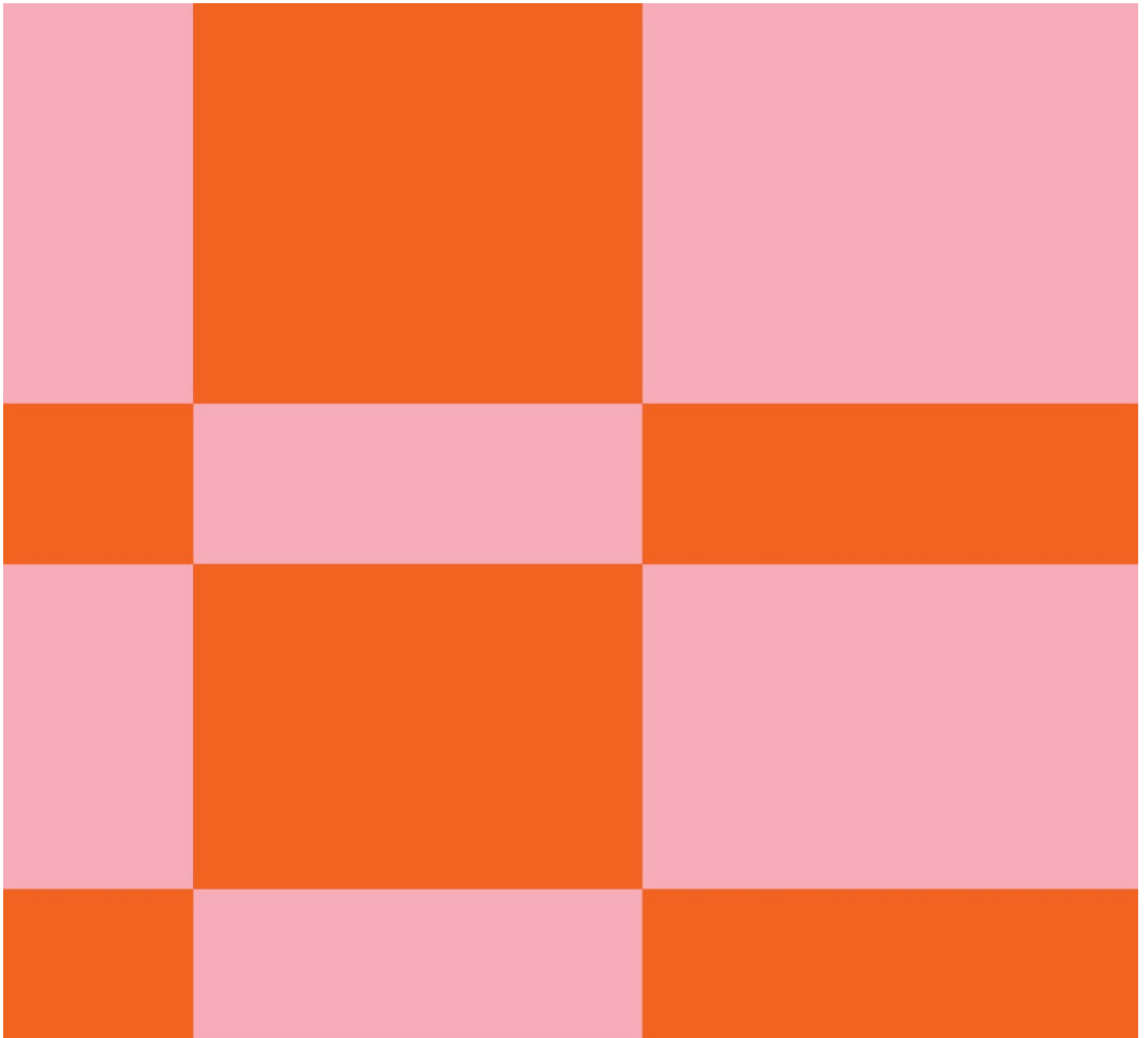


White Bay Power Station Community Consultation Snapshot 2024

March 2025



Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge Gadi Country, her lands, sea and sky, we acknowledge her custodians, their kin the Wangal, Bidjigal, Cabrogal and Cammeraygal who often visited this Country to connect and share.

We recognise and respect First Nations people's ongoing cultural heritage, beliefs and connection to the land, seas, and community.

We would like to pay our respects to the Elders both past and present.



Artist: Nadeena Dixon

Executive Summary

The community consultation program to gather insights about the future use of White Bay Power Station (WBPS) as an arts, cultural, entertainment, creative industries and community space ran from April-September 2024.

Through the consultation, over 203,000 people were made aware of the opportunity to have their say. Of this number, 1,296 people were formally engaged through face-to-face and online methods.

