

Dapto Town Centre Plan

# Engagement Report

April 2017

## Acknowledgements

Wollongong City Council would like to show its respect and acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the Land to which this Plan applies, of Elders past and present, and extend that respect to other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

This Plan was developed in partnership with the Dapto Futures Group - representatives of the Dapto Chamber of Commerce, Neighbourhood Forum 8 and interested community members. Wollongong City Council would like to acknowledge the time and effort and the ongoing contribution of these groups and their partners to the revitalisation of Dapto.

Wollongong City Council would like to thank members of the community who contributed to this plan by providing feedback in engagement activities.

# Contents

<b>Executive Summary</b>	<b>5</b>
Introduction	6
Objective of Engagement	7
Engagement Methods	8
<b>Feedback - What we heard</b>	<b>12</b>
Online Survey	12
Social Media	14
Online Feedback	15
Information Kiosk	17
School Visits	18
Written submissions	22
<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>25</b>

## How to read

This Engagement Report presents the findings of the public exhibition of the draft Dapto Town Centre Plan. This report briefly describes the methods of engagement and summarises the feedback we received across these activities.

The findings of this report have been incorporated into changes to the draft Dapto Town Centre Plan 2017 to create the Final Dapto Town Centre Plan 2017-2027.

This Engagement Report is a summary only of the broad and comprehensive feedback received during the preparation of town centre Plan for Dapto. The feedback received will continue to inform the roll-out of projects and programs across Dapto, including the actions specified in the Dapto Town Centre Implementation Plan 2017. For more information please contact the Land Use Planning section of Wollongong Council.

## The evolution of the Dapto Town Centre Plan





Dapto Square, 2016

# Executive Summary

## Community Engagement Process

The one-month public exhibition for the draft Dapto Town Centre Plan started on 6 March 2017 and closed on 3 April 2017. Wollongong Council, along with the Dapto Futures community group, conducted a series of community engagement activities and a total of 1426 comments were gathered by the end of the exhibition period (including 790 comments collected in an earlier survey).

The public consultation for the draft Dapto Town Centre Plan was successful thanks to active community participation. All comments gathered from the process will inform Council's finalisation and implementation of the Dapto Town Centre Plan.

## Support and Opportunities

The comments received recorded majority support for the plan across all engagement methods.

The Dapto community would like to see environmental, economic and social developments in the region, and indicated support for high quality urban growth in Dapto.

Many comments highlighted the lack of retail offer in Dapto and a key theme was increasing the number and diversity of shops and services in Dapto. Some comments referred to Stockland Shellharbour Shopping Centre as an example of successful regional retail shopping destination with high quality dining spaces and expressed a desire for similar spaces, offers and new main street interaction in Dapto.

The community cherish Dapto's history and wanted the Plan to address historical elements such as unique Dapto stories and visible acknowledgment of its heritage.

Generally speaking, the comments indicated that it is time for Council to put resources in Dapto and help the region grow into a liveable place which suits the needs of the

local community. Maintenance and cleaning of existing infrastructure were seen as the first step in achieving a revitalised town centre.

Many Dapto residents stressed the importance of urban beautification such as the streetscape and shopfront upgrading which has been successful in the Albion Park town centre revitalisation. There was significant support for more trees and gardens as well as water features and general footpath upgrades and refreshing of Dapto's tired and old infrastructure.

## Challenges and Concerns

During the exhibition period, the Dapto community raised concerns on a wide range of issues.

The Dapto Square has long been a controversial public space which is currently underutilised and considered uninviting. Many comments from the consultation identified Dapto Square as an unsafe place with anti-social behaviour and unfriendly design. Improving the safety of the Town Centre was therefore another key theme. The community would like to see the cleaning up of and suitable maintenance works happening in the Dapto Square as the first step to recreate an attractive and vibrant town centre.

In addition, the community was concerned about accessibility, traffic congestion and public transport issues in Dapto and surrounding areas. The draft Plan's vision for improved opportunities to walk around the town centre was generally supported.

A number of comments mentioned the potential connectivity between Dapto Town Centre and the West Dapto Urban Release Area, and supported the possibility of building a ring road system to ease the current traffic pressure on Princes Highway. This would be significant for the future development of Dapto Town Centre and West Dapto, and the sustainable long-term relationship between the two centres.

We used 10 different engagement methods and collected 1426 comments on the draft Dapto Town Centre Plan

# Introduction

Dapto is a regionally- significant centre offering a wide variety of high-order services and is a focal point for future jobs and housing growth. The West Dapto Urban Release Area will provide a significant portion of Wollongong's growth, and be home to over 55,000 new residents when complete. West Dapto sits right on Dapto's doorstep, providing many opportunities and challenges for the region.

As part of Wollongong City Council's Town and Village Planning process, a draft Town Centre Plan was prepared for the Dapto Town Centre in 2016- 2017, with the assistance of the 'Dapto Futures' Community Group.

This draft Plan included a Vision for Dapto to ensure it becomes:

- Our unique and welcoming place
- A pedestrian friendly centre, and
- An attractive and vibrant centre

Each of these Vision statements was supported by a number of draft strategies which provide more detail about how this Vision can be achieved.

To test the draft Vision and strategies and align future Dapto Town Centre projects with community aspirations, the draft Dapto Town Centre Plan 2017 was placed on public exhibition seeking the broad community's views and priorities.

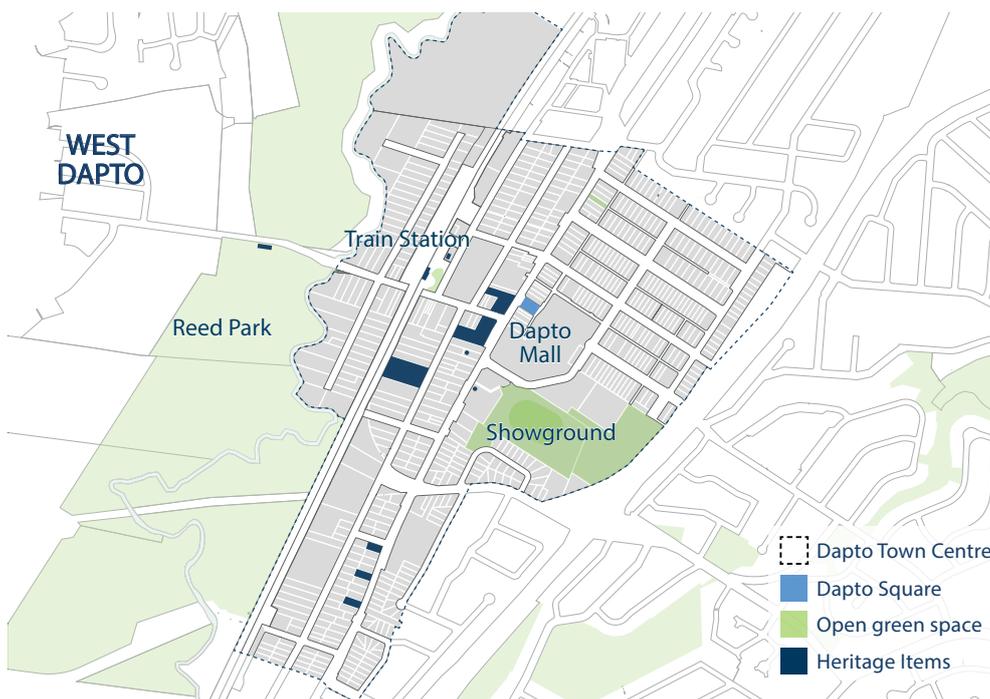
This report summarises the outcomes of this public exhibition (community engagement) period, and is intended to provide an overview of what the community told us they want for Dapto into the future. This feedback can then be used to shape and scope council and community projects and seek funding sources such as grants, and also to measure the success or otherwise of projects into the future.

