

Positively

PENRITH



St Marys Town Centre

Draft Place Plan





Statement of Recognition of Penrith City's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Heritage

St Marys Town Centre sits on the banks of Wianamatta – South Creek. It is Wianamatta Country, nestled within two vital waterways, South Creek and Ropes Creek.

Council values the unique status of Aboriginal people as the original owners and custodians of lands and waters, including the land and waters of Penrith City.

Council values the unique status of Torres Strait Islander people as the original owners and custodians of the Torres Strait Islands and surrounding waters.

We work together for a united Australia and City that respects this land of ours, that values the diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural heritage and provides justice and equity for all.

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Executive Summary

The St Marys Town Centre is undergoing an exciting transformation with new housing, infrastructure, and public space projects on the horizon. With so much happening, the community want improvements that benefit everyone and can start sooner rather than later.

The St Marys Town Centre Place Plan will help prepare and support the community and businesses for the change that is coming. It will establish priorities for the next 5-10 years and identify ways for how everyone can get involved.



Planning for the future

Penrith City Council is working with community and businesses to manage growth and change in St Marys Town Centre (Town Centre) over the next 20 years. The delivery of this Place Plan will complement the St Marys Town Centre Structure Plan (adopted by Council on 28 November 2022) and support the St Marys Master Plan (underway).

The St Marys Town Centre Structure Plan has set a place vision, place outcomes, and set of directions to guide the growth of St Marys as a vibrant, welcoming, sustainable and authentic strategic centre. The Master Plan will further test and refine the directions and concepts of the Structure Plan to provide the technical analysis required for implementation.

| STRUCTURE PLAN | MASTER PLAN | PLACE PLAN |
|---|--|--|
| Plans for future development and growth concept | Tests and costs Structure Plan concepts | Current issues and concerns – supporting change management |
| Place vision | Fine grain road networks | Focus on the immediate |
| Place outcomes and strategic directions | Urban design and other technical studies | Solutions |
| Land use | | People focused |
| Public spaces | | Deliverables in scope with partners |

With the Structure Plan and Master Plan operating at a high-level, the St Marys Town Centre Place Plan outlines how we can prepare for the change to come.



A Place Vision for

St Marys Town Centre

In 2022, Council undertook community and stakeholder consultation to help inform the St Marys Town Centre Structure Plan and develop a place vision for the St Marys Town Centre.

This shared place vision directs the transformation of the Town Centre over the next 20 years.

ST MARYS: A THRIVING DESTINATION IN THE WESTERN PARKLAND CITY

In 20 years, St Marys will have transformed from a suburban centre offering local convenience to a **vibrant strategic centre with a welcoming, sustainable and authentic urban experience.**

With living, commercial, service, industrial, cultural and recreational areas served by an integrated regional transport hub, St Marys will be a place where one would find everything one needs - a mixed-use centre in its true sense.

Celebrating its abundant natural assets and rich history, St Marys will be known for its place beside South Creek with green landscapes and views of the Blue Mountains.

With a network of people-places connected by a walkable and safe public realm, and a contemporary and high-quality built environment, St Marys will attract people from all walks of life as well as businesses looking to operate in an inclusive and diverse community.



Vibrant

As a vibrant and diverse economy, one would find everything one needs in St Marys. The Town Centre will have a diverse economic offering across a range of sectors.



Welcoming

As a welcoming place, St Marys will protect and build upon its community spirit and diversity to become a safe and inclusive centre with diverse housing, open spaces and transport connections.



Sustainable

As a sustainable town centre, St Marys will leverage upon investment in public transport to offer a mixed-use and walkable urban environment.



Authentic

As an authentic destination, St Marys will protect its natural, historic and cultural assets and promote arts and creativity.

Why we need a Place Plan

While much of our planning to date looks far into the future, the St Marys Town Centre Place Plan is a unique opportunity to focus on the improvements that can be made today. This is particularly important given the change that's coming to St Marys over the coming decades.

This Place Plan provides actions that seek to improve the St Marys Town Centre today, but also support the place and its community for the future. Some actions can be done by prioritising existing resources and some will require additional funding through grants to deliver.

The community know and love their place best and can help activate the Town Centre by organising, hosting, or attending an activity or contributing to other improvements that will see our local streets, lanes, arcades and parks feel safer and more vibrant.

Penrith City Council wants to support residents, businesses, and community organisations in making St Marys Town Centre an even better place to live and work, and an exciting authentic destination for visitors. The St Marys Town Centre Place Plan will provide a roadmap for what this support looks like and how everyone can get involved.

Placemaking is a "creative and inclusive process where many different people can collaborate to make their local public spaces more sociable, accessible and attractive."

Penrith City Council

What will this Place Plan help deliver?

The actions detailed within the St Marys Town Centre Place Plan can be grouped into four categories:

Installation

A piece of artwork, street furniture or equipment that is left in place.

What could this lead to?

These actions will help 'spruce up' our Town Centre, making it a welcoming and vibrant place during the day and at night.

Event

A large-scale initiative like a festival that takes place in public areas and draws a diverse local and visitor audience.

What could this lead to?

These actions help us shout from the rooftops why we love St Marys so much. They attract visitors from beyond the area and provide an opportunity for the community to come together.

Activity

A small gathering, class or workshop on the streets, parks or in our local businesses and community spaces.

What could this lead to?

These actions will connect current and future community members and can support local entrepreneurs. The more activities we have in Town Centre, the more we get St Marys buzzing.

Enabling Infrastructure

An outlet, facility or governance structure that improves public space to allow installations, activities, and events to happen.

What could this lead to?

Making vibrancy easier to achieve and deliver for everyone.

Get involved!

The St Marys community is proud of their Town Centre and shared history. They band together during the tough and good times to make their places and life better. The St Marys Town Centre Place Plan calls on the community to get behind these actions and collaborate to make ideas a reality.

If you're interested in any of the actions shared in this Place Plan get in touch with Council at the St Marys Business Office or Penrith Civic Centre. Also share this document with friends, neighbours, families, and local organisations that you think could do good in your neighbourhood.



What are the priority actions for the next 5 years?

The St Marys Town Centre Place Plan seeks to deliver the following actions over the next 5 years



Vibrant

Encourage and build capacity of local businesses in the St Marys Town Centre to apply for business grants from the NSW Government

Prepare and distribute a Town Centre map promoting local businesses and events with input from local community

Expand the Façade Improvement Program to trial temporary placemaking opportunities focused on outdoor dining for restaurants and late night businesses and rear of property improvements, including lighting

Partner with Sydney Metro and Sydney Trains to activate the plazas at St Marys Station and connect local communities, creatives and organisations for programming

Advocate for Sydney Metro to deliver community information and place-based wayfinding within the Arrival and Interchange sub-precinct (i.e. digital billboards that showcase library programs, heritage trail, upcoming events, etc, to improve the experience for customers)

Encourage pop-ups and seek tenancies for the empty shops along Queen Street, focusing on Queen Street between Station and Phillip Street



Welcoming

Continue to deliver creative hoardings along construction sites in the St Marys Town Centre

Pilot a web-portal for St Marys Town Centre that maps out current and future projects and sites

Prepare an Activation Plan for Central Park that is developed in partnership with the St Marys community

Mitigate the construction impacts of St Marys Central Park through wayfinding and activation of nearby public spaces (i.e., footpath decals, activation of nearby parks)

Deliver a Pedestrian Lighting Strategy for the St Marys Town Centre



Sustainable

Integrate end of trip facilities into new Council-owned community facilities in the St Marys Town Centre

Develop options to address heat in existing and new Council-owned facilities (i.e., heat refuges)

Expand shade and tree canopy cover within the St Marys Town Centre along key movement corridors

Increase community connection to South Creek by supporting the work of local organisations and schools (i.e. Connection to Country, rehabilitation and environmental value)

Deliver educational material that explains the benefits of trees and green infrastructure across the St Marys Town Centre

Refer to Part C of this Place Plan for more information on these actions.



Authentic

Deliver artistic wayfinding across the Town Centre as a way to unpack connection to Country, history, and St Marys authentic place stories

Install welcome signs and local art at the key entryways to the St Marys Town Centre that highlight our authentic identity and offer a warm and inviting introduction to the town

Investigate the programming of new activities and events that celebrate diverse cultures and authentic stories of locals living and working in St Marys

Expand the murals in St Marys, amplify local champions and supporting local talent. e.g. St Marys art trail research

Create opportunities for participation in activities in the open spaces adjoining South Creek, through placemaking events and the provision of infrastructure

Explore the creation of a campaign to promote what's special about St Marys to a Sydney wide audience (i.e., invite and curate an experience for social media influencers)

Support the investigation of a new Library and Community Hub in the St Marys Town Centre





PART A

About the project

The project study area

A rapidly changing region

The St Marys Town Centre sits within the broader Western Sydney region.

The NSW Government is positioning Western Sydney to become the national capital for advanced manufacturing, built around the Western Sydney International (Nancy-Bird Walton) Airport and the development of the Aerotropolis precinct, along with its connecting infrastructure.

The St Marys Town Centre plays an important role in supporting growth in jobs and housing within the Western Parkland City and over the coming years as the Western Sydney International Airport opens.



Figure 1 – St Marys in the context of Penrith's Economic Triangle, Sydney, and Parramatta CBDs and Aerotropolis

By 2036, it is expected that nearly.

50%

of Sydneysiders will call the Western Parkland City home.



