

<p>Neighbourhood Forum 5</p> <p>Wollongong's Heartland</p> <p><i>Collaborating with Council on community aspirations, visions, needs & concerns.</i></p>		<p>Coniston, Figtree, Gwynneville, Keiraville, Mangerton, Mount Keira, Mount St Thomas, North Wollongong, West Wollongong, Wollongong City.</p>
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**Agenda of meeting WEDNESDAY 1st October 2025 at 6.00
In the Library Theatre**

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| 1 | Welcome | |
| 2 | Presentation | Matt Press and Hayden David from the NSW Building Commission, on the role Certifiers and implications of faults in High Rise Buildings |
| 3 | Apologies | Harold Hanson, |
| 4 | Minutes | of meeting of 3 rd September and matters arising: see pp.23-27 |
| 5 | Comments | If you wish to comment on, or object to, any of the recommendations in this agenda please respond before the meeting date. |
| 6 | Caveats | see p.2 |
| 7 | Responses | 7.1 Gwynneville Irvine St Precinct:: see p.2, rec p.3 |
| 8 | Reports | 8.1 Economic Development Strategy: see p.4, rec p.5
8.2 Roads Act Options: see rec p.7
8.3 Figtree Community Group: see p.6
8.4 Figtree Centre: see rec p.6
8.5 Surveillance cameras Stuart Park: see rec p.7
8.6 Lake Illawarra Estuary Management Committee: see p.7 rec p.8
8.7 BlueScope Surplus Land consultation: see p. 8 rec p.9
8.8 Managing Wollongong City's flood risk: see p.9 rec p.10
8.9 New Lease for Lagoon Restaurant: see p.,10, rec p11
8.10 New Lease for North Wollongong Kiosk: see p.11 rec p12 ;
8.11 Mt Ousley - Picton Roads community consult:see p.12 rec p13
8.12 Triathlon: see p.13 rec p.14
8.13 NSW Building Commission: see p.14
8.14 Council Code of Meeting practice: see 15, rec p.18
8.15 Stuart Park; see p.18 |
| 9 | Planning | 9.1 Planning: see p.19
9.2 Development Applications see rec p19 .
9.4 DA determinations: see p.20 |
| | General Business | see p.21 |
| 11 | Snippets | see p.22 |

Current active membership of Neighbourhood Forum 5 : 462 households

6 Caveats Please note that whilst these reports and reviews, together with the recommendations and actions based on them, have been prepared with all due care and objectivity, no legal responsibility is accepted for errors, omissions or inadvertent misrepresentations, nor for any outcomes which might result from them.

7 Responses. 7.1 Gwynneville Irvine St Precinct:

From the September meeting Council was requested to adopt a consultation process similar to that used for the Mount Ouseley Interchange Project.

“Council conducts consultation in relation to Planning Proposals in line with the Community Participation Plan. As you know we have undertaken a range of consultations over the life of the project, outlined below for your information. We will continue to ensure NF5 is engaged as a stakeholder in the process.

Engagement activities associated with the Planning Proposal:

- Between 22 July and 16 August 2024 Council sought initial community feedback on the Planning Proposal through a non-statutory preliminary consultation process. This is an additional process to inform the local community of a Planning Proposal request and is not required by the State’s legislation. The exhibition material noted that a second formal exhibition period would occur if the Planning Proposal request was progressed.
- Following Council’s endorsement to progress the Planning Proposal and the receipt of the Gateway Determination from the NSW Department of Planning Housing and Infrastructure, a formal exhibition was undertaken. This statutory public exhibition extended for a period of 8 weeks from 10 March to 5 May 2025, double the period required.
- Council and Homes NSW hosted two community drop-in sessions during the exhibition period on 9 and 29 April, which provided the community with the opportunity to ask questions and understand the proposal prior to making a submission.
- Private landowners affected by the proposed changes to development controls were invited to attend an online session specifically for them on 30 April 2025.
- A dedicated page was established on Council’s website which provided a large range of documents and information related to the Planning Proposal and the exhibition process. Some of this information was also available in hard copy at the drop-in sessions.

- Homes NSW also undertook engagement with and provided information to their residents and the broader community about the project.”

Land Use Planning Manager (Acting)

Comment

From the response noted above, it would seem that Council do not propose to adopt a consultation process similar to that used for the Mount Ouseley Interchange Project nor to prepare a Master Plan for the area. One problem is that over time the necessary, but unidentified, infrastructure required could cost tens of millions of dollars for which there doesn't seem to be coherent way to fund particularly because of fragmented ownership pattern. Moreover it is proposed that until 625 social/affordable dwellings have been built in the precinct it requires all development to comprise at least 50% social housing – effectively sterilising all private holdings for many years thus defeating the object of the proposal.