The information received during the community engagement period will also be used to refine the Draft Dapto Town Centre Plan to create a final plan that provides strategic guidance for the future growth of Dapto.

The final Dapto Town Centre Plan 2017-2027 (the Plan) is intended to be used by everyone who lives, works and visits Dapto Town Centre and will guide change through infrastructure and public space improvements, planning policy amendments and partnerships with a variety of stakeholders. The Plan is a ten-year strategy with actions to be staged over the short, medium and longer term.

The draft Dapto Town Centre Plan was placed on public exhibition from Saturday 6 March to Monday 3 April 2017

The engagement reached thousands of people and we received over 1400 comments!



A map of the Dapto Town Centre Study Area

# Community Engagement Objectives

## Objectives

The objectives of the engagement process were to:

- Understand community aspirations for the future of Dapto Town Centre
- Test the relevance and support for Town Centre Vision, Strategies & Key Steps and to identify any gaps in the draft Plan
- Raise awareness of Dapto Town Centre Plan and empower groups to achieve the Vision in collaboration with Council

## A focus on youth engagement

Dapto and surrounding suburbs have a high proportion of young people with almost a quarter of the population aged 18 or under according to 2011 Census statistics. Because of this, a heavy emphasis was placed on engaging with school students, and Council staff visited and ran activities with a number of primary and high schools in the area.

## Achievements

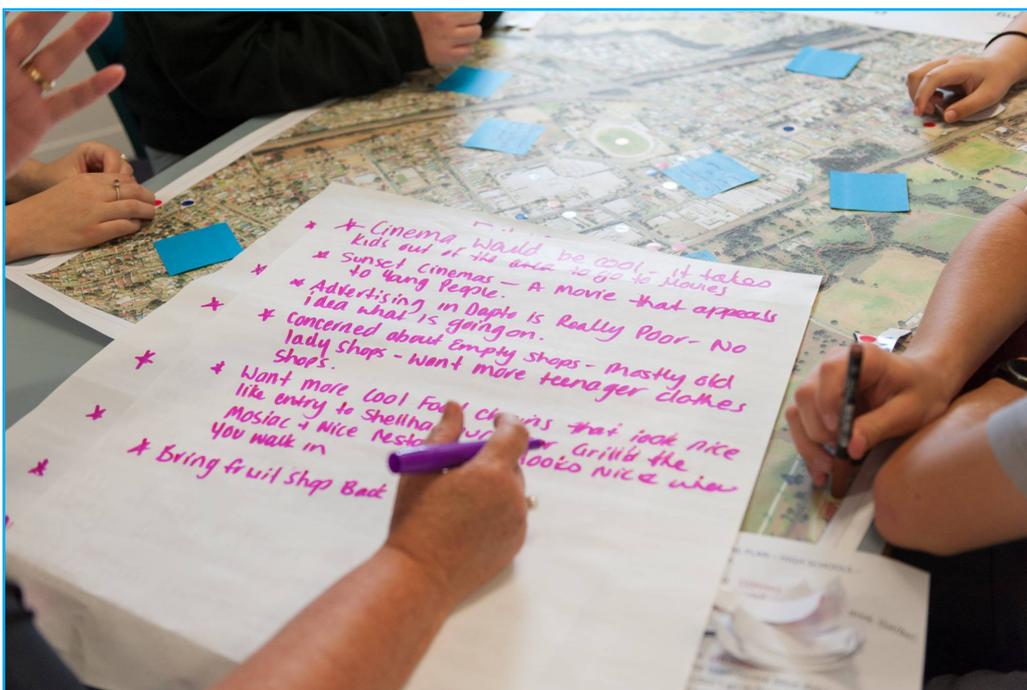
The engagement period collected 1426 documented responses and additional feedback was collected during face to face conversations with community and business owners, residents and school students.

Submissions received overwhelmingly supported the draft Dapto Town Centre Plan and no outright objections to the Plan were received, although many opportunities for improvement across the Town Centre were noted.

## Limitations/Suggested Improvements

The Engagement Process was designed to be as comprehensive as possible within the relatively short 4 week timeframe. A shortcoming of the process included limited targeted engagement with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community in Dapto and neighbouring suburbs. Council staff attended the Aboriginal Reference Group meeting on 22 February 2016 and visited schools with a high proportion of Indigenous students. Actions within the Plan will require further community engagement and emphasis and resources should be placed on engaging with the local Aboriginal community as key stakeholders in these actions.

Over 150 school students participated in the engagement process, providing over 500 ideas for Dapto!



Some of the feedback collected from Dapto High School - 8 March 2017

# Engagement Methods

Dapto Square Survey, 2016



Hey there!  
Thanks for taking the time to do our survey.

**What this survey is for:**  
The Dapto Futures Group (DFG) are representative group from your community looking to improve the Dapto Town Centre. The goal of this survey is to better understand our community and their aspirations for Dapto Town Square.

**Your feedback will be used to...**  
This information will be used to inform the development of the Dapto Town Centre plan 2016/2017 delivered by Wollongong City Council. Particularly, to better understand small changes 'Quick Wins' that could take place in the Town Square hosted by both the community and Council.

## Dapto Futures Survey

The Dapto Futures community group prepared and distributed a survey asking residents, workers and visitors why they visit Dapto, how they get there and what they would like to see in Dapto in the future, with a focus on Dapto Square.

The survey attracted a lot of interest with 790 responses received!

City of Wollongong added 3 new photos. March 6

We've put together a draft plan to make Dapto Town Centre a more welcoming, people-friendly place over the next 10 years. Now we want your help - check out the plan, tell us what you think, and throw your great ideas in the mix at <http://haveyoursaywollongong.com.au/help-shape-the-vision-f...>



Like Comment Share

120 Top Comments

Wollongong City @Wollongong\_City - Mar 5

Check out our draft plan for improving #Dapto Town Centre over the next 10 years and tell us what you think at [haveyoursaywollongong.com.au/help-shape-the...](http://haveyoursaywollongong.com.au/help-shape-the...)

