

Prepared by:



The Planning
Studio

390-422 Harris St and
273 Pyrmont St, Ultimo

Social Impact Assessment

On behalf of
DigiCo

12 March 2025
[Final_REV 2]

A woman in a blue dress is performing a dance, holding a large white boomerang. She is standing on a green lawn with trees in the background. The image is partially obscured by a semi-transparent circular overlay containing text.

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the lands and waters across Australia - in particular the Gadigal people who have occupied and cared for the area that includes the City of Sydney LGA and Ultimo and pay our respect to Elders, past and present.

We deeply respect the continued connection to Country of First Nations Peoples through stories of place, culture and caring for the natural environment. We recognise + celebrate First Nations peoples as part of the oldest living culture - the original storytellers, planners, designers - who continue to care for Country, culture and community.

We also acknowledge the impacts of displacement and the need for truth telling + deep listening to heal. We are committed to listen, learn and walk alongside as we plan with communities for equitable, sustainable, generous and connected places and communities.

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Completion Date:	27 February 2025 _ DRAFTv1 7 March 2025_Final 12 March 2025_ Final REV 2
Qualifications:	Bachelor of Social Science (University of Newcastle, NSW) Bachelor of Urban and Regional Planning, Hons (University of New England, NSW) Planning Institute of Australia (Full Member)
Declaration:	This social impact assessment (SIA) relates to a proposal by DigiCo for 390-422 Harris Street and 273 Pyrmont Street, Ultimo. This SIA has been prepared to accompany the Development Proposal Application. This SIA has been prepared using best practice assessment methodology and is a true and independent review of the proposal based in the information provided to The Planning Studio and to our understanding contains no false or misleading information.
Signature:	

Photo Source: City of Sydney Council website [<https://news.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/articles/monument-to-first-nations-people-unveiled-on-gadigal-country>]

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Introduction

Social impacts generally refer to the consequences that people experience to their daily life, liveability, and wellbeing when a new project brings about change - big or small - to a locality.

Purpose

This Social Impact Assessment report has been prepared on behalf of HDI SYD1 Property Holdings Pty Limited (DigiCo) in support of a State Significant Development Application (SSDA) submitted to the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure (DPHI) under Part 4 of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 (EP&A Act 1979).

The SSDA seeks approval for intensification of the existing data centre development at the site. Specifically, the SSDA seeks consent for the vertical expansion of two existing data centres at the site known as SYD1W (western facility) and SYD1E (eastern facility). The vertical expansion would allow for the intensification of the data centre to provide for a 88MW facility.

This report provides an assessment of social impacts and responds to the Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements (SEARs) issued by DPHI on 8 May 2024 in relation to the project.

Overall Impact Assessment

This report concludes that the proposed development is suitable from a social impact assessment perspective.

Based on this assessment and the recommendations provided, the proposal is expected to have an overall low to neutral social impact. The potential changes and impacts throughout the construction and operational phases of the development and future uses on surrounding residents and businesses can be sufficiently managed by the proposed design and the implementation of recommended mitigation measures.

The Site Context

The site is located within the suburb of Ultimo, within the City of Sydney Local Government Area (LGA).

The locality is characterised by a mix of uses, as shown in Figure 1. This includes lower density terrace housing with heritage value on the west side of Harris Street, mid-rise residential development to the south, the International Convention Centre to the east, and higher residential densities and tourist accommodation buildings to the north.

The site is less than 1km from the Sydney CBD and Darling Harbour which contain high rise commercial and residential towers, waterfront areas, public reserves, and numerous shops and entertainment premises.

The Site

The subject site comprises an entire block and is made up of two parcels of land, known as 392-422 Harris Street (on the western side) and 273 Pyrmont Street (on the eastern side). The western side comprises the data centre referred to as SYD1W, and the eastern side comprises the data centre referred to as SYD1E.

As shown in Figure 2 below, the site is generally in a rectangular form, with frontages to Harris Street to the west, Quarry Street to the south, Pyrmont Street to the east, and both Fig Street and the Western Distributor to the north (with the Western Distributor constructed in a viaduct above Fig Street).

