

STRATEGIC PLANNING

Social Impact Assessment Guidelines for Assessing Development Applications

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1. Acknowledgment of country

Randwick Council pays respect to the traditional owners of the land, the Bidjigal and Gadigal people, and we acknowledge the living and continuing culture of the traditional custodians of this country.

We recognise that the traditional owners have occupied and cared for this Country over countless generations, and we celebrate their ongoing contributions to the life of the area.

Abbreviations and Acronyms

CIS	Community Impact Statement
BOSCAR	NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research
DA	Development Application
EP&A Act	Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979
EP&A Reg	Environmental Planning & Assessment Regulation 2021
LGA	Local Government Area
NSW	New South Wales
RAP	Reconciliation Action Plan
RDCP	Randwick Development Control Plan 2013
RLEP	Randwick Local Environmental Plan 2012
RCC	Randwick City Council
SEE	Statement of environmental effects
SIA	Social Impact Assessment
SIC	Social Impact Comment
SIMP	Social Impact Management Plan
Housing SEPP	State Environmental Planning Policy (Housing) 2021

2. Introduction

The Social Impact Assessment (SIA) Guidelines ensure that the social impacts of development and strategic planning decisions are identified early, assessed proportionately and managed effectively, so that development contributes to a lively, inclusive and equitable Randwick City. Social Impact Assessment is an integral part of Council's development assessment process. These Guidelines assist applicants, the community and Council by outlining when an SIA is required, the level of assessment to be undertaken, and the information needed to support a robust assessment.

2.1. Aims

These Guidelines aim to:

- Establish thresholds for when a Social Impact Assessment is required
- Define the levels of assessment and when each applies
- Specify the information and evidence required to support an SIA
- Ensure balanced consideration of social, cultural, economic and environmental effects
- Identify reporting and monitoring requirements for managing social impacts
- Provide guidance on how SIAs should be prepared, submitted and assessed

2.2. What is Social Impact Assessment?

Definition

A Social Impact Assessment (SIA) is the process of identifying, analysing, monitoring and managing the intended and unintended social consequences (both positive and negative) of Planning Proposals or certain proposed developments as part of a Development Application (DA) in order to balance social, economic and environmental outcomes for individuals and communities, and promote a more sustainable and equitable human and physical environment.

Depending on the nature, scale and complexity of a proposal, social impacts may be addressed through either a Level 1 Social Impact Comment (SIC), which provides brief commentary within the Statement of Environmental (SEE) Effects on key social impacts and responses, or a Level 2 Social Impact Assessment report (SIA Report), which involves a more detailed assessment of potentially significant social impacts and appropriate mitigation or enhancement measures.

Social impacts include changes to:

- People's way of life (how they live, work, play and interact with one another on a day-to-day basis)
- Culture (shared beliefs, customs and values)
- Community, including community cohesion, stability, character, services and facilities
- Accessibility (including access and use of development and infrastructure, whether public or private)
- Health and wellbeing (including physical and mental health)
- Decision making and participation (the degree to which people are meaningfully informed, engaged, and able to influence proposals)
- Livelihood (impacts on people's ability to sustain their income, employment, economic security and day-to-day means of supporting themselves and their households)

- Surroundings and amenity (changes to the look, feel and enjoyment of place—visual character and views, noise and vibration, odour, lighting, privacy, and overall environmental quality)

Principles

The following guiding principles are important in assessing social impacts:

- Focus on likely impacts having regard to proportionality and risk of the proposal
- Promote equity and inclusion by addressing social rights of present and future generations
- Identify both positive as well as negative impacts
- Enable meaningful participation of affected communities, engage early and throughout the project lifecycle
- Mitigate social impacts by through practical, clear and enforceable actions that enhance individual and community economic well-being and welfare and safeguard the welfare of future generations
- Encourage consideration of social consequences when decisions are made in relation to development applications