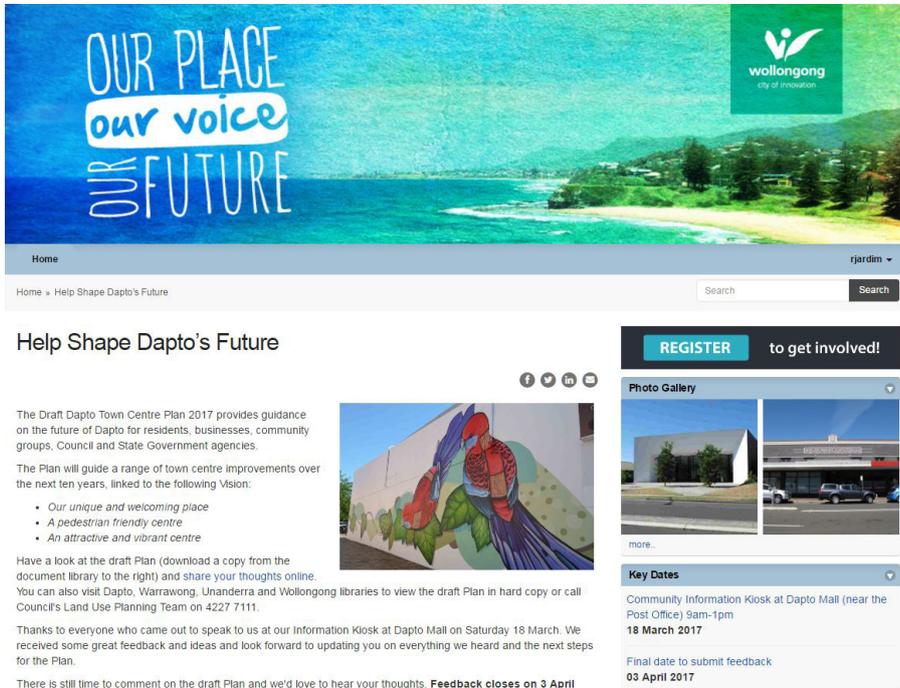


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## Social Media

On 5 March 2017, Council posted a Facebook message to promote the draft Dapto Town Centre Plan. Local businesses and organisations such as Dapto Mall and the Dapto Leagues Club also shared the post with their networks. Overall, the post reached over 23,000 people.

Council also promoted the draft Plan on Twitter, making over 1500 impressions.



## Project webpage

The draft Dapto Town Centre Plan was promoted on a project specific webpage on Council's HaveYourSay online engagement platform.

The webpage contained links to download the draft Plan, FAQs, key dates, photos and the option to submit an online feedback form. The draft Plan was downloaded by 846 people and the webpage attracted 2000 views.

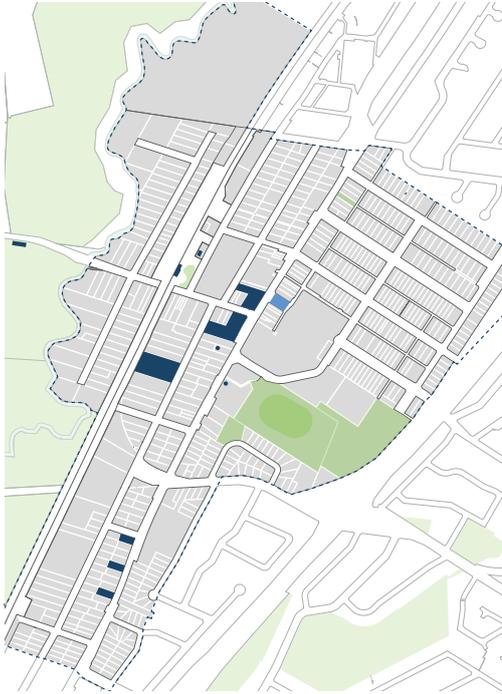


## Information Kiosk

On Saturday 18 March, from 9am - 1pm, Council staff and Councillors talked to the community at an information kiosk set up inside the Dapto Mall.

A total of 49 comments on the draft Plan were received on the day.





## Letters

943 letters were sent via post to landowners and business owners/tenants within the Study Area.

Letters were also sent to government agencies such as the RMS, NSW Police, NSW Health, Transport for NSW and the Disability Council amongst others. Letters were also sent to State MP Anna Watson and Federal MP Stephen Jones.



## Forums and Reference Groups

Members of the Land Use Planning and Engagement Teams visited the Neighbourhood Forum 8 meeting on Wednesday 8 March.

Council staff presented the draft Plan to the Aboriginal Reference Group on the 22 February, the Active Transport Reference Group on 14 March and was due to present to Access Reference Group meeting on 17 March, unfortunately this meeting was cancelled due to storms and flooding. The draft Plan was presented to the Heritage Advisory Committee on the 28 March.

# Feedback - What we heard

## Dapto Futures Survey

Throughout the preparation of the draft Dapto Town Centre Plan, Council worked closely with the Dapto Futures community group to develop a collective future Vision for the Dapto Town Centre.

The 'Dapto Futures' group included representation from the Dapto Chamber of Commerce, Dapto Leagues Club, Dapto Mall, Dapto Showground as well as enthusiastic members of the community and local business owners.

The 'Dapto Futures' group developed an online survey that aimed to better understand the community's aspirations for Dapto Town Centre, with a focus on Dapto Square.

The survey was made available online for a period of six weeks from 10 September 2016 to 31 October 2016. The survey was successfully promoted by the 'Dapto Futures' group through their extensive networks via email, on social media platforms and through word of mouth.

The online survey used accessible language and contained graphics to ensure it was suitable for a wide audience.

The survey contained targeted questions designed to clarify how the community currently use the Dapto Town Centre, identify the changes they would like to see in Dapto Square and to understand future aspirations for the Town Centre.

A total of 790 responses were received. Participants were asked to identify their age and responses were received from a wide mix of younger and older people.

## Quotes about the Square

"Create a safer space for families..."

"A playground for children would be a great asset"

"Give it a purpose..."

"A place where everyone respects each other regardless of culture"

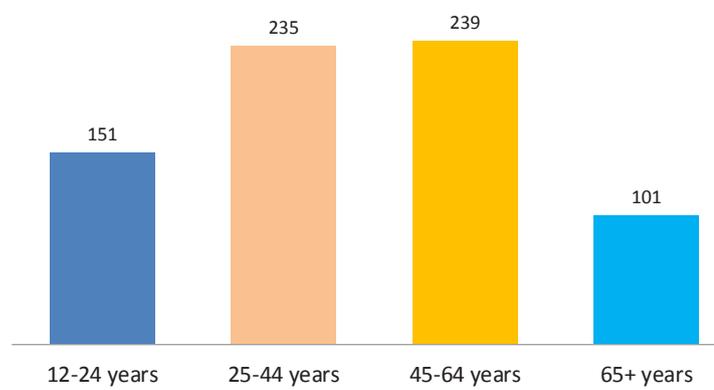
"Soften the area to make more inviting, grass/seating, night lighting"

"Clean it up, make it more presentable"

"More markets and interactive events to make it a place that's welcoming and fun"

## We heard from every age group...

■ 12-24 years ■ 25-44 years ■ 45-64 years ■ 65+ years



Number of responses received in each age group. Not all people answered this question.