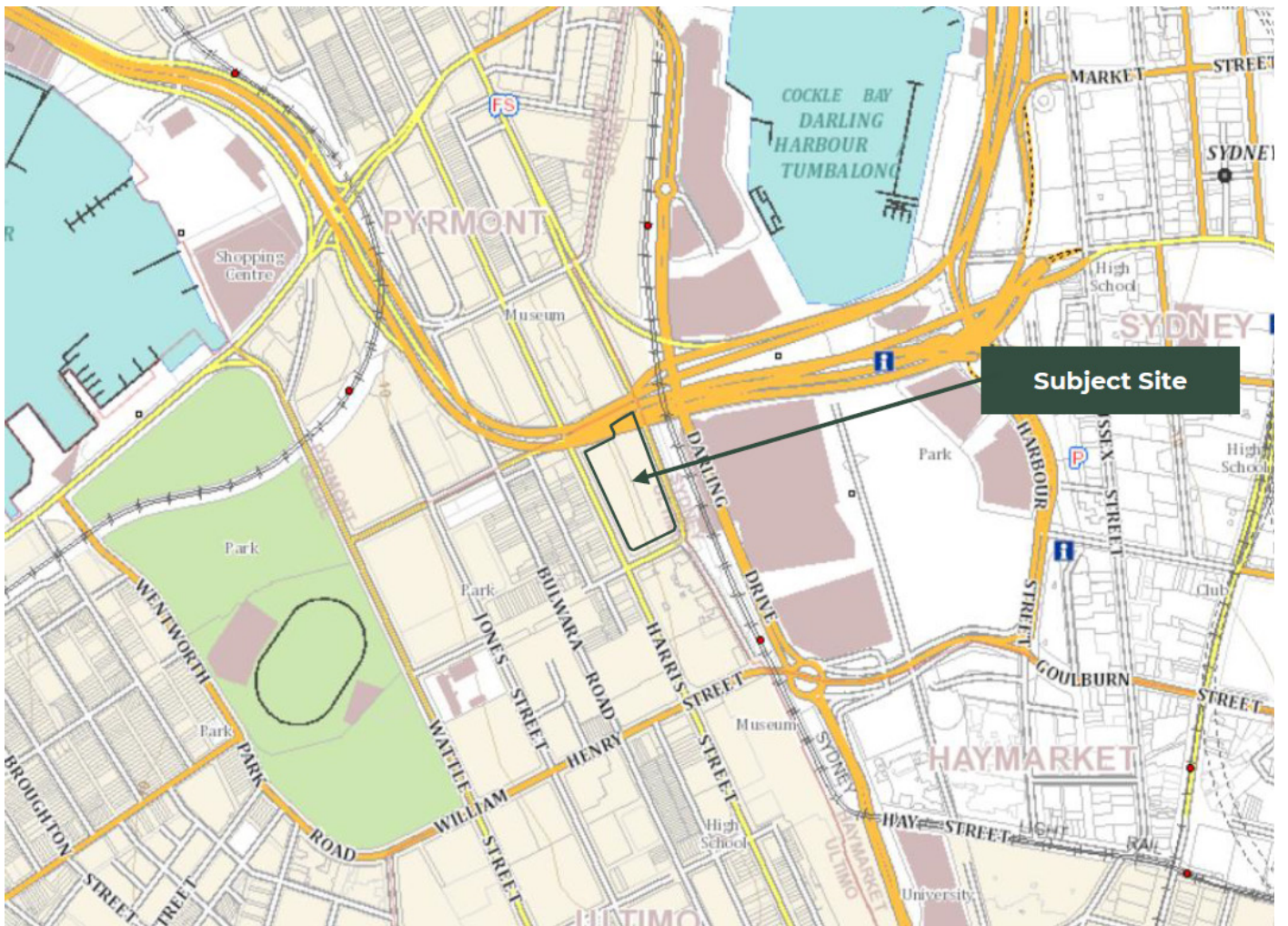


Figure 1: Site Context Map (Source: Six Maps)



Figure 2: Aerial Image of the subject site and surrounds (Source: MetroMap)



The Development Proposal

The SSDA seeks approval for intensification of the existing data centre development at the site. Specifically, the SSDA will seek consent for the vertical expansion of two existing data centres at the site known as SYD1W (western facility) and SYD1E (eastern facility) and data hall densification works.

