

ORDINARY COUNCIL

ORD01

**SUBJECT: CAMDEN TOWN CENTRE INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS -
COMMUNITY CONSULTATION UPDATE**

FROM: Director Community Infrastructure

TRIM #: 14/184061

PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with the results of the public exhibition of the proposed Camden Town Centre Improvements. This report presents the submissions received as part of the eight (8) week community consultation, and seeks endorsement for the proposed key initiatives as recommended and supported by the community.

BACKGROUND

In 2012, Council resolved to relocate to Oran Park in 2016. In mid 2013, Council established an internal committee to develop a range of strategies and options to support the Camden and Narellan commercial precincts by the time Council relocates.

As part of this work, a Retail and Commercial Study of the Camden Town Centre is being prepared. This Study will provide a sustainable vision for the Camden Town Centre which defines its future form, focus and function. This work will also provide a range of strategies and options for Council's building assets, including the existing administration centre in John Street. This work is currently being finalised and will be brought back to Council for further consideration in early 2015.

In addition to this, Council has been undertaking reviews of the important infrastructure elements of the Town Centre (shown in **Attachment 1**), including traffic movements, car parking, drainage, street lighting, paving and furniture.

In March 2013, Council engaged a consultant to undertake a traffic study for Camden Town Centre. The Camden Town Centre Traffic and Transport Study 2013 focused on transport infrastructure necessary to achieve greater accessibility for all pedestrians and road users, whilst also seeking to retain the unique aspects that the Town Centre currently provides, in terms of its heritage and 'country town' environment.

Previous studies and periods of consultation have highlighted the need to respect, protect and build on the area's unique history, while recognising the area's contribution to the rapidly growing vitality and diversity of the remainder of the LGA. As a first step in this process, Council has prepared a strategy that begins to give physical form to the detailed planning undertaken over the past years. The initial focus of these works is proposed to be a staged upgrade of Argyle Street and the construction of an open top decked car park in Oxley Street.

Council developed an Argyle Street Concept Plan, building on the 2008 Camden Town Centre Strategy, and the Camden Town Centre Traffic and Transport Study 2013. This includes the construction of traffic lights, upgraded pavement alignments and finishes to create a pedestrian friendly environment which will complement the

outcomes of the Retail & Commercial Study of the Town Centre, and respect the town's unique character. This upgraded environment will be furnished with lighting, furniture, landscaping and signage as appropriate to each place in the street and its planned activity.

The aims of these works are to:

- create an environment that will encourage a slower speed environment;
- create an environment which upgrades and enhances pedestrian mobility safety and access;
- enhance the main street of Camden so that it can continue to be relevant in a growing and changing LGA, as well as the broader region;
- create additional parking close to Argyle Street; and
- facilitate the continued retail and commercial success of the Town Centre.

In November 2013, June 2014 and September 2014, Councillor Workshops were held to examine the proposed works and to review extensive consultation with all stakeholders, including resident and business stakeholders.

At its meeting of 8 July, 2014 Council was presented with a range of proposed upgrade works for the town centre of Camden. At this meeting Council resolved to:

- i. *endorse the key initiatives as recommended (Items 1 – 5 of this report) for public exhibition, including:*
 - *traffic lights and pedestrian lights on Argyle Street;*
 - *a decked car park located in Oxley Street (Site 2a);*
 - *reduced traffic lanes and increased footpath width;*
 - *footpath paving material; and*
 - *street furniture.*
- ii. *undertake an eight (8) week public exhibition as outlined in this report; and*
- iii. *be provided with a further report detailing the results of the public exhibition.*

This report presents the submissions received as part of the eight (8) week community consultation for the Camden Town Centre Improvements, and seeks endorsement for the proposed key initiatives as recommended and supported by the community.

MAIN REPORT

For a period of eight (8) weeks, from 23 July to 17 September, 2014 Council undertook an extensive period of public exhibition. This consultation invited feedback from the community, businesses and relevant stakeholders.

