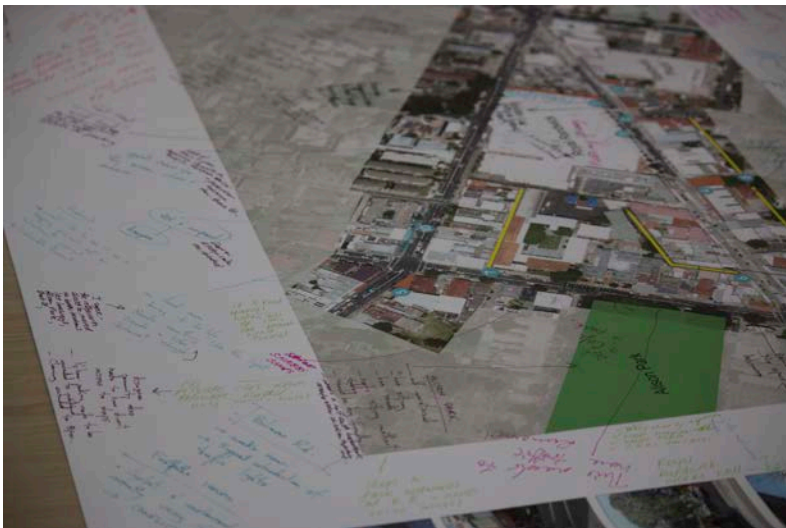
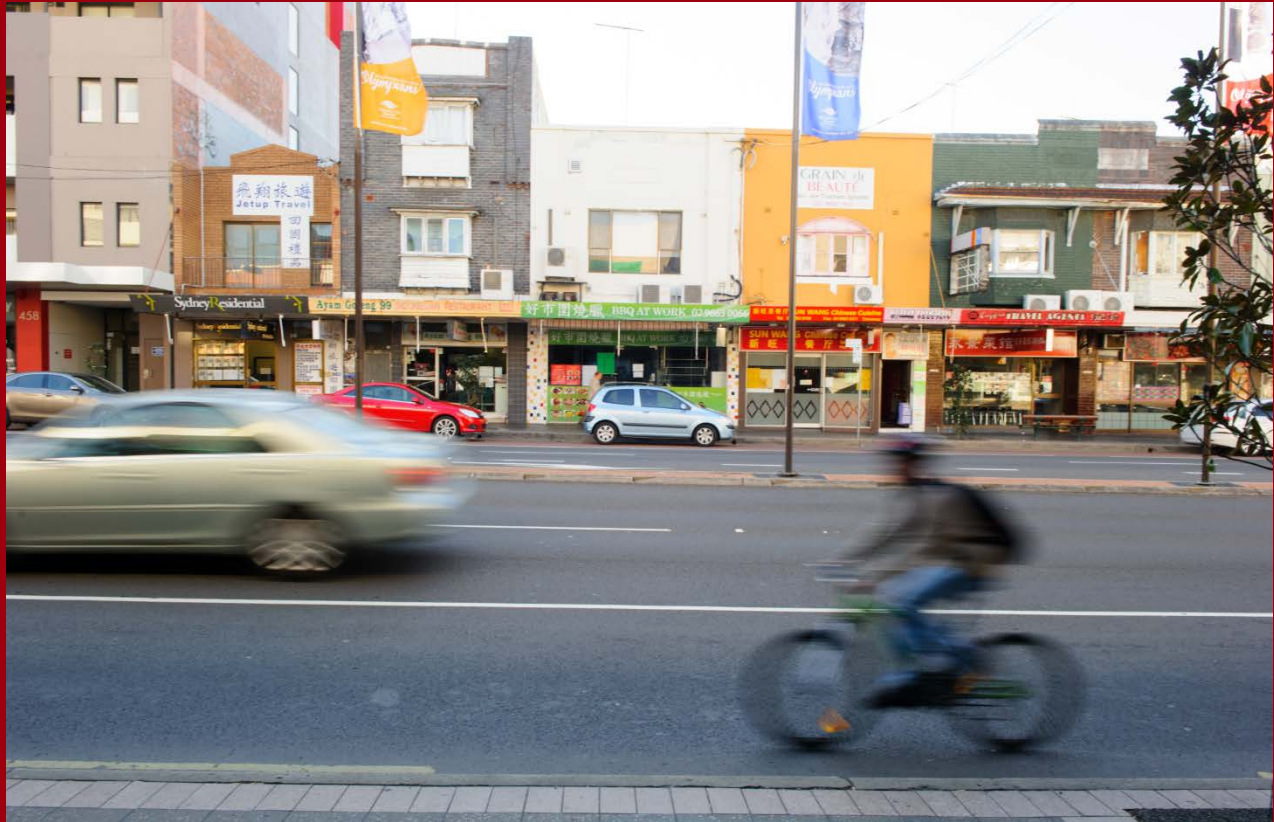


Overview

- Two focus groups were held on 2 March 2017 and 9 March 2017 to build on key themes that emerged from the Randwick Junction Town Centre visitor survey.
- Each focus group comprised nineteen participants, facilitated by Randwick City Council staff.
- The group began by introducing one another; and describing what they liked about the town centre.
- Participants then engaged in interactive table activities that focused on 3 key themes: 1. Getting Around, 2. Spaces, and 3. Places and Buildings.