The vertical expansion would allow for the intensification of the data centre to provide for a 88MW facility

In summary, approval for the following is sought for development comprising:

- Augmentation and vertical extension to the data centre facilitating the installation of electrical and mechanical equipment;
- Conversion of existing building floor space into additional electrical rooms or conversion of plant/mechanical space;
- Increase in the total megawattage of the data centre from 42.5MW to 88MW; and
- Installation of an additional 24 generators, achieving a total of 66 generators across the site.

SEARs relevant to this report

This Social Impact Assessment report has been prepared to respond to the SEARs issued for the DigiCo expansion project. The SEARs that are relevant to this assessment are provided below.

Item	Title Description	Section Reference (this Report)
Social	Include a social impact assessment in accordance with the Department's Social Impact Assessment Guidelines for State Significant Projects.	Whole of report. Social Baseline and Social Impact Assessment

Table 1: SEARS Requirements



“Awareness of the differential distribution of impacts among different groups in society, and particularly the impact burden experienced by vulnerable groups in the community should always be of prime concern”

- Vanclay, 2003

The Planning Studio's approach to the process of social impact assessment to scope, assess, and enhance or mitigate potential positive and negative impacts that may arise from the proposed development.

The City of Sydney has social impact considerations that follow NSW DPE's Social Impact Assessment Guideline 2022. These considerations are part of their "Social Sustainability Policy and Action Plan" (2018-2028) that outlines how they assess and manage the social impacts of developments within their area.

The proposal is assessed against City of Sydney's social impact considerations and DPE's established assessment approaches to undertaking an independent and fair assessment of social impacts.

Defining social impacts

Social impacts are the consequences that people experience when a project brings about change and can be uniquely social or intrinsically related to other environmental, economic, and cultural impacts.

A social impact can be defined as the net effect of an activity on a community and the wellbeing of individuals and families.

The well-established categories of social impacts, which are the foundation of social impact assessment are illustrated in Figure 6 (page 9).

Establishing a social baseline

In order to assess the social impacts accurately, a detailed assessment of the social baseline enables consideration of the existing surrounds of the proposal. This consideration is made through the collection of data to establish benchmarks against which the impacts of the proposal can be assessed.

The Planning Studio has conducted a desktop review of the publicly available information from sources such as the ABS, Profile.id and information provided by the proponent, to inform our understanding of relevant demographic and social context and trends.

Predicting, Analysing, and Evaluating Impacts

Our assessment identifies and evaluates changes to the social baseline due to the proposal. This includes the assessment of positive, negative, and cumulative impacts. Changes can be tangible or intangible; qualitative or quantitative; direct or indirect; and subjectively experienced.

The following defines, for the purpose of the SIA these types of impacts:

Positive social impacts: result from changes to the physical or social fabric that make it better (in any of the impact categories) than before the project took place. This includes the direct contribution to health and wellbeing with additional social infrastructure, services or facilities.

Negative social impacts: result from changes to the physical or social fabric that make it worse (in any of the impact categories) than before the project took place. This could be the amplification of an existing social issue or the creation of a new impact.

Cumulative social impacts: result from changes to the physical or social fabric that occur from multiple projects or activities that need similar resources or affect similar impact categories

The likelihood of social impacts arising from each matter is assessed as part of the scoping process and applied on a case-by-case basis to identify the significance of impact from the individual proposal.

The likelihood of a potential impact is a primary consideration. The criteria used to determine the likelihood of impacts is summarised in Table 3 (over the page).

The magnitude of a potential impact is another key consideration to determine a risk rating. In determining the magnitude, the five key characteristics assessed are:

- Extent
- Duration
- Severity or Scale
- Sensitivity or Importance
- Level of Concern

The matrix by which these characteristics are measured is illustrated in Table 3.