2.3. Legislative Context

- Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 (EP&A Act) — s4.15: Consent authorities must consider significant likely impacts, including social and economic impacts in the locality
- Environmental Planning & Assessment Regulation 2021 (EP&A Reg): Modernised DA processes, notification/publication, and efficient digital communication; replaces the 2000 Regulation
- Local Infrastructure Contributions (Part 7): s7.12 levies, s7.4 planning agreements—ensure nexus, reasonableness, and transparency in funding community facilities and services
- Randwick Local Environmental Plan 2012 (RLEP): principle statutory instrument guiding land use and development; aligned with Council's LSPS (Vision 2040) strategic directions
- Randwick Development Control Plan 2013 (RDCP): Detailed design guidance (e.g., adaptable/universal housing, boarding houses)
- State Environmental Planning Policy (Housing) 2021 (Housing SEPP): Consolidates seniors housing, affordable rental housing, boarding houses; updated provisions for seniors housing and affordable housing bonuses/SSD pathways
- Liquor Act 2007 s48 & Liquor Regulation 2008: Category A/B Community Impact Statements (CIS) for certain liquor licences and extended trading—assessed for overall social impact
- NSW Social Impact Assessment Guideline: Framework for State significant projects; refinements in July 2025 clarify scoping, significance, mitigation, Social Impact Management Plan (SIMP). Local DAs should adopt proportionate elements

2.4. Land covered by these guidelines

These guidelines apply to all land within the Randwick Local Government Area (LGA).

3. Who needs to be involved in the SIA process?

Roles of main parties

Council

- Advise applicants early (pre-DA) if a SIA is required in accordance with these guidelines, or alternatively if social impact commentary should be included in the development proposal
- Impose conditions of development consent to prevent or mitigate any negative social impacts of a development, which may include the preparation of a SIMP where appropriate
- Prepare SIA considerations for strategic planning projects (LEP changes, DCP reviews, masterplans, strategies etc.)

Applicants

- Engage early with Council on the SIA scope
- Engage with affected communities proportionate to the proposal's impact and under the advice of Council
- Prepare Social Impact Commentary or SIA full report addressing mitigation and management actions
- Implement approved SIMP commitments and contribute to monitoring/reporting of social impacts, if conditioned in the DA

Community

- Participate in the DA process during public consultation/notification stage noting potential social impacts of proposals
- Involvement through any surveys, community meetings or written submissions

4. Levels of Assessment

Two levels of assessment are required for developments depending upon the complexity and type of proposal:

Level 1 - Social Impact Comment (SIC)

For the majority of proposals, appropriate commentary in the SEE is required addressing key social impacts and proposed responses or actions. A social impact comment will not be required for minor DAs with negligible social impacts.

See Randwick Development Assessment Application Management Guide for advice on a social impact comment.

Level 2 - Social Impact Assessment (SIA Report)

This report provides a more in-depth assessment of likely significant social impacts. It includes social baseline data*, stakeholder analysis, impact evaluation (significance), mitigation/enhancement measures, and Social Impact Management Plan (SIMP) (if needed).

For proposals which require an SIA, these guidelines should be used to assist both its preparation and assessment.

**For further guidance on preparing a social baseline study, refer to [NSW Social Impact Assessment Guideline](#).*

5. When is a Social Impact Assessment required?

An SIA is generally required where any of the following apply; however, these triggers are indicative only and subject to Council discretion, having regard to scale, context and sensitivity.

- Residential proposals with more than 50 residential dwellings
- Major proposals in excess of 4,000 square metres site area where proposals involve substantial intensification in visitation, employment or service demand
- Seniors housing proposals under the Housing SEPP, especially large facilities or intensification of existing facilities
- Major commercial, institutional or mixed-use proposals likely to increase daily population or alter the social fabric (e.g., hospitals, education, cultural venues)
- Proposals likely to increase or reduce employment, significantly affect housing supply, housing affordability or availability, or generate demand for community facilities and services
- Proposals likely to have a significant impact on the equitable provision of open space within the locality
- Proposals that impact recognised community meeting places, cultural places or neighbourhood identity or cohesion
- Proposals likely to raise public safety concerns or create areas of risk for occupants or pedestrians (to be addressed via design and ongoing management/operations)
- Liquor licence applications requiring a community impact statement (CIS) under the Liquor Act/Regulation (Council may request additional SIA content to inform submissions or DA conditions, if relevant)
- Any projects with potential cumulative social impacts, where the combined effect of multiple developments or ongoing change may intensify impacts on the community
- Any of the following land use types regardless of those size requirements:
 - Backpacker accommodation
 - Boarding houses
 - Co-living developments
 - Brothel
 - Drug rehabilitation centre
 - Entertainment complex (cinema, amusement centre)
 - Industry (greater than 10,000 square metres gross floor area)
 - New licensed premises/significant expansion of existing licensed premises
 - Public transport facilities
 - Restricted premises.

