

INNER WEST



Engagement outcomes report – Your vision for Balmain Town Hall precinct

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Summary

Council engaged the Balmain community for input into future planning for the Balmain Town Hall Precinct which includes the Library and takes in the Balmain PCYC to the new Balmain Square.

Community engagement was carried out online and face to face. Feedback opened on 4 July and closed 14 August 2022 and included an online survey and ideas wall at Your Say Inner West, a public meeting on 13 July and responses/submissions from other stakeholders/individuals.

The online survey was divided into two parts, participants had the option to complete questions about both the precinct and library or just one section.

Overall the online engagement had 1,079 visitors, 82 people completed surveys and there were 18 posts on the ideas wall.

The Balmain Town Hall public meeting was attended by 64 people.

Feedback has been reviewed, analysed and themed for inclusion in this report. All verbatim comments are contained in an Appendix at the end, with personal details redacted.

The overarching themes emerging from the feedback about the Balmain Town Hall Precinct and the Library are summarised below:

What people like:

- Architectural quality and heritage character
- Central location and gateway to the main shopping strip
- The various spaces within the library
- The access and use of the collection and technology in the library

What would attract people to stay longer?

- Activate the street
- Renewal of the buildings, their settings and the streetscape
- Running events and activities to attract visitors
- Creating a local hub with an arts and cultural focus where people can come together
- Providing increased and affordable spaces for work, study and meeting
- The addition of a café in one of the spaces

What should Council improve?

- Create a new master plan that makes proposals for the whole area
- Create a new focus on the library / town hall / court house
- Improve on the connectivity between the library and the courtyards and outdoor area between the Town Hall and the Courthouse building
- Create a unified street with all buildings activated and contributing to the street.
- Make the library bigger and open it up with outdoor courtyard spaces, particularly on the northern eastern side
- Consider new complementary community use of the depot site. Could be parking, community garden or other community or open space uses.
- Improve the Town Hall facilities including the kitchen, A/V, acoustics and furniture.

Based on the community feedback outlined above, Officers have concluded that to improve the area, Council should prioritise:

- Developing an overall masterplan for the area taking in Council buildings, depot, street and activating all buildings in the area.
- Focusing available resources on existing library / town hall
- Expand the offering of the library by integrating it with the courtyards and outdoor areas
- Consider the current uses within the Town Hall and Depot and whether this is the most optimal outcome for the community
- Consider ways to include exhibition space/ museum and/or arts precinct or community hub/centre
- Running events focused on activating the street and drawing people into the area

Background

At its meeting in April 22 Council resolved the following:

1. Note that there is \$1.4 million allocated to the upgrade of Balmain Town Hall in the 2022/23 Budget;
2. Commence community engagement on this upgrade and expand the scope of the consultation to include the revitalisation of the whole Balmain Town Hall precinct, from Balmain PCYC to the new Balmain Square;
3. Convene a public meeting at Balmain Town Hall to discuss the revitalisation of the precinct and invite the following participants: Council Meeting 12 April 2022 20
a) local artists and volunteers involved in recent activations of the precinct and maintenance of the glasshouse; b) the Member for Balmain; c) the Friends of Balmain Library; d) the Balmain Association; e) representatives of the NSW Government (owner of the Balmain Courthouse) as well as private land owners within the precinct; f) business owners within the precinct; and g) the Balmain / Rozelle Chamber of Commerce.
4. Receive a report on the cost estimates of a main street upgrade of the precinct including improvements to the footpaths, tree planting, public art and new street furniture and enhancement of heritage.

In addition to the above resolution it has been over 11 years since the library has been refurbished and only the 1st stage of the renovation was implemented.

The project was set out in the Delivery Program 18-22 and Operational Plan 2021/22 with budgets planned in the capital works project for 21/22 \$502,000 and 22/23 \$940,000. The Inner West Library also has grant funds that can contribute to new furnishings for the library.

Engagement Methods

The Engagement methods were:

- Online on yoursay.innerwest.nsw.gov.au via survey and ideas wall tool
- Public meeting held at Balmain Town Hall
- Face to face meeting with Library staff and Friends of Balmain Library and State Library of NSW representatives
- Submissions by post/email

Promotion

The project was promoted through the following channels:

- Council Facebook post July 4 and July 15
- Promotion on Council's Website
- Press release 14 July 'Balmain Town Hall to be revitalised'
- Balmain Ward wide letterbox drop of DL postcard to 18781 households
- Direct email to invited stakeholder list as per Council resolution
- Posters in Balmain library
- Council's electronic newsletter to 19,000
- Library electronic newsletter to 78,000 library users
- Face to face engagement between library customers and library staff

Engagement outcomes

Part one – Online survey results via Your Say Inner West (82 responses)

We asked participants to provide their suburb where they lived.

Balmain/Balmain East/Balmain Peninsula	45
Rozelle	10
Birchgrove	8
Annandale	3
Lilyfield	5
Other/ Prefer not to say	8

We also asked them to select their age group:

18-24	6.10%	5
25-34	3.66%	3
35-44	6.10%	5
45-54	17.07%	14
55-64	20.73%	17
65-74	28.05%	23
75	13.41%	11
Prefer not to say	4.88%	4

Q 2. What do you love about the precinct and what's working well? (56 responses)

Note: In the open-ended questions respondents made multiple comments in their response. Staff have reviewed, analysed and themed the comments. The verbatim comments are at the back of this document in the Appendix.

Theme	Percentage of theme mentions in total number of comments	Number of theme mentions in comments
Respect for heritage	58.93%	33
Architecture	21.43%	12
Library	19.64%	11
Community atmosphere	16.07%	9
Central location	12.5%	7
Meeting spaces	12.5%	7
Glasshouse	10.71%	6
Telstra Plaza	10.71%	6
Other	10.71%	6
Variety of services	8.93%	5
Civic focus	7.14%	4
Landscaping	5.36%	3
Outdoor seating	3.57%	2
PCYC	3.57%	2
Access to transport	3.57%	2

Q3. What would attract people to stay longer? (54 responses)

The verbatim comments are at the back of this document in the Appendix.

Theme	Percentage of theme mentions in total number of comments	Number of theme mentions in comments
Increase outdoor and library seating	33.33%	18
Cultural activities and displays	29.63%	16
Improve the Glasshouse and surrounds (this group specifically identified the glasshouse)	25.93%	14
Modernise the library / improve library layout (includes meeting spaces, power, natural light, children's area)	25.93%	14
Improve utilisation of garden (this includes the library courtyards)	24.07%	13
Landscaping (this was a general response relating to landscaping / greening the entire area)	24.07%	13
Landscape between Courthouse and Town Hall (this group specified the connectivity between the buildings)	16.67%	9
Meeting Spaces	12.96%	7
Cafe in Library, Court House, Glasshouse	11.11%	6
Activate the Courthouse	11.11%	6
Maintenance of building	9.26%	5

Theme	Percentage of theme mentions in total number of comments	Number of theme mentions in comments
Outdoor play area	7.41%	4
Exhibition space	7.41%	4
Connectivity with the street	7.41%	4
Improve access	5.56%	3
Update shelter shed	5.56%	3
Increase open space	5.56%	3
Reduce/slow traffic	3.7%	2
Glasshouse activations	3.7%	2
Masterplan the area	3.7%	2
Range of spaces	3.7%	2
Signage	3.7%	2
Utilise the Occasional Care Centre	3.7%	2
Improve lighting	3.7%	2
Markets	3.7%	2
Community Atmosphere	3.7%	2
Programs and services	3.7%	2
Not sure	3.7%	2

The following themes were mentioned once: museum, diverse retail, redevelop the PCYC, longer opening hours, water cooler, more promotion, information displays, bicycle rack and public art.

Q4. What improvements would you prioritise in the short term (over the next couple years) for Balmain precinct? (56 Responses)

The verbatim comments are at the back of this document in the Appendix.

Theme	Percentage of theme mentions in total number of comments	Number of theme mentions in comments
Improve library layout / modernise the library	16.07	9
Maintenance of building	39.29%	22
Improve the Glasshouse and surrounds	26.79%	15
Improve utilisation of courtyard	26.79%	15
Outdoor seating	19.64%	11
Activate the Courthouse	16.07%	9
Access	14.29%	8
Cultural activities and displays	14.29%	8
Landscaping (whole area)	14.29%	8
Improve Town Hall A/V	14.29%	8
Landscape between Courthouse and Town Hall	10.71%	6

Theme	Percentage of theme mentions in total number of comments	Number of theme mentions in comments
Improve Town Hall	10.71%	6
Connectivity with the street	8.93%	5
Meeting Spaces	8.93%	5
Exhibition space	7.14%	4
Cafe in Library, Court House or Glasshouse	7.14%	4
Community Atmosphere	7.14%	4
Acoustics (Town Hall)	7.14%	4
Glasshouse activations	7.14%	4
Improve toilets	7.14%	4
Relocate Depot	5.36%	3
Remove carparking near Town Hall	5.36%	3
Range of Spaces	5.36%	3
More public/street art	5.36%	3
Shaded Areas	3.57%	2
Community Garden	3.57%	2
Update shelter shed	3.57%	2
Masterplan the area	3.57%	2

Theme	Percentage of theme mentions in total number of comments	Number of theme mentions in comments
Increased communication about What's On	3.57%	2
Programs and services	3.57%	2
Other	3.57%	2
Town Hall Dome	3.57%	2
Improve footpaths	3.57%	2

The following themes were mentioned once: outdoor play area, signage, reinstate viewing dock, respect the heritage, redevelop the PCYC, access to local studies, markets, museum, bicycle rack, make booking easier, cinema, clock tower bell reactivated, not sure, allocate budget, remove toilets, places to study, reduce/slow traffic and improve meeting room.

Q5. What are your big ideas for the long term (10+ years) for Balmain precinct? (52 responses)

Theme	Percentage of theme mentions in total number of comments	Number of theme mentions in comments
Provide a range of spaces and places to meet, study etc	30.78%	18
Cultural activities and displays	32.69%	17
Exhibition space	19.23%	10

Theme	Percentage of theme mentions in total number of comments	Number of theme mentions in comments
Maintenance of building	17.31%	9
Landscaping	15.38%	8
Activate the Courthouse	15.38%	8
Relocate Depot	13.46%	7
Access	11.54%	6
Connectivity with the street	11.54%	6
Other	11.54%	6
Modernise the library / improve library layout	11.54%	6
Improve utilisation of garden	9.62%	5
Community atmosphere	9.62%	5
Respect for Heritage	9.62%	5
Improve Town Hall	7.69%	4
Cafe in Library, Court House or Glasshouse	7.69%	4
Landscape between Courthouse and Town Hall	7.69%	4
Reduce/slow traffic	7.69%	4
Improve the Glasshouse and surrounds	5.77%	3

Theme	Percentage of theme mentions in total number of comments	Number of theme mentions in comments
Improve Town Hall A/V	5.77%	3
Remove carparking near Town Hall	5.77%	3
Increase open space	5.77%	3
Community Garden	3.85%	2
Increase parking	3.85%	2
Museum	3.85%	2
Programs	3.85%	2
Town Hall Dome	3.85%	2
Expand Library into Town Hall	3.85%	2
Masterplan the area	3.85%	2
Cinema	3.85%	2
Markets	3.85%	2
Diverse retail	3.85%	2
Signage	3.85%	2

The following themes were mentioned once: activate glasshouse, reinstate viewing deck, utilise the Occasional Care Centre, improve meeting room, redevelop PCYC, improve access to transport, purchase the Courthouse, encourage cycling, more public art, recognise Aboriginal heritage.

Q6. Are there new uses for existing buildings we should consider or advocate for?

(52 responses)

The verbatim comments are at the back of this document in the Appendix.

Theme	Percentage of theme mentions in total number of comments	Number of theme mentions in comments
Cultural activities and displays	28.85%	15
Provide a range of meeting/study spaces and places	28.85%	15
Activate the Courthouse	15.38%	8
Exhibition space	15.38%	8
Cafe in Library, Court House or Glasshouse	13.46%	7
Community Centre	11.54%	6
Improve utilisation of garden	9.62%	5
Improve Town Hall (including acoustics	9.62%	5
Improve the Glasshouse and surrounds	7.69%	4
Museum	7.69%	4
Landscaping	5.77%	3
Maintenance of building	5.77%	3
Reinstate Viewing Deck	3.85%	2
Improve Town Hall A/V	3.85%	2

Theme	Percentage of theme mentions in total number of comments	Number of theme mentions in comments
Don't know	3.85%	2
Other	3.85%	2
Community Atmosphere	3.85%	2
Markets	3.85%	2
Connectivity with the street	3.85%	2
Programs	3.85%	2
Expand Library into Town Hall	3.85%	2

The following themes were mentioned once: relocate depot, access to local studies, utilise the occasion care centre, increase open space, landscape between Courthouse and Town Hall, relocate archives, improve lighting, cinema, community garden, improve meeting room, further consultation and glasshouse activations.

Q7. What construction, activities or events should we focus on? (47 responses)

Theme	Percentage of theme mentions in total number of comments	Number of theme mentions in comments
Cultural activities and displays	34.04%	16
Exhibition space	12.77%	6
Maintenance of building	12.77%	6

Theme	Percentage of theme mentions in total number of comments	Number of theme mentions in comments
Landscaping	8.51%	4
Community Centre	8.51%	4
Respect for Heritage	8.51%	4
Other	8.51%	4
Modernise the library / improve library layout	8.51%	4
Programs	6.38%	3
Improve Town Hall including acoustics	6.38%	3
Reduce/slow traffic	4.26%	2
Improve Town Hall A/V	4.26%	2
Improve the Glasshouse and surrounds	4.26%	2
Affordable meeting rooms	4.26%	2
Improve lighting	4.26%	2
Markets	4.26%	2
Cafe in Library, Court House or Glasshouse	4.26%	2
Community Atmosphere	4.26%	2
Improve utilisation of garden	4.26%	2

Theme	Percentage of theme mentions in total number of comments	Number of theme mentions in comments
Provide a range of spaces and places to meet and study	4.26%	2
More public / street art	4.26%	2

The following themes were mentioned once: access, increased communication/promotion, cinema, recognise Aboriginal Heritage, relocate Depot, activate the Courthouse, access to local studies, outdoor seating and masterplan the area.

Q9. Do you visit Balmain Library? (65 responses)

Yes	61
No	4

Q10. How often do you visit Balmain Library? (59 responses)

Daily	6.78%	4
Weekly	35.59%	21
At least once a month	28.81%	17
At least every six months	28.81%	17

Q11 Top three reasons I visit Balmain Library are . (58 responses)

Multiple choice option	Number of people who chose this option as one of their top three reasons
Borrow or return an item	46
Pick up a reservation	25
Use a study space	20
Read the newspaper	16
Use the internet	13
Other	13
Attend an adult's program	9
Use a computer or printing service	9
Use a meeting room	9
Access Local History services	8
Attend a children's program	6
Attend a youth program	0

Q12. What do you like about Balmain Library? (58 responses)

Theme	Percentage of theme mentions in total number of comments	Number of theme mentions in comments
Friendly staff and customer service	31.03%	18
Collection	24.14%	14
Quiet areas	24.14%	14
Range of spaces and places to study	22.41%	13
Community atmosphere	18.97%	11
Central location	13.79%	8
Heritage	10.34%	6
Borrowing and returning	10.34%	6
High quality internet	5.17%	3
Reserving	5.17%	3
Reading newspapers	5.17%	3
Access	5.17%	3
Public computers	5.17%	3
It's perfect how it is	5.17%	3
Comfortable	3.45%	2
Programs	3.45%	2

The following themes were mentioned once: intimate, sensory wall, peaceful, good opening hours, small, bicycle rack, natural light and cultural activities and displays.

