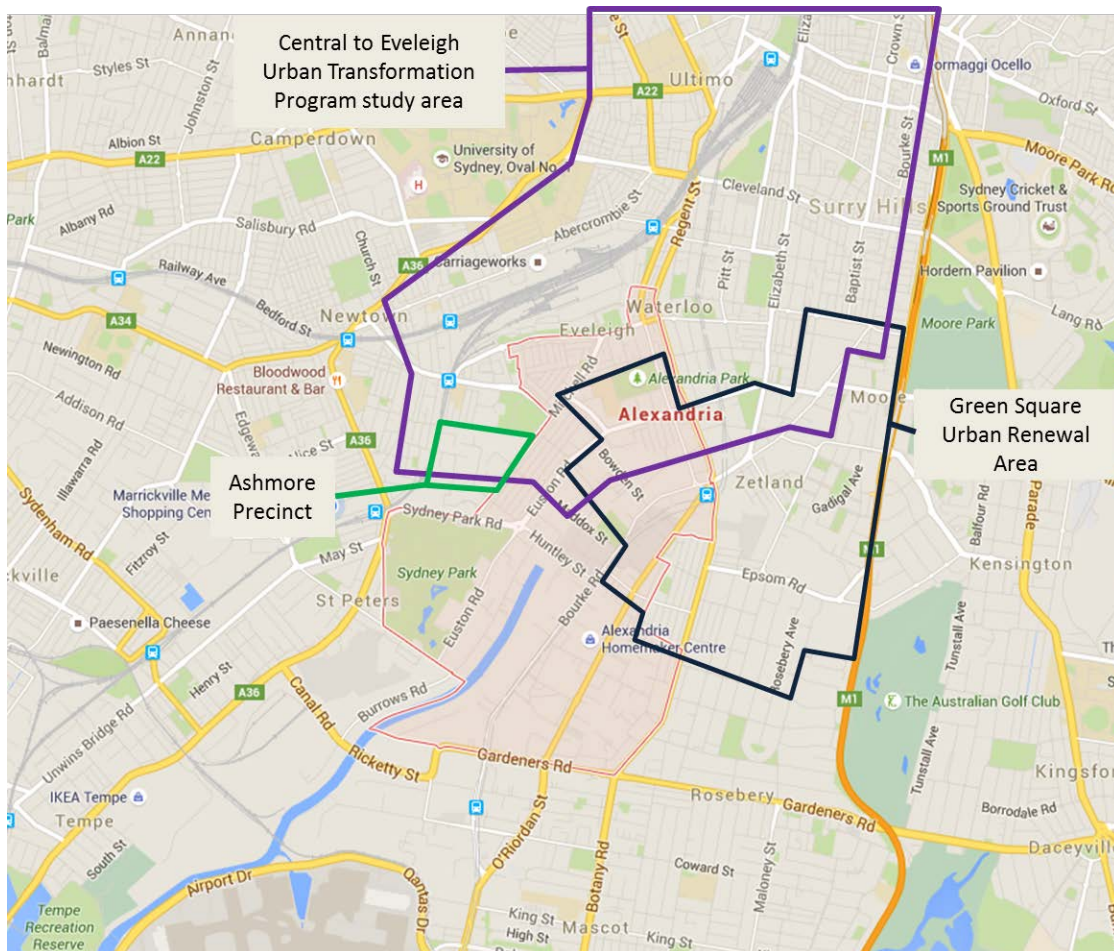
The Suburb of Alexandria is shown shaded in red; Central to Eveleigh Urban Transformation Program Study Area bounded by purple; Green Square Urban Renewal Area bounded by blue; and the Ashmore Precinct bounded by green.

Figure 1: The suburb of Alexandria (Sydney) with major urban renewal areas identified.

Green Square

Green Square is a former industrial area that is now a prime urban redevelopment site, occupying an area of 278 ha within 4km of the Sydney CBD (Figure 2). The Green Square Urban Renewal Area includes the suburbs of Beaconsfield and Zetland, together with parts of Rosebery, Alexandria and Waterloo. The transformation of the area is being driven by the City of Sydney and the NSW Government.

By 2030, the City of Sydney expects 30,500 dwellings to be built within the Green Square redevelopment zone, accommodating a population of up to 61,000 residents. This will make Green Square the highest density residential development in Sydney.[4]

The first Green Square release area was the Victoria Park 24 hectare site in Zetland. About half of the suburb of Zetland has undergone major renewal since the Green Square redevelopment began, with the remainder of Zetland set to be renewed as part of the Green Square Town Centre development.

The Green Square Town Centre development is being planned as a sustainable, innovative and connected place with opportunities to live, work, socialise, learn and shop locally and will be home to about 6,800 residents and 8,600 workers. It will cover an area of 14 hectares in the centre of the Urban Renewal Area and will include a public plaza, library and green space.[5]

Although the rail line linking the CBD with Sydney Airport services Green Square, public and active transport infrastructure continue to be the main challenges for the Green Square development[6]. An integrated transport system is required, incorporating rail, bus and cycleway infrastructure to increase modal split and reduce traffic congestion.

Another challenge for Green Square is to ensure the availability of housing for a wide cross-section of the community and key workers. The provision of affordable housing is a key issue for the City of Sydney, with the Council identifying the need for close to 8,000 affordable rental dwellings within the City by 2030.

Affordable housing is particularly important in Green Square as the area gentrifies through urban renewal. At the time the Green Square Masterplan was developed in 1997, an increase in house and land prices was forecast to occur as the rezoning and development progressed. This would impact on the ability of low to moderate income earners to purchase or afford rental accommodation in the area. An affordable housing scheme was developed to mitigate the effects of this upward pressure on the housing market. The scheme aims to provide 330 affordable housing units for rent to low to moderate income households and key workers in the area as the Green Square development takes shape, funded by developer contributions.[7]

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[4] City of Sydney, 'Green Square', viewed 7 October 2015,
http://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/vision/major-developments/green-square
[5] City of Sydney, 'Green Square Town Centre', viewed 19 September 2015,
http://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/vision/major-developments/green-square/green-square-town-centre
[6] Dargaville, J, 'Public Works: Green Square Poses Transport Challenge' [online]. *Government News*, Vol. 31, No. 2, Apr/May 2011, viewed 18 September 2015,
http://search.informit.com.au.wwwproxy0.library.unsw.edu.au/documentSummary;dn=907184452796343;res=IELBUS
[7] City of Sydney, *Green Square Affordable Housing Program*, 2012, p3.
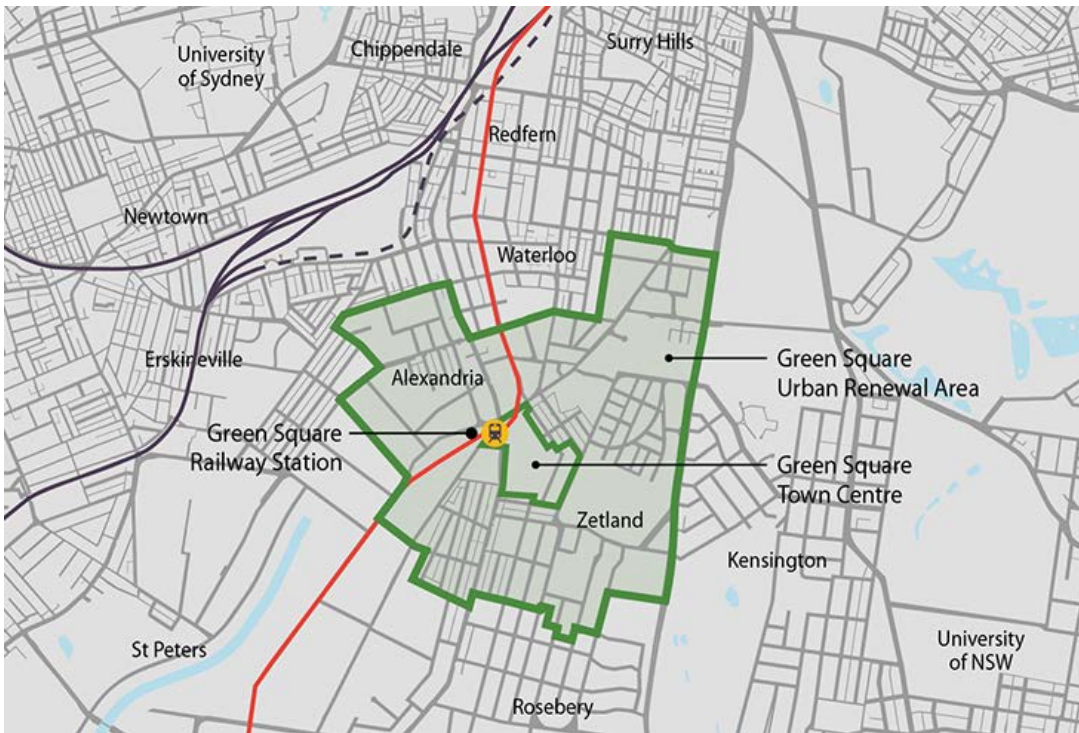
Figure 2: Green Square Urban Renewal Area & Green Square Town Centre (source: City of Sydney[8])

Central to Eveleigh Urban Transformation Program

The Central to Eveleigh Urban Transformation Program was announced in mid 2013 and is located immediately to the north-east of Alexandria (Figure 3). It encompasses an 80 hectare area with a large amount of government owned land, particularly around the rail corridor between Central and Erskineville.

Urban renewal projects often involve the redevelopment of low income or social housing stocks. The economic equation in these areas is such that, to maintain affordable dwellings or social housing, governments are forced to commercially redevelop large portions of their land holdings[9].

UrbanGrowth NSW, the NSW Government's city transformation agency, is responsible for progressing studies into urban renewal in the area, planning and design, and ultimately delivery of future development.

At this stage, UrbanGrowth NSW are still undertaking consultation and planning activities to build a transformation plan and vision for the corridor. However, this precinct will ultimately undergo significant change to the urban design, planning framework, places, and neighbourhoods. New housing and associated urban development will be delivered across the site at much higher densities than currently occur.

For example, apartment buildings of 20-35 storeys are likely in some locations and in other locations heights might range from two to 14 storeys[10]. The tallest building in Waterloo at present is social housing and is approximately 30 - 32 storeys, however most buildings in the area are still considerably lower. Urban renewal should also result in improved community services, improved open spaces, improved transport infrastructure, and the improved reuse of heritage assets.

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[8] City of Sydney, *Green Square Town Centre Public Domain Strategy*, 2013
[9] Comber, B, Nixon, H, Ashmore, L, Loo, S, and Cook, J, 'Urban renewal from the inside out: spatial and critical literacies in a low socioeconomic school community', *Mind, Culture, and Activity* Vol. 13, No. 3, 2006, pp. 228-246.
[10] UrbanGrowth NSW, 'What is density done well?', viewed 22 August 2015, http://engage.centraltoeveleigh.com.au/density_done_well

Project area
☐ Defined project corridor
☐ Study area
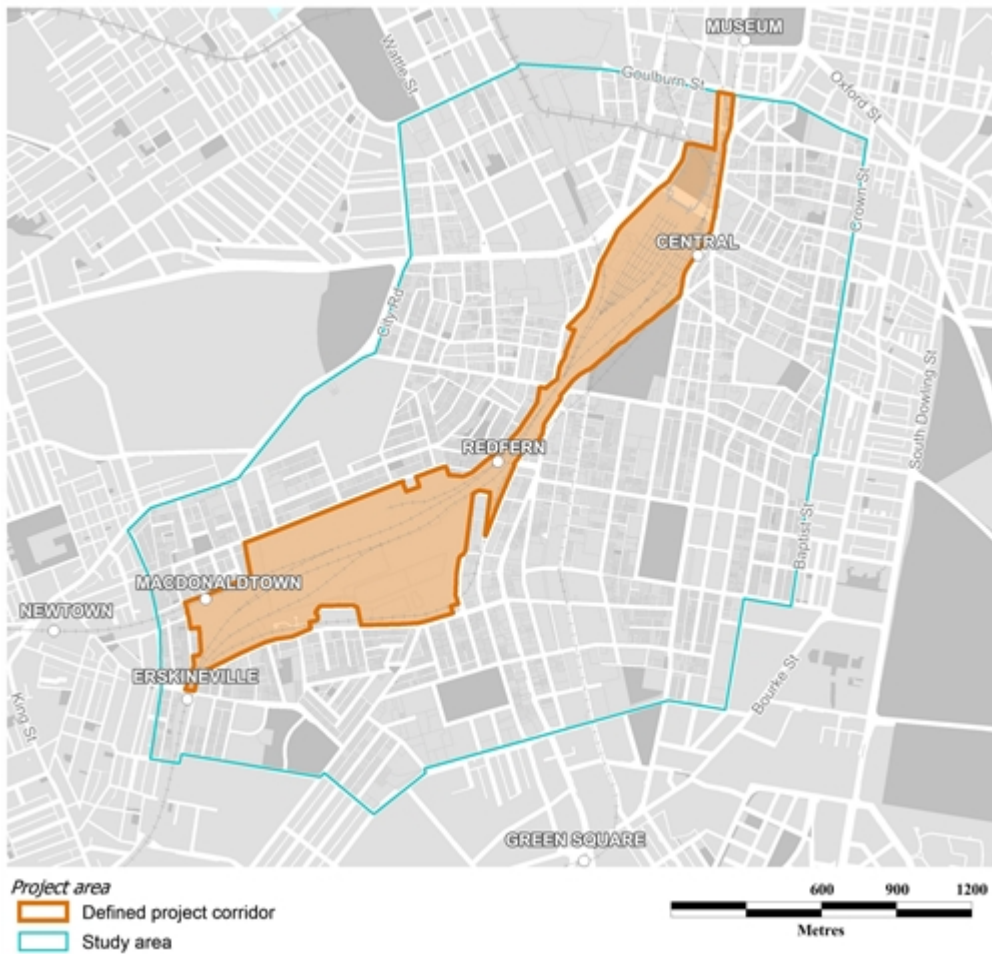
Figure 3: Central to Eveleigh Urban Transformation Program study area

Ashmore

Ashmore precinct is a 17 hectare formerly industrial site designated to become a new sustainable, primarily residential, neighbourhood that integrates into the established residential areas of Erskineville and Alexandria surrounding the site[11]. Located in Erskineville on the border of Alexandria, the precinct is bound by Ashmore Street to the north, Mitchell Road to the east, Coulson Street to the south, and a rail line to the west, refer Figure 4. The redevelopment is being driven by the City of Sydney.

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[11] City of Sydney, *Ashmore Precinct Infrastructure Plan*, 2014, p. 8, viewed 30 August 2015, http://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/vision/major-developments/ashmore-precinct/planning-for-the-ashmore-precinct

Figure 4: Ashmore precinct (source: City of Sydney[12])

The former industrial site was first identified as an area for urban renewal in 1995, with the first residential uses permitted on the site in 1998[13]. Community consultation and revision of planning controls occurred between 2006-2013 and redevelopment will be staged over the next 10 years[14]. Once complete, the development is expected house approximately 6000 new residents.

The primarily residential development will offer a variety of dwelling types from low-rise terrace houses, to units of different sizes in buildings up to 8 storeys in height. No affordable housing units have been designated for the site, creating affordability challenges for low to moderate income earners as renewal takes place. The population of Ashmore is projected to include more young families and working aged singles and couples, with fewer older and teenaged residents.[15]

To support the new as well as the existing community of the area, the precinct will accommodate new cafes, childcare facilities, local shops, and a supermarket. New pedestrian links and cycle ways will

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[12] City of Sydney, *Planning for the Ashmore Precinct*, 2015, viewed 25 September 2015, http://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/vision/major-developments/ashmore-precinct/planning-for-the-ashmore-precinct

[13] City of Sydney, *Ashmore Precinct Infrastructure Plan*, 2014, p. 7, op. cit.

[14] City of Sydney, *Planning for the Ashmore Precinct*, 2015, op. cit.

[15] City of Sydney, *Ashmore Update: Social Sustainability*, 2013, viewed 29 August 2015, http://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/vision/major-developments/ashmore-precinct/planning-for-the-ashmore-precinct

encourage active modes of transport, and a large central park will provide a new recreation space for the community and contribute to the desired landscape character of the precinct.

The Ashmore Precinct Infrastructure Plan[16] identifies the required social and physical infrastructure planned for the precinct, and outlines the responsibilities of different local and state agencies as well as proposed staging for its delivery. The construction of several new apartment buildings has now begun, with development application processes underway for more[17]. Council has indicated that the rapid pace of redevelopment may see redevelopment of residential complexes completed in the next 3-5 years, around 5 years faster than expected. This pace will put pressure on the availability of transport and social infrastructure in the early years of the new neighbourhood that have been planned for delivery over a longer time frame.

Alexandria

Alexandria is undergoing significant urban renewal with rezoning enabling increased residential densities, particularly in the northern part of the suburb. Sites being redeveloped for medium to high density residential development have primarily been on brownfield light industrial sites such as Ashmore and the mixed use areas around Botany Road near Green Square, however the redevelopment of some existing low density residential stock has occurred. Along with the new cafes and creative industries that have been drawn to the area, the renewal of existing housing stock has been part of a gentrification process in the area. Increasing property prices has seen the median house and unit price increase by more than 60% and 30% respectively in the past five years[18] putting increased pressure on the affordability of the area.

Industrial and commercial uses are part of the history in Alexandria, however as residential development achieves higher returns, commercial uses are being pushed out moving job opportunities further away. A large area of southern Alexandria has been designated by the City of Sydney as Southern Employment Lands. In this area, industrial and business park uses are protected to support future employment and economic growth in the area.[19] While residential development is restricted in the Southern Employment Lands, affordable housing can be permissible to enable low income key workers to reside in areas with good access to jobs and transport[20].

Media Review on Alexandria urban renewal perspectives

Online and print media articles were reviewed for aspects of liveability that were reported as subjects or themes in media articles on Alexandria. Keyword searches were carried out on the City of Sydney's media portal, which employs the media monitoring tool *Isentia*. The 'Boolean' keyword searches were: Alexandria / Green Square / Ashmore / livability [sic.] / liveability / urban renewal.

The targeted searches focused on a seven-month period in 2015 (March 24 to September 20), which coincided with a period of sustained public 'chatter' around rising property prices, housing affordability and

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[16] City of Sydney, *Ashmore Precinct Infrastructure Plan*, 2013, op. cit.

[17] City of Sydney, *Residential Monitor, June 2013*, 2013, viewed 17 October 2015,
http://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0005/189842/ResMonitorJun13web_Issue50.pdf

[18] Realestate.com.au, *Alexandria*, 2015, viewed 18 October 2015,
https://www.realestate.com.au/neighbourhoods/alexandria-2015-nsw

[19] City of Sydney, *City of Sydney Employment Lands Strategy 2014-2019*, 2014, viewed 17 October 2015,
http://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/development/planning-controls/draft-plans-and-current-studies/employment-lands#page-element-dload

[20] City of Sydney, *City of Sydney Employment Lands Strategy 2014-2019*, 2014, op. cit.

transit oriented development in Sydney. Key examples from 2012 and 2014 were also analysed for comparison of media focus on similar key themes reported in the past few years.

The review identified relevant articles in media with a focus on Sydney, namely *Sydney Morning Herald* and *Daily Telegraph,* as well as in a number of locality-based media, namely *Inner West Courier, CENTRAL* and *South Sydney Herald.* No relevant media articles in ABC.net.au were identified in the period 24 March to 20 September 2015.

The articles reveal some common themes around the increased development and urban renewal of Alexandria and surrounds. Common constraints communicated in the articles are the increased pressure on physical infrastructure including public transport, road congestion, and water services, as well as social infrastructure including schools, childcare and community services. The issue of coordination between local and state government agencies arises particularly in relation to the provision of services to cater to increased demand. One article mentioned the desire to preserve the heritage and leafy character of Ashmore, which is perceived to be under threat with new development. Pressure on housing affordability was also raised as an issue resulting from the urban renewal and gentrification of the area.

Several articles also cited the benefits of urban renewal particularly at Green Square including increased services, street activation, vibrant communities and parks that are making the area more attractive as a place to live and work.

The key findings are summarised below in Table 1. Relevant extracted quotes are found at Appendix C.