CULTURE: individual and shared beliefs, customs, values, language and traditions related to cultural and social identities and backgrounds. How these are expressed, represented, celebrated and valued. The stories, and connections to Country, and waterways, cultural importance of places and buildings.



ACCESSIBILITY + PERCEPTIONS:

safety, aspirations or fears about the future for their community, place + young people. How people access and use infrastructure, services and facilities.



WAY OF LIFE

is how people live, work, play + interact with each other day-to-day.

HEALTH + WELLBEING:



the physical, psychological, and social health, wellbeing + safety of individuals and the community, particularly those most vulnerable and not merely the absence of illness + disease but also the effects on public health.

PERSONAL LIVELIHOOD + RIGHTS:



whether people are economically affected or experience disadvantage, which includes violation of civil rights and people's capacity to sustain themselves through employment or business.



CIVIC ENGAGEMENT + DECISION MAKING:

the extent to which people are able to participate in decisions that affect their lives, the democratic systems, resources and action taking place.



COMMUNITY

cohesion, stability, character + resilience as well as the services + facilities, and people's sense of place.



ENVIRONMENT:

the connection to Country and the natural environment, equitable access to and management of resources, quality of air and water, level of potential health and hazard risk, adequacy of utilities and food security. Also the use of the built environment, aesthetic value and amenity on humans, such as shade, public safety and security, and environmental quality.

Figure 6: Categories of Social Impact
(Source: Adapted from Vanclay, 2003 | Graphic: The Planning Studio)

Likelihood	Magnitude				
	Minimal	Minor	Moderate	Major	Significant
Almost Certain [$< 90\%$]	Low	Medium	High	Very High	Very High
Likely [70%]	Low	Medium	High	High	Very High
Possible [50%]	Low	Medium	Medium	High	High
Unlikely [30%]	Low	Low	Medium	Medium	High
Very Unlikely [$>10\%$]	Low	Low	Low	Medium	Medium

Table 3: Social Impact Significant Matrix
Source: NSW Government Social Impact Assessment Guideline (2021)

Social Baseline

This section provides a social baseline of the development proposal site and surrounding area including the site's locality, social context, demographic characteristics, local social and cultural infrastructure, areas of social influence and policy context.

District Strategic Planning

The **Eastern City District Plan** (the Plan) sets out a vision, objectives, strategies, and actions to manage the economic, social and environmental growth in the "Eastern District" of Greater Sydney.

The subject site is situated in an area identified as the "Innovation Corridor" within the Eastern Harbour City. The Eastern City District Plan identifies planning priorities for the City, two of which are relevant to the project:

- Planning Priority E7: Growing a stronger and more competitive Harbour CBD
- Planning Priority E8: Growing and investing in health and education precincts and the Innovation Corridor

Aligned with the proposed development, the planning priorities highlights the support for the creative and digital industries and business support services in the Innovation Corridor for the competitiveness of Greater Sydney.

The proposed development would be consistent with this strategic framework, as it will provide for additional growth and provide support for the digital economy within the CBD Innovation Corridor, NSW, and the Australian economy more broadly.

Local Strategic Planning

The **City Plan 2036**: City of Sydney Local Strategic Planning Statement (LSPS) outlines the city's vision for development and growth.

Planning Priority 2 is "developing innovative and diverse business clusters in City Fringe". Action P2.5 of this Priority is of relevance to and in support of the proposed development: "Strengthen the economic and productive role of the Innovation Corridor by: ...(b) identifying and supporting opportunities to appropriately increase capacity for commercial and other enterprise uses particularly those contributing to specialised and knowledge based clusters...."

The subject site is situated in the Harris Street Village which is located on the western fringe, encompassing the inner city suburbs of Ultimo and Pyrmont. It is home to the regional headquarters of the broadcasting, publishing, media and technology sectors.

Planning priorities relevant to the development proposal are centred around 'productivity'. These include:

P1: Growing a stronger, more competitive Central Sydney: To prioritise space for business and enterprise activities.