Q 13. Rate the following library services (58 responses)

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Not sure
Customer service	37.93% 22	50.00% 29	8.62% 5	1.72% 1	1.72% 1
Library collections	21.43% 12	44.64% 25	30.36% 17	0% 0	3.57% 2
Library online resources	21.05% 12	38.60% 22	7.02% 4	5.26% 3	28.07% 16
Programs for children	8.93% 5	21.43% 12	8.93% 5	0% 0	60.71% 34
Programs for adults	7.02% 4	28.07% 16	19.30% 11	5.26% 3	40.35% 23
Computer and internet	15.79% 9	36.84% 21	15.79% 9	3.51% 2	28.07% 16
Printing services	8.77% 5	33.33% 19	14.04% 8	3.51% 2	40.35% 23
Study spaces	5.26% 3	33.33% 19	26.32% 15	15.79% 9	19.30% 11
Local History services	9.09% 5	30.91% 17	9.09% 5	1.82% 1	49.09% 27
Meeting room hire	5.36% 3	25.00% 14	10.71% 6	5.36% 3	53.57% 30

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Not sure
Opening hours	30.91% 17	43.64% 24	16.36% 9	1.82% 1	7.27% 4
Wifi	21.05% 12	36.84% 21	5.26% 3	3.51% 2	33.33% 19

Q14. What would encourage you to visit Balmain Library? (3 responses)

Themes included: longer opening hours, maintenance of building, modernise the library and expand library into the Town Hall.

The verbatim comments are at the back of this document in the Appendix.

Q15. What improvements or changes would you like at Balmain Library?

(58 responses)

The verbatim comments are at the back of this document in the Appendix.

Theme	Percentage of theme mentions in total number of comments	Number of theme mentions in comments
Provide a range of places to study and meet	31.04%	18
Maintenance of building	27.59%	16
Improve access	17.24%	10
Improve library layout	15.52%	9
Collection	10.34%	6
Improve utilisation of garden / courtyard	10.34%	6

Theme	Percentage of theme mentions in total number of comments	Number of theme mentions in comments
Fix the air conditioning	10.34%	6
Improve the Glasshouse and surrounds	8.62%	5
Cultural activities and displays	8.62%	5
Modernise the library	8.62%	5
More seating	8.62%	5
Quiet areas	6.9%	4
Technology	6.9%	4
Other	6.9%	4
Improve children's library / separate children's library / separate entrance for children's area	6.9%	4
Programs and services	5.17%	3
More staff	5.17%	3
Improve lighting	5.17%	3
Longer opening hours	5.17%	3
Expand library	5.17%	3
Light modular furniture	3.45%	2
Connectivity with the street	3.45%	2

Theme	Percentage of theme mentions in total number of comments	Number of theme mentions in comments
Natural light	3.45%	2
Acoustics	3.45%	2
Pram Parking	3.45%	2
Increased communication about What's On	3.45%	2
Programs	3.45%	2
Cafe in Library, Court House or Glasshouse	3.45%	2
Improve customer service	3.45%	2
Local studies	3.45%	2
Respect for heritage	3.45%	2
It's perfect how it is	3.45%	2

The following themes were mentioned once: community atmosphere, improve toilets, remove courtyard trees, signage, bicycle rack, exhibition space, water cooler, community atmosphere and showcase stained glass windows

Q16. How does Balmain Library benefit the community? (55 responses)

The verbatim comments are at the back of this document in the Appendix.

Theme	Percentage of theme mentions in total number of comments	Number of theme mentions in comments
Meeting spaces and places to study	58.18%	32
Collection	38.18%	23
Community atmosphere	34.55%	19
Programs and services	34.55%	19
Quiet, relaxing, peaceful and comfortable	21.81%	12
High quality internet / wifi / public PCs	16.30%	8
Access	12.73%	7
Cultural activities and displays	10.91%	6
Central location	5.45%	3
Friendly staff and customer service	5.45%	3
Local studies	3.64%	2
Reading newspapers	3.64%	2

The following themes were mentioned once: toilets, opening hours and research.

Q 17. A contemporary library is used for a wide variety of purposes. These uses compete for spaces in an already highly utilised community facility.

To help us understand your preferences, please rank the following vibes you would like your library to have. (50 responses)

Rank	Response
First	Social – people gathering in groups chatting and laughing
Second	Quiet – displaying friendly reminders that the library is a quiet place for reading, study and research
Third	Books everywhere – vast collection of books to browse and borrow, book shelves take up most of the space
Fourth	Comfortable – various seating options and inviting open layout with fewer shelves where people can hang out all day
Fifth	Group learning – where you can gather with your peers to prepare for an exam, complete a group assignment, discuss the latest book with your local book club
Sixth	Solitary learning – where you spend time to do your study, research your next local history podcast, prepare your class presentation

Q18. Do you have anything else to share about Balmain Library? (33 responses)

The verbatim comments are at the back of this document in the Appendix.

Theme	Percentage of theme mentions in total number of comments	Number of theme mentions in comments
Meeting spaces and places to study	21.21%	9
Improve utilisation of garden and landscaping	9.09%	3
Friendly staff and customer service	6.06%	2
Quiet areas	6.06%	2
Community atmosphere	6.06%	2
Larger	6.06%	2
It's perfect how it is	6.06%	2
Technology	6.06%	2
Respect for Heritage	6.06%	2
Exhibition space, cultural activities and display	6.06%	2
Improve lighting	3.03%	1

The following themes were mentioned once: maintain the building, improve collections, café in library/courthouse/glasshouse, relaxing, light furniture, central location, improve access.

Part two – Responses received online through the Ideas Wall tool on Your Say Inner West.

There were 18 posts on the wall made by 8 contributors. The verbatim comments are at the back of this document in the Appendix.

Theme	Percentage of theme mentions in total number of comments	Number of theme mentions in comments
Community Atmosphere	14.4%	10
Improve the Glasshouse and surrounds	11.5%	8
Access	8.6%	6
Landscaping (whole area)	5.7%	4
Landscape between Courthouse and Town Hall	5.7%	4
Glasshouse activations	5.7%	4
Outdoor seating	4.3%	3
Activate the Courthouse	4.3%	3
Improve whole precinct	4.3%	3
Cultural activities and displays	4.3%	3
Improve Town Hall	4.3%	3
Improve utilisation of courtyard	2.8%	2
Connectivity with the street	2.8%	2
Repurpose Depot	2.8%	2

Theme	Percentage of theme mentions in total number of comments	Number of theme mentions in comments
Shaded Areas	2.8%	2
Create a Cinema/theatre	2.8%	2
Exhibition space	1.4%	1
Acoustics (Town Hall)	1.4%	1
Range of Spaces	1.4%	1
Community Garden	1.4%	1
Masterplan the area	1.4%	1
Restore the dome	1.4%	1
Create a co-working space	1.4%	1
Improve footpaths	1.4%	1

The following themes were mentioned once: Exhibition space, Acoustics (Town Hall), Range of Spaces, Community Garden, Masterplan the area, Restore the dome, Create a co-working space, Improve footpaths

Part three – Feedback received via in-person engagement sessions

- a) Public meeting at Balmain Town Hall on Wednesday 13 July 2022. 64 attendees, nine comments received during Q&A session. The verbatim comments are at the back of this document in the Appendix.

Theme	Percentage of theme mentions in total number of comments	Number of theme mentions in comments
Improve community Atmosphere	10.3%	3
Glasshouse activations	10.3%	3
Activate the Courthouse	10.3%	3
Improve the Glasshouse and surrounds	6.8%	2
Improve utilisation of courtyard	6.8%	2

The following themes were mentioned once: Improve Access, Landscaping (whole area), Landscape between Courthouse and Town Hall, Improve whole precinct, Connectivity with the street, Repurpose Depot, Acoustics (Town Hall), Improve AV in Town Hall, Range of Spaces, Community Garden, Restore the dome, Create a museum, Improve parking, Community gardening, Bring back chiming clock on the tower, Refurbish library

b) Comments received from organisations/groups/stakeholder workshops

Friends of Balmain

A meeting was held with the Friends of Balmain Library on Tuesday 26th July and Library staff. The meeting was a general discussion about the Library service in general, Balmain Library, the project in general.

Comments included fixing up the A/V and kitchen facilities in the Town Hall. The group was encouraged to put in a submission as a group and as individuals. The group submitted comments through the YSIW Ideas Wall tool – see appendix for verbatim report.

State Library of NSW

Public Library Consultants from the State Library of NSW attended the Library on 4 August 2022. Following the meeting they prepared a Library Building report.

Recommendations include that Council:

- considers expanding any underutilised indoor and outdoor areas to increase the size of the library;
- considers changes to address the access issues
- relocates the service desk
- provides a range of seating options
- consider the deck area and the indoor / outdoor space close to the Children's area
- considers the use of the smaller rooms and their purposes to encourage optimal use
- upgrades and connects the Town Hall meeting room to the Library to increase space
- refurbishes and improves the condition of the Town Hall and
- provide additional power

The full report is provided as Attachment 1 to this document.

Part four – Other responses from individuals

1. Letter to Council on 14 August contributing an historical article about the history of Balmain Town Hall.
2. Letter to Council requesting involvement in a working group and putting forward the idea that the court house should be repurposed as a museum with mock trials.
3. Letter to Council on 13 July 2022 asking if Council could arrange refurbishment of the clocktower.
4. Letter to Council proposing that Council consider a Public Private Partnership to redevelop not only the Council assets, but the entire precinct in conjunction with the State Government. Indicates that by partnering with the private sector, Council can recover the budget allocation and reinvest the allocated funds towards other Council ventures. Sited examples included the Kiora Lane Precinct in Double Bay providing library and community spaces, supermarket, public parking and active laneways.

Recognises that developing Council and State owned assets within the Balmain Town Hall Precinct is not a simple development proposal. Argues that by adding density to the rear depot site, the proposal could provide relief to the heritage buildings while enabling a commercialised streetscape to activate the area.

Indicates that the aim should be to achieve the best social and economic outcome for the community; delivering housing, economic activity and social spaces for teaching, learning and gathering.

Appendix of verbatim responses

Identifying details have been redacted.

Online survey responses Q. 2 (56 responses) What do you love about the precinct and what's working well?	
1	<p>The precinct is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Centrally located, between Balmain, Birchgrove and Rozelle - Receives the perfect mix of shade and sun and is sheltered from the wind - A hub of so many important functions: post office, police, library, town hall, PCYC and open space - Located on a public transport hub of buses (441, 442, 433, 445) - A community hub for school kids, parents with young kids and retirees all using the library and study spaces - Located in a hub of cafes, restaurants and retail
2	<p>The new Square on the corner at Montague Street is a credit to the Community, Telstra and the IWC. The concept of a Town Hall Precinct is the logical and excellent extension to the Square.</p>
3	<p>The line of historic buildings including the Fire Station and stone house.</p> <p>The places where people can sit - both alone and for talking with others.</p> <p>An idea to celebrate a community champion would be a statue of Bob from the hardware shop sitting on the seat near the Fire Station ready for a chat - maybe writing the day's thought on his blackboard.</p>
4	<p>The Post Office and Court House Building which has just been repainted and the side balcony of the Post Office has been repaired. What is not working well is the area between the Town Hall and the Police Station which is the council's responsibility.</p>
5	<p>The varied building forms and the mix of building ages</p>
6	<p>I just like coming here to use the computers to view my emails as my internet at home isn't very good. It is much better here at the library. The staff here are also very helpful and willing to assist me whenever I ask. It is a nice communal space for anyone to use and enjoy.</p>
7	<p>Nice heritage building</p>
8	<p>The Precinct is home to the Blamain Library which is home to an environment fit for extensive studying. whenever my home life got too rowdy, i am able to come to the library and complete my work in a safe, quiet setting.</p>

Online survey responses

Q. 2 (56 responses)

What do you love about the precinct and what's working well?

9	Its the hub of the area! Working well – the corner of Darling St and Mullens – green space, benches, a real focal point.
10	Love the building itself! Love the heritage it carries
11	Victorian heritage buildings and streetscape retained give area its character. Public buildings in commercial area mean much foot traffic.
12	Heritage architecture, location of public buildings in commercial area
13	The library is great for all ages. The hall is used for local public to have their say in meetings that affect them and used for the arts too. The new Telephone pocket park is great but disappointed the seats face away from each other and some extra planting at the road sides of it to create more of a retreat feeling/less exposed would be great.
14	Victorian facade. Centrality in Balmain. Could reuse the glasdhouse.
15	Created for testing purposes only. Please ignore
16	The new Telstra Park.
17	Heritage architecture
18	I love the row of grand buildings – especially now the post office corner has reclaimed a bit of breathing space, and with more street furniture, lighting and green, it's possible to stop and soak up the history and interact
19	Architectural integrity of beautiful old buildings. Library is an excellent resource.
20	The services the library and PCYC offer, and their central location. Cafes also help make it a vibrant place. The zebra crossing is very useful for people walking and crossing the street easily too.
21	The Town Hall, post office and library are all beautiful buildings that must be maintained forever. Their history and beauty gives Balmain a wonderful street scape and their interiors are sublime.
22	Hi Inner West Council, I am sorry that I could not attend the meeting about the vision for Balmain Town Hall. It's an amazing space – would be a great concert venue, though would need acoustic advice and treatment as part of the development. A space with a grand piano would be fantastic for the community. Possibly with live recording desk. Available for affordable price for artists – the rentals in Sydney are crippling and

Online survey responses

Q. 2 (56 responses)

What do you love about the precinct and what's working well?

	<p>too many \$ that artists apply for go to the rental costs of expensive spaces.</p> <p>I'm going to add that it could also be great as a general purpose contemporary performance space. So think about video, projects, small light setup. Film nights, choir nights, talks ...</p> <p>Better accessibility to get equipment and instruments upstairs.</p> <p>More accessible parking.</p>
23	Attractive buildings
24	Beautiful old building.
25	The heritage of the buildings is good and should be enhanced and restored where needed. Keeping the Post Office integrated to the precinct is preferable. Outdoor areas such as the corner adjacent the phone exchange is excellent and should be complemented.
26	As an avid reader I love the Balmain Library. I also like the new park near the post office.
27	Such an iconic bunch of beautiful buildings of which some of them are now being restored & looked after. Love the recent garden/seating area at the telecommunications corner.
28	I value the services that the Library currently offers now, including book borrowing for adults and children, the availability of newspapers and periodicals, and the large rear children's and teen's area. I also value the glasshouse area and immediate surrounds.
29	beautiful heritage buildings
30	The heritage buildings
31	The Telstra square is a welcome addition to the civic space in the precinct. In the area between the court house and the Balmain Town Hall, the glasshouse creates a beautiful, historical focal point.
32	The way it looks and Its relationship to courthouse and post office.
33	Not much - in need of a complete overhaul. The glasshouse is the exception, because of work executed by volunteers over the last few years
34	<p>The historic architecture that is largely unspoilt.</p> <p>Intimate village feel with character unlike many other soulless suburb centres.</p>
35	Heritage buildings reflecting the history of Balmain
36	Amazing combination of architecture. Three unique expressions of architecture next to each other and with views back to the city. The Post Office, Court House and Town Hall.

Online survey responses

Q. 2 (56 responses)

What do you love about the precinct and what's working well?