Table 1: key findings of the media review

Locality	Media	Headline	Key themes
Ashmore Estate	*South Sydney Herald*, March 2012	'Ashmore redevelopment lacks planning, say residents'	Constraints: • Physical infrastructure • Social infrastructure • State & local government coordination
Green Square	*Sydney Morning Herald*, 27 July 2014	'Green Square traffic problems'	Constraints: • Physical infrastructure (public transport) • Traffic congestion
Green Square	*Domain* in *Sydney Morning Herald*, 21 October 2014	'Population and prices rocket as Green Square takes off'	Benefits: • Activated streets • Community facilities & activities • Close to city, airport, beaches
Green Square	Sydney Morning Herald, *25 April 2015*	'Inner explosion driving the boom'	Constraints: • Physical infrastructure • Social infrastructure • State & local government coordination
Green Square, Ashmore	*Inner West Courier*, 5 May 2015	'Road set to pay a heavy toll: Report tipping traffic rise'	Constraints: • Traffic congestion (Westconnex) • Reduces potential for further housing

Locality	Media	Headline	Key themes
Ashmore Precinct	*Inner West Courier*, 5 May 2015	They really do give a fig: Residents up in arms over doomed trees'	Constraints: • Character preservation (biodiversity, heritage)
Green Square	*Daily Telegraph*, 16 May 2015	'Lure of the city feeding boom in high-rise living'	Benefits: • New services • New community facilities • New jobs
Central to Eveleigh, Green Square, Olympic corridor	*Sydney Morning Herald*, 12 June 2015	'Certainty vital for Sydney's way ahead'	Constraints: • Certainty for investment • Complex governance
Harold Park, Redfern, Mascot	*Sydney Morning Herald*, 20 June 2015	'Suburban projects offer new lifestyles'	Benefits: • Convenience • Gentrification
Harold Park	*Inner West Courier*, 14 July 2015	'Race on for affordable housing: Lord Mayor says essential workers being forced out'	Constraints: • Affordable housing • Social inclusion
City of Sydney, Green Square	*CENTRAL*, 19 August 2015	'Boom conditions luring developers: Busiest month on record for applications'	Benefits: • Convenience Constraints: • Physical infrastructure • Affordable housing • State & local government coordination
Erskineville, Mitchell Road site	*Daily Telegraph*, 21 August 2015	'Development boom in Erskineville has residents concerned about strain on services and infrastructure'	Constraints: • Physical infrastructure (public transport) • Social infrastructure • State & local government coordination

Conclusion

Alexandria's proximity to several major urban renewal developments has positioned it to experience a significant increase in residential development over the coming years. Urban renewal of surrounding areas has highlighted the delicate balance between population increase and the adequate provision of infrastructure, services and affordable housing. Public sentiment about urban renewal of these areas expressed in the media echoes these challenges. Coordination between local and state tiers of government is required to deliver the services and infrastructure required for these growing density communities, and to address the affordability challenges associated with urban renewal.

3. State and local policy context

Introduction

At a metropolitan level, the NSW Government sets directions and actions to guide Sydney's productivity, environmental management, and liveability through the Department of Planning & Environment. The City of Sydney has a series of policies to shape the development of the City as an important local government area in Sydney, as well as the unique smaller villages that make up the City. These policies encompass strategic visions for the City, to the planning and delivery of physical and social infrastructure in urban renewal areas. A wellbeing indicator framework has also been developed to measure and compare the progress of the City. The policies discussed in this chapter all influence the development of Alexandria and experience for residents and workers of the area.

A Plan for Growing Sydney

A Plan for Growing Sydney is the current metropolitan strategy for Sydney. The strategy states that the NSW Government's vision for Sydney is 'a strong global city, a great place to live', and has four goals to achieve this vision:

1. A competitive economy with world-class services and transport
2. A city of housing choice, with homes that meet our needs and lifestyles
3. A great place to live with communities that are strong, healthy and well connected
4. A sustainable and resilient city that protects the natural environment and has a balanced approach to the use of land and resources[21]

The second goal is also important for Alexandria, as the Government aims to locate more housing in areas close to jobs through urban renewal of areas such as Green Square and Alexandria that are well located and serviced by transport.[22]

Under the third goal, liveability is stated as being "Sydney's continuing competitive advantage in the decades ahead. It will contribute to the city's ability to foster innovation, develop thriving centres and attract investment and skills from across the world."[23] Under this goal, a series of directions are set out which focus on urban renewal, networks of green spaces, active transportation and clean public spaces, and the promotion of heritage, arts and culture. [24]

Green Square is named as a 'strategic centre' in the strategy, which means it is planned to have at least 10,000 jobs and is a priority location for employment, retail, housing and services.[25] While Green Square is a focus for investment and increased development, Alexandria, part of which is included in the Green Square Urban Renewal Area, will receive additional growth as a result of this focus and it location.

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[21] Planning & Environment, *A Plan for Growing Sydney*, NSW Government, 2014, p.2.
[22] Ibid., p.62.
[23] Ibid., p. 80.
[24] Ibid., pp.82-93.
[25] Ibid.

Sustainable Sydney 2030

The City of Sydney as 'green, global and connected' is contained in Council's long-term vision document, *Sustainable Sydney 2030*.[26] Sydney 2030 focuses on ten Strategic Directions:

1. A globally competitive and innovative city
2. A leading environmental performer
3. Integrated transport for a connected city
4. A city for walking and cycling
5. A lively, engaging city centre
6. Vibrant local communities and economies
7. A cultural and creative city
8. Housing for a diverse population
9. Sustainable development, renewal and design
10. Implementation through effective governance and partnerships

Of particular relevance to this research are Strategic Directions Nos. 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9. In the formulation of *Sydney 2030*, residents, workers, visitors and businesses were asked what kind of city they wanted. There was strong response for a city that connects its people to one another.

Sydney 2030 aims for connectedness, including by planning for the City's villages (different areas of the City with distinctive characteristics) to be strong focal points for community life and encourage a sense of belonging.

The City's Green Square Urban Renewal Area is one of these focal points. The City indicates that Green Square will make a significant contribution to *Sydney 2030*'s vision, targets and directions for urban renewal, design excellence, sustainable forms of transport and affordable housing.

City of Sydney Social Policy

The City of Sydney has developed a Social Policy with the aim of improving the social and economic development opportunities of all who reside, work in and visit the City.[27]

Among the principles of the Social Policy are:

- Principle 2.3   Consultation and participation builds community
- Principle 2.4   Diversity is strength
- Principle 2.5   Community safety
- Principle 2.6   Accessible public transport
- Principle 2.9   Providing for healthy communities
- Principle 2.11   Public spaces are for everyone
- Principle 2.12   Fair and integrated decisions

Council's roles relevant to this research include:

- Role 3.2   Helping to build communities
- Role 3.4   Integrating social and cultural factors into decisions and planning

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[26] City of Sydney, *Sustainable Sydney 2030: The Vision*, 2008.
[27] City of Sydney, *City of Sydney Social Policy*, 2006.

- Role 3.6   Provision of community services and facilities

The Social Policy was developed prior to *Sustainable Sydney 2030*. Principles of the Social Policy are incorporated into *Sustainable Sydney 2030*, for instance, in its aim for 'connectedness', and in Strategic Direction 6 (Vibrant local communities and economies). One of the core elements for *Sustainable Sydney 2030*'s Green Square Activity Hub is to ensure substantial social, community and cultural infrastructure is delivered upfront and acts as a catalyst for further development in the area.

Accompanying Social Plans outline how the City implements the Social Policy, with Action Plans contained within the Social Plans. Action areas of the Social Plan relevant to this research include 'managing population growth and change', 'affordable housing', 'quality community facilities and services' and 'community consultation and information provision'.

City of Sydney Indicator Framework

The City of Sydney has commissioned a wellbeing indicator framework for its local government area.[28] The rationale for the project is "the growing consensus in many contexts around the world that traditional economic indicators of 'growth' are not adequate to provide a balanced assessment of 'progress'. It is based on the belief that there is a need to develop a more sophisticated understanding of the many dimensions of progress, wellbeing and sustainability, and more effective ways of measuring 'whether things are getting better'."[29]

The following five 'domains' were adopted for the City of Sydney Indicator Framework:

1. Healthy, safe and inclusive communities
2. Culturally rich and vibrant communities
3. Democratic and engaged communities
4. Dynamic, resilient local economies
5. Sustainable environments

Each of the domains includes measurable targets and benchmarking (comparing outcomes in the City of Sydney LGA with those elsewhere).

The Indicator Framework aligns broadly with *Sydney 2030* and the City's Social Policy. For example, an indicator for the domain 'Dynamic, resilient local economies' is 'travel time to work' (which is an issue that a the City does not control but can influence). This measure aligns with Principle 2.6 in the Social Policy 'Accessible public transport', and aligns with the *Sydney 2030* Target for Sustainability: "By 2030, the use of public transport for travel to work by City Centre workers and City of Sydney residents will increase to 75%, up from 70% in 2008."[30]

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[28] Institute for Sustainable Futures (at the University of Technology, Sydney*), City of Sydney Indicator Framework*, November 2011.

[29] Ibid., p. 8.

[30] City of Sydney, *Sustainable Sydney 2030: The Vision*, 2008, p. 19.

Green Square Draft Infrastructure Strategy and Plan

The City of Sydney is currently preparing an infrastructure plan for Green Square.[31] The Plan covers Alexandria Park, East Alexandria and Beaconsfield, which are within the study area of this research. The Plan outlines the necessary infrastructure that will support the growth of Green Square and southern industrial areas, and seeks to establish when the infrastructure needs to be in place.

Key components of the Plan include:

- Identifying infrastructure priorities, for instance projects to be undertaken in the short term i.e. next five years or in the medium to long term i.e. within five to 20 years;
- Articulating who is responsible for infrastructure delivery;
- Allowing for a range of infrastructure delivery mechanisms;
- Providing for effective co-ordination of infrastructure planning and delivery by all levels of government and the private sector;
- Public availability; and
- Demonstrating the NSW Government's financial commitment to infrastructure delivery.

The City of Sydney is focused on addressing social infrastructure demand, with a particular focus on major urban renewal areas such as Green Square. Social infrastructure delivered by the City of Sydney includes open spaces, public domain, active transport, libraries, stormwater management, and local traffic controls.

The City of Sydney as a local government has an advocacy or partnership role in engaging with relevant state government agencies with regard to meeting demand for social infrastructure. The provision of key facilities and services that are typically the responsibility of NSW Government agencies include; health (primary health care including mental health, GP medical centres, ambulance services), education services (primary and secondary schools, TAFE, universities) and a range of community services including fire services, police and postal services.

The Plan seeks continued partnership with relevant state agencies (such as Department of Education and Communities, and Family and Community Services) to ensure the delivery of infrastructure occurs in an efficient, integrated and timely way.

Ashmore Infrastructure Plan

The City has prepared an infrastructure plan for Ashmore precinct to guide the provision of infrastructure over the next 10 years.[32] The Plan identifies items of infrastructure that are likely to be impacted by development and whether they have been identified in a study, policy or plan. It identifies when the infrastructure is likely to be required, and who is responsible for its provision.

The Plan includes social planning and infrastructure provision (Section 10) such as community facilities, education, childcare, open space and recreation. Among the key issues for Ashmore is high density living and small homes. Community facilities will play an increasingly important role as 'community living rooms' – spaces for people to relax and socialise, as well as for the delivery of social programs and services. To support the liveability of the City and the wellbeing of the community in a high density urban environment,

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[31] City of Sydney, *Draft Green Square Infrastructure Strategy and Plan*, 2015.
[32] City of Sydney, *Ashmore Precinct Infrastructure Plan*, 2015.

the adequate provision of open spaces and community facilities as 'community living rooms' is especially critical.

Infrastructure delivery in the area is focused on new facilities at the Green Square Town Centre, however the connection residents of Ashmore feel to the new community at Green Square and the perception that those facilities meet their localised needs is questioned in the Plan.

Draft Green Square Placemaking Framework

The Green Square Placemaking Framework[33] was developed to create and deliver a Town Centre that has a strong sense of identity and aligned with the community's needs and desires. The key outcome being sought is a strong, resilient and unique community, and a community that actively participates in decisions about its future and contributes to the ongoing development of the Town Centre.

The placemaking priorities identified for Green Square are 'economic', 'community', 'heritage' and 'access, design and environment'.

Actions arising from the 'community' priority relevant to this research include:

- Action 2.2 – Identify, develop and deliver initiatives to foster community connection in and to the Green Square Town Centre and wider Green Square Urban Renewal Area.
- Action 2.3 – Develop a social infrastructure strategy for the Green Square Urban Renewal Area, which addresses demand for a range of facilities and services arising from population growth in the renewal area and the wider City South Area.

Actions arising from the 'heritage' priority relevant to this research includes:

- Action 3.1 – Identify and promote the heritage and history associated with the Green Square Town Centre and wider Green Square Urban Renewal Area.

Conclusion

This chapter has considered the state and local policy context for Alexandria and draws on the elements that support the liveability of the City of Sydney and the wellbeing of the community. This policy context provides a greater understanding of strategies and goals that influence Alexandria's ongoing development and liveability. The metropolitan strategy *A Plan for Growing Sydney* highlights the need to accommodate new dwellings close to jobs through urban renewal of places such as Alexandria. At both the state and local levels, there is a significant policy focus on Green Square as a 'strategic centre' and major area of investment and urban renewal for the City. Policies around Green Square and Ashmore aim to provide adequate physical and social infrastructure that will support and promote healthy, resilient and connected communities.

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[33] City of Sydney, *Draft Green Square Placemaking Framework*, 2014.

4. Literature review

Introduction

The research and theory related to liveability is complex. This emerging concept is used as an outcome or a measure to help shape urban environments and establish values that are important to individuals. This is particularly the case as cities experience urban renewal.

In order to understand the perceptions of liveability by individuals, it is important to identify definitions of liveability from contemporary literature and relate these back to connected concepts including urban renewal and the compact city. Both urban renewal and the compact city imply that an increase in the density of development can be considered a catalyst or an impediment to liveability. The concept of place-making is a typical urban planning response that aims to improve liveability where urban renewal or the compact city requires a more focused effort.

This chapter identifies the concepts that relate to or influence residential satisfaction and therefore, liveability – urban renewal, the compact city, and place-making. The concept of liveability is then discussed and defined.

Urban renewal

Urban renewal comprises the redevelopment and enhancement of underutilised or disadvantaged urban areas[34]. A contemporary definition for urban renewal is provided by SGS Planning and Economics:

> *"Urban renewal is the process of transforming underutilised and sometimes degraded or neglected parts of the city into spaces and built environments that meet contemporary living, working or cultural needs. While urban renewal can happen incrementally as established urban areas are modernised through new investment, it is usually facilitated by a dedicated public effort."[35]*

Over the last 20 years, the redevelopment of industrial areas within growing cities has been a focus of metropolitan planning, both in Australia and internationally. In Australia, urban renewal interventions have been a common theme of social housing policy since the 1990s[36]. Urban renewal can also occur incrementally as the value of land increases over time.

Urban renewal is usually linked with improving social disadvantage within established residential areas of a city. However, the consequences of urban renewal include an increase in land value and "gentrification" that can reduce housing affordability and result in a loss of dedicated affordable or social housing units[37]. Urban renewal that involves the transition of brownfield (industrial) areas does not necessarily impact on existing residents, but without appropriate consideration can result in new housing that is not accessible to low income cohorts.

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[34] Davison, G, Gurran, N, Van den Nouwelant, R, Pinnegar, S, and Randolph, B, *Affordable* housing, urban renewal and planning: emerging practice in Queensland, South Australia and New South Wales, AHURI Final Report, No. 195, Melbourne, 2012.

[35] SGS Economics and Planning, *Best Practice Urban Renewal*; Report to City of Sydney, 2014, p2.

[36] Judd, B. & Randolph, B. 'Qualitative methods and the evaluation of community renewal programs in Australia: Towards a National Framework', *Urban Policy and Research*, Vol. 24, No.1, 2006, pp. 97-114.

[37] Davison *et al*, 2012, op. cit.

Urban renewal is a critical policy tool used to help shape our growing cities. Population growth in Australia is concentrated in the metropolitan areas[38] and this rapid rate of growth has led to continued strong suburban expansion at relatively low densities[39]. This in turn is leading to unsustainable outcomes, including a lack of affordable housing. As cities grow the requirement to meet housing demand becomes a key planning issue. Urban renewal supports the creation of new dwellings. More importantly, it can create a diversity of housing for an aging population and support affordable housing.

Urban renewal can also have large environmental benefits. Built form and transport systems influence energy use, resource use, and waste production. They also affect microclimates and dictate the provision of open space and vegetation. A well planned urban renewal intervention could easily adopt and meet renewable energy targets, water sensitive urban design, or even urban food production or forestry. In terms of sustainability and lifestyle, a well designed denser city is often considered preferable to the current low density characteristic of Australian cities[40]. Notwithstanding, simply increasing housing density does not necessarily equate to improved energy and water outcomes. Rather, these outcomes must be considered during the early planning phases of urban renewal.

Compact city

The compact city concept is a widely discussed concept in the contemporary Australian urban policy arena and has become the planning orthodoxy of the 21st century.[41] Although the term is widely used, there is no single model and the term is often ill-defined.

In one of the earliest references to the concept, Dantzig and Saaty[42] made use of the term 'compact city' when offering a solution designed to address large conurbations and environmental degradation. The theoretical model involved 250,000 people living in a 3.2 kilometre wide, eight-level mixed use climate-controlled cylinder. Peter Calthorpe[43] provided a complementary solution being Transit Oriented Developments (TODs) which sought to reshape urban sprawl into walkable neighbourhoods serviced by public transit.

Neuman[44] offers a critical observation of the compact city movement and questions whether compact cities are sustainable and liveable primarily because social equity was more often than not negatively affected by compactness. This observation is important as it raises questions about how density should be delivered. Density alone will not necessarily lead to better outcomes, unless it is accompanied by better service provision and well designed built environments.

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[38] McGuirk, P & Argent, N, 'Population Growth and Change: Implications for Australia's Cities and Regions', *Geographical Research* Vol. 49 No. 3, 2011, pp. 317–335.

[39] Bunker, R, 'How Is the Compact City Faring in Australia?', *Planning, Practice & Research*, Vol. 29, No. 5, 2014, pp. 449-460.

[40] Newman, P & Kenworthy, J, *Sustainability and Cities: Overcoming Automobile Dependence*, Island Press, Washington DC, 1999.

[41] Troy, L, Easthope, E, Randolph B, and Pinnegar, S, *Renewing the Compact City: Interim Report*, City Futures Research Centre, University of New South Wales, Sydney, 2015.

[42] Dantzig, G.B. & T.L. Saaty T.L, *Compact City: A Plan for a Livable Urban Environment*, W.H. Freeman & Co., San Francisco, 1973.

[43] Calthorpe, P, *The Next American Metropolis: Ecology, Community, and the American Dream*, Princeton Architectural Press, New York, 1993.

[44] Neumann, M, 'The compact city fallacy', *Journal of Planning Education and Research*, Vol. 25, No. 1) 2005, pp.11-26.

Neuman argues that a definition of a compact city does not exist and outlines the following first cut list of characteristics to help guide future research:

> *"(1) high residential and employment densities; (2) mixture of land uses; (3) fine grain of land uses; (4) increased social and economic interactions; (5) contiguous development; (6) contained urban development, demarcated by legible limits; (7) urban infrastructure, especially sewerage and water mains; (8) multimodal transportation; (9) high degrees of accessibility: local/regional; (10) high degrees of street connectivity (internal/external), including sidewalks and bicycle lanes; (11) high degree of impervious surface coverage; (12) Low open-space ratio; (13) Unitary control of planning of land development, or closely coordinated control; and (14) Sufficient government fiscal capacity to finance urban facilities and infrastructure."*[45]

Neumann points out that these characteristics are not exhaustive and do not necessarily make a compact city sustainable or liveable. He argues that many of the features that compact city proponents find appealing (e.g. opportunity and choice) are more dependent on size and scale instead of density or compactness. Further, Neumann suggests that while it is true that aspects of liveability (e.g. greenery, a sense of safety, good schools, and quiet streets) can be accommodated in compact cities, liveability is not only a matter of urban form, it is also a matter of personal preference and he notes that (in the United States) people have long been voting with their feet and moving to the outskirts.[46]

The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) agrees that the term compact city is not always used uniformly and is not always well understood. The OECD also agrees that there is extensive debate as to whether compact city policies result in positive impacts on urban sustainability objectives. In an attempt to define the term, the OECD characterises compact cities as being:

> *"i)* dense and proximate development patterns; *ii)* urban areas linked by public transport systems; and (iii) accessibility to local services and jobs".[47]

The OECD suggest that while people may associate the term with a 'small' city in terms of population or geographical space, metropolitan areas can also be compact if they have the characteristics listed above.[48]

Recently, the compact city concept has had an impact on the suburban fringe of Sydney largely due to long-range metropolitan strategies and housing diversity policies that promote smaller lots and high density housing near public transport. There are further obstacles for the success of a compact city in more established areas as it can be harder to renew areas with existing strata title developments. Importantly, compact cities need to be delivered well and people need to manage their buildings well to avoid issues with poor amenity through deteriorating and poorly managed blocks [49]

It is evident from the literature that the compact city concept has evolved over time from a mooted solution to urban sprawl and environmental degradation to a multi-purpose concept that seeks to contribute positively to sustainability and economic growth. The OECD has noted that some people already feel that the term should be reassessed as it may lack the necessary notion of economic viability, diversity,

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[45] Neumann, M, 2005, op. cit.