An extensive range of ideas and broad possibilities for the future uses of WBPS were covered through a range of engagement methods. There was a strong desire for flexibility in uses and diversity in programming and activation. A number of barriers to attending arts and cultural events in general were highlighted and specific areas for improving WBPS and elevating visitor experience including access, transport and amenity.

However, opportunities revealed by the engagement included a desire for WBPS to serve as a multifaceted hub of creativity, inclusivity, vibrancy and community connection. By responding to these insights, WBPS has the opportunity to become a landmark cultural and community space for locals and visitors alike, reflecting both its rich industrial heritage and its potential to inspire future generations. With NSW Government's objectives to drive the visitor economy by unlocking growth through events and experiences, and elevating Sydney and NSW, WBPS has a critical role in delivering on these aspirations.

Overall, the consultation identified a strong appetite across Greater Sydney for bold and interactive experiences that complement and emphasise the sites grand scale and unique heritage attributes.

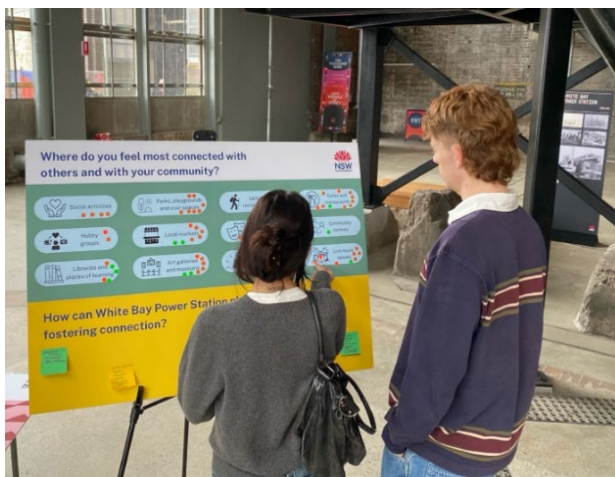


Image Credit: Pop-up session at White Bay Power Station, JOC Consulting

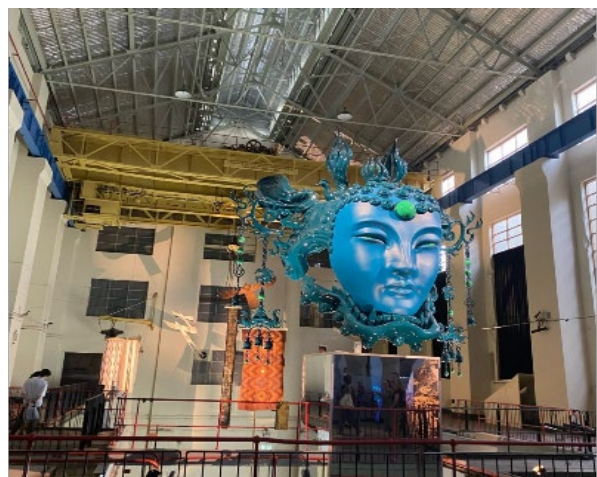


Image Credit: White Bay Power Station, JOC Consulting

1 Introduction

White Bay Power Station presents a once in a generation opportunity to create an experiential venue like no other.

In 2024, Placemaking NSW (PMNSW) conducted 9 months of extensive community consultation to inform the short-term and long-term use of White Bay Power Station (WBPS) as an arts, culture, entertainment, creative industries and community space.

There has been enormous interest in WBPS long before its doors re-opened to the public for the first time in March 2024. People wondered what it looked like inside and what its future might hold. Since 2017, PMNSW has completed extensive remediation to repurpose the site. It has now been Zoned for Special Uses (SP1) which includes entertainment, art and culture, creative industries and community use, presenting a unique opportunity to create a new, vibrant public place for the people of NSW.

PMNSW's vision for WBPS is to create a space where everyone feels welcome, fostering a deep sense of connection between each other and the wider community. The consultation activities were designed to delve deeper into this idea of connection to understand what role WBPS can play in bringing people together.

The theme of sparking joy was also central to the consultation methodology, explored through activities that elicited ideas for arts, cultural and community activities at WBPS.

Overall, the consultation sought to build on the community's excitement towards WBPS and uncover future possibilities for its use as Sydney's newest cultural icon.

Consultation Objectives

- Gather community insights on specific uses to inform the medium and long-term use of the White Bay Power Station as an arts, culture, entertainment, creative industries and community space.
- Ensure proactive, clear and meaningful delivery of communications and consultation activities to ensure all interested parties feel consulted and involved in the planning process.
- Engage with a broad cross-section of communities across greater Sydney as well as interstate and international visitors to capture a diversity of perspectives and balance the needs of all user groups.

