



# Sydney Metro Northwest Places Placemaking Framework

December 2021

**SYDNEY METRO  
NORTHWEST  
PLACES**

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of Country throughout NSW and pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging.

*Places which develop in response to an identified local character and agreed desired future character are likely to be more sustainable, contribute to good quality of life and attract investment.*

Department of Planning, Industry and Environment (2019) Local Character and Place Guideline

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**Images:**  
Tallawong Pocket Park, Tallawong Station.  
Cover: Playgroup NSW, Tallawong Pocket Park, Tallawong Station.

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## Introduction

Landcom is the NSW Government's land and property development organisation. We aim to create more affordable and sustainable communities.

This Placemaking Framework outlines the placemaking approach for the Sydney Metro Northwest Places program, and guides the work of Landcom, Sydney Metro and our development partners.

### Creating vibrant places for people to live, shop, work and play.

Landcom and Sydney Metro are working together on the long-term planning and development of government-owned developable land surrounding the stations on the Metro North West Line. The program, called Sydney Metro Northwest Places, focuses on creating diverse, well-designed places for current and future communities to live, work, shop and play.

Each of these places are centered around Sydney Metro stations at Epping, Cherrybrook, Castle Hill, Hills Showground, Norwest, Bella Vista, Kellyville and Tallawong. Their evolution will be gradual, with many places developing over the next ten years.

For further information on the program visit [smnwplaces.com.au](http://smnwplaces.com.au).

### This Framework

The placemaking program strives to create a sense of community and belonging as these places evolve. Placemaking uses both temporary and more permanent anchors to encourage people's connections to place and people. Temporary placemaking allows us to trial and test ideas to inform the permanent elements that come together to sustain well-loved, positive and enduring places.

This Placemaking Framework aims to:

- establish a shared understanding of placemaking
- outline the guiding principles that underpin our approach
- support our development partners to commit to great place outcomes
- build community capacity to support resilient and sustainable placemaking.

This Framework is informed by state and local strategic plans and relevant reference documents, including:

- NSW Public Spaces Charter (in development)
- Design and Place State Environmental Planning Policy (in development)
- Movement and Place Framework (Government Architect NSW).

The Framework should be read in context with these and other planning documents, development approvals and their supporting documents such as concept plans and urban design guidelines.

Visit the [relevant plans](#) section for further information about these documents.

### Northwest community

Our approach to placemaking considers local community and the history of the Northwest.

The Darug/Dharug people are the traditional custodians of Sydney's northwest. In some dialects, Darug refers to the yams and underground root vegetables found in the area.

Traces of tens of thousands of years of culture indicates the area was rich in natural resources from the river systems and surrounding lands. Many of the modern roads we see today follow the Darug's ancient walking tracks.

With European settlement came farming and agriculture, the establishment of Bella Vista Farm, the bushrangers that stalked Old Windsor Road, and convict uprisings such as the Battle of Vinegar Hill and Irish Rebellion at Rouse Hill.

Today, these places are located in the local government areas (LGAs) of the City of Parramatta (Epping), Hornsby Shire (Cherrybrook), The Hills Shire (Castle Hill, Hills Showground, Bella Vista, Norwest, Kellyville, Rouse Hill) and Blacktown (Tallawong).

Sydney Metro opening, Tallawong Pocket Park, Tallawong Station.



Placemaking inspires people to collectively reimagine and reinvent public spaces as the heart of every community. Strengthening the connection between people and the places they share, placemaking refers to a collaborative process by which we can shape our public realm in order to maximise shared value.

**Project for Public Spaces, placemaking definition.**

# Sydney Metro Northwest Places program

As the NSW Government's land and property development organisation and a state-owned corporation, we work with government and the private and not-for-profit sectors to create exemplary housing and places that provide social, economic and environmental benefits to the people of NSW.