[46] Ibid., pp.15-16.

[47] OECD, *Compact City Policies: A Comparative Assessment*, OECD Green Growth Studies, OECD Publishing, 2012, p.15.

[48] Ibid., p.31.

[49] Easthope, H, Randolph, B, *Governing the Compact City: The challenges of apartment living in Sydney*, City Futures Research Centre, University of New South Wales, Sydney, 2008.

creativity and vitality.[50] Urban policy makers in Australian cities will need to continue to adapt to new challenges and sentiments associated with the concept. The NSW Government's metropolitan strategy '*A Plan for Growing Sydney*' embraces the compact city concept by promoting new housing in centres.

Place-making

"What defines the character of a city is its public space, not its private space" [51]

According to Project Public Spaces (PPS) placemaking is both an overarching idea as well as a hands-on approach for improving neighborhoods and cities[52]. The many advocates of this approach argue that placemaking can inspire individuals to collectively reimagine and reinvent public spaces as the heart of every community. With community-based participation at its center, an effective placemaking process uses a local community's assets, inspiration, and potential, and aims to create quality public spaces that contribute to people's health, happiness, and well-being.

Schneekloth and Shibley[53] explain placemaking as transferring the theory and practices of the 'charrette' architectural design method to planning situations. In a charrette style process individuals are taught to structure their knowledge of their own activities and environment and then translate this knowledge into physical designs of new (or reinvented) places.

However, Walljasper[54] and others point out that the designs or masterplans for a neighbourhood improvement effort are less critical to success than other factors such as having a management plan and the support and involvement of the local community.

Advocates like PPS describe placemaking as both a process and a philosophy. Its focus is the people who live, work, and play in a particular space and understanding their needs and aspirations for that space and for their community as a whole. The placemaking process is developed around observing, listening to, and asking questions of these people. This knowledge can then be used to create a shared vision for that place. The vision can then evolve into an implementation strategy, often beginning with small-scale improvements that bring immediate benefits.

Children can also play an important role in neighbourhood placemaking. Sutton and Kemp[55] explored how children could be engaged as active participants in neighbourhood placemaking through a design charrette process. While there are some inherent challenges including the difficulties for all parties in taking on new roles and overcoming institutional hierarchies there are strong arguments for including young people and children in neighbourhood placemaking. The neighbourhood is where children enter public life. This is where they will interact with their peers and other adults outside their families. Ideally the social and physical aspects of neighbourhoods will assist this important aspect of early development by enabling children to try out varied social roles and learn to engage with cultures, lifestyles and belief systems which are different to their own.

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[50] OECD, 2012, p.51, op. cit.

[51] Clos, J, UN Habitat cited in Project Public Spaces, viewed 20 September 2015, http://www.pps.org/reference/ten-strategies-for-transforming-cities-through-placemaking

[52] Project Public Spaces, viewed 20 September 2015, http://www.pps.org/reference/what_is_placemaking/

[53] Schneekloth, L & Shibley R, *Placemaking: the art and practice of building communities*, Wiley, New York, 1995

[54] Walljasper, J, *The Great Neighbourhood Book: A Do-it-Yourself Guide to Placemaking,* Project for Public Spaces Inc, 2007.

[55] Sutton, S & Kemp S, 'Children as Partners in Neighbourhood Placemaking: Lessons from Intergenerational Design Charrettes', *Journal of Environmental Psychology* Vol. 22, 2002, pp. 171-189.

Liveability

In Australian urban centres, there has been a recent policy-driven shift towards higher density living to manage an increasing population and urban growth. Previous studies undertaken[56] [57] have suggested that community attitudes towards more compact forms of living have been unsupportive of the approach, reflective of the entrenched 'Australian dream' of owning a quarter acre block with large backyards and features to suit their lifestyles. However this approach is changing as the time and cost involved in transport rises and cities become more desirable and attractive places to live.

There is also evidence to suggest that current forms of high density living have failed to deliver on a range of factors that influence residential satisfaction and therefore, liveability. These include poor environmental quality, heavy noise and traffic, and a lack of community.[58]

As the need for more compact forms of development evolves and attitudes towards higher density living start to shift, the concept of 'liveability' and the factors that influence it become important for planners and policy makers in designing and managing high quality neighbourhoods and supportive, sustainable cities.[59]

Liveability is a concept that covers many aspects of life and there are a broad range of factors that contribute to making a place liveable. There is no single accepted definition of liveability, most likely because the factors that are considered important for liveability vary for individuals.

Previous research on liveability and high density living suggest that objectives such as social mix and cohesion, housing affordability, choice of housing type, service provision, mobility and transport, health and a sense of safety are key factors in determining perceptions of liveability[60] [61]. Liveability has also been linked to specific features such as residential design, quality and aesthetic features as well as aspects related to the broader neighbourhood such as the quality and amount of open space, vegetation cover, noise and pollution.[62] [63]

This accords with the understanding of liveability in the State of Australian Cities reports that describe liveability as "the degree to which a place… supports quality of life, health and wellbeing for the people who live, work or visit."[64] Here liveability encompasses the physical attributes of cities such as the way they

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[56] Kennedy, R. & Buys, L, *Dimensions of Liveability: A Tool for Sustainable Cities*, Sustainable Building Conference, Madrid, 2009

[57] Bishop, B.J. & Syme, G.J, 'The social costs and benefits of urban consolidation: a time budget/contingent valuation approach', *Journal of Economic Psychology*, Vol 16. 1995, p.26-33.

[58] Thomas, J.A., Walton, D & Lamb, S, 'The Influence of Simulated Home and Neighbourhood Densification on Perceived Liveability', *Social Indicators Research*, Vol.104, No.2, 2011, pp. 253-269

[59] Kennedy and Buys, 2009, op. cit.

[60] Kennedy, R. and Buys, L. 2009, Dimensions of Liveability: A Tool for Sustainable Cities. Sustainable Building Conference, Madrid

[61] Victorian Competition and Efficiency Commission, *Final Report - Inquiry into Enhancing Victoria's Liveability*. 2008, viewed 16 September 2015, http://www.vcec.vic.gov.au/Inquiries/Completed-inquiries/Victorias-Liveability/Final-Report

[62] Ibid.

[63] Howley, P, Scott, M, Redmond, D, 'Sustainability versus liveability: an investigation of neighbourhood satisfaction', *Journal of Environmental Planning and Management*. Vol 52 No. 6, 2009, pp. 847-864

[64] Major Cities Unit, Infrastructure Australia, *State of Australian Cities 2010*, 2010, p.93, viewed 12 September 2015, https://infrastructure.gov.au/infrastructure/pab/soac/index.aspx

are planned or constructed, as well as the social attributes such as political stability, social cohesion, safety, conviviality and social inclusiveness, population diversity and heritage.[65]

The Victorian Competition and Efficiency Commission developed a working definition of liveability in 2008, which encompassed the key elements from various studies and reports. This definition states that liveability "reflects the wellbeing of a community and represents the characteristics that make a place where people want to live now and in the future".[66] This definition closely links liveability to concepts of sustainability.

Liveability and sustainability are two of planning's 'contemporary guiding lights' with the former linked to quality of life and resident satisfaction and the later concerned with ensuring future viability. These two issues need to work in tandem to ensure that liveability principles about the functioning and satisfaction of current day quality of life are used as a platform for future viability.[67]

With this understanding of liveability, increasing policy attention has linked liveability with the global competitiveness of cities at the local through to the international level.[68] [69] [70] Both the NSW Government's metropolitan strategy *A Plan for Growing Sydney* and the City of Sydney's *Sustainable Sydney 2030 Community Strategic Plan* state that liveability underpins Sydney's global competitive advantage, citing elements such as innovation, creativity thriving communities, sustainability and urban renewal as key drivers of liveability.[71] [72]

The desire to understand the relationship between economic, environmental and social aspects of cities and their global competitiveness has triggered an increased interest in the measurement of liveability.[73] Over the past decade the OECD has been developing new ways of measuring societal progress, moving beyond the use of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) as the primary tool measuring both the economic and social progress towards measures of liveability, with tools such as the *Better Life Index*.[74] This has prompted the development of a number of indices by both private and public sector organisations that measure and rank liveability in different cities and regions using a series of indicators, for example *The Economist Intelligence Unit Liveability Index, Mercer Quality Living Index*, the *Property Council of Australia City Liveability Index* and the City's own *Indicator Framework.* Used cautiously, these tools can assist policy makers to track the progress of different factors of liveability and identify areas for policy improvement, benchmarking against other nations, cities or local areas. They can also help citizens to understand the factors that contribute to the liveability of their city, enabling them to engage in the policy processes that shape their experience.

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[65] Ibid.

[66] Victorian Competition and Efficiency Commission, 2008, op. cit.

[67] Ibid.

[68] Major Cities Unit, Department of Infrastructure and Transport, *State of Australian Cities 2011,* 2011, viewed 12 September 2015, https://infrastructure.gov.au/infrastructure/pab/soac/index.aspx

[69] City of Sydney, *Sustainable Sydney 2030 Community Strategic Plan*, 2014, viewed 12 September 2015, http://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/vision/sustainable-sydney-2030/resources

[70] Planning & Environment, NSW Government, *A Plan for Growing Sydney*, 2014, op. cit.

[71] Ibid.

[72] City of Sydney, *Sustainable Sydney 2030 Community Strategic Plan*, 2014, op. cit.

[73] Major Cities Unit, Department of Infrastructure and Transport, *State of Australian Cities 2012*, 2012, p. 205, viewed 12 September 2015, https://infrastructure.gov.au/infrastructure/pab/soac/index.aspx

[74] Major Cities Unit, Department of Infrastructure and Transport, *State of Australian Cities 2011*, 2011, op. cit.

Conclusion

Liveability is a concept that covers many aspects of life and there are a broad range of factors that contribute to making a place better for people, particularly in the face of urban renewal and increased density within cities. Urban renewal and the concept of a compact city are linked with increased density within a city. This can benefit or reduce the physical and social quality of a place. In the absence of dedicated place-making activities, there is a significant risk that urban areas 'get worse' or are perceived as over-developed. That is, they become less liveable.

There is no single accepted definition of liveability, most likely because the factors that are considered important for liveability vary for individuals. Targeted evaluation of specific places before and after change is therefore essential in order to understand 'whether things are getting better'.

5. Methodology

Introduction

Considerable academic research has been undertaken on liveability and change, and much has been reported in local media outlets on these issues. Building on this available information, a central objective of this research was to better understand how individuals think about liveability in their local area and their priorities in a rapidly growing urban community.

Another key objective of this research was to develop and test innovative and repeatable research methods that encourage participation by members of the community who may not typically respond to conventional community engagement processes.

Understanding what makes a place 'liveable' and what attributes of a place are most important to the community is not a simple task. Attempting to measure a community's attitudes towards change in their local area provides a further challenge.

Our approach to researching these challenging questions about liveability and change in Alexandria was developed around undertaking public face-to-face surveys. This method was carefully designed to ensure a random sample of respondents who live and/or work in the local area as well as to minimise the potential for non-response error. In this way the research could reach individuals who may otherwise be unlikely to provide their feedback on issues affecting their local area.

The study area is located in Alexandria, covering the residential areas of Alexandria as well as adjacent areas in Erskineville including Ashmore precinct. The area is bounded by major rail and road infrastructure as shown in Figure 5. This area is representative of an established inner Sydney suburb, which is beginning to see quite rapid growth and change to the surrounding local area. In this respect, the findings from this research will also be relevant to other suburbs with similar characteristics.
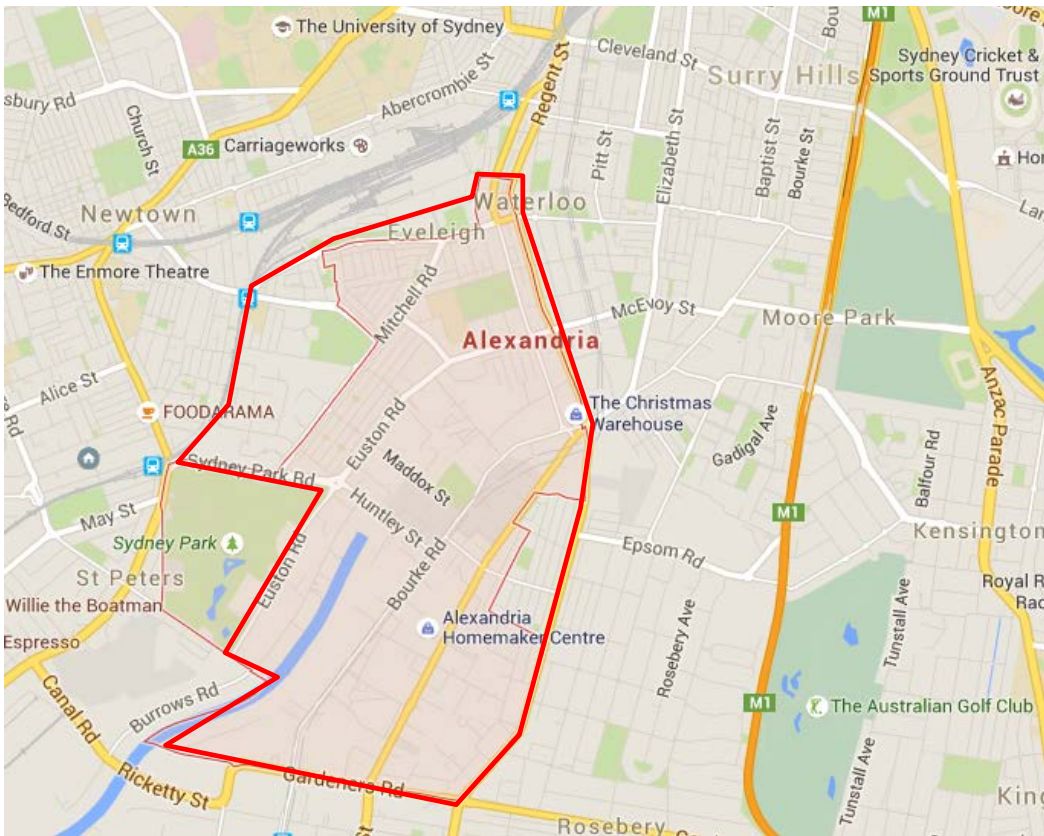
Figure 5: Study area (heavy red boundary) covering the residential areas of Alexandria (shaded red area), as well as adjacent areas in Erskineville

While local advocacy groups and directly affected parties can often present passionate and carefully articulated views on particular ideas and proposals – what do average residents in Alexandria think about their local area? What are their priorities and thoughts about change? These were the questions being explored through the public surveys.

Desktop research from local media outlets (Chapter two) and academic literature (Chapter four) on the key ideas and themes relevant to the research brief also informed the findings which are presented in Chapter six of this report.

The Survey

The face-to-face survey contained 23 questions and was designed to be relatively quick (5 to 7 minutes) and simple (with responses being recorded by each student researcher) to ensure a high response rate was achieved.

Questions within the survey were linked to introduce, then further explore, respondents' opinions around change, liveability and how they would like to be involved in future decisions about their local area.

The survey was also used to rank features of Alexandria that contribute to liveability and identify resident and worker opinions associated with future growth and change in the local area.

Seven open-ended questions were used in the survey to enable discussion and explanation in addition to the selection and ranking questions. These questions enable further analysis of the choices made by respondents particularly given the subjective nature of the research topic.

Key details were requested from respondents, including how long they had lived or worked in the area, whether they had children living at home, employment, gender and age group. These details were used to analyse the survey sample.

The 'Ping Pong Priorities' and 'Rate-o-meter'

Additional activity tools were developed for use in conjunction with the survey.

The 'ping pong priorities' activity immediately followed the filter questions around whether the respondent lived or worked in Alexandria and was over 18 (if there was any doubt). This activity was designed to test how respondents would choose between 16 features of Alexandria and prioritise their four choices in order of importance. This was a somewhat challenging question delivered in an interesting and engaging way through the 'ping pong priorities' exercise. Members of the research team workshopped potential responses to capture different local qualities that were anticipated to be important for local residents and workers. The option was also available for respondents to identify an alternate or other quality, although this option was only taken up by one respondent. The 16 features or qualities of Alexandria presented on ping pong balls were:

Cafes / entertainment	Good for pets	Diversity	The people
Safety	Good for kids	History / heritage	Schools
Value for money	Exercise	Familiarity	Public transport
Cycling	Convenience	Green spaces	Attractive buildings

Figure 6: Survey tool kit

Figure 7: Ping Pong Priorities tool

Figure 8: Rate-o-meter tool

The third part of the survey involved rating Alexandria as a place to live or work. The 'rate-o-meter' was developed as an interactive tool and respondents were asked to place the needle on their rating of Alexandria. The rating scale ranged from 1 being terrible, 3 as okay, and 5 as brilliant. The 'rate-o-meter' was also used by respondents to rescore Alexandria under the scenario that more people were living in the area.

The Pilot Survey

The design of the public survey is critical. Any flaws will have flow on effects that ultimately corrupt or diminish the value of the final results. To eliminate potential issues with the survey tools a pilot survey was conducted on 31 August 2015 at Alexandria Park and Erskineville Oval.

The pilot survey revealed that using the internet-based survey tool *Key Survey* 'live' on a tablet device whilst asking questions, recording answers and using the 'ping pong priorities' and 'rate-o-meter' tools was challenging and awkward, and a number of potential issues were identified:

- Slowed the survey process down considerably given students needed to work in pairs
- Difficult to type accurate responses quickly
- Data cleaning would take extra time
- May be errors due to rushed data entry
- Glare on screen presented a challenge
- Significantly reduced the 'engagement' element of the conversation - it stifled what may be a more relaxed conversation
- The visibility of devices may have been off-putting for some respondents (as opposed to a pen and paper).

The priorities tool worked well during the pilot and it was noted that without the visual aid of the ping pong balls (or a similar list at least) it would have been difficult for respondents to get through the priorities question.

The 'rate-o-meter' tool worked and all respondents engaged well on this. Although there was an apparent lack of desire by respondents to rank even numbers, with 2 of 3 respondents choosing half numbers. As a result the *Key Survey* responses were expanded to enable entry of half scores.

From the pilot survey a number of specific recommendations were made to refine the survey tools:

1. Conformation that we do not wish to audio record the surveys.
2. Use paper surveys which can be carried and managed by one person in conjunction with the activities box. This will significantly improve efficiency and allow more surveys, or in adverse weather be the most efficient use of available time.
3. Data entry to be undertaken immediately at the end of each shift by survey team members (i.e. each team member input their own surveys) to ensure accuracy and reduce the task of data cleaning. This will also use the *Key Survey* tool to best advantage.
4. Keep workers in the survey and alter the weekday survey session to include lunchtime in Alexandria Park, which is likely to yield worker respondents.
5. Keep lid 'off' the activity box to generate interest when moving around, as it seemed to generate some curiosity in surrounding persons.

The Survey Response

The face-to-face survey was undertaken at Alexandria Park and immediately surrounding streets on Saturday 5 September 2015 between 9:00am and 5:30pm, and on Wednesday 9 September 2015 between 12:30pm and 5:30pm. These dates and spread of times were chosen to maximise opportunities to survey both residents and workers from the local area. Erskineville Oval was also used for a short period to conduct the survey. Conducting the surveys in these parks had the distinct advantage that most people were stationary and/or seated and much more likely to agree to participate in the research than, for example, persons walking in the local streets.