37	I live close by and use the gym at the pcyc and visit hungry bull everyday. This precinct has its own little culture, it's a community of locals who say hello to each other. It is already great but needs some TLC, an update
38	Community space, historical site, beautiful buildings
39	The open quality of the space with places to sit. The Balmain Library and all its amenities, including talks and sitting spaces and it's general accessibility for all ages. The lovely little greenhouse - I've not been in but I love that it's there amongst it all and you can participate in it.
40	The buildings
41	It's the civic focus for the Balmain Peninsula.
42	I love the fact that it has not been turned into a plastic, highrise buiding
43	The Post office, courthouse, & Townhall have a great civic presence. The opening up of the post office corner has greatly improved the appearance of the building.
44	PCYC does diminishes the whole streetscape and adds nothing to the concept of "high street" business such as cafes and restaurants all of which have struggled since the pandemic and those that survive the next years of the pandemic need support of passing traffic/trade The library needs to be refurbished including aircon/filters that comply with covid/AASA standards protocols and the small rooms actually used by the community as meeting rooms through a proper booking system. Prior to the pandemic the library was being used by high school students after school hours for study and "drop in" use of meeting rooms where 3-4 students would watch streaming services on their laptops. Great safe place for older kids for homework/study but hey not 2-3 hour use of small closed door rooms for streaming for bored students waiting for parents return home.
45	Traditional "town hall".
46	it's heritage buildings and the streetscape it creates it's uncluttered and et back from road and traffic the glass house is unique

Online survey responses

Q. 2 (56 responses)

What do you love about the precinct and what's working well?

47	I like the scale and the ornate Victorian architecture of the PO, Courthouse and Police Station. I also like the few well established trees, along with the glasshouse and little pockets of greenery. The 'shelter shed' adds some sense of community. I liked the quirky old boat outside the PO which has since been removed.
48	The village atmosphere, the people and the parks The history of the area
49	The Heritage buildings. The central location. A science of space.
50	The Library is a valuable community facility. Irreplaceable.
51	The height of the buildings, that they are all linked to the emerging Federation of Australia. Their Historical significant. As landmarks defining the beginning of the Balmain Shopping centre as you moved towards the ferry.
52	I love the way it is currently
53	The town hall building, library and Balmain square are all beautiful buildings and it is a pleasure to have them in our community. The library and its programs are brilliant, and the PCYC has excellent clubs.
54	It is visible and the library is available
55	The beautiful heritage buildings. The unique glass house available for the community.
56	Great central location in a vibrant retail area. Very close to bus services. Post Office is fantastic – location and services.

Online survey responses

Q.3 (54 responses)

What would attract people to stay longer?

1	<p>An open air space to "hang out in". People pour out of the PCYC, families, kids, retirees, after their exercise, or whilst waiting for friends and family to finish at the PCYC and have nowhere to go. There are a few cafes which quickly fill. So families shuffle the kids off in their cars and leave the suburb.</p> <p>If the area between the library and the courthouse was reimagined to be a beautiful multi-functional civic centre, people could get take aways and sit, linger, play, wait and socialise. It would turn a weekend PCYC activity into a day out in Balmain.</p> <p>People who already come to the library would have a greater reason to stay. Meet friends, have a bite to eat outdoors in the space, and spend half a day there. An outdoor civic space would greatly extend the footprint of the library in a healthy, covid-safe and truly Balmain kinda way</p>
2	<p>A reason to be in the area alongside the Post Office and the PCYC.</p> <p>The businesses on the north side a reasonably well patronised</p>
3	<p>At public meeting the idea of a museum section in the Court House would attract people.</p> <p>The green section of the driveway between Town Hall and Police Station with Conservatory at its centre could stand a treatment similar to the Post Office mini park would change the character of this section. Unless vehicle access to the Meeting Room could be provided through the depot, retention of the driveway itself would be needed, but plantings may integrate it better with the green.</p>
4	<p>Revitalise the area around the glasshouse with seating similar to the area adjacent to the Telstra building. Flower and shrub plantings would be good also.</p>
5	<p>A public use even commercial use for the frontage between the post office and the police station. There should be a restaurant, tables and chairs there. This is a prime north facing spot on the darling st. ridge - too important to leave as empty. It needs activation with various uses fronting it.</p> <p>Glasshouse should have a Council funded monthly workshop.</p> <p>Gardening advice, seedlings for sale</p>
6	<p>Update landscaping</p>
7	<p>I am not too sure, considering the precinct holds enough chairs and tables for leisure and work, and it is near the local woolies and restaurants, so there is always a place to 'fuel back up'.</p>

Online survey responses

Q.3 (54 responses)

What would attract people to stay longer?

8	More benches, more green space, more open space for people to rest and stay. Currently very disjointed, seen as not a combined, unified space.
9	More desk spaces with adapter might attract more people
10	More public use of precinct for community meetings and events including glasshouse. Shelter shed is used and needs refurbishment.
11	Public use of precinct buildings for events, upgrade of glasshouse and shelter shed
12	<p>More regular and consistent events for locals eg Regular sustainable opportunities to sell or swap preloved clothing in the hall, dances aimed at different ages[there is virtually no opportunity for dancing socially locally] local artists or hobbyists or clubs events to sell their ware[not necessarily weekly or monthly but regular consistent opportunities- eg 3 monthly], Repair workshops etc Cinema nights. A Local Theatre space/nights would be wonderful to have mixed aged arts opportunities.</p> <p>More space for students to study quietly in the library. Access to meeting rooms for meetups or etc- make info and price minimal. The Hannaford centre is oversubscribed so offer some more similar opportunities here too. Especially affordable spaces for teachers offering affordable experiences. Community plant meet and swap in green house, seed saving, learning etc. Community orchard/farm park/green space, garden learning hub at council depot. The community is always growing in size so adding these amenities and spaces is important for the future</p>
13	More seats out the front. Fix up the nearby old shelter. Needs a unifying feel.
14	Created for testing purposes only. Please ignore
15	Opening the buildings and making them integrate with the street so that you can see people are in them - this will encourage others to enter
16	<p>I think more integrated greenery/shelter and street furniture helps. Relocating the parking so the area around the buildings has a nicer pedestrian flow would definitely encourage more lingering - and give the glass house more potential with better space around it.</p> <p>Utilising the vacant spaces in the buildings for cultural engagement. Activating those buildings will bring life back to the precinct.</p>

Online survey responses Q.3 (54 responses) What would attract people to stay longer?	
17	Re-purpose old courthouse.
18	Slower streets, more bike parking (covered where possible), repurposing kerb side space for parklets and wider footpaths, library spaces with more natural light and greenery, improving the public open space on all sides of the library, and a kids library space that's easier to find.
19	I would love to see the whole Town Hall become a place to visit I've never been inside the court house and I've lived in Balmain for over 40 years. I have of course been to a lot of meetings upstairs in the Town Hall and I know the Library very well but nothing else.
20	Coffee and tea in the glass house, though visual artists might also like that space for exhibition.
21	Seating; cafe
22	Better landscaping at the front and around the building.
23	Vibrant outdoor spaces for the community with space to congregate and spend time engaging. A focal area with a variety of choices for entertainment and eateries.
24	1. Information displays. 2. More public seating. 3. Information brochures advising about current uses and facilities.
25	Redevelopment of the glasshouse/garden area near police station and toilets.
26	More seating. More seating in the library for all users. More and better seating for the area around the glasshouse and immediate surrounds.
27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - more seating and greenery - removal of the Telstra building eye sorry - kids playground - water fountains - outdoor sculpture and artwork depicting the history of the area (for example an old tug boat or ferry)
28	More places to sit in sunny spots
29	More connected public space with facilities like seating and tables on both the east and west sides of Balmain Town Hall.
30	More events
31	A vibrant remodelling, and longer opening hours and more frequent use of the annexe for art exhibitions

Online survey responses Q.3 (54 responses) What would attract people to stay longer?	
32	Keeping the buildings maintained and cohesive with clear signage. Planted gardens and seating.
33	If the glasshouse was full of begonias as is the one in Cook Park in Orange many more people would come to see its beauty.
34	Cafe with viewing deck back to city.
35	Make it more appealing! Places to sit in the shade, live music in the evenings, outdoor tables, changing art exhibitions etc
36	Using spaces better - shops, cafes, public venue for concerts etc - making the area more lively and vibrant
37	If the precinct were more seamless (at the moment each building and area feels a bit standalone and not really a "precinct") so that you could create spaces and places which could flow into each other. For example, if a part of the back of the Balmain library were opened up so it lead into a garden type area in front of the daycare which could have seated areas alongside play areas. Other paths in the garden could lead to spaces for sitting and reading, playing chess, etc. That whole area has a lovely northern sun which would be taken advantage of.
38	Don't know. Why should people stay longer anyway?
39	Shade from trees Temporary shelter for existing seating
40	A cafe. Restaurants. A dedicated arts precinct that is open all day + at night.
41	More attractive building on the site of the PCYC. Sure have lower ground floor yoga and fitness centre and with side entry to a new medium rise building that should be redeveloped in conjunction with Federal education/health and in conjunction proposal for Balmain Hospital to become a post-grad teaching hospital - partner with overseas uni e.g. Uni of Singapore, which has done a similar thing about 10 years ago.
42	Places to sit. Coffee cart.
43	more seating/plantings chess table
44	People are too busy and too distracted to linger. The shelter shed with seating and tables is great. The new 'corner' subsumed from the old Telecom building is not so people friendly or attractive. It is a busy noisy

Online survey responses

Q.3 (54 responses)

What would attract people to stay longer?

	intersection with an uninspiring art installation, and last time I looked the plant wall was full of half dead plants. Tragic.
45	Live music , interesting, diverse shopping. Markets. Lighting of street trees.
46	A cafe in the courtyard of the library. Market stalls selling fresh produce. An art gallery.
47	More garden, parents and young children creative play inside and outside library.
48	as residents? or as Shoppers? or as visitors? Less congestion - moving the buses of the high street back on block and walking to the shops. More open spaces.
49	Actual books, and spaces to read, and comfortable and functional furniture. I was so disappointed when I visited the library as a new Balmain resident. The lack of investment and care is visible. A library with a few books, zero ambience or community feeling.
50	To make it attractive and intersting, just leave it as it is. Maybe do some repairs.
51	Some upgrades to the police station and the grassed area out the front of it (currently unused old chess tables), similar in style to the new space at Balmain Square. Better use of the community hall behind the library.
52	More events, clear signage, community facilities
53	More benches and tables around the area.
54	More green open space - with some covered places if possible. Children's playground.

Online survey responses

Q.4 (56 responses)

What improvements would you prioritise in the short term (over the next couple years) for Balmain precinct?

1	<p>Please see my submission (from MyKindCo) on the submission page. I would like to see the spaces around the library including the caretakers garden (what a waste of precious space!) including the space between the library and the courthouse (where there is currently a 7 space car park and library wheelie bins) turned into the open urban civic centre it deserves to be!</p> <p>I believe that a priority, before engaging architects, is to engage urban planners (or put the project out to the Town Planning Uni students as a term project) to realise a MASTERPLAN for the area. After this any and all refurbishment, remediation of buildings such as the Library should follow. Any architects then employed must consult the master plan prior to doing any design work.</p> <p>I believe, aside from some basic refurbishment, the biggest BANG FOR YOUR BUCK will be relocating those seven carpark spots the the side of the library and landscaping this incredible sun-filled outdoor space into a useable space for take away dining, outdoor study/reading area and play area for mums and kids.</p>
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Online survey responses

Q.4 (56 responses)

What improvements would you prioritise in the short term (over the next couple years) for Balmain precinct?

2	<p>1. The area between the Police Station and the Town Hall This area should be redeveloped to the standard of the Square. The Kathleen Hamer glasshouse should be repaired and made usable and offered to community groups for appropriate uses. The diagonal pathway should be formalised. Car parking near the toilets should be eliminated unless necessary. Gardens and seating would enhance the area – a cool place in summer when the Square is too hot.</p> <p>2. The Town Hall Meeting Room This is an important community facility. It can be made much more usable for meetings and functions. It needs quite a lot of work but I would prioritise these two. A quality audio visual installation with appropriate acoustic treatment of the room Improve the kitchen facilities.</p> <p>3. The Precinct as a whole. The IWC should work with the State Government to open up the Courthouse buildings. A public tour would be a great idea. Traffic calming from Jacques Street to Montague Street including widening the footpath on the north side of Darling Street to allow plantings and increased use of the footpath by restaurants and coffee shops. Ensure 393 Darling Street is developed appropriately</p>
3	<p>More seating. Some covered. Current seating looks tired and is all the same. Need some covered seating space eg behind the greenhouse. The shelter shed needs a renovation?</p>
4	<p>The area adjacent to the library needs to be revamped. The car parking area needs to be removed and replaced with a footpath. This means no cars allowed The bus shelter needs to be removed. Council needs to allocate funding in the budget for all this to happen otherwise this will have been a wasted exercise.</p>
5	<p>Allow / encourage retail (cafe) tenancies between police and post office.</p>

Online survey responses Q.4 (56 responses) What improvements would you prioritise in the short term (over the next couple years) for Balmain precinct?	
6	Separate entrance for small childrens' room in the library. Better acoustics as library is too noisy.
7	i am not too sure on short term priorities
8	Benches. Trees/green space. Revamped library.
9	More study spaces for students (like highschool students or uni students) may need to be prioritized
10	Balmain Town Hall kitchen is very outdated and needs urgent upgrade. Also the sound system is inadequate. Unfortunately, new collapsible tables are too heavy for use by volunteers.
11	Refurbishment of town hall kitchen and updst town hall accoustics Replace current collapsible tables with lighter version for easy movability and occupational healthy and safety ease.
12	Making affordable access for groups, communicating to locals how they can use the spaces and costs to generate interest. A mini city orchard, community garden, farm etc to bring different ages together, cinema and theatre nights. sustainable fashion swaps/selling regularly, decluttering markets, arts and craft hobby markets for locals even if 2/3 times a year. how locals can meet each other too and will bring visitors to Balmain. Needs to go on a calendar so people can prepare and have consistency. Regular Dancing and Cinema nights.
13	Maybe planter boxes. Seating arrangements similar to area near Post Office. Garden on rhs of Town Hall should be redone. Depressing mess now. Do somethng with old depot.
14	Created for testing purposes only. Please ignore
15	The Post Office Clock to have the chimes restored. So many people that live close to the PO miss hearing the chiming. It has been the subject of several posts on FB in last couple of years.
16	Improve the landscaping around the buildings with gardens so that people can wonder through and sit on benches
17	Revitalising and upgrading the facilities at the Town Hall, as well as improving the booking system. Also starting inquiries with the state government on the potential access/use of the court house The post office is privately owned? Not sure what the options are there.