Nearly every summer, Penrith records the hottest temperatures in Sydney where the mercury can rise above 45 degrees.



Penrith is the closest Local Government Area to the new Airport and surrounding Aerotropolis precinct.

Strategic alignment

The St Marys Town Centre Place Plan is guided by strategic documents at state, regional and local levels alongside the suite of St Marys Town Centre strategic planning documents.

NSW

WESTERN SYDNEY

PENRITH CITY COUNCIL AREA

ST MARYS TOWN CENTRE

| WHAT IS THIS DOCUMENT? | WHAT DOES IT SAY ABOUT ST MARYS TOWN CENTRE? | HOW DOES IT INFORM THE PLACE PLAN? |
|--|---|--|
| Public spaces charter (2021) | Identifies 10 principles for quality public space, to support all those who advocate on behalf of, provide advice on, make decisions about, or plan, design, manage and activate public spaces in NSW. | Provides best practices advice on how to achieve quality streets and parks, fostering a vibrant and buzzing Town Centre. |
| Guide and framework to place activation, Department of Planning & Environment | Informs on steps to activate public spaces and their benefits. | Provides best practice advice on how to host events and activities and deliver activations within the Town Centre. |
| Western City District Plan (WCDP) (2018) | A plan for managing growth that recognises the diversity and richness of St Marys' unique cultural identity alongside its important open spaces and sporting facilities. It envisages the Town Centre as an important spine for the Western Parklands City supporting a growing population of the region. | The Place Plan is a key component of realising WCDP vision for Western Sydney through the prioritisation of actions within St Marys diverse and active nighttime economy, improve transport connectivity and walkability, activate Queen Street and support innovation. Town Centre that supports. |
| Greater Sydney Region Plan: A Metropolis of Three Cities | Build on a vision of three cities, where everyone lives within 30 minutes of their daily needs. It identifies St Marys as an 'activity node and growth area that offers opportunities to promote tourism and take advantage of local economic activity. | The Place Plan is a key component of realising these opportunities and will be supporting the development of tourism sector, utilising marketing to promote St Marys to the wider Sydney region and diversifying and stimulating economic activities within 500m of St Marys Metro Station. |
| Penrith Local Strategic Planning Statement (2020) (LSPS) | Sets out the 20-year vision for land use in the Penrith City Council area which includes St Marys Town Centre. | The Place Plan is guided by the LSPS's desire for the transformation of St Marys Town Centre into a strategic hub that supports the growth of Greater Penrith, Western Sydney Airport and the Aerotropolis. |
| Community Strategic Plan 2036+ (2022) (CSP) | Identifies the main priorities and aspirations of the Greater Penrith community, including St Marys. | The Place Plan is informed by the vision of the CSP, helping to set a clear road map of community aspirations. |
| St Marys Town Centre Structure Plan (2022) | Sets a 20-year direction for the long term transformation of St Marys Town Centre. | This Place Plan is guided by the Place Vision and Place Outcomes identified by the community in St Marys Town Centre Structure Plan. |
| St Marys Town Centre Master Plan (in development) | Sets 10-year designs for land use changes and associated infrastructure of St Marys Town Centre. | The Place Plan will test projects and street improvements. The Master Plan compliments the Place Plan, by providing longer-term permanent street and park improvements. |

Principles for successful and quality public spaces

Outlined in the Public Spaces Charter, these are a set of 10 principles that assist in guiding the planning, designing, managing, and activating of public spaces.



1. Open and welcoming

Activation should welcome people of all ages, genders, abilities, cultures, religions, incomes and backgrounds.



2. Community focused

Activation should be a participatory process that helps people socialise and take ownership of public spaces.



3. Culture and creativity

Activation should share stories, values, history, perspectives, and personal expression.



4. Local character and identity

Activation should build on the existing character of the place, its heritage, and its people.



5. Green and resilient

Activation should embody sustainability and promote ecological awareness.



6. Healthy and active

Activation should support physical and mental health.



7. Local business and economies

Activation should support local businesses and economies.



8. Safe and secure

Activation should enhance the safety of public spaces.



9. Designed for place

Activation should make public spaces more comfortable and usable, and balance needs for activity and for rest.



10. Well-managed

Activation should be managed with appropriate resources and funding to ensure quality outcomes.

St Marys Town Centre

The St Marys Town Centre is located 25 km west of the Parramatta CBD and 46 km from Sydney CBD. It is connected by established and emerging rail and road networks including the Great Western Highway, St Marys Train Station, and with the soon-to-open St Marys Sydney Metro

Standing proudly as one of the two main centres within the Penrith Local Government Area (LGA), the St Marys Town Centre is a crucial component of Penrith's 'Economic Triangle', which also encompasses Penrith and the future Aerotropolis precinct.

The St Marys Town Centre spans 245 hectares across the suburbs of St Marys and North St Marys. It contains 3,500 residents and its community catchment reaches over 45,000 people. The largest and most productive industrial lands of the Penrith area are located north of the train station.

A number of well-loved community attractions are located in the St Marys Town Centre including Ripples Leisure Centre, Penrith City Council Library and Coachmans Park drawing in community from surrounding suburbs.

The St Marys Town Centre is set within a valley and surrounded by a rich natural landscape including Wianamatta - South Creek and an array of existing parks and open spaces. The forthcoming Central Park, will further link its core with the surrounding nature, reinforcing community bonds and creating a civic heart within the Town Centre.



Population projections are that the Town Centre will be home to another 11,000 - 12,500 people over the next 20 years.



By 2041, St Marys Town Centre will offer up to four times the number of homes it offered in 2021.



By 2041, St Marys Town Centre will have transformed into a vibrant strategic centre with a diverse economic offering and over two and a half times the number of jobs it offered in 2016.

Council's endorsed Employment Lands Strategy recognises the area north of the rail line in St Marys as one of five primary industrial precincts in Penrith LGA.

A snapshot of time in the St Marys Town Centre

St Marys has a long and multi-layered history. As a place on the banks of Wianamatta - South Creek, St Marys has great significance for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community. It is also an increasingly diverse community, where 13,570 people from different backgrounds, language groups, religions and nationalities call St Marys home. Celebrating our past, helps us look to the future.

Wianamatta Country

St Marys lies at the convergence of two crucial waterways, South Creek and Ropes Creek. This confluence has held profound cultural and ceremonial importance for local Aboriginal communities for thousands of years, preserving deep connections to their land and heritage.

The Town Centre boasts numerous Aboriginal heritage sites, many of which align with existing and ancient ridges and creek locations. A network of Aboriginal walking paths, trade routes, and songlines serve as essential cultural corridors.

It's crucial to acknowledge that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples maintain a living and enduring bond with the land, a connection that persists despite the impact of colonisation.

Early Colonial

From 1804, a series of land grants were made along South Creek. The township's proximity to the creek ensured that the area became one of the largest estates in the colony.

Wianamatta Country

St Marys sits on the banks of Wianamatta - South Creek. It is, and always will be, Wianamatta Country.

Recent times

The industrial development at St Marys was crucial to the growth and expansion of the whole Penrith LGA in the following four decades. In the early 1990s the NSW Government funded the bus/rail interchange and the easy access upgrade of St Marys train station.

Industrial

The railway station built in 1863 led to the growth of local industries like tanning and wagon production. During World War II, the industrial area, originally situated along the Great Western Highway, moved north of the rail line and expanded to manufacture ammunitions employing around 3,500 people.

Early colonial

From 1804, the region experienced radical change after Governor King made a series of land grants along Wianamatta - South Creek and the partial subdivision of O'Connell Estates into town allotments and fields. The township's proximity to the creek ensured that the area became one of the largest estates in the colony. The township was originally named South Creek and became St Marys after the church of St Mary Magdalene was consecrated in 1840.



Figure 3 - 1804 map of the country between Penrith, Camden and Liverpool (Source: National Library of Australia)

Industrial

St Marys continued to grow, particularly with the construction of the train station in 1863, which marked the establishment of local industries like tanning and wagon building. 'G and J Bennett,' renowned wagon builders of NSW (1858-1958), made St Marys famous for their top-quality heavy transport wagons.

By the late 19th century, the Town Centre shifted from the Great Western Highway to Queen Street, leading to area-wide redevelopment and road expansion. During World War II, the industrial zone north of the railway expanded to produce ammunition, employing around 3,500 people. This industrial boom brought about new job opportunities and housing needs.

To accommodate the workforce, an area west of Queen Street designated temporary cottages on small plots, known as 'Duration Cottages,' which still exist throughout the precinct today.



Figure 4 - 'G and J Bennett,' wagon builder (St Marys Town Centre Corp)

Recent times

By 1950, the industrial areas were noted for its diversity with a work force of 2,500 people across 94 firms. The industrial development at St Marys was crucial to the growth and expansion of the whole Penrith LGA in the following four decades. In the early 1990s the NSW Government funded the bus/rail interchange and the easy access upgrade of St Marys train station.

Council upgraded Queen Street and sealed the adjacent car parks. The interchange will soon include the Sydney Metro airport rail link, set to open in 2026. With St Marys serving as a pivotal junction between the Sydney Metro and Sydney Trains. This expansion is expected to stimulate new housing developments within the Town Centre, in close proximity to the interchange.

Nine items of heritage significance remain in the Study Area.

These include St Marys Railway Station group (including goods shed, signal box and crane), St Marys Magdalene Anglican Church, Victoria Park and Memorial, St Marys Public School, and Bronte House on Gidley Street.