In total, 89 local residents and workers participated in the research through the face-to-face surveys. Notably, there was only one recorded non-response (where a person was approached and either lived or worked in the study area and declined the survey). However, it should be acknowledged that a number of persons declined the survey without explanation and without disclosing whether or not they lived or worked in the study area. These situations were not recorded as a non-response as it was not possible to determine whether the person was part of the chosen sample. Notwithstanding this, the survey achieved a very high response rate (almost 99%) largely owing to the simple and creative approach taken by the research team and the locations and times chosen to conduct the survey.

Analysis

Characteristics of the survey sample were compared with available demographic information for Alexandria from the 2011 census and a 'confidence interval' was calculated for the sample. Analysis of the survey questions was undertaken with Microsoft Excel and the outputs from different questions were explored by cross-tabulating with key demographic variables and responses to other survey questions.

Key words and themes within open ended questions were grouped and also cross-tabulated against key demographic variables.

Conclusion

The methods used for this research have enabled the exploration of the highly subjective opinions of local residents and workers on liveability and change within an inner Sydney suburb that is beginning to witness significant growth and change in the local area. The results of this research will also be relevant to other communities with similar characteristics to Alexandria.

The results of the survey are presented in Chapter six of this report.

Some innovative and repeatable techniques (the 'ping pong priorities' and Alexandria 'rate-o-meter') were used in conjunction with the survey and their relative success is also discussed in Chapter six.

Triangulating the survey results with the academic research on liveability and the pressures facing growing communities together with commentary from local media outlets has enabled a more complete understanding of the key issues for growth and change within Alexandria.   The conclusions and recommendations developed from this research are presented in Chapter seven of this report.

Figure 9: Field work

6. Survey results

Introduction

This chapter presents the findings and analysis of the survey results. The chapter includes commentary about the demographics of the survey sample, which are then compared to the 2011 Census data for Alexandria. This is followed by the detailed analysis of the results for each of the different areas of the survey such as; the important features of the local area; perceptions of liveability; preferences regarding change and participation are presented.

Findings and analysis

Survey sample

The complete survey results are provided in Appendix B.

A total of 89 people were surveyed in Alexandria (including pilot respondents). Of those surveyed, 61 respondents (69%) said they lived in Alexandria, 12 respondents (14%) said they both lived and worked in Alexandria, and 16 respondents (18%) said they worked (but did not live) in the area.

Based on a survey sample of 73 (workers excluded), a population of 6,172 in the 2011 Census[75] (people under the age of 19 excluded), a proportion of 50%, and a confidence level of 95%, the Confidence Interval (CI) is 11.47.

As shown in Figure 9, the most populous age bracket was 30-39 with 27 respondents (37%) living in Alexandra falling into this age bracket. The worker population was marginally younger with the highest proportion (7 respondents, 44%) falling into the 20-29 age bracket. No one under the age of 18 was surveyed, but of those who lived in Alexandria, 27% had children living with them. Whilst not recorded, it was observed that a high proportion of respondents had a dog.
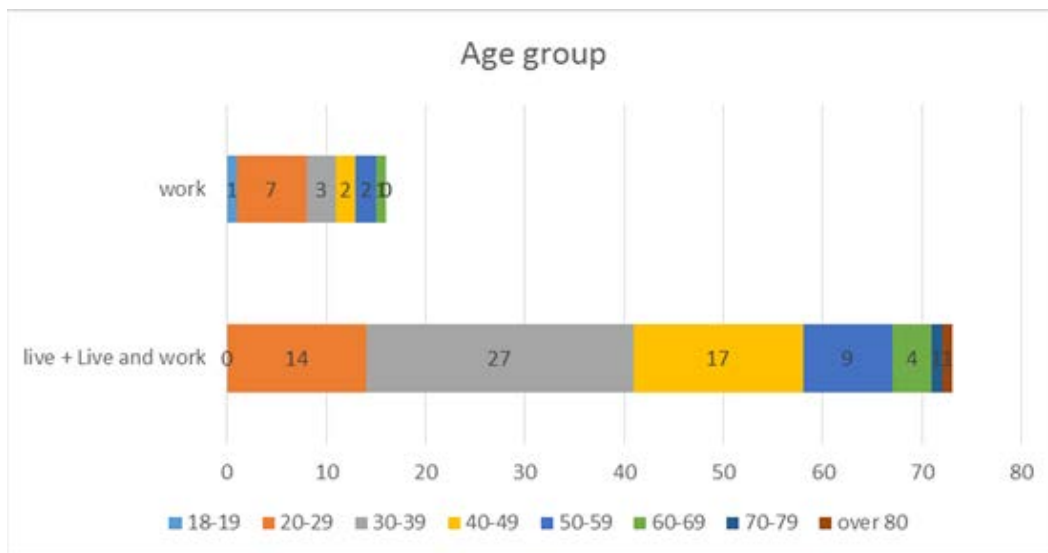
Figure 10: *Survey Sample (Age group)*

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[75] Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Alexandria (SSC10022) 2011 Census QuickStats*, 2011, viewed 4 October 2015, http://www.censusdata.abs.gov.au/census_services/getproduct/census/2011/quickstat/SSC10022?opendocument&navpos=220

The employment status of residents showed 54 respondents (74%) work full-time, 4 respondents (6%) work part-time, 2 respondents (3%) unemployed, 10 respondents (14%) not in the workforce and 3 respondents (4%) being full time students. Of those who work in Alexandria, 15 work full-time with only one working part time. (Refer to Figure 10).
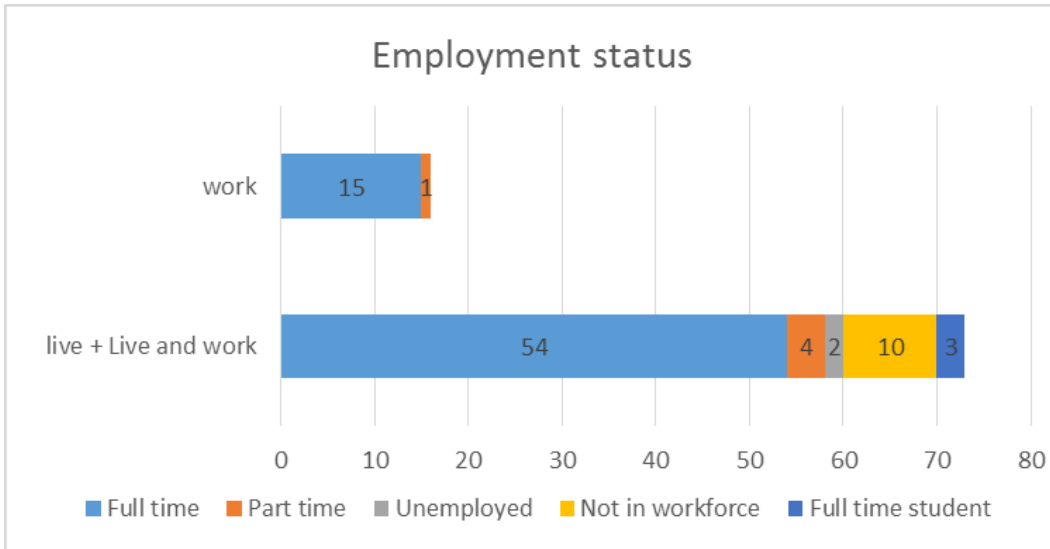
Figure 11: *Survey Sample (Employment status)*

Both established and new residents were surveyed with 32 respondents (44%) living in the area for 5 years or more, 19 respondents (26%) living in the area between 2 and 5 years, and 22 respondents (30%) living in the area for less than 2 years. Of those respondents that only worked in the area, 12 respondents (75%) had worked in the area for 5 years or less (refer to Figure 11).
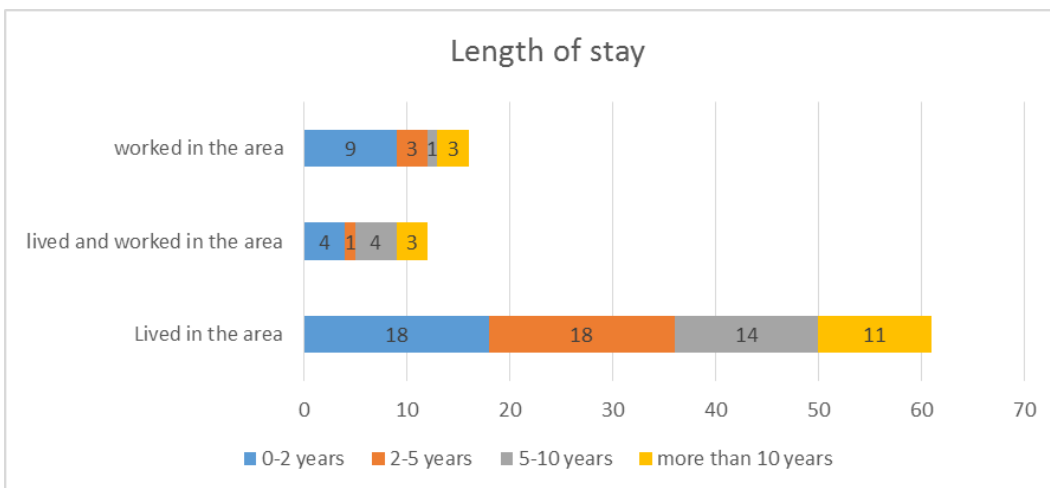
Figure 12: *Survey Sample (Length of stay)*

A high proportion of respondents who lived in the area own their own home, with 62% of respondents owning their own home and 38% renting their home (excludes workers). Figure 12 (below) demonstrates that of those surveyed (who lived in the area) 38 (52%) live in apartments, and 35 (48%) live in houses, townhouses or other types.
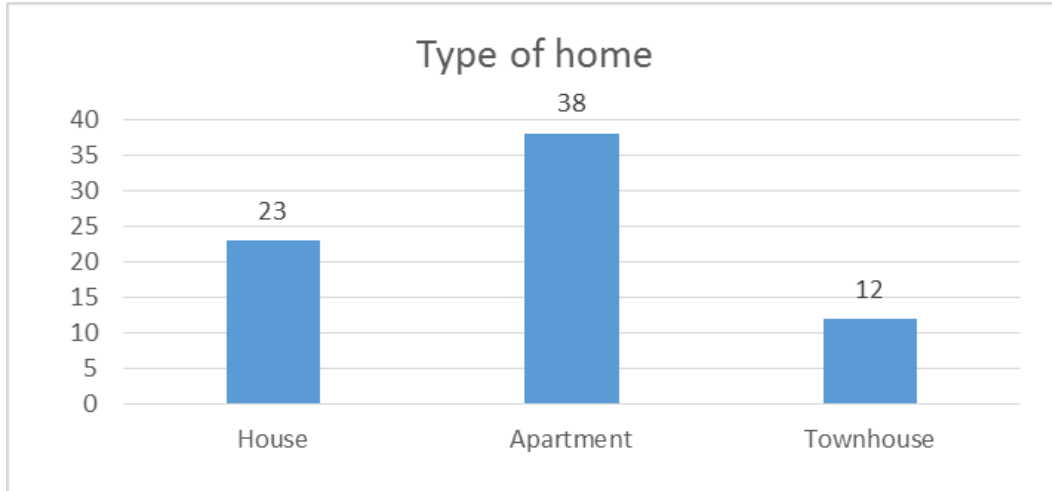
Figure 13: *Survey Sample (Type of home)*

Table 2 below provides a comparison between the 2011 Census and the research survey sample. The survey sample broadly reflects the 2011 Census population.

There were a greater proportion of female respondents (48 respondents or 54%) than the 2011 Census (48.2%). The proportion of residents surveyed in Alexandria who work full-time generally reflects the 2011 Census. A significantly higher number of surveyed residents owned their home (62%) when compared to the Census (52%). A more even split of surveyed residents lived in apartments (52%) and houses/other (48%) than in the Census population where nearly 60% of residents live in apartments.

Table 2: Comparison between the 2011 Census and the research sample.

Demographic Measure		2011 Census[76]	Research Sample
Gender	Female:	48.2%	54%
	Male:	51.8%	46%
Age	30-39 bracket:	29.7%	37%
	Median age:	33	
Employment Status	Full-time:	76.2%	74%
	Part-time:	16.9%	6%
	Unemployed:	3.2%	3%
	Away from work:	3.8%	14%
	Full-time student:	N/A	4%
Housing Tenure	Own home:	52%	62%
	Rent home/other:	48%	38%
Housing Type	Apartment:	59.3%	52%
	House/other:	40.7%	48%

Most important features in the local area

Respondents were asked to identify the four most important features in the local area for them (Question 5). Having done so, they were asked to rank their selected four features in order of importance (Question 6); respondents ranked their shortlist from 1 (most important) to 4 (less important) using the 'ping pong priorities' tool.

The top four features identified as most important in the local area were convenience (50 responses), cafes/entertainment (47), public transport (41) and green spaces (40), as shown in Figure 14 below. More than 30% of the respondents also identified diversity (34), the people (33) and good for pets (27) as being important. A summary of responses to all features is provided in Table 3.

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[76] Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2011, op. cit.
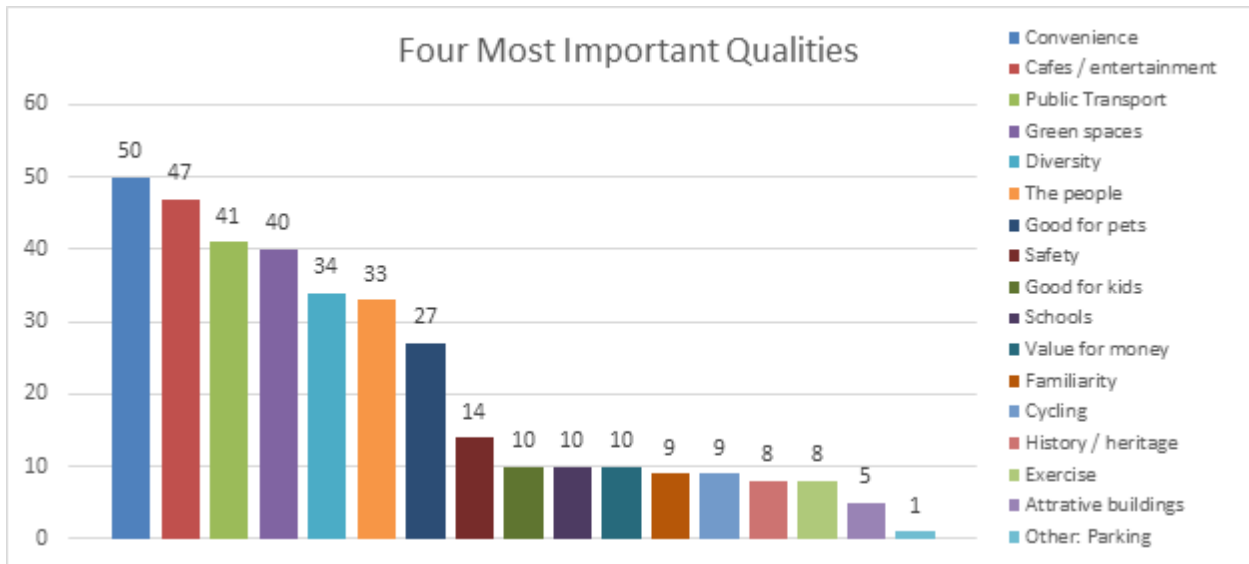
Figure 14: *Number of respondents identifying the four most important features in the local area*

Table 3: Summary of responses to all features

Important features	Out of total respondents	Responses Qualitative
		Qualitative
Convenience	50 (55%) 25 ranked as 1 (28%)	• Easy access to/from work (Figure 15 shows a *word cloud* of this concept) • Good access to public transport including being close to Redfern train station • Of the 50 respondents, 32 (64%) lived, 10 (20%) worked, and 8 (16%) lived and worked in the area.
Cafes/ entertainment	47 (53%) 6 ranked it as 1 (7%)	• Services are local, convenient to get to and provided places to socialise • Of these 47 respondents, 36 (77%) lived, 8 (17%) worked, and 3 (6%) lived and worked in the area.
Public transport	41 (46%) 13 ranked it as 1 (5%)	• Some are not car-owners and the majority relied on public transport to commute to work and access to the CBD • 6 respondents mentioned commuting by train (Redfern station mentioned by 4 of the 6) • Not all convenient access to/from work was by public transport; some drove, cycled and walked • Of these 41 respondents, 30 (73%) lived, 7 (17%) worked, and 4 (10%) lived and worked in the area.

Green spaces	40 (45%) 6 ranked it as 1 (7%)	• Related to respondents' sense of wellbeing, e.g:
		   o *"The presence of green spaces let me get out and enjoy the sunshine. Parks are good for relaxation, for pets and kids as well as mental health"*
		   o *"[Green space] has a huge impact on my day. I use the spaces in the morning, lunch and afternoon*
		 • Related to 'good for pets' and 'good for kids' (see below).
		 • Of these 40 respondents, 27 (68%) lived in the area, 9 (23%) worked, and 4 (10%) lived and worked in the area.

Important features	Responses	
	Out of total respondents	Qualitative
Diversity	34 (38%) 10 ranked it as 1 (11%)	• Enhanced their experience of the area because of the mix of people, summed up in a response: *"Diversity brings 'richness' to the community. Alexandria has diversity in age, culture, social issues, socio-economic status and people's thinking. Working with community groups diversity is great."* • Only one of these 10 respondents referred to diversity of the physical environment and services; all the rest referred to a diverse social and cultural environment. ○ It is assumed that they have social interaction with others who live and/or work in Alexandria: *"I have had good friends and neighbours for many years."* Diversity is related to 'the people' (see below).
The people	33 (37%) 10 ranked it as 1 (11%)	• Referred to *"a good broad cross section of people. There is a mix of ethnicities, age, income, and there are GLBT people. It is relaxed, easy going and tolerant."* • Others referred to family and friends in the area, giving them *"a sense of belonging"* and *"connectedness to the community"*. • However, one respondent sensed *"cliques are emerging in the area"* and that *"the community is divided."* • About 37% of the respondents included diversity (33) and the people (34) as two of the four most important features. 22.5% of the respondents (20) gave diversity and the people the top ranking. From the qualitative responses describing how diversity and the people improved their experience of the area, it is clear that these two features were closely related to the social environment and respondents' interaction with others in the area. • Of these 34 respondents, 13 (38%) lived, 12 (35%) worked, and 9 (27%) lived and worked in the area.
Good for pets	33 (37%) 10 ranked it as 1 (11%)	• Many of the 9 respondents referred to dogs and parks as an improvement of their experience of the area, presumably because nearly all the 89 surveys were conducted at Alexandria Park. • One respondent mentioned Alexandria Park, Sydney Park and Erskineville Park. Two respondents related pet-ownership and social interaction, presumably because they met other dog-owners at off-leash parks.
Safety	14 (16%) 3 ranked it as 1 (3%)	• All three respondents referred to safety outdoors and in the public environment such as parks and walking to the train station. • 7 (50%) of these 14 respondents worked in the area and one lived and worked in the area.
Good for kids	10 (11%) 1 ranked it as 1 (1%)	• As one respondent said they *"can live locally and not have to travel elsewhere for parks. There are local community groups and parent groups. It takes a village to raise a child."* This respondent owned and lived in a townhouse and worked (part-time) in the area.
Schools	10 (11%) 4 ranked it as 1 (5%)	• Of those who ranked 1 for schools, two respondents mentioned schools and local convenience, while one said: *"Because I'm planning a family."*

Important features	Responses	
	Out of total respondents	Qualitative
Value for money	10 (11%) 1 ranked it as 1 (1%)	• *"Cheap rent. Lifestyle…affordable cafes and entertainment. Proximity to the city."* Of the 10 respondents who chose value for money as one of the four most important features, 6 were renters of apartments.
History/ heritage	8 (9%) 1 ranked it as 1 (1%)	• *"Interested in Australian history and likes living in an area where there is history."*
Familiarity	9 (10%)	• Not chosen as top rank
Cycling	9 (10%)	• Of these 9 respondents, one worked in the area. • Not chosen as top rank
Exercise	8 (9%)	• Of these 8 respondents, one worked in the area. • Not chosen as top rank
Attractive buildings	5 (6%)	• Of these 5 respondents, two worked in the area • Not chosen as top rank
Parking	1	• The male respondent owned a house and has lived in the area for more than 10 years.

