Vision and Principles

This section explores the vision and principles for St Leonards and Crows Nest, taking into consideration the various character areas and their future aspirations.
3.1 Starting with Place

What is character?
Character is what distinguishes one neighbourhood from another. It is the way a place ‘looks and feels’, as well as how people attach a sense of belonging to it.

It is formed by a combination of physical and natural qualities, including the relationship of the public domain to private realm, buildings to the streets, and buildings to other building. It is unique and detailed, coming down to the complementary connection between built form, architecture, urban grain, movement, street life, topography and vegetation.

What is the character of St Leonards and Crows Nest?
St Leonards & Crows Nest includes a number of distinct neighbourhoods, each with their own unique identity, built form and place qualities.

The size of the area naturally allows for a number of diverse character areas, ranging from the low-rise industrial and commercial buildings fronting wide streets throughout Artarmon, to the leafy low-scale residential streets in Crows Nest, and the high-density, tall buildings and mix of uses throughout St Leonards.

There is an intrinsic opportunity to celebrate the diversity of these places. However, there is also a risk that the many diverse areas may potentially lose their ‘sense of place’ as the area grows.

A key objective of the project is to unify and connect these unique places through leafy, urban links. It is critical that as part of the area’s evolution, development pressure doesn’t undermine its character. Qualities that make each area unique and memorable should be retained and celebrated.
Vision and Principles

3.2 Vision Objectives

The following are a number of high-level objectives that have informed the vision for the future Crows Nest and St Leonards area. These objectives have been taken from the draft vision statement that was developed in the interim stage of preparing this report. The principles that underpin the delivery of the vision objectives are explored in detail over the following pages.

1. Leverage world-class health and education uses to provide opportunities for training and employment growth into the future.

2. Protect and strengthen the area’s commercial role supported by complementary uses to capitalise on renewed confidence in the commercial market and potential softening of the residential market.

3. Create future employment opportunities leveraging off the increased transport capacity of the new metro station.

4. Protect and enhance opportunities in the Artarmon employment area to fulfil the important urban service needs of the wider North District.

5. Create a network of new and existing usable, public open spaces which prioritise walking, cycling and access to transport, promote a healthier urban environment and encourage social interaction.

6. Incorporate opportunities for transit-oriented development including commercial and mixed use development that takes advantage of existing and future transport.

7. Develop high quality and diverse residential areas that create sustainable and liveable communities.

8. Preserve, strengthen and enhance the existing diverse character areas.
3.3 Principles

Open Space, Public Domain and Community

Create a pedestrian and cycle green network

This can be achieved through measures such as traffic calming, low vehicle speeds and clearly identified pedestrian linkages, crossings, arcades and lane ways.

Define a pedestrian and cycle network that provides appropriate access within and from areas beyond the site. This includes connectivity to local and regional open spaces. Provide areas of new open space and embellish existing where possible.

Enhance existing open spaces

Enhance the existing regional open space assets and connectivity to nearby centres. Open open space and facilities should also be co-located and shared with schools where possible.

New schools should be located within accessible areas with access to open space

Schools should have a strong street presence. Safe and accessible schools should consider local road design and be co-located near to complementary land uses. Shared use of school facilities is encouraged.

Movement and Access

Transit oriented development

Allow for new transport infrastructure to support the Metro and facilitate the growth of jobs and employment opportunities, by reinforcing and strengthening connections to places of work. Integrate land use and planning to support public and active transport solutions.

Manage the delivery of future car parking with existing vehicle usage

Balance visitor car parking supply with the objective of reducing private vehicle use. A “minimalist” car parking policy should apply to new residential and commercial development in the area, in the vicinity of the rail and metro stations.

Multi-modal approach

A multi-modal approach considers several different modes of movement. Transport connections should consider the role of new and existing centres and provide integrated links for connecting people across Sydney, while also prioritising active and public transport.

Protect and expand the existing urban canopy

Improve the existing tree canopy specifically along key roads, main streets, in places and in parks.

Urban canopy should provide integrated connections between pedestrian friendly streets and open space to improve the quality of the public domain.
Vision and Principles

Land Use and Activity

Create an exciting, safe and memorable experience for pedestrians in the Precinct.

Activation of the ground plane is key to creating a pedestrian focused environment. Active frontages can provide an enhanced connection to buildings and increase safety through passive surveillance and street activity.

This can be assisted through measures such as traffic calming, low vehicle speeds and clearly identified pedestrian linkages, crossings, arcades and laneways.

Ensure that buildings contribute to the life and sense of place.

Buildings should provide visual interest and respond to the function of surrounding streets through façade articulation and active ground floor uses.

Reinforce and preserve the significance of heritage.

New development should embrace the local built form heritage of the area by embracing building elements and treatments that reflect and celebrate their character.