Recommendation

That Council, and the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure be urged not to proceed with any re-zoning of the land until such time as:

- 1 A more comprehensive engagement plan has been implemented;
- 2 a Master Plan for area has developed in association with affected communities, and adopted;
- 3 the financial implications of providing the necessary infrastructure have been assessed and the funding arrangements agreed;
- 4 a fair and equitable way of providing social and affordable housing is adopted.

7.2 Issues awaiting responses

Partial responses/acknowledgements/actions have been made to some of these items * but substantial responses are still to come.

1	City Centre Movement and Place Plan	7/08/2024
2	Housing Mix –	9/10/2024
3	Parking for Carers & Service People –	9/10/2024
4	Corrimal Street Footpath	24/10/2024
5	Community use of Local Parks –	24/10/2024
6	Allotments and Community Gardens -	25/10/2024
8	Road Safety in Stuart Park	06/11/2024
9	Construction activities on Footpaths	24 /11/2024
10	Loss of CBD parking	7/2/2025
11	Pedestrian Safety in Keiraville	7/2/2025

12	Electric Scooters	7/2/2025
13	Acceptable Major Event locations	7/2/2025
14	Continental Pool opening hours	15/3/2025
15	Wiseman Park Playground	2/4/2025
16	Recycling of packaging	2/4/2025
17	*Wollongong Harbour Breakwater	7/5/2025
18	Delivery and Operational Plan meeting	7/5/2025
20	Breakwater Public Access	7/5/2025
21	Parking Restrictions adjacent to Stuart Park	9/6/2025

8 Reports 8.1 Economic Development Strategy 2025-35

The draft Economic Development Strategy 2025 to 2035 is on exhibition inviting feedback until 6 November 2025. Link is: <https://our.wollongong.nsw.gov.au/economic-development-strategy-2025-2035>

The current Economic Development Strategy 2019-29, outlining the key priorities, goals and actions of Council with respect to its role in supporting economic activity in Wollongong included three objectives and a Mid Term Review found that all three objectives of the original strategy had been achieved:

1. Generate 10,500 net new jobs by 2028 – 100% of jobs target achieved
2. Lifting median incomes – growth in median incomes between 2016 and 2021 for Wollongong residents of 4.1%
3. Targeted sectors align with talent pool – achieved

The review states that Wollongong outperformed the NSW economy on most key indicators over the five-year period:

- Wollongong’s economic growth (change in Gross Regional Product) exceeded the state average (2.5% vs 2.0% p.a.)
- Wollongong’s local jobs growth averaged 2.1% per annum, faster than the state average (1.9%) and significantly higher than the average for Greater Sydney (1.3%).
- Employed resident growth was even stronger, averaging 2.5% p.a. compared to 1.9% p.a. for the state.
- Once adjusting for population, Wollongong’s GDP per capita, one of the measures of living standards, was quite strong over the last five years (2% p.a.) and almost double the state average (1.1% p.a.).
- Registered business numbers in the Wollongong LGA increased by 14.4% over the three years to June 2023, stronger than that for the state (10.8%).

- Growth in businesses with 20-199 employees (19.1%) was notably higher than the state average (11.1%), with business growth led by construction, professional services, and health care.

Recommendation

That ;

- 1 Council be congratulated on the city’s economic development performance over the past five years;
- 2 members be aware that the deadline for feedback on the draft 2025 - 2035 Economic Development Strategy is Thursday 6th October.

8.2 Roads Act Options

Transport for NSW has released an Options paper to explore models that could establish a suitable framework for reforming the NSW Roads Act 1993, which has undergone limited change and no longer meets the evolving needs of NSW communities. Transport for NSW is reviewing the Act to ensure it reflects modern function of roads, recognising both the importance of roads to move cars and freight but also their role as places where people walk, cycle, catch public transport, meet, shop, and connect with their communities.

It is noted that in July 2024 TfNSW issued a Road User Space Allocation Policy that included a principle that TfNSW must “allocate road user space based on the network vision and road functions, considering all road users in order of: 1. Walking; 2. Cycling; 3. Public Transport; 4. Freight and Servicing; 5. Point to Point transport; 6. General Traffic and On-street Parking for private motorised vehicles.”

The reform approaches in the Options Paper are presented as three models each reflecting different levels of change. These models are:

Model 1: Codifying Current Practice

This model keeps the Act’s current structure but embeds current practices into the legislation to clarify responsibilities and makes processes more transparent and consistent without major changes.

