

Understanding community consultation



Geography

Unit or lesson title and main focus questions

Understanding community consultation

How does community consultation work?

How can an understanding of geography help me participate in the consultative process?

Most appropriate level and suggested number of lessons

Stage 5

4-6 lessons

Teacher briefing

In this sequence of lessons, students learn about community consultation and how they might participate in this process in an informed manner. They select and research an aspect of the Sydney Metro Northwest project, prepare a presentation, and deliver it to the class as if they were a member of the project team presenting to a community group.

Geography K-10 promotes values, attitudes and social skills that are essential to students' success in and beyond their schooling. These include making responsible and informed decisions, and participating in society as active and informed citizens.

Requirements for these lessons

- Computers
- Internet connection
- Bookmarked websites (see web links).

Assessment

Each student makes a short three to five minute presentation to the class, and the class ranks these according to criteria including: range, depth and relevance of the information; persuasiveness of the case; and the originality of the presentation.

Key terms and vocabulary

Community consultation, approval process, Sydney Metro Northwest *Environmental Impact Statement*, visual amenity.

Background information

Following community and business consultation in the period 2011-13, key changes and improvements to the Sydney Metro Northwest project have been made.

Discuss these with the class. Examples of change as a result of successful community consultation assist students to understand the nature and value of the process.

Changes as a result of consultation include:

- More stations, with the number changing from six to eight railway stations
- Increasing commuter car parking by 1000 spaces to a total of 4000. As a result of limited public transport options during the decades of extensive growth, the North West region has the highest density of car ownership in Australia. Understanding the planned vehicle management issues included in the proposed Sydney Metro Northwest development has been very important to many residents
- Changing the location and name of Hills Centre Station to Hills Showground Station. The railway station has been renamed Hills Showground Station, in line with a suggestion by the Castle Hill and Hills District Agricultural Society. The station construction site has been moved to the south east, further away from the Showground ring and community facilities. The trotting stables and horse amenities are also to be relocated to reduce the impact of construction. The new station will now be on the site of the former Hills Centre. Following feedback, the heavy vehicle access road will be moved. Four out of five community facilities previously proposed to be demolished have now been retained. An improved bus interchange and commuter car park will be located closer to the station
- Easing disruption to Norwest Boulevard during construction by relocating Norwest Station. Following community and business feedback from the first Sydney Metro Northwest *Environmental Impact Statement*, the location of the station has been moved slightly to the south east – significantly reducing possible disruptions to road traffic using Norwest Boulevard during construction. About 15,000 people from across Sydney work at this specialised employment centre and this is expected to grow to 30,000 by 2031. It will be an underground station integrated within Norwest Business Park. Surrounding roads and footpaths will be upgraded to provide access to the station, with the roundabout at Norwest Boulevard and Brookhollow Avenue to be replaced by traffic lights to improve pedestrian and road safety
- Reducing the size of the Cheltenham construction site by more than 2000 m².

Web links



Have your say

A website where people can contribute to public discussion.

<https://www.haveyoursay.nsw.gov.au/>

Sydney Metro Northwest *Environmental Impact Statement 2*

The second Sydney Metro Northwest *Environmental Impact Statement* was a significant part of this community consultation. It focused on elements such as: the design and operation of the eight new railway stations; commuter parking for 4000 cars; how the metro rail link will operate; transport interchanges; the areas around the railway stations; and rail infrastructure like railway tracks and signalling systems.

https://www.sydneymetro.info/sites/default/files/01_Cover__Declaration__Exec_Summary__ToC.pdf%3Fext%3D.pdf

Sydney Metro Northwest *Environment Impact Statement 1 Summary*

This document is an overview of the first Environmental Impact Statement for Sydney Metro Northwest

https://www.sydneymetro.info/sites/default/files/NWRL_EIS_No-1_overview_summary_EMAILversion.pdf%3Fext%3D.pdf

Sydney Metro Northwest

This outlines the project and shows the many reports and ideas that were used to guide its development.

<https://www.sydneymetro.info/documents>

Syllabus links

Geography K-10

Geography Stage 5 – Changing places

– the management and planning of Australia’s urban future.

Environmental change and management

– the management of the environmental change.

(GE5-2) explains processes and influences that form and transform places and environments

(GE5-4) accounts for perspectives of people and organisations on a range of geographical issues

(GE5-7) acquires and processes geographical information by selecting and using appropriate and relevant geographical tools for inquiry

(GE5-8) communicates geographical information to a range of audiences using a variety of strategies.

Learning experiences

Step 1 – Discussion of community consultation

- What is community consultation?

Ask students to write down the types of questions Sydney Metro Northwest facilitators may have asked individuals and community groups during the consultation process. Students research and discuss the following questions:

- Why do major projects have community consultation?
- What is the approval process for major projects?

Ask students to read Sydney Metro Northwest *Environmental Impact Statement 2* Overview, Executive Summary and answer the following questions:

- What aspects of Sydney Metro Northwest were addressed in community consultation?
- How are issues of community concern dealt with during the consultation process?
- Ask students to read page 6 of the Sydney Metro Northwest *Environmental Impact Statement 2* Overview to see what government agencies need to be consulted when developing a large infrastructure project.

Students may also look up legislation such as the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* (NSW) and the *Australian Environment Protection and Biodiversity and Conservation Act 1999* to find out what community consultation they require.