Online survey responses Q.4 (56 responses) What improvements would you prioritise in the short term (over the next couple years) for Balmain precinct?	
18	Better acoustics in main town hall meeting room upstairs.
19	More (covered) bike parking, slower streets, priority crossings for people walking (especially side streets), less on street car parking and parklets, a more open and inviting library with natural light, improving the public open space on all sides of the library.
20	Open up the whole Town Hall to weekly meetings, such as the Balmain Institute or the Friends of Balmain Book Group. Have general discussions there. Allow it to be used by the locals for meetings.
21	Performing arts space with acoustic treatment
22	Public toilets
23	Restoration of heritage buildings and appropriate landscaping.
24	Dedicated spaces to gather and enjoy the area. Art works installed in keeping with the precinct and seating and cafes usually are a good option.
25	Shade trees or shade awnings. More grass areas.
26	Development of more outdoor seating in the above area. Expanded usage of town hall/courthouse buildingsâ€™ opening for public use.
27	More seating. More seating in the library for all users. More and better seating for the area around the glasshouse and immediate surrounds.
28	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - painting and repairs of the buildings - public access and revitalisation of the courthouse, potentially as a fresh food market - reinstallation of the town hall dome that was removed decades ago - dedicated local museum space
29	Relocate the council depot and convert to a park Remove the occasional care buildings Fix the town hall and buy some decent furniture and technology Expand the library
30	Relocate the seven parking spaces that are currently on the south of the glasshouse and replace with paving and seating. Make the western side of the Balmain Town Hall permeable by connecting the footpath with the library courtyard and then through to the caretaker's garden.
31	Rationalisation/ beautification of surrounds especially area between town hall and police station. Glasshouse should be

Online survey responses

Q.4 (56 responses)

What improvements would you prioritise in the short term (over the next couple years) for Balmain precinct?

	updated/maintained with a community use focus relative to its heritage significance.
32	Maintaining the lawns, opening the annexe, opening up the (barely-used) depot, perhaps converting the office buildings for local creative use. Investing properly in the glasshouse
33	Ensuring the historic buildings are restored and not developed inappropriately or modernised which is not in keeping with the current vernacular.
34	A coffee shop adjacent to the glasshouse would help to beautify the area and bring locals together in an outdoor garden setting which are few and far between in the Balmain area
35	Reopen the public viewing deck and reinstate its original cupola roof with views back to the city on top of the Town Hall. The Town Hall was originally built with this feature and is diminished without it. Also, families can enjoy the viewing deck back to the city as they once did.
36	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Fix the footpaths - replace the pavers in front of PCYC, continue those large pavers along to at least Jacques St 2. paint the PCYC building which is looking tired, especially the window frames 3. Paint a huge colourful mural line at Rozelle Public School on the wall of the PCYC facing the library 4. Completely replant and improve the small garden area between the library and the pcyc 5. Put down outdoor tables and chairs and a large shady tree there 6. See how we can have live music in the precinct 7. More graffiti! N cute local youth to put street art where possible. It adds the edginess that gives this part of Balmain its unique character
37	Fixing historical buildings that are currently looking shabby and unusable - making spaces open for pop up community spaces - art centre, concerts, etc
38	The Post office and old courthouse building such a beautiful thing which looks so dire and feels like it falling into disrepair.
39	The Balmain Town Hall / Library Precinct on Darling Street should be redeveloped and promoted as a Community Hub which can play an important role in achieving positive health and wellbeing outcomes for the community by providing diverse settings to deliver locally based services, community development opportunities, and space for the

Online survey responses

Q.4 (56 responses)

What improvements would you prioritise in the short term (over the next couple years) for Balmain precinct?

formal and informal development of social networks and relationships. The proposed Balmain Town Hall / Library Hub should contribute to community building by providing: A place for community members to meet to undertake community building projects; A focal point in the community where people with common community interests can gather; A source of information for people on how to access networks, services and other community building resources; A local source of community building support through the accommodation of community development organisations, and A new opportunity for the provision of new and needed services, facilities and amenities into the wider Balmain community.

Council should undertake Community Hub Precinct Planning Study, the purpose of which should be, in essence, the provision of multipurpose places where a variety of activities occur, a range of goals are addressed, and different objectives can be pursued.

The key to any community hub concept is integration. This can mean both integration of services, programs and activities within a multipurpose community facility or an integration of a range of activity generating uses including community and cultural facilities, shops, transport, public parks and plazas, landscaping, public art and innovative night-time lighting.

Community hubs should also provide a valuable link and central location for residents to access local services, activities, support structures, learning options, community information and provide opportunities for social and civic participation.

The scope of the proposed Balmain Community Hub Precinct should include four primary objectives: Service coordination and delivery; Place-making; Community building; and Financial sustainability.

Service coordination and delivery Hubs can provide a means of accommodating a number of social and community organisations together in the one physical space, with the goal of enhancing both coordination among services and access to them by the community. The emphasis of service coordination is on encouraging collaboration between different organisations to better serve community needs.

An additional motivator is to make more efficient use of resources, by sharing common facilities rather than each organisation having its own separate space. Service coordination often involves bringing

Online survey responses

Q.4 (56 responses)

What improvements would you prioritise in the short term (over the next couple years) for Balmain precinct?

	community services together in a single location, sometimes as part of some form of multiservice centre.
40	Change the horrible "artwork" on the square wall, and demolish the horrible building it is on Get some decent public toilets
41	Move police etc parking off Darling Street and widen footpath Display seasonal horticultural exhibits in the glasshouse - extremely low value use at present Make access to the lower town hall (meeting room) more attractive Improve access from the south - Little Darling and Little Arthur Streets Improve hotch potch advertising of community uses of the PCYC - external signboards/wayfinding to replace festooned banners over building facade and inside entry vestibule - the building is heritage! Retain a dignified appearance of the streetscape befitting its civic importance Provide public parking in part of the Balmain works depot out the back Put a decent, prominent lift in Balmain Town Hall and fix up the toilets - appalling Make the stage area of the town hall more appealing without destroying its heritage look Install decent audiovisual technology in the town hall Make the police entrance and counter area more inviting
42	Fix the water pooling/drainage issues in the ramp access outside the police station, after many ears of insult to the disabled
43	Cafe. Places to sit. Create a plaza that gets the sun so is active during the day. Rebuild the Town Hall Dome removed during WW2. Renovate the Town Hall to become a great venue that is used all the time eg like Sydney Town Hall.
44	library - as above in the next 1 year while calling for expression of interest for PCYC development and setting up committee to lobby Federal Education Minister & Health Minister in adjoining electorates while PM Albanese is local Federal Minister.

Online survey responses

Q.4 (56 responses)

What improvements would you prioritise in the short term (over the next couple years) for Balmain precinct?

45	Seats, tables, coffee cart.
46	restore/maintain buildings esp care to glass house replant and maintain hanging garden in Telstra sq planter boxes until more substantial trees planted
47	Stop making everything so corporate and soulless. More trees.
48	Balmain has always been known for its pubs. It has lost so many . Encourage live music. The gathering of the community. Open air cinema in Morts Dock.
49	Accessibility to disabled and older people. The space is a bit cluttered with roads, pathways and gardens. Repairs to buildings and painting.
50	Young family activities.
51	Building Maintenance, more street scaping to improve the quality and look of the area.
52	More trees and plants in the precinct to attract birds and other tree loving animals
53	Simple upgrades to the grassed area out the front of the police station, and renovations to the community hall behind the library.
54	Use of all buildings
55	Upgrade the benches and tables along the main street.
56	As long as there is a Masterplan for the area that is shaped by community feedback, I am happy for the project owners to determine the best first steps.

Online survey responses

Q.5 (52 responses)

What are your big ideas for the long term (10+ years) for Balmain precinct?

1	<p>Overall, we propose a precinct to attract, capture & engage through a hub of community spaces including cultural recognition, collaborative sharing of ideas, innovation and the arts, council initiatives, and social purpose activities. Partnership opportunities are abundant for the precinct and are to be explored to maximise the precinct's potential.</p> <p>ZONE 1: Outdoor Community Space Expand the Library and Town Hall Meeting Rooms into surrounding shared outdoor space Relocate the carpark and waste management to the eastern side of the library, allowing for a vibrant pedestrian and civic space between the buildings capturing visitors to the area Connect and upgrade outdoor spaces around the library (including the caretakers largely underutilised garden), maximising the precinct usable footprint Garden spaces showcasing First Nations representation through native landscape design, public art including sculptural installations and wall murals Allow for the Balmain Association and friends of the Library to curate important historic public artworks for the outdoor spaces Storytelling opportunities for historically influential women through, art, exhibitions and installations</p> <p>ZONE 2: Indoor Collaborative Space Town Hall (above library) as extension of library. Differentiated as a quiet space, house library collection, reading hub, work stations, allowing for more active and social use of the library downstairs. Showcase Balmain Association exhibits etc Regenerate and increase the usability of the Glasshouse by creating an educational, sustainable, innovative, collaborative and programmed space Include in-residence Creative Industries tenure for Town Hall Meeting Room, regular programming and activation Investigate program partnerships with PCYC Repurpose and reimagine Court House into an educational space (eg Mooting as well as school activities) and/or a Creative and Performing</p>
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Online survey responses

Q.5 (52 responses)

What are your big ideas for the long term (10+ years) for Balmain precinct?

	<p>Arts Centre, or arthouse cinema example: Golden Age Cinema in Surry Hills</p> <p>ZONE 3: Community & Collaborative Space</p> <p>Council Depot as hospitality, community leisure and creative in-residence program hub</p> <p>Reimagine the Council Depot as a space for both community and collaboration through ~The Grounds style local hospitality kiosks, green food trucks, seating areas and community garden</p> <p>Repurpose dedicated area as a sustainability and recycling hub- becoming a flagship community circular economy and innovation hub</p> <p>Re-home artist studios to the Depot to have direct interaction with the public and build creative community</p> <p>Consider regular and periodic community activation of the space in the way of community pizza ovens (see Albury City Council), food truck themed takeovers and or open-air cinema and community events such as weddings and birthdays (example Bridge Road School Forest venue hire).</p> <p>Contact us for more details</p> <p>Again MyKindCo has proven records in activation of this precinct through take-over events held in the Glasshouse and Town Hall Meeting room. This included a strong focus on historical local figures, First Nations representation.</p> <p>Securing partnerships, sponsorships and funding forms a large part of our capacity, and we would welcome a meeting with Council to discuss the full extent of our ideas garnered from consultation with local community groups such as the Balmain Association, Friends of the Balmain Library, Inner West Mums, Balmain and Rozelle Carers and Parents, local residents and businesses at large.</p> <p>From MyKindCo</p>
2	<p>Open the Courthouse buildings for community and public activities - Museum of Balmain, performance spaces, cultural displays.</p>

Online survey responses

Q.5 (52 responses)

What are your big ideas for the long term (10+ years) for Balmain precinct?

3	Usage of the court house for the public. What happens in the building between the Court House and the post office? Corner park to be larger when Telstra releases that extra space. The new small corner park is excellent to meet people and looks attractive. Better signage about historical connections. What about a history festival- block off the road and have period costume and pedestrians on the streets with old fashioned foods on sale in stalls.
4	Lets see how the next 2 years go.
5	Its tempting to focus on the buildings, but the challenges faced by the broader area are mainly commercial. There is a deficiency in the quantity and mix of retail offerings, mainly due to absurdly high rents. This has resulted in further limitations on retail mix and vacancies. Results in further poor retail choice, low foot traffic, no buzz. Need to start with the people. Once a quarter streetmarkets. 4x a yr Sundays 10-3 no cars from Beattie St to PCYC. (busses re-route on Beattie like the trams used to do)
6	Move works depot away and create a new park with lane access to Montague St and Jacques St. Create green walls on Telstra Building and other places.
7	over the next 10 years I would like to see a vast array of parking spots as it is always a bit of a hassle to secure a park close to the library
8	Would love to one day see more space to walk around and rest.
9	N/A
10	Add Courthouse to library. The heritage library building is too small for new uses such as study areas or computer use or comfortable small groups. Pram storage for popular story time is a nightmare. The addition of Courthouse space would be great. Purchase of remaining Telstra building and a covered extension of square would be great.

Online survey responses Q.5 (52 responses) What are your big ideas for the long term (10+ years) for Balmain precinct?	
11	Upgrade and find better use for courthouse eg venue for music, art youth etc
12	As Above Gather all the ideas and have a survey with different suggestions for people to vote on. Let them be included in the decision making.
13	Better amalgamation of courthouse and town hall area to be more inviting.
14	Created for testing purposes only. Please ignore
15	It would be great to imagine it as a cultural hub artist residencies performances music talks venue for workshops Local history museum indoor makers markets
16	Knock down the rest of the phone exchange and extend public space.
17	An open and inviting library, a functional post office / courthouse building, streets that clearly prioritise walking and cycling.
18	I'd love to see films in the Town Hall become a regular feature. The nearest cinema is in Leichhardt and parking is a hassle there so could we please have a Balmain Cinema in the Town Hall?
19	Affordable and accessible parking
20	Community hub
21	Interior spaces that be used safely by young people, eg art, drama, dance workshop spaces
22	Use cases for the area need to be community based with arts and entertainment as a primary objective.
23	Enhancing facilities in town hall, town hall meeting room & library.
24	Breathe more life & energise usage of these areas. Town hall area for live music, exhibitions, plays, historical info on Balmain. Local schools could put on productions, graduations etc.

Online survey responses

Q.5 (52 responses)

What are your big ideas for the long term (10+ years) for Balmain precinct?

25	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- removal of council depot and transformation into a new park- public rooftop access to the courthouse to allow views over precinct- removal of occasional care and replacement with dedicated new child care facility- eventually there should be a genuine town plaza in the precinct
26	Turn the depot into an interactive sculpture park
27	The town hall becomes a key performing arts facility. A council-run visual arts exhibition space is established. Telstra square is extended following the demolition of the remaining Telstra exchange building.
28	Make sure that the relationship (including the paint colours) of the post office, the court house and the town hall) are maintained and developed. Develop an unifying landscape and garden plan from the PO corner to the end of the Town Hall
29	As above, traffic calming reopening the courthouse building
30	That Balmain continues to be a unique historical boutique suburb full of character and respected to that end without high rises and fast food outlets
31	More restoration and use of historical buildings and more beautifying with the use of colourful gardens.
32	I would like to see it become a combination of affordable cafes and shared office space like We-Work.
33	<p>Sell the council lot which houses the tucks and cans etc and make that into a park/cultural centre/arts space</p> <p>Ensure the beautiful court course/post office building gets a stunning renovation with cafes, restaurants, performance spaces and also; a large shared go working space that people can book a desk or meeting room in:</p>

Online survey responses

Q.5 (52 responses)

What are your big ideas for the long term (10+ years) for Balmain precinct?

34	It would be great to see the precinct retain its historical significance while having a vibrant community space – for Balmain and greater Sydney residents. This could have both private and public components – cafes, restaurants, shops combined with public spaces.
35	A multi-use space for different ages at different times of the day. From the daycare, library to the garden to (say) galleries for local artists (including crafts and other creatives where there could be workshops in arts/crafts etc almost like a Sydney Community College) combined with evening dining options or small bar.
36	<p>Placemaking for the Balmain Town Hall / Library Community Hub</p> <p>Placemaking for this Balmain location should be a multi-faceted approach to the planning, design, integration and management of public spaces. Put simply, it involves looking at, listening to, and asking questions of the people who live, work, and play in a particular space, to discover their needs and aspirations. This information is then used to create a common vision for that place. Placemaking capitalises on a local community assets, inspiration, and potential, ultimately creating good public spaces that promote people health, happiness, and wellbeing.</p> <p>Council should undertake a Balmain Town Hall Precinct Placemaking Study / Program that uses urban design to enhance the physical quality, appearance and integration of buildings and public places to reinforce a place's identity and make it a more attractive environment for people to gather and interact with each other. This mix of uses will typically involve integrating community facilities such as libraries and community centres with local shops (including cafe and restaurants), public and/or private transport and often parks, and other service facilities such as health related or State Government support agencies. This element of place making is an extended form of colocation. It involves more than co-location of services in a multipurpose facility and involves greater integration of a variety of people attracting uses.</p>
37	The way things are going, open a soup kitchen

Online survey responses

Q.5 (52 responses)

What are your big ideas for the long term (10+ years) for Balmain precinct?

38	<p>Put the telephone exchange underground - major waste of prime space - and extend Balmain Square.</p> <p>Move the Balmain works depot to a less important/valuable site to provide parking</p> <p>Free up the spaces between important buildings as much as possible</p> <p>Balmain Square was supposed to be a big idea and ended up a very small idea that took forever - don't repeat the same small thinking and lack of pressure on Telstra</p> <p>Replace the town hall tower</p>
39	<p>Keep It Simple S</p>
40	<p>Create an arts precinct that functions all day + at night. The site is extremely underused- the Town Hall should have a function every night of the week.</p> <p>Theater + cinema- same idea as Paddington Town Hall which has a cinema.</p> <p>Give a theater company a long lease so there is certainty of being able to run a business.</p> <p>Would need to build new facilities + adaptive reuse of some of the existing.</p> <p>Could use some of the adjacent council depot site, with all access still from Darling St.</p>
41	<p>As above - 10years is too too long</p>
42	<p>Open up the ground floor of the town hall, by putting doorways in the eastern side. The building is too small to be of much use. Could you build a big modern annex out the back?</p>
43	<p>Try some permanent plantings rather than gimmicky high maintenance temporary 'plant walls'. The flower tubs along Darling Street were another disaster.</p>
44	<p>I would like to see people not so reliant on cars. More walking, bike riding, electric buses. A Highline type development, like the one in New York, extending from The Bays Precinct . - White Bay - Gladstone Park - Darling Street</p>

Online survey responses

Q.5 (52 responses)

What are your big ideas for the long term (10+ years) for Balmain precinct?

