# Community & Stakeholder Engagement Plan

Sydney Water, GHD & MR Communications Services

**Green Space Masterplan** 

March 2025









# **Document Control**

Version	Prepared by	Date	Reviewed by	Date	Approved by	Date
Version 1	(MR Communications, (GHD)	23/01/2025	(GHD)	23/01/2025	N/A	
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# **Acknowledgement of Country**

Sydney Water respectfully acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the land and waters on which we work, live and learn. We pay respect to Elders past and present.



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## Introduction

This Community and Stakeholder Engagement Plan (CSEP) describes how Sydney Water, GHD and MR Communications Services will engage with external stakeholders about the Upper South Creek Green Space master plan. The plan will serve as a strategic approach to involve and collaborate with the communities and relevant stakeholders in the identified regions of Western Sydney. It outlines the engagement approach, objectives, planned actions and timing.

This CSEP is staged separately from the previously issued and approved CSEP associated with the Advanced Water Recycling Centre (AWRC) works. This CSEP will require submission to the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure (DPHI) for approval.



# 1 Project Background

Sydney Water is currently constructing the Upper South Creek (USC) Advanced Water Recycling Centre (AWRC) in Kemps Creek and supporting pipeline infrastructure in the surrounds. The project will support the population and economic growth of Western Sydney including the Western Sydney International Airport and the designated growth areas; Southwest Growth Area and Western Sydney Aerotropolis Growth Area. The AWRC will provide high quality, treated water, for release into the connecting waterways in Western Sydney, which will support the environmental health of those waterways.

The AWRC site is about 78 ha in size and is in the suburb of Kemps Creek, bounded by Wianamatta-South Creek to the west, Kemps Creek to the northeast and the new M12 Motorway to the south. The site, accessed from Elizabeth Drive via Clifton Avenue and Badu Muru Grove, will include an operational area and a Green Space.

The Wianamatta Circular Economy Precinct (CE) east of the operational area is part of the broader AWRC development for a future circular economy precinct.

The operational area currently being built by John Holland for Sydney Water as part of the Stage 1 work will include:

- the AWRC which includes buildings, infrastructure and equipment for wastewater treatment
- ancillary infrastructure including an administration building, carparking, internal roads, renewable energy generation, onsite detention basins, chemical storage and switch rooms.
- infrastructure to release treated water and stormwater to Wianamatta-South Creek.

Stage 1 also includes the rehabilitation of the Wianamatta-South Creek riparian corridor along the western site boundary.

Sydney Water's 2021 Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) proposed that the Green Space would include:

 landscaping to develop a green space that enhances biodiversity, uses best practice water sensitive urban design and provides visual screening of the AWRC

The green space area is an important link in the green spine along Wianamatta-South Creek envisaged in the NSW Government's vision for the Western Sydney Aerotropolis Growth Area (WSAGA).

## **Project description and objectives**

The below information has been sourced from Sydney Water's 'AWRC Green Space Project Plan' document (Rev 3, dated 12 December 2023). To leverage the 1-billion-dollar investment in the USC AWRC, Sydney Water has proposed to establish a Green Space on the residual flood prone land around the AWRC and Circular Economy Zone.

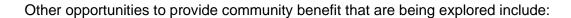
The Green Space represents an opportunity for Sydney Water to demonstrate its core values of caring for the environment and the community. A master planning process is underway to shape future use, embellishment and management of this land in line with Sydney Water's corporate objectives and customer expectations. The master plan aims to contribute to a range of environmental, cultural, community and liveability objectives.



Figure 1: The Green Space, Operational and Circular Economy zones

Sydney Water's primary objectives for the Green Space include:

- Providing access to Country for Traditional Custodians for cultural practice, connection and enterprise
- Restoring the floodplain through revegetation and generating potential biodiversity and carbon offsets
- Rehabilitating waterways to meet NSW Government waterway health objectives
- Improving canopy cover and mitigating urban heat and climate change challenges
- Preserving and interpreting the Indigenous and scientific heritage.



- Providing for regional active transport connections, leveraging from dedicated cycleways on the M12 motorway and other surrounding developments
- Creating spaces for research and education associated with the AWRC, Circular Economy and natural environment.

Certain components of the master planning process are included within the AWRC Stage 1 scope and budget. This includes the preparation of a high-level master plan for the Green Space and the rehabilitation of the Wianamatta-South Creek Corridor within the boundaries of the site. The master plan may identify future stages of work, engagement and planning which would go beyond the current AWRC project scope.