P2: Developing innovative and diverse business clusters in City Fringe: To grow knowledge-intensive business clusters with health, education, innovation, technology and creative industries in the Harbour CBD and prioritise those strategic land uses, and improve connections between business and institutions.

Key moves relevant to the development proposal include: "Build internationally competitive and knowledge-intensive business clusters in the Innovation Corridor". The City will strengthen the economic role of this corridor by prioritising space for specialised and knowledge-based clusters, plan for a genuine mixed-use precinct with high amenity and investigate opportunities to increase capacity for enterprise uses

Sustainable Sydney 2030–2050, sets out a strategic plan for the next 25 years. Strategic direction 9: "A transformed and innovative economy"

The precinct revitalisation approach protects and grows existing clusters of cultural space across Sydney. The 'Pyrmont and Ultimo innovation and design precinct', connects education facilities, museums, media companies and innovation start-ups. The area is seen as Sydney's nexus of creative thinking, arts practice, technology and design.

The **Central Sydney Planning Strategy (2016-2036)** is a 20-year growth strategy. The site sits just within the extended geographical boundaries of Central Sydney, located adjacent to the Darling Harbour revitalisation State project.

The City of Sydney **Floor Space and Employment survey 2022** collects data on how individual spaces are used by businesses across the entire local area of Sydney LGA, both internal and external, alongside



the number of employees working in each location, providing a comprehensive snapshot of the city's economic activity and land use patterns across different buildings and properties.

The industry sector of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) encapsulates the technology used to create, store, transmit and share information. A data centre is considered part of the ICT industry category.

The 2022 survey results show that ICT is included in the top three industry sectors alongside Finance and financial services and Professional and business services. ICT accounted for 38,895 workers in 2022, a proportion of 7.5% of the total jobs by city-based industry sector.

The total internal floor area for ICT was 865,730sqm or 5.2% as a proportion of occupied business floor area across the City of Sydney.

The **Pymont Peninsular Place Strategy** is a 20-year plan to enable a transformation that unlocks innovation and investment to create the jobs of the future, while celebrating the rich heritage and charm of the peninsula.

"During the next 20 years, Tumbalong Park will be an integral park of the globally recognised tourism and visitor destination, Darling Harbour, and a meeting place for innovators, entrepreneurs and businesses."

The proposed intensification of the data centres aligns with the strategy's objective, as the development will contribute to the unlocking of innovation and investment within the peninsular.

Surroundings facilities and services

The accessibility and proximity of the wider social infrastructure of services, community facilities and open space to the development proposal site is greatly beneficial to workers' wellbeing and social life.

The site is located in proximity to the Darling Harbour precinct and within the suburb of Ultimo. These localities offer services, spaces, and facilities which are anchor points for the community wellbeing of both locals and visitors.

Numerous and reliable **transport provisions** are essential for workers, enabling them to commute efficiently to their workplaces. Well-connected transport and public transport systems reduce travel times, lower costs and ensures punctuality for workers. Transportation links in the area includes:

- Dulwich Hill Line (L1): runs through Ultimo with stops at Paddy's Markets, Convention, Exhibition Centre and Pymont Bay providing access to neighbouring suburbs and key destinations.
- Ferry Services: Ferry wharves at Barangaroo and Pymont Bay connect visitors to various parts of Sydney, enhancing the precinct's accessibility.
- Local Bus Routes:
 - Route 370: Connecting Coogee to Glebe Point, passing through Ultimo.
 - Routes 423, 426, 428: Linking Kingsgrove, Dulwich Hill, and Canterbury to the city centre, with stops in Ultimo.
 - Route 430: A loop service from Sydenham to Central Railway Square, serving the Ultimo area.

Green spaces and recreation facilities near businesses are environments which provide workers opportunities for rest and physical activities. These spaces can often be used before or after work, during lunch breaks, or to catch up with friends and family. They encourage social interaction, mind space and creativity, ultimately enhancing the wellbeing of workers.