Throughout the consultation period Council attended the following community events:

- Community Workshop 1 – 29 July – Introduction and overview of proposed public domain works capturing people's issues and aspirations.
- Community Workshop 2 – 27 August – Main focus of the workshop was on the Retail and Commercial Study with an update provided on the progress of the public domain improvements considering preliminary feedback.
- Community Workshop 3 – 3 November – Workshop was focused on the Retail and Commercial Study with an update providing the community on final preliminary consultation results (Consultation closed 17 September)
- BIBS & Storytime Camden Library

- BIBS & Storytime Narellan Library
- Camden Senior Citizen's Centre
- Harrington Park Over 55's
- Carrington Retirement Village
- Narellan Probus
- Chamber of Commerce Camden and Narellan
- Historical Society
- Camden Youth Council
- Access Community Advisory Group
- Camden Rotary

In addition Council undertook the following in order to reach as wide an audience as possible:

- advertisements in local papers, road side banners;
- surveys with business and community representatives;
- information and regular updates on Council's website, Facebook, media releases;
- information displays at various locations including Council Offices and Libraries;
- update letters from the Mayor through the consultation period on the community events and council process;
- letter box drop throughout the town centre;
- an online survey and street survey; and
- additional questions included in the Camden Council Sustainability Indicators Survey 2014.

During the eight (8) week period Council presented to over 600 people, received 587 formal submissions and within these submissions there were over 3000 individual comments.

To determine findings, the results of all submissions and comments made through each activity were collated, categorised and analysed by Council officers. These results and the individual submissions were further analysed through an independent audit. The results of the independent audit were consistent with Council's analysis.

In most cases it was clear whether the comment was in support or not in support of an initiative. However, in some situations this was not clear, and on this basis was included in the neutral category. Unless a submitter clearly indicated that they were neutral on a topic the audit interpreted submissions as being either positive or negative.

Other comments that did not relate directly to an element of the proposal were recorded and analysed as part of the retail and commercial study and vision analysis.

The following tables present the results of the independent analysis of the submissions for each of the endorsed key initiatives. The Town Centre Report – JBA Report on Review of Submissions (**Attachment 2**) and the individual submissions (provided in the **Supporting Documents**) are available as attachments to this report.

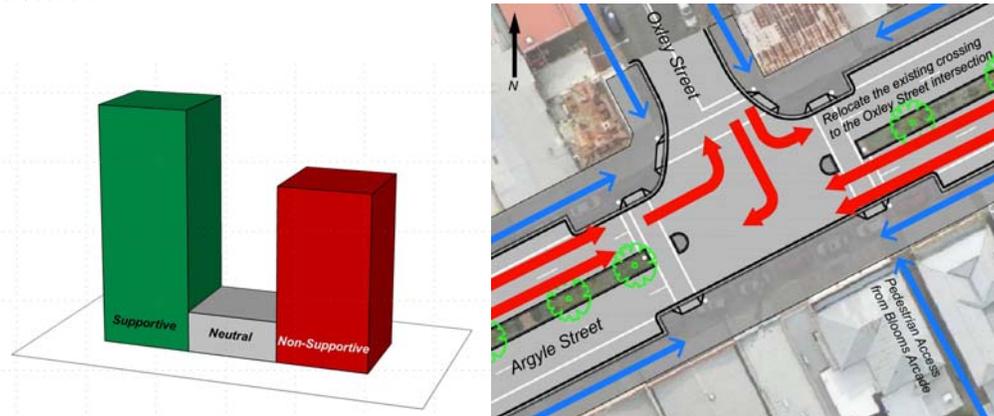
Key Initiatives

1. Traffic signals

a) Oxley Street and Argyle Street signalised intersection

	Support	Neutral	Non-support	Total
Number of Submissions	221	40	172	433
Percentage breakdown	54.4%	9.2%	39.4%	100%