As master developer for the Sydney Metro Northwest Places program, we're leading the early placemaking activity. As these places transform, we're creating a range of placemaking activities to create a sense of place and build community connection.

We will work with development partners to ensure they demonstrate their commitment to engaging with communities and creating quality open spaces, in line with this Framework.

We are prioritising placemaking initiatives around the stations at Tallawong, Kellyville, Bella Vista, Hills Showground and Cherrybrook.

The Sydney Metro Northwest Places program is shaped around the development of around 10,000 new homes and approximately 350,000m<sup>2</sup> of retail, commercial, open and community space.

## Our vision

Our vision for Sydney Metro Northwest Places is for:



### A range of housing choices

- housing for people at different life stages
- a minimum 5% affordable housing across the program.



### Spaces for businesses, workplaces and community facilities

- jobs near where people live
- strong local economies
- thriving local centres.



### Walkable places with great access to great transport

- open street networks and paths connecting places to stations
- connections to existing paths and cycleways.



### Sustainable places for current and future communities

- open spaces for people to enjoy
- sustainability principles such as water and energy efficient design
- well-designed public spaces and buildings that demonstrate design excellence.

# Placemaking mission

- Our mission is to create more affordable and sustainable communities
- Our Sustainable Places Strategy aims to create innovative and productive places that demonstrate global standards of liveability, resilience, inclusion, affordability and environmental quality.

## Landcom's Sustainable Places Strategy

Our approach will respond to human movement and built environment to enable:

- early placemaking – temporary activations that build attraction and attachment
- enduring place outcomes – soft and hard infrastructure.

We create healthy and inclusive places by considering:

- economic prosperity
- social stability and equity
- educational opportunity
- physical and mental health and wellbeing
- recreation, culture and entertainment.

## Healthy and Inclusive Places Pillars

## A place-based approach

Placemaking will be achieved through the following initiatives:

- community development and partnerships
- events and programming
- retail and community-based tenancies
- infrastructure, comfort and image
- public art.

## Placemaking initiatives

Smoking ceremony led by Uncle Wes Marne (left), featuring the artist Tina Havelock Stevens. Performance documentation, *Hasta La Bella Vista Baby*, 2019 by Tina Havelock Stevens, Bella Vista, NSW. Co-commissioned by C3West on behalf of the Museum of Contemporary Art Australia and Landcom. Image courtesy and © the artist. Photograph: Jaimi Joy.

### Placemaking approach

Our aim is to engage with people's hearts and minds, responding to the location and anchoring sentiments of community ownership, pride and connection. By encouraging unique placemaking initiatives - from the temporary and incidental to monumental and enduring - we can help to create a legacy of sustainable places.

Our approach will align with the following placemaking principles:

- place attraction and attachment
- collaborative partnerships
- sustainability
- leadership.

It will be guided by the following placemaking objectives:

- create places where people feel welcome and safe by encouraging community activity, connection and pride
- generate positive social, economic, visual, cultural and environmental outcomes
- promote design excellence that improves how people experience the place
- engage with stakeholders to support initiatives that provide a legacy of community benefits
- enhance active and public transport connections to help people and businesses act sustainably
- increase awareness of the Sydney Metro Northwest Places program.

### Early placemaking

Early placemaking can bridge the gap between the opening of the Metro North West Line in 2019 and the development of new places around the stations. We'll do this through temporary initiatives that help people to feel welcome and create a sense of safety, such as artworks on construction hoarding and pop-up events and activities in pocket parks. Our program will draw on past, present and future perspectives, and evolve over time to create new experiences and initiatives for people to discover.

For developers, early placemaking will commence when a land purchase is settled and will continue throughout construction.

### Enduring place outcomes

Placemaking aims to respond to the changes in how people move around and the built environment, helping to create enduring place outcomes. Working with local organisations, businesses and communities will support longer term placemaking initiatives that bring about positive social outcomes and a resilient local economy.

