

# North **Belrose** **RESIDENTIAL**

Communications and Engagement Plan

## 1 Background

The Metropolitan Local Aboriginal Land Council (Land Council) is preparing a planning proposal for the development and construction of approximately 170 residential dwellings with associated service infrastructure on a portion of their land in Belrose. The site is located in a bushland setting adjacent to an existing residential area off Ralston Avenue, within the Warringah Local Government Area.

Of the total 135 hectare site owned by the Land Council, less than 15 per cent is being proposed for development, with more than 85 per cent of the land preserved in an urban bushland state.

Zoning for the site was deferred from the Warringah Local Environment Plan (WLEP) 2011 by the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure and the site currently remains under the provisions of WLEP 2000. An application to rezone the site to enable development is being prepared via a planning proposal (LEP amendment) by a Joint Venture (JV) partnership between the Land Council and Matthews Civil Pty Ltd. It is expected that the planning proposal will be assessed by Warringah Council, prior to its submission to the NSW Government for gazettal.

This Communications and Engagement plan considers the planning proposal in its overarching strategic context and provides a framework for engaging stakeholders. The aim of the strategy is to provide a coordinated approach to communication and consultation and to help develop constructive working relationships with key stakeholders.

The tools and activities identified in this strategy have been designed to assist in the delivery of relevant, timely and consistent information to a range of stakeholders including local residents, neighbours, Warringah Council, relevant State and Federal MPs, local environment groups and the broader community.

This plan outlines the communication and consultation activities required to ensure effective engagement with key stakeholders, throughout the application process.

**NOTE:** The rollout of communication and consultation activities will be subject to external factors including formal consultation with government agencies (both local and state); the overall timing to complete the necessary documentation and the timing for formal exhibition. It is therefore critical that consultation and communications activities are reviewed on a regular basis to ensure consistency with the timing of the planning proposal and the subsequent approvals pathway.



**This Communications Strategy is current as at 6 March 2013**

## 2 Project rationale

The overarching rationale behind this project is to provide an opportunity for the Land Council to achieve the aims outlined in the preamble of the NSW Land Rights Act 2003:

***Land in the State of New South Wales was traditionally owned and occupied by Aborigines. Land is of spiritual, social, cultural and economic importance to Aborigines. It is fitting to acknowledge the importance which land has for Aborigines and the need of Aborigines for land. It is accepted that as a result of past Government decisions the amount of land set aside for Aborigines has been progressively reduced without compensation.***

## 3 Project vision

To undertake a benchmark land development project, working in a collaborative partnership to achieve a high quality development, incorporating excellence in design, open space treatments, landscaping and construction.

## 4 Communication Objectives

The objectives of this strategy are to:

- Develop constructive relationships with key stakeholders, including government agencies and local community groups;
- Ensure accurate, consistent and timely communication and consultation activities to support the lodgement of the planning proposal and contribute to the successful delivery of the project;
- Develop a process to capture community attitudes and identify issues or concerns that may arise; and
- Demonstrate a commitment by the JV partners to an environmentally and socially sensitive development that respects the existing character of the local area.

## 5 Strategic approach and positioning

Community perceptions will have a major impact on the successful delivery of the project. In achieving a positive outcome for this project it is important to take a proactive approach to keeping Warringah Council, local environment groups and the community informed.

Early communication should concentrate on three key areas:

1. The concept of development, including residential, on the site is not new and has been considered in the past. Some areas of the site contain existing road/service infrastructure, such as a sealed roadway with concrete kerbing and guttering.
2. That the project is consistent with the underlying philosophy of the NSW Aboriginal Land Rights Act 1983, namely that the “Land is of spiritual, social, cultural and economic importance to Aborigines” (with emphasis on its economic importance).
3. The land is not simply being sold to a developer: the planning proposal is being developed as a joint venture partnership between the Land Council and Matthews Civil Pty Ltd. This is the first time that the Land Council has undertaken a project such as this, as a development partner.

The JV partners will need to liaise with all stakeholders, listening to their views and considering their comments while progressing the project.

It will be important that the JV partners engage with local environmental and community groups early in the process and explain the work that has been done to identify and protect any threatened species. Equally important will be to outline the planning and assessment process to adjacent residents and neighbours, to highlight the environmental considerations that will be incorporated in the proposed development.

## 6 Stakeholder and issues analysis

Delivery of the Belrose residential project will involve communication with diverse groups of stakeholders. This includes local residents, environment groups, councillors, state and federal members of parliament, local media and the broader community. Formal consultation with various government agencies will also be required as part of the planning and assessment process.

Key issues that need to be considered include:

- Current land zoning and approval pathway.
- Environmental considerations.
- Perceived and actual impacts on adjacent residential properties.

It is expected that additional stakeholders and issues will be identified as the project progresses. Managing issues will require ongoing monitoring and review. This will be particularly important when the concept plan is developed and additional engagement takes place.

Stakeholder identification, along with potential issues and communication management actions, will be updated over the life of the project. To ensure information remains current, stakeholder issues and communication management strategies will be regularly updated in a separate stakeholder database.