Figure 5 – Bronte House
(St Marys Town Centre Corp)



Figure 7 – Heritage goods shed outside the train station
(St Marys Town Centre Structure Plan)



Figure 6 – Parish church of St Marys Magdalene
(penrithhistory.com)

Want to know more? For more information on local history in St Marys refer to Penrith City Council's St Marys Town Centre Structure Plan – background evidence: Understanding St Marys and search images via Penrith City Library's catalogue using an 'All Resources' search.

Celebrating our past, looking to the future

The St Marys Town Centre is on the cusp of transformation, driven by significant public and private investment, and while there's some big City-shaping activity underway, it is the people who make the place special and unique. We know great places are made by the locals who love them. So, the St Marys Town Centre Place Plan has prioritised the community voice and unique qualities of the place.

Community-led

The St Marys Town Centre Place Plan is community led – capturing the values, vision, desires, ideas, and actions shared by community members to identify the best way forward for the Town Centre and its people.

While this document marks a moment in time, the process is ongoing and iterative. The St Marys community, and their shared history, are the starting point for any decision making.



Creating great places requires a collaborative approach and ownership from all those that live, work, and visit the place. By working together, we can harness people power to achieve more, and best of all, create lasting connections creating a safer, healthier, and better-connected St Marys Town Centre.

Consultation process

Council recognises that community consultation is a crucial starting point in the planning process. This involves a thorough understanding of community feedback to date, building upon the community's Place Vision and Place Outcomes identified in the Structure Plan and on-the-ground consultation.

From May to June 2023, during community and stakeholder consultation, we encouraged residents, local businesses, community groups, and organisations to participate. We undertook a diverse range of engagement activities including pop-ups, intercept surveys, online surveys, door knocks, interviews, and workshops. Visiting community at school, their place of business, along Queen Street, at well-loved local facilities, events, and activities across St Marys Town Centre.

Communication activities



Instagram posts



5,500 letters and postcards to property owners



Facebook posts



Posters on windows of local businesses



Media release picked up by Western Weekender and Autumn Our Place



St Marys Town Centre Corp Newsletter



Council e-newsletter & Your Say page



Postcards at local businesses, St Marys Library and Ripples

Engagement activities



Community pop-ups across four events



Community intercept surveys across three locations



One online community survey



One community workshop



One online business survey



Two business door knocks



Nine stakeholder interviews



Two business briefings



One business workshop



The case for change

If one thing is certain, it's that change is coming and everyone in the community has a role to play. How prepared we are for that change will depend on the work done today.

This is what the St Marys Town Centre Place Plan is about – finding opportunity over the coming years to celebrate what's unique about St Marys Town Centre and the community that makes it special.

We heard during the consultation that the community can benefit from the area's transformation and even thrive during periods of uncertainty, if they are involved with the change and play an active role in placemaking opportunities.



Investment now and into the future

Over the coming years, St Marys will gain new facilities and infrastructure like a new train station (Metro), upgraded and new green space, new community spaces including a library, and additional housing and jobs.

In the meantime, construction sites and closure of public spaces as they undergo upgrades, may cause disruption to locals and impact on the experience of visitors. In particular, construction of the Sydney Metro Western Sydney Airport line is set for completion in 2026 and apartment developments across the St Marys Town Centre will also be filled with new residents over the coming years.

Significant investment in places, buildings and infrastructure may cause disruption in the short to medium term but will also benefit the community in the longer term. The new infrastructure being rolled out across St Marys Town Centre has the potential to bring significant economic investment, social opportunity and draw in new residents, commuters, and visitors alike.

Spending time on the things that matter to community

This Place Plan prioritises actions based on community feedback and the opportunity to support local residents and businesses in making their places better and their connections stronger.

The strengths of the St Marys community will help develop capacity to leverage the change and trends that are coming. These strengths can be further supported through training, workshops, and other educational programs.

"With the rail upgrade hopefully it will bring a bit more of a crowd."

Business workshop participant





PART B

About St Marys Town Centre

Our people and community

St Marys is home to a growing, young population with a notable proportion of young families and workforce. The suburb is characterised by a high level of cultural diversity – almost 1 in 2 residents were born overseas.


Demographic snapshot

Who is the community?

3,538
total residents
in the study area

20%
people aged under 18
*compared to 12%
across the LGA*

14%
people aged 65 and over
*compared to 12%
across the LGA*

 **9%**
people need assistance
due to disability
*compared to 5% of the
population across the LGA*

20%
Aboriginal and/or Torres
Strait Islander people
*compared to 3%
across the LGA*

What is the cultural heritage of the community?



36%
of residents were
born overseas



27%
non-English-
speaking households
*compared to 17%
across the LGA*

The most common
languages used at
home other than
English include Arabic
(2.9%), Tagalog (2.5%),
Samoan (1.9%),
Hindi (1.6%), and
Filipino (1.4%)

How do people live?



47%
households
rent privately
*compared to 24%
across the LGA*

13%
households
renting social
housing
*compared to 4%
across the LGA*

10%
households owning
homes outright
*compared to 25%
across the LGA*

1 in 2
travel to work
via private motor
vehicle

The people of St Marys are...

... a diverse and socially-minded community with a strong desire to maintain the St Marys place and historic character, while taking advantage of opportunities for growth to benefit everyone.

WE ARE...

OUR VALUES



A diverse community that values inclusivity

The St Marys community gets more and more diverse as the years go on. Between 2011 and 2021, the percentage of residents born overseas increased significantly. Similarly, the percentage of English-only speaking households decreased from 69% in 2011 to 59% in 2021.



Big fans of a good gathering and party

Community value culture, local activity and entertainment that celebrates the history and diversity of St Marys.



Champions of the 'fair go', socially-minded

The St Marys community appreciates the strong sense of social connection, with high levels of participation in community events.



Supporters of local business, and family-owned businesses ourselves

The St Marys community appreciates the communal village atmosphere and connection to place. There is a strong business community, from long-standing family-owned service businesses to smaller culturally specific market niches.



Proud of our shared history

St Marys is Wianamatta Country and home to several long-standing community groups, such as St Marys Combined Pensioners and Superannuants Association, and St Marys District Historical Society. Residents value the history and heritage of St Marys.

Our places and spaces

A network of cultural, social and recreational spaces are located across the St Marys Town Centre. These facilities and assets are much-loved by locals and greater connection will be critical to the future sustainability of the St Marys Town Centre.



St Marys Library



St Marys Community Centre

Social and cultural

St Marys and District Historical Society



Existing community activities and events



Heritage listed churches



New Sydney Metro Plazas



New community Hub and New Library



New trial pop-up parks and temporary cycle paths

Future

New Central Park



Residential areas within the Town Centre have access to public open spaces within 200m walking distance



Wianamatta - South Creek & South Creek Park



View to the Blue Mountains



Ripples Leisure Centre

Natural and recreational



The Kingsway Playing Field



Kokoda & Coachmans Park

Social and cultural places

The St Marys Town Centre includes a number of religious, creative, community and recreational facilities that provide space for learning, gathering and celebration.

SPACES IN FOCUS

Key social and cultural spaces within the St Marys Town Centre include:

- **Wianamatta – South Creek** – is a waterway running along most of the western boundary of the Town Centre. Provides connection to the natural environment and significance to Country, natural cooling, active and passive recreation, and flood storage. Opportunities exist in improving the water quality and enhancing its connection to the Town Centre through active transport and site lines.
- **St Marys Corner** – there is a cluster of social and cultural services, facilities, and organisations to the very south of the Town Centre called St Marys Corner. These serve a regional catchment but are disconnected from Queen Street, the train station, and other civic uses in the Town Centre. Opportunities arise in connecting these services, facilities, and organisations to the Town Centre.
- **St Marys Library** – the Library is a well-used space that provides digital support, study and meeting spaces for the local community. It currently stays open until 8pm on four nights of the week and there is community interest in this continuing or extending later into the night. Due to its size, the Library has limited space, with a lack of multi-purpose space to support the arts or other programming. The St Marys Library requires an upgrade to meet the needs of a growing population.
- **St Marys Senior High School** – in close proximity to the train station is St Marys Senior High School, a partially academically selective and comprehensive post-compulsory secondary day school with students from across the LGA. With a large oval and hall that offers a flexible multi-purpose space, however, it is rarely used for community purposes. Opportunity to develop a joint use agreement with the Department of Education for access to facilities at schools.
- **St Marys Public School** – a heritage listed item with a school curriculum that engages students with St Marys Town Centre, South Creek, and significance of Country. Potential to leverage this engagement and connection with South Creek to assist with remediation.
- **Heritage churches** – St Marys Magdalene Anglican Church offers regular Sunday services. It contains a cemetery and a joining hall. Opportunities to use its hall for community purposes.



Events and activities

The community also love events like:

- **St Marys Lights Up** – a twilight family friendly event of food, drinks, live music, and free entertainment for kids on Queen Street. This annual event is well attended and usually takes place on a Saturday afternoon to evening in the month of May.
- **Lunch Time Tunes** – at Coachmans Park of a lunch time on Wednesday, it is an opportunity to showcase local talent in the heart of St Marys.
- **Coffee catch up networking** – regular monthly catch up of business owners at various locations. Organised by St Marys Town Centre Corporation it helps businesses stay informed and updated on opportunities.
- **St Marys Spring Festival** – a community event showcasing the Town Centre and local businesses and performers. This annual event is on the first Saturday in September. Led by St Marys Town Centre Corporation and supported by Penrith City Council.
- **Movie Nights** – accessible and free pop-up cinema screenings organised by Penrith City Council. Using Coachmans Park, it's well loved by community.
- **Easter and Halloween** – annual community activities led by St Marys Town Centre Corporation and supported by Penrith City Council.