Enduring place outcomes might range from small, intimate or incidental public spaces, curious artworks, green spaces, playgrounds or pathways that conjure adventure, to grand open spaces where crowds can gather for events or sport, or where people can come to relax.

# Placemaking journey

**Early placemaking - community building starts here.**

**Attraction**

- Encourage and motivate people to visit.
- Make places safe and desirable.

**Attachment**

- Create places where people want to stay.
- Build emotional links to places so people want to return.



**Enduring outcomes - thriving community**






- Attract investment to support quality built form and deliver long-lasting and sustainable placemaking.

Live Life Get Active, Tallawong Pocket Park.



## Placemaking initiatives

Our placemaking approach includes five types of initiatives.

Initiatives	Aspiration	Example activities
 <p>Community development and partnerships</p>	Work with the community and businesses to create opportunities for connections and to support social and economic outcomes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community capacity building</li> <li>Lifelong learning</li> <li>Business support</li> </ul>
 <p>Events and programming</p>	Create active and vibrant places through events that encourage community participation, build a connection to place and celebrate the cultural diversity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Signature events</li> <li>Community events</li> <li>Seasonal decorations and events</li> <li>Wellness and fitness programs</li> </ul>
 <p>Retail and community-based tenancies</p>	Provide a dynamic retail and services mix (temporary and permanent) to connect people to businesses, activate spaces and enhance experiences.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Temporary retail</li> <li>Ground leases</li> <li>Meanwhile uses</li> <li>Permanent retail</li> </ul>
 <p>Infrastructure, comfort and image</p>	Design spaces that are safe, welcoming, comfortable and well-maintained both day and night.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public open spaces</li> <li>Temporary and permanent community facilities</li> <li>Tree planting and landscaping</li> <li>Wayfinding</li> <li>Lighting and street furniture</li> <li>Creative hoarding</li> </ul>
 <p>Public art</p>	Incorporate contemporary, memorable and bold artworks that build a unique story of each place, encourage social connections and bring life to public areas. Use art to inspire, invigorate and announce these areas as places for people to live, connect and grow.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Temporary artworks</li> <li>Permanent artworks</li> <li>Socially engaged artworks</li> </ul>



Tina Havelock Stevens, *Hasta La Bella Vista Baby*, 2019. Performance documentation, Bella Vista, NSW. Co-commissioned by C3West on behalf of the Museum of Contemporary Art Australia and Landcom. Image © and courtesy the artist. Photograph: Jaimi Joy.



## Community development and partnerships

### Community capacity building

This begins by forming partnerships with local community networks, including education, not-for-profit and charitable organisations, to work together to establish activities. This provides opportunities for communities to connect and exchange skills and information.

Over time, socially responsible partnerships can influence more self-sufficient, resilient and active communities.

Community capacity building initiatives could include seed funding to support community organisations to build capacity; establishing coalitions of like-minded people; or providing spaces where activities can take place.

### Lifelong learning

Lifelong learning aims to improve people's knowledge, skills and competences throughout their lives. It gives people from diverse backgrounds and ages opportunities to gather, learn, share and grow.

Examples of lifelong learning initiatives could include parents and children's groups, native plant workshops with local Darug/Dharug knowledge holders and educational workshops. People can come together to collectively create content that may be integrated into other activities, such as public art displays or interpretative signage.

### Business support

Collaborating with local business organisations, such as chambers of commerce, can engage a range of local businesses.

Business support might take the form of short-term rental income relief for local start-ups, which may lead to long-term leases. Other approaches could include support for social enterprises that can generate local jobs, training and services, or promotional initiatives to raise awareness of and increase visitation to local businesses.



Sandeep Pandir and Lauren Brincat at his Backyard Conversation. Lauren Brincat, *The Plant Library*, 2019. Rouse Hill, NSW. Co-commissioned by C3West on behalf of the Museum of Contemporary Art Australia and Landcom. Image courtesy and © the artist. Photograph: Jaimi Joy





## Events and programming

### Signature events

A signature event with broad appeal can be a highlight in the community calendar. It may occur over days or weeks, or anchor smaller events or things that stimulate community involvement and connection.

