Draft Social Impact Assessment Guidelines
Waverley Council
May 2021

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Part A: Introduction

Context
The future vision for the Waverley LGA is embodied in its Community Strategic Plan 2018-2029 (CSP) and Local Strategic Planning Statement 2020-2036 (LSPS).

Some key goals of the CSP are to *"create a resilient, caring and cohesive community"* and to *"strengthen people's inclusion in community life, promote diversity and celebrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture past, present and future".* The LSPS includes a direction to be a *"city for people".* See Table 5 within Appendix A for specific desirable social outcomes for the Waverley LGA.

Whilst **environmental** and **economic** impacts of a proposal must be assessed, in order to successfully achieve the goals of the CSP and the direction of the LSPS, **social impacts** must be properly considered as well in development and planning decisions. This can be done by way of undertaking a Social Impact Assessment (SIA).

Waverley Council is committed to the SIA process as a means of considering the potential social impacts of developments more comprehensively and consistently in planning and decision making. Not all development proposals will be required to provide an SIA because there are already development controls in Council's LEP and DCP that are designed to mitigate impacts.

Refer to Appendix B for examples of desirable social outcomes.

Social Impact Assessment

Social Impact Assessments (SIA) are supposed to tell us *what* social impacts matter when it comes to proposed developments, *where* the impacts will be felt, by *whom* and *how*. SIA should also deal with how impacts will be managed, or, indeed, if they can be managed at all.

For example, SIAs can inform who and how people might be affected by a new boarding house nearby; if a new light rail corridor will benefit some whilst adversely impacting others; and what kinds of social benefits and impacts can we expect from a new school or hospital. It can provide information about the cumulative impacts of having many of the same types of developments in one area. Or it can indicate if there is a lack of certain types of uses (e.g. affordable housing) in an area so that the loss of any more may not be in the public interest.

SIA provides an opportunity for the opinion of the surrounding community to be considered in the DA assessment process, however, only justified, concrete and evidence-based views surrounding likely effects of the proposed development will be afforded weight in assessment.

Nine Social Impact Types

Social impacts are a critical consideration when assessing the suitability of a proposal. Social impacts typically include changes to one or more of the following Social Impact Types[1].

1. **accessibility:** how people access and use infrastructure, services, and facilities, whether provided by a public, private or not-for-profit organisation, facilitating or hindering universal access principles, affordability.
2. **accommodation:** affordable housing; displacement; housing choice, universal housing (housing for life).
3. **community:** composition, cohesion, stability, character, how the community functions and people's sense of place.
4. **culture:** both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, including shared beliefs, customs, values and stories, language and dialect, and connections to Country, land, waterways, places and buildings, respect for culture and significant places. Acknowledge Aboriginal heritage, place/land.
5. **health and wellbeing:** including physical, social, spiritual and mental health especially for people vulnerable to social exclusion or substantial change, psychological stress resulting from financial or other pressures, and changes to public health overall. Considers sense of belonging or being unwelcome; and social interaction/isolation. Not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. Give consideration to creating or impacting spaces that enable people to recreate without having to enter a commercial premises.
6. **livelihoods:** people's capacity to sustain themselves through employment or business, whether they experience personal

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[1] Reference for Social Impact Types: Vanclay, F. 2003 International Principles for Social Impact Assessment. Impact Assessment & Projects. Appraisal 21(1), 5-11. http://dx.doi.org/10.3152/147154603781766491

breach or disadvantage, and the distributive equity of impacts and benefits.

7. **safety & security:** including graffiti, vandalism & property damage, offensive language & behaviour, safety of women, young people and homeless people, substance consumption or abuse, and truancy**.** Also, peoples' justified perceptions about safety, fears about the future of their community, and aspirations for their future and the future of their children. Promote design for safety of women walking alone and places of natural surveillance for safety of children, women, people with a disability.

8. **surroundings:** including ecosystem services such as shade, pollution control, and erosion control, public safety and security, access to and use of the natural and built environment, and aesthetic value and amenity. The quality of the air and water people use, the availability and quality of the food they eat, the level of hazard or risk, dust and noise they are exposed to, the adequacy of sanitation, their physical safety, and their access to and control over resources.

9. **way of life**: how people live, how they get around, how they work, how they play, and how they interact each day.