"Community events are how I met my friends. They're great for mothers and children."

Community pop-up participant

"Anything that brings more people out on the street will make them feel safer. During the day, especially when it is sunny, the feeling of walking down Queen Street is just so lovely because shops are open and there are quite a few people around. It would be great to extend this feeling beyond 5pm"

Community survey participant



Natural and recreational places

The St Marys Town Centre is flanked by Wianamatta – South Creek and includes a series of open spaces of different scales and functions.

The only paved plaza type spaces are Coachmans Park and the Southern Plaza of the train station on Station Street. The remaining open spaces are green, mostly grassed areas within South Creek Park including regional sporting destinations.

South Creek Park is a major asset for the St Marys Town Centre and services a regional catchment while providing locals with a fun and active precinct on their doorstep. South Creek Park attracts 400,000 visitors annually and includes St Marys Tennis Centre, Blair Oval, a rugby field, Penrith BMX track and Ripples Leisure Centre and Hydrotherapy Centre. Into the future, the park will require upgrades to better service a growing population, better active transport connections – particularly into Queen Street and the train station precinct, and greater tree canopy with better biodiversity outcomes for South Creek.

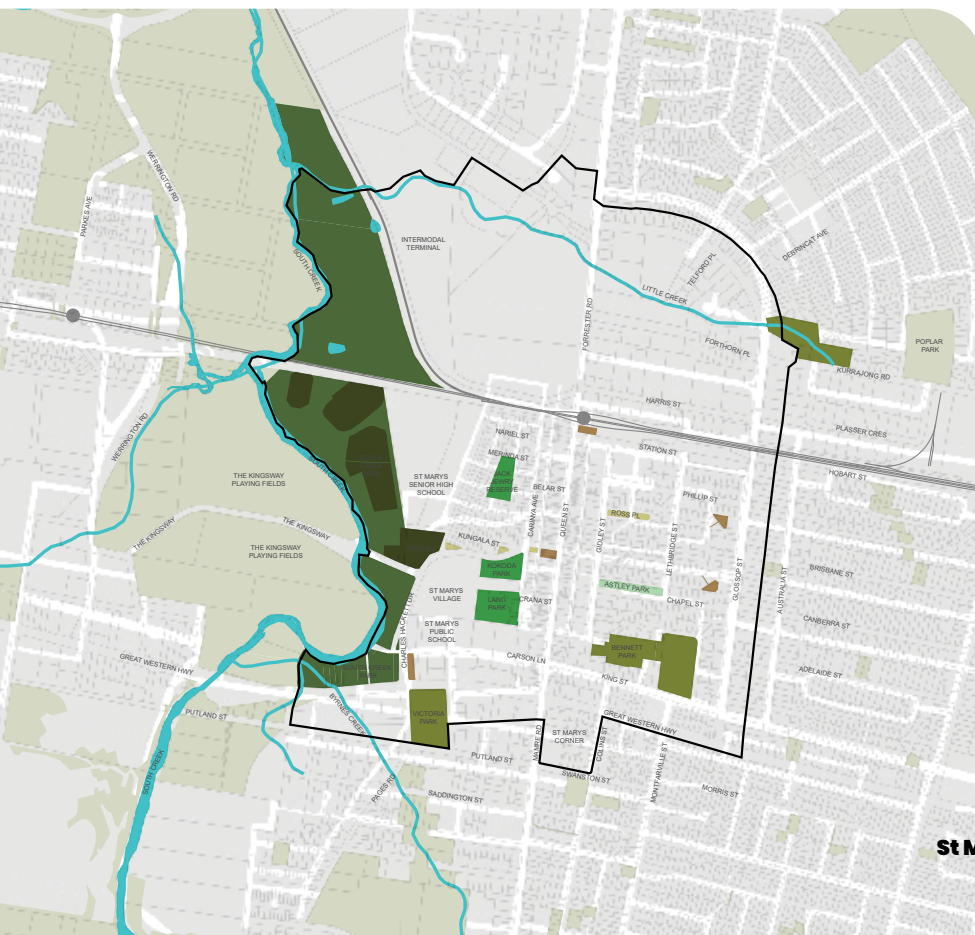
The experience of walking in the St Marys Town Centre can vary during the seasons and for people with different abilities. New cycling and walking infrastructure along with through-site links should help encourage more people to walk and cycle. The future will consider –

- **Link cycling and walking infrastructure** activating the street interface to South Creek and South Creek Park, and Ripples Leisure Centre with Queen Street and St Marys Train Station. This will create a network of active transport and will open the creek and the park to places where people live, work, play, study and socialise.
- **Create through-site links and paths** connecting along Glossop Street, The Kingsway, Chapel Street, Charles Hackett Drive and King Street.

Other connections are in the north of St Marys Town Centre, which is in particular need of walking and cycling infrastructure to make it a more attractive place to work. Employee amenity is a critical selection factor for many businesses, especially for those in the knowledge-based sectors. This includes adding street landscaping and improving the pedestrian and bicycle connections to public transport, recreational facilities, and open space to provide better safety, directness and attractiveness.

"They've done good with Coachmans Park, it's a great space that unites our community."

Community pop-up participant



Existing Open Space
Types - Hierarchy

Key

- Study Area Boundary
- Western Train Line and Station
- Proposed Metro Station
- Waterbody
- Citywide Park (>20ha)
- District Park (min. 2ha; avg. 5-10ha)
- Local Park (0.5-2ha)
- Linear Park (min. 20m wide)
- Sporting Space
- Pocket Park/ Plaza (0.15<0.5ha) and smaller open space
- Open Space within Road Reserve/ Urban Green Space
- Open Space - Private Ownership
- Open Space outside Study Area
- Land Parcel

0 200 m



Our new Central Park

Penrith City Council has received \$21 million through the NSW Government’s WestInvest program to deliver St Marys Central Park. The park will serve as St Marys’ green civic heart – featuring a large central lawn, outdoor performance stage and public artwork.

In 2021, 79% of respondents in the Structure Plan community engagement survey thought St Marys needed a new central park or square. St Marys Central Park responds to this feedback, which identified the desire for a kids play area, family-friendly area, local events, public and/or community art, and street furniture.

For the development of the St Marys Town Centre Place Plan we went a little deeper. We rolled up our sleeves and got out there, attending community events, joining in on various activities, and hitting the streets of Queen Street to gather opinions on what they’d like to see in their new park. The community had some pretty clear favourites. Their top three features were a fun playspace, misty water to cool off, and a specially designated space where young people could hang out and have fun.



Figure 9 – Pop-up participant’s top 3 features of St Marys Central Park (St Marys Town Centre Place Plan Consultation)