2 About White Bay Power Station

White Bay Power Station (WBPS) is a one-of-a-kind historic site of state and national significance, set to become a cultural beacon on Sydney Harbour. Constructed between 1912 and 1917, it is one of the longest-serving power stations in Sydney, originally powering the city's tram and rail network. It was decommissioned in the 1980's and has since been repurposed by PMNSW as an arts, culture, entertainment, creative industries and community space.

The key areas that are currently open to the public within the site are:

- Turbine Hall (3395m²)
- Boiler Room (2720m²)
- Entertainment Hall (315m²)
- Northern Courtyard and Coal Handling Plaza (2800m²).

WBPS encapsulates significant historical and cultural values of the community. It is the only historical power station retaining machinery and equipment from before the 1950s. It is listed on the NSW State Heritage, National Trust of Australia and National Estate registers.

Opening its doors to the public for the 2024 Biennale of Sydney exhibition titled 'Ten Thousand Suns' marked a new era for WBPS, taking it from one of Sydney's oldest historic sites to one its newest cultural venues. The future connectivity provided by Sydney Metro West will provide an exceptional opportunity to welcome those from across Sydney to experience what this reimagined icon has to offer.



3 Consultation Snapshot

In alignment with PMNSW’s vision to create a space where everyone feels welcome, consultation was specifically designed to target a broad cross section of the wider Sydney community and hard-to-reach groups, as well as interstate and international visitors.

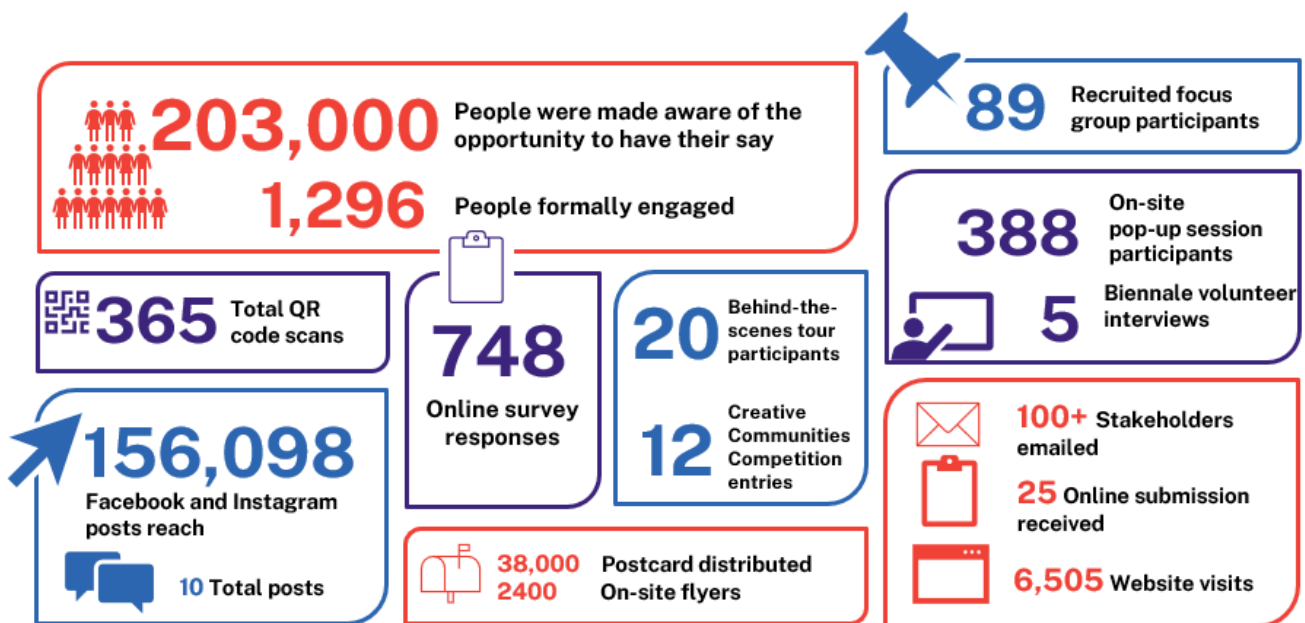
The community consultation program was undertaken from April-September 2024 and gathered insights about the desired future uses of White Bay Power Station (WBPS) as an arts, cultural, entertainment, creative industries and community space.

Through the consultation, **over 203,000 people** were made aware of the opportunity to have their say. Of this number, **1,296 people** were formally engaged through face-to-face and online methods.