Model 2: Plan-Led Framework

This model introduces network plans that would better align road management with land use planning and provide a clearer, more proactive way to manage change. It would also reduce the need for case-by-case approvals and support more consistent decision-making.

Model 3: Institutional Change

This model would establish an independent road regulator to oversee and support the management of roads in NSW, ensuring accountability and alignment with safety, accessibility, and sustainability goals.

Members can refer to the Options Paper Community Companion Document (found in Link: <https://www.haveyoursay.nsw.gov.au/roads-act-1993>) and respond to the community survey by Friday 31 October 2025

Recommendation

That TfNSW be advised that the Forum supports Model 2 provided adequate arrangements are made for resourcing infrastructure noting that the first priorities are for walking and cycling.

8.3 Figtree Community Group

On 31 July there were productive discussions at a well-attended initial meeting, and key issues identified were re Traffic, Flooding, Parking and Local Character. A second meeting of the Figtree residents group took place on 10th September, when the weather was inclement and few residents attended. It is proposed to defer a future meeting and review the situation later this year/early next year.

8.4 Figtree Centre

In 2012 the Forum adopted an ambitious Plan to upgrade the Figtree Grove centre into a town centre with community facilities but more dramatically a very significant housing component over ground floor open parking. It was known at the time that the site was subject to some flooding but there was virtually no proposed development at ground level.

However it has now come to light that levels in a series of low lying playing fields and parks adjacent and near the site have been significantly raised to make them flood free increasing the risk to this site. This, together with constraints on flows in Byarong Creek itself, make it injudicious to proceed.

Recommendation

That the Forum no longer promote an expansion of the Figtree town centre until such time as Council renders the area flood free.

8.5 Security cameras Stuart Park

In recent months there has been a significant increase in the amount of vandalism, as a result of motor vehicles doing burnouts and donuts in the area of Stuart Park. This is occurring both on grassed areas, causing many thousands of dollars' worth of damage, and on road surfaces and car parks. During August 2025, after a significantly bad overnight vandalism event, Council set up a temporary security camera in the area. During the time it was in place it appeared to have had the desired effect. The revving and hooning in the Stuart Park came to an abrupt stop. That camera has now been removed, and the problems have returned.

Recommendation:

NF5 requests Wollongong Council to install permanent security cameras to act as a deterrent to stop antisocial behaviour in the Stuart Park precinct.

8.6 Lake Illawarra Estuary Management Committee

Lake Illawarra is a treasured regional asset. During August 2025, Wollongong's independent planning panel approved (3 votes to 1) an application to establish a jet ski hire business at the Illawarra Yacht Club in Warrawong. The community member on the panel strongly objected to the application based on the impact of the new business on wildlife and public amenity.

There has been considerable community disquiet about how the consultation process was run for a proposal with such a wide impact on a significant area of the Lake (the jet ski tours, travelling at 55km/hr will complete 16 kilometre laps of the lake between 8am and 5pm every day of the week over summer.

Since the abolition of the Lake Illawarra Authority in 2014, the Lake Illawarra Estuary Management Committee (LIEMC) has been established with its principal role to protect the Lake's fragile ecosystem by adhering to the Lake Illawarra Coastal Management Program (CMP). The CMP is a 10-year strategy for the coordinated management of the Lake "to help improve the lake, protect its values and address its threats.

Membership of the LIEMC includes Wollongong and Shellharbour Councils, relevant state government agencies, the local community, the Aboriginal community and independent scientific advisers.

Amongst the many concerns raised by the community, since the planning panel approved the new jet ski hire business for a two-year period, has been the lack of consultation with other lake user groups, bird watchers, and residents who live close to the perimeter of the lake, and who will likely see and hear the jet skis as they circle the Lake. Wollongong Council has said the jet ski business did not "meet the threshold" for it to be referred to the Environment Protection Agency.

It is noted that the LIEMC also wasn't asked to comment on this DA which seems to be a significant oversight. A councillor who is a member of the Committee responded to the concerns of one local, saying "the Lake Illawarra Estuary Management Implementation Committee do not have a role in providing feedback on development applications for the Lake." The Chair of the LIEMC, advised he wasn't informed of the DA until a fortnight after it had been approved.

At the time of writing this agenda item, final approval for the jet ski DA rests with Transport for NSW (Maritime) which has confirmed it actively encouraged the relocation of the jet ski hire business from Botany Bay to Lake Illawarra.