#### **Context and timing**

GHD and John Holland, in partnership with Sydney Water, engaged with Aboriginal and government stakeholders about a range of topics relating to the design, construction and operation of the USC AWRC and Pipelines project in 2023. The Green Space opportunity was mentioned during these discussions however specific details were not presented for feedback at that time. Sydney Water itself engaged separately with several stakeholders about the Green Space in 2023.

Detailed stakeholder engagement about the Green Space was deferred to late 2024, as several specialist environmental and flood studies had to be completed first. Sydney Water will begin engaging with relevant stakeholders in early 2025 to finalise a master plan and business case for the Green Space.

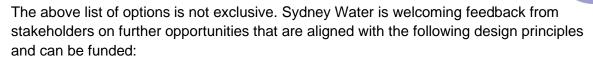
Sydney Water has engaged GHD and MR Communications Services to support Sydney Water in undertaking formal engagement with key stakeholders to inform the development of the green space master plan. The stakeholder engagement program is expected to involve:

- Planning: From September 2024
- Engagement Round 1: February 2025
- Consideration of initial feedback in master planning: May/June 2025
- Engagement Round 2: August/September 2025
- Reporting: Late 2025

## The master planning process

While the EIS provided for a range of possibilities for the Green Space, the opportunities described in Sydney Water's November 2024 *Greenspace Master planning Options Shortlist* report include:

- Regenerated landscape with tree and undergrowth planting across the 38 hectares.
- Opportunity to restore vegetation to western edge of Wianamatta-South Creek.
- Cross array tree planting.
- M12 cycle connection (future potential).
- consideration of stormwater retention basin and wetland biofiltration and/or biofiltration structures within the floodplain for additional storage to support the adjoining Circular Economy Zone



- Restoring local biodiversity.
- Meeting stakeholder expectations as much as possible.
- Avoiding construction in the flood plain.
- Not precluding future biodiversity offsets.
- Preserving the potential for an access trail or active transport linkages.
- Incorporating stormwater management options.

Tract, on behalf of Sydney Water, will carry out the following tasks to prepare the Green Space master plan:

- Site analysis of Green Space and Circular Economy Precinct.
- Ecological, cultural heritage and social opportunities and constraints mapping.
- Consider stakeholder engagement aspirations, feedback and recommendations (the focus of this CSEP).
- Prepare draft options for initial discussions with Sydney Water PCG.
- Develop consolidated master plan and report.

Sydney Water will consider the project objectives, opportunities and constraints mapping, the considerations outlined below and feedback from stakeholders before making its decision on how the Green Space will be used and managed.

#### Considerations

The following points have been considered in the development of the engagement approach in this CSEP and will be important for stakeholders to understand when learning about and providing feedback on the potential uses and future management of the Green Space.

- Upper South Creek planning approval The project EIS, planning approval and related NSW Planning Minister's Conditions of Approval and the commitments in the Stage 1 Work Urban Design and Landscape Plan relating to the Green Space must be considered. These are discussed further below.
- Nearby projects Other projects nearby that may impact on the development and
  management of the Green Space include Sydney Water's USC networks program, the
  AWRC operational area and riparian corridor work, the Western Sydney Aerotropolis
  Stormwater project, circular economy precinct, Transport for NSW's M12 project to the
  south and any development plans by the University of Sydney, which borders the

southern boundary of the site. Dharug Traditional Custodians will want to know more about any future work that needs to involve construction/excavation in the Green Space.