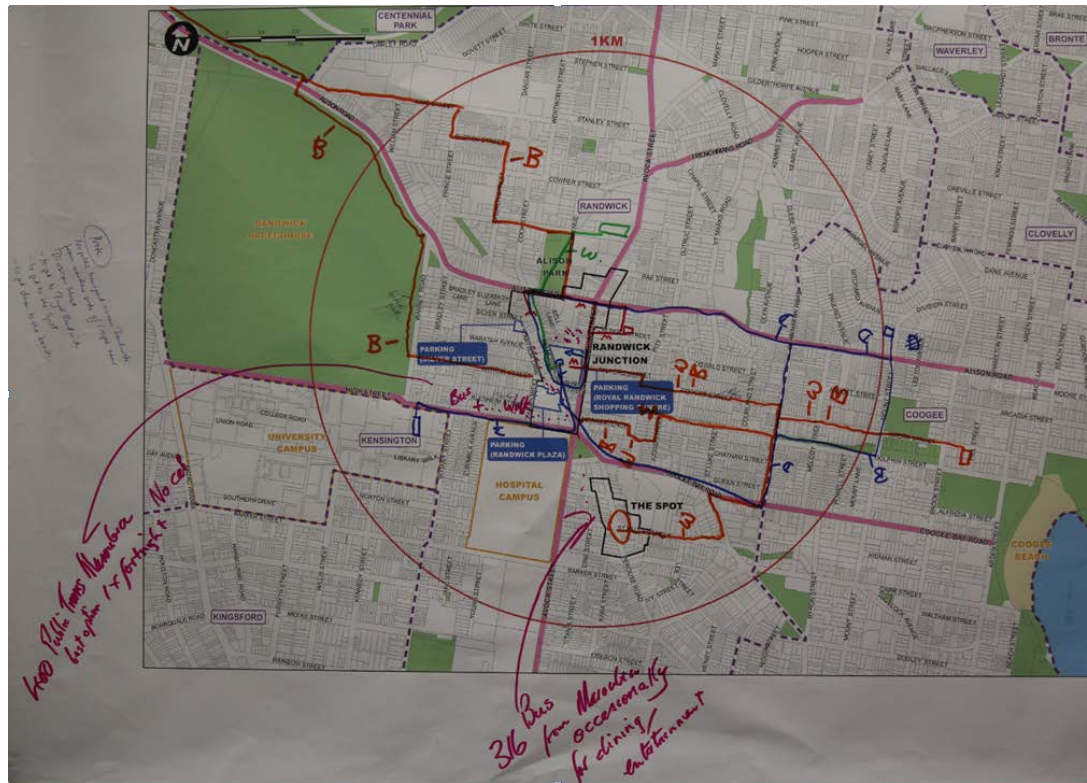


1. Getting Around

Activity 1 – Getting to the Town Centre

The purpose of this activity was to find out which routes people take to get to the Town Centre, and whether these routes are different based on the time of day, mode taken (i.e. driving, walking, etc.)

We also wanted to find out if there were particular barriers that stop participants from choosing one travel option over another (e.g. driving instead of cycling).



Activity 1 - Outcomes



What did people say?

- Avoca St is difficult to cross as a pedestrian; dangerous for cyclists
- The intersection at the corner of High St and Avoca St is confusing and doesn't work well
- Not being able to turn right from Avoca St into Royal Randwick carpark is a major barrier
- Lack of coverage makes it difficult to catch a bus to get to Randwick
- Having separated cycle paths to the Town Centre would make cycling more appealing
- Car parking is not necessarily an issue – it depends on the time of day