Figure 15: *Word cloud relating convenience to transport and being close to work and the city*

The results to the important features question were also computed by giving values to the ranking. For the feature ranked as one, it was given a score of 4, while 3 was given to the second ranked, 2 for the third, and 1 to the fourth ranked feature. The arithmetic mean was then computed to achieve a better weighting of the results.

Looking into different group responses using these weighted average, there was small variance of the ranking the important features. For those living in the area, their top 4 most important features of the area were (1) convenience, (2) public transport, (3) cafes/entertainment and (4) diversity. For those living and working in the area, they ranked (1) convenience, (2) cafes/entertainment, (3) the people and (4) diversity as important features. Lastly, those working in the areas considered (1) convenience, (2) green space, (3) cafes/entertainment and (4) public transport as the top most essential features. It is interesting to note that diversity and the people are the qualities that are most considered by the respondents who are actually living as well as living and working in the local area, which may be factors that are associated with feeling of belonging to the place.

Only one respondent chose to rank a feature of liveability that was not presented on a ping pong ball, with their chosen feature being 'parking'. The low uptake by respondents of the offer to rank features not provided to them and the common reference to parking being an issue in Alexandria in open ended questions could suggest that respondents were influenced by the features of liveability chosen by the researchers to be shown on the ping pong balls. Had other features been presented on the ping pong balls, the results may have provided different insights into important features of liveabiltiy.

Perceptions of liveability

Question 8 asked respondents to rate Alexandria using the 'rate-o-meter' tool, with almost half of respondents rating the area between 'okay' and 'brilliant' (or 4 on the scale). There was a tendency towards the higher rating of 'brilliant' overall, as shown in Figure 16.
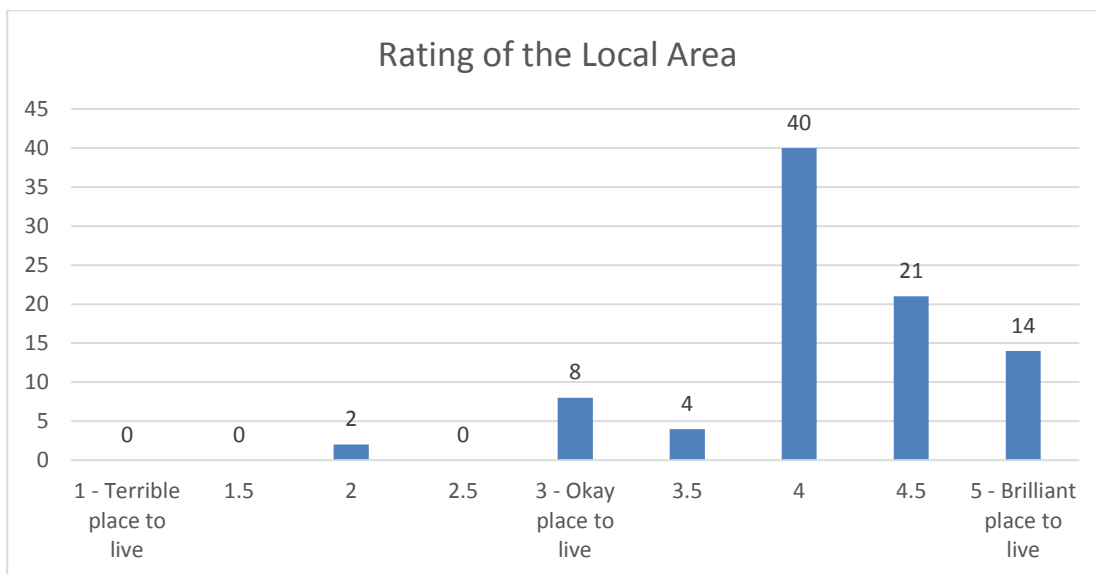
Figure 16: Rating of the local area (total number of respondents).

There was generally a higher rating given by respondents that lived in the area, with only five of 61 respondents that lived in the local area rating Alexandria as 3.5 or 3. There were no ratings below 3 for respondents that lived in the area. For respondents that both lived and worked in the area, there was also a low proportion (two of 12) that rated the local area at 3 ('okay'), with the reminder rating the local area 4 or above. Conversely, seven of 16 respondents that only worked in the local area rated Alexandria at 3.5 or below. This group averaged the lowest rating, including two ratings of 2.

This indicates that respondents' perception of liveability is related to living in, and an attachment with, the local area. This feeling of attachment can be further evidenced by looking at owners and renters within respondents that live in the area or live and work in the area. Of the 45 (51%) respondents that owned their home, all but one rated the local area between 4 and 5. For the 28 renters, the average rating was 3.75.

Apartment dwellers considered the local area slightly less liveable than respondents living in a house or a townhouse. However, the length of time respondents in any dwelling type had lived (or worked) in the area did not appear to correlate with the rating.

Demographic factors, such as age or gender did not appear to correlate with the rating.

Question 9 asked respondents to consider what would make the area better. Improvements in parking, public transport, and traffic were consistent themes that emerged. 23 (26%) respondents raised traffic improvements as having an influence on making the area better. Additional provision for parking and improved public transport was important to 12 (13%) and 14 (16%) of respondents respectively. Seven respondents identified active transport (pedestrian and/or cycle) improvements as important.

Respondents commonly identified the need for more entertainment and services to improve the area. For example, 13 (14%) respondents cited the need for more cafes or entertainment establishments. There were a range of social services for the area suggested by 14 (16%) respondents, including chemists (four specific mentions), open space, public toilets (three specific mentions), cultural facilities, schools, and local shops. Several respondents cited facilities for dogs (off leash areas, or a 'dog beach').

Housing affordability was another area of concern, with 10 (11%) respondents indicating that improved housing affordability would make the area better.

Responses related to the density of residential development indicated a perception that new development was contributing to a reduction in liveability (13 (14%) respondents). A perception of more people and apartments had a clear nexus with traffic issues and lack of public transport. There was a strong emphasis on limiting future residential development and maintaining the existing sense of community. For example, one participant stated:

"I feel like we have reached the point of overdevelopment. It is destroying the sense of community. There is too much property investment occurring, which is contributing to a transient community. Parking is an issue. I feel like it is okay for visitor numbers but there is not enough parking for residents."

This theme is also revealed in the word grab for the responses to this question, shown in Figure 17.

Notably, only respondents that lived (or lived and worked) in the area raised issues related to the density of residential development.

Figure 17: Word cloud for responses to survey question 9 – What do you think would make the area better?

Perception of change

The survey asked a number of questions related to the changes people have noticed in Alexandria and how these changes have impacted on people's perception of Alexandria as a place to live and/or work.

Question 10 asked respondents to identify what changes they have noticed in Alexandria and how those changes have impacted on them. Many people identified both positive and negative changes within Alexandria.

In total, 72 of the 89 respondents (81%) identified at least one negative change. The issue that was mentioned by the largest number of respondents was increased traffic congestion. 28 respondents (31%) identified this as a negative change they had noticed in the area. There were two other issues mentioned by a large number of respondents: lack of available parking (14 respondents or 16%); and the number and/or height of apartment buildings (13 respondents or 15%). Other changes respondents felt detracted from the area included an increase in population (eight respondents or 9%), increase in house prices (three respondents or 3%), gentrification (three respondents or 3%), overcrowding on public transport (two respondents or 2%) and a loss of green space (two respondents or 2%).

At least one positive change noticed within the area was identified by 58 of the 89 respondents (65%). The overwhelming response to this question was an increase in the number of cafe/ restaurant / entertainment offerings. This was the largest response of any change identified (positive or negative), mentioned by 31 respondents (35%). Other changes respondents felt had enhanced the area included an increase in the population and therefore lively atmosphere (six respondents or 7%), increase in house prices (four respondents or 4%), more bike paths, quality of green spaces and enhanced feelings of safety (three respondents or 3% each), improved streetscape and better public transport (one respondent or 1% each).

There were a number of respondents who mentioned that Council had made improvements to the local area. One respondent reported for example *"It is evident that Council has made efforts to provide green spaces, cycleways, etc. These have enlivened public spaces."* These respondents have all lived in the area for greater than 5 years.

Three of the 89 respondents (3%) felt there had been little change in the area, and eight respondents (9%) felt they couldn't comment as they hadn't lived or worked in the area for long enough (less than two years) to identify significant change.

The findings for this question suggest that the protection and enhancement of green spaces is an important consideration for the City of Sydney when planning for an increasing population. The City could also explore the different ways in which high density living can be achieved without large apartment blocks dominating the landscape. Support for small businesses and events that positively contribute to the vibrancy and sense of community within Alexandria could also be explored.

Question 11 asked people to identify whether or not an increase in the number of people living in the area would change the rating they gave to Q8, which asked respondents to rate Alexandria as a place to live and/or work. 60 of the 89 respondents (67%) indicated that an increase in population would change their rating. It should be noted that while some people answered "yes" to this question, when asked to provide their new rating of Alexandria as a place to live for Question 12, the rating did not change. These respondents did provide comment however on how the changes could impact their rating.
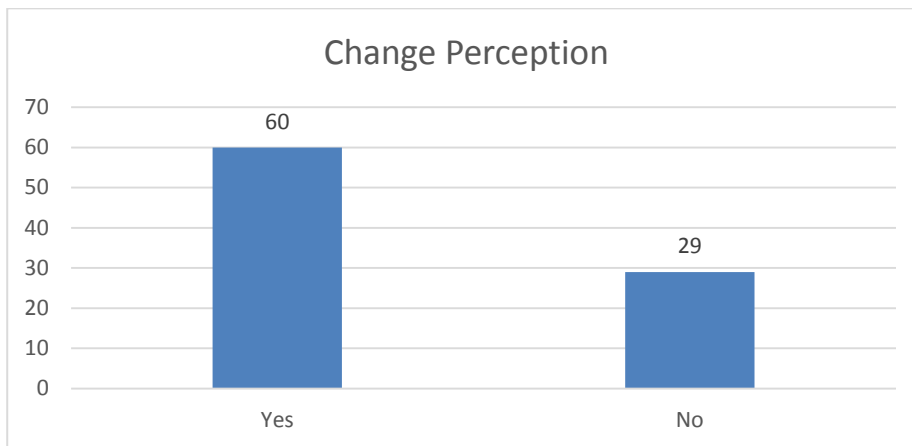
Figure 18: Response to Question 11 - whether or not an increase in the number of people living in the area would change the rating they gave to Q8

Question 12 asked respondents to indicate what their new rating of Alexandria would be (if they had indicated their rating would change) and Question 13 asked respondents to explain why.

Of the 60 respondents who indicated their rating would change, 39 (65%) indicated the change would be negative, i.e. their rating would reduce, 13 (22%) indicated their rating of Alexandria would increase and 8 respondents (13%) indicated it would depend.

Of those who indicated they would rate living in Alexandria lower with an increase in population, most reduced their rating by 1. Reasons given to explain why their rating would reduce included:

- An increase in traffic congestion;
- Overcrowding on public transport;
- Concern that infrastructure would not keep pace with the increased population;
- More pressure on parking;
- Negative impacts on quality of life; and
- Loss of character / amenity of the area.

These findings suggest there is a need for infrastructure to be delivered in a timely manner to support an increase in population. The responsibility for the delivery of this infrastructure rests with a number of agencies, including the City of Sydney and state government departments. A strong partnership approach is required to facilitate the coordinated delivery of infrastructure and to ensure stakeholder expectations are managed, and are realistic and achievable.

Of those who indicated their rating of living in Alexandria would improve, most increased their rating by 0.5. Reasons given to explain why their rating would improve included:

- Additional services and amenities would be provided for the increasing population;
- Economic benefits;
- Improvements in the number of cafes / bars;
- Enhanced social interaction; and
- A greater sense of community.

Those that indicated any change in their rating "would depend", indicated this was related to whether or not infrastructure and services were able to 'keep pace' with the increasing population.

22 of the 31 respondents (71%) who had lived in Alexandria for less than two years indicated either a positive change, or that their rating would not change with an increase in population. 24 of these respondents (77%) were renting. These findings suggest that the newer residents of Alexandria were more open to change and saw an increase in population as being positive for the area. There was no other apparent link between the findings for different groups.

Preferences on participation

Question 14 asked respondents whether it was important for them to be involved in future decisions affecting the local area, and Question 15 asked them why. These questions were designed to determine the relative importance given by residents and workers to participating in local decisions made by the City of Sydney, state agencies, developers and others in their local area. Asking these questions of a random sample including persons who may be difficult to engage using conventional consultation methods was important to the research objectives and may assist in the development of future engagement strategies.

The majority of respondents 51 of 89 (57%) considered that it is important to be involved in future decisions affecting their local area. A further 28 (13%) of respondents put qualifications on the importance of their future participation such as "only for big decisions that directly impact" upon them.

Notably, only 15 of 37 (41%) of respondents who "rent" rather than "own" considered it important to be involved in future decisions affecting their local area (Figure 19).
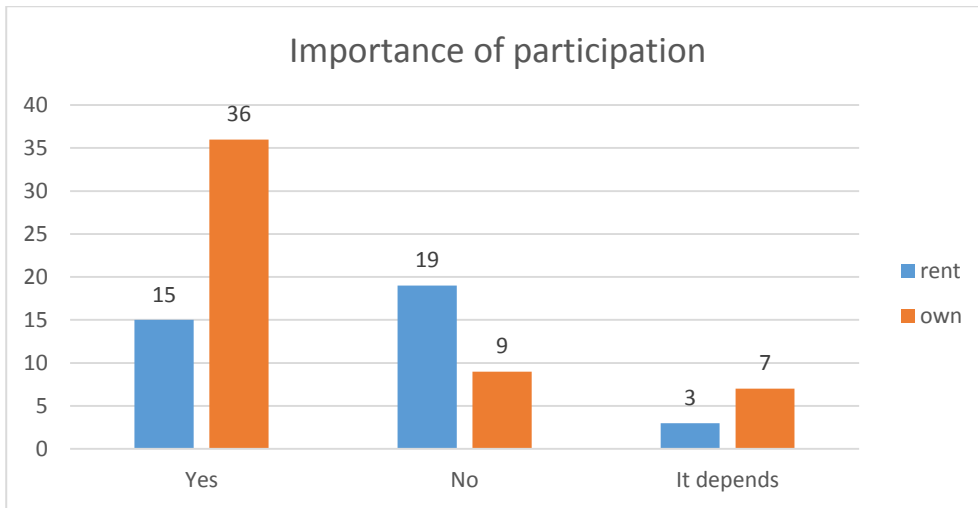
Figure 19: *Importance of participation on decisions affecting the local area*

Moreover, 19 of the 28 respondents who felt it was not important to be involved in future decisions were renting their home / apartment, and 14 of these had lived in the area for less than two years. Several of these responses suggest a lesser level of attachment to the local area with comments such as *"won't be here long"* and *"I don't feel strongly about decisions affecting the area because I do not own a home here".*

Other respondents who answered 'no' to this question provided reasons such as *"have no time to be involved"* or that *"involvement does not have much impact".*

Overall the responses indicate a willingness and expectation amongst most local residents and workers to be involved in the decisions that affect their local area. This view was strongest for residents who "own" their home or apartment and highlights the importance of engaging with homeowners in future engagement activities. Moreover, many respondents offered examples of how they have previously been involved in such issues and this is further explored in Question 16.

Question 16 asked how respondents would like to be involved in decisions affecting their local area. While the majority of resident and worker respondents considered it important to be involved in decisions that affected their local area, their preferences for how to be involved were diverse. Often engagement strategies will utilise a variety of different communication media. Notwithstanding this individuals have preferences in how they wish to be contacted, involved and engaged in any future process about their local area.

Figure 20 below reveals that individual respondents had different preferences for involving themselves in decisions affecting their local area. In this question respondents were able to provide more than one method of how they would like to be involved or engaged in future issues. The age of respondents can be linked to their preference of engagement tools. As shown in Figure 20 a greater proportion of respondents aged between 18 and 39 prefer internet based tools such as social media, websites and email, whereas those aged over 60 prefer letters / newsletters and meetings / community forums. The results from this question highlight that for an engagement strategy to be successful it must incorporate a range of communication styles and forms to match the preferences of a diverse community.
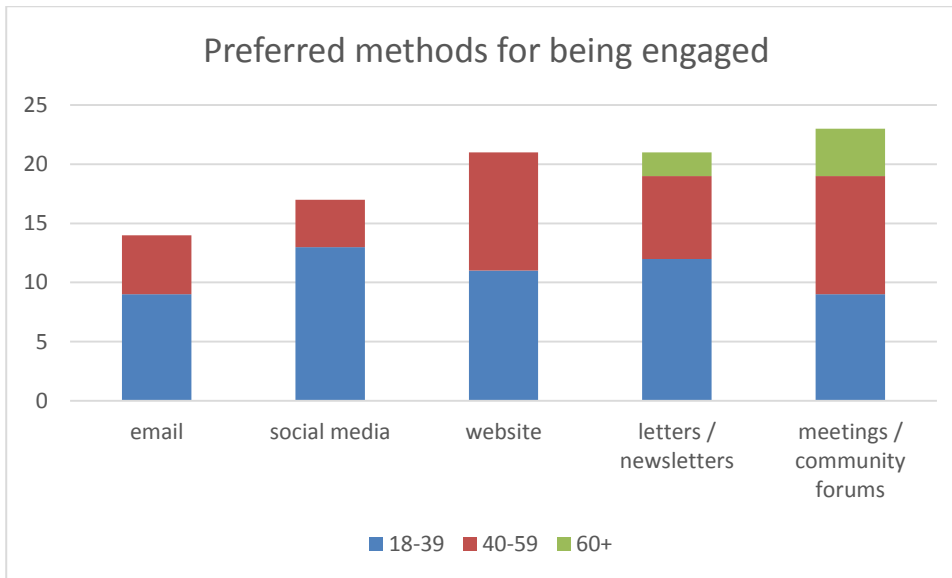
Figure 20: *Participation Preferences*

Additional Comments

When asked if they would like to make any additional comments at the conclusion of the survey, 24 respondents (27%) volunteered additional comments. These comments included both positive and negative sentiments towards the area in roughly equal proportions.

Almost all of these respondents lived in the area (23 of the 24 respondents), and five both lived and worked in the area. 15 respondents were owners of their home and eight were renters (excludes the one worker). The respondents of this question were representative of the survey sample in terms of housing tenure and housing type.

Of the positive comments made by respondents, there were several (5) mentions of the great green spaces in the area including thoughts such as "*the green leafy areas are good for kids*" as well as "*I love the landscaping in this area. The Council do a really good job of maintaining the landscaping and I hope they keep this up.*" Another respondent said they wanted more trees in the park.

Sentiment about the City's role in the area was positive, with three respondents commenting on their work. One respondent commented, "*It is a great village, and the last true village in the City of Sydney area.*" One respondent cited that the Christmas event put on by the City was great for the community.

There was one comment about the diversity of the area that gave Alexandria a unique feel compared to other areas of Sydney. While not recorded, it was observed that several respondents in Alexandria Park felt a connection and familiarity with many other residents, saying hello to passers-by who were familiar to them while the survey was being carried out.

Negative sentiments conveyed through the additional comments were predominantly focused around transport with eight comments that included concerns about the adequacy of public transport in the area, traffic congestion on the road network, and the need for the cycle network to be connected up.

Two respondents also raised concern about the protection of heritage in the area as new development occurs, with one stating "*the heritage of the area is important to fight for.*"

Conclusion

In processing the results, there were various findings that emerged. Key findings included that local residents generally value features such as convenience, cafes/entertainment, public transport, and green spaces in Alexandria. A majority of the respondents rated Alexandria in the highly leading towards brilliant as a place to live in. Residents and workers appeared fully aware of the changes happening and generally expressed negative views of the current developments. However, there are still those few hopeful respondents that see positive changes or potential in the area. In addition, a majority of the respondents deemed it important to be part of future decisions in Alexandria.

Based on the quantity and quality of the results received, the method and design of the survey proved to be an effective way of extracting the perceptions of the local residents and workers on liveability in Alexandria. The approach was able to identify common perceptions of this a highly relative concept. The next chapter discusses the conclusions and recommendations of the research.