- Aviation safeguarding As the site is near the Western Sydney International Airport,
  Sydney Water's Upper South Creek site must be developed and managed in a way that
  is consistent with the Aviation Safeguarding Guidelines for the Western Sydney
  Aerotropolis and surrounding areas and the Western Sydney Aerotropolis Development
  Control Plan 2022. Key considerations relate to the need to minimise the risk of bird
  strike on aircraft and minimise glint and glare for aircraft and the air traffic control tower.
- **Potential flooding** Sydney Water has completed flood studies to show how the site, including the Green Space, could be affected by flooding. Tract will consider this in relation to the feasibility of certain uses of the Green Space.
- **Timing** The Stage 1 work including the AWRC operational area and revegetation of the Wianamatta-South Creek riparian corridor must be completed in 2026.
- Aboriginal cultural heritage salvage information Dharug Traditional Custodians and other interested Aboriginal stakeholders have expressed a strong desire to know more about the Aboriginal cultural salvage work that was done by for Sydney Water in 2023. Final reports are not expected to be available until early 2026 however the stakeholders would like more interim information so that they can consider it when providing feedback on the future use and management of the Green Space.
- **Funding** Sydney Water is open to feasible Green Space options that will help with the ongoing management and maintenance of the site from external public or private organisations. This could include income from a Biodiversity Stewardship Site, carbon offsets, recreation and/or partnerships with Aboriginal enterprises.
- Surrounding area The surrounding area includes the new airport, M12 motorway,
  Western Sydney Airport Sydney Metro, new commercial warehouses, the Twin Creeks
  Estate and land owned by a mix of developers, the University of Sydney, private rural
  residential owners and market gardeners. The area is expected to develop over time as
  more industrial and employment lands are built. This nature of the future surrounding
  area and the limited nearby residential population with good public transport links must
  be considered.
- Stakeholder availability and consultation fatigue Stakeholders in the Aerotropolis and western Sydney are very busy, particularly Dharug Traditional Custodians who must juggle work, daily life and giving their time to projects such as this as Custodians. Further, discussions about the Upper South Creek project have been happening for several years. There were several workshops and meetings in 2023 with Aboriginal and government stakeholders however they were advised that the Green Space could not be discussed in detail until 2024. Now is the time to listen to stakeholder aspirations, share detailed information and consider feedback in a timely manner. Explaining how feedback will be used, and the decision-making element of the master planning process will be an important and respectful part of the engagement program.



# Past engagement outcomes

Extensive stakeholder engagement occurred in 2023 about the design, construction and operation of the Upper South Creek AWRC and Pipelines project. This centred mostly on discussions that would feed into the Urban Design and Landscape Plan (UDLP) for the Stage 1 work.

As outlined in the UDLP, although the Green Space was not discussed in detail in 2023, there was strong interest in the master planning process for opportunities within the Green Space.

Aboriginal stakeholders emphasised the need to protect flora and fauna, restore the natural flow of water through the site, explore the possibility of improving land and water management across the area and not just within the AWRC site, consider some interpretation and education about Caring for Country and increase awareness of local Aboriginal language.

Government stakeholders expressed interest in what Sydney Water was planning but there was no strong interest or commitment of funding for additions such as local cycling path connections or having another organisation take on the ownership or management of the Green Space site.



# **Engagement approach**

This engagement program builds on the work done in 2023 by continuing discussions with the key Aboriginal, local council and state government stakeholders as Sydney Water finalises its master planning for the Green Space. It seeks to inform stakeholders about Sydney Water's intentions, seek feedback on current options and identify any other feasible options that would support the project's objectives.

Our engagement is guided by our Indigenous community engagement principles:

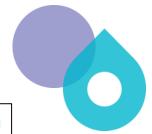
- Respect and cultural awareness: Our team know the importance of cultural safety
  and how to build respect and create an environment of cultural safety with
  communities. Our engagement team has high levels of cultural awareness and include
  both Indigenous and non-Indigenous team members.
- **Genuine and meaningful engagement:** We bring our clients on the journey as we approach Indigenous community engagement in a transparent and genuine way. From the outset, we work with our clients to understand the project context, scope, nonnegotiables, and key messages. We practice deep listening as we recognise that engagement with Indigenous communities involves two-way knowledge sharing.
- Valuing storytelling: We recognise that storytelling plays an integral role in Aboriginal
  cultures. We have planned our engagement approach to allow for time and space to
  practice culturally sensitive storytelling as a way of communicating, learning and
  appreciating the connections and knowledge that Indigenous communities, our clients,
  and our team have.
  - The wider community will be informed once the master plan and next stage of funding is confirmed.

## **Engagement requirements**

The Green Space was listed as part of the Upper South Creek Stage 1 work described in the EIS, however, when the Stage 1 Urban Design and Landscape Plan (UDLP) was prepared in late 2023 it was too early to say what the Green Space would entail as the master planning process had not yet progressed. The UDLP provided to the Planning Secretary stated that stakeholder engagement on the Green Space would be undertaken as part of a future master planning process, separate to the engagement undertaken for the Stage 1 AWRC operational area and riparian corridor.