## Dapto Futures Survey

The 'Dapto Futures' online survey comprised a total of seven questions, including two open ended questions that invited people to identify their preferences for future changes in Dapto Square and asked the community to share ideas for the Dapto Town Centre.

The online survey revealed that 50.3% of respondents visit the Dapto Town Centre on a weekly basis. Survey respondents also indicated the most popular way to visit the Dapto Town Centre was by car, with 85.32% of people reporting this as their primary mode of transport.

The first open ended question (Q5) asked survey respondents to identify the one change they would like to see in Dapto Square. All survey participants answered this question with the 790 suggestions grouped under ten broad themes.

Under the broad theme of 'Safety' most people were concerned with change that focused on 'management of antisocial behavior' (66%) in the Square. Other popular suggestions included creating a 'safe & inclusive space' (22%) followed by the identified need for "increased policing" (11%).

The theme of 'Appearance' identified changes to make Dapto Square more 'attractive' (29%), by adding elements such as seats (26%) and shade (58%), cleaning (13%), making the space more permeable (increasing sight lines) (4%) and the provision of more lights (2%)

Under the theme of 'Retail Offer' the community overwhelmingly identified the desire to have markets in Dapto Square (49%), more restaurants and cafes (33%) and a more diverse offer of retail and services (18%).

The theme 'Events & Culture' identified a strong desire to see more art in the Dapto Town Centre (41%) followed by more entertainment offers (36%) and increased opportunities for cultural activities and visibility (23%).

Under the theme 'Nature' many people wanted to see more 'trees and gardens' (53%) in the Square. 'Water fountains' (15%) and making the Square into a 'park' (15%) were also popular ideas. People also suggested planting flowers (10%) whilst 3% of responses mentioned the need for landscaping maintenance. A small number of people mentioned 'recycling' (2%) and the use of natural materials (1%).

Other themes included Recreation & Play (5%), Community Facilities (2%), 'Unsure' (2%), 'Nothing' (1%) and 'Transport' (1%).

### Quotes about the Square

"its difficult to keep dry whilst waiting for the bus on rainy days - more shelter please"

"Water blast the area and clean it up (all of Dapto's streets need this) let's be proud of the area we live play, work etc"

"sometimes the people who sit around there are a bit loud and I think sometimes under the influence. I would police this a bit more"

"There are regular people that are always there, mainly men who are drinking alcohol. This is the one thing that makes me worried and sometimes scared as I walk past them with my children. I don't see how you can stop them from sitting there, so maybe create more comfortable and clean space for them..."

### Top priority for the Square...



Main themes identified in the survey when asked, 'what is one thing you would change about Dapto Square'



# Feedback - What we heard

## Social Media

Council posted information regarding the draft Dapto Town Centre Plan on Facebook on 6 March 2017. The post was intended to promote the project, gather feedback and to direct viewers to the project specific webpage on Councils Haveyoursay engagement platform.

At the close of public exhibition period, the post produced 113 likes, 64 comments and 83 shares. A total of 52 Facebook users provided comments which showed support, highlighted issues or expressed individual ideas regarding the future development of Dapto.

These comments mentioned a wide range of current social issues in Dapto. Among the total of 52 comments collected (of which three (3) mentioned more than one theme), roads and traffic issues (17 comments) and the safety issues related to anti-social behaviour (17) came out as the top 2 most common themes.

People were concerned about local road conditions (e.g. a large pot hole on Bong Bong Road) and the delivery of transport infrastructure projects (e.g. the Fowlers-Fairwater Drive bridge to West Dapto). These projects sit outside the current study area and the comments were directed to relevant Council divisions for consideration and action.

Some other important themes that were

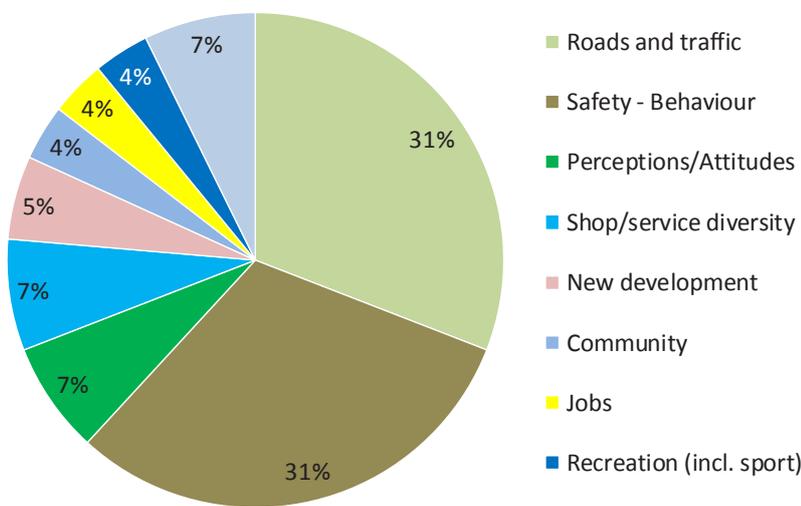
identified by the Facebook comments included the general perceptions and attitudes towards Dapto (4), the need for a diversity of shops and services (4), and issues regarding new development, such as the development potential for the old Dapto Primary School site(3).

When it comes to the number of likes for each theme which indicated the approval rate for all these comments (as of the end of exhibition period), the safety issues related to anti-social behaviour in Dapto Square gained the largest number of likes from other Facebook users (92 likes).

Some other themes that were widely supported included the need for high quality recreation & opportunities to play sports (42 likes), more events in Dapto such as a Farmers Market (38 likes) and roads and traffic issues (37 likes).

Council's Facebook post on the 6 March 2017 reached over 23,000 people

Facebook Feedback (52 comments)



Main themes identified in feedback detailed in Facebook comments.

## Facebook comments

"Why don't local councils along the south coast lobby state/Federal to spend money on bettering the roads and infrastructure. ... whilst I acknowledge plans for a bypass, with the ever growing population a faster, more efficient rail system would be great to move people with greater ease"

"Life needs to be brought to the streets, not hidden in the Mall. Yes to outdoor farmer's market. Sidewalk cafés. No to dull shop-fronts. We need colour. We need vibrant life a town that is a great place to spend time and to create good community heart"

## Online Feedback

The project specific webpage titled 'Help Shape Dapto's Future' was available from Saturday 4 March to Monday 3 April.

During this time, the page was viewed over 2,100 times by over 1,800 people. The draft Plan was downloaded 882 times from the webpage.

Of the 1,800 people who visited the webpage only 40 were registered with Council's online HaveYourSay engagement platform.

The webpage received a large spike in visits at the beginning of the public exhibition period with 591 visitors on 6 March and 643 on 7 March, indicating successful promotion through Facebook, newspaper advertisements, letters and distribution/word of mouth by the Dapto Futures community group. A much smaller spike was also evident after the information kiosk with 60 visitors to the page on 18 March.

Limited demographic data can be collected from registered participants. 39 registered participants who visited the page were from the Dapto area, in suburbs within the 2530 postcode and one participant was from the Figtree area. 28 registered participants are female, and 12 are male. The registered participants represented a mix of ages. Most of the registered participants were aged 26-35

(12) and 36-45 (12). 1 registered participant was aged under 18 and 3 aged between 18-25. 8 registered participants were aged 46-55 and 4 between the ages of 56-65.