Potential Social Impact

Applicants must consider the full range of potential social impacts associated with their proposal. These impacts should be assessed using a risk-based, proportionate approach consistent with EP&A Act s4.15, the [NSW SIA Assessment Guideline](#), and [International Association for Impact Assessment \(IAIA\) principle](#).

The following is a list of potential broad social issues which may need to be addressed in a development:

- Access & mobility
- Accommodation & housing
- Community services and facilities
- Community identity, cohesion and a sense of place
- Public safety and perceptions of safety
- Impact on future generations
- Economic
- Cultural
- Community values and place attachment
- Employment and local economic participation
- Health and wellbeing
- Demographics (population size, composition and change)
- Interaction between new development and existing community
- Needs of social groups (women, older people, people with disability, children, youth, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, and culturally and linguistically diverse communities)
- Recreation facilities and open space
- Social equity and inclusion
- Digital access and inclusion
- Community values.

If the answer to any of the following questions is YES or POSSIBLY, the issue needs to be appropriately addressed in a social impact assessment:

- Is the proposal likely to give rise to a significant increase or reduction in the number of persons living or working on or visiting the site?
- Is the proposal likely to disadvantage or benefit any particular social group?
- Is the proposal likely to give rise to an increase or decrease in employment opportunities in the locality?
- Is the proposal likely to have a significant impact on the existing housing stock in the locality, particularly low rental housing?

- Is the proposal likely to have a significant impact on the equitable provision of open space within the locality, having regard to the community's needs, location, and capacity to use it?
- Is the proposal likely to have an impact upon existing community meeting places or give rise to an increased demand for community facilities or services in the locality?
- Is the proposal likely to require on-site support services to ensure safe, appropriate, or sustainable use of the development for its intended population?
- Is the proposal likely to give rise to increased conflict in the community or adversely impact upon community identity?
- Is the proposal likely to enhance or detract from the cultural life of the community?
- Will the proposal create areas of risk for occupants or pedestrians within or adjacent to the development?
- Is the proposal likely to give rise to increased community concern regarding public safety?
- Will the proposal materially change local amenity (visual character and views, noise and vibration, odour, lighting, privacy, or overall environmental quality)?
- Is the proposal likely to affect people's or businesses' ability to sustain income, employment or business continuity (including access to livelihood resources)?
- Is the proposal likely to constrain fair participation—that is, whether affected people are meaningfully informed, engaged and able to influence decisions?

6. How to prepare a SIA Report

Generally, an SIA should contain the following information (adapted from the [NSW SIA Assessment Guideline](#) for best practice):

- Executive summary
- Proposal description and context
- Social baseline (demographics, housing, service provision, community identity; data sources and validation)
- Stakeholder identification and engagement plan (proportionate methods; record of issues raised)
- Impact identification and significance evaluation (severity, extent, duration, likelihood; cumulative effects)
- Mitigation and enhancement strategy (specific measures tied to affected groups and local conditions or context)
- Social Impact Management Plan (SIMP) — where residual impacts are non-negligible: actions, responsibilities, performance measures, reporting schedule
- Monitoring and adaptive management (post-approval commitments)
- Compliance with statutory and policy framework (LEP, DCP, Housing SEPP, contributions and planning agreements)
- Appendices (engagement materials, datasets and maps)

Community/social profile

The extent and detail of data collection will depend upon the nature and scope of a development. As a minimum, the profile should describe the social characteristics of the affected community and preliminary investigation of possible issues. Appendix 1 contains a list of data sources.

The social profile should include relevant community consultation. The type of consultation used will depend upon the type of proposed development and its potential impacts. It can include personal contact, focus groups, surveys and presentations to groups.

Appendix 2 contains examples of social indicators which may be examined in the development of a community and social profile.