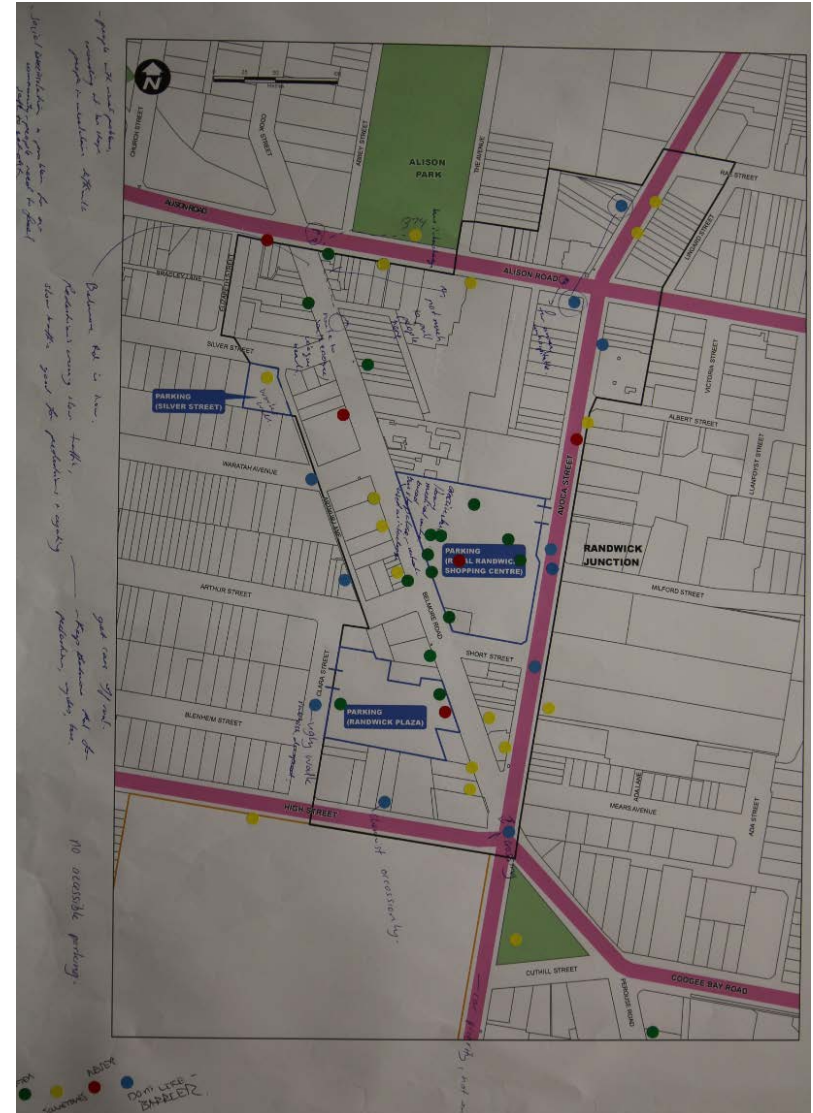


Activity 2 – Getting around

Participants were asked to show where they went when they came to the Town Centre, using a traffic light system (green – often, yellow – sometimes, red –rarely).

We then talked about the reasons why some parts of the Town Centre worked better than others.

Finally, participants were then asked to identify the areas of improvement that could make getting around the Town Centre easier.



Activity 2 – Outcomes



What did people say?

- Belmore Rd retail strip provides a lot of services, which are convenient and accessible
- Improvements are needed to make crossing Avoca St easier. Suggestions included a pedestrian crossing, roundabout, and an extra set of traffic lights
- Being able to turn right from Avoca St into Royal Randwick Shopping Centre carpark would improve access to Town Centre
- Better integration needed between The Spot, Highcross Park and Randwick Junction
- The restaurant strip to the north of the Town Centre has its own character and isn't well connected to what was felt as the activity centre of Randwick Junction, Belmore Rd. Lack of through site links to Alison Rd and Avoca St made visiting the northern area less appealing.



2. Spaces & Places

Activity 1 – Ideas Map

About:

An aerial map of the town centre was placed on the table for participants to identify what they like and don't like about the public domain.

Lots of ideas were provided regarding how to improve the town centre in particular for:

- Laneways (Bell, Greenstead and Arthur Lanes),
- Green spaces (High Cross Park and Alison Park),
- Existing public spaces (Sandgate Cottage and Short Street) and
- new opportunity site at Waratah Avenue



Activity 1 - Outcomes

What did people say?

- Widen footpaths
- Introduce more landscaped areas, hanging flower baskets and trees
- Provide more seating and areas to meet and socialise
- Need to address pedestrian safety along Belmore Road
- Reduce vehicle traffic on Belmore Road