Figure 8 – St Marys Central Park context within St Marys Town Centre

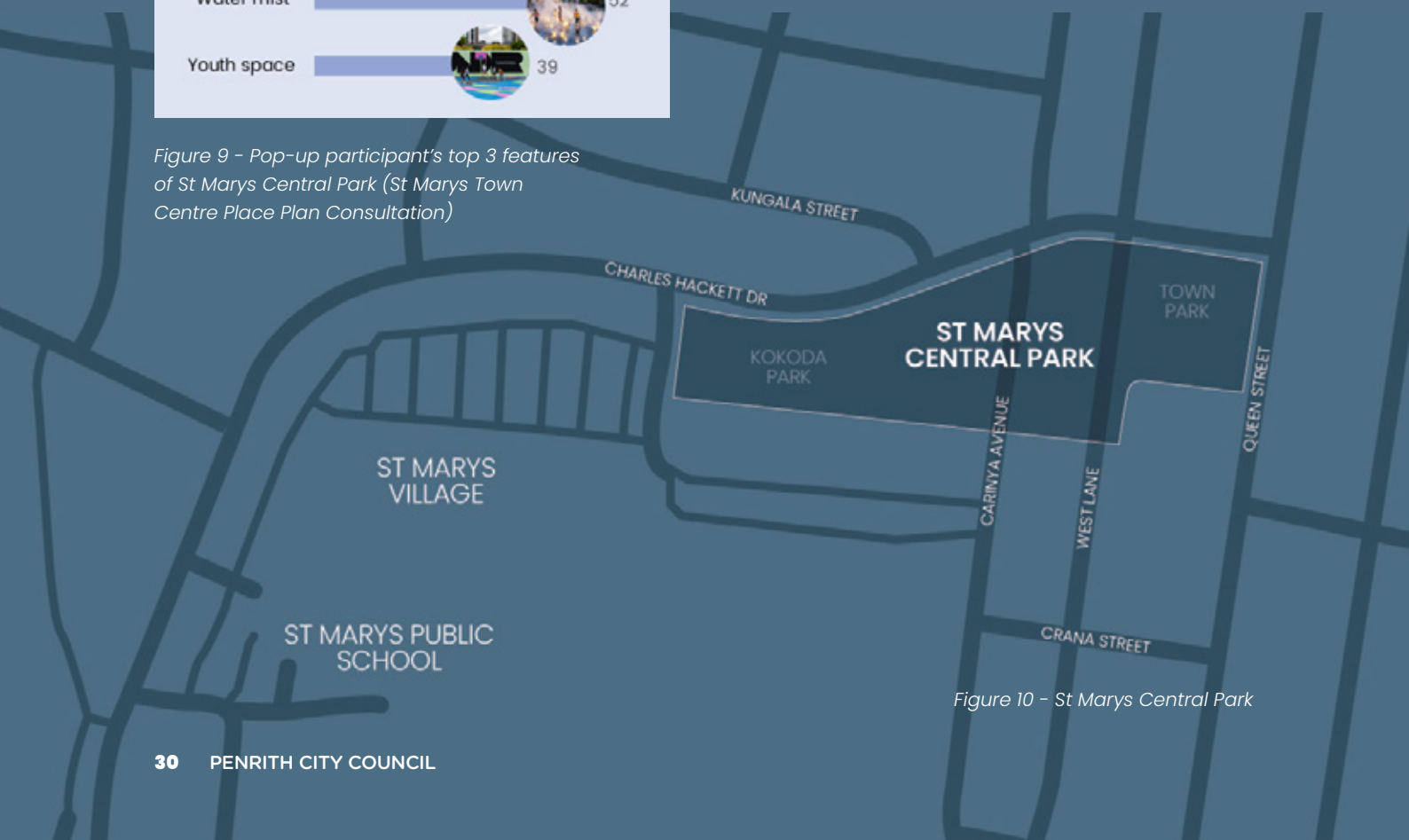


Figure 10 – St Marys Central Park

Our local businesses and industry

St Marys Town Centre has long been an engine room for jobs and business in the Penrith LGA, and Greater Sydney. There are two distinct areas separated by the train line with industrial activity to the north and more retail and professional services to the south.

Two distinct areas

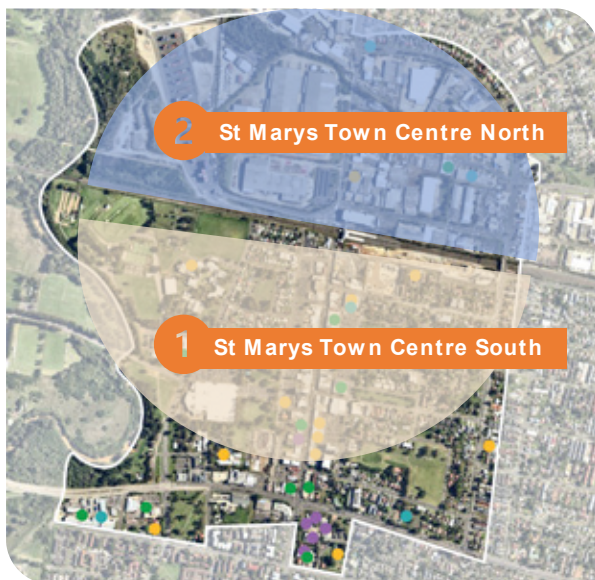


Figure 11 – St Marys economic zones, St Marys Town Centre Structure Plan Background Evidence Report – Understanding St Marys.

“As new residents move in and the demographic changes, we want to make sure the dollar stays in St Marys, we don’t want to lose the dollar to other areas.”

St Marys Town Centre Corporation
workshop participant

1. ST MARYS TOWN CENTRE SOUTH:

A thriving high street and bustling enterprise corridor south of the train line

The southern portion of the St Marys Town Centre is home to a wide variety of businesses, with approximately 250 ground floor businesses directly facing the street. These businesses are primarily service-based (35%) and retail-oriented (28.5%). The St Marys Town Centre benefits from a robust and well-established business community, encompassing family-owned and culturally specific small businesses. These assets can help make St Marys an attractive destination for shoppers and capture customer spend from Penrith, Mount Druitt, Blacktown, Marsden Park and the Aerotropolis. In the short term, this Place Plan is looking at the change we can embrace today and how businesses can take advantage of regional growth including initiatives like outdoor dining and collaborative marketing efforts.

2. ST MARYS TOWN CENTRE NORTH:

A historic and important industrial precinct north of the rail line

The St Marys industrial precinct to the north of the rail line serves as a vital economic engine for the LGA and the wider Sydney region. It hosts a mix of large regional manufacturers as well as small and medium-sized enterprises. While it currently has limited street and park amenities, there’s potential for improvements that focus on the experience of local workers. The Structure Plan supports initiatives like street greenery and streetscapes, establishing sustainable architectural design, and improving pedestrian and cycling connectivity across the block. This Place Plan will continue the investigation through consultation with locals and piloting of placemaking projects, like cycle paths and temporary street enhancements.

The night-time economy

Most night-time businesses operating in the area are food activities, followed by health, groceries, and drink activities. A significant number of businesses that are closed during the night-time period have gates or security shutter/roller doors installed. These features can negatively impact on an individual's perception of safety and feeling of comfort in public spaces.

Community and stakeholder feedback shared during consultation for the Penrith and St Marys Night-Time Economy Strategy point to a need for improved safety, better promotion, enhanced offerings, and diversity of experiences to bolster the night-time economy in the St Marys Town Centre.

The St Marys Town Centre Place Plan will leverage the strengths of our authentic local businesses, while also expanding the existing night-time hubs to heighten the vibrancy and appeal of St Marys after dark. An exciting opportunity lies in potentially branding an ethnic and cultural 'Eat Street', a captivating sub-precinct nestled along Queen Street. This could be complemented by collaboration with businesses, facilitating the curation of activities and events that enhance the overall night-time experience.

"Sad when you drive down Queen Street and all the shops have shutters – it looks terrible."

Community pop-up participant

"Need to entice more foot traffic at night"

Business workshop participant



Local employment levels

A recent night-time study and round of engagement commissioned by Investment NSW identified that:

- **78%** of people would like more night-time activities that do not centre on alcohol
- **71%** of people agree that they would explore more parts of Sydney at night if they knew more about them, particularly the younger generation

In 2016, St Marys was home to 3,522 jobs including 17% professionals and managers, 16% labourers and 13% technicians and trades workers. In 2018, the Western Sydney District Plan and associated Collaboration Area Place Strategy identified that the Greater Penrith area could grow jobs by 35% to 45,000 over the next 20 years.

The Structure Plan identified a target of 2,100 – 5,600 additional jobs in the St Marys Town Centre between 2016-2041, making the total projected job target 5,600 – 9,100 by 2041.

What we previously heard – desires and concerns

In developing the Structure Plan, the Council engaged with the St Marys community, inviting them to share their desires and concerns. Presented below is a summary of these desires and concerns.

Desires

Greater diversity of activities and events

The community appreciates existing community events and activities; however, they desire a greater range. Most commonly, they told us they'd like events for young people, and activities involving art and culture.

Improved shopping, dining, and entertainment

The community values Queen Street's authenticity and its diverse range of small businesses. However, there is also a strong desire for the addition of dining options, similar to those found in precincts like Parramatta.

More to do after dark

The community want to see an expanded range of dining experiences at night. They have expressed a desire for Queen Street to be brought to life through dining options, co-ordinated and planned placemaking initiatives, events, activities, and pop-ups.

Spruced up Town Centre

The community want to see streets, parks and plazas better maintained and cleaned, and the quality of condition of shopfronts enhanced to engage with locals and welcome visitors.

Industry collaboration and partnerships

Pursuing industry collaboration and a partnership approach between government, private sector stakeholders and local businesses.

Concerns

A perceived lack of safety

The community are concerned about safety and level of policing within St Marys. Anti-social behaviour in public spaces, around the train station and perception of unsafe areas was higher at night.

A hotter summer (every year)

The community is concerned about hot summers and cold winters. They expressed a strong desire to be protected during extreme weather conditions and minimise future impact by climate change.

A service gap for community

The community want social services retained in St Marys, particularly when thinking about the future, and want areas to be catered for including youth, women, elderly, and people with a disability. Residents also want more social and affordable housing to meet the needs of the future St Marys community. Intergenerational households were also referenced.

A lack of accessible transport options

The community desires greater accessibility within and beyond St Marys with public and active transport. There is a need to facilitate improved north-south and east-west connectivity. Some residents suggested free bus transport for seniors, community members with a disability and for low-income families.

"These are family-oriented area, restaurants need to cater for the younger demographic."

Primary school workshop participant

What we heard – ideas for action

Central to the success of the St Marys Town Centre Place Plan are the voices of more than **540 community members**.

Building upon community desires for the Town Centre expressed during consultation for the Structure Plan allowed us to take a deep dive, asking community and stakeholders ‘How do we begin to achieve your desires?’ and ‘What are your ideas for action?’. St Marys community told us more than **800 ideas to improve the Town Centre**. A collection of community ideas has been presented below.