The NSW Planning Minister's Conditions of Approval for the Stage 1 Work including stakeholder engagement requirements for the UDLP. As explained above, while the UDLP did not address the Green Space specifically, the requirement to engage with the stakeholders mentioned in Conditions E61 and E63 below is assumed to apply for the current engagement program planned for the Green Space master plan.

This CSEP forms part of a requirement of the Project's Conditional of Approval (CoA) and will need to be approved by DPHI.



#### Design Outcomes

- E61 The place making, design and landscape outcomes for the AWRC site of Stage 1 of the CSSI must be:
  - (a) informed by and be consistent with the Upper South Creek Advanced Water Recycling Centre Urban Design Report, dated July 2021 (provided as Attachment A to RFI 1, dated 1 June 2022) and identified in the documents listed in Condition A1, including but not limited to the objectives and design principles, requirements, and opportunities; and
  - (b) prepared in consultation with the community (including the affected landowners and businesses or a representative of the businesses), LALCs, RAPs and relevant council(s).
- E62 Where Work results in the temporary removal of a recreational or community use, and no similar use with sufficient capacity for regular users is located within two (2) kilometres of the site, then a temporary facility of comparable scale must be provided for the duration of the use of that site.

#### Urban Design and Landscape Plan

- E63 An Urban Design and Landscape Plan (UDLP) must be prepared for the AWRC site to document and illustrate the permanent built works and landscape design of Stage 1 of the CSSI and how these works are to be maintained. The UDLP must be:
  - (a) prepared by a suitably qualified and experienced person(s) in place, urban and landscape design and bush regeneration;
  - (b) prepared in consultation with relevant council(s) and the community, including affected landowners and businesses:
  - landowners and businesses;
    (c) submitted to the Planning Secretary for approval no later than one month before the construction of permanent built surface works and/or landscaping in the area to which the UDLP applies; and
  - (d) implemented during construction and operation of Stage 1 of the CSSI.

Note: The UDLP may be developed and considered in stages to facilitate design progression and construction. Any such staging and associated approval would need to facilitate a cohesive final design and not limit final design outcomes.

#### **Engagement objectives**

The key objectives of this engagement exercise with Traditional Custodians is to:

- Leverage long term trust and relationships with the Aboriginal community and organisations.
- Introduce Traditional Custodians to the scope of the project and the current proposed options for the Green Space.
- Discuss the recommended approach to engagement, timing and opportunities for Traditional Custodians to inform the draft master plan for the Green Space.
- Listen to Country and the voices of Aboriginal communities and reflect their aspirations and needs in the Green Space, particularly in relation to where, how and when part of the site could or should be used for Aboriginal cultural or enterprise uses.
- Understand preferred engagement methods for when the master plan is confirmed, and various options are progressed to design and delivery. Implement engagement strategy that has been informed by local context, stakeholder feedback and guidance.

Similarly, the engagement with government and non-government stakeholders seeks to:

- Provide an update on Sydney Water's plans for the Green Space.
- Confirm there are no major concerns with any of the initiatives proposed (note: there were no objections to what was discussed at a high level in 2023).
- Understand if there are other options that should be investigated for future consideration and implementation (note: there were no further suggestions to what was discussed at a high level in 2023).
- Identify which stakeholders want to be kept informed during the design and delivery of the Green Space.
- Implement engagement strategy that has been informed by local context, stakeholder feedback and guidance.



# **Aboriginal stakeholders**

The key Aboriginal stakeholders' group for the Green Space master plan project has been identified based on previous USC AWRC engagement and knowledge of existing community dynamics and relations. GHD have a long-standing working relationship with the community and have worked with Sydney Water in the past to establish and maintain these relationships. These stakeholders include:

- Dharug Traditional Custodians: They are the primary focus and have a deep connection to the land. Their interest lies in ensuring that their cultural heritage is respected and preserved
- Local Aboriginal Land Councils (LALCs): Represent the interests of Aboriginal people in the area and are involved in land management and cultural heritage protection
- Registered Aboriginal Parties (RAPs): Have a statutory role in protecting Aboriginal cultural heritage and are consulted on matters affecting their heritage
- Other Aboriginal Stakeholders: Includes Elders, community members, and representatives from local Aboriginal organizations who provide insights and feedback on the project. Engagement with these stakeholders may be subject to recommendation and consensus from the core stakeholders' group.