Recommendation:

NF5 expresses its disappointment at the lack of due process for the consideration of the local planning panel for the jet ski hire business which seeks to set up on Lake Illawarra. NF5 also seeks an explanation why the LIEMC wasn't consulted on this controversial proposal which will clearly have some impact on the Lake and those who use it or enjoy its quiet amenity.

8.7 BlueScope Surplus Land Consultation

Exciting plans for the rezoning of about 200 hectares of "surplus" land at the Port Kembla Steelworks are currently on public exhibition for public feedback. The exhibition period closes at 5pm on Thursday 2 October 2025.

The proposal applies to underutilised land, located predominantly along Five Islands Road, Port Kembla, withing the existing BlueScope steelworks. The exhibition documents include an Explanation of Intended Effect, and the public is encouraged to view the documents and provide feedback.

BlueScope is hoping, over time, the now empty land will attract new industries and provide jobs for up to 30,000 people. It's also proposed that there will be a vibrant cultural precinct, which could include the proposed Museum of People Culture and Industry, which was pitched to NF5 by Franca Facci at our September meeting.

Recommendation:

NF5 makes a submission offering its support for BlueScope's revitalisation plans and encourages its members to also lodge their own submissions by the deadline of 2 October,

8.8 Managing Wollongong City's flood risk

Council is working with the community and other stakeholders to better manage flood risks in the Wollongong catchment area. Council is to be complimented after holding two excellent information sessions for affected residents on 17 September, and another on 24 September. There were many staff in attendance and a consultant, which gave attendees a good chance for one-on-one discussions/explanation.

They've prepared a [draft Wollongong City Floodplain Risk Management Study and Plan](#). This study and plan look at how flooding affects people, their property and land, infrastructure like roads and stormwater pipes, and public spaces like parks and recreation areas. It identifies flood risks and looks at what we can do to reduce and manage those risks.

The Wollongong City catchment area includes Wollongong, Mangerton, Coniston and Mount Saint Thomas. The draft plan outlines the potential risks and impacts of floods and recommends practical ways to reduce current and future flood risks. These findings will help guide future planning and development in this area.

As part of this study, Council has identified some options (or measures) to help in managing flood risk across the catchment area. These include built structures that help to control floodwater and reduce impact on public and private assets. They can also help keep drains and culverts free from blockage during big storms. Examples include culvert upgrades and regrading of roads.

Council says this should help our community better prepare for and respond to floods by improving awareness and communication. Examples include emergency plans, flood warnings, and community education.

These involve change/addition of flood planning controls for future developments (buildings, roads and others) to ensure that land uses are compatible with flood risk. It can also include voluntary house raising. Council staff have run many options for solutions, some suggested by residents from local knowledge of events and impacts, and further investigations will occur. Many displays were around a table to allow individual discussion on specifics.

A significant element was that in some places a very high tide determines the flooding and this restricts solutions. It is understood Council are negotiating with the golf club as there may well be some trade offs to the benefit of all. Raising houses or flood proofing them are on the agenda as well as purchase. A draft strategy is expected to go on exhibition soon which will spell out costs (environmental not just money) of the options. Whilst some residents are still unhappy, at least they are aware of the relevant issues, difficulties and options. The public is encouraged to have their say and feedback is open until 3 November 2025.

Recommendation: NF5 to prepare a submission as part of the consultation process and encourage all members to review the Floodplain Study and Plan and make individual submissions if they wish.

8.9 New Lease for Lagoon Restaurant.

A small notice was recently discovered at the Lagoon restaurant site in Stuart Park, and a search of Council's website for Public Notices revealed that Council is proposing to grant a Lease for five (5) years plus a five year extension. It invites public written submissions by 5pm Tuesday 7 October, ie 28 days from when the notice was posted on the website.

It includes that any submissions should be clearly outlined and based on the effect of granting the lease will have on the existing or future use of the Crown Land. It is understood to be the first step in a complex process to satisfy requirements of the Local Government and Crown Land Acts, leading to Council inviting tenders for a new 5-year lease and licence.

The Lagoon's first lease to Emibarb for 10 years from 1986 was granted after much public controversy, including concerns by the Crown Land relevant manager, about whether such a significant area of precious Crown land dedicated in 1884 for a public park should be used for a large commercial restaurant.

However the Lagoon became very popular and a second lease for 10 years to 2006 was granted with minimal opposition. Unfortunately a fire in 2001 destroyed the building, and in 2003 Council agreed to a 20-year lease to rent the lessee's new building of about 1,400 sqm until July 2026, and a non-exclusive licence to use the adjoining land of about 660 sqm at zero rent.