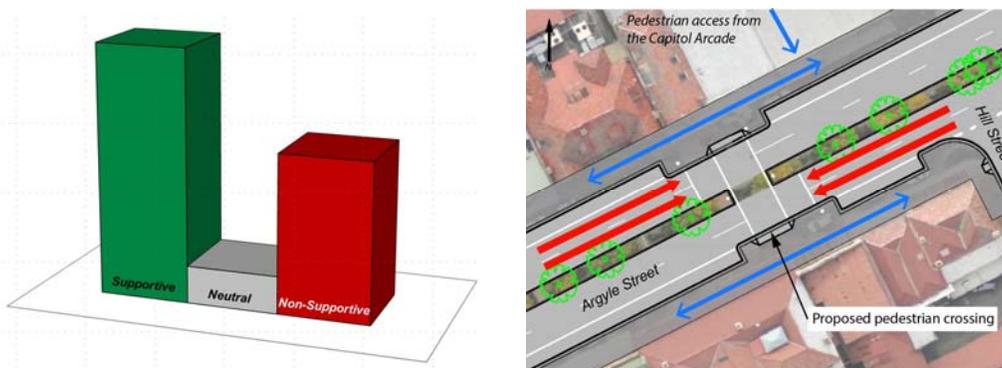
Table 1 – Community consultation results summary for the Oxley Street and Argyle Street signalised intersection.



b) Pedestrian signals east of John Street

	Support	Neutral	Non-support	Total
Number of Submissions	240	36	151	427
Percentage breakdown	56.2%	8.4%	35.3%	100%

Table 2 – Community consultation results summary for the Pedestrian signals east of John Street.



Discussions:

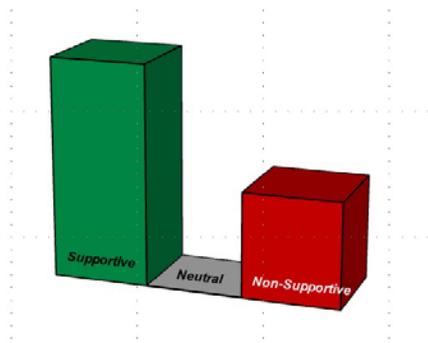
Most people supported the proposal for a fully signalised intersection at Argyle Street and Oxley Street. Together with the installation of pedestrian traffic lights, the idea of installing traffic lights in Argyle Street attracted the largest number of comments of any

issue and was strongly supported. Frequent comments in support of the traffic lights cited improved pedestrian safety.

**2. Decked car park in Oxley Street adjacent to the Civic Centre (Site 2a)
Does Camden need a decked car park?**

	Support	Neutral	Non-support	Total
Number of Submissions	287	4	124	415
Percentage breakdown	69.1%	0.9%	29.8%	100%

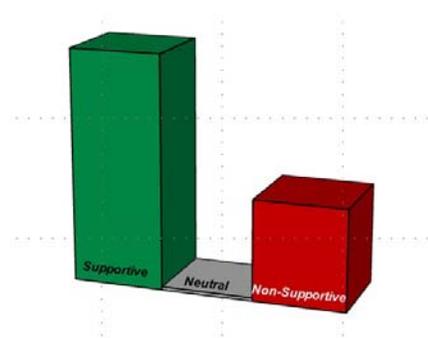
Table 3 – Community consultation results summary on the need for a decked car park in Camden.



Location of the car park in Oxley Street

	Support	Neutral	Non-support	Total
Number of Submissions	116	3	67	186
Percentage breakdown	62.7%	0.1%	36%	100%

Table 4 – Community consultation results summary on the location of the proposed decked car park in Camden.



Discussions:

The majority of community responses to the Oxley Street car park support the proposal. Further, comments in support noted a lack of street parking in Argyle Street and that a solution to increase car parking was long overdue.