Twenty (20) online feedback forms were received. You must be a registered user to submit an online feedback form and only a small amount of webpage viewers are registered with the platform. However, these submissions were generally quite comprehensive with comments spanning a number of themes and presenting various ideas for Dapto.

The ideas and comments raised within the online feedback form submissions identified 23 separate themes.

The main theme identified in the feedback forms was a desire for a larger number of and greater diversity of shops and services in Dapto. The next most popular theme was a desire for more greenery around the town centre, followed by more artworks and improvements to safety and walkability. Other themes included roads and traffic, encouraging cycling, play, Indigenous history and culture and water.

## Highlights

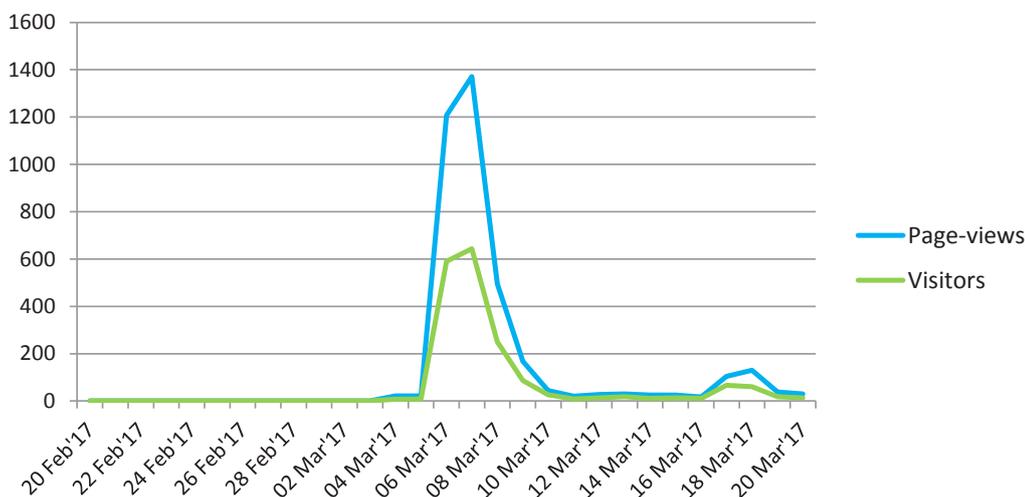
2,100 webpage views

882 downloads of the draft Dapto Town Centre Plan

Photographs viewed over 370 times

20 feedback forms completed

## Webpage Visit Timeline



Record of webpage visitors and number of page views.

# Feedback - What we heard

## Online Feedback

Markets were a popular suggestion (in particular food and/or produce markets) with an existing market operator in the Dapto area expressing interest in organising a market in the Square.

Three (3) suggestions highlighted the need to respect Dapto's heritage, particularly its Indigenous heritage and culture and suggested artworks, cultural centres and multicultural food fairs as possible ways to do this. One submission stressed that artworks and other representations of culture need to be authentic and involve local people and positive local stories. Keeping the farming history of Dapto alive was also noted in three submissions, through urban and rooftop gardens, markets and fresh food shops.

Roads and traffic feedback was centred around reducing congestion on Bong Bong Road near the station and making roads safer through efficiently organising the traffic. One submission stated that the taxi rank should be relocated and one submission recommended the bus stop in front of Alexanders Cafe on the Princes Highway should be moved nearer to Aldi where the footpath widens to give the small businesses in this area more room, improve the streetscape appearance and the comfort of the bus stop.

Submissions about safety raised issues regarding behaviours in the Square that made them feel unsafe, including drinking of alcohol, offensive language, litter, graffiti and public urination. A partnership with the NSW Police was suggested although the nature of this partnership not elaborated upon. Many of the submissions (whether mentioning safety or not) were supportive of more activities taking place in the Square.

Some of the feedback forms (8) noted 'making the town centre more family friendly'. Many ideas were suggested to do this, including making the centre easier to walk around especially with a pram, playgrounds and water features, attractive planting and landscaping and paying more attention to general maintenance of the town centre.

Improvements to the appearance of Dapto Town Centre were also noted in the feedback forms, with removal of graffiti, landscape and street furniture maintenance, shop improvements and plantings being popular suggestions.

## Feedback form Quotes

"I feel the Square...could be used for live music, family area and a cafe/restaurant. I've lived in Dapto my whole life and I like the way it is. I also know a lot of people who feel the same, but would like some small changes"

"I like the incorporation of indigenous and western history and interpretive sites."

"Sounds great, I can't wait for the town centre to be revitalised"

"Less cars, more pedestrian friendly streets with food stalls, markets, greenery"

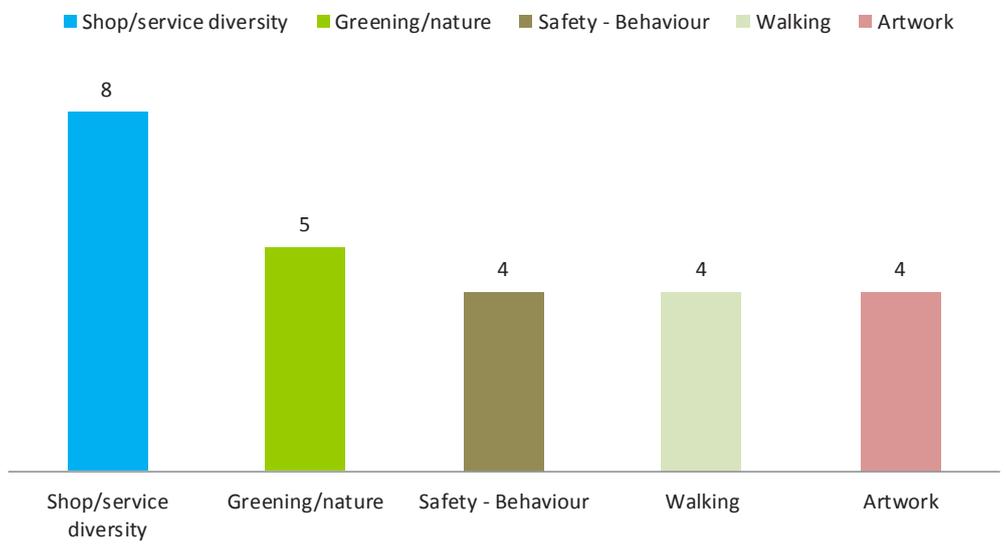
"I will be super annoyed if council chase away the Koori mob, and replace them with some tokenistic artwork"

"As Dapto means Water Plenty it would be nice to have some kind of water feature in the town square"

"There is a bench chair outside where H and R block is it leans to one side it's been like that for years I can't understand why council has never fixed that bench seat"

"...big commercial/corporate kept to Dapto mall and the main street are locally owned and operated unique businesses...if gain-ign bulky goods/furniture/whitegoods stores keep these to more industrial areas like Marshall Street..."