45	The courthouse is not required by the legal industry anymore as cases are handled online or at Downing st. Turn the Courthouse into an Art Gallery and tie to NSW Art Gallery or Powerhouse for small exhibition. Move the Police station. It's an old building not fix for purpose and the police could have a new building say in the new Bay district. Use this space for some sort of community purpose. The Council Utilities station at the back of site. - move to Callan Park or Bay district and create a council space for markets like the organic markets in Orange Public school.
46	Art precinct.
47	Move the cars out to a central parking area and use mini buses to move people around. Make it more friendly to walk rather than driving
48	My big idea for Balmain it to maintain the streetscapes as they are, and ensure that the 19th and early 20th century buildings are preserved.
49	The precinct to be a mix of truly public space, community-purposed office space (e.g. potential relocation of some of our local doctors, pharmacist etc) and some limited retail / hospitality - e.g. spaces available to the public to use for community groups, meeting places for local parents groups (partner with the NSW Family Health Centre for this) art galleries, concerts, local school events etc. A permanent art gallery. Extension of the library into an outdoor space. Updates to the PCYC building
50	Community venue for performances of all types. A festival space that open air markets and street party
51	I would like to see the Balmain Precinct area be a vibrant space for community events, in particular cultural, music and art events.
52	Masterplan should include re-purposing the council depot for public open space. While it might be convenient for council workers, it is a poor use compared to an amazing public open space.

Online survey responses

Q.6 (52 responses)

Are there new uses for existing buildings we should consider or advocate for?

1	<p>Yes, we'd love to see an extension of the Library that functions as a second lounge room outside the home – a co-work space hybrid as such. A place where we can do group study, group collaboration, work, read, have a coffee and read magazines and papers together. Attend seminars and courses. Record our own podcasts and music. We feel that if the council incorporates the outdoor space and incorporates it with the way the buildings are used, and how the buildings open into the spaces, in a clever way, you will have ACTIVE spaces at the group level – so social group work, social reading and chatting, and upstairs in the town hall or courthouse will be more passive spaces, quieter etc. The courthouse should be used for educational purposes, school plays, mootings, and screenings. As well as performance, theatre and arthouse movies.</p> <p>The DEPOT area should become artists in residence, kiosk cafes, recycling collective educational and innovative space ...</p>
2	Open the Courthouse buildings for community and public activities – Museum of Balmain, performance spaces, cultural displays.
3	<p>Court house could be a community centre.</p> <p>Legal aid centre.</p> <p>Training centre</p>
4	For council the priority is the Town Hall. It is under-utilised. Amateur groups, including musicians, and not for profit organisations should be approached for use.
5	Open the eastern side of the PCYC to the library forecourt. Ground floor activation.
6	Community centre and meeting rooms in the Court House. NSW government to partly fund.
7	i think the current arrangement of buildings is utilized to the best of its abilities, if there was an extra building used, maybe it could hold a small cafe in which i could get coffees by 6 pm
8	Community spaces!
9	N/A

Online survey responses

Q.6 (52 responses)

Are there new uses for existing buildings we should consider or advocate for?

10	As above, anything that brings community together regularly. Community room smaller than Town Hall, but larger than Small meeting room.
12	Library courtyard space glassed in for all weather use
13	As above- send out a floor plan for people to see what is actually available- size of buildings etc. To get more detailed comments.
14	Possible relocation of Library to court area to give Library more space or allow more library space out the back in depot area.
15	Created for testing purposes only. Please ignore
16	Make the Glass House a community garden. What is it now used for, and by whom ? Would be fabulous to have a community herb growing centre - particularly for those of us who grow herbs only for the starving possums to demolish.
17	Theatre
18	The court house or (also vacant space in the Post Office?): The Inner West doesn't have a decent gallery space! A local history museum would be great! and how about space for indoor markets? The Town Hall could surely be used for performance, dance, rehearsal, workshop.
19	Create a community space in the former courthouse.
20	Seems like the big courthouse building isn't used much. Could be repurposed for community and non-profit organisations.
21	Any building that's not used daily should get a review. Could it be used by locals for some creative projects
22	Glass house should be a cafe Community centre
23	Don't know
24	A community technology centre. Art municipal gallery with bar restaurant (may be fine dining) the view from the top of the court has to be wonderful.

Online survey responses

Q.6 (52 responses)

Are there new uses for existing buildings we should consider or advocate for?

25	Survey community for suggestions re town hall (dance classes, gentle exercise groups for seniors, formation of Balmain Community Band, fundraising events for local charities & community groups.
26	See above.
27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - perhaps the police should be relocated to an area of less heritage significance - conversion of one of the buildings into a contemporary cinema/theatre space similar to the Valhalla or Dendy Newtown " for an area that prides itself on the arts it is strange that there is no theatre
28	<p>The library should expand through the town hall and the caretakers cottage.</p> <p>The library should have green space.</p>
29	Explore a range of uses for the courthouse, including as a museum and an exhibition space.
	Don't know enough about the availability of spaces to be able to comment. More small meeting rooms easily available to community groups would be good -
30	As above
31	Any community organisations or short term office lets like WeWork. Continuing education for adults learning a wide range of skills like language, artisan crafts and arts and literary pursuits
32	More exhibitions promoting local art and crafts
33	<p>Reinstate Viewing deck on Town Hall.</p> <p>Cafes in some of the buildings.</p> <p>Reopen Courthouse.</p> <p>Convert offices into WeWork like facilities.</p> <p>Do historic tours of the 3 main buildings every Saturday and Sunday 11am for an hour.</p>
34	<p>See above</p> <p>The redevelopment of the courthouse/post office is so important and long overdue</p>

Online survey responses

Q.6 (52 responses)

Are there new uses for existing buildings we should consider or advocate for?

35	Concerts or other performances in the Town Hall, artist and other creative spaces
36	The town hall (upstairs above the library) needs to be renovated to be more useable. The acoustics are too poor for local performances to be held but it would be the perfect space.
37	New uses should incorporate the development of a Balmain Community Hub that is more than a single multipurpose facility, that accommodates a variety of services, programs and activities, and that is well integrated with other people attracting uses in the local area. A community hub can also be a group of separate buildings that, although physically separate, cluster together to create an activity centre and access point for meeting a diverse range of community needs. The existing buildings should be integrated into a Community Hub that is more than the traditional community or neighbourhood centre. The mix of uses within a hub is more extensive and may include facilities such as a library, as well as services like health care and social support, meeting space for community groups, office accommodation for community organisations, space for community functions and events and possibly some form of enterprise, whether that be commercial or social in nature. Community hubs are also places that encourage social gathering and are designed to provide spaces for people to congregate and meet together in both planned and incidental ways.
38	Not sure. Is the old courthouse still in use? If not, open it up and make it a cultural centre

Online survey responses

Q.6 (52 responses)

Are there new uses for existing buildings we should consider or advocate for?

39	<p>Move some of Council's administration into the courthouse eg call centre, customer service</p> <p>Reactivate the court room for public meetings and private functions</p> <p>I quite like the library as it is - I thought the initial makeover was very good. If Council sets up a customer service centre in the courthouse then the library entry could be uncluttered</p> <p>Move some library archives (eg local history) and back room functions into the courthouse if that allows public use of the library space to be extended</p> <p>Is caretaker accommodation at the side of the town hall still in use? Is this the best use?</p>
40	As noted above.
41	As above
42	<p>encourage use by local groups esp schools at no cost and let to locals such as dance schools/martial arts tutoring/lessons--at low cost</p> <p>pop up art sales</p> <p>precinct meetings</p>
43	Stop selling public assets!
44	Business owners should be encouraged to upgrade premises. 6 pm free parking for Darling St. Balmain is lacking atmosphere. It is dead. There are too many of the same type of businesses.L
45	Yes. Court House - Art Gallery. Police station- community centre, cafe or restaurant. Utilities Site in rear - community markets. All buildings need to draw people to the site 7 day a week.
46	Public meeting and activity rooms.
47	<p>Government owned or commercial?.</p> <p>remote the childcare centre at the back of the library, which is underutilizes and create a park = open space for community use</p>
49	Not really. Maybe the court house could be re-purposed in the hospitality industry (e.g. budget accommodation and restaurants)
49	A permanent art gallery in the Town Hall building.
50	Arts and education

Online survey responses

Q.6 (52 responses)

Are there new uses for existing buildings we should consider or advocate for?

51	The Balmain court house and town hall could include a 'mini' museum to showcase the local history. It could be attached to a room available for hire for community events.
52	Court House - vacant and idle is not a good situation. I would be happy with use split between retail, commercial and public use.

Online survey responses

Q. 7 (47 responses)

What construction, activities or events should we focus on?

1	Look at what Albury City Council is doing! Amazing stuff! Community pizza oven that they fire up once a month that can be booked out during other times, music in the park etc Please see the submission made (emailed) by MyKindCo.
2	Traffic calming from Jacques Street to Montague Street including widening the footpath on the north side of Darling Street to allow plantings and increased use of the footpath by restaurants and coffee shops.
3	Community events eg anzac ceremony at Obelisk is a great community event. Something similar for precinct would be great.
4	Revitalising the area around the glasshouse.
5	See above
6	that is a good question, in my opinion, the hosting of a mini art show would be very entertaining, bring in more of the younger generation to the precinct
7	N/A
8	Music theatre library community forums, art galleries, seating outside
9	Library courtyard glassed in for all year use
10	As above - have another survey with suggestions put out to vote on and floor plan with size of rooms, how many, size of depot area etc
11	Very important to give Balmain residents a good meeting place and a real community centre. Also good places for daytime places for older residents.
12	Created for testing purposes only. Please ignore
13	Not for profit, things for all age groups
14	Unifying the precinct with plantings and street furniture. Upgrade the Town Hall facilities - lighting, heating, PA system, projection screen
15	No more external construction

Online survey responses

Q. 7 (47 responses)

What construction, activities or events should we focus on?

16	Redesigning the kerb, rethinking the whole street. Open streets are always great fun and very popular. And think of people of all ages – e.g. kid focussed events and spaces. (ask the kids nearby what they'd like :)
17	Could Balmain please have a Repair Shop/Cafe? There's too many household items (electrical, furniture) being thrown out every week that just requires some expert help to get it in good working order again and there's plenty of retired people in the Balmain area that could offer their services to work there.
18	Acoustic consultation and treatment for Balmain Town Hall as performance space. Flexible seating. Rehearsal and performance spaces for musicians, composers, groups. Affordable and accessible.
19	Free or very inexpensive activities for young people, eg opportunities to play or learn music, drama groups, etc.
20	Renovation of the old buildings to create options for new business to to gain a foothold in the precinct.
21	Energising the precinct as indicated above.
22	Activities and events that focus on local Balmain history for kids and adults.
23	- greatest benefit to greatest people not just those that are squeaky wheels (avoid giving space to sectional interests) - injecting life into the area "as much public access as possible"
24	Things you can actually deliver on your land
25	Run a public consultation on the potential uses of the glasshouse. Following upgrades to the public spaces and buildings, run a local arts festival with commissioned installations and performances to showcase the upgrades.
26	see above
27	As above, parkland for depot plus a community cafe and art space

Online survey responses

Q. 7 (47 responses)

What construction, activities or events should we focus on?

28	Limit construction to respect the buildings as they are without imposing modern architecture which will fight with the existing buildings. Enhance through respectful restoration of the current buildings
29	Preserving historical buildings
30	Declare architect and former Mayor, EH Buchanan, birthday and Historic Day for Balmain and celebrate the history of all historic houses and buildings in Balmain. This could be celebrated with a mass walking group from the Town Hall around the neighbourhood to look at significant buildings and back to Town Hall for a wrap up session and perhaps acknowledge and further promote Heritage initiatives with a Top 10 list of historic initiatives for the area.
31	Annual street festival like in other suburbs with music, stalls, food etc to raise money for local migrants and or asylum seekers Id like to see an organisation like Addi Riad in Marrickville in Balmain: there are so many retirees who I think would volunteer
32	Performing arts, art spaces and cultural activities
33	See above.
34	Things that interest the Peninsula community - exhibitions, music, changing library displays of local history etc - not jazzed up and otherwise boring street events.
35	Fix what we have. It we cannot afford it, dont put up rates for it, just wait.
36	As noted above.
37	Library refurbishment/management as above
38	back to balmain type annual festival
49	Getting a weekly market happening again.
40	Please do not include any second-rate, "innovative" sculptures. An aboriginal sculpture would be welcome though - they tend to fit in better with the surrounding environment.

Online survey responses

Q. 7 (47 responses)

What construction, activities or events should we focus on?

41	Live music . Markets . Food discovery. Free movies for families in Morts Dock , Gladstone Park, Elkington Park. Lighting of street trees in Darling Street.
42	Art Gallery. Community Markets. Cafes.
43	Library
44	Fix up the Balmain Main Town Hall - loves unloved.
45	Ease of knowing what is on in which building and when
46	Child friendly musical and art events/activities.
47	As above, once there is an approved Masterplan, focus on the most cost and time effective way to deliver the Masterplan.

Online survey responses

Q. 12 (58 responses)

What do you like about Balmain Library?

1	Locations, the staff, seeing young and old. Its a quietly social place. I love the front foyer area where there are always retirees reading papers and people watching. That's where I want to be when I'm old. At the moment I'm at story time with my son, but I wish the caretakers garden was open to us to take a break in.
2	Friendly helpful librarians Pleasant quiet space to spend time
3	Friendly staff Good range of books. I especially love audio books and there is a wide range that suits my interests. Old building.
4	Community facility with internet
5	I just like coming here to use the computers to view my emails as my internet at home isn't very good. It is much better here at the library. The staff here are also very helpful and willing to assist me whenever I ask. It is a nice communal space for anyone to use and enjoy. I like the human aspect - interacting with others makes me happy and I enjoy the fact that I'm not surrounded by empty space and plants.
6	Intimate
7	everyone respects the quiet environment at all hours of the day, unlike libraries such as Chatswood or Lane cove
8	Calm and collegial atmosphere, well used public space that is popular, good amount of quiet study space for patrons. I also really like how the spaces are clearly defined - there is a clear study room, a separate children/youth space, a common space. This makes sure noise levels in different areas stay in their respective area, and lets people choose where they would like to be. I like the common area and the fact that people read their newspapers there - it creates a sense of community.
9	It's a nice quiet space for community.
10	Friendly atmosphere Borrowing and returns systems Friendly staff Reservation system New books display
11	Heritage building, available facilities, events, books available, easy return system, reservation system
12	We have one
13	Varied spaces for various uses. Warm comfortable feel.

Online survey responses

Q. 12 (58 responses)

What do you like about Balmain Library?