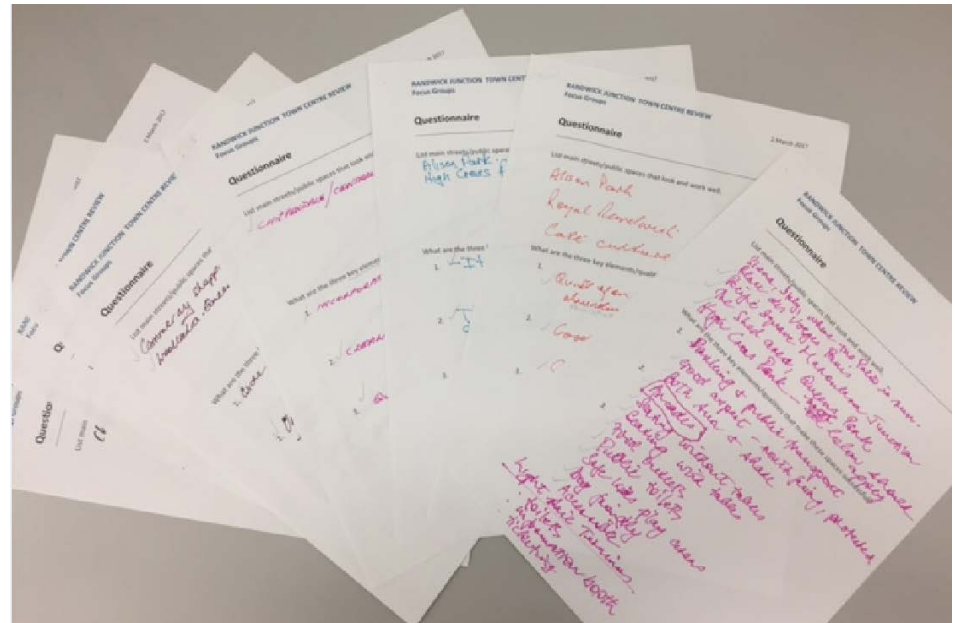
Ideas Map

Activity 2 – Questionnaires

About:

A questionnaire was also filled out by the participants. The purpose of the activity was to brainstorm what are the **elements that make a good public space**.

The participants were asked to list main streets/public spaces that look and work well and to identify the key elements/qualities that make the spaces successful.



Activity 2 – Outcomes

Some examples of places with a successful public domain



Church Street, Parramatta



Majors Bay Road, Concord (Google Street View, 2017)



Auburn Road, Auburn (Google Street view, 2017)



Norton Street, Leichhardt

Elements and qualities of a successful public space

- Accessible by bike, pedestrian and public transport
- Green spaces to soften the built environment
- Good ambience
- Buildings are well maintained and open to street
- Seating with and without tables
- Wide footpaths
- Restricted traffic movement
- Safe play areas for kids
- Areas to explore and enjoy!



3. Buildings

Activity 1 – Existing Buildings

Participants reviewed a map and images of the buildings in and around the town centre to:

- identify buildings or parts of buildings they liked and didn't like, using a "traffic light" system of sticky dots
- add suggestions for buildings or elements they would like to see change
- suggest and discuss other examples of great shopping strips and town centres, and what qualities made them great



Activity 1 – Summary of outcomes

Likes

- Heritage items within the town centre, and especially heritage landmarks such as Sandgate Cottage, the Star and Garter Inn, the Statue of Captain James Cook and the Former Randwick Post Office.
- Elements of buildings including art deco shopfronts, and the mural adjacent to Sandgate Cottage
- Mix of street front retail and shopping centres is valued

Dislikes

- Older retail buildings are often poorly maintained or have unsympathetic additions, and are visually disconnected above and below the awnings.
- Specific buildings including Randwick Plaza shopping centre, late night chemist/ medical centre (corner Belmore & High St), Telstra building (Avoca Street), eastern façade of the Royal Randwick shopping centre.

Suggestions for change

- Consistency/cohesion in signage and awnings.
- Shopfronts could be restored, use sympathetic colour schemes
- Activation and improvement of Clara Street and Short Street
- Change/replace Randwick Plaza, buildings on corner of Belmore & High St

Activity 2 – Building Types

Participants looked at a range of different examples of building types, and different design approaches to buildings in town centres, and indicated their opinions.

Examples included:

- small, medium & large scale additions to older buildings
- contemporary infill buildings in a heritage streetscape
- larger scale redevelopments and mixed use buildings
- adaptive re-use of heritage buildings

The purpose of the activity was to generate discussion and future thinking about the kinds of buildings, and the character and design elements that positively contribute to the qualities of town centres.



Activity 2 – Summary of outcomes

The lively discussion on this activity generated a range of ideas and preferences. Some common threads included:

- Sympathetic relationships between old and new buildings are important. Buildings that relate to a human scale are also important.
- This does not mean that new buildings must replicate older buildings, and there was positive feedback about well-designed contemporary infill buildings, and a mixture of old and new working in harmony.
- Innovative adaptive re-use that allows people to experience old buildings in new ways was positive.
- New developments that provided opportunities to improve the public domain, activate streetscapes, laneways and side streets, or add through site links were well received.



Next Steps

Next steps and timeline

Feedback from these focus groups will be used to inform the preparation of a new Town Centre Strategy. Based on the feedback provided in the focus groups, the results of the survey, and future consultation activities, Council will be preparing a detailed report that discusses the input received. This will be made available together with the draft Strategy later this year.