Key Consideration Groups
Given Waverley's diverse population, social impacts should be considered from the unique perspective of groups that makes up the larger community including those who are more vulnerable and/or minorities.

Cumulative and Consequential Impacts
Social impacts can be cumulative, the result of more than one development or land use type in an area. This can become apparent over time, rather than being immediately perceptible or relatable to a specific development or development type.

An example being the difference between a quiet neighbourhood street with one boarding house which sits within the existing character and provides for housing diversity, versus a quiet neighbourhood street with 10 boarding houses that alters an established character and has the potential to cause ten times the impacts of one boarding house with increased noise and traffic.

An SIA can identify where an existing area may already effectively be saturated with a certain type of use (e.g. backpackers, pubs and clubs) and further instances will have a detrimental social impact on the neighbourhood.

The opposite may also be true. An SIA may identify where certain types of use are diminishing and are considered important to housing diversity and community satisfaction. For example, the loss of affordable housing or sporting and recreation land.

Applicable Development
An SIA will not be required for all development or land use types. It is not meant to be an onerous or unreasonable requirement on landowners. Development that may require a Social Impact Assessment will typically be:

- of a large and/or sensitive nature;
- in a sensitive or constrained setting; and/or
- likely to have an impact on the community that can't be mitigated by normal Development Application conditions.

Appendix A outlines a list of land uses which will usually require SIA. The table is a guideline only as there may be instances where an SIA is not considered necessary in the circumstances of the particular case and others where the development is not in the table but the Council planners believe one should be supplied.

Social Impact Assessment

There are two levels of Social Impact Assessment: **Social Impact Comment (SIC)** and **Social Impact Statement (SIS).** Both must consider the social impact key considerations and detailed assessment process; however, the extent of research and author of assessment varies.

A social impact comment (SIC) relates to projects unlikely to result in significant social impacts or of a scale that does not warrant a comprehensive analysis by an experienced practitioner. An SIC need only be undertaken by a qualified and experienced town planner and can be included within the Statement of Environmental Effects report where social impacts are already discussed to address *s4.15* of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979.*

The social impact statement (SIS) is a comprehensive assessment typically required for developments where significant social impacts are anticipated. The SIS should form its own report and must be undertaken by someone with appropriate training and experience, particularly in using rigorous social science methodologies that are undertaken with public involvement. Suitable persons will have a relevant tertiary qualification in social science, human geography or the like, have experience in community development (needs analysis, facility/service planning), in public participation, and in use of the types of statistical and qualitative information required for the SIS.

Part B: SIA Structure

This Part details the recommended report structure for a Social Impact Assessment.

1. **Assessment catchment:**
    Identify and justify the physical catchment for the assessment. The area size will vary depending on the scale and nature of the project ranging from the individual street in which the development is proposed, to a wider area that has the same zoning. For example, if a new supermarket is proposed in an area where there are local small-scale suppliers of similar goods, the catchment should include these shops.

2. **Social baseline:**
    Identify a pre-development social baseline of the assessment area through a study describing the social context without the proposed development. It documents the existing social environment, conditions and trends relevant to the impacts identified.

    The study is a benchmark against which direct, indirect and cumulative impacts can be predicted and analysed. Tailor the scope and content of the social baseline study to the project context using meaningful indicators and information.

    Baseline data can be collected through secondary research using existing data sources such as Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) data, NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research (BOSCAR) data, material from similar projects, published research, relevant local, State and

Commonwealth strategic plans and policies, or the outcomes from previous community engagement.

The social baseline should at minimum consider:

- **Area Profile:** What is the social, physical, cultural and economic profile?
- **Features:** What features of the community, the social locality, and/or the landscape do people value – from urban areas, the sense of community or the accessibility of services, to natural and diverse environments or quiet/vibrant neighbourhoods? How do these features influence local people's or businesses' way of life, health or wellbeing?

Other social baseline considerations may include:

- **First Nations:** What Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community past, present and future significance does the assessment area hold?
- **Climate Change:** The gradual rise in average temperature, reduced water availability and increased severity of storms experienced in Waverley due to Climate Change is resulting in less comfortable **surroundings** and a change in **way of life** (refer to *Nine Social Impact Types*). Development should demonstrate resilience against these resultant social impacts and exhibit a design that provides social comfort and function in warmer decades to come without reliance on air-conditioning. Are there other prevalent Climate Change trends that produce social impacts in the assessment catchment?
- **Key Consideration Groups:** How do the *Key Consideration Groups* currently sit within each *Social Impact Type* item goal? Refer to Appendix C for the Social Outcomes Matrix.