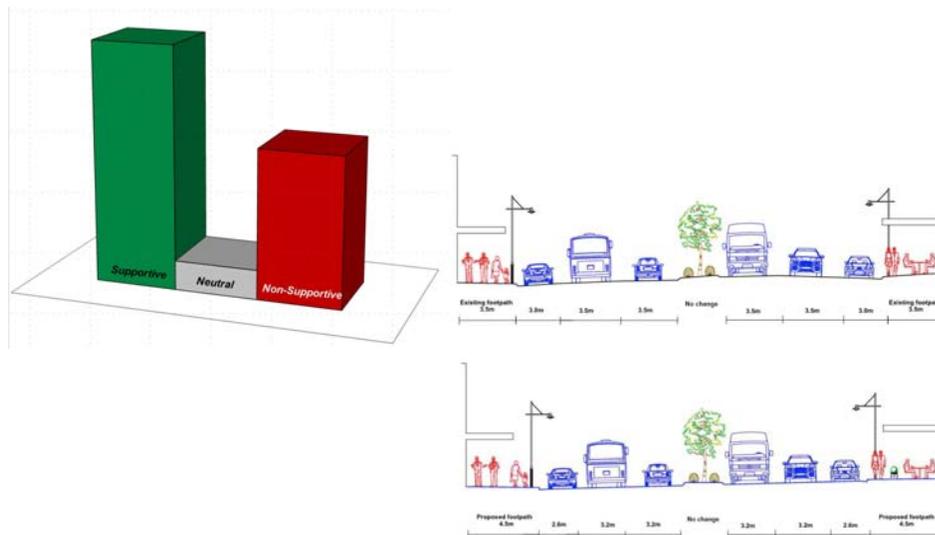
The Oxley Street, Site 2a, was preferred over other alternatives. There was strong opinion provided both for and against the Oxley Street location, with supporters claiming that it is a central location close to the main concentration of shops, with people not in support noting that there are better, less intrusive uses for such a strategically located and large site.

Of all the categories the car park had the lowest proportion of neutral submissions. This indicated that people were certain in their views, and as such strengthens the validity of the submission analysis.

3. Footpath widening

Issue	Support	Neutral	Non-support	Total
Number of Submissions	294	36	181	511
Percentage breakdown	57.5%	7.1%	35.4%	100%

Table 5 – Community consultation results summary for the footpath widening on Argyle Street, Camden.



Discussions:

The widening of the footpath attracted a large number of submissions. Submissions were largely in support; however one common theme of non-support was the narrowing of the traffic lanes.

The narrowing of traffic lanes received a number of comments. People were concerned that narrowing of the lanes may have an adverse impact on traffic safety due to Argyle Street carrying large vehicles such as trucks and buses.

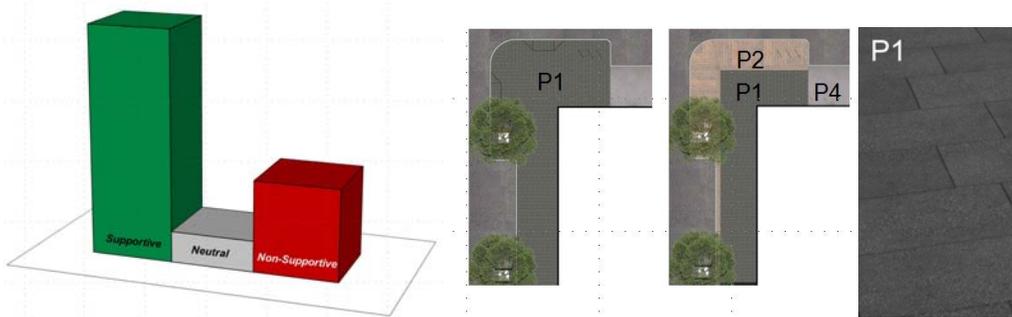
It is also noted that the lane widths are proposed to be reduced from 3.5m to 3.2m, which is still within the recommended lane widths in Austroads of 3 to 3.3 for low speed urban arterial roads.