Identify the scope of assessment

The SIA should clearly define:

- The geographical boundaries of the study
- Likely areas of impact including an examination of the surrounding land uses and demographic patterns
- Key stakeholder interests – issues of concern relating to the project
- Assessment of cumulative impacts (including saturation of a particular land uses within an area, where future similar uses may result in detrimental impacts upon the neighbourhood, or the loss or diminishing of certain types of use within an area)

Project and estimate the impacts

- Address both positive and negative social impacts
- Use comparative analysis across feasible alternatives, including no-development option
- Consider cumulative impacts from nearby developments and strategic changes
- For Housing SEPP projects, ensure consistency with affordability, seniors housing and diversity objectives

Identify proposed mitigation measures

Where an assessment identifies negative impacts, mitigation measures must be investigated. They should contain specific details of particular characteristics of the affected community. The measures should demonstrate how impacts are avoided, minimised or managed in the context of the proposal. The proposal should demonstrate an overall net benefit to the community – see sections 8 and 9.

Community involvement

The level of consultation will vary according to the proposal. Applicants should discuss the proposed method of consultation with Council before preparing an SIA.

Effective community involvement should:

- Identify potential public concerns, values and expectations
- Gather meaningful input from the public on design options and alternatives
- Enhance transparency, develop and maintain trust
- Assist in decision making

7. Assessment of development applications

When reviewing SIC/SIA Council will consider:

1. Consistency with Randwick LEP 2012 and Randwick DCP 2013 including adaptable/universal housing, boarding houses, co-living development
2. Likely social impacts in the locality (s.4.15), significance and adequacy of responses
3. Community submissions received and how the proposal aligns with the public interest and addresses community concerns
4. Nexus of the proposal to public infrastructure to ensure community needs are addressed
5. Whether a balanced assessment been provided demonstrating the overall net benefits and justification for the project
6. Soundness of data and assumptions used are sufficient, reasonable and relevant
7. Consideration of alternatives to the proposal and social implications
8. Whether potential impacts can be adequately mitigated or net benefit demonstrated
9. Adequacy of ongoing monitoring and mitigation strategies through conditions of consent (see below)

The checklist at Appendix 3 should be used by applicants in addressing social impacts and preparing an SIA.

Where any part of the checklist cannot be completed, additional information should be sourced.

8. Monitoring of social impacts

An applicant should identify any impacts that need monitoring and how monitoring will be achieved.

Council may also consider the following monitoring approaches, including:

Options for Monitoring	Methods and important issues
Regular reports on specific impacts provided by owner/developer	Required through a condition of consent with periodic review with the onus on the developer to report on social impact issues; frequency aligned to impact significance; must report against SIMP metrics.
Monitoring by the public	Community feedback provides practical monitoring of lived impacts. Council may establish reporting channels.
Committees set up under conditions of consent/Council monitoring	Oversight by Council officers from various departments, residents, service providers, landowners and stakeholders. Useful for complex high-impact projects.

Source: Cox & Miers

9. Further advice

Please contact Council for further assistance on when and how to prepare an SIA:

- Customer Service Centre on 9093 6000
- Strategic Planning Division on 9093 6992
- Website: www.randwick.nsw.gov.au
- Visit Council's administrative building at 30 Frances Street, Randwick NSW 2031 during business hours

We are committed to making sure you can access the information you need in a format that is right for you. Other helpful contacts include:

- 131 450 to speak with the Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS)
- 133 677 TTY/voice calls
- 1300 555 727 Speak & Listen
- 0423 677 767 SMS relay

10. Appendices

Appendix 1: Sources of data

The following list is not exhaustive, and applicants and Council may consult other sources:

Randwick City Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Community Strategic Plan• Community Engagement Strategy• Local Strategic Planning Statement• Demographic and suburb profiles ID Profile (available from Council's website)• Community Services directory• Development approval data• Informing Strategies• Inclusive Randwick Strategy• Resilience Strategy• Annual reports• Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP)• Disability Inclusion Action Plan• Affordable Rental Housing Strategy• Randwick Social Study• A Safer Randwick City• Randwick Disability Inclusion Action Plan• Open Space and Recreation Needs Study• Historical land use information• Rate information – number of dwellings, land use• Internet access at library
Australian Bureau of Statistics	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Census data (demographic, economic / employment, housing)• Census computer data products: CDATA,• Manufacturing and retail censuses• Economic and employment / unemployment• Social trends data• Victims of crime survey (for availability)• Building and construction data• Disability data• Health data• Tourism data
NSW Government Agencies	
	<p>Note all NSW government agency web sites can be accessed from the State Government homepage.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Crime statistics for NSW and LGAs

NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research (Attorney General's Department)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Specialist crime data and comparative trend analysis
Department of Community Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supported accommodation information
Department of Education and Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enrolments in government and private schools Enrolment of special groups (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders; Non-English Speaking Background students)
HomesNSW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Housing and Rental Bond Board data (rents, dwelling types) – quarterly Rent and Sales Report
Transport and Population Data Centre (Dept of Planning)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Passenger travel for all modes of transport (by traffic zones and statistical local areas) Journey to work data Freight movement survey Population projections (LGA and regions) Demographic trend analyses
Department of Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employment Lands Development Program data Regional housing statistics and market analysis Metropolitan Urban Development Program data – new release areas (MUDP) production data – established areas
NSW Health Department	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Health statistics
NSW Police	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mapped crime data by local commands (available through local police stations) Crime data - BOSCAR Annual customer satisfaction surveys (levels of reporting and police response)
Tourism NSW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visitor numbers (by country of origin) Hotel/motel accommodation figures Tourist expenditure data
NSW Valuer General	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Average house prices by type of dwelling and locality
Commonwealth Government Agencies	
Centrelink	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of persons on social security benefits (by postcode or region)
Department of Employment and Workplace Affairs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quarterly Statistics (unemployment rates, labour force data)

Appendix 2: Examples of Social Indicators

Groupings Quantitative	Indicators	Qualitative Indicators
<i>Social Profile</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Size of population and net migration 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mobility data • Age structure • Single parent rate • Divorce rate 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Age structure of labour • Labour force participation • Distribution of wealth • Age left school • Nature of dwelling occupancy 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Language spoken at home • Country of birth 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Occupational mobility 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educational attainment • Motor vehicle ownership Median income 	
<i>Social Cohesion</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In/out migration • Level of attendance at community events/festivals/markets etc • Presence of active social/professions/trade/volunteer organisations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Density of acquaintance, family/friends networks • Interrelationship between the groups and the associations in the area. • Participation in recreational activities
<i>Social Resilience</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presence of thriving voluntary sector • Presence of business incubators e.g. cooperatives • Level of community involvement in planning activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment of spirit/energy in area e.g., new initiatives, community capacity to adapt to change. • Vitality of Chamber of Commerce • Presence/absence of success stories in area i.e.: previous change experiences

Appendix 3: Assessment checklist

Social Impact Checklist			
Impact	Likely to result from the proposed development		Comments
	Yes	No	
<i>Demographic changes</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• changing community needs & expectations• significant population changes			
<i>Accommodation & housing</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• low income and social housing• affordable housing• housing for special needs groups• housing for older people & those with a disability			
<i>Needs of older people</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• access issues• availability of support services			
<i>Needs of people with a disability</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• access issues• signage and wayfinding• availability of support services			
<i>Needs of younger people</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• childcare issues• children's needs• youth			
<i>Health impacts</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• health effects of air quality• toxic wastes & hazardous chemicals			
<i>Cultural issues</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• needs of people on non-English speaking backgrounds• Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander• religious needs• other cultural issues			
<i>Neighbourhood & community</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• neighbourhood safety• community identity• community severance• community cohesion			
<i>Facility requirements</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• need for community services & facilities			

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • access to open space and recreation • state government provided facilities (education & health) • transport (public or private) 			
<i>Economic issues</i>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • local employment generation • local employment opportunities • business development opportunities 			
<i>Cumulative impacts</i>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • redundant facilities & possible re-use • affects of similar types of developments in the locality 			
<i>Transport/access issues</i>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is access equitable for all, e.g. aged, disabled, youth? • will public transport be required to provide access? 			

Note: Where any part of the checklist cannot be completed, additional information and assessment may need to be undertaken prior to lodgement of a DA.