We understand that the key objectives of this engagement exercise with Traditional Custodians is to:

- Leverage long term trust and relationships with the Aboriginal community and organisations.
- Understand engagement to date, capture any feedback to date regarding the Green Space and previously expressed desires for the space.
- Introduce Traditional Custodians to the scope of the project and the current proposed options for the Green Space.
- Discuss the recommended approach to engagement timeline and key opportunity for Traditional Custodians to inform the draft masterplan for the Green Space.

#### Areas of influence

We know that for this project, there are a range of community stakeholders who will have an interest in this project, including local Elders, Indigenous organisations and knowledge keepers.

The key area of influence that could be influenced as part of the engagement process for Aboriginal stakeholders, include:

**Flora species:** Aboriginal stakeholders can provide valuable insights into the selection of flora species that are culturally significant and native to the area. This includes plants used for traditional medicines, food sources, and those with cultural or spiritual significance. Engaging with stakeholders ensures that the selected species reflect the cultural heritage and ecological knowledge of the Dharug Traditional Custodians

**Planting method/layout:** The planting method and layout should be designed in consultation with Aboriginal stakeholders to reflect traditional land management practices. This could include the use of specific planting patterns, companion planting, and the creation of culturally significant landscapes. The layout should also consider the natural flow of water and the preservation of existing vegetation, where possible.

Flora maintenance (methods and contractors): Maintenance methods should align with traditional ecological knowledge and practices. This includes the use of culturally appropriate techniques for weed control, pruning, and soil management. Additionally, engaging Aboriginal contractors for maintenance work can provide economic opportunities for the community and ensure that the maintenance practices are culturally sensitive.

**Area/requirements for cultural practice:** Designating areas for cultural practices. These areas could be used for ceremonies, gatherings, and other cultural activities. The requirements for these areas should be determined in consultation with Aboriginal stakeholders to ensure they meet the needs of the community. This includes considerations for privacy, accessibility, and the preservation of cultural heritage sites.

**Cultural/educational signage/information:** Cultural and educational signage can provide information about the cultural significance of the area, traditional land management practices, and the flora and fauna present. This signage should be developed in collaboration with Aboriginal stakeholders and local artists to ensure it accurately reflects the cultural heritage and knowledge of the Dharug Traditional Custodians and considers appropriate placement within sites location.

Access requirements and procedure: Access to the site should be managed in a way that respects the cultural significance of the area. This includes establishing protocols for access to culturally sensitive areas, providing clear guidelines for visitors, and ensuring that access points are designed to minimize environmental impact. Engaging with Aboriginal stakeholders in the development of these procedures ensures that they are culturally appropriate and respectful.

**Artefact burial location:** The location for the burial of artefacts should be determined in consultation with Aboriginal stakeholders. This ensures that the artefacts are returned to a place that is culturally significant and that their preservation is managed in a way that respects traditional practices. The burial location should be documented and protected to prevent vandalism and ensure the artefacts' long-term preservation.

These areas of influence highlight the importance of engaging with Aboriginal stakeholders throughout the project to ensure that their cultural heritage and knowledge are respected and integrated into the project planning and implementation.

Our approach to engagement allows for community to identify how they would like to engage with us, and what material they would like to engage with us on. This helps to manage consultation fatigue, which we know is a current challenge for Aboriginal communities.