## 7 Communication and consultation

Communication and consultation will play an important role in identifying and addressing community issues or concerns that may arise throughout the project. In addition to a program of communications and engagement activities, it will be imperative to implement feedback mechanisms and provide stakeholders with a direct point of contact for enquiries. This includes a 1800 community number and project email. Key stakeholder groups and recommended tools and activities are outlined below.

### Adjacent residents

Early communication with landowners/tenants near the site is a critical component of the community engagement program. Residents/landowners in this area are the most likely to have a view on any future development.

An initial round of communication with local residents will be undertaken to assist the project team in establishing a central point of contact and demonstrating a commitment to early engagement with the community.

Follow up communication with (and/or notification distributed to) adjacent residents and the local community is also proposed following the development of the concept plan. This may be a 'Have a Say Day' or drop-in session.

### Local environmental and interest groups

An initial round of briefings is proposed with key stakeholders such as local environment groups. The aim is to demonstrate the commitment by the JV partners to environmental sustainability and to provide information on the site and the key issues that are being considered.

A second round of stakeholder briefings would then coincide with the development of a concept plan and may be rolled out along with a local community 'Have a Say Day'.

### Council

In addition to statutory consultation with council planners during preparation of the planning proposal, the JV will also engage the mayor and councillors. The purpose is to outline the strategic rationale for developing the site, ensure open lines of communication through-out the project and to reinforce the 2004 Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the MLALC and Warringah Council.

## **State and Federal MPs**

Relevant state and federal members of parliaments are likely to be contacted by constituents and should be kept informed of the project through regular correspondence.

## **8 Communication tools and activities**

### **1800 Community line and project email**

A 1800 number and project email address have been established to provide a central point of contact for enquiries and will be included on all collateral. The 1800 number and email address will operate during business hours and enquires received out of hours would be responded to the following business day.

### **Online communications**

A project website will provide an effective tool in posting information for access by stakeholders and the broader community. Online communications can be updated with relevant planning reports and other documents.

The website would include the 1800 number and email address for enquiries.

An additional “stay in touch” function could be established to allow community members or other stakeholders to opt in to a stakeholder database for regular project updates.

### **Project FAQ sheet and briefing note**

An FAQ sheet and briefing note will provide an overview of the planning proposal and be a tool for providing information to people with interest in the project. These can be made available at Council’s administration offices and online.

### **Letter notification**

Letter notification will be arranged for nearby residents to provide an information of the proposal, provide a direct point of contact and provide links to online materials.

### **Briefings**

Key stakeholders such as environment groups will be contacted via written correspondence and offered a briefing to provide information on the project and to assist the project team identify any potential issues.

### **Community Have a say Day**

A community Have a Say Day is proposed to provide information about the proposal enable the community to speak directly with member of the project team. Information will include display materials (Boards) along with other project materials and will be attended by key team members. (Suitable locations and format TBC).

### **Project display, information boards and potential onsite signage**

Content for project display boards would include a project overview, details of the concept plan and the planning approval process, as well as other aspects that are of community interest. Display materials would be used for community information day and briefing sessions.

### **Media**

Media will provide an opportunity to disseminate accurate information to the broader community and assist in dispelling any misconceptions about the development.

A media release will be prepared for local media to coincide with the rollout of other communication and consultation activities. Information will include key messages and relevant quotes by a spokesperson for the JV partners. Additional media and/or a site tour will be considered when appropriate.

## 9 Stakeholder Engagement

A proposed plan of engagement actions for roll out is provided below.

Action	Description
<b>Establish community contact mechanisms</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish and activate 1800 community info line (1800 252 040)</li> <li>Communications with Warringah Council Officers/ DP&amp;I</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Website page: northbelrose.com.au</li> <li>Project email address: info@northbelrose.com.au</li> </ul>
<b>Draft materials</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Media release</li> <li>FAQ sheet (for web)</li> <li>Stakeholder letter (Residents/local action groups)</li> <li>Briefing note / letter notification (MPs Ministers)</li> </ul>
<b>Brief Council and DP&amp;I</b>	Department of Planning and Infrastructure Warringah Council staff and councillors
<b>Brief community groups</b>	Warringah Urban Fringe Association (WUFA) Belrose Rural Community Group Trail Care / Northern Beaches Mountain Biking Group (NoBMoB) Palomino Riding School Belrose Community Action
<b>Contact with MPs</b>	Jonathan O'Dea, Member for Davidson Rob Stokes, Member for Pittwater Matt Kean, Member for Hornsby Paul Fletcher, Federal Member for Bradfield Brad Hazzard- Minister for Planning Robyn Parker- Minister for the Environment Victor Dominello - Minister for Citizenship, Communities and Aboriginal Affairs Federal MP Bronwyn Bishop - Member for Mackellar
<b>Notify stakeholder (Residents/local action groups)</b>	Local community notification - letter distribution to adjacent streets
<b>Announce to media</b>	<b>Media</b> - Manly Daily, SMH (Urban affairs).