In June 2006 the NSW Supreme Court ruled in favour of the lessee, which meant the rent to Council must be based on the unimproved land value, as stated in the lease document, rather than Council's intended market value, that provided a multi-million difference in rent over the 20-year term of the lease, which was subsequently executed by Council's Administrator in Nov 2008.

Submissions on how the new lease and licence will affect the use of Crown Land will depend on many factors, including whether the future tender documents can ensure protecting the public interest and access in the park and avoid problems that have occurred over the past 20 years. These include contraventions of a licence DA consent Sep 2001 condition for the restaurant /kiosk that it shall not be used as a place of public entertainment nor as a function centre or reception hall/centre without written approval of Council.

Also that the seating capacity shall not exceed 278 persons, whereas this is doubled by the website's advertised capacities around 460 for function rooms, plus more for the northern Annexe built in 2013. The Annexe deck and subsequent roof (initially rejected in the public interest but subsequently approved) has been built for exclusive use on the licence area, which contravenes a condition of lease.

Recommendation

Council be requested to develop a community engagement plan for this project that enables agreed representatives of NF5 to be involved in developing relevant sections of the tender documentation to ensure the public interest and access to this irreplaceable Crown Land will be protected and maintained.

8.10 New Lease for North Wollongong Kiosk;

A small notice was recently discovered at North Wollongong (Diggies) café site, and a search of Council's website for Public Notices revealed that Council is proposing to grant a Lease and Outdoor Dining Licence for five (5) years plus an option for a five-year extension. It invites public written submissions by 5pm Thursday 2 October, ie 14 days from when the notice was posted on the website, whereas the lagoon lease submission period is 28 days.

It includes that any submissions should be clearly outlined and based on the effect of granting the lease and licence will have on the existing or future use of the Crown Land. It is understood to be the first step in a complex process to satisfy requirements of the Local Government Act, leading to Council inviting tenders for a new 5-year lease and licence.

Submissions on how the new lease and licence will affect the use of Crown Land will depend on many factors, particularly the areas proposed to be included in the Outdoor Dining Licence Area, access and waiting areas for the kiosk café and dining annexe.

Unfortunately, whilst reference to leases for other cafes and kiosks are publicly available on Council's website for Leases and Licences, and the Contracts Register in accordance with the GIPA Act, information on Diggies café & kiosk is not available. Neither is a lease nor licence for Diggies, so a GIPA request has been forwarded to Council to urgently email same, to enable NF5 consideration and response.

Recommendations

Council be requested to

- 1 extend the submission period to 28 days, ie closing Thursday 16 October, and provide plans indicating the areas proposed to be leased and licensed.
- 2 provide a copy of the draft lease and licence by close of business on Monday 5 October to enable consideration and a submission by 16 October.

8.11 Mt Ousley Road-Picton Road community consultation

Transport for NSW is currently in the early stages of investigating options to improve the safety, reliability and resilience of a five-kilometre section of the M1 Princes Motorway at Mount Pleasant and Mount Ousley. The Federal and NSW Governments have committed \$10 million towards planning for improvements.

This section of the motorway carries about 55,000 vehicles per day and forms a missing link between other upgrades of the corridor, the Mount Ousley Interchange (under construction) and the Picton Road upgrade (in planning). It is often subject to traffic congestion, particularly during weekday peak periods and weekend holiday peaks.

It also forms part of the key corridor for movement of freight between the Illawarra region and Greater Metropolitan Sydney and it is the only crossing of the Illawarra escarpment suitable for higher productivity freight vehicles, with alternative routes subject to load limits and other restrictions.

Transport for NSW is now seeking feedback on people's experiences travelling along and accessing this section of road. They say insights will give a better understanding of the issues different stakeholders experience travelling on this section of road, to help them identify measure to improve safety, traffic performance and reliability for all road users.

In particular the long standing 40 km/h speed for heavy vehicles and 80 km/h for light vehicles is supported, together with better compliance measures and including re-installation of the noise cameras.

The consultation period which will help inform planning and development of upgrade options closes at 11.59pm on Monday 20 October 2025.

Recommendations:

- 1 a submission be made during the consultation period
- 2 Forum Members are encouraged to contribute to the feedback as individuals:
Email: MountOusleySRI@transport.nsw.gov.au

8.12 Triathlon

Wollongong will host the Triathlon Worlds in mid-October 2025, and consultation is now underway with locals and businesses which will be impacted. While the event will cause disruption, like the UCI Road Cycling Championships in 2022, it will also showcase Wollongong to a global audience and bring several thousand visitors to the city and region.

Event organisers, who have overall responsibility for the event management and community consultation, say there will be significant changes to access, parking and traffic arrangements between Wednesday 15 and Sunday 19 October when temporary road closures will be in place. Pedestrian access within the event precinct will be available at all times.