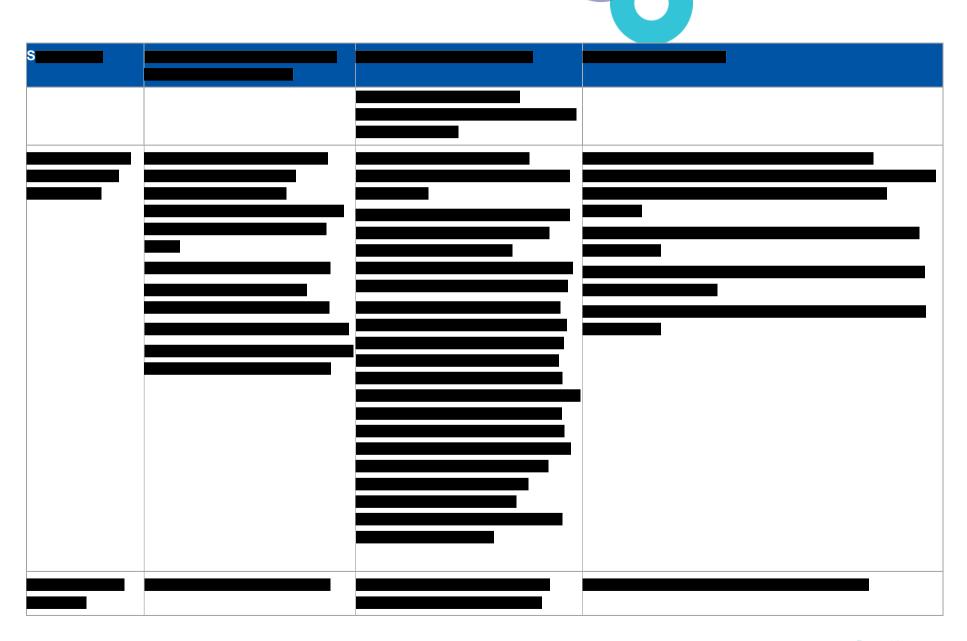
We will work closely with Traditional Custodians and Sydney Water during the process to tailor any specific needs and engagement preferences of the stakeholders. We commend Sydney Water's commitment to the Recognise Country Guidelines and support for engagement processes in the Aerotropolis that start with Country.