Built Form

Height and Density Transitions

Consolidate density between the two stations, transition down to low density areas and Willoughby Road Village.

Height and density needs to sensitively respond to the character of surrounding conservation and low character areas, particularly to the north along Henry Lane, and to the east towards Willoughby Road. This includes protection of solar amenity, views and privacy.

Landscape and Topography

Landscape and topography can impact the perceived bulk of built form. Buildings should respond to the steep topography at street level, whilst utilizing the landscape to reinforce the existing character of the area.

Heritage, Character and Streetscape

The scale and articulation of key streets and character areas should be interpreted within areas where change is occurring to provide an appropriate site specific response on in-fill sites, particularly within the Central Precinct, St Leonards South and transition to the conservation areas and Willoughby Road.

New residential development should provide a mix of dwellings.

The mix of dwellings across the area should respond to the housing needs of the local area. A mix of dwelling types provides housing choice and supports equitable housing access. This includes existing single and semi-detached houses, terraces, medium and high density apartments.
3.4 Design Ideas

1. Proximity to Stations - Epicentre

This principle recognises that density located in close proximity to a transport hub such as St Leonards Train Station or the proposed Crown Nest Sydney Metro Station facilitates Transit Oriented Development (TOD). Taller buildings are to be located within 150-200m of either station, and transition down in height to the surrounding areas.

2. Centre & Height Transition - Height ‘Knuckle’ Area

Through height and bulk, St Leonards is to be read as the predominant centre to reinforce its commercial role and Crown Nest as secondary to reinforce its role as a lifestyle destination. Large developments are to be located between St Leonards Train Station and Crown Nest Sydney Metro Station along the Pacific Highway with a transition in height, bulk and scale from the highway to the surrounding neighbourhood areas. This focus of height as referred as the ‘knuckle’ area within St Leonards and mixed use commercial

3. Maintain Willoughby Road and Conservation Areas

Willoughby Road is treated as a special area that is to be protected. Proposed developments are to ensure minimal overshadowing, and avoid unreasonable visual impact to the public domain along Willoughby Road.

4. Reduce Impact on Heritage Conservation Areas

Similar to Willoughby Road, the Heritage Conservation Areas are to be protected. Proposed developments nearby are to ensure minimal overshadowing, and avoid unreasonable visual impact to the public domain or private open spaces of dwellings within the Heritage Conservation Areas.

5. Expand Open Space Network and Protect Amenity

Find opportunities to provide additional open space in the study area. Proposed developments are not to cause unacceptable overshadowing to any key existing or proposed public open spaces.

6. Response to Character Area

Proposed developments must respond appropriately to the built form character of the sub-precinct, including height, bulk and scale, as well as the character areas and existing and proposed uses.

7. Transition between Character Areas

The interface between two character areas should respond to the adjacent character area to create an appropriate transition between the two.

8. Fine Grain Approach

Proposed development should consider its relationship to surrounding context and urban grain while seeking to provide improved accessibility through appropriate frontage treatment and provision of arcades, laneways and enhanced public domain.
3.5 Character Areas

St Leonards and Crows Nest presents a number of unique environments and character areas, which have been updated since the Interim Strategy and should be considered in the future planning and development of St Leonards. These include:

- Artarmon Employment
- Health & Education
- Gore Hill Oval & Cemetery
- Pacific Highway Corridor South-East
- Residential (St Leonards South)
- Residential (Wollstonecraft)
- St Leonards Centre and Crows Nest Station
- Crows Nest Village
- Residential (Naremburn)
- Residential (Crows Nest)

Each area has a unique identity. Future planning for the area needs to strengthen good existing characteristics of place, while supporting sustainable growth to allow communities to flourish.

- **Artarmon Employment Area**
  Artarmon Employment Area is proposed to be protected for employment and urban services. It will evolve into a key employment and tech area fostering complementary uses adjoining light industry. The sub area in the vicinity of the RNS Hospital and closest to St Leonards Station will evolve to provide higher order urban service industries including high tech, communications and allied health uses.

- **St Leonards Centre and Crows Nest Station**
  The St Leonards Centre and Crows Nest Station area is proposed to be a high density commercial and residential centre that ensures the area strengthens its role as a major commercial centre in Sydney. Development will be predominantly mixed-use (commercial + residential) although, stand alone commercial development will be encouraged particularly on larger sites.

- **Residential (Naremburn and Crows Nest)**
  Heritage Conservation Areas are to be retained

- **Crows Nest Village**
  Crows Nest Village is proposed to be retained in its current form to protect the fine grain scale of the residential and retail area.

- **Pacific Highway Corridor**
  The Pacific Highway Corridor is proposed to be an activated, mixed use corridor with a key focus on employment. It is a strategic location between the Mater Hospital and the proposed Metro Station.

- **Residential (Wollstonecraft)**
  Wollstonecraft is proposed to be retained as medium density residential within a landscaped setting.