Road closure maps are available on the website. Local Access – 2025 World Triathlon Championship Wollongong

The event managers are happy to respond to questions via email: community@wollongongtriathlon.com or by phone on 44237775. If locals have essential appointments during the event period contact community@triathlon.com and event organisers will work on assisting with access.

For more information on the event and its impact, Business and Community Information Sessions will be held at the Mall Friday Markets on Friday 26 September and 10 October 10am-2pm, and on the Blue Mile adjacent to Levendi Cafe from 10am-12 noon on Sunday 28th September and Saturday 11th October. Volunteers for the event are still being recruited. Email volunteers@wollongongtriathlon.com

Concerns have been raised by some small business owners around the harbour about consultation and information processes, and potential financial impacts due to access restrictions, but Council maintains that they will lose financially by the significant disruption. The Lord Mayor has said publicly that many businesses would benefit from the event,

Recommendation:

The Forum wishes Council and the race organisers well with the event and effective engagement earlier effective engagement with local residents and businesses for future major events which come to Wollongong to maximise positive experiences for everyone.

8.13 Building Commission Presentation

It is most welcome that the NSW Assistant Building Commissioner will make a presentation and the Senior Building Codes Officer will be in attendance. In 2023, the NSW Government launched Building Commission NSW, the state's first dedicated building and construction regulator covering home building licence holders, tradespeople, registered design and building practitioners, professional engineers and certifiers.

It is responsible for ensuring safety, quality, and accountability across the residential construction industry. Their regulatory responsibilities cover all residential buildings, and key responsibilities include licensing, complaints, compliance, investigation and enforcement.

In December 2024 the NSW Minister for Building advised that the second Building Commissioner had started and his priorities included building on the success of his predecessor in restoring quality and public confidence, and further industry reform including to: Support strong regulation, industry productivity, and consumer protection; Increase construction compliance and building quality; Support further education on how quality construction can save practitioners time and money; and Set clear expectations of 'what good looks like' through industry education, and examples of rated developers and good standard projects.

In early 2025 NF5 wrote to the Commissioner after concerns that a private Certifier engaged by the developer had issued a Construction Certificate for a development which was contrary to the terms of the Development Consent, but it transpires that unless Council acts within 3 months to have it set aside there is nothing they can do.

Other concerns raised by residents include to:

- clarify roles of Building Commissioner and Council;
- NSW Building Certification system - concerns including responsibilities of Council when problems arise;
- NSW Design and Building Practitioners Act 2020 and DBP Regulation 2021- impacts on requirements for class 2 residential buildings (ie most) eg Structural Engineers reports needed, qualifications, availability, costs etc, particularly re maintenance work and rectification of non-critical issues;
- 373 Crown St DA 2006/698 - status of rectification of defects, process, timing and conditions to enable occupation of the building;
- 377-383 Crown St DA 2022/628 approved by WLPP/Council consent 20 May 2024, which refers to CCs but need to find CC conditions and who enforces (eg Council role?). Meanwhile noisy rock excavation continues to the detriment of nearby residents and businesses.

8.14 Council Code of Meeting practice:

In response to public exhibition of Council's updated draft Code of Meeting Practice inviting public submissions until 30 October, this report focuses on a need to ban closed briefings of Councillors and recommends NF5 make a submission accordingly.

For many decades NSW Councils held regular "Standing" Committee meetings open to the public (such as for Finance, Works, Planning, Community Services, Strategy, etc), which made recommendations to full open Council meetings for determination. This helped Councillors who were Committee members to develop expertise within their 'portfolio' and led to better-informed discussions, recommendations, transparency and accountability.

This changed in 2011 when the General Manager arbitrarily introduced closed briefings of Councillors, and these have become entrenched, despite opposition by residents, frequently by NF5, and by some councillors from time to time, regarding lack of transparency. Now all Councillors (60% new since last year's election) are expected to have expertise and find the time to analyse up to 1,800 pages of reports and management recommendations based on discussions at previous closed briefings.

For example since October 2024 there have been 24 closed briefing sessions with the heading of 95 agenda items published on Council's website, but no details or minutes. Last year in September the Office of Local Government (OLG) issued a discussion paper entitled "Councillor Conduct and Meeting practices - A new framework," following a review of thousands of complaints since 2020/21, and sought submissions. There were many worthy proposals, including to ban closed briefings of Councillors "to ensure the community can observe local democratic processes".