7. Conclusions and recommendations

This research examined residents' and workers' perceptions of liveability in Alexandria as well as their views on changes in the area resulting from increased development density. It also identified the preferences of residents and workers for participation in decision-making affecting Alexandria. The research was undertaken using a face-to-face survey that included the use, and testing, of innovative methods ('ping pong priorities' ranking tool and the 'rate-o-meter') to encourage participation.

Liveability in Alexandria

The 'ping pong priorities' tool together with the 'rate-o-meter' allowed insights into different aspects of Alexandria as either catalysts or impediments to liveability.

The top four features in Alexandria identified as most important by residents and workers were **convenience, cafes/entertainment, public transport** and **green spaces**.

Convenience in terms of easy access to/from work in the city was identified as the most important aspect of liveability in Alexandria. Respondents identified a clear nexus between convenience and good access to public transport, with 56% of the respondents (50) choosing convenience as one of the four most important features in the local area, and 46% of the respondents (41) choosing public transport.

Cafes/entertainment and green spaces were identified as places that improved respondents' experience of Alexandria and as places to socialise.

Important aspects of liveability in Alexandria were associated with both the socio-cultural environment and the built environment. The City of Sydney has the potential to directly shape or influence some aspects of the socio-cultural environment and the built environment. For example, aspects such as 'diversity' and 'the people' were identified as important by over 35% of the respondents. These are policy areas that the City of Sydney can shape and influence, such as through encouragement of the provision of diverse housing types and sizes as well as through provision of community services, facilities and spaces. While it is the responsibility of NSW Government agencies to provide education services such as schools, the City of Sydney can enhance liveability in Alexandria by making it 'good for kids' through diverse housing types and sizes, community childcare services, public play areas and child-friendly places. Enhancing the built or natural environment such as parks can also enhance the social environment, for example, the 'green spaces' are 'good for pets' and for 'exercise' where residents also socialise, meet 'the people' and enhance 'familiarity'.

Aspects of liveability in Alexandria that are important to residents and workers can be broadly divided into policy areas a local government can directly shape, and policy areas a local government does not directly control but could influence.

Aspects of liveability City of Sydney can directly shape

Cafes/entertainment
Green spaces
Diversity
The people
Good for pets
Safety
Good for kids
History/heritage
Familiarity
Cycling
Exercise
Attractive buildings
Parking

Aspects of liveability City of Sydney does not directly control but could influence

Convenience
Public transport
Schools
Value for money

Liveability in Alexandria was rated highly, with almost half of respondents rating the area much closer to 'brilliant' than 'okay' (or 4-5 on the scale). In fact, there was a tendency towards the higher rating of 'brilliant' overall. Liveability in Alexandria was rated higher by residents than by workers. All residents who participated in the survey rated liveability as 'okay' or better (minimum 3 on the scale). Residents who owned their home rated the local area between 4 and 5, while the average rating given by renters was 3.75. This indicates that respondents' perception of liveability is related to living in, and an attachment to, the local area and also home tenure or length of residence.

When asked what would make the area better, improvements in parking, public transport and traffic were consistent themes. Clearly, improvements in transport infrastructure will improve perceptions of liveability in the area. Other consistent themes for improvement included:
- The need for more entertainment (e.g. cafes);
- The need for more social services/infrastructure (e.g. chemists, open space, public toilets, cultural facilities, schools and shops);
- Improved housing affordability; and
- Limiting future residential development.

In the qualitative responses, some respondents expressed satisfaction with what the City of Sydney is doing in Alexandria, for example the provision of open spaces, cycleways and community events like Christmas carols. These findings affirm the City of Sydney's existing policies and strategies to protect and enhance liveability in Alexandria.

Changes affecting liveability in Alexandria

Respondents identified both negative and positive changes affecting liveability in Alexandria.

The change in Alexandria perceived negatively by the largest number of respondents was increased traffic congestion. Two other changes mentioned by a large number of respondents were the lack of available parking, and the number and/or height of apartment buildings. The survey found that respondents perceived density of new residential development as having a negative impact on liveability. Respondents viewed the increase in residential density in the area (particularly with apartment buildings) as contributing to local traffic congestion. As discussed above, improvements in transport infrastructure could further improve perceptions of liveability in the area.

A change in Alexandria perceived positively by a clear majority of survey respondents was the increase in the number of cafe/restaurant/entertainment offerings. A large number of respondents felt that an increase in the local population made the area more lively as well as stimulating increased and better services.

Most residents and workers who participated in the survey were not opposed to increased residential density in the area, as long as aspects of liveability were protected or enhanced and as long as infrastructure, services and amenities kept pace with the development.

Participation in decision-making

An engaged community is an indicator of community wellbeing.

The survey found residents of Alexandria to be an informed and engaged community. Residents were more interested in participating in decisions that may affect the local area than workers. Of the residents, homeowners felt more strongly about being involved in decision-making affecting the local area, possibly as a result of having a greater level of attachment and ownership of the area than renters.

Different engagement methods were preferred by different people to keep them informed and engaged as well as feel a sense of empowerment over decisions and actions affecting their environment.

Recommendations

The authors of this report make the following recommendations arising from this research.

Policy recommendations

City of Sydney can directly shape

Incentivise diverse commercial uses such as 'cafes/entertainment' in the local area, including stimulating the night-time economy.

Dedicate some Section 94 development contributions towards 'green spaces' in the local area which would be 'good for pets', 'good for kids', 'exercise' and 'familiarity'.

Organise community events and activities celebrating and showcasing the 'diversity' of the population in the local area. Such events and activities should provide opportunities for local communities to meet 'the people' and enhance 'familiarity'.

Mandate targets for affordable rental housing supply in the local area (such as in 'Investigation Areas' in the Southern Employment Lands) and support these targets with planning policies, to strengthen 'diversity', 'the people' and 'value for money'.

Provide dedicated public places in the local area that are 'good for pets' such as off-leash dog parks with bag dispensers.

Continue to work with the community to address the 'safety' and security issues of people who live, work or visit the local area.

Consult or engage children in the design of public places so that 'green spaces' and the public domain in the local area would be 'good for kids'.

Continue to use a variety of methods and media to keep the local community informed of activities in the local area including changes and future development.

Strengthen citizen participation strategies to engage workers and renters in the local area.

Expand or replicate the Green Square Placemaking Framework to include Alexandria. Tailor place-making strategies to strengthen place attachment to the local area by different user groups including workers and renters.

City of Sydney does not directly control but could influence

Advocate for and work in partnership with NSW Government agencies for public transportation infrastructure to enhance 'public transport' in the local area e.g. light rail through the area to Green Square, increase train and bus services, priority and capacity.

Advocate for and work in partnership with NSW Government agencies for more schools in the local area so that Alexandria is 'good for kids'.

Advocate for and work in partnership with NSW Government agencies to retain government subsidised housing in the local area to strengthen 'diversity' and 'the people'.

Increase financial subsidies to and work in partnership with community housing sector to expand non-market affordable housing in the area to strengthen 'diversity', 'the people' and 'value for money'.

Advocate for and work in partnership with NSW Government agencies for dedicated cycleways in the local area to encourage 'cycling' and 'exercise'.

Actions for immediate benefits

This research found the following services will bring immediate benefits to the community in the local area.

Provide public toilets at Alexandria Park that are not closed or locked during the day.

(Note: There are many users of Alexandria Park including its children's playground and picnic areas).

Expand community events and activities currently focused in the Green Square area to other parts of Alexandria, such as Alexandria Park, celebrating and showcasing the 'diversity' of the population in the local area. Such events and activities should provide opportunities for local communities to meet 'the people' and enhance 'familiarity'.

Future research and engagement approaches

The authors of this report make the following recommendations for future research.

All the surveys of this research were carried out at Alexandria Park. Respondents lived or worked possibly within a 10- to 15-minute walk from the park. The high rating for 'green spaces' and 'good for pets' could be related to locations where the surveys were carried out.

Recommendation: Carry out the same survey of a random sample population and compare the findings. Alternatively, carry out the same survey for a different targeted area within Alexandria and compare the findings.

This research focused on features in the local area that are most important to the respondents. Finding out what aspects of the local area respondents consider require the most improvement may provide insight into aspects they perceive to be unliveable.

Recommendation: Find out the four least liveable aspects of the local area and compare the findings.

This research focused on respondents aged 18 and above. 12.5% of the population in Alexandria was under the age of 20 in the 2011 Census. In the next 20 years, this age group is forecast to increase in Alexandria.

Recommendation: Design specific engagement approaches for children and young people to understand aspects of liveability in the local area for this demographic group.

The 'ping pong priorities' tool and 'rate-o-meter' were visual tools that generated some interest as the research team walked around Alexandria Park. A number of respondents said that they were willing to participate in the survey because they were curious about the interesting and unusual survey tool. Consequently, there was a high response rate when approaching potential respondents.

Recommendation: Use creative methods similar to the 'ping pong priorities' and 'rate-o-meter' tools to encourage high participation in surveys.

Summary conclusions about liveability in Alexandria

This research addressed the following questions:

1. How do people perceive liveability in the area?
2. What are the most important features in the local area that make the area liveable?
3. How do people feel about changes occurring in the area as a result of increased development density?
4. What are people's preferences in regards to participation in decisions affecting their local area?
5. For questions 1-4, does this differ for different groups of people?

People in Alexandria perceive convenience, cafes/entertainment, public transport and green spaces as key aspects of liveability. These features were demonstrated to be important to residents and workers across different groups of people. Aspects to improve liveability that were consistently identified included parking, public transport and traffic themes. Changes in Alexandria were largely perceived negatively with common themes continuing such as increased traffic congestion.

The survey found residents of Alexandria to be an informed and engaged community. Respondents expressed satisfaction with the work that the City of Sydney is doing in Alexandria, which affirms the City of Sydney's existing policies and strategies to protect and enhance liveability in Alexandria.

Appendix A: Survey instrument

This is the survey to be used for the field work in Alexandria under the MUPS0007 course.

Good day! We are conducting a student project on Alexandria, I am wondering whether you have a few moments to answer some questions?

1. Do you live (or work) in this area (with reference to the map)?

○ Yes, I live and work here.

○ Yes, I live here.

○ Yes, I work here.

○ No

2. Would you be interested in doing a 5 minute survey about your thoughts on living/working in the area? Here is a project information statement about our research.

○ Yes

○ No

3. [If any doubt] are you over 18?

○ Yes

○ No

4. How long have you lived (or worked) in the area?

○ 0-2 years

○ 2-5 years

○ 5-10 years

○ more than 10 years

5. What are the most important features in the local area for you? Please choose 4 of these balls. If there is something you feel is important to you that is not listed here, you can write this on one of the blank balls.

- ☐ Cafes / entertainment
- ☐ Good for pets
- ☐ Diversity
- ☐ The people
- ☐ Safety
- ☐ Good for kids
- ☐ History / heritage
- ☐ Schools
- ☐ Value for money
- ☐ Exercise
- ☐ Familiarity
- ☐ Public Transport
- ☐ Cycling
- ☐ Convenience
- ☐ Green spaces
- ☐ Attractive buildings

Other

....

6. Please indicate here the ranking of the chosen features from 1 (most important) to 4 (less important).

1

....

2

....

3

....

4

....

7. [Referring to the number one ball choice] how does this quality improve your experience of this area?

....
....
....
....

8. Please rate your local area as a place to live and/or work on a scale from 1 to 5.

- ○ 1 - Terrible place to live/ work
- ○ 1.5
- ○ 2
- ○ 2.5
- ○ 3 - Okay place to live/ work
- ○ 3.5
- ○ 4
- ○ 4.5
- ○ 5 - Brilliant place to live/work

9. What do you think would make the area better?

....
....
....
....

10. What changes have you noticed in the area and how have they impacted on you?

....
....
....
....

11. Do you think an increase in the numbers of people living in the area would change your rating of this area?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

12. What would be your new rating of Alexandria?

- ○ 1 - Terrible place to live/work
- ○ 1.5
- ○ 2
- ○ 2.5
- ○ 3 - Okay
- ○ 3.5
- ○ 4
- ○ 4.5
- ○ 5 - Brilliant place to live/work

13. Can you please explain why?

....
....
....
....

14. Is it important for you to be involved in future decisions affecting the local area?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No
- ○ It depends

Other

....

15. Why is it important for you to be involved?

....
....
....
....

16. How would you like to be involved?

....
....
....
....

We just have a few final quick questions about you:

17. Do you have any children who live with you?

○ Yes

○ No

18. Do you rent or own your home?

○ Rent

○ Own

19. What sort of home is it?

○ Apartment

○ House

○ Townhouse

Other

....

20. Are you in paid employment? Please tick one.

○ Full time

○ Part time

○ Not in the workforce

○ Unemployed

○ Full time student

21. Age group

○ 18-19

○ 20-29

○ 30-39

○ 40-49

○ 50-59

○ 60-69

○ 70-79

○ over 80

22. Please select gender

○   Male

○   Female

23. Notes (or other comments/suggestions):

....

....

....

....

Thank you for your time.   Please add your name and e-mail address to the separate contact list if you would like to be kept updated about the findings of this research.
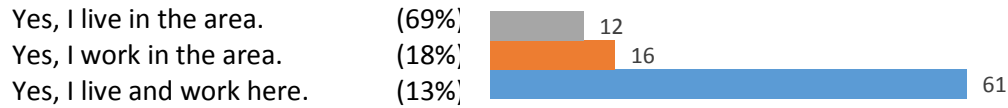
Appendix B: Survey results

Survey Results
Alexandria: Liveabiltiy, Community and Change

Total number of respondents: 89

Do you live (and/or work) in this area
Yes, I live in the area.   (69%)
Yes, I work in the area.   (18%)
Yes, I live and work here.   (13%)

12
16
61

Would you be interested in doing a 5-minute survey about your thoughts on living/working in the area?
Yes = 89 (100%)
No = 0 (0%)
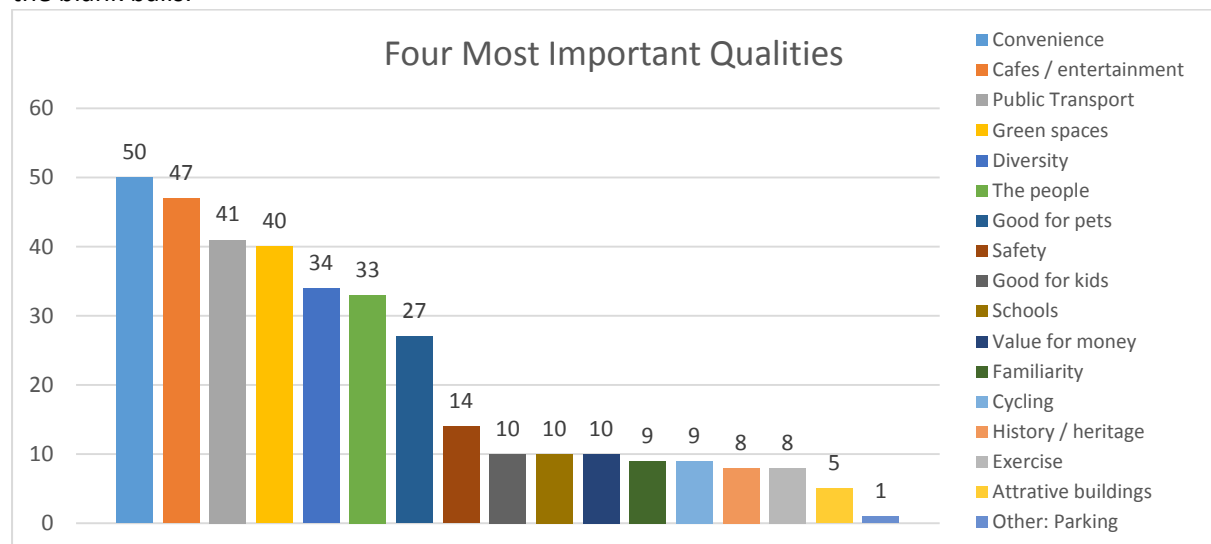
(If in doubt) are you over 18?
Yes = 89 (100%)
No = 0 (0%)

How long have you lived (or wo
0-2 years   (35%)
2-5 years   (25%)
5-10 years   (21%)
More than 10 years   (19%)

17
19
22
31

What are the most important features in the local area for you? Please choose 4 of these balls. If there is something you feel is important to you that is not listed here, you can write this on one of the blank balls.

Four Most Important Qualities

- Convenience
- Cafes / entertainment
- Public Transport
- Green spaces
- Diversity
- The people
- Good for pets
- Safety
- Good for kids
- Schools
- Value for money
- Familiarity
- Cycling
- History / heritage
- Exercise
- Attrative buildings
- Other: Parking

50 47 41 40 34 33 27 14 10 10 10 9 9 8 8 5 1

Please indicate the ranking of the four chosen features from 1 (most important) to 4 (less important). (Results here were computed with weighted average.)

Rank	Important Features	Weighted average
1	Convenience	1.74
2	Public Transport	1.25
3	Cafes / entertainment	1.12
4	Green spaces	1.07
5	Diversity	1.03
6	The people	0.96
7	Good for pets	0.80
8	Safety	0.39
9	Schools	0.31
10	Value for money	0.27
11	Good for kids	0.25
12	Cycling	0.21
13	Exercise	0.18
14	Familiarity	0.15
14	History / heritage	0.15
15	Attractive buildings	0.09
16	Other: Parking	0.03

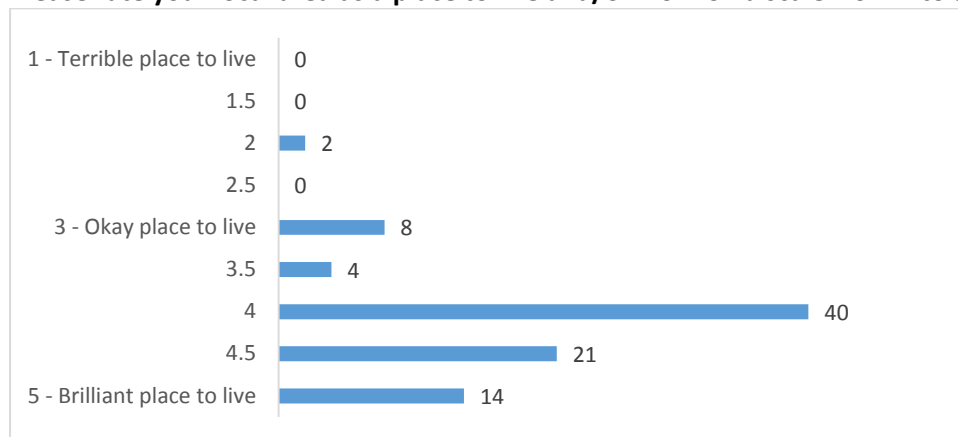**(Referring to the number one ball choice) how does this quality improve your experience of this area?**

Important Feature	Common Themes	Frequency	Proportion	Summary of Responses
Convenience		**38**	**100%**	
	Proximity	19	50%	• Easy to get to the city/CBD • close to work/business; • Central location/area • Close to Sydney Park • Close to everything • Everything needed is nearby
	People	1	3%	• Family and friends are local
	Transportation	5	13%	• Train from Redfern station only takes 15 minutes to city/work • Easy to get to the train station and I catch the train to work • Transport and local services make it easy to meet people and friends • Public transport is convenient for my daughter who goes to North Sydney Girls' School • Don't own a car and close to Redfern Station
	Walkability	4	13%	• Really easy to walk to get anything I need within Alexandria or nearby • Walking and cycling is convenient in the area • Even if we don't have a car, we can still go to places like the university or church

Important Feature	Common Themes	Frequency	Proportion	Summary of Responses
	Amenities/local services	4	11%	• Everyone is close by that I need • Convenient since it is close to everything • Close to everything - can walk to shops and family
	improved lifestyle	4	11%	• Work/life balance • It's city living, but a simplified life • Reduces or frees up time to do other things
Public Transport		**15**	**100%**	
	Close to the train station	3	20%	• Live close to Redfern train station • Train comes every 5 minutes • Can catch the train to work
	Worsening traffic	3	20%	• Traffic is getting worse and the Green Square development will add to traffic congestion, so public transport is really important. A light rail option would be beneficial.
	Easy access, reliability and flexibility	9	60%	
Diversity		**10**	**100%**	
	Diverse mix of people and culture	8	80%	• Cross-section of people • Tolerance, open mindedness, can openly be a gay/lesbian couple • Fits in, lots of other young people • Diversity in housing commission • Diversity in age, culture, social issues, socio-economic status and peoples thinking • Good for kids to get exposed to • Not narrow minded and open city, culturally • Area is not up-market • Nobody judges others
		2	20%	• Makes the area safer and new cafes and businesses are of a higher standards • Enjoys working in diverse areas (he is from London). The area represents Australia well.
The People		**10**	**100%**	
	Family and local community	6	60%	• Family lives here (in the local area) – have support in looking after my kids, they have interactions with their cousins, etc. • Close friends and family live here also. This enhances my enjoyment of living here.
	Mix of people	1	10%	• There is a good broad cross section of people. There is a mix of ethnicities, age, income, and there are GLBT people. It is relaxed, easy going and tolerant.
	Interaction and friendly community	3	30%	• Sense of belonging, connectedness to the community; good social interaction • More fun - and I enjoy the interaction with people • I have friends that live here and I enjoy socializing • Friendly people, feel welcome here