Signature events can establish places as destinations. A mix of both large and small-scale signature events can be planned within the capacity of available land and infrastructure. They may be standalone events that attract many locals, or events that are part of a city-wide event such as Sydney Festival.

### Community events

Community events can feature farmers' markets, local makers, food truck operators, musicians, performers, DJs, buskers, local choir groups or a temporary cinema program.

These events help to support local businesses and community organisations. Partnership opportunities should be explored to create new or support existing events. Always consider any council or community local events when determining event types and timing.

Activities that inject moments of joy using unexpected and unique experiences should be considered. They could include pop-up initiatives or giveaways that surprise and delight recipients.

### Seasonal decorations and events

Seasonal decorations and events should reflect local community interests and celebrate culturally appropriate holidays and events. Seasonal decorations could support events such as Christmas, New Year, Lunar New Year, Autumn Harvest Festival and Diwali.

### Wellness and fitness programs

Health and lifestyle is a pillar in our approach to sustainability; we therefore recommend programs of health and wellbeing activities that will encourage the community to adopt positive habits.

Opportunities can be explored with local sporting organisations to establish meet-ups that appeal to diverse audiences – from tai chi, yoga or cross fit to cycling workshops and fun runs. These activities enhance how people feel about themselves and how they feel connected to a place.

There are also opportunities to work with local fitness businesses to trial free activities in the area, with the long-term strategy being to lease a permanent retail space.

Nupur Dance Group. Tina Havelock Stevens, *Hasta La Bella Vista Baby*, 2019, Bella Vista, NSW. Co-commissioned by C3West on behalf of the Museum of Contemporary Art Australia and Landcom. Image © and courtesy the artist. Photograph: Jaimi Joy





## Retail and community-based tenancies

### Temporary retail

Temporary retailers bring activity while filling a gap in the permanent retail space.

Pop-up retail can test and trial the viability of future permanent retailers. It may include food and beverage trucks, or retailers in temporary or permanent structures. Self-equipped mobile units such as food trucks (compliant with council and food safety requirements) can trade to support activities and events as required.

### Ground leases

Ground lease opportunities will be considered on developable lands yet to be divested, to attract contemporary retail, leisure and entertainment offerings. With broad appeal for workers, visitors and residents, ground leases can add to a destination's appeal and drive visitation.

### Meanwhile uses

Meanwhile uses are temporary developments that are more than just a pop-up or short-term event; they will be in place for many years, but will not be permanent. Meanwhile uses bring activity to otherwise quiet spaces and create interest and attraction to an area undergoing significant and protracted redevelopment.

Meanwhile uses are often planned for a minimum of five years, and can include cultural programming, retail activations or temporary housing. They could support social enterprise and community-based tenancies.

Meanwhile uses allow a quick response to a critical shortage in infrastructure or services while more permanent infrastructure is planned. They create opportunities for renewal and can influence the character of an area.

### Permanent retail

The right mix of shops and services should contribute to the character of the place and community needs and be supported by a trade area analysis. Offerings should complement planned and existing retail offerings, including metro station retailers.

Roasters Rebellion kombi cart at Tallawong Pocket Park.





## Infrastructure, comfort and image

### Public open spaces

People use public open spaces for active and passive uses.

- Active uses are sports, such as basketball or soccer.
- Passive uses are not organised - like relaxing, reading a book, going for a run or picnicking.

These are spaces for events, wellness, lifestyle and fitness programs or for people to sit, protected from the weather, within attractive landscapes.

Temporary pocket parks can demonstrate a commitment to open spaces during the early stages of development. These can also create an opportunity to test the spaces and facilities people enjoy.