Green spaces and recreation facilities in the area include:

- Tumbalong Park: A 5-hectare park designed with native Australian flora, fountains, and a children's playground, serving as a venue for various public events.
- Wentworth Park (multi-purpose sporting pitches; cricket nets and fitness stations; playground and picnic areas)

- Chinese Garden of Friendship: Garden offering Chinese heritage and culture, featuring traditional landscapes and architecture.
- Ian Thorpe Aquatic and Fitness Centre (3 swimming pools; fitness / gym facilities)
- Gyms in the area: Anytime Fitness, The Health Club, Plus Fitness Market St.
- The Goods Line: An 800-meter linear park and shared pathway repurposed from a former railway line. It features amenities such as seating, an amphitheatre, play spaces, and Wi-Fi, fostering community interaction and providing a green corridor connecting Ultimo to surrounding areas.
- Darling Harbour Playground (outdoor climbing frames and interactive water features for children and teenagers).

The provision of **retail shops** in proximity to business areas is beneficial for workers to easily access essentials, grab meals, run errands during breaks, and catch up with people ultimately allowing people to efficiently manage personal tasks without long commutes which saves time and energy. Additionally, vibrant retail areas contribute to a lively and engaging work environment, making workplaces more attractive and enjoyable. Nearby retail spaces include:

- Darling Square: A modern precinct featuring specialty shops, eateries, and the Darling Square Library, contributing to the area's urban renewal.
- Cockle Bay Wharf: A waterfront dining and entertainment complex with a variety of restaurants, bars, and nightlife options.

Education services near businesses benefit workers by providing opportunities for skill development, career growth, and work-life balance. Convenient access to training centres, universities, and childcare facilities allows employees to further their education, upskill, or ensure quality education for their children without long commutes. Education facilities in the area include TAFE NSW Ultimo Campus, University of Technology Sydney, University of Sydney, and various private and council-run childcare centres.

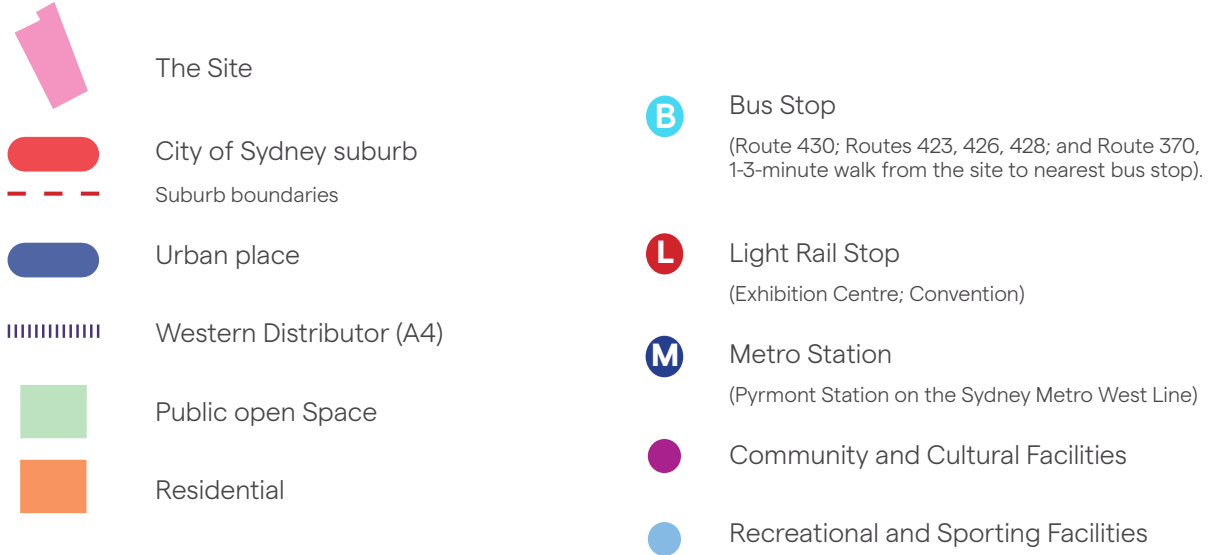