Trends influencing change in St Marys Town Centre

| TREND | DESCRIPTION | RELEVANCE |
|------------------------------------|--|---|
| What is the driver of change? | What does this mean? | How can we leverage this trend for community benefit? |
| Growing population | Council's projections are that the Town Centre will be home to another 11,000 - 12,500 people over the next 20 years. | Planning for population change by supporting the current community through the process and connecting them with new residents will foster a shared sense of belonging and promote a socially resilient community. |
| Heat and sustainability | Urban heat contributes to environmental pressures – impacting our communities, natural systems, local economies, and individual wellbeing. | Effective and timely planning can protect our ecosystems and reduce the harmful effects of urban heat. We can do this by adding more greenery, making it better for walking and cycling in the Town Centre, and cleaning up South Creek. |
| Investment and jobs | Connection to the new Aerotropolis precinct has the potential to attract investment, increase jobs and economic activity. | Planning for younger populations educational needs alongside business-friendly policies and public domain improvements is key to making our centre stand out, entice investments, and encourage innovation. |
| Visitors and tourism | Stage one of the Western Sydney International Airport will include a 3.7-kilometre runway and facilities for up to 10 million passengers annually. | To set the Town Centre up for success, it's important to plan early before habits are formed. St Marys is culturally diverse, and its rich history makes it attractive for tourism. The Visiting Friends and Relatives market, and business travel market could help further support local entrepreneurs and community organisations. |
| City-shaping infrastructure | Over the coming years, St Marys will gain new facilities and infrastructure like a new train station (Metro), upgraded and new green space, new community spaces including library, and additional housing and jobs. | Well-planned integration of the Sydney Metro with surrounding public spaces, cycle paths, businesses and creative community can create economic opportunities and a welcoming environment. |
| Access and inclusion | Ensuring all members have access to community services will become increasingly important as additional residents put additional demand on community services. | Proactive planning efforts to ensure equitable access to opportunities will support and address the challenges faced by marginalised individuals and groups within the St Marys community. |

"St Marys is going to be bigger than Parramatta CBD"

St Marys business workshop participant





PART C

Our future



Place Vision

The Structure Plan has laid out the Place Vision for St Marys in 20 years, envisioning it as a thriving destination within the Western Parkland City.

The St Marys Town Centre Place Plan serves as our roadmap, initiating our journey toward making this vision a reality. It is structured around four fundamental pillars of the Place Vision, utilising them to shape the actions and drive the transformation process.

Vibrant



As a vibrant and diverse economy, one would find everything one needs in St Marys. The Town Centre will have a diverse economic offering across a range of sectors.

Welcoming



As a welcoming place, St Marys will protect and build upon its community spirit and diversity to become a safe and inclusive centre with diverse housing, open spaces and transport connections.

Sustainable



As a sustainable town centre, St Marys will leverage upon investment in public transport to offer a mixed-use and walkable urban environment.

Authentic



As an authentic destination, St Marys will protect its natural, historic and cultural assets and promote arts and creativity.

How can we make it happen?

The St Marys Town Centre Place Plan is a living and evolving document. This section of the Place Plan outlines how the priority actions will respond to community needs and help us get ready for the change that's coming.

Who is bringing the ideas to life?

Great places are made with community. That's why we need everyone's help to create a vibrant, welcoming, sustainable and authentic Town Centre.

RESIDENTS

People living in St Marys make the place special. Our residents can help deliver the actions in this Place Plan by participating, sharing information, getting involved and providing feedback. The St Marys Town Centre Place Plan also provides a list of great ideas shaped by community feedback that can be done today.

LOCAL BUSINESSES

Businesses can play a pivotal role in delivering the Plan. Offering their venues or resources for events and proposing innovative ideas to make projects more appealing to the public.

LANDOWNERS AND DEVELOPERS

Integrating new developments within the Town Centre is an important part of the Plan. Collaboration during the planning and construction phase will ensure the seamless integration of new developments into the existing fabric, enhancing the surrounding public space.

COMMUNITY GROUPS AND ORGANISATIONS

Partnerships with local organisations, non-profits, and sporting groups will be instrumental in bringing the Place Plan to life.

COUNCIL

Council plays a central role in overseeing its implementation and ensuring the success of the Plan. From securing additional funding, engaging in partnerships, allocating resources, and collaborating with stakeholders to bring the Plan to life.

NSW STATE GOVERNMENT

State Government departments play a key part in the transition of St Marys Town Centre. As infrastructure becomes operational, their role will be to support their integration, sponsoring events and sharing resources and expertise.

WHEN ARE THE ACTIONS HAPPENING?

| | | |
|--------------------|---|------------|
| Short term | These are 'shovel ready' or quick win projects, we can begin to deliver them right now | 1-2 years |
| Medium term | Projects that align with the delivery of the Metro or will take a bit longer to deliver | 3-5 years |
| Long term | Larger projects in the pipeline that require investigation, significant resources, or funding | 6-10 years |
| Ongoing | Continuous delivery and improvement based on community feedback | 1-10 years |

The following pages outline events, activities, and improvements to help realise the Place Vision.

TYPES OF ACTIONS IDENTIFIED IN THE IMPLEMENTATION PLAN ARE:



New actions

What will be delivered as part of this Place Plan



Future possibilities

Projects ready for grant and funding opportunities

Pillar 1: Vibrant

As a vibrant and diverse economy, St Marys will be a place where people can find everything they need as well as surprising and exciting experiences.

A vibrant Town Centre is always bustling with activity day and night. This pillar emphasises our commitment to nurturing a resilient and flourishing network of community leaders, businesses and services that caters to the diverse needs of residents, workers, and visitors.

St Marys Town Centre is home to many fantastic businesses operated by passionate locals. This Plan seeks to further support their business growth and expand night time activities. We'll achieve this through supporting outdoor dining, collaborating on activities and events and building capacity initiatives.

The upcoming St Marys Metro Station, linked to the Aerotropolis precinct and Western Sydney International Airport, will bring investment into streets and plazas surrounding the station, this will bring investment into streets and plazas surrounding the station, giving people a reason to spend locally and visit time and time again.

North of the station is one of our region's largest industrial precincts with the potential to evolve into an attractive place for people, improving its appeal to new investments and industries. We can breathe life into the streetscapes through creative placemaking and the development of pedestrian and cycling routes - enhancing their appeal.

Our strengths

The Town Centre's 'village feel'

Community of local business supporters

'Can do' attitude

Our assets

Independent artists and creative locals

St Marys Town Centre Corporation supporting capacity building in business and place branding

"Communicate how great our businesses are and our affordable food."

Business workshop participant

What we heard

Businesses are eager to collaborate on promotional activities and extend trading after dark.

75% of community survey and pop-up participants, want food activities after dark.

'Improve the outdoor dining experience' was the most common idea for improving the shopping, dining, and entertainment experience.

What we're already doing and committed to

The St Marys Town Centre Structure Plan has made it a key direction to "attract new businesses and diversify the day and night time economy."

As well as "provide up to 9,1000 jobs in St Marys Town Centre by 2041."

And "acknowledge the complexities of city making and develop partnerships to achieve the best outcome for our community."

Actions

| ACTION | LEAD | WHEN | ACTION TYPE |
|---|----------------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| Encourage and build capacity of local businesses in the St Marys Town Centre to apply for business grants from the NSW Government | St Marys Town Centre Corporation | Ongoing | + |
| Prepare and distribute a Town Centre map promoting local businesses and events with input from local community | St Marys Town Centre Corporation | Short term | + |
| Expand the Façade Improvement Program to trial temporary placemaking opportunities focused on outdoor dining for restaurants and late night businesses and rear of property improvements, including lighting | St Marys Town Centre Corporation | Medium term | + |
| Partner with Sydney Metro and Sydney Trains to activate the plazas at St Marys Station and connect local communities, creatives and organisations for programming | Council | Medium term | + |
| Advocate for Sydney Metro to deliver community information and place-based wayfinding within the Arrival and Interchange sub-precinct (i.e. digital billboards that showcase library programs, heritage trail, upcoming events, etc, to improve the experience for customers) | Council | Medium term | + |
| Encourage pop-ups and seek tenancies for the empty shops along Queen Street, focusing on Queen Street between Station and Phillip Street | St Marys Town Centre Corporation | Medium term | + |

What can you do today?

A collection of quick and simple ideas for community members, businesses and community groups and organisations of St Marys:

- Bring a visitor to Queen Street to have a coffee
- Spread the word about your favourite local business on Facebook, Instagram, and Google Maps
- Host your next birthday at a local business
- Attend an after-dark activity or event with your friends and family
- Encourage friends and family to busk around St Marys Station
- Tell your local businesses what you love about them and want to see more of
- Join a Chamber of Commerce or St Marys Town Centre Corporation
- Businesses update or build an online business profile by creating an Instagram and Facebook Page for Business account
- Use social media for positive comments, if you have a complaint, make it directly to the business or organisation



Vibrant Case Study

Shopfront Activation Program, City of Melbourne



Rationale

In 2021, the City of Melbourne partnered with the Victorian Government in a program to activate vacant shopfronts around Melbourne with creative ideas and enterprises. The goal of this program was to increase vibrancy, and foot traffic and support existing businesses and local creatives across Melbourne despite the ongoing challenges of Covid-19.

It did this through the leasing of vacant shopfronts at minimal or no rent. The program is one component of a comprehensive suite of initiatives and interventions to ensure that retail and hospitality precincts remain active and vibrant after Covid-19.

Description

The program budget was \$2.6 million funded via the Victorian Government's contribution to the Melbourne City Recovery Fund. The City of Melbourne acted as a conduit between landlords and creatives and requested that landlords make the property available at no or minimal rent. Vacant properties were offered to businesses that complement, not compete, with existing businesses in the area. Spaces were offered for five weeks to more than twelve months. Spaces were offered to artists, budding entrepreneurs, retailers, and artisan makers.

The program engaged external placemaking agencies to activate shops.

Improved outcomes

- 67 businesses participated across two years. 10 businesses are still in operation since the program closed in March 2023.
- By 2022, Council had a strong pipeline of potential new activations.
- The program was well received by business owners who are neighbouring the newly activated shopfronts. Businesses reported that new stores created a visual impact, a sense of excitement in precinct areas and brought in new customers.
- The program continues to strengthen Melbourne's economic recovery and helped make Melbourne a business-friendly city.