However, when combined with the widening of the footpaths there was a clear preference for the footpaths to be wider, citing safety, pedestrian mobility and the opportunity for further outdoor dining as the main reasons. The widened footpaths will also facilitate the implementation of the recently adopted Outdoor Dining Policy.

4. Upgrade paving material

	Support	Neutral	Non-support	Total
Number of Submissions	281	38	111	430
Percentage breakdown	65.3%	8.8%	25.8%	100%

Table 6 – Community consultation results summary for the paving material upgrade on Argyle Street, Camden.



Discussions:

There was broad support for the upgrade of the paving and paving material. Specific comments were received from non-supportive submissions for paving tones of more earthy colours, while those in support recognised the long term benefits of the selected option.

5. Style of street furniture

	Support	Neutral	Non-support	Total
Number of Submissions	261	53	81	395
Percentage breakdown	66.1%	13.4%	20.5%	100%

Table 7 – Community consultation results summary for the street furniture upgrade on Argyle Street, Camden.



Discussions:

The majority of submissions recognised the existing street furniture needs to be upgraded. While the results were closer, the majority of residents also supported Councils preferred 'Historically Sensitive' street furniture option. Most non supportive submissions preferred the existing street furniture, and do not want Council to spend money on new street furniture.

Other comments

Further comments were received in relation to the proposed public domain improvements, mostly from the community forums. Comments on traffic were the most frequently occurring, with some feedback expressing concern about potential adverse impacts of the public domain works on traffic flow and safety.

For example, the following comments were received:

- install speed humps in side streets around town centre to prevent excessive speeding;
- reroute traffic from main street (redirect trucks/heavy vehicles from Argyle Street);
- consider only one lane of traffic with a shared car parking/cycle way on Argyle Street; and
- investigate a right turn into Oxley Street for west bound traffic.

In response to these concerns Council is currently considering a range of further town centre upgrades. It is important that this is done in a strategic and considered way and the above comments will be investigated as part of this broader suite of possible upgrades.

Camden Council-Sustainability Indicators Survey 2014 - Management Report

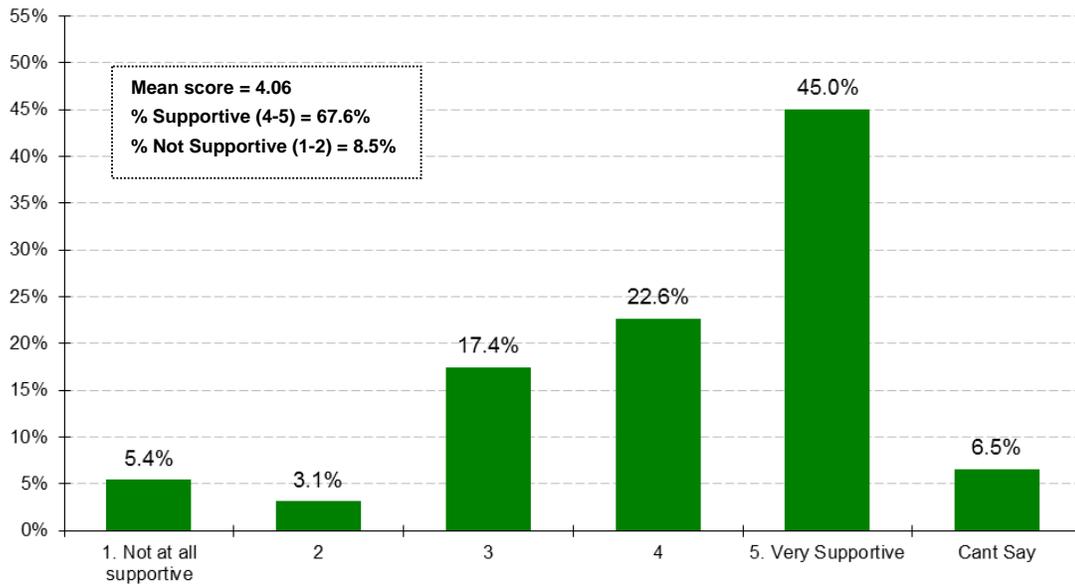
As part of the Camden Council Sustainability Indicators Survey 2014, submission participants were also asked about the proposed Camden Town Centre Improvements

Of the 403 interviews conducted around 46% of residents indicated they were aware of the public domain works.