Important Feature	Common Themes	Frequency	Proportion	Summary of Responses
Good for pets		**10**	**100%**	
	Presence of pet-friendly areas	8	80%	• Can bring dog to park • Has two dogs that need walking every day. Alexandria park and other parks in the area make this much easier and more pleasant • It's easy to walk my dog in the park before work • It is convenient because it is an off-leash dog park and I live close to the park. It is easy to love pets and puts me in a good state of mind
	Socialisation with pet-owners	2	20%	• Encourages other pet (dog) owners – like-minded people - to meet and socialize • Health of animals and social interaction
Cafes / entertainments		**6**	**100%**	
	Socialisation / meeting friends	3	50%	• Nice to meet friends nearby • Easy to meet some people and spend time with friends • Going to cafes is a social experience - going out for coffee every morning at work enables you to get out of the office and enjoy the social time
	Presence of cafes / entertainment venues	3	50%	• Can walk to local cafes • Able to get good lunch food
Green spaces		**6**	**100%**	
	Open and accessible area	5	83%	• Green spaces are needed because of the increase in urban density • Green Spaces in Alexandria are accessible for everyone • Nice to walk through green spaces when going somewhere e.g. work
	Relaxation	1	17%	• The presence of green spaces let me get out and enjoy the sunshine. Parks are good for relaxation, for pets and kids as well as mental health. • Has a huge impact on my day. I use the spaces in the morning, lunch and afternoon.
Schools		5	100%	
	Good schools	2	40%	• Impressed with school and how its run and the community element. (Alexandria Park Community School) • Because I'm planning a family.
	Location of schools	3	60%	• Not having to travel to a good school is a local convenience. • The primary school and high schools are located together. Grand daughter goes to school here, it is very accessible

Important Feature	Common Themes	Frequency	Proportion	Summary of Responses
Safety	Feeling of home and security	3	-	• Physical safety (getting to work). Feel unsafe walking past people in the social housing area. • Because I finish work late, I have to walk to the station. Like to have lunch in the park without any problems. • Likes to feel secure, happy to get out and about. Feels happy at home.
Good for kids				Can live locally and not have to travel elsewhere for parks. There are local community groups and parent groups. "It takes a village to raise a child.
History / heritage				Interested in Australian history and likes living in an area where there is history.
Vale for money				Cheap rent. Lifestyle u – ' affordable cafes and entertainment… and proximity to the city'

Please rate your local area as a place to live and/or work on a scale from 1 to 5.

1 - Terrible place to live	0
1.5	0
2	2
2.5	0
3 - Okay place to live	8
3.5	4
4	40
4.5	21
5 - Brilliant place to live	14

What would make the area better?

Common themes	Frequency	Responses
Traffic and transport options	**32**	• More reliable bus services and possibly light rail. More people without infrastructure could be a problem. • If there were less traffic and light rail on Wyndham Street. • Improved traffic - "Traffic is bad". More frequent train services at Green Square station. • Improved traffic management - there is traffic congestion. Transport facilities and management around residential development e.g. cycleways. • Traffic congestion needs to be addressed. The traffic lights are not functioning well. • Less car traffic. There is too much through traffic already. Better cycling infrastructure. • The roads are really busy. An increase in the people living in the area will make it worse. • Additional parking, improved road network and less cars. Cycling feels more risky in this area because of the road network and traffic congestion. • Improving McEvoy Street is essential. • Better public transport such as roads and traffic lights (a few intersections are

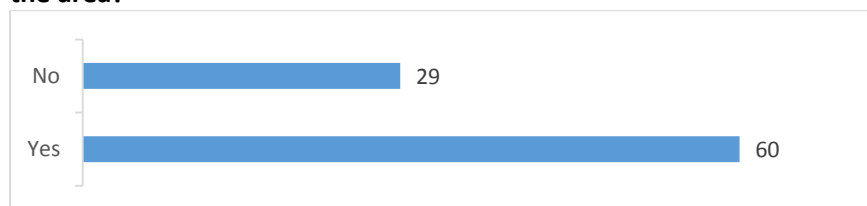| Common themes	Frequency	Responses
		tricky); There should be more bus routes and not just in McEvoy and Botany avenues. • More public transport. Less industrial traffic. No West Connects. There needs to be a link between the City and the airport that's not through Alexandria. • Better public transport. A footbridge over McEvoy Street! • Traffic is an issue - the drive to work is very difficult • Better traffic management, especially with more people in apartments. • It would be better if it were more pedestrian friendly for example there is no crossing on McEvoy St to get to the park from work. • I live in a cottage/house and parking in the area is difficult on weekdays. There is timed parking on my street but it is always full. Sometimes I have to wait until after 3pm to find parking on my street. Less of a problem on weekends. There are no good schools around. If the Alexandria School's ranking does not improve, my family might have to move elsewhere.
Venues and entertainment	17	• More cultural events, more cafes, and more cultural facilities • More night-time entertainment venues and restaurants - the area lacks vitality. • More restaurants, more village-like atmosphere (like in Erskineville); more cafes and take-out places within walking distance. • More supermarkets • Cafes, especially for vegetarians. • More shops that are open late. • Cheaper cafes to buy lunch • More green areas. • There is a need for more diversity of food outlets (not just cafes) for lunch and/or for after work.
Parking	12	• Parking is an issue. I feel like it is okay for visitor numbers but there is not enough parking for residents. • Less restricted parking is needed for visitors to the area as it is stressful for people who are visiting residents in the area to find a park. • It is getting crowded on Saturdays, so extending the weekday parking restrictions to Saturday would help with parking. • More free parking spaces. • If new developments also provide more parking for their residents (these new developments do not provide parking). A lot of people park in this area and then commute from Redfern Station i.e. they use the area for park-and-train.
Price and affordability	9	• Maintain affordability • Rent prices and land prices for housing are too expensive. May not be able to stay in the area. • Affordable places to live. There needs to be access to accommodation for mid-level employees. Need more high-rise residential to create more affordable housing options. • The area is not affordable. I cannot live here long term.
Housing and apartments	8	• Department of housing need to fix up area • More diversity and also more growth in housing which leads to better services. • If I had a bigger backyard. • Less apartments • More variety on housing options • Stop building big apartments. • The inflexibility of housing and development rules can be an issue. • Lower rental costs. • Less public housing and people with social problems. Doesn't mind the elderly people in the housing commission but feels the drug and social problems make the area unsafe.

Common themes	Frequency	Responses
Less/controlled development	6	• Keep existing character and not increase density • If there were less development. Too many residential apartments. The place is already too crowded. • Keeping it the same. Increased development is bad • Respectful and wise development. True consultation where people are listened to. • Already reached the point of overdevelopment, which is destroying the sense of community. There is too much property investment occurring which is contributing to a transient community. • Improve industrial areas • Less of constant construction
Amenities	6	• More shopping facilities and quieter streets • Needs more amenities, e.g. there is no pharmacy or medical centre in Alexandria. You can't get everything here (although you can get most things without travelling too far). • More facilities for babies and children. • More shops and amenities, e.g. a grocery store. • Better supermarkets. In the area, there are only Spar, IGA and Woolworths. I would like larger supermarkets that offer greater variety. It would be good if the supermarkets were at a more centralised location rather than spread out in different areas. • It would be better if there's a chemist in the area. I went to the doctor's the other day but couldn't find a chemist.
Safety	5	• Needles being discarded in public places are concern. Also kidnapping is a concern • If junkies moved out (referred to Redfern). I avoid certain areas at night. • Botany Road crossing is unsafe • Too close to the housing estate, feels unsafe. • Improved safety at the station and in common places. • If the area close to Redfern Station were safer at night. If safety and security were better.
Happy as it is	4	• Everything is already great. • It is a great place to live since it is pretty quiet; more green space and convenience. • It's already a good place.
Community	3	• There is an obvious divide in the community (haves & have nots, aboriginal, elderly, etc). There is a need to balance community diversity and salt and pepper social housing. • Maintain local aboriginal community • More of a community feeling/sense of community. It feels sparse. It needs more places for people, something like the Goods Line.
Toilet	2	• More public toilets in parks with improved technology (e.g an app with a code to deter anti-social behaviour) • Alexandria Park needs a public toilet.
Beach	1	• If it were closer to the beach • If there were an off-leash dog beach.
Schools	1	• Better schools influence the quality of people and families living in the area.
People	1	• Smaller population, fewer people.

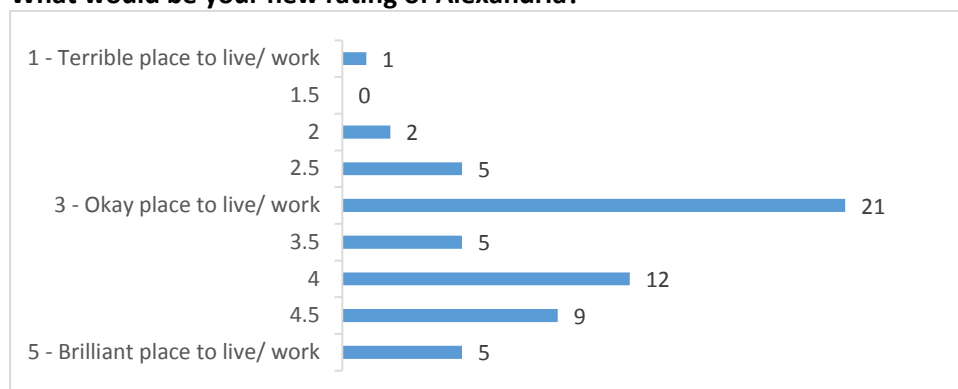**What changes have you noticed in the area and how have they impacted on you?**

Common Themes	Frequency	Detailed Responses
Increase in residential units	40	- Lots of apartments. Bur bit much commercial areas underneath. - Industrial buildings are being converted to housing. Impact is traffic and cars making it more difficult to get in / out of Alexandria. Specific example is the Alexandria Hotel project which proposes conversion to apartments with no parking. - House prices have increased astronomically (even more than surrounding suburbs). This has put buying a house out of reach. - More people, more apartments and higher density apartments can affect the local amenity and quality of life. Examples include loss of sunlight, green spaces and heritage. The Alexandria Hotel proposal was used as an example of this. - Has noticed more apartments - this competes with green space - More residential apartments have gone up, leading to traffic congestion. - More apartments. Increase in property value - positive impact. - There have been good renovations of the housing estates to make them safer. New fences mean people can't run through the housing estate away from the cops which is good. - More people, bigger unit blocks. She feels frustration that some new development is not being built in accordance with the DA, and now has to spend lots of money on screening for a new development behind her house. - More high-rise development is occurring. The construction of Green Square is happening very quickly and is adding to the high-rise development. - There has been an increase in the height of the apartments that are being built. - There are more buildings and residents. And more companies are moving away from the city. - There are more units, but it should be low rise units. I don't like high rises. I like the look and feel of the place - original and low rise. It will look terrible if high density. - The area has become unaffordable which is a concern - would like to stay in the area and move into a larger home one day. - Apartment blocks - so many it's ridiculous. But no roads or parking. - New development in the southern part of Alexandria is drawing people down that way which is good. - Big developments at Green Square such as the Town Centre and off-the-plan apartments for sale.
Increase of commercial and entertainment	25	- Increase in the number / better cafes and restaurants. - Pubs are surviving and improving. - Nice place to live e.g. with community facilities, restaurants, new supermarket - positive impact. - Small businesses are being pushed out to make way for high rise development. - There a few bars and late night restaurants. And I notice bottles and litter around. People not living in the area are not caring about the surrounding. - More eateries and improved streets cape. Enhances my experience of living here. - The quality and quantity of cafes has improved and there are numerous interesting eateries and businesses. There's almost no need to leave the area! - There is more to do and more options. - Different businesses popping up on Botany Road, for example, I found a new hairdresser there the other day and cafes like John Smith. NBN has started the roll-out in nearby areas (near train station). - More commercial development like the Alexandria Hotel and cafes. Impact me positively because they make it more interesting, more colour, more movement.

Common Themes	Frequency	Detailed Responses
Road conditions and traffic / parking / transportation issues	16	• Deterioration of streets • Overcrowding with cars. Buses are packed. • Less available parking. The on-street parking in the neighborhood is always full. • Bike paths have been built, which is a positive impact because I ride a push bike to work. • Bad traffic around train station - negative impact. • Increasing burden on roads and parking. • Too many people who work here drive to work. This is adding to the parking pressures. The streets are gridlocked. • One positive feature is there are more cycling lanes (cycles to work). • They are building more complexes and not enough roads. • The parking has been terrible even in the last 6 months I have been here. • The infrastructure needs to be upgraded to accommodate the extra people.
Increased density	13	• There are more people here. The 'Range Rovers' are moving in (affluent people) • Gentrification, leading to narrowing of diverse types of people. It is becoming trendy and expensive. • The area has become more gentrified. There are more 'hipsters' living in the area. • More people makes the area more friendly, more locals with the same mentality. • Changing community from an upmarket / white community to a diverse community • It is more lively, there are more people and cafes, the parks are busy. People are using the spaces more. • There are many more families now - there used to be only couples that lived in the area. • The safety of the area is much better with more people around. • The people are diverse.
Amenities	3	• More development happening. This has led to more gyms, more cafes and more supermarkets - a positive impact. • Continued improvement (e.g. stormwater). Things are starting to get actioned by Council.
Increase / constant construction	3	• Lots of construction. Lots of new apartments. • Since my house is in the same street (with constructions), it is hard to sleep because of the loud construction noise.
Green spaces		• Council has provided more amenities like gardens and trees. This makes the area more aesthetically pleasing, compared to how it was years ago. • The Council has enlivened public spaces
Haven't lived in the are long enough	9	

Do you think an increase in the numbers of people living in the area would change your rating of the area?

No	29
Yes	60

What would be your new rating of Alexandria?

Rating	Frequency
1 - Terrible place to live/ work	1
1.5	0
2	2
2.5	5
3 - Okay place to live/ work	21
3.5	5
4	12
4.5	9
5 - Brilliant place to live/ work	5

Can you please explain why?

Answer	Frequency	Explanation
5 - Brilliant place to live/ work	5	Because services follow the people. "In 10 year's time, this will be a fantastic place to live."
		It'll be better for local businesses. More people means better community.
		More social interaction
		It depends how well it is done. It could be better if the infrastructure and regulations are in place, or it could be worse if it becomes overcrowded. [Note: new rating of Alexandria was not given as it could go up or down - rating entered into Keysurvey not correct]
		Depends on the infrastructure.
4.5	9	More good people can live here.
		There will be more social interaction.
		Will lead to nicer cafes and bars and better shopping
		It depends whether the infrastructure is improved. [Note: he didn't give a new rating as it depends, so new rating entered into Keysurvey is not correct].
		Good for people who own their own home (increase value). But would also push out people.
		Would be more exciting and a bigger centre (more activity). But only better if you didn't drive, especially along Botany Road.
		If there are no changes to infrastructure if would be worse. More people with improved infrastructure is fine.
		There would be more amenities if there were more people. [respondent said their new rating would be 4.75].
		Slightly better rating because lots of parks and people give a sense of community.
4	12	Loss of charm and inconvenience from traffic. loves the area but there is a fine balance.
		More busy - crowding issues.
		It is becoming a less diverse community e.g. apartments across the road now selling for $2.2M. How does this development relate to Waterloo and Redfern communities?
		More people means that more facilities will be built e.g. schools, restaurants.
		Might increase traffic in the area generally

Answer	Frequency	Explanation
		If done right, more density can be good. But fear of reduced green spaces, more traffic, and concern about the type of people moving to the area.
		Traffic in the area
		No change if the infrastructure is provided (roads). Also positive because it brings more people and business.
		Needs more diversity of people and wealth. Feels there is a low standard of people living here.
		It would turn from an industrial to a residential area, with more cafes and places to go.
		There would be more cafes, more people around, more shops.
		It depends on the support infrastructure. Need more places to meet.
3.5	5	More high rise apartments and people would crowd existing spaces.
		More people will create more congestion. The popularity of venues such as Buckland Hotel and Fratelli mean there is no parking for locals. New residential developments don't have on site parking which contributes to the problem.
		Unless the infrastructure is improved to support the new population there will be issues with congestion and crowding.
		Traffic is already bad and would get worse. Buses would take longer.
		My rating would probably stay the same. It depends on the parking situation, if it will worsen.
3 - Okay place to live/ work	21	Traffic transport congestion and issues
		Only slightly affected. Hypothetically might go down.
		General overcrowding on buses and in public spaces, lack of parking, loss of amenity.
		Loss of character and peace and loss of community feel.
		Increased density. It is too crowded. The roads are clogged. Carparking is harder.
		Increase numbers of people means the roads are busier and harder to get seats on trains.
		Pace of management is not keeping up with pace of development. Heritage feel of the area is changing e.g. factories going. There are now more towers instead of green spaces.
		Noise, traffic, loss of green space, pressure on the environment.
		Quality of life is impacted, going outside is not as pleasant. You lose intimacy and green space. Increased noise.
		An increased density is needed to support an increase in population and this will impact on the view from my apartment that I currently have.
		Alexandria will become overcrowded.
		Traffic and parking issues would increase.
		It is at capacity now. It would be harder to get around with more people. The buses are already full, parking is difficult, and the traffic is bad. There isn't enough space for more people.
		There will be lots of people in the area.
		Due to the traffic that might worsen.
		I would not like to see more people in Alexandria. I would like more gardens and green areas.

Answer	Frequency	Explanation
		If the infrastructure is not improved, the parking and traffic situation will worsen. I think it needs light rail to improve flow through. And there is a need for more schools and medical facilities.
		Traffic and parking will get worse.
		Increased parking problems. But maybe more cleanliness.
		Doesn't want to live in an area with masses of people.
		There will be more traffic on the roads.
2.5	5	Because the infrastructure is inadequate for population increase. The community make-up will be different.
		Big is not always better. Parking concerns
		Additional people living in the area will place an additional strain on roads which aren't equipped for a larger population. More bike lanes are required to make cycling more accessible for people and to increase the safety of people who want to cycle.
		Transport gets harder.
		More traffic and crowded on buses.
2	2	Overcrowding
		Alexandria is pleasant now with four storey apartments. Green Square is full of high-rise development and I fear that will happen in Alexandria to cater for an increase in population. This will add to the parking and traffic pressures as the roads are choked now.
1.5	0	
1 - Terrible place to live/ work	1	It would be detrimental to have more people. There are already a lot of people here.
Total	60	

## Is it important for you to be involved in future decisions affecting the local area?

It depends — 12
No — 26
Yes — 51
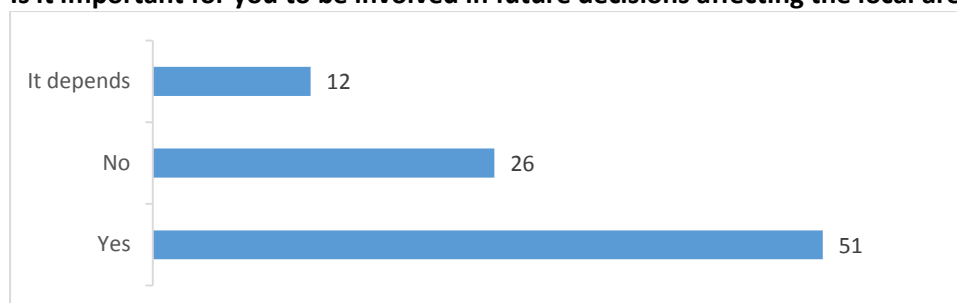
Why is it important for you to be involved?