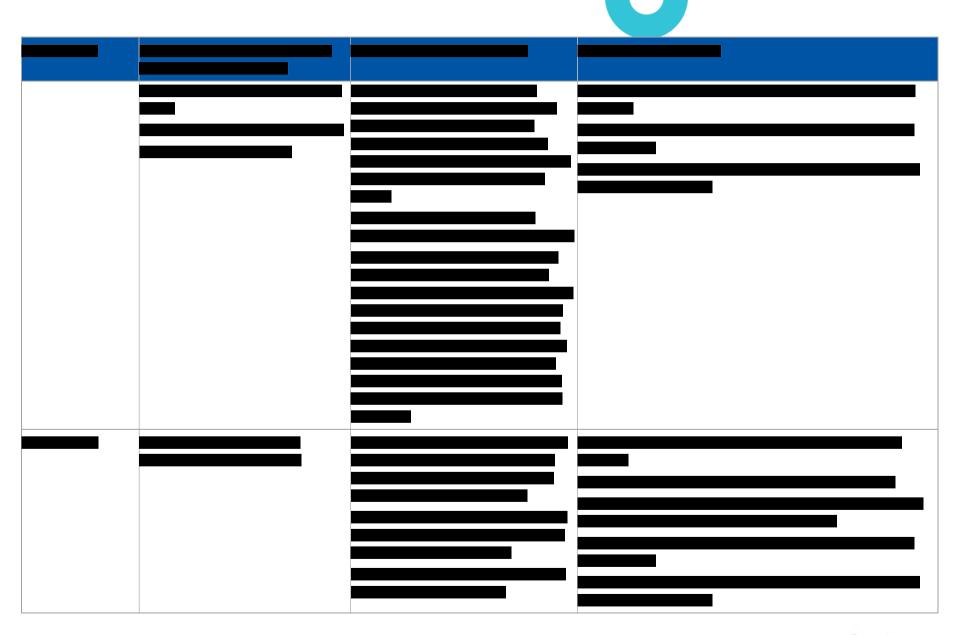
#### Government and other stakeholders

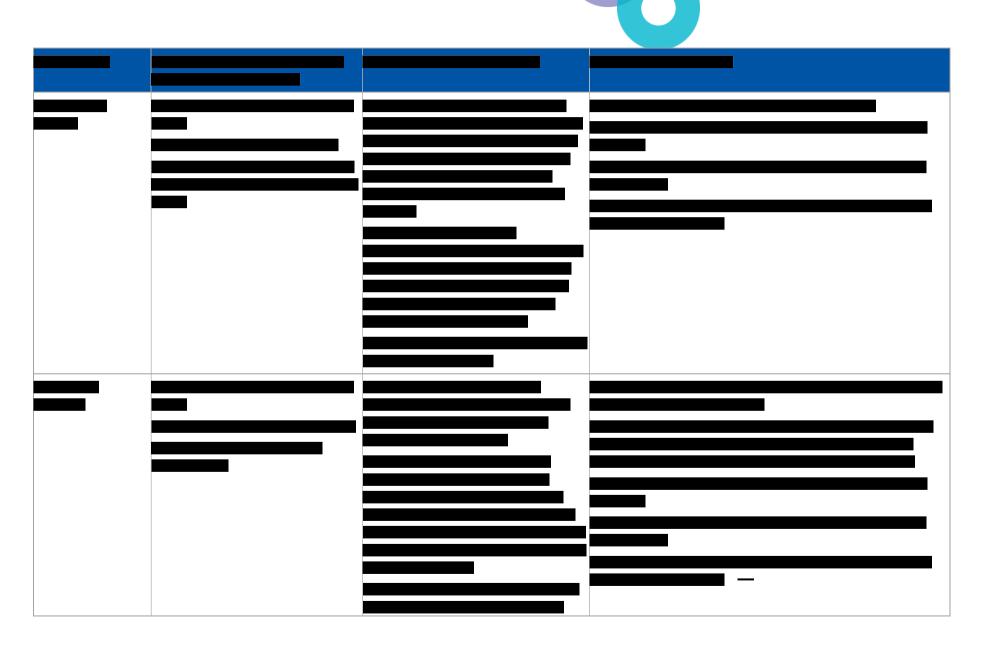
Important discussions need to occur with the City of Penrith, City of Liverpool, government agencies and other interested stakeholders, such as Bicycle NSW, once the engagement program has first progressed with Aboriginal stakeholders.

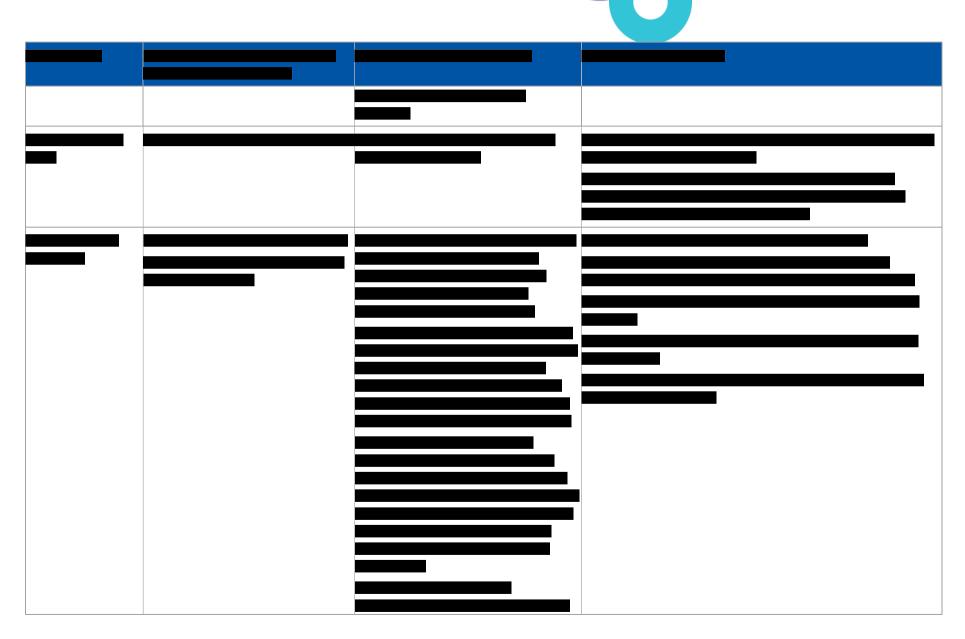
It is also important for Sydney Water to revisit past conversations about potential land-use opportunities and sensitively manage expectations about what is and what isn't possible moving forward. Depending which options are progressed, endorsement from key stakeholders will be helpful for future discussions about environmental approval pathways, potential funding and plans of management.