A follow up question was asked of residents regarding their level of support for the works using a 5 point scale where 1 was 'not at all supportive' and 5 was 'very supportive'.

Residents, as detailed in the following graph, rated their level of support for the proposed public domain works as 4.06 out of 5. This indicates a very supportive view held by residents. Overall two out of three residents support the proposed public domain works, whilst only 8.5% were not supportive.

Camden Council-Sustainability Indicators Survey 2014



SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDED WORKS

Building on prior studies, technical reports and eight (8) weeks of extensive community consultation, the following summarises the recommended works.

1. Traffic Signals

Council has undertaken an assessment to determine the most appropriate location for the introduction of traffic signals on Argyle Street.

The expert assessment of the street indicates that traffic signals on Argyle Street at the intersection of Oxley Street, as well as the introduction of pedestrian signals within the vicinity of the pedestrian crossing between John Street and Hill Street, are the most appropriate locations, providing improved pedestrian safety and traffic flow within Camden. It is recommended that Council endorse the traffic light locations to allow for detail design and implementation, based on:

- the Camden Town Centre Traffic and Transport Study 2013 and improving pedestrian connectivity and safety; and
- broad community support for the proposal.

The signalisation of both the pedestrian crossing and intersection facilities are subject to final design & RMS approval.

2. Decked Car Park

Council has undertaken an assessment to determine the appropriate location for the development of a decked car park as an extension of the Camden Town Centre Traffic and Transport Study.

Of the five potential sites, Site 2a Oxley Street (Adjacent to the Civic Centre) is the most functional and cost effective for the development of a decked car park. Accordingly, it is recommended that Council adopt Oxley Street as the preferred site to allow for design, based on:

- the Decked Car Park Assessment scoring the highest;
- increased car park capacity closest to Argyle Street when compared to other Council owned car parks;
- minimal impact on adjoining sites; and
- broad community support for the proposal.

The proposed decked carpark is planned for construction in 2016/17 with an indicative budget of \$3.6M allocated from Section 94 cash reserves in the 2014/15 budget. Design will commence following further consultation to confirm the final concept design.

Should Council resolve to adopt the Oxley Street location for the decked car park, the Camden Contributions Plan 2011 will require amendment to reflect this change.

3. **Footpath Width**

Council has undertaken an assessment to determine the feasibility of increasing the width of the footpath from 3.66m to 4.66m. This has shown that it is possible to extend the footpath width and reduce the steep footpath slope. Accordingly, it is recommended that Council endorse the progression of a wider footpath for Argyle Street, to allow design resolution and implementation, based on:

- improving footpath slopes;
- the opportunity for greater Town Centre activity;
- providing additional space for pedestrians;
- providing additional space for the newly adopted and updated Camden Council Outdoor Dining policy;
- reduced lane widths from 3.5m to 3.2m; and
- broad community support for the proposal.

4. **Paving Material**

Council has undertaken an assessment to determine the most appropriate paving material for Argyle Street, Camden.

The assessment of the material choices indicates that grey granite is the most appropriate long term paving choice for Argyle Street. Accordingly, it is recommended that Council endorse grey granite as the primary paving material for Argyle Street, based on:

- the durability and stain resistance of granite affords the best opportunity to get the most effective long term solution;
- based on Heritage advice, granite is an acceptable option; and
- broad community support for the proposal.

The opportunity exists to explore the incorporation of some more 'earthy' paving materials as a secondary material for highlights and detailed treatments as identified by some members of the community. This opportunity will be explored through the design process and presented to Council as the project continues. This process will include further consultation with the Camden Historical Society as a stakeholder with a particular interest and knowledge base that has the potential to add great value to the outcome.