This Placemaking Framework aligns with the NSW Public Spaces Charter and adopts the Charter's 10 guiding principles to inform quality public space planning, design, activation and management. Permanent public spaces should be comfortable and fit-for-purpose, designed to accommodate a rich user experience with shade, seating, play spaces or other amenities that suit the community needs.

### Temporary and permanent community facilities

Community facilities can be used for events and programs, innovation hubs, artist studios, workshop spaces and/or co-working facilities. These spaces can be designed to accommodate many different uses.

Community facilities tend to be social hubs and help support people's connections to place.

### Tree canopy and landscaping

Trees and other vegetation can lower surface and air temperatures by creating more shade, which then reduces urban heat. We will look at landscaping and other efforts to build up the tree canopy and green open spaces across Sydney Metro Northwest Places. Doing so will provide cooler, more comfortable spaces and increase people's access to quality green, open public spaces within a 10 minute walk of urban areas.

Placemaking may also consider community gardens, so that residents without a garden can plant edible plants or enjoy gardening programs.

### Wayfinding

Wayfinding describes the way people navigate an area. Wayfinding helps us to define paths and identify the points where people make decisions about which way to travel. Residents and visitors will enjoy better connections and experiences as they move from place to place.

Wayfinding points people in the direction of local walking and cycling trails, neighbourhood landmarks, institutions, heritage and attractions.

Wayfinding may include signage, pavement stickers, creative landscaping, interpretive signage, digital information, mobile apps and cultural or historical storytelling. Any wayfinding strategy should consider council design requirements and existing wayfinding.

### Lighting and street furniture

Street furniture and lighting can create spaces that are welcoming and that feel safe. Street furniture could take on a sculptural form and incorporate public art. New technologies in lighting may provide creative and intelligent options with capacity for data collection, security, signage, automation and sustainability. Any approach should consider council design requirements.

### Creative hoarding

Hoarding isolates developable land and construction areas to both protect those areas and improve public safety.

Hoarding can be a canvas that brings life to a place. People are known to feel safer in more attractive spaces, where there is less graffiti, litter or environmental issues such as dust.

Hoarding can be transformed into vibrant and visually interesting streetscapes that might showcase local artists or community interests in murals, printed graphics, photos, projections, interactive installations such as green walls, or program or development branding.

Development partners must adhere to the *Requirements for Content Displayed on Fencing, Hoarding and Billboards* as specified in contractual documents regarding hoardings.





## Public art

Public art can help to develop community identity and a strong sense of place. This includes temporary, permanent and socially engaged artworks.

Public art programs might include a series of permanent art, the integration of art into architectural and landscape design features, or more temporary works such as installations, new media and outdoor performance. There may be a mix of public art devised and developed either by Landcom or by development partners.

The Sydney Metro Northwest Places public art program is inspired by a theme based on the idea of 'The Network' which is further developed with five sub-themes. Artworks will reflect the interconnected values and relationships developed between people, places and the environment.

Our [Public Art Guidelines](#) provide more information in terms of the theme, and the development, production, installation and management of art in public areas, private developments and transit areas.



# Stakeholder engagement

Early consultation with stakeholders and the community underpins the success of placemaking. We use the Join In Framework for Engaging Stakeholders (Landcom 2019) which details accepted and promoted engagement principles:



**We aim to be: Collaborative**

This means: Working with stakeholders with an interest in delivering positive project outcomes



**Purposeful**

Planning and resourcing engagement to support project delivery



**Proactive**

Engaging stakeholders early and throughout project planning and delivery and making it easy for them to participate



**Accountable**

Being clear about the purpose of engagement, level of influence and how the influence has shaped recommendations and decisions



**Inclusive**

Engaging stakeholders with different needs and interests

We consider a broad range of stakeholders to engage with during placemaking initiatives, including engagement with the local council and community.