14	Created for testing purposes only. Please ignore
15	Friendly helpful staff. Good local place to work with internet.
16	It's small Staff are friendly
17	Great resources, friendly staff
18	The natural light is nice
19	Grandchildren like to play and read in kids section
20	The friendly staff, the auto check in and book reservation process, the bike parking right out front.
21	Homley feel
22	I love the building and I love the quiet. It also has a very good range of books to borrow.
23	Central location It has a toilet
24	space has a productive layout that enables easy access to all sections of the library. With dedicated areas for various activities which as someone who uses the library to study is of upmost importance to have an area that it quiet and for use everyday.
25	I like that there's a few spaces to go, this means that I have plenty of spots to choose that suits what I would like in a study space. But I would like to see a bit more private rooms. There's also a decent amount of books in every section of the library.
26	the energy of the space is simply lovely. a quiet, comfortable vibe thats perfect for studying or simply winding down.
27	Friendly helpful staff.
28	I like the space and layout. The collection is OK.
29	Quiet space but could be made more cosy.
30	Good opening hours, especially at the weekend
31	I value the services that the Library currently offers, including book borrowing for adults and children, the availability of newspapers and periodicals, and the large rear children's and teen's area. I also value the glasshouse area and immediate surrounds.
32	Books for the kids
33	The staff
34	It is a short walk from home.
35	Good location, easy to get to, nice heritage building, very good resources, excellent customer services,
36	Its heritage. It's reasonably quiet - when staff are not talking to one another from different sides of the space!
37	Friendly staff and quiet space

Online survey responses Q. 12 (58 responses) What do you like about Balmain Library?	
38	The range of books and magazines for all ages and it's peaceful.
39	Like having a local library, somewhere stimulating to be, rather than being stuck at home
40	The building is historically beautiful
41	Availability of computers, newspapers and a quiet place to read.
42	It is used for reading and research, aided by competent librarians The kindergarten-type aspect should not intrude upon serious readers
43	reasonable range of facilities for a small library
44	It is wheelchair accessible.
45	Small.
46	the fact that it's there and local
47	Some nice staff. Relaxed and informal atmosphere. Good range of books, plus always new books arriving, even though people no longer read much.
48	The face-to-face service provided by the Librarians
49	The staff are amazing. The location as long as you walk. The historical nature of the building. People come together
50	I mainly go to Book Buddies and I love the children's space. My daughter loves the sensory wall and the large amounts of floor space.
51	When it first open it was a comfortable space. Now a bit tired.
52	It's local
53	Almost everything--the whole place has a great ambience. It is a treat to visit and I wish I lived closer or had transport and could visit more often. As things are, I don't really feel qualified to assess individual library services.
54	It is a quiet community space
55	The children's room, the work spaces, the wide range of books, helpful staff, great technology
56	It is on the street
57	Access to the children's library area.
58	The space is unusual and characterful - nicer in many ways than a glass and concrete modern alternative.

	<p>Online survey responses</p> <p>Q. 14 (3 response)</p> <p>What would encourage you to visit Balmain Library?</p>
1	If I moved to the area
2	Operating hours of Balmain library need to be extended
3	The library needs to be brought into The 21st century. It is small and akin to something in a small country town.

Online survey responses

Q. 15 (58 responses)

What improvements or changes would you like at Balmain Library?

1	better gardens and open space to be in that are directly connected to the library! As it stands I have to leave the library to enter the cold shady lonely courtyard to the side of the library. Connect the spaces outside to the library. CUT down some of the figs to allow sun into the courtyard.
2	<p>Librarians' desk would be better placed near the front entrance</p> <p>Doors are heavy and difficult for parents with prams and strollers and the elderly and those with a physical disability.</p> <p>The pickup shelves for reserved books does not need to be next to the librarians' desk and at present it feels as though we are invading their space.</p> <p>Better use could be made of the small courtyard area.</p>
4	<p>Move the desk.</p> <p>The heavy doors are very difficult to push open.</p> <p>Can new books be better displayed? Better lighting.</p> <p>Improve signage.</p> <p>Stained glass windows in childrens section need to be on display- move shelving OR move the windows so they can be seen. The windows were a Friends of the library donation, made by a local artist.</p>
5	Nothing too major - the AC is poorly set up. In some areas its way to hot in winter, too drafty in the front study room.
6	To me the library is perfect as is. I like the old building and the layout of the space. I'm able to find what I'm looking for and it suits my purposes.
7	<p>Separate entrance for small children's room.</p> <p>Improve acoustic, library is too noisy.</p>
8	i would appreciate if it would be open after 7:30, probably to around 8 pm would be super beneficial, that extra 30 minutes would be a great help
9	I would love even more study space - sometimes I can't be confident about getting a table (especially in the afternoons during weekdays). I also would like more bathrooms and a place to fill up my water bottle inside the library. I have noticed that there are limited places for group learning - I would like to see space for this - especially considering that a lot of high school students come here (something we want to maintain!)
10	More study desks would be really helpful. I think it will attract more students

Online survey responses**Q. 15 (58 responses)****What improvements or changes would you like at Balmain Library?**

11	Movement of customer service desk from back Swinging doors heavy and difficult YA collection not used and could be used for small group study. Air conditioning needs work. Pram parking
12	Change position of library desk to front, easier entry doors, better use of youth section, air conditioning.
13	More study space for students
14	More meeting spaces. Fix air conditioning. More space for kids and prams.
15	Created for testing purposes only. Please ignore
16	More workstations with ability to charge devices. Currently its impossible to sit at a desk and charge with an Apple charger for Mac as the plug is flush with the desk and won't allow for the charger.
17	Better entrance More information on forthcoming events A more modernized appearance - artworks, brighter colors
18	Take the State Library in Macquarie St as a guide - more natural light. This building is also great as you can see people inside from the street which makes it inviting to go in
19	Id like to know more about whats going on at the library, and the services available.
20	Make the kids and youth sections easier to find. They are very hidden. Rethink and open up the outdoor space on all sides. Have a few more quiet working spaces, as it's often full. Create more natural light, as it's very enclosed. Undercover bike parking would be awesome.
21	More power points to use own device
22	After years and years of using the library I'd really love for parents and young children to access the childrens' area through the back path and doors. The loud noise the parents make (often talking very loudly to their children or friends) coming through the library's main glass doors is a dreadful shock and disturbs all of us who are there to read or study. Occasionally there's a very noisy screaming child allowed to run around the library with absolutely no one asking the parent to "parent" their child. Always amazes us retired folk as much as it does the younger people trying to study.

Online survey responses Q. 15 (58 responses) What improvements or changes would you like at Balmain Library?	
23	Better collection Larger areas for reading
24	possibly the implementation of better desks and seating the the break out rooms of the library as for long periods of time the chairs can become slightly uncomfortable and the desks are often extremely squeaky which can be disrupting.
25	-Bigger selection of books -Private study spaces
26	Maybe more staff.
27	I would like the Library to open on Sundays and for it to extend the opening hours for Mondays and Thursdays until 8 pm.
28	Toilets need an upgrade. More comfortable seating & quiet nooks for reading or study.
29	More seating in the library for all users.
30	Some investment in it! Tired and run down Should be modelled on the marrickville library renovation in terms of a vibrant new space
31	Modern use the look and feel. It is possible to respect heritage in a contemporary way. Open the children's library into the green space and have a deck / outdoor area Remove the large trees and encourage use of the courtyard
32	A wider range of periodicals including literary journals. The current range of periodicals are mostly lifestyle-related.
33	Air conditioning should be in working condition Sliding glass doors at the entrance More study spaces
34	Building needs TLC
35	Children's library needs to be separate from main library. It needs to be transferred to another building. Crying babies in prams plus noisy children need their own space away from main library. Also an adult scrabble group would be great. Marrickville library pre-covid offered activities: Cryptic crossword/Scrabble/Western Mahjong/Eastern Mahjong advertised in a Train Your Brain flyer. Covid seemed to put an end to those terrific free activities to keep older brains active. Balmain library also used to screen movies.
36	More cultural activities
37	A better online catalogue and more seated areas amongst the books.

Online survey responses Q. 15 (58 responses) What improvements or changes would you like at Balmain Library?	
38	See above
39	More staff
40	To increase the available spaces for meetings, interactive spaces, have a coffee on site, different programs.
41	Extend opening hours on Fridays and weekends. Refresh the collection of DVDs to include more blue ray and UHD video discs. Generally refresh the library collection and cull old or rarely borrowed items.
42	stated earlier make the entrance doors more easily accessible for elderly and disabled. They are too heavy.
43	Customer service is extremely variable but very poor too often.
44	As outlined earlier
45	Needs to be bigger.
46	on going maintenance--more displays eg history
47	The library is okay as is.
48	A Library Technician who can assist with Loans/Returns. My mother has become sight impaired & has stopped using the Library as she can't use the automated Loans/Returns system. More Librarians to assist with reference & general queries
49	Childrens area is really tired. Renew chairs in library area
50	More study/work spaces. My husband and I would like to use the space more for our further study and/or work.
51	Bring back a film group preferably in the afternoon. Dont change the librarians so often. More groups for senior adults. We dont want to go to marrickville or Ashfield
52	Use Surry Hills library as a template. Great space. Great functional meeting rooms. Comfort space. Good collection. Excellent WiFi. Marrickville Library great.
53	Look at Glebe or 5 Dock libraries
54	I think that's a question for people with more professional expertise than I have.
55	I was disappointed in the new Matrrickville library. It was a lost opportunity for easy welcoming pedestrian public access from Marrickville Rd. Instead you have to run a gauntlet of customers queuing and sitting

Online survey responses

Q. 15 (58 responses)

What improvements or changes would you like at Balmain Library?

	<p>at the cafe which has been given prime position. Further interior frontage is devoted to windows where people are staring at their laptops and eating food.</p> <p>To access the library I then have to walk down a long wide staircase where the only rails are at each end. I am 73 and walk at least a kilometre to the library and dont appreciate the obstacle course to get in. Then, the only walk way up is up long stairs if you want to access the non fiction section. I liked the layout of the old town hall library much better. I find the loungey seating next to the stairs very off putting, with a sprinkling of young folk looking very self conscious as they gaze at their laptops in full view of everybody. The design seemed to give priority to those using the car park, and to profits for a cafe, rather than a welcoming access to young and old from the main road, instead of a totally blank facade with a cafe at one end. Its like they didnt want anyone to know it was a library. I never see young parents with toddlers in there. Please dont allow the renos to be a pretentious impractical fiasco.</p>
56	<p>just need an upgrade looking old, air con fixed, improvements to the courtyard area to make it more friendly to seat and enjoy the space</p>
57	<p>Make it easier to access historical archives</p> <p>Serve good coffee there.</p>
58	<p>The Children's area be upgraded with an accessible outdoor area.</p> <p>Improve/increase collection</p>

Online survey responses Q.16 (55 responses) How does Balmain Library benefit the community?	
1	In so many ways! A meeting point for young and old! A congregations of youth and elderly.
2	Good for borrowing books, reading newspapers, researching Balmain history. Good programs are provided for adults and children.
3	People who cant afford the internet can access internet at library. Youth can charge devices at library. People who cant afford newspapers can read at library. Gives people somewhere to go outside of their homes. People with limited space in homes can BORROW a book and read and return, dont have to store it at home.,childrens programs appear very popular.m
4	Multiple ways. Its a third room of their house for some. V. Positive
5	I just like coming here to use the computers to view my emails as my internet at home isn't very good. It is much better here at the library. The staff here are also very helpful and willing to assist me whenever I ask. It is a nice communal space for anyone to use and enjoy. I like the human aspect - interacting with others makes me happy and I enjoy the fact that I'm not surrounded by empty space and plants.
6	Good resources and purchase of new books covering politics and current affirs.
7	by creating an environment that is comfortable for everyone to use
8	Libraries are without a doubt the most important community spaces that there can be. Free wifi and a place to sit are very very important. It is also good that the library has long opening hours - I see lots of people coming here after work and after school.
9	By existing! I feel like it's a lovely space for a lot of us to come and spend time as well as getting the work donez
10	It benefits as a library but also as the only free public shelter for residents. It currently the only community hub.
11	Library use snd also free use of internet, meeting place and reading venue, community hub
12	Creates accessible space for everyone to access resources may not have at home
13	Absolutely. Community meeting space.
14	Created for testing purposes only. Please ignore
15	A good space for reading and working that builds community.

Online survey responses Q.16 (55 responses) How does Balmain Library benefit the community?	
16	It's central position makes it's readily available It is a place where people can have quiet time reading, studying, catching up on news.
17	Great resources and great meeting place
18	Every community needs a library! It's a local meeting place, encouraging local connection and education, investigating local history.
19	Great books, friendly and helpful staff, space to work while kids do ju-kitsu nearby, a great place for downtime and concentration.
20	It's a wonderful place to come in out of the cold and rain or the heat of Summer to take five and relax and enjoy everyday living
21	We all love it! It's a place of refuge and contentment for all the local community. So many great books to discover and read. We'd be lost without it.
22	It has a public toilet
23	allows easy access to a wide range of texts for free which is helpful to those that can't afford to purchase books. Also allows for a dedicated study space which is important for a lot of the community who don't have somewhere they can work distraction free or with internet available.
24	Balmain library helps the community by providing a space where children can learn, enjoy, and make friends. It also includes school students and workers with a place to study or to do their work. Sometimes it's just an overall place to relax and rewind.
25	Reading is a wonderful hobby enjoyed by many Balmain residents. The library makes a valuable contribution to this enjoyment.
26	The Balmain Library benefits the community by enriching our cultural life. It provides a meeting space and resources for all age groups from toddlers to the elderly and including students. The FOBL events are a welcome addition to our local events calendar.
27	Good accessibility to resources etc.
28	Great space for kids but could be much more of a community gathering space
29	Na
30	At a time when education and social contact are being increasingly privatised, it is crucial to have public libraries that enable people to enjoy recreational reading as well as undertake more focussed projects and activities.

Online survey responses Q.16 (55 responses) How does Balmain Library benefit the community?	
31	The library provides resources and services which support the learning, recreational and social needs of the community including for people who cannot travel to the library via home library service
32	An open, democratic soace
33	Cultural and community space
34	Provides a public place for people to gather, learn and relax. It's variety of resources means that it fosters in children in particular a sense for books and learning. Quite a few people also work from there.
35	Not sure as I let my membership lapse years ago when I joined Max Webber Library (which is AMAZING) when I started working in that area of Sydney
36	A community isn't a community without a library where people can hang out. Especially in hard times, which are increasingly upon us.
37	Focal point on Darling Street
38	Provides a quiet place to read , use the internet borrow items of interest.
39	With a place to gain knowledge
40	Provides multiple services to a range of age groups.
41	as a community centre hub
42	What struck me were the people being tutored, or being helped with some complex bureaucratic form. Perhaps you need specific services for tutors and community workers, who in turn support community members..
43	see above uses
44	So many people love to live in front of a screen, so it is good the library has computer facilities. Good, also that there are still enough Inner West readers, so that the bookshelves are not getting too thinned out.
45	<p>Balmain Library is a crucial community service! The Library is no longer a repository for books but also a meeting place for children & young adults.</p> <p>Not only are the Balmain Librarians are professional, friendly & approachable, they hold a vast amount of knowledge</p>
46	An area for study, access to internet, computers, printing etc for everyone. A place to unwind.
47	It is a great space that brings the community together. My mothers group meets there regularly to enjoy Book Buddies, and the space is perfect for our kids.
48	A community space to meet and gather.

Online survey responses

Q.16 (55 responses)

How does Balmain Library benefit the community?

49	In a huge number of ways. Every community which has a library shares treasure in my opinion.
50	I always love libraries as community hubs as well as books. I took my children and then grandchildren to activities there, and at one point obtained every text book I needed by inter-library loan for my English masters degree.
51	Access to Information, social spaces, essential part of the community
52	The library is vital for the enrichment of local culture.
53	<p>Balmain library is critical to young families in the area - particularly its reading programs, and the separate space for children to play and read together.</p> <p>In a world where remote work is becoming more prevalent, Balmain library is also critical for residents as a quiet space to work.</p>
54	The Children's program and community talks events.
55	I don't need internet services but some cohorts in the community likely rely on this as their only access. This is a presumption but I'd like to see it tested before removing this service.