5. Street Furniture

Council has undertaken an assessment to determine the most appropriate furniture style for Argyle Street, Camden.

The assessment of the furniture choices indicates that a selection that is simple and historically sensitive is the most appropriate long term furniture choice for Argyle Street. Accordingly, it is recommended that Council endorse the furniture selection (Historically Sensitive), based on the most historically appropriate response to the town, based on:

- the notion that the street furniture nominated does not compete with Camden's current historical and architectural elements as confirmed by Council's Heritage Consultant; and
- broad community support for the proposal.

The recommendation is that Council adopt the 'Historically Sensitive' furniture style as the consistent direction from which to make detailed furniture design decisions. The detailed selection of furniture items will be developed and explored through the design process, with updates being provided to Councillors as the project continues.

Proposed Staging and Timing

The upgrade of Argyle Street is a long term project for Council, with staff currently detailing plans for the implementation over a number of years (Refer Options Plan – **Attachment 3**).

Attachment 3 to this report is an overall plan providing options for staging of the works over a period of time, with an overall indicative cost of approximately \$12m. Estimates will be further refined as the detailed design develops and the full extent of civil and landscape works are known. The works have been divided into 7 options that can be considered as part of an overall staging plan.

At Council's Ordinary Meeting of 24 June 2014, Council approved a budget allocation of \$1.754M for the implementation of **Stage 1** Camden Town Centre upgrade. The focus of this work was between John Street and Oxley Street and did not specifically include the pedestrian signals midblock between John Street and Hill Street (Stage 2). This initial location has been selected due to recommendations by Council officers, based on steeper footpath slopes, high pedestrian volume and proximity to the proposed decked car park.

As design investigations have continued and budget options clarified, it is recommended that Options 1 and 2 (as shown in **Attachment 3**), be undertaken as one construction project, with an indicative cost of \$3.5M.

Due to the increased extent of works, to avoid major disruption to the community during Christmas 2015, and to fall outside of major events planned in Argyle St (e.g. Camden Show, Anzac Day & Light Up Camden), it is envisaged that the works be split into 2 components. Works between Oxley Street and John Street are proposed to be undertaken between the months of June and November 2015. Works between John Street and Hill Street proposed to be undertaken between February and April / May 2016.

The attached options plan (**Attachment 3**) reflects an indicative program of works for the coming years that would achieve a comprehensive upgrade of Argyle Street and an upgrade of John Street between Argyle Street and Mitchell Street. This program

identifies the potential next stage of works extending either to Murray Street, or John Street, subject to the outcomes of the Council's Commercial and Retail study which will be brought to Council in a future report.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Camden Town Centre Works

As part of adopting the 2014/15 budget Council allocated \$1.754M towards the Camden Town Centre Upgrade (Stage 1).

The balance of funds required for Stage 1 is \$1.746M. It is recommended that this balance be funded from a combination of Capital Works Reserve, Asset Renewal Reserve and pending grant income. The final funding package cannot be determined until the outcome of the grant application/s is known. In order to provide certainty around funding, it is recommended that \$1.0M be funded from the Asset Renewal Reserve and \$746K from the Capital Works Reserve. Upon receipt of applicable grant funds the level of funding required from these reserves could be reduced. This will allow Council to complete Options 1 and 2, being the total Stage 1 package of works.

The remaining stages of the Camden Town Centre works will be included in the long term financial plan and will be considered by Council in its upcoming budget deliberations. Council Officers will also continue to explore possible funding sources to expedite future stages of the Camden Town Centre Improvement project.

Funding opportunities for all stages include:

- RMS blackspot funding (grant application lodged);
- Western Sydney Airport Local Roads Program (grant application lodged);
- National Stronger Regions Fund (grant application in progress – to be lodged on 28 November); and
- Stormwater Management Levy – for drainage related works only.

Camden Decked Carpark

In addition, Council has adopted an indicative budget of \$3.6M to be funded from Section 94 cash reserves, for the construction of a decked car park in Camden (Construction 2016/17).