Answer	Common Themes	Frequency	Proportion	Detailed Responses
Yes	Resident / member of the community	22	43%	• Considers this an obligation as being part of a community. That is being a part of decisions not just having decisions made for you. There will always be tension between what is good for businesses versus residents versus government. • Is part of the community and lived here 10+ years. • Local people have good knowledge about the area. • Feel part of the community and ensure changes don't impact on family • Because I am a home owner and have invested time and money in the local area. • I see myself staying for a long time.

Answer	Common Themes	Frequency	Proportion	Detailed Responses
				• 'People who live in the community make the community' and its important to have a say.
	Updated with developments / changes	16	31%	• Example: Alexandria pub was going to be redeveloped without parking and would have had an impact • Wants to be kept informed on what is going on in the community • Don't trust the government to manage changes, need checks and balances in place so that the process is more transparent • Wants to keep it a young area and continue to make it a good, social place to be. E.g. Keeping the Alexandria pub was a big issue in the community. • If I'm involved I stay updated on what's happening within Alexandria and it gives me a say in where we live. • There might be new decision on urbanism of the area, such as activities and new entertainment • Wants to be kept informed and have the opportunity to participate when he feels the need, e.g. the closing of the Alexandria Hotel was a big issue. Clover Moore has done a very good job at consulting the community. The State Government is no good. • To make sure what you like doesn't get destroyed. He doesn't want Alexandria to become like the CBD, it should be different. • To understand what kind of developments are occurring. • Because the traffic and the parking affect my every day. They would change whether I still consider the area convenient.
	Express opinions / responsibility	13	25%	• Would like to feel that their opinion is being listened to. • It's important for all local people to have a say. • It is part of democracy. Do not want the Land and Environment Court to overrule Council or local community. • Can help decide the future. • I would like to be involved but I am skeptical about the outcomes of involvement. I have previously been involved in a local focus group consultation. I feel like I have to depend on more aggressive advocacy through groups like ARAG (Alexandria Residents' Action Group). • It's no good whinging about something without acting on it. Its grassroots democracy. • People who have power say 'yes yes yes', but really they mean 'no no no'. They don't respect the people, but the people have power in numbers. • Good to hear alternative views. Building community. • Change can be good, but I want to be involved to help shape the future of the area I live in. • Belongs to a residents action group (ARAG). Believes there is no use whingeing about the local area unless you make some effort to contribute. • So you feel included and have the opportunity to give your opinion if you want to. • I want to give a local perspective on the area rather than changes because of legislative perspective.

| Answer	Common Themes	Frequency	Proportion	Detailed Responses
No	No time to be involved / not important	3		• I don't pay rates. • I am very lazy on these things • Not really interested since I have too much to do.
	Involvement has no impact	4		• Involvement does not seem to have much impact e.g. consultation on location of traffic lights. • I don't feel like me being involved would make a difference. For example, WestConnex is happening and I think they should have spent money on public transport instead of road infrastructure. • It won't make a difference if I am involved. I relate to the area as Redfern, not as Alexandria.
	Not going to stay long / renting	6		• I'm renting and don't know how long I will be in the area. • Won't be here long. Just renting and want to move (to the Gold Coast).
It depends		12		• If those big decisions directly affect me. • Would just like to know what is happening in the area generally. • Would like to be involved for large scale developments only. • I don't think it will make much of a difference if I get involved. • To make sure the area stays the way you want it. • Interested but not active participant. Would only become active for very significant changes, for example a reduction in services. • Locals understand the area and can provide different insight. • It is important for people that live here. • Maybe if something was happening next door. • Decisions can change the experience of working here.

How would you like to be involved?

Preferred methods for being engaged
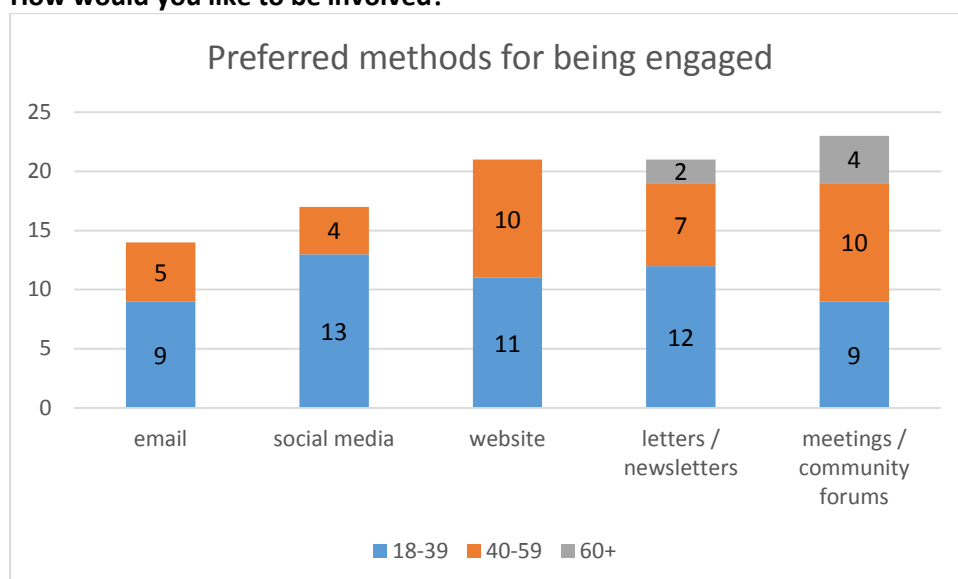
Demographics:

(_For those living and living and working in the area)_

Do you have any children living with you?

Without	46
With	27

Do you rent or own your home?

Rent	28
Own	45
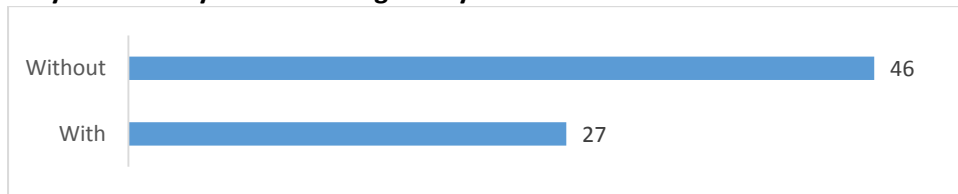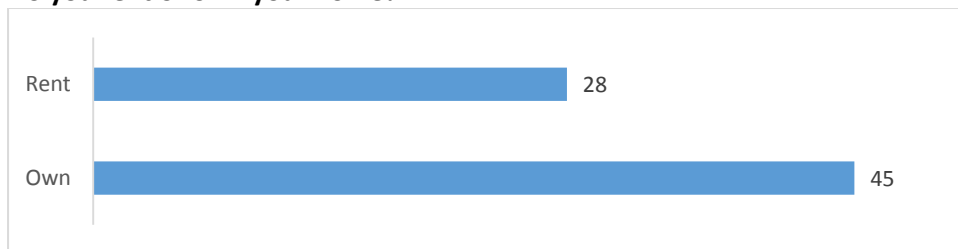
What sort of home is it (for those living and living and working in the area)?
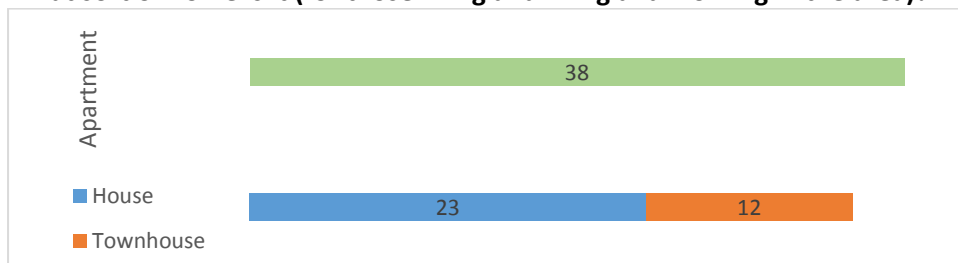
Apartment: 38

House: 23 | Townhouse: 12

Legend: ■ House ■ Townhouse

Are you in paid employment? Please tick one.

work: Full time 15 | Part time 1

live + Live and work: Full time 54 | Part time 4 | Unemployed 2 | Not in workforce 10 | Full time student 3

Legend: ■ Full time ■ Part time ■ Unemployed ■ Not in workforce ■ Full time student

Please select age group.

work: 1, 7, 3, 2, 2, 1, 0

live + Live and work: 0, 14, 27, 17, 9, 4, 1, 1

Legend: 18-19, 20-29, 30-39, 40-49, 50-59, 60-69, 70-79, over 80

Please select gender.

work: 8, 8

live + Live and work: 40, 33

Legend: Female, Male
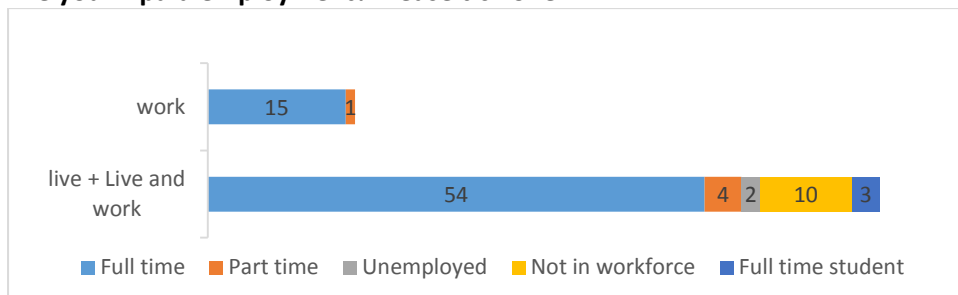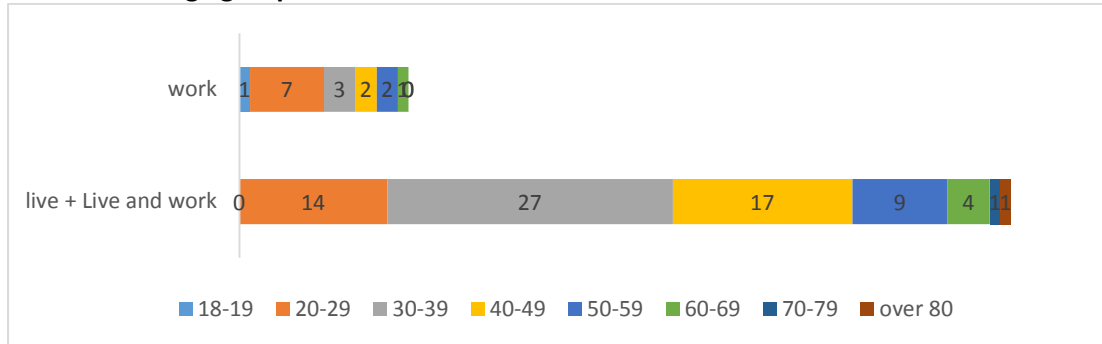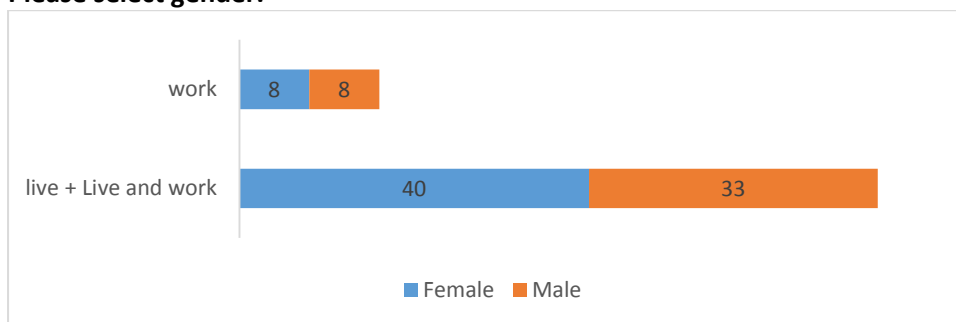
Notes (or other comments/suggestions)
1. The local activity / event organised through the City of Sydney for Christmas is great for the community.
2. This is a booming area. It is only going to get better.
3. The roads are already busy. WestConnex is the biggest threat to Alexandria. Heritage of the area is important to fight for.
4. More development leads to more traffic. Green Square train station already packed. Would like to see fewer people living here. Would like fewer high rise buildings.
5. I like the parks and new apartments.
6. Need more public transport (buses and trains). "Buses are terrible." Light rail to Waterloo would be good. Building construction standards should be improved. Construction defects by large construction companies that apparently do not have insurance. They declare bankruptcy and strata owners left to carry the costs.
7. We need lots more trees in the park.
8. Considers the City of Sydney an exceptional Council, however concerned about the state influence and changes to the voting system to give two votes to businesses. Believes this is likely to bring about change that is not good for the city or the local area.
9. Development needs to be balanced and consider restoring heritage

10. The traffic is definitely getting worse in the area. Reducing traffic congestion and improving parking is important.
11. Wyndham St and Botany Road are always congested with traffic. They are through-routes and there is no way to get across town without crossing these two arterial roads.
12. The cycle ways need to connect up. I lived in Alexandria when we were required to pay a levy for Green Square for a year. I wouldn't want to do that again.
13. I love the landscaping in the area. The Council do a really good job of maintaining the landscaping and I hope they keep this up.
14. Generally, the local area has a positive or good vibe. It is nice area to live, people are nice and friendly, and has lots of green spaces. The train station is close with just a 5-minute walk. And there are also lots of bicycle lanes. It is easy to love the place.
15. It is a great village, and is the last true village in City of Sydney area (CoS uses the phrase 'City of Villages'). He has confidence in the council, but not the state.
16. He likes that it is a clean, eco, energy efficient place.
17. My main concern is WestConnex when it is opened, and if it will improve or worsen traffic in the area. My fear is to be locked in by traffic. Since Alexandria is also getting better with cafes and parks.
18. Not enough transport and facilities to get around.
19. Alexandria is a good place to live. That is why I moved back. In whole of Sydney, Alexandria is more relaxed and safer than in Redfern, where I moved back from.
20. Wouldn't want to live here.
21. It is great to be able to sit here [Alexandria Park] and watch the dogs although we do not own a dog ourselves at this time.
22. This area feels different to other parts of Sydney - diverse people, very left-wing.
23. I love the green parks like Sydney Park, the green leafy areas - good for kids.
24. When I first moved here, the place was accessible and affordable. It no longer is. I feel sorry for others trying to get a foot in the door now.

Appendix C: Media extracts

Relevant extracted quotes from media review on Alexandria and liveability.

'Ashmore redevelopment lacks planning, say residents', *South Sydney Herald*, **March 2012**

"But residents are concerned that the proposed project is an overdevelopment of the site and that it lacks coordinated development of infrastructure to manage the increased demand it will create – particularly for water infrastructure, public transport and traffic systems as well as school and preschool facilities in the area, all of which are already under strain."

"The community also expressed dissatisfaction in finding itself caught in the middle of a disagreement between the Council and the State about who should control projects such as Ashmore."

'Green Square traffic problems', *Sydney Morning Herald*, **27 July 2014**

"Many of the 16,000 new homes proposed to be built will be outside of walking distance to the train station, which is itself becoming crowded."

"With a "poor" heavy rail system and without rapid transit to make owning a car unnecessary, transport will remain a chink in the [Green Square] *plan."*

"You really do need to ensure that there is delivery of infrastructure at the same time as residential densities increase,"

'Population and prices rocket as Green Square takes off', *Domain* in *Sydney Morning Herald*, **21 October 2014**

"In the daytime it's much quieter and in the evening you can hear life all around you. There are people out walking, playing with their dogs in the park and strolling to restaurants and cafes in the evening. And with the long-awaited new town centre happening, we're going to have so many more facilities."

"Sydney Lord Mayor Clover Moore says there's a lot being done to turn Green Square from a location to a community."

"As a measure, the number of community activities has increased dramatically over the past five years, including the launch of the Saturday markets, groups practising Tai Chi, the formation of the Green Square Choir and a business networking group."

"New residents receive welcome tote bags from the current library building, with information about cycling, dogs, high-density living, local community groups, businesses and city services."

"Regular community newsletters are emailed to a city subscriber list, and there's an online hub for residents to promote community activities and events, with grants and a community development co-ordinator to help."

"It's also very friendly. Ally [the dog] *can socialise with other dogs, and when you're out with your dog, people stop to talk. You meet a lot of people and there's a good sense of community."*

"It's so central here to everywhere."

'Inner explosion driving the boom', *Sydney Morning Herald,* **25 April 2015**

"Growing dominance of multi-unit housing in the Sydney property market."

"The surge of inner-city home building is pressuring the state government to improve transport and other infrastructure to cater for thousands of extra residents and workers, especially in Green Square"

'Road set to pay a heavy toll: Report tipping traffic rise', *Inner West Courier*, **5 May 2015**

"This [vehicles flowing on to local road network] *will impact the viability of urban renewal areas such as Green Square and Ashmore, reducing future housing potential."*

'They really do give a fig: Residents up in arms over doomed trees', *Inner West Courier*, **5 May 2015**

"It seems pretty outrageous when the City of Sydney talks about preserving biodiversity and maintaining the heritage of the area. I think people buy into the area for the leafiness of the suburb so why are we cutting them down?"

"The community petition currently has close to 300 signatures."

'Lure of the city feeding boom in high-rise living', *Daily Telegraph*, **16 May 2015**

"Developers have concentrated their projects in these areas to sate homebuyers' insatiable appetite for inner-city properties, but the new apartments have also helped revitalise the region, drawing trendy retailers, new services and young professionals."

"Empty, dead land is being transformed into new, vibrant communities with parks, beautiful spaces and new businesses. It's a big change."

'Certainty vital for Sydney's way ahead', *Sydney Morning Herald*, **12 June 2015**

"As we face a unique period of transformational change, investors, governments and communities all require certainty when it comes to sustainable urban renewal planning and outcomes."

'Suburban projects offer new lifestyles', *Sydney Morning Herald*, **20 June 2015**

"The [Harold Park] development is creating a ''fantastic community'' that is a model for urban renewal…''a 3.8-hectare park that forms part of a 20-hectare green corridor leading to the harbour foreshore, together with two kilometres of cycle paths…able to do their weekly shopping, stock up on fresh produce, dine out, grab a coffee or go to the gym."

"One common thread for emerging suburbs is their nearness to lifestyle hot spots."

''Redfern is changing, there are provedores going in there, there are restaurants going in there,'' says [Ben] *Stewart* [CBRE director]. *''It's reasonably inexpensive now but it's becoming a very desirable place to live.''*

"The main selling point of Mascot Central is its top-notch facilities. Planned is a shopping centre, which will link up with Mascot train station. Shops will include Woolworths and a chemist to complement the medical centre. There will also be a childcare centre and two aquatic zones, each with a 25-metre pool, gym, spa and sauna."

'Race on for affordable housing: Lord Mayor says essential workers being forced out', *Inner West Courier*, **14 July 2015**

"Local, state and federal governments need to work together to ensure that police officers, nurses, hospitality staff and other essential workers can continue living in the city close to jobs," she [Sydney Lord Mayor Clover Moore] said.

"The soaring cost of land and real estate is making housing in the inner-city less affordable and forcing many lower-income earners to outlying suburbs. This is an economic as well as a social issue for our city."

"We are doing what we can as a local council because a diverse range of housing is fundamental to the cultural and social vitality of Sydney, and to its economic growth and livability."

'Boom conditions luring developers: Busiest month on record for applications', *CENTRAL***, 19 August 2015**

"They [boom market conditions] *are being supported by its attractiveness to people wanting to live here."*

"We are Australia's most global city, so we do attract workers and residents from all over the world."

"What we are seeing in Sydney is the conversion of older commercial buildings into residential apartments so, for example, they could be heritage-listed warehouses converted into loft-style apartments."

"Because the City is spending more on infrastructure like roads and footpaths, street furniture, libraries, childcare centres and playgrounds, it makes higher density living more attractive."

"With so many new apartments in the pipeline, it is vital that the State and Federal Governments now work with us to provide transport, schools, affordable housing and the other infrastructure essential for new high-density communities," Cr Moore said.

"Our aim has been to create a city renowned for its design excellence, beautiful parks and open space, business growth, creative capacity, livability and sustainability."

'Development boom in Erskineville has residents concerned about strain on services and infrastructure', *Daily Telegraph***, 21 August 2015**

"There had been too much buck passing between local and state governments and planning should not be about constantly playing catch-up."

"We are not against development, but will fight to ensure that we have the transport services we badly need now and the other infrastructure such as childcare and school places."