In November 2024 at the NSW Local Government conference a media report on the opening address included: "Minister Hoenig called for more transparency in local government and also stated that he was working on reforms using the briefings and briefing documents, opening up these otherwise closed instruments to the scrutiny of the public and involved industries, as they were often used to avoid 'not just the law' around council transparency, but also 'the spirit of the law'".

In December 2024 OLG invited feedback on proposed amendments to the Model Code of Meeting Practice for Local Councils in NSW (Model Meeting Code), which was foreshadowed in the September 2024 discussion paper. The Minister's foreword included "The most important of the reforms is to end private councillor briefing sessions. While well-intentioned as a means of educating councillors on matters before council, these sessions have had a corrosive effect on the transparency of council decision making.

Communities are entitled to know the deliberations of their councillors and the nature of the advice given to assist them in making responsible decisions." The changes included: "Proposed amendments to the Regulation will restrict councils from holding briefing sessions."

On 29 August 2025 OLG advised that “following extensive consultation, the new 2025 Model Meeting Code was finalised, and will be prescribed.” OLG requires that “Councils must adopt a code of meeting practice that incorporates the mandatory provisions of the 2025 Model Meeting Code no later than 31 December 2025. Councils are required to consult with their communities prior to adopting a code of meeting practice.”

OLG notification includes that “among other changes, the mandatory provisions of the 2025 Model Meeting Code will prohibit pre-meeting briefings.” Clause 3.31 states: “Briefing sessions must not be held to brief councillors on business listed on the agenda for meetings of the council or committees of the council.” And it notes “Pre-meeting briefing sessions are inconsistent with the principles of transparency, accountability and public participation and have the potential to undermine confidence in the proper and lawful decision-making processes of the council.”

On 8 September Council’s website shows an Agenda item for the Councillor briefing session included re Code of Meeting Practice. On 15 September Council’s Agenda included a late Report that addressed the OLG requirements and included an updated draft Code of Meeting Practice. Councillors did not discuss the report because it was one of two-thirds of reports in the Agenda that passed in a block vote at the start of the meeting. The staff recommendation was adopted to place the draft Code on public exhibition inviting public submissions (until 30 Oct 2025), after which a summary of submissions and an updated Code will be reported to Council for determination.

The Report claims that “the prohibition of pre-meeting briefings has the effect of prohibiting briefings on items on the agenda, only between the publishing of the agenda and the meeting of the Council or Committee,” but this is arguable. Council’s draft Code re briefings has the same wording as clause 3.31 in the Model Code, but excludes OLG’s note, and introduces a new clause titled “Workshops, Strategic Forums and Councillor Development Sessions” which new clause 3.35 states will not be open to the public.

Council claims that no decisions are made at closed briefings, but this is immaterial because it is understood discussions will include business relevant to consideration at future Council meetings, which are required to be open.

In summary, closed briefings of Councillors are anti-democratic, non-transparent and could obscure considerations of business being handled by Council.

They seem to be inconsistent with the mandatory provisions of the 2025 Model Code, conflict with OLG public documents since September 2024 (which includes being inconsistent with the principles of transparency, accountability and public participation, and have the potential to undermine confidence in the proper and lawful decision-making processes of the council), they are contrary reject to the Minister’s statements since November 2024, and they contravene the “spirit of the law” re transparency.

Recommendation

NF5 make an appropriate submission

8.15 Stuart Park

A member has raised a number of issues in relation to this park. Unfortunately he has missed a couple meetings and the issue was deferred to this meeting

9 Planning

9.1 Please note that whilst this review, and the recommendation based on it has been prepared with all due care and objectivity, no legal responsibility is accepted for errors, omissions or inadvertent misrepresentations, nor for any outcomes which might result from the assessments. As these reviews have only been made with the information available, members are encouraged to make their own submissions with any additional comments to the Secretary well before the closing date.

9.2. DA-2024/818 shop top hsg, 7 stories 27 units Keira St W'gong 26th September

This is a proposal for a 7 storey building from 101-113 Keira Street on the NE corner with Smith St. The original application seems not to have been advertised and was a deemed refusal. It ended up in the Land and Environment Court. Revised plans now been submitted which seem to comply with most council requirements save building separation and a minor variation in height.