Should Council resolve to adopt the Oxley Street location for the decked car park, then the Camden Contributions Plan 2011 will be amended to reflect this change.

In order to commence the design phase \$200K is required to be forward funded from the Capital Works Reserve. Upon the Camden Contributions Plan being amended Section 94 will reimburse the Capital Works Reserve with the \$200K.

CONCLUSION

This report presents the findings of a comprehensive community consultation period and seeks Council's support for a range of works and projects.

This engagement process included inviting community input into the future vision for the Camden Town Centre and future uses of Council's building assets.

During the eight (8) weeks of community consultation from 23 July to 17 September, Council requested community input on a suite of proposed upgrades to the town centre of Camden. This consultation has identified strong support for the proposed works, and the level of community involvement and engagement through this process is a testament to the community's passion for their town.

Council presented to well over 600 individual people, from a broad cross section of the community. Throughout the eight (8) weeks Council received 587 submissions containing over 3000 individual comments.

Throughout the consultation period Council conducted two (2) community workshops, with an additional workshop following the close of the formal consultation period. Council accepted comment through various media options, events, and wrote and letter-box-dropped numerous residents, shopkeepers and interested stakeholders.

From here, following consideration of the submissions received through the community engagement process, Council's endorsement is sought for the infrastructure works in the Camden Town Centre. The works and projects as discussed in this report are recommended for adoption. If adopted, Council Officers will now seek to progress the design and all requirements for the implementation of the Camden Town Centre Improvements. Meanwhile, the Retail and Commercial Study and future vision for the Camden Town Centre along with strategies for the future of Council's building assets are being finalised and will be presented to Council for further consideration in early 2015.

RECOMMENDED

That Council:

- i. endorse the key initiatives as recommended (Items 1 – 5 of this report) including:**
 - **traffic lights at the intersection of Argyle Street and Oxley Street and pedestrian lights on Argyle Street, between John Street and Hill Street,**
 - **a decked car park located in Oxley Street (Site 2a),**
 - **increased footpath width of one metre along Argyle Street,**
 - **footpath paving material as detailed in this report, and**
 - **upgraded street furniture as detailed in this report;**
- ii. endorse the proposed staging plan for the completion of the works noted as Stage 1 (comprising Options 1 and 2), as shown on Attachment 3;**
- iii. transfer \$1.0M from the Asset Renewal Reserve and \$746K from the Capital Works Reserve being the balance of funds required for Stage 1 of the Camden Town Centre works;**
- iv. transfer a further \$200k from the Capital Works Reserve to fund the design phase, with the \$200K to be reimbursed from Section 94 upon amendment of the Camden Contributions Plan.**
- v. progress further investigation and design of Stage 1 (comprising Options 1 and 2) of the Argyle Street improvements with delivery of the works as indicated in the report;**
- vi. progress further investigation and design of the decked car park in Oxley Street (Site 2a);**

vii. undertake an amendment to the Camden Contributions Plan 2011; and

viii. write and thank those who made submissions, and advise them of Council's decision.

ORD01

ATTACHMENTS

1. Argyle Street - Original Draft Concept
2. Town Centre Report - JBA Report on Review of Submissions
3. Town Centre Report - Camden Town Centre Options Plan
4. Provided under separate cover - Submissions - Camden Town Centre - Freeform submissions - *Supporting Document*
5. Provided under separate cover - Submissions - Camden Town Centre - Have Your Say - *Supporting Document*
6. Provided under separate cover - Submissions - Camden Town Centre - Online Questionnaire - *Supporting Document*
7. Provided under separate cover - Submissions - Camden Town Centre - Feedback from First Community Event(s) - *Supporting Document*
8. Provided under separate cover - Submissions - Camden Town Centre - Feedback from Second Community Event - *Supporting Document*
9. Provided under separate cover - Submissions - Camden Town Centre - Feedback from Third Community Event - *Supporting Document*