## Haveyoursay Online Feedback (20 comments)



## Information Kiosk Comments

An information kiosk was held in Dapto aiming to raise community awareness and inviting people to come and speak with Council Officers about the draft Dapto Town Centre Plan.

The information kiosk took place on Saturday 18 March inside Dapto Mall. In addition to having information available relating to the draft 'Dapto Town Centre Plan' the kiosk also provided details around the proposal to extend Baan Baan Street between Station Street and Osborne Street.

There were a total of 49 comments received (submitted in writing to the suggestions box) at the information kiosk. These comments have been grouped into 18 overarching themes.

The most common themes related to 'Roads & Traffic' which attracted 9 comments, followed by the desire for 'Shop & Service Diversity' with 7 comments, 'Parking' at 6 comments, 'Walking' 4 comments and 'Laneways' with 3 comments.

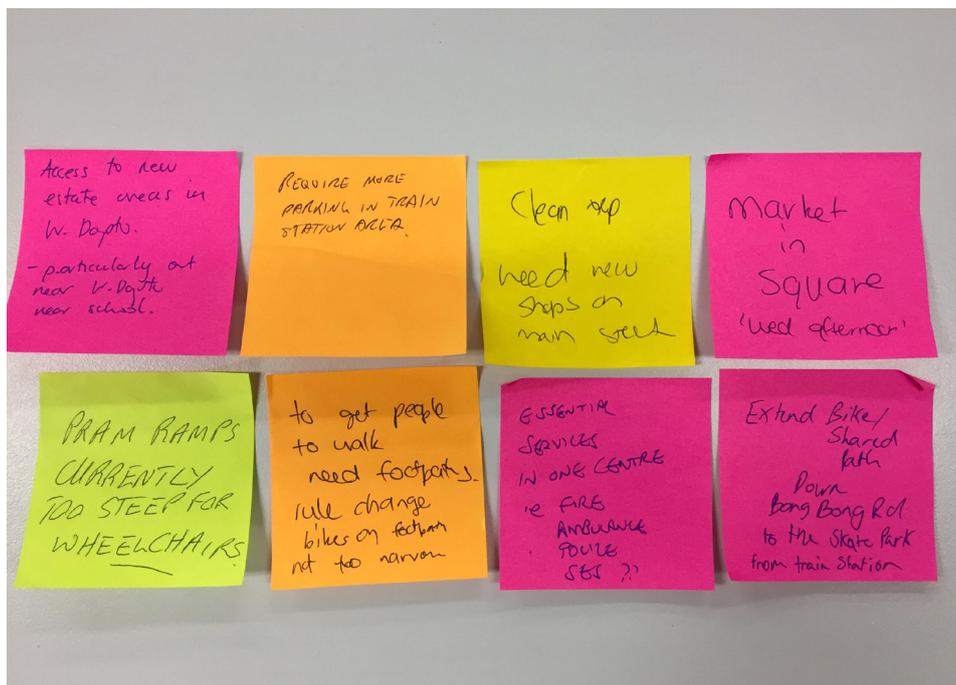
Overall the community expressed high levels of support for the draft Dapto Town Centre Plan and were particularly keen to see key steps highlighted in the Strategies translated into visible improvements in the Dapto Town Centre

Comments shared at the Information Kiosk did not highlight issues with safety or antisocial behaviour occurring in Dapto Square. On the contrary, feedback from the information kiosk focused on the Square becoming an increasingly inclusive space and specifically expressed that people currently using the space should not be actively moved on.

The high proportion of comments relating to 'Roads & Traffic' could be linked to the fact that the Information Kiosk also provided information relating to the proposed extension of Baan Baan Street.

Also the high levels of rainfall that were recorded in the month of March, highlighted the importance the community placed on road infrastructure in and around Dapto Town Centre.

A significant amount of feedback also centred on the fact that the Dapto Town Centre was looking 'tired' and in need of maintenance to refresh the look and feel of the Town Centre.



## Kiosk Ideas

"Dapto should have a streetscape upgrade like Albion Park"

"Laneways in Dapto are like a drag strip - pedestrians need priority"

"Need footpaths, people will walk if there are footpaths provided"

"Railway station needs better signage in Town Centre"

"The TAFE building could be retro-fitted for affordable housing or even crisis accommodation"

# Feedback - What we heard

## School Visits

Council officers visited four local schools during the course of the public exhibition period: Dapto High School, Kanahooka High School, Koonawarra Primary and Dapto Public School. A small session was also conducted with a Careways Breakfast Program, attended by a small group of children from Koonawarra and Lakelands Primary Schools. Over 150 students participated in activities ran by Council officers exploring how local children and youth currently perceive and use the Dapto Town Centre, and what they would like Dapto Town Centre to be like in the future.

Each consultation session lasted for approximately 60 minutes. Firstly, primary school students were given dots of three colours to place on a big Dapto Town Centre map – blue dots to represent places they currently visit in the town centre, and green/red dots to show places they generally feel safe and unsafe in.

High school students were provided dots of only two colours to indicate on map the places they do visit (blue) and do not visit (red) in Dapto Town Centre. Group discussions delved into why places were well visited or avoided, providing valuable data for the Town Centre Plan.

The second activity involved students having a group brainstorm discussion, writing/drawing their comments and ideas for the draft Plan & future of Dapto Town Centre on post-it notes, and sticking them on the same map used in the first activity. More than 500 comments have been collected from this exercise.

We spoke to over 150 students (aged between 9 and 17) and we collected over 500 comments.



The number one priority for both high school and primary school students is the need for a diversity of shops and services

## School Visits

The largest number of comments received from school students (both high school and primary school students) related to the lack of shops and services catering to young people in Dapto. They indicated that they would generally travel outside the suburb to visit shops they enjoyed.

The next largest number of comments related to spaces for recreation. It was commonly stated there was limited space for young people to hang out or play in within Dapto Town Centre. Feedback indicated that current spaces (Reed Park, Skate Park, Mall, Showground etc) do not necessarily meet the needs of young people currently and could be improved.

Some interesting and subtle differences can be recognised from comparing high school and primary school feedback:

1. Whilst important to both groups, primary school students care more about the recreational, sport-related and play services provided in the town centre and high school students are proportionally more interested in shopping.
2. Primary school students in Dapto are more concerned about their general safety. They nominated many areas in the town centre as 'unsafe', including Dapto Square, roads, bushland areas, vacant sites and carparks.
3. High school students in Dapto are more aware of the need for a cultural scene of Dapto, with more comments from high school students requesting more cultural facilities, events and artworks in Dapto.

Other common issues included the need for better cycling facilities, more greenery, trees and water and more events.