Students may also look at Sydney Metro Northwest Community Newsletters to see past consultation initiatives along the alignment. <https://www.sydneymetro.info/documents>

Step 2 – Outline the activity

Students work in groups on the following scenario:

As a member of the Sydney Metro Northwest project team you have been asked to make a presentation on an aspect of the project to help the community understand what is being planned for the region. What aspect or topic will you choose?

Instructions:

- Your task is to research your chosen topic, and find out the main issues that are important to the community
- You will need to deliver your presentation to the class in three to five minutes.

The class will vote on the group whose presentation:

- Is most informative
- Is most interesting and well-presented
- Covers the key issues of the chosen topic.

Process questions:

- What are the key issues you intend to investigate?
- Where will you locate the information?
- What are your findings? Rank the ideas and information most useful in helping the community understand what is being planned for the region. Explain your ranking
- How will you present your information?
- What is the most effective means of informing others?

Step 3 – Research and topic selection

Students may like to choose from the topics that are listed below. Students may also wish to refer to the International Association of Public Participation website.

<https://www.iap2.org.au/Home>

Examples of topic selection:

| | |
|---------------------------|---|
| Station design | Taxi ranks |
| Railway operating systems | Cycle storage |
| Construction work | Railway tracks |
| Transport interchanges | Signalling systems |
| Park-and-ride | Ventilation systems |
| Kiss and ride | Overhead power supplies and substations |
| Bus stops | Access roads and landscaping |

More detailed and complex topics covered by the consultation and approval process were:

| | |
|--|--|
| | Land use and community facilities |
| | Ecology (terrestrial and aquatic) |
| | Visual impacts |
| | Climate change and greenhouse gas assessment |
| | Surface water and flooding |
| | Air quality |
| | Waste management |

Ask groups to think about and record all the aspects of their topic that need investigation. Use Sydney Metro Northwest *Environmental Impact Statement 2*, Executive Summary to assist.

Step 4 – Preparing the case and presentation method

- What method of presentation will be used?
- How can the presentation be made as interesting and as clear as possible?

Remind students they:

- Can search on the internet for ideas about ‘How to make powerful presentations’
- Might use multimedia to present their case. There are animations and video clips on the Sydney Metro Northwest website
- Might examine a station location and precinct using Google Earth
- Could make a photographic slideshow or PowerPoint of their case.

Step 5 – Group presentations to the class

Possible approaches include planning the order of presentations by grouping topics together, such as those about station design, bus interchange issues, cycle storage and ‘Kiss and ride’ locations.

Teacher references and extension work

An alternative to using the Sydney Metro Northwest *Environmental Impact Statement 2* is to use the NSW Department of Planning and Environment's Sydney Metro Northwest *Corridor Strategy* document, September 2013.

<https://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/-/media/Files/DPE/Reports/north-west-rail-link-corridor-strategy-2013-09.pdf?la=en>

Students can download and read the information contained in this document and prepare their presentation using this alternative material. Below is a summary of the key characteristics on each planned station precinct.

Tallawong

Tallawong precinct will play an important role as a local village centre providing for the daily needs of residents and workers. Higher density housing is suggested around the station with low density housing replacing rural residential in other areas of the precinct. Improved pedestrian, cycle and vehicle connections will be available with the new station, and substantial open spaces will provide for recreation and wildlife habitats.

Rouse Hill

Rouse Hill precinct will become a major transport and commercial hub featuring mixed uses including retail, commercial and residential. The new train station, regional bus routes and cycle paths will improve accessibility in the precinct. Streetscapes within the precinct will be upgraded with new and widened footpaths to encourage walking as a preferred mode of transport.

Kellyville

Kellyville precinct will continue to be a major residential area for Sydney's North West region with a range of housing types to ensure affordable and appropriate housing for all members of the community. Two local centres will provide for the daily needs of residents. One will be adjacent to the train station, the other on Windsor Road.

Bella Vista

Bella Vista precinct will become more attractive and viable as a commercial hub with the addition of the new train station. Increased commercial activity in the Norwest Business Park will attract managers, professionals and other workers who will have a choice of detached houses, townhouses or apartments. Bella Vista Farm will remain a key conservation and heritage area.

Norwest

Norwest precinct will be reinforced as the major commercial hub of the North West region. Offices and light industrial, retail and community facilities will be mixed with high density residential close to the station to create a vibrant and active centre. Norwest Boulevard will be upgraded to be a green, pedestrian-friendly corridor.

Hills Showground

Hills Showground precinct will include a new local centre near the train station that could provide retail, restaurants, boutique offices, apartments and cultural facilities such as theatres and galleries. More intensive employment is predicted for some of the current industrial areas, while Victoria Avenue remains as a bulky goods retail corridor. The Showground will remain a regional recreational asset.

Castle Hill

Castle Hill precinct will continue as the major retail centre for Sydney's North West region. Castle Hill will increase its retail offerings to remain a major retailing hub, extend the amount of commercial offices, increase residential density near the station, and become a major transport hub with the train station and bus interchange at Arthur Whitting Park.

Cherrybrook

Cherrybrook precinct's new local centre near the train station will include neighbourhood shops and services to meet the daily needs of the local community. Higher residential density is suggested within walking distance of the station, while the area south of Castle Hill Road will remain low density residential.