**Local council**

Council approvals, policies and guidelines should be considered when designing and implementing placemaking approaches. We have established working relationships with council officers at Blacktown City Council, The Hills Shire Council, Hornsby Shire Council and City of Parramatta Council, and can introduce our development and placemaking partners.

**Local community**

Community engagement is essential to placemaking. It can take many forms and provide both formal and spontaneous opportunities for people to get involved to develop content or be directly involved in the creation of projects. Participation in creative projects provides the opportunity to be energising and liberating, while strengthening social ties and building community connectivity.

Engagement with the local Darug/Dharug community will build Aboriginal connections to place and help to build a collaborative approach to placemaking. New insights into local Aboriginal history, knowledge, education programs and language can lead to meaningful cultural collaboration.

We recommend working with a body like the [National Aboriginal Design Agency](#) and local Aboriginal organisations such as the Dharug Strategic Management Group or Darug Custodian Aboriginal Corporation to facilitate consultation and partnerships with Aboriginal knowledge holders, artists and clients.

For further information about engaging community and insights from early consultation, contact our project team at [sydneymetronorthwest@landcom.nsw.gov.au](mailto:sydneymetronorthwest@landcom.nsw.gov.au).

**Connection to Country**

Across government, we work to bring in Aboriginal perspectives at different stages of urban development. Our early placemaking program will include Aboriginal perspectives and knowledge sharing to inform elements like interpretation, wayfinding, public art or open space planning.

**Measuring performance and impact**

Placemaking performance and impact can be measured through a range of engagement metrics such as visitor satisfaction, duration of stay and social impact.

These findings provide insights into the success of placemaking initiatives and whether we are meeting our objectives. Data can inform future programming and investment, and shape enduring place outcomes.

We engage an independent organisation, [Place Score](#), to track early placemaking investment and to assist in prioritising future investment.

We also assess placemaking efforts through the [Healthy and Inclusive Places Survey](#) once communities are established. The survey measures the perception of people living in residential communities against housing affordability and diversity, community and design features, and personal wellbeing.

Other options include the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment's resources (including the [Great Public Spaces Toolkit](#)) and [Australian Social Value Bank](#) to calculate social impact of relevant placemaking initiatives.



## Relevant plans and references

Consider the following information and plans when developing placemaking approaches to tailor them to each precinct.

Place	Community Profile.ID	Local Environmental Plans	Cultural Plans
Tallawong	Tallawong Community Profile	Blacktown Local Environmental Plan 2015	Blacktown Cultural Plan 2007 Blacktown Arts
Rouse Hill	Rouse Hill Community Profile	Hills Shire Local Environmental Plan 2019	The Hills Cultural Action Plan
Kellyville	Kellyville Community Profile		
Bella Vista	Bella Vista Community Profile		
Norwest	Norwest Community Profile		
Hills Showground	Hills Showground Community Profile		
Castle Hill	Castle Hill Community Profile		
Cherrybrook	Cherrybrook Community Profile	Hornsby Local Environmental Plan 2013	The Hornsby Shire Cultural Facilities Strategic Plan 2015
Epping	Epping Community Profile	Parramatta Local Environmental Plan 2011	Parramatta Cultural Plan 2017