Online survey responses

Q.18

Do you have anything else to share about Balmain Library?

1	Please contact us for our detailed ideas. We are a collective of local residents: mykindco
2	Love the historical feeling of our library. Wish there was more natural light in library. More space could be made available by putting archives somewhere eg in council depot buildings or court house. Use the meeting room as part of the library to expand library space, setting up a meeting room in council depot or court house
3	I really want to see the history and character and charm of the building stay.
4	Love this community resource! So much! Thank you.
5	N/A
6	Access to courtyard should be opened and perhaps used as a covered space. Space is the biggest problem generally with all the competing interests and so every space is precious. FOBL donated stain glass windows need to be visible and not obstructed by shelving. FOBL Committee appreciates the hard work of staff and all our efforts are directed to library flourishing.
7	Better use or increase in size of library space
8	Group activity spaces and more study spaces would be good
9	Love it but spaces may need to be reworked.
10	Created for testing purposes only. Please ignore
11	It would be great to see more workstations with ability to charge devices.
12	Thanks for this consultation!
13	Please if nothing else keep it a Quiet space. There's ample cafes and places to go and talk and laugh out loud. There needs to be one community place to go inside and quietly enjoy books.
14	I really like Balmain Library .
15	It is a local and much loved asset.
16	Staff are always helpful & take time to assist in your requests.
17	Na
18	At the library, there used to be exhibitions of local artists works which were popular. I would like to suggest the library organise exhibitions again.
19	Staff don't OWN the precinct
20	Our whole family loves it.

21	<p>I appreciate that it is not your fault that you had the building you are in to work with, and that you are reliant on council (who obviously had little interest in star of the art libraries I went to that one at the forum when it first opened. It was an insult! Never went back) for funds etc.</p> <p>its probably lucky that my two sons weren't very academic when they were in high school as Balmain library not really set up for large groups of students needing study space If I recall correctly your library wasnt even open on Sundays until more recent times. Im 60 and my local library (Gosford) was open on Sundays when I was in high school. In the seventies!</p>
22	The green decor is a bit boring, but I don't really care, as I go there to read.
23	No
24	<p>If it HAS to be used as a public kindergarten/meeting place, then please keep these places separate so those who wish can read and research in peace</p> <p>LOOK UP THE DICTIONARY DEFINITION OF A LIBRARY - THAT IS WHAT IT SHOULD BE.</p> <p>While you are at it, look up the definition of a Community Centre - they are not the same.</p>
25	no
26	We live in an increasingly noisy, 24/7 switched on world. Cafes, etc. are for socializing and catching up. There are heaps of cafes in Balmain. Keep the Library as a quiet space for self learning, contemplation, reading, etc.
27	PLS employ more qualified Librarians!
28	A Coffee shop please. Those mothers need a coffee shop in the courtyard
29	Please build a bigger library so that ALL of the above purposes are accommodated. They are all so very important in ways that cannot be valued in dollars.
30	What I also love is to rely on the librarys displays, if I dont have a specific book in mind. Very important, so you dont have to search along spines of books. The librarians always display an interesting selection to choose from, so there needs to be room for these displays.
31	no
32	It is quite a small library. It would be great if the library could be expended.



33	I consider myself tech-savvy but I have found the membership process to be unreliable. I'd love membership and borrowings to be app (phone) based.
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Online Ideas Wall posts (18 posts from 8 contributors)

#	Title	Posts	Votes
1	The Balmain Association	<p>The Balmain Association has not had the resources to provide a formal submission regarding the precinct. However it does support investment in the precinct.</p> <p>The Balmain Town Hall is sadly neglected with peeling paint, tatty curtains on the proscenium, damaged panels on the stage front, dismal acoustics, cheap chairs, and little to entice community use for other than periodic meetings. When compared with facilities in other LGAs it comes a very poor last.</p> <p>The Court House is unused and could be used for community purposes such as a small theatre.</p> <p>the Glass House must be retained and we have already endorsed being named as a memorial to Kathleen Hamery.</p> <p>Several of our members have made individual submissions, in particular that of BA members Lisa Tatman and Ilona Tar as 'mykindco'.</p> <p>We would welcome the opportunity to discuss and to work with IWC and other community groups to develop a revitalised community centre which adds to the rich heritage of the peninsula.</p>	8
2	The Green Depot: Community Hub	<p>The Depot has great potential as an integral part of the Balmain Town Hall Civic centre.</p> <p>We have consulted with local businesses and feel that we have much to offer in our proposal that we would like to present to Council.</p> <p>Again, anything done to the Balmain Library, no matter how big or small, should take into account how the Library will relate to all of the</p>	7

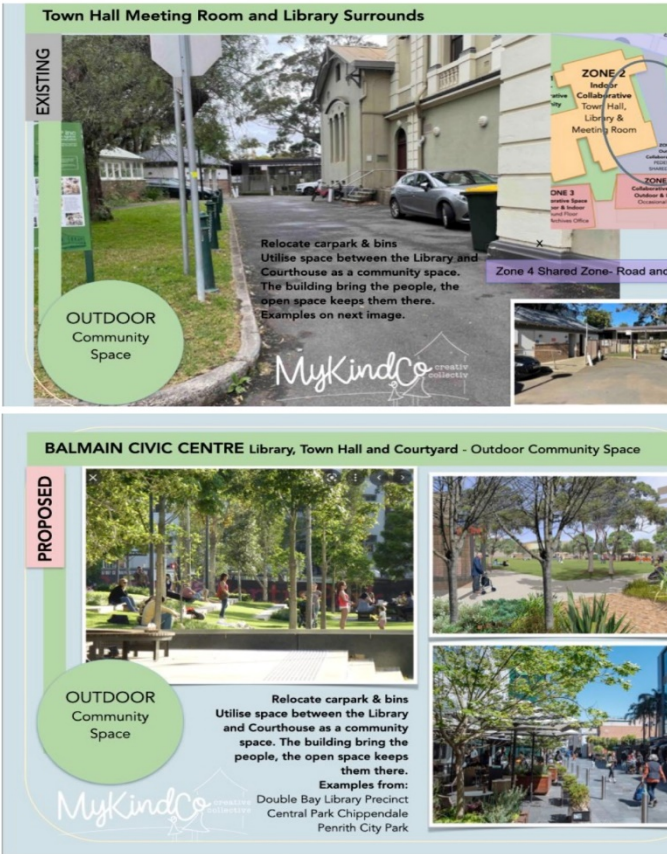
		<p>spaces and building surrounding them, including the Council Depot.</p> <p>MyKindCo is a collective of local Balmain residents with Big Ideas, proven funding, sponsoring and project management. We are Landscape Architects, marketing managers, designers, writers and more. We would love to share our ideas with you.</p> 	
3	COUNCIL GARDEN REPURPOSED AS LIBRARY GARDEN	<p>The council-owned garden to the west to the library is currently under-utilised. It is fenced off and currently inaccessible.</p> <p>Considering the volume of families (mums, dads, carers and grandparents) who frequent the library, this garden has a</p>	7

		<p>massive potential for use by this demographic as an extension to the enjoyment of their library visit.</p> <p>The rear of the library is a modern extension, and so therefore considering perforating this modern architectural addition and allowing for access to the garden from the children's library section would not require too much of the Library refurb budget.</p> <p>The image included here shows how many easy access points there are from the library to this stunning little piece of urban greenery.</p> <p>We would love to see this space filled with those little kids who's mum's have moved heaven and earth to get them out of the house and up to the library for what might be their main social interaction for the day. Those kids, and their mums, carers etc who need a little break from the books, fresh air to recalibrate and revive. A place where they can mingle with young and old who seek a little nature to break up and extend their time at the library.</p> <p>We feel this space could be really magical, useful, purposeful and unique. It links beautifully to the PCYC (if the rear access to the PCYC is reimagined) and lends itself to a place for those using the PCYC to take stock, wait for their friends and maybe even pick up a book.</p> <p>MyKindCo are a collective of local Balmain residents who care deeply about this precinct. I am a landscape architect, children's book illustrator and a mum. My children's book, Nonna's Gnocchi, was launched by Hill of Content in conjunction with an event hosted by the Balmain Library.</p>	
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		<p>Its with deep affection that I'd like to see a garden along side the children's library area. We would like to share our more detailed ideas with you!</p> <p>EXISTING COUNCIL SPACE AS LIBRARY GARDEN</p>  	
4	Co-Working Space @ Balmain Courthouse (Free for Residents)	<p>Background:</p> <p>Largest figures suggest that 40% of Australians now work from home in same capacity each week.</p> <p>Opportunity:</p> <p>Balmain is populated by a diverse group of people from those that run their own business through to working for some of the world's most famous companies.</p> <p>We share a common passion that is the unique community of Balmain, yet there is not place for us to come together to connect.</p>	4

		<p>People are looking for a space to feed off the energy and general comfort from being in a space with others, not just working from the limited space many have in Balmain.</p> <p>The challenge:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Currently the library serves a great stop gap for people seeking a communal space to work side by side with their fellow Balmain community. - It is clearly popular given the rooms dedicated to these are always full. - However the nature of working from home needs a tailored environment and importantly should not interrupt the beautiful environment of the library. <p>How Would It Work:</p> <p>The initial investment would revitalise a part of the courthouse into a unique shared workspace, the envy of any LGA in Australia. However the key would be to create a funded model so the space would be free or have minimal charge for the residents of Balmain/Birchgrove/Rozelle.</p> <p>Each month a sponsor would fund the space, for e.g. Telstra and they would be able to put some small commercial messages and even host a night in the space to promote for e.g. their Small Business products and services.</p> <p>The key would be to use corporate partners to fund the space so it is cost neutral, critical will be to make it accessible to all residents no matter their work needs. For e.g. a self funded retiree may love the idea of sitting among like minded people but is not official working as much as wanting a space to remain involved.</p> <p>Summary:</p>	
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		Co-Working at Balmain Courthouse will provide an inclusive, and progressive space that reflects the changing needs of all Balmain residents.	
5	COMMUNITY SPACE BETWEEN THE LIBRARY AND COURTHOUSE	<p>The amazing area between the Library/Town Hall and Courthouse is a sunny catchment that funnels in from Darling St. There are often people sitting in the dappled shade of the trees, reading the paper, waiting for friends, or catching up with their neighbours.</p> <p>There is much greater potential for this space to be used by the community, and the Library. If we consider the potential of this space when upgrading the Library, we can see that even the internal layout of the library should consider how its interior space could spill out into this amazing civic 'square'. This might require reimagining the location of the (currently very difficult) seven car spots to the side of the library, and the waste management (wheelie bin storage) of the library to allow for this space to live up to its full potential.</p> <p>Included in this image are examples of mixed-use, hard and soft landscaped urban spaces, which, with a little imagination, could be applied in some way to the spaces between the incredible buildings within the Balmain Town Hall precinct.</p> <p>People using the facilities in this precinct (Post Office, Police, Library, Daycare, PCYC, Town Hall Meeting Room, Town Hall, cafes across the road) are much more likely to stay (and spend) in the area if there is somewhere to gather, sit and just be.</p> <p>This space could be as vibrant or as passive and peaceful as the design allows.</p>	7


		<p>MyKindCo are a collective of Balmain residents with Big Ideas. We've considered this area in depth, and we'd love to share our more detailed ideas with you.</p> 	
6	Balmain Town Hall Civic Centre: Masterplan	<p>The Balmain Town Hall and Library upgrade would largely benefit from a masterplan that includes the detailed use of the outdoor spaces that connect these amazing buildings together. In doing so, any work done to the Library, Town Hall or other buildings, be it upgrade or refurbishment, will take into account community access to the surrounding outdoor spaces.</p> <p>Each door, each window, each space within the Library should take into considerations its current, and mostly, its potential relationship to the civic spaces outside. These may be in the form of reading gardens, play spaces, outdoor tables, study areas, gathering spaces etc. The spaces surrounding the library are beautiful sun and shade catchments,</p>	6


		<p>community catchments, sheltered and inviting. They should form part of each and every plan for the indoor spaces.</p> <p>The buildings bring the people together in this space. The library is a hub of social and passive activity for young and old (and a beautiful place for young and old to mix), the post office, and PCYC also bring people to this space with purpose. But where do they go after their errands are run? What would extend their time in this space? What would invite people from all corners of the Inner West to spend a day or half a day in our suburb? The life that open air community spaces give keeps people lingering for longer.</p> <p>It is therefore important to also consider the Council Depot as part of the masterplan for this precinct. It needs to be audited, revolutionised, streamlined and shared with the community in an exciting and dynamic way. It is only with a masterplan can we rationalise even the smallest plan for the Library or any of the buildings in this amazing precinct. What an exciting space for this amazing peninsula community, and for the Inner West as a whole.</p>	
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		<p>Town Hall Meeting Room and Library Surrounds</p> <p>EXISTING</p>  <p>Relocate carpark & bins Utilise space between the Library and Courthouse as a community space. The building bring the people, the open space keeps them there. Examples on next image.</p> <p>OUTDOOR Community Space</p> <p><i>MyKindCo creative collective</i></p>  <p>BALMAIN CIVIC CENTRE Library, Town Hall and Courtyard - Outdoor Community Space</p> <p>PROPOSED</p>  <p>Relocate carpark & bins Utilise space between the Library and Courthouse as a community space. The building bring the people, the open space keeps them there. Examples from: Double Bay Library Precinct Central Park Chippendale Penrith City Park</p> <p>OUTDOOR Community Space</p> <p><i>MyKindCo creative collective</i></p> 	
7	Glasshouse	<p>My idea is that the glasshouse has optimal community use. It could be used for exhibitions of residents' treasured and rare plants, a place to agist plants for a short time if residents go away for a short period, days where gardeners can swap plants, market days where gardeners in the community can sell or give away surplus fruit and verges grown in their gardens and for propagation of rare and interesting plants life orchids and opulent epiphytic plants in addition special events day or night like the light show held a few years ago.</p> <p>Schools in the area could be involved. Most have small gardens. The children could donate produce on days when there is such an activity and become involved in maintaining a school stall.</p>	2

		<p>The garden around the light house needs more planting, mulching and general beautification. Responsibility to maintain would be shared.</p> <p>Some of the activities could have a commercial aspect where the income can be donated to help maintain the glasshouse. However I think that Council would need to provide some funding.</p> <p>Obviously to carry out some or all of what was outlined above would require some coordination so I think a committee to do this could be formed which hopefully could be folded into the existing body which cares for the glass house.</p>	
8	Balmain Town Hall acoustics	I am not aware if this has been discussed, but the acoustics in the Balmain Town Hall are not good. It is an excellent space for a large meeting, but I often find that it is very difficult to clearly hear the speaker	3
9	Ideas Survey feedback for Balmain Library	Refer to my survey response	0
10	Balmain cinema and theatre	One of these historic buildings should be transformed into a cinema or theatre space. For a suburb with a strong connection to the arts it is Strange that there is no such facility. It would be a great community hub and reference historically the nearby former cinema on Rowntree st	6
11	Balmain civic precinct, circa 1907	<p>This is a better copy of the photo in the article "It's Time", Peninsula Observer, no. 306, March 2008.</p> <p>Interesting that the roof of the Post Office tower appears to have lost its finial in this</p>	2