- **Vulnerable groups:** What minority groups and vulnerable groups are present? What opportunities are present to increase their level of social inclusion, sense of belonging and cultural protection?

3. **Predict and Assess the Social Impacts on Social Baseline:**
Critically assess the predicted impact of the development proposal against the social baseline. Describe and justify the methodologies used to predict and analyse social impacts, assumptions and projections as well as outcomes of the process.

Consider the:

- Possible adverse social impacts; provide justification for why this is acceptable. How can the adverse impact be mitigated or removed? Although the project may deliver benefits in the longer term, how might the project be designed to avoid and minimise any short-term adverse impacts?
- Possible beneficial social impacts; provide a supported explanation for why this is produced. How can the possible impact be enhanced or introduced?
- Extent of the impact - immediate, longer term or cumulative; and
- Density and clustering of similar development.

4. **Mitigation Measures and Monitoring via Social Impact Management Plan (SIMP)**

In order to mitigate negative social impacts and introduce and enhance beneficial ones identified within the *Predict and Assess* step, the proposal should be adjusted by way of design and/or operational improvement. Depending on the scale and controversy surrounding the proposal readjustment, additional community and stakeholder consultation may be required.

Developments with an SIS should establish a robust Social Impact Management Plan (SIMP) that clearly outlines negative impacts and what measures will be incorporated to mitigate these.

Social impact can be negative or positive and it may be possible to address the negative impact of a proposal by offering a community benefit or improvement within the SIMP that will reduce the negative impact. Following are some measures that can be considered to achieve a more positive social impact from a proposal, alongside those shown in the *Desired Social Outcomes* in Appendix C. Others not listed within Appendix C or below may also be considered by Council.

- Floor space, outdoor space, or a public facility for community use;
- Community development – financial & in-kind support social, cultural or recreational initiatives e.g. public art, community safety, health & wellbeing projects, facilities/services or events for the general community or specific target groups, business development projects and the like; and
- Ongoing consultation & engagement.

Some of these can be designed into the development proposal or conditioned in the consent. Others may come within the ambit of a

Voluntary Planning Agreement *[s7.4 of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979].* An applicant may voluntarily offer to make a planning agreement with Council.

Inclusion of positive impacts or community benefit does not mean that a proposed development will automatically be approved by Council. Similarly, a proposal will not automatically be refused if there are perceived negative social impacts. However, Council will endeavour to ensure that negative impacts are reduced, and positive impacts are introduced or enhanced.

Part C: Resources and References

Waverley Council:
- Waverley Community Strategic Plan
- Waverley Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2017 - 2021
- Waverley Local Strategic Planning Statement
- Waverley Local Housing Strategy
- Waverley Our Liveable Places Centres Strategy
- Waverley Smart Cities Strategy

Appendix A – Applicable Development

Table 1 – Development typically requiring SIA by land use

Land Use	Threshold
Shop top housing Residential flat buildings	More than 50 dwellings. Aligns with Inner West Council's guideline.
Boarding houses and hostels Seniors housing	New developments that contain (insert number) rooms. New developments that contain (insert number) rooms that that are to be located within (insert distance) of another existing Boarding House.
Entertainment facilities	Capacity for 100 or more persons. Aligns with Inner West Council's guideline.
Any premises where it is proposed to serve or sell liquor under the NSW Liquor Act 2007 excluding a limited licence and a small bar. These are assessed in conjunction with local police.	New developments Historically controversial, regardless of capacity.
Places of public worship	New developments Historically controversial, regardless of capacity.
Retail premises	More than 1000sqm of new or additional gross floor area. Neighbourhood supermarket LEP definition by DPIE is restricted to 1000sqm.
Sex services premises Restricted premises	New developments Historically controversial, regardless of capacity.
Tourist and visitor accommodation • Backpackers' accommodation • Hotel or motel accommodation • Serviced apartments	New developments Historically controversial, regardless of capacity.