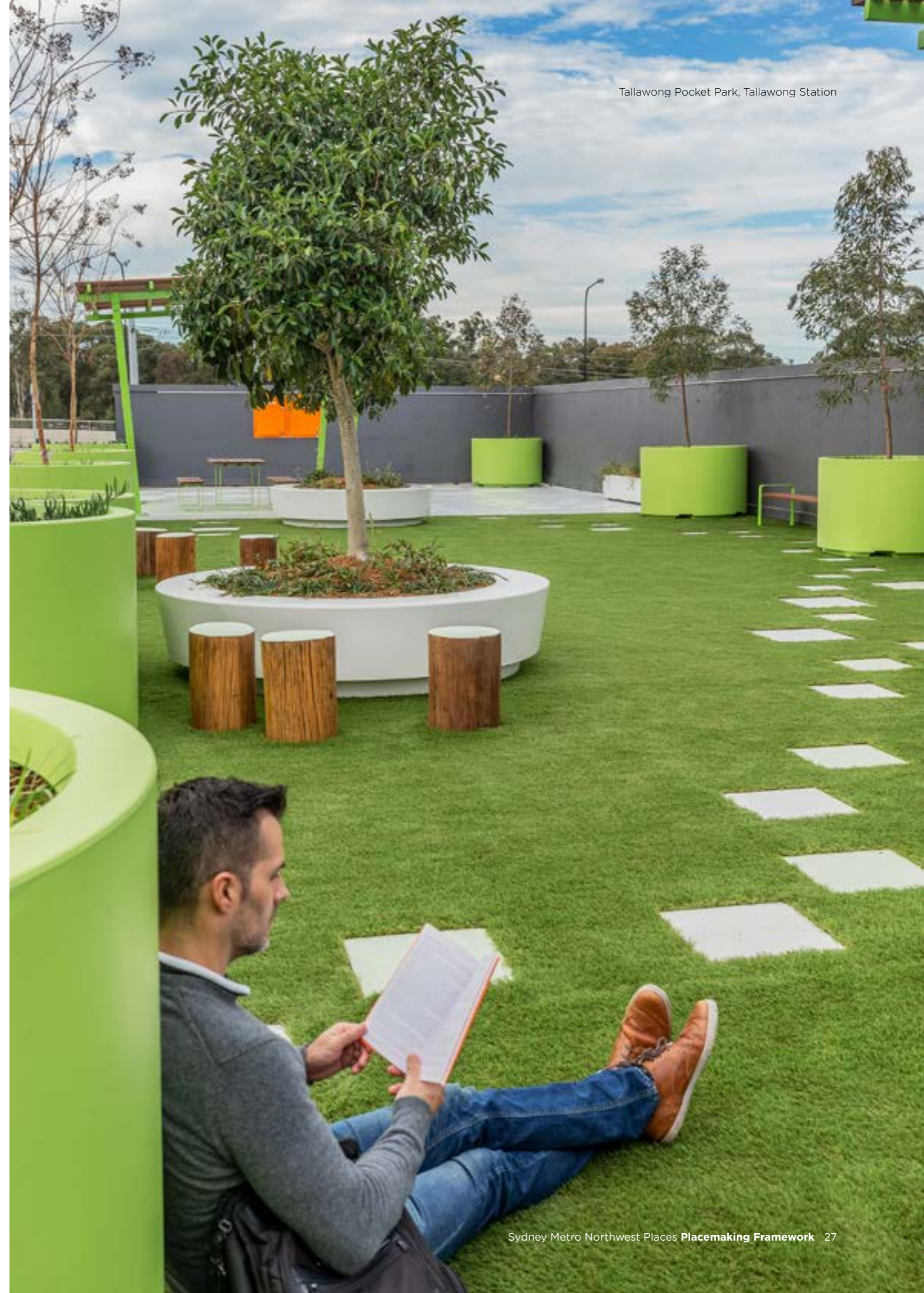
Additional local reference documents to consider include:

- local strategic planning statements
- development control plans
- contribution plans
- public domain plans including master plans, such as Showground Masterplan and Cattai Creek Masterplan
- recreational and open space strategies
- community strategic plans and asset management strategies
- accessibility and inclusion guidelines or plans
- economic development and tourism strategies
- public domain plans or guidelines
- cultural and community facilities strategic plans.

### State plans

Relevant state strategic plans include:

- [Movement and Place Framework \(Government Architect NSW\)](#)
- [NSW Public Spaces Charter \(DPIE, to be released in 2021\)](#)
- [Design and Place State Environmental Planning Policy \(DPIE, in development\)](#)
- [Future Transport 2056 \(Transport for NSW\)](#)



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