Consultation methods included:

- Social media outreach
- Online surveys
- Onsite consultation and pop-up sessions at Biennale of Sydney 2024 and Power Up Festival 2024
- Interviews with Biennale of Sydney 2024 volunteers
- Behind-the-scenes stakeholder tours
- A competition for school students in the Inner West and Glebe, called the Creative Communities Competition
- Ten recruited Sydney-wide focus groups.

This snapshot document summarises the overall consultation outcomes report that establishes a clear direction for WBPS’s future.



4 Summary of Findings – Barriers to Participation

Throughout the consultation, participants highlighted a number of barriers to attending arts, cultural and community events. The feedback included barriers to attending arts, cultural and community events at WBPS as well as comments on barriers to attending such events in Sydney more broadly. This information can assist Placemaking NSW when hosting and designing events at WBPS. The most common barriers shared during the consultation included:

Transport



Participants highlighted challenges with public transport as a key barrier to attending events, such as multi-mode journeys and long travel times. Lack of parking was also identified as a deterrent.

Facilities



Inadequate seating, bathrooms, parents room facilities, wayfinding, and food services can negatively impact the overall experience at cultural events and deter participation, especially for those with caring responsibilities, the elderly or those with different physical and sensory abilities.

Accessibility



Lack of accessible pathways, wheelchair-accessible facilities, lifts, inadequate crowd management and lack of quiet spaces create significant barriers.

High Costs



The cost of transport to get to the event, entry fees, and extras such as food and drinks are a common barrier, especially in the current economic climate.

5 Summary of Findings – Ideas for Enhancement

Overwhelmingly, participants who visited WBPS engaged were in awe of the grandeur, unique architecture and heritage features of the space. Many cited the building itself as the main reason for visiting the site. When asked to consider ways to enhance the visitor experience and future uses of the space, common themes included:

Greater Accessibility



More wheelchair-accessible facilities, ramps, and sensory-friendly hours to accommodate diverse needs were cited as desired enhancements by some members of the community.

Enhanced Comfort



The provision of ample, comfortable, shaded seating and break-out areas to eat and rest were important considerations for many, especially older visitors, families, and those with different physical and sensory abilities.

Community Spaces for Connection



There was a strong desire for the spaces and activations at WBPS to facilitate community connection and social interaction by allowing people to experience different types of activities. Suggestions varied from educational workshops to dance classes, to rehearsal spaces for students and creative practitioners and for people to come together in both structured and spontaneous settings.

Traffic Management



Enhanced traffic coordination, management of vehicle traffic and better pedestrian movement was also suggested by some community members. The impact of increased visitation to the peninsula is front of mind for the local community, with parking availability and public transport options highlighted as key consideration for improvement.

6 Summary of Findings – Looking to the Future

Across all consultation methods, participants were asked ‘future thinking’ questions regarding their desires and ideas for the future of WBPS as an arts, culture, entertainment, creative industries and community space. Several key themes emerged:

Diverse and Inclusive Programming



Participants want to see diverse arts and cultural representation and event programming that caters to different ages, cultures and backgrounds.

Live Music and Late-Night Vibrancy



Participants expressed a desire for night time vibrancy including live music, night markets, and festivals. Live music and performances stood out as a top suggestion across the consultation, with ideas ranging from classical orchestras to dance party ‘raves’.

Education and Historical Elements



People expressed interest in learning more about the history of WBPS and the stories of the those who worked there, with calls for the guided tours to be all-year round. Interpretive signage and enhanced interactive and educational features were popular suggestions to bring the site’s story to life.

Curated Events celebrating the Unique Architecture



For many, the scale and uniqueness of the building is the ‘star of the show’ and the drawcard that they want to see celebrated and utilised so the audience can engage with the unique architecture and story of this incredible place. Many cited this was a key point of difference for WBPS compared to other arts, cultural and community venues in Sydney.

Large-Scale Events



WBPS is seen as a place capable of hosting large-scale arts and cultural events. Participants highlighted the desire for the space to accommodate a variety of large-scale events that bring people together in a unique setting.

Family-Friendly Activities



Numerous participants expressed a desire for interactive, educational and accessible cultural events that were family friendly and inclusive.

7 Next Steps

There will be future opportunities for the community to provide feedback about the ongoing activities at WBPS through the WBPS website at www.whitebaypowerstation.com

Thank you to everyone who generously provided feedback and ideas throughout the consultation process.



Image: Pop-up session at White Bay Power Station, May 2024



Image Credit: White Bay Power Station, JOC Consulting



Image Credit: White Bay Power Station, JOC Consulting



Image: 'Legs on the Wall' White Bay Power Station, 24th Biennale of Sydney Ten Thousand Suns, Katje Ford