		<p>photograph, and also the slight flare-out at its apex. They reappear in later photos.</p> <p>https://historicphotos.com.au/products/balm-ain-nsw-australia-c1906-s153</p> 																			
12	<p>Peninsula Observer, no. 306, March 2008</p>	<p>https://balmainassociation.org.au/newsletters/contents/306%20200803.pdf</p>  <p>IT'S TIME</p> <p>The most outstanding group of buildings in Balmain, in more ways than one, comprises the Post Office, Court House and Town Hall. This "Civic Group", which was completed in 1888, was designed by Edmund Blackett (Post Office and Court House) and Edward Buchanan (Town Hall). The Architectural style of the buildings is Late Victorian Classical.</p> <p>Blackett was the Government Architect and Buchanan was, at the time of the opening of the Town Hall, the 29-year-old Mayor of Balmain (the youngest mayor in the colony), Alderman for the North Balmain (now Birchgrove) Ward, designer of St John's Church and Ellersie Terrace (in Ballast Point Road) and the main driving force behind the creation of Birchgrove Park.</p> <p>At the time the Civic Group was completed it was just over 50 years since the first land subdivision was made of the "Gilchrist estate" (the 550 acres of the original 1800 Balmain land grant that extended from Peacock Point in the east to Callan Park and White's Creek in the west). In that time the population of Balmain had grown</p>  <p>Civic Group in 1906</p> <p>to about 20,000 and Balmain had become the industrial heartland of Australia.</p> <p>The site of the Civic Group is the highest point in Balmain, the centre of Balmain Council boundaries and was the site of Balmain Cottage Hospital and subsequently, in 1875, Balmain Council offices and the first Council Chamber (now the Meeting Room at Balmain Town Hall) in 1881.</p> <p>Since 1888 there have been some noticeable changes to the Civic Group. The fence around the buildings was probably removed during WW I. The first addition was of a single storey Police Station (1920) on the western side of the Court House. (The 1854 Watch House continued to be used into the 1930s when it became the residence for a constable's family.) This first addition was in sympathy with the original design.</p> <p>The second major change was the removal of the octagonal dome from the eastern side of the Town Hall in 1942. It has been said that this was done because the dome presented a clear visual marker for Japanese bomber pilots but the more likely reason is that the framework for the dome rotted making the dome unsafe.</p> <p>After WW I the glass house was built in to supply flowers for the Town Hall. Shortly afterwards Balmain Council was incorporated into Leichhardt Council. In 1953 an unsympathetic first floor was added to the Police Station. The 50s also saw the Darling Street part of the Balmain Telephone Exchange excrecence built on the park beside the PO in 1957 and the steeple on the PO tower removed.</p> <p>In 1972 the telephone exchange was enlarged by adding taller building behind the 1957 one creating an even greater monstrosity. The softener for this egregious extension was the replacement of steeple on the PO tower in 1978.</p> <p>There have been other changes to the Town Hall, mainly to the interior and there is a planned extension to the rear of the Town Hall to accommodate an enlarged library. Nothing appears to be planned for the Telephone Exchange. The building is owned by Telstra Corporation. Its exchange function could be fitted into a small room but Sydney County Council Energy Australia has a lease on the building for a sub-station until 2011.</p> <p>Surely it is time to consider returning the Civic Group to its former glory by removing the front of the Telephone Exchange and replacing with a small square or plaza with fountain, rebuilding the Town Hall dome, and perhaps also removing the first floor of the Police Station.</p> <p>IN THIS ISSUE</p> <table><tr><th>Page</th><th></th></tr><tr><td>1</td><td>The Civic Group</td></tr><tr><td>2</td><td>Balmain's Religious Heritage</td></tr><tr><td>3</td><td>Callan Park</td></tr><tr><td>4</td><td>White Bay, Telephone X</td></tr><tr><td>5</td><td>Nature, Ballast Point, Lion</td></tr><tr><td>6</td><td>Living Loving and Loathing Balmain. Dunny Update</td></tr><tr><td>7</td><td>Is Balmain Part of Australia?</td></tr><tr><td>8</td><td>What's on in the Watch House</td></tr></table>	Page		1	The Civic Group	2	Balmain's Religious Heritage	3	Callan Park	4	White Bay, Telephone X	5	Nature, Ballast Point, Lion	6	Living Loving and Loathing Balmain. Dunny Update	7	Is Balmain Part of Australia?	8	What's on in the Watch House	0
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13	Balmain civic precinct on Harbour Bridge opening day, 1932	<p>The Balmain civic precinct sneaks into the corner of an aerial photograph taken by Milton Kent on Harbour Bridge opening day, 1932-03-19. And yes, the Town Hall is finally seen with its octagonal dome. Wouldn't it be a great idea to replace it?</p> <p>This is just a small portion of a photo that follows Darling St all the way down to St. Andrew's.</p> <p>https://collection.sl.nsw.gov.au/record/9yM6AVE9/BwNRjWIP2B84y</p> 	0
14	Historical material re Balmain Town Hall dome	<p>The image is a small portion of an aerial photo by Milton Kent, c1948-49, showing the Balmain civic precinct. The Town Hall dome is clearly missing.</p> <p>https://collection.sl.nsw.gov.au/record/YEGm8qVn/QOel5DIMK32NZ</p> <p>An article in The Truth, 1938, suggests why the dome may have been demolished. Reporting on the aftermath of a severe storm that hit Sydney, it records "Balmain Town Hall tower damaged and collapse threatened".</p> <p>Truth (Sydney), 1938-12-11 p32: "Other Details of Storm Damage".</p> <p>http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article169097818</p>	0

			
15	Demolition and reconstruction of the roof of the Post Office tower	<p>Could the happy ending for the roof of the Post Office tower be repeated for the Town Hall dome?</p> <p>Sun Herald 1974-05-19, p62: "The Mystery of the Missing Tower Roof: Balmain's Trend-Setting Post Office Has a Problem", by Elwyn Leighton Black.</p> <p>States that the PO tower roof was removed in 1956. Has before-photo of PO with roof and without telephone exchange, and after-photo of PO without roof and with telephone exchange (built 1958).</p> <p>https://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=IL5f5cZgq8MC&dat=19740519 https://smharchives.smedia.com.au/Olive/APA/smharchive (requires library card)</p> <p>Sydney Morning Herald, 1978-10-25, p11: "Post Office gets back its crown", by Joseph Glascott.</p> <p>States "The cupola [sic] above the [Balmain Post Office] tower was dismantled in 1957". Reinstated "early last week".</p> <p>https://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=IL5f5cZgq8MC&dat=19781025</p>	0

		<p>https://smharchives.smedia.com.au/Olive/APA/smharchive (requires library card)</p> <p>OFFICE HAS A PROBLEM</p> <p>G F</p> <p>heri- s fast kemo- and nt of most acted</p> <p>that arden se to early</p> <p>I that ag the is es- trade, there- it of</p> <p>desig- ment ad to justi-</p> <p>redo- irrac- nerve nestic ercial more and Bal- vater-</p> <p>olled, a de- il be</p> <p>9</p>  <p>This is how the Balmain Post Office looked until 1956 — the clock tower complete with roof.</p>  <p>Today the tower is roofless and partly obscured by the Telephone Exchange (left). The Court- house is on the right.</p>	
16	Glasshouse saved, c1977	<p>Sydney Morning Herald, 1977-10-20, p10:</p> <p>"Balmain to keep landmark: Glasshouse saved: may get facelift", by Joseph Glascott.</p> <p>Includes a quotable quote from Paul Landa, then Minister for Planning and the Environment: "The Balmain Town Hall precinct will become a very handsome area. It will</p>	1

		<p>certainly contain the most valued civic glasshouse in Australia."</p> <p>https://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=IL5f5cZgq8MC&dat=19771020</p> <p>https://smharchives.smedia.com.au/Olive/APA/smharchive (requires library card)</p>	
17	Restoring the dome of Balmain Town Hall (part 1)	<p>Most Balmain residents are familiar with the Post Office clock tower and the dome on the Balmain Court House, but few are aware that the Balmain Town Hall also once had a dome. Perhaps that is because surprisingly few photos or other representations of it survive.</p> <p>I only became aware of the dome myself in researching on old postcard where three towers/domes are clearly visible on the Balmain skyline. However, once you know about it, the photo of the crisply repainted Balmain Town Hall on your web page presents a stark reminder that the dome is missing.</p> <p>The Balmain Town Hall was designed by Edward Harman Buchanan, a noted architect, Balmain resident, and mayor in 1888-89. Thus he was also the dignitary who opened the building in 1888. The quirky orientation of the building and strategic positioning of the tower formed a striking streetscape, with the Post Office (federal government), Court House (state government) and Town Hall (local government), creating a mixed civic precinct that is rare in NSW.</p> <p>The Town Hall dome, supported by an arcaded storey and topped by a lantern, was dismantled during WWII as a safety precaution, as was the pyramidal roof and arcaded storey of the Post Office tower. However, after the war only the PO tower was reconstructed, though belatedly, in 1978. I have often wondered what happened to the</p>	1

		materials of the Town Hall dome, as when it was dismantled there surely must have been an intention to rebuild it afterwards. However, that never eventuated. (Could the materials still be hiding in some council depot? If not, what happened to them?)	
18	Restoring the dome of Balmain Town Hall (part 2)	<p>(continued)</p> <p>In any case, I am not the first person to suggest the idea of rebuilding the Town Hall dome. Only today, as it happens, quite by chance I discovered an article in Vol. 15 of the Leichhardt Historical Journal, 1986, by Chris McNamara. His article is well researched, from an architectural as well as historical perspective, and presents two proposals as 1988 bicentennial projects: (a) replacing the dome of Balmain Town Hall as a priority, and (b) lopping off the front of the telephone exchange building. Both are aimed at "Completing the Civic Skyline".</p> <p>Chris McNamara's arguments are as persuasive in 2022 as they were in 1986. Now that the telephone exchange has finally been dealt with, the Town Hall dome should become the focus of attention. After all, if Balmain council, with population 22,500 in 1888, could afford to build the whole of the Town Hall as a matter of civic pride, then surely the current council, with population 200,000, can afford to replace its dome.</p> <p>Vol. 15 of the Leichhardt Historical Journal is available from https://web.archive.org/web/20180317173635/https://library.lmc.nsw.gov.au/DIGITAL/EBOOKS/JPEG/lhj15.pdf</p>	2

	Public Meeting 13 July 2022 (9 responses)
#	Response
1	<p>As part of the Inner West Fest last year, to showcase what I thought could happen in this space I applied for an EOI to activate the Balmain Town Hall meeting room and the Glass House as I found it was a very neglected space, even the grounds were overgrown with weeds, the community space of the glass house had very limited members and the town hall meeting room was in great need of maintenance and basically unutilized (except for regular community groups who had regular bookings).</p> <p>In that time I came into the space and turned it into an art gallery space. I used all the funding from a grant of \$10,000 towards activating the space. I had to put in my own hanging system to hang up Archibald winning prize paintings in space with the support of the Harding Miller Foundation and local artists that paint, and local collectors participated and contributed to the actual activation of that space. We had the space open for a week and then we actually had a program of talks that appealed to our demographic here in Balmain and they were very popular. We had workshops in the Glass House. I engaged a paper artist to install the fabric and paper flowers that you can still see in there. It was called Queen Bees of Balmain so it's about putting the matriarchal kind of female leadership of the local community, injecting that into the space and to make it a creative welcoming space for all of our main people to attend.</p> <p>So that was actually a pilot to showcase how simply that space could be activated and how people wanted to see it culturally activated, how the arts improve its health and well-being. Would love to see that continue with the further infrastructure and cultural development of this entire precinct to make it the central heart of Balmain.</p>
2	<p>A museum would be a great idea, a very modern museum with interactive vision explaining key historic events. It could also be kept as a little courthouse that you can have mock trials in. You could do some history on the place and find out any interesting trials that have been held here over the years. They could be recreated.</p> <p>All of the universities have new competitions, they have witness examinations of activities and it seems to me that something like that the council might be able to sponsor a meeting competition</p>

	<p>between the high schools in the inner west area and it could be held here.</p>
3	<p>There's about a dozen buildings constructed by Buchanan in this area. Originally there was a cupola roof on top of the public viewing deck that was made out of timber. You should look to reinstate the cupola on top of the viewing tower. It would make Balmain a place that appeals to children young adults and older people.</p>
4	<p>I'm here today representing the Balmain Rozelle Chamber of Commerce. The chamber would love to see ongoing activations in the whole area as it brings people, both locals people from outside the area.</p> <p>An activation program is imperative. We also need to get parking right, so that people are actually able to park here.</p>
5	<p>When I look at the library and anything we want to do with the buildings, I think about how we can further the footprint to include the outdoor spaces.</p> <p>The Glass House and the little tram depot are a funnel shape that literally draws people in from Darling St It has a beautiful sun catchment as well as shade.</p> <p>There's just so much potential for the entire space around the library to be better utilized.</p> <p>The caretakers garden is not utilized and not accessible to the public. I love seeing the multi-generational sort of interaction at the library. Imagine if that could spill outdoors in wonderful ways.</p> <p>What they've done at Double Bay around the library and even though that's a lot more sort of civic than possibly or urban than possibly being Balmain but there's a lot of ideas in that as well. So I think from my perspective would be asking the council whoever designs, whoever's looking at the buildings,</p> <p>Someone should look at how those outdoor spaces can be activated.</p> <p>There is also an opportunity to enable all the parents spilling out with their kids from the PCYC to stop and use the area, as they really have nowhere to go afterwards. They try to get into the cafes but they essentially find it too hard, get in their cars and drive off.</p>

	<p>So for example where there's seven car parks currently, this could be turned into an attractive pedestrian space.</p>
6	<p>You go to Newtown or to Marrickville and they're alive at night they're bringing in people, theatre, the arts, comedy, everything. And outside the factory it's all lit up with lights and heaters and everybody's sitting outside drinking before they go into whatever entertainment. In comparison Balmain is asleep.</p> <p>Would like to open up the court house to help make Balmain more alive.</p> <p>Could we actually have plants and trees that provide fruit and herbs or things for the people who are less well-off in the area and that we can actually grow through food free to give to the less well-off people as well as being something attractive to look at.</p> <p>Regarding bringing more people to the area, a friend of mine used to come over to the Town Hall Pub every Sunday afternoon for the drag show. Can we not bring something like that back to Balmain? Something really fun and colourful that will be really vibrant and it would attract people</p>
7	<p>Lived in Balmain since 1972, a passionate gardener and I love the glass house.</p> <p>Would like to see more activation and use of the glass house, on a regular basis by all the community members.</p> <p>Would like to see some sort of a committee whereby it's used as a space that everybody has access to all the time. Could even be a commercial aspect or a swapping aspect and if could involve schools. There are so many things you could do with that Glass House, it's just fantastic and it's in a great location.</p> <p>A workshop would be a really good thing to have there. I'm a very passionate orchid grower.</p>
8	<p>Would absolutely love to attend an orchid workshop in the Glass House, sounds like a brilliant idea.</p> <p>The Clock Tower used to chime on the hour and that stopped some time ago. Does anyone know why that stopped, and the question for the residents is would you like to see that return? Or was it a</p>

	<p>nuisance, reminding us of getting older every hour, because I really thought that was a charming feature. I would count the chimes every time.</p>
9	<p>Committee of Friends of Balmain Library are disappointed about the plans for refurbishment, repairs, water damage, painting and drainage.</p> <p>The library is too small, and is not used very well</p> <p>We understand that it's used by a lot of mothers and young children . The children section of the library is very very poor in terms of its content, the collection is very small, it's not very well set out.</p> <p>It's very disappointing that the beautiful stained glass windows are mostly no longer visible, they're covered by shelving and not even able to be appreciated by the young users of the library.</p> <p>We wonder too whether there might be some other spaces in the precinct that could be used.</p> <p>We wonder if the upstairs section of the library that's now used I think just for archives could be used as part of the collection, with archives placed elsewhere.</p> <p>The air conditioning in the library is very unsound and uneven</p> <p>There are lots of other things to the library in a practical sense to make it a much more welcome area for people to use. It's not a place that you come to meet friends.</p> <p>Request something is done with the town hall for speaker events. Install of a new sound system.</p>