Learnings for St Marys

- The vacant property will be leased through an EOI that is open throughout the length of the project.
- Call to action for owner of vacant or undertrained spaces within the precinct at the bottom of the project page.
- Agencies are working closely with relevant precinct associations.
- Curation and theming of occupancy and activation reflect the precinct's authentic character and strongly align with the agreed strategic vision for the precinct.
- Landlords need to understand the program, and the benefits that it will offer them and to become comfortable with prospective tenants – this takes time and many meetings.

Pillar 2: Welcoming



As a welcoming place, St Marys will protect and build upon its community spirit and diversity to become a safe and inclusive centre with diverse housing, open spaces, and transport connections.

St Marys Town Centre will create a sense of belonging as a diverse and welcoming village. It will be inclusive and safe no matter what time of the day and night. This pillar stands as a commitment to fostering an environment that is secure, accessible, and energised, connecting public spaces, streets, parks, transportation, businesses, and diverse housing.

To build an appealing Town Centre, it all starts with a warm welcome at St Marys Station, connecting residents, workers, students, and visitors to the community's diversity and spirit through cultural and creative elements in public spaces, like art murals, sculptures, and innovative lighting.

Guaranteeing a safe experience while commuting, shopping, strolling, and exploring the Town Centre is vital. The Plan offers opportunities to brighten dark laneways and parking areas with community artwork, and lighting. We understand that safety perceptions differ based on familiarity and demographics. A safe Town Centre is comfortable, easy to navigate, with intuitive signage, clear lines of sight, and buzzing with activity.

The future civic heart, Central Park, will nurture belonging and unity among present and future residents. There are numerous opportunities to create a lively park, involving St Marys' youth and families, connecting them with local community groups and organisations, and building on well-loved existing activities.

What we heard

Community groups and organisations were eager to host activities and events in future St Marys Central Park.

56% of community survey participants want more markets, friendly-friendly activities, and landmark festivals.

93% of community feel safe during the day, this dropped to 24% after dark.

Our strengths

Well-lit Queen Street

Socially oriented and inclusive community who love existing events and activities

Future-focused planning for the Town Centre offers a diversity of housing types and open spaces

Our assets

Community champions and regulars who are a friendly face for newcomers

Future St Marys Central Park and civic hub

St Marys Station future plazas, one north and the other south of the station

Active community groups and organisations

What we're already doing and committed to

Council already has a creative hoarding policy to encourage temporary structures erected in public spaces to be designed and installed to improve amenities and experience for the community.

As outlined in our Community Safety Plan, we're committed to public space safety by "ensuring the safety of residents and visitors in public spaces through activation and lighting."

St Marys Town Centre Structure Plan outlines Council's commitment to delivering St Marys Central Park.

Actions

| ACTION | LEAD | WHEN | ACTION TYPE |
|--|---------|-------------|-------------|
| Continue to deliver creative hoardings along construction sites in the St Marys Town Centre | Council | Short term | + |
| Pilot a web-portal for St Marys Town Centre that maps out current and future projects and sites | Council | Short term | + |
| Prepare an Activation Plan for Central Park that is developed in partnership with the St Marys community | Council | Medium term | + |
| Mitigate the construction impacts of St Marys Central Park through wayfinding and activation of nearby public spaces (i.e., footpath decals, activation of nearby parks) | Council | Medium term | + |
| Deliver a Pedestrian Lighting Strategy for the St Marys Town Centre | Council | Medium term | ● |

What can you do today?

A collection of quick and simple ideas for community members, businesses and community groups and organisations of St Marys

- Attend a NAIDOC week event
- Organise a street party
- Participate in a local event
- Support your local music scene by hiring them to perform at your café or restaurant
- Team up with your neighbouring business and host a weekly activity or offering e.g., Thursday ladies night or activities for kids on Tuesdays
- Invite a new neighbour or resident over for coffee
- Have a say when it comes to planning and growth matters
- Leverage cultural heritage by hosting a neighbourhood lunch or work lunch featuring the attendee's cultural dishes
- Get involved and advocate for ideas and solutions that you are passionate about
- Connect with your local groups or school to host an activity or event
- Say something positive about Queen Street and its businesses
- Snap, send and solve damage or waste issues using the Penrith 'Waste Champion' App in the Google Playstore or Apple App Store



Welcoming Case Study

Enliven Places Programme, Christchurch City Council, NZ



Rationale

To help Christchurch's city centre through transition and recovery after the 2011 earthquake, the Christchurch City Council trialled and tested a variety of 'grassroots' wayfinding and streetscape improvement projects. These projects were aimed at making the city centre more accessible, and improving amenity, wayfinding, and sense of place while the city navigated through this challenging time.

These projects were designed and delivered in partnership with the community and artists, taking the shape of poster art and installations.

Description

These pop-up projects acted as new guiding features in the city, illuminating pathways during the day and night, accompanied by events that enhanced amenities and activity. They were both enjoyable and creative, reflecting Christchurch's authentic character while also providing information about road closures and directing people to transitional parks and areas. Some of these projects found a permanent home in neighbouring community gardens once they were no longer needed.

Improved outcomes

- Projects considered were well-planned and had partnerships in place.
- Diverse, innovative, experimental, and amenity-enriching projects created buzz, improved wellbeing, and offered a much-needed point of difference.
- Supported the city centre by offering a cluster of activities.
- Create vibrancy and improve the environment, experience and activity for residents, visitors, and businesses.

Learnings for St Marys

- Small grant funds provided support to those seeking to temporarily turn vacant spaces into spaces that are vibrant, enlivened, greened or otherwise publicly activated.
- Funding was scaled: must be able to attract at least 200 people for grants of less than \$5000 and 500 people for grants over \$5000.
- Enabled individuals, community groups and businesses to contribute to Christchurch's regeneration with productive, positive, and creative temporary projects that enliven vacant areas.
- Projects were awarded on the basis that they 'offer added value' such as the potential for an extended duration, innovation, diversity, and significant private partnerships.

Pillar 3: Sustainable



As a sustainable Town Centre, St Marys will leverage upon investment in public transport to offer a mixed-use and walkable urban environment.

A more sustainable Town Centre is about planning for a liveable future. Creating an attractive, walkable, and healthy Town Centre that provides for all our daily needs all in one place.

The St Marys Town Centre Place Plan acknowledges that making the area more walkable is a longer-term goal, however, some measures and initiatives can be put in place over the short term, using walking and cycle paths to connect St Marys Station to other key locations across the Town Centre. Presenting important opportunities to trial tactical cycling and walking connections within 800m of the train station. This will also support positive health and wellbeing outcomes for community members.

A robust Town Centre that is resilient to climatic challenges ahead. The St Marys Town Centre Place Plan presents opportunities to create streetscapes and public spaces that support an increase in shade structure and tree canopy cover using quality and local design.

"St Marys has a lot to offer, we have wide streets."

Business workshop participant

What we heard

Community take pride in Queen Street's spacious streets and wish to see people prioritised rather than cars through greenery, lighting, and public art.

60% of community survey participants want more shade structures and green space along Queen Street.

Many community participants desire walking and cycling paths connecting to the Town Centre and from South Creek.

Our strengths

Community consensus and support for initiatives that seek to mitigate extreme heat

Access to green and open spaces

Our assets

Walkable wide streets of Queen Street

Much-loved Wianamatta – South Creek

South Creek Park (and precinct)

Primary and High Schools

Library and education campaigns

Delivery of the St Marys Metro and other public transport routes

What we're already doing and committed to

The Structure Plan is committed to the "delivery of a high-quality and safe public domain that prioritises pedestrians and cyclists of all abilities and public transport use."

Council is working towards improving mobility across St Marys Town Centre through its Disability Inclusion Action Plan's commitment to "embed access and inclusion outcomes within strategic planning directions for St Marys Town Centre Structure Plan and Master Plan."

The Green Grid Strategy outlines Council's commitment to "concentrate cooling efforts in St Marys on the hottest areas. These are the areas in front of the train station and the car parks between Queen Street and East Lane."

Actions

| ACTION | LEAD | WHEN | ACTION TYPE |
|---|---------|-------------|-------------|
| Integrate end of trip facilities into new Council-owned community facilities in the St Marys Town Centre | Council | Ongoing | + |
| Develop options to address heat in existing and new council-owned facilities (i.e., heat refuges) | Council | Ongoing | + |
| Expand shade and tree canopy cover within the St Marys Town Centre along key movement corridors | Council | Short term | + |
| Increase community connection to South Creek by supporting the work of local organisations and schools (i.e. Connection to Country, rehabilitation and environmental value) | Council | Short term | + |
| Deliver educational material that explains the benefits of trees and green infrastructure across the St Marys Town Centre | Council | Medium term | + |

What can you do today?

A collection of quick and simple ideas for community members, businesses and community groups and organisations of St Marys:

- Walk or cycle to work or the station
- Join a walking, cycling or running group
- Instead of driving, walk to the shops or local store
- Get involved and advocate for ideas and solutions that you are passionate about
- Join a Bushcare or sustainability group
- Use the Heritage Walk app to learn more about local landmarks



Sustainable Case Study

EDGE GreenWay, Inner West Council, NSW



Rationale

Since 2019, every year for two weeks, the shores of the GreenWay canal in Lilyfield are transformed into a series of activations. The Inner West Council collaborates with local artists and creatives to occupy shipping containers, hosting a rolling series of programming that connects community to the sights and sounds of the environment and nature along the canal.