## Ideas for Dapto from Primary Students

"Like inflatable world, flipout & hangtime"

"I want a gaming shop for gamers"

"New play equipment - slide and swings"

"Mall should have more security and protection... scary teenagers and bad people in Dapto Square"

"Aquarium in the space next to Dapto Mall"

"Bigger Skate Park"

"Mall like Shellharbour"

"dump trucks to clean up the streets"

"more markets and low price specials"

"fountain in town centre"

"a stage in Dapto Square for performing arts"

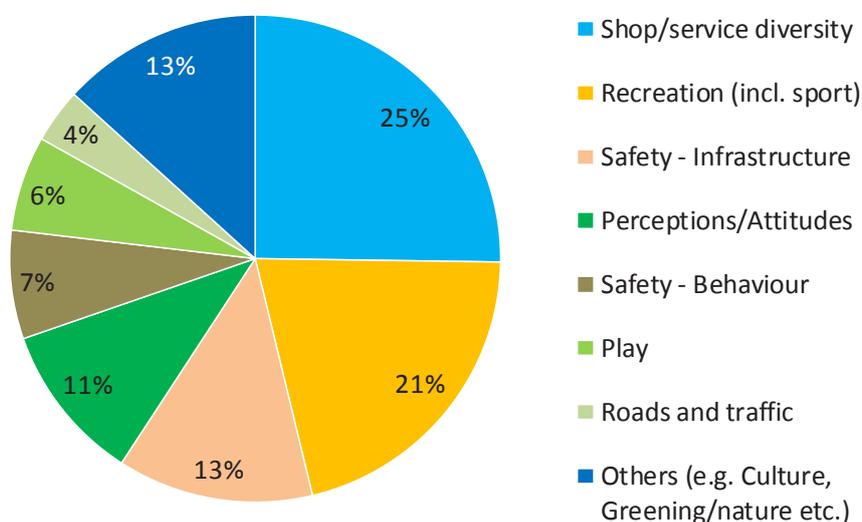
"Dapto Mall playground is only for little kids- the town centre needs a playground for older kids"

"A hut for the homeless people- serves food and takes donations"

"flower patches and animal care"

"Dapto needs a police station, a hospital and more safety"

## Primary School Feedback (333 comments)



Main themes identified in feedback received from primary school students.

# Feedback - What we heard

## Primary School Comments

A total of 333 comments were collected from primary school students about what they wanted to see in Dapto in the future. The need for a diversity of shops and services (25%) and the availability of high quality recreation areas & opportunities to play sports (21%) were the two themes with the largest number of comments.

Other themes included: safety issues including (behavioural and traffic-related-13%); negative attitudes towards Dapto described as (empty, boring, colourless etc- 11%); addressing anti-social behaviour such as yelling, fighting, drinking (7%) and the need for more playgrounds (6%).

Students felt safest at the Dapto Ribbonwood Centre and Library (42 votes), followed by Dapto Pool (36 votes). McDonalds and the Mall were also viewed as quite safe (26 and 34 votes, respectively).

Dapto Mall and Dapto Showground were places viewed as both safe and unsafe. Feeling unsafe generally meant the area was too busy, has unfriendly strangers and a place where you could easily get lost. Dapto Square, Mullet Creek and the Dapto scrap metal yard were all identified as unsafe places.

Most students wanted more shops and opportunities to play, such as sporting offers and water play, skate parks or indoor rock climbing or trampolining. There is currently no outdoor area in the town centre study area that provides recreational opportunities for children. Interestingly, the main recreation spaces near the town centre, Reed Park and the skate park, did not attract many votes as either a safe or unsafe place, and were viewed as being too far away, needing better facilities, better connections and more things to do.

## Top 5 Safe Places

1. Ribbonwood Centre & Library
2. Dapto Pool
3. Dapto Mall
4. McDonalds Dapto
5. Dapto Showground

## Top 5 Unsafe Places

1. Dapto Showground
2. Dapto Mall
3. Mullet Creek
4. Scrap Yard
5. Dapto Square



This map shows places in Dapto Town Centre voted as safe (green) or unsafe (red), the larger the dot the more votes it received.

## High School Comments

During the engagement period, council officers engaged with Dapto High School Student Representative Council (SRC) students and Year 10 students from Kanahooka High School.

Among the 170 comments gathered, the students have identified two themes being the most important to them – wanting more shops and services (30%) and more opportunities for high quality recreation & sports (16%).

Other themes which were mentioned by a significant number of students include the general negative perceptions and attitudes towards Dapto (8%); the need for more artworks in the town centre area (6%); the consideration of safety issues related to anti-social behaviour (5%) and the need for more cultural facilities and elements in Dapto (5%).

The top 5 most popular places that high school students visit in the Dapto Town Centre are:

1. Dapto Mall
2. Dapto Train Station
3. McDonalds
4. Dapto Leagues Club
5. Dapto Ribbonwood Centre

The Mall received a mix of feedback, with many comments relating to the fact that it catered mostly to older customers and had few shops for young people or places to hang out. Students indicated they travelled to Wollongong, Warrawong, Shellharbour and Sydney for shops and entertainment. This is reflected in the Train Station being the second most visited site. McDonalds (and to a lesser extent KFC) were identified as places to meet.

The top 5 most avoided places are:

1. Dapto Square
2. Dapto Showground
3. Dapto High
4. Commuter car park (Bong Bong Road)
5. Dapto Square Lane

Dapto Square was seen as having nothing to do, but also seen by many students, particularly female students, as an intimidating space. Anti-social behaviour such as staring, yelling and drinking alcohol were named as intimidating behaviours. The Showground was viewed as offering nothing for young people and Dapto High was listed due to school rivalries. The commuter car park was seen as a vandalism risk.

## Ideas for Dapto from High School Students

“Markets, live music, better offer in mall”

“A park in town that has skate, play, basketball and social areas”

“Bright art like humming-birds”

“More shops - clothes, sports, shoes, hungry jacks and Oporto”

“Souvenir shops for Dapto Dogs”

“Spider playground”

“Make it like a Town Piazza in Italy - fountains, cafes, art, live music & buskers”

“More culture - so tourists come to Dapto”

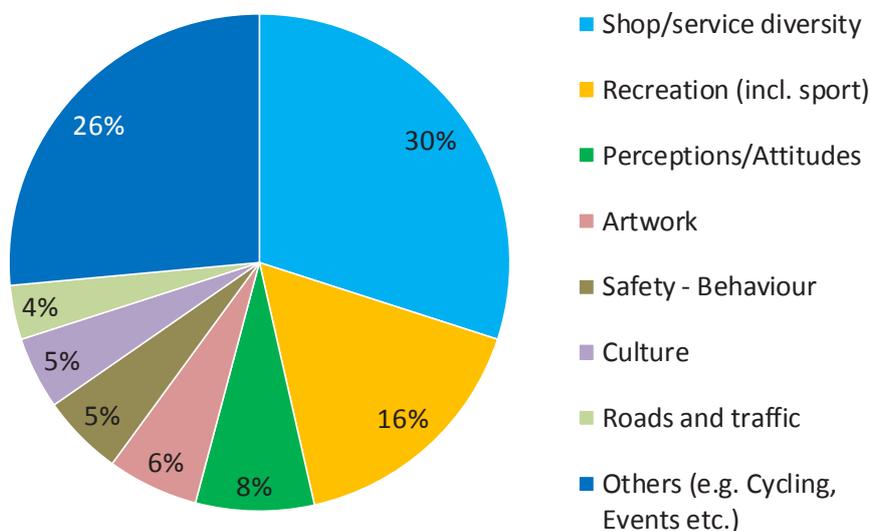
“Art work - by kids and professional artists, especially at train station and in the Square”

“Sunset Cinema- outdoor cinema that shows movies that appeal to young people (not just kids movies)”

“Want more cool food chains that look nice like entry at Shellharbour -Grill'd, the mosaic and nice restaurants. Looks good when you walk in”

“Dapto history + fb page - advertise and promote Dapto”

## High School Feedback (170 comments)



Main themes identified in feedback received from high school students.