- **Gore Hill Oval & Cemetery**
  The Gore Hill Oval is proposed to be retained for recreational uses to support residents and workers. Willoughby Council has significant plans for redevelopment of the Oval. Some enhancements could be made to the cemetery to improve sense of place and pedestrian connections.

- **Health and Education**
  The Health and Education character area is proposed to be retained for uses associated with health and education industries to build on the vision for an expanded "health and education precinct". Further development of this area will be guided by an integrated strategy.

Figure 1.1.25 Character Areas

**Residential (St Leonards South)**
St Leonards South is proposed to accommodate higher density residential in certain areas over time. Higher densities will be focused in those areas closest to St Leonards Station. Commercial land along Pacific Highway will be retained for employment uses.
3.6 Desired Future Character Objectives

**St Leonards Centre/Crows Nest Sydney Metro**
1. Protect conservation areas and existing character of Crows Nest east of Oatley Street.
2. Focus height and density at the intersection of Pacific Highway and Albany Street between the two stations.
3. Retain 135 employment zones where appropriate, to encourage a high density employment within the area.
4. Provide a strong commercial offering and a wide range of activities to support an 18-hour cycle (including night time economy)
5. Enhance existing east-west connections and investigate opportunities for north south linkages and through-site linkages including to Hurstville Park and the Crows Nest Sydney Metro sites, St Leonards North and throughout the St Leonards centre.

**Crows Nest Village**
1. Retain the existing fine grain character of the Village/Willardby Road area.
2. Sensitively transition development near Willardby Road to ensure appropriate solar access and visual character is maintained.
3. Support the continuous growth of active shop fronts and quality public domain.
4. Expand Hurme Street Park towards Hurme Lane to provide more opportunity for deep soil and passive recreation.

**St Leonards South**
1. Support the development of St Leonards South at appropriate densities, as presented in the St Leonards South Residential Precinct Draft Plans exhibited by Lane Cove Council in 2017.
2. Focus higher density development in the north east, within close proximity to public transport.
3. Maintain view sharing and solar amenity by transitioning development down from Pacific Highway to River Road and Park Road.
4. Reinforce the existing north-south connections.
5. Investigate opportunities for improved east-west connections through St Leonards South Masterplan, connecting Newlands Park to Gore Hill oval.
6. Protect existing heritage items within the area.

**Artarmon Employment Area**
1. Artarmon Employment Area should continue as an industrial centre, providing key urban services to the local and regional population.
2. Facilitate a high density of industrial jobs towards the station.
3. Provide for industrial uses to develop in the Herbert-Frederick Street sub-area to cater for evolving technology.
4. Potential to improve connections along Reserve Road through the hospital to Gore Hill Park.
5. Potential to improve public domain and quality of the streetscape along Herbert Street and Frederick Street linking to Reserve Road.
6. Ensure the area is robust to allow for the growth of tech industries, start-ups and ancillary retail.
Vision and Principles

Health and Education Precinct
1. The Health and Education Precinct is to evolve and reinforce the role of St Leondras as a major service and employment centre.
2. Investigate opportunity for new school at TAFE site to accommodate future enrolment demand.
3. Improve north-south and east-west pedestrian connections from Artarmon through to St Leondras.
4. High priority to develop an integrated strategy with Health NSW.
5. Provide opportunity for key worker housing and office accommodation within walking distance of the campus.

Naremburn and Crows Nest Residential
1. Protect and maintain the heritage conservation character of Naremburn and Holtermann Estate Conservation areas.
2. Ensure both areas retain a largely low scale residential character with leafy streetscapes.
3. Ensure transitions from Chalder Street to conservation area is adequately managed through stepping of height of development south of Hanly Lane away from existing houses.
4. Ensure future development does not significantly impact on solar amenity of existing residents.

Wollstonecraft Residential
1. Protect and maintain the existing urban fabric of Wollstonecraft.
2. Allow opportunities for a mix of medium density and townhouse development.
3. Ensure future development responds to the surrounding context, considering existing views and topography.
4. Reinforce the landscape character of this area by retaining existing trees and providing adequate setbacks to allow new landscaping to be established.

Pacific Highway South
1. Retain the existing height along the Pacific Highway between Heritage Items near the Five Ways and Bruce Street, reinforcing the existing building scale at the Crows Nest Five Ways intersection.
2. Streetwall alignment and setbacks are to reference the scale, form and grain of existing heritage Items, responding to the surrounding built form character at, and adjacent to, the intersection.
3. Explore opportunities for linking uses to the Mater Hospital with commercial podiums along the highway.
Urban Design Framework

This section introduces the draft Plan for St Leonards and Crows Nest, including supporting urban design framework relating to:

- Environment, Public Domain and Community
- Activity
- Movement and Access
- Land Use
- Built Form