Appendix B – Draft DCP Controls

Table 2 – DCP Controls

Objective	Control
To maximise community benefits and encourage appropriate behaviours	Robust plan of management must be prepared and adhered to.

Objective	Control	Objective	Control
To maximise community benefits and encourage appropriate behaviours	Boarding houses/hostel/backpackers accommodation with (insert rooms) must have a full time on-site manager accommodated within the premises Currently, boarding houses with capacity for 20+ residents require an on-site manager. Despite this, there is history of complaints surrounding inadequate hours of existing managers on boarding houses of this size.	To increase the validity and reliability of the SIA	The SIS must be undertaken by someone with appropriate training and experience, particularly in using rigorous social science methodologies that are undertaken with public involvement.
To reduce cumulative impact of development and ensure diversity in housing	Applicants must prepare a site plan identifying the number and size of the same development type/land use within a 2km radius. This applies to the following development types: • Hostel/boarding house/ backpacker's accommodation • Sex services • Pubs/registered clubs	To reduce interaction between children/ students/sensitive beliefs and restricted premises/ sex service patrons	Ground floor and/or highly visible restricted premises and sex service premises are not suitable for location within clear view of an existing educational premises, childcare centre or place of public worship.
	Applicants must justify how the addition of a development requiring an SIA will not produce an adverse cumulative impact given the context.	To increase access to public open space.	Development requiring SIS and resulting in an increase in residential housing should aim for the below as a success benchmark when selecting development location:
To ensure that the local community has input into the SIA	See Appendix D.		

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Objective	Control
	Performance indicators
	Local access
	High-density areas > 60 dwellings/ha — 2–3 minutes walk / 200 m walking distance to a local park (barrier free)
	Medium- to low-density areas < 60 dwellings/ha — 5 minutes walk / 400 m walking distance to a local park (barrier free)
	District access — 25 minutes walk / 2 km proximity to a district park. District parks also provide local access
	Draft NSW Government Architect recommendation which may be implemented in new Design and Place SEPP.
	FYI - Average Waverley LGA density is 43 dwellings/ha.

1. **accessibility:** Infrastructure, services and facilities are safe and affordable, facilitating autonomy and independence for all residents.. Key services (healthcare, recreation, and shops) are nearby.
2. **accommodation:** Affordable housing and diverse housing mix options are available within accessible areas. Where a high number of small units are planned affordable collective washing and drying facilities are available onsite.
3. **community:** A diverse and cohesive community composition with a sense of place and inclusion is provided.
4. **culture:** Shared community beliefs, values, places and connections are respected and enhanced.
5. **health and wellbeing:** The local area provides good access to facilities and activities promoting physical and mental, health & wellbeing and sense of belonging.
6. **livelihoods:** There is equitable access to employment/business, and equitable distribution of impacts and benefits.
7. **safety & security:** The NSW Government's *Crime Prevention and the Assessment of Development Applications Guidelines* are successfully implemented, with consideration of potentially vulnerable population groups.
8. **surroundings:** All groups have equitable access to high quality and safe surroundings. The natural, built environment and overall amenity of space is improved.
9. **way of life**: Personal autonomy over lifestyle is provided for all groups.

Appendix C – Desired Social Outcomes

Draft SIA Assessment Guidelines

Appendix D – Community and Stakeholder Consultation

Consultation Types

The purpose of consultation is to obtain perspectives from the local community who may be adversely impacted by a development rather than from just the project's perspective.

Consultation will depend on the type of development proposed and may include the methods outlined in table 3:

Table 3 – Community and Stakeholder Consultation

Column 1	Column 2
Email address for people to submit to	Workshop / focus group
Survey	Public information session

A detailed design is not always required for the community consultation stage. A suitable question may include:

*What do you think about ***insert type of development and scale*** development at ***address***?*

The information obtained from the consultation methods should actively and clearly inform changes to the proposal, however, only justified, concrete and rational views from stakeholders will be afforded weight.

These engagement tools should be reasonably promoted to ensure relevant community members are adequately notified and able to participate. Communications can include:

- Letterbox drop within a reasonable radius of proposed development
- Notification to precinct committee members
- Advertisement in local paper such as Wentworth Courier/The Beast
- Notices in nearby businesses/community organisations

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