Description

The GreenWay is a linear environmental and active travel corridor and a place of cultural significance through the Inner West. Over the last 15 years, it's undergone significant remediation by community groups and Council. The purpose of the EDGE GreenWay is to encourage and strengthen community connection to nature and encourage the use of the place.

Artists host an array of family and dog-friendly programs from performances, workshops, talks, walking tours and installations. Programs are supported by food trucks and pop-up bars along with a landmark event centred around Earth Hour. Community is also encouraged to BYO picnics and keep cups.

Outcomes

- Commissioning new works from local artists was an innovative Council initiative. Art on the GreenWay was site-specific creating an environmental art trail that promoted connection to the natural and creative ecosystems.
- EDGE GreenWay raised awareness about the GreenWay.
- Artists highly rated their experience with Living Arts in the co-curation of EDGE GreenWay and were eager to build on this goodwill.
- In 2023, Council built upon partnerships with schools, other community groups and the voluntary sector to enrich the program further through workshops for kids.
- The program incorporates a sustainability message and continues to develop a culture of zero waste, carbon neutrality where possible, and the use of renewables and recyclables.
- Use of local providers for food truck offerings.

Learnings for St Marys

- EOI process is effective and inclusive with a co-curatorial model that engages local creatives and communities to generate site-specific work and showcase their diverse talents.
- Opportunities to link to existing well-known initiatives or events e.g. Earth Hour.
- Opportunities to build on this relationship through regular artists' gatherings and the formal establishment of an artists' network could support further growth of the relationship.
- Incorporating a small trader street market that includes bespoke food outlets should be considered in this context.
- Utilise volunteers to help resource events and activities.
- Commission art that leverages unique qualities of the place.
- The program should be supported by a robust marketing strategy that should include early social media content, teaser posters, printed maps, signage, trained volunteers, and a launch event that attracts media attention.

Pillar 4: Authentic

As an authentic destination, St Marys will protect its natural, historic, and cultural assets and promote arts and creativity.

St Marys Town Centre is fortunate to be home to a range of attractions, including sporting fields that draw in community from the wider region, as well as natural creeks and ridges. The Town Centre is home to a network of urban laneways, streets, and parks. Its authentic cultural and social infrastructure fosters an environment that encourages artistic innovation and creative expression.

This presents an immense opportunity for well-coordinated and centralised offerings in arts, culture, and creativity. A range of live music, dance performance, art galleries or pop-up shows, that utilise our empty shops and creative assets in central locations of our Town Centre. Importantly, we should foster collaboration and a partnership approach between organisations, businesses, and landowners.

St Marys Metro Station is where visitors from the Western Sydney International Airport and Aerotropolis precinct will alight a transfer to the Sydney Trains, T1 Western Sydney line. This offers once in a lifetime opportunity to capture these visitors and connect them with our rich cultures and diverse food offerings through investment in region wide marketing, tourism, and business capacity building opportunities - broadcasting to the region our unique and authentic selves.

Our strengths

Established community and families that have lived locally for generations

Community appreciation for Country

Shared value in heritage and historic preservation

Community of culture lovers

Our assets

South Creek and it's connection to Country

Several Aboriginal heritage and culturally significant sites

South Creek Park's facilities - rugby field, Penrith BMX track and Ripples Leisure Centre and Hydrotherapy Centre

Diverse businesses and events

St Marys Street Art Trail

What we heard

Community would like to see the prioritisation of cultural activities such as cultural music and dance performances, events that celebrate our diverse cultures, pop-up art exhibitions and art murals in laneways or buildings.

St Marys youth desire greater connection to Country displayed throughout St Marys streets and around South Creek.

The best way to improve our Town Centre is to showcase our authentic and unique local identity and connect with nature.

What we're already doing and committed to

We're developing a St Marys Heritage Study which will prioritise bringing the cultural elements out through the town and amplifying the cultural significance of South Creek.

Sport and Recreation Strategy outlines Council's commitment to upgrading St Marys Tennis Centre, Robin Wiles Park, Bennett Park and updating and reviewing the Ripples Leisure Centre Master Plan.

Public Art and Placemaking Strategy outlines our commitment to amplify Aboriginal voice, culture, and heritage.

Actions

| ACTION | LEAD | WHEN | ACTION TYPE |
|---|----------------------------------|------------|-------------|
| Deliver artistic wayfinding across the Town Centre as a way to unpack connection to Country, history, and St Marys authentic place stories | Council | Short term | ● |
| Install welcome signs and local art at the key entryways to the St Marys Town Centre that highlight our authentic identity and offer a warm and inviting introduction to the town | Council | Short term | ● |
| Investigate the programming of new activities and events that celebrate diverse cultures and authentic stories of locals living and working in St Marys | Council | Short term | ● |
| Expand the murals in St Marys, amplify local champions and supporting local talent. e.g. St Marys art trail research | St Marys Town Centre Corporation | Short term | + |
| Create opportunities for participation in activities in the open spaces adjoining South Creek, through placemaking events and the provision of infrastructure | Council | Long term | ● |
| Explore the creation of a campaign to promote what's special about St Marys to a Sydney wide audience (i.e., invite and curate an experience for social media influencers) | Council | Long term | + |
| Support the investigation of a new Library and Community Hub in the St Marys Town Centre | Council | Long term | + |

What can you do today?

A collection of quick and simple ideas for community members, businesses and community groups and organisations of St Marys

- Participate in a local event
- Attend an art or creative class or workshop
- Use local artists to help promote your business
- Attend a show or help promote cultural activity
- Volunteer at a local space
- Donate or offer works in-kind support
- Buy something from a local artist – an artwork, music or sculpture
- Get involved and advocate for ideas and solutions that you are passionate about
- Attend a show or help promote cultural activity
- Attend NAIDOC week event
- Acknowledge Country and learn about its importance
- Include Aboriginal organisations on your business email list or networking event
- Include Traditional Place names when sending or receiving a parcel
- Get involved and advocate for ideas and solutions that you are passionate about



Authentic Case Study

Proud City Campaign, City of Logan, QLD



Rationale

As part of their rebranding in 2021, the City of Logan created a launch campaign titled 'Proud City'. A media campaign that celebrated local champions who are representative of Logan's authentic businesses and community.

Description

Located 30 minutes from Brisbane CBD, the City of Logan is a growing community known for its diversity. The campaign focused on Logan's strengths: its authentic culture and diverse community. It sought to flip stereotypes, inspire optimism amongst community and foster a positive narrative of Logan among the wider Brisbane region.

This campaign appeared on bus shelters, billboards and across social media. It encourages the wider Brisbane region to visit Logan's authentic businesses, parks, and attractions and get to know the people.

Outcomes

- A groundbreaking campaign that highlighted the people behind the place. Everyone who appeared in the campaign was a local creative, business, or local resident.
- A 'real' tone of voice that helped cut through the noise of competitors with high quality photography and visual merchandising.
- Improved perception of place branding and awareness of destinations across the City of Logan.

Learnings for St Marys

- Demonstrates the benefit of a media campaign to change wider community sentiment around a place.
- A collaborative approach between Council, the local businesses and community will empower community to take ownership of their story – standing proud as a beautiful work-in-progress.
- Visitors want to experience authentic local people and places. The retail diversity of St Marys is a major strength.

Measuring success – our desired place outcomes

The Place Vision outlined in St Marys Town Centre Structure Plan is supported by place outcomes – acting as goals – about what community would like to see in St Marys Town Centre in 20 years.

You told us the goals we should set are...

Figure 12- St Marys Town Centre outcomes identified through consultation for St Marys Town Centre Structure Plan



Similar to the Structure Plan, these outcomes will be used to set goals for the St Marys Town Centre Place Plan, signposts that will keep us on track, guiding us on our journey. They will be used to evaluate the success of the implementation of each action.

Get involved!

The St Marys Town Centre Place Plan aims to bring people together through collaborative activities, events, or programs.

Does your organisation, community group or sporting team want to help bring a program to life? Do you want to make an activity or event happen St Marys?

The more people get behind these actions the faster we will transform St Marys into a thriving destination in the Western Parklands City. We encourage you to take part as much as you want and can.

What can you do?

Start the conversation with your friends, neighbours and families by bringing this document along to your next community meeting, activities or BBQ or send us your ideas. We'd love to hear them!

Send us your ideas!



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References

Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census 2021, 2021.

Council Plans and Engagement Reports

St Marys Pavilion Cost Model

The Heart of St Marys – Village Green Central Park and Performance Space – Scoping Report

WestInvest Community Project Grants – Local Government Allocation

St Marys Town Centre Structure Plan – Stage 1 Community Engagement Report

St Marys Town Centre Structure Plan – Stage 2 Community Engagement Report

RFQ St Marys Community Hub – Feasibility Study and High Level Business Case

St Marys Town Centre Place Plan and St Marys Central Park Update

St Marys Town Centre Structure Plan – Shaping the Future of St Marys

St Marys Town Park Concept Design Elements

St Marys Town Centre Planning Pathway Fact Sheet

St Marys Town Centre Structure Plan – Summary

St Marys Town Centre Structure Plan – Background Evidence

St Marys Central Park Map

Primary data

St Marys Site Visit, JOC Consulting & Penrith City Council

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