# Feedback - What we heard

## Written submissions - Government Agencies

Written responses were received from four (4) government agencies - Transport for NSW, the Roads and Maritime Service, the Office of Environment and Heritage and the Disability Council of NSW.

### Transport for NSW

Transport for NSW (TNSW) support access and mobility related improvements in Dapto Town Centre and the redesign of Dapto Town Square. TNSW recommends Council engage further with them and the RMS around any plans to alter the Princes Highway. TNSW supported improvements to transit stops but requested clarification around improvements to transport facilities such as bus stops and train station.

TNSW noted in particular that buses operate along the Princes Highway and any efforts to calm the Princes Highway would need to consider potential impacts on bus traffic. TfNSW do not support any redirecting of buses away from the Princes Highway as it is the most convenient link for bus customers.

TNSW also suggested that Council consider cycle paths that are separated from road ways to connect with West Dapto.

### Roads and Maritime Services (RMS)

The RMS provided comments relating to the Regional classified status of the Princes Highway (between Emerson and Unara Roads) but acknowledged their preference for Council to determine the most appropriate road treatments to improve safety and efficiency.

The RMS noted they are the sole authority responsible for the review of speed zones on public roads and any future proposed reduction in speed zones would need to be developed in consultation with their Network and Safety Officer.

“Significant bus operations occur along the Princes Highway, with routes 31, 2, 33, 41, 43 and 57 servicing the town centre and surrounding suburbs. Potential traffic calming measures can impact bus operations in terms of service delivery, on-time runnign and the overall customer experience”

Transport for NSW

## Written submissions - Government Agencies

### Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH)

The Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH) are supportive of the environmental initiatives within the draft Plan including improving pedestrian links and access, creating engaging spaces, play areas, landscaping and urban greening.

OEH noted the importance of mitigating urban heatwave impacts. Initiatives to influence local climate include tree planting, landscaping, water features, breezeways and water sensitive urban design. Including quantifiable measures in the implementation plan such as increased tree canopy cover are also suggested. OEH also noted other sustainability measures could be reiterated in the draft Plan including supporting energy efficiency (LED lighting, solar power generation) and improving active transport opportunities and reducing car emissions.

OEH support a Site-Specific Development Control Plan Chapter and accompanying Design Manual which includes sustainability measures.

OEH noted that recent Aboriginal cultural heritage investigations at West Dapto are revealing new information about the archaeology and contemporary Aboriginal cultural values of the region, and suggest that the revitalisation of the Dapto Town Centre provides an opportunity to present this information to the Dapto community in culturally appropriate ways.

OEH noted the Study Area is affected by flooding but that flood management has not been mentioned in the draft Plan. Opportunities exist within the Mullet Creek floodplain between Dapto and Horsley to strategically plan for increased floodplain storage and waterway conveyance, riparian corridor enhancements, water quality treatment initiatives and enhanced community amenity, accessibility and connectivity.

OEH suggested including reference to future demographic changes to inform strategic actions.

### NSW Disability Council

The NSW Disability Council commended the draft Plan for having a community focus, however expressed disappointment at the lack of focus on disability issues.

The NSW Disability Council referenced Wollongong's Disability Inclusion Action Plan and stated that it requires including these issues early in the planning process. Not doing so can increase costs in the future associated with retro-fitting.

The NSW Disability Council recommended that the Plan ensures that:

- Physical spaces are accessible and easily traversed,
- Way finding, maps and web information is available in multiple accessible formats,
- Spaces provide respite from the sun and rain,
- Access is provided to water and toilets, including accessible toilets and changing facilities,
- Access is provided for members of the public but also for employees and contractors who may have a disability.

"It is suggested Council conduct Aboriginal community consultation to identify knowledge holders ... to contribute interpretive information to the process in culturally appropriate ways"

Office of Environment and Heritage

"[The Dapto Town Centre Plan] is an opportunity to make a place that is welcoming for ALL people..."

NSW Disability Council

# Feedback - What we heard

## Written submissions - Community

Eight (8) written submissions were received commenting on the Draft Dapto Town Centre Plan.

Six (6) submissions indicated support for the plan whilst two (2) provided comments only (neither directly supporting nor objecting to the draft Plan). Two (2) submissions commented on the quality of the document, stating it looked great.

All submissions received were from the 2530 postcode of Dapto and neighbouring suburbs.

One submission was authored by the Dapto Chamber of Commerce, strongly endorsing the draft Plan and naming it as the first step in ensuring that Dapto Town Centre delivers amenity, services and lifestyle benefits to existing and new residents.

The Dapto Futures group also sent in a submission of support, thanking Council for helping produce a high quality document. The Dapto Futures group also requested more information regarding the ordering of projects and further details regarding the funding and financial situation of these projects.

Other comments received within written submissions from residents and businesses included noting that Dapto looks old and tired and the proposed improvements are needed especially in the context of a growing population. Ideas for Dapto were shared including:

- encouraging cafes and restaurants
- providing interesting artworks, such as sculptures from local artist May Barrie
- make Dapto unique
- rezone to get more high rise and more people and shops
- widening footpaths and introducing street trees and landscaping
- minimise big box development and have the Mall address the street for increased vibrancy
- mid-week growers market

Two (2) submissions noted issues that need to be addressed in Dapto including addressing anti-social behaviour in the Square, removing graffiti, picking up rubbish and managing weeds.

We received six (6) letters of support for the Draft Dapto Town Centre Plan

# Conclusion - What next?

## How the Dapto Town Centre Plan will be used

The feedback we heard from the community, residents, businesses, community groups and stakeholders assisted in understanding aspirations for the future of the Dapto Town Centre.

Feedback received indicated broad support for the Town Centre Vision, Strategies & Key Steps. This feedback was incorporated into the final Dapto Town Centre Plan and resulted in minor amendments. Much of the feedback related to future actions for the Town Centre and has helped to refine the accompanying Implementation Plan.

The Dapto Town Centre Implementation Plan 2017 provides more detail regarding the Key Steps and actions named within the Final Dapto Town Centre Plan.

The Dapto Town Centre Plan & Implementation Plan are intended to guide change and growth in Dapto that aligns with the community's vision for the Town Centre across the next ten years.

Both the Plan and the Implementation Plan will be used to guide actions, including infrastructure, planning and community projects and can also be used as a mechanism to attract grant funds for projects that align with the Vision and Strategies.

For more information please call the Land Use Planning Team on (02) 4227 7111

## The suite of documents



These documents are available on Council's website [www.wollongong.nsw.gov.au](http://www.wollongong.nsw.gov.au)