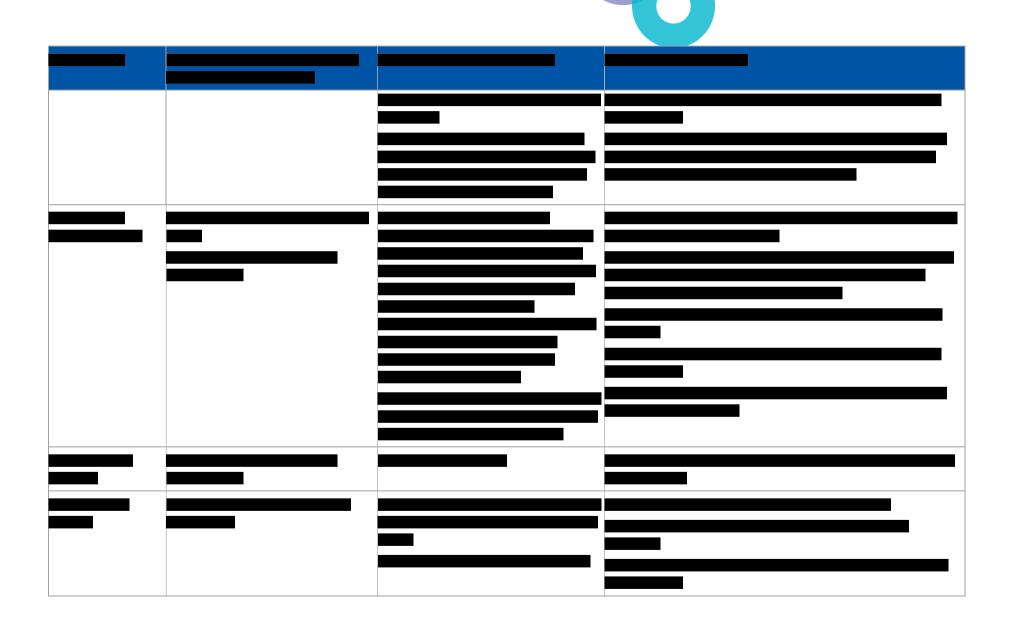














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# **Key Messages**

## Overarching corporate messaging

- To support future development across Western Sydney, Sydney Water is planning and building new water and wastewater infrastructure to enable development in growth areas.
- We work with other government agencies to meet growth forecasts, ensuring we deliver the right services at the right time.
- We are protecting public health and the environment by ensuring the community can access safe and reliable wastewater services.
- We are taking steps to minimise any impacts to the environmental and community.
- We are working with the community and stakeholders on each element of the project and will keep them informed.

## **Project messaging**

- Sydney Water is planning the Upper South Creek AWRC project to support population and economic growth in Western Sydney, including growth areas known as the South West Growth Area and Western Sydney Aerotropolis Growth Area.
- The project's scope of work includes the construction and operation of a:
  - o new AWRC
  - new treated water and brine pipeline

This project will deliver sustainable wastewater treatment and high-quality recycled water to create a cooler, greener Western Parkland City, with a wide range of benefits for the entire community including:

- providing efficient and cost-effective wastewater services
- producing high-quality, recycled water for a range of reuses
- recycling organic waste to generate electricity
- helping to protect local waterways and aquatic ecosystems via environmental flows
- producing biosolids for an alternative to chemical fertilisers in agriculture
- enhancing biodiversity by greening Western Sydney with recycled water
- generating renewable energy within the AWRC and through solar
- building a facility that can respond to changes in demand as our community grows.

Once delivery starts, the project will take about three years to build, with some sites such as the AWRC site requiring construction activity over this entire period. Other components such as pipelines will occur in several locations at one time, with works moving progressively along the alignment.

Once each element of the project is built, it will undergo commissioning tests to make sure it is ready to operate and works to restore disturbed areas will be completed.



## **Green space messaging**

- Sydney Water has set aside 38 hectares of largely flood prone land around the AWRC operational site and circular economy zone for greenspace
- A master plan is underway to inform how the space could be used to contribute to a range of environmental, cultural, historical, community and liveability initiatives
- As part of the master planning process, we are engaging key stakeholders to seek their input on potential future uses of the Greenspace
- Engagement with Traditional Custodians and stakeholders on the greenspace master plan will begin in Q1 2025.
- Feedback from engagement done throughout 2023 regarding site construction, riparian zone,
   UDLP, cultural awareness training will be used to inform the master planning process
- Open to a range of opportunities for Indigenous cultural engagement and enterprise as well as recreational and environmental/biodiversity uses. Hard constraints to use of the land include:
- Land within the 1:100 ARI has limited potential for built form. Must consider flood impact of any proposal.
- Revegetation of the floodplain must be done in consideration of impact on flood extents –
   may not be possible to revegetate in certain areas subject to flood impact
- Underlying zoning of the land will define what uses are possible and balanced with demand. Any prohibited uses would be avoided due to complex planning processes.
- Long term maintenance and operating model will need to be considered for any option.