Recommendation

That a submission of support be endorsed, subject to Council confirming that the original DA was advertised,

9.4 DA Determinations

24/87 complies	N.W'gong	39-41 Montague St	16 warehouse units	Support	Approved
24/96 complies	Keiraville	74 Grey St.	Dual Occ	Support	Withdrawn
24/100 faulty	Figtree	4A Arter Ave.	13 dwellings	Object	Withdrawn
24/162 complies	W. W'gong	473 Crown St	7 affordable units + facility	Support	Approved
24/181 complies	Mt Keira	Mt Keira Road	Archery clubhouse	Support	Approved
24/207 faulty	N. W'gong	26-30 Ajax Ave	12 houses	Support	Refused
24/210 faulty	W'gong	41-47 Denison St	17 stories, 75 units	Support	Refused
24/290 complies	W'gong	2 Auburn St	Dog day care	Support	Approved
24/436 complies	W'gong	55 Corrimal St 5 Georges Place	6 stories 11 units	Support	Approved Panel
24/476 faulty	W'gong	264-6 Kenny St	19 stories, 113 units	Object	Deemed refusal
24/477 faulty	W. W'gong	33 Parsons St.	3 houses	Object	Refused
24/538 complies	W'gong	65 Gladstone Ave	Dual Occ	Support	Approved
24/599 faulty	W'gong	109-115 Church St	9 stories, 45 units	Object	Approved
24/574 complies	Coniston	47 Robertson St	Dual Occ	Support	Approved
24/608 faulty	W'gong	Keira and Kenny Sts	14 stories, 116 units	Object	Withdrawn
24/776 faulty	W'gong	14 Finlayson St	Dual Occ	Support	Approved
24/788 faulty	Keiraville	19 Rose St	Dual Occ	Object	Approved
24/860 faulty	Keiraville	13 Braeside Ave	Dual Occ	Support	Withdrawn
24/722 faulty	W'gong	49 Mangerton Rd	Dual Occ	Not to object	Approved
24/796 faulty	Figtree	14 Mallangong Close	Dual Occ	Support	Approved
24/803 faulty	W'gong	34 Evans St	Dual Occ	Support	Approved
24/812 faulty	Gwynneville	26 Crawford Ave	Dual Occ	Support	Approved
25/131 faulty	W'gong	89 Evans St	Dual Occ	Noted	Refused

Not yet determined

23/765 faulty	W'gong	1-3 Stewart St	13 stories, 27 units	Object
23/945 complies	W'gong	98-104 Gipps St	5 storey commercial	Support
24/510 faulty	W'gong	17-19 Gladstone Ave	47 units, 12 stories	Object
24/708 faulty	W.W'gong	93 Robsons Rd	10 Co-living rooms	Support
24/875 faulty	W'gong	94-102 Kembla St	58 units,7 stories	Support
25/79 complies	Keiraville	35 Bulwarra St	Dual Occ	Support
25/139 faulty	W'gong	15 Marr St	Extra 6 units, 2 stories	Object
25/162 complies	Gwynneville	222 Gipps Road	Dual Occ	Support
25/454 complies	Coniston	57 Robertson St.	Dual Occ	Support
25/466 complies	W'gong	23 Finlayson St.	Warehouse	Object
25/472 complies	Figtree	79 Belleview Rd,	Dual Occ	Support
25/477 complies	Gwynneville	5 Acacia Ave	Dual Occ	Support
25/510 faulty	W'gong	17-19 Gladstone Ave	Extra 3 stories, 12units, 8 affordable	Object
25/594 complies	W'gong	60 McKenzie Ave	Dual Occ	Support
25/1226	W'gong	37-39 Burelli St,	Extra 19 units, 4 stories	None

10 General Business

10.1

Next Meeting
6.00pm Wednesday 5th November 2025
 Library Theatre

Current active membership of Neighbourhood Forum 5 : 464 households

11 Snippets

A Place to Play

Play is essential to a good childhood, and that housing design must provide space for children to play – both as a fundamental need and as a protected right.

Designing for good childhoods requires consideration of the relationship between outside and inside, sightlines and how the positioning of kitchens, living spaces and bedrooms, as well as windowsill heights and views of greenery’ can have a profound impact on if, and how, children can play and be outside.

There is a fragility to play, and the conditions must be right. This means not just the physical space, but the positive and welcoming attitudes of children and young people in our streets, neighbourhoods and the public realm.

We need an urgent rethinking of the balance of what children need from housing. It argues for a shift away from the emphasis on separate, equipped, designated play areas, towards a broader acceptance of space for children to support their playing out and wellbeing

We must design places where land use creates high-quality physical infrastructure but also supports improved social outcomes. The sounds of children playing out should be heard on streets which have been created for people as well as cars, where neighbours can connect with one another and their environment. It is possible to get housing right for and with children; there is hope, and we can learn lessons from the past and around the world.

Dinah Bornat



See also [the Healthy Higher Density Living for Families with Children: An Advocacy, Planning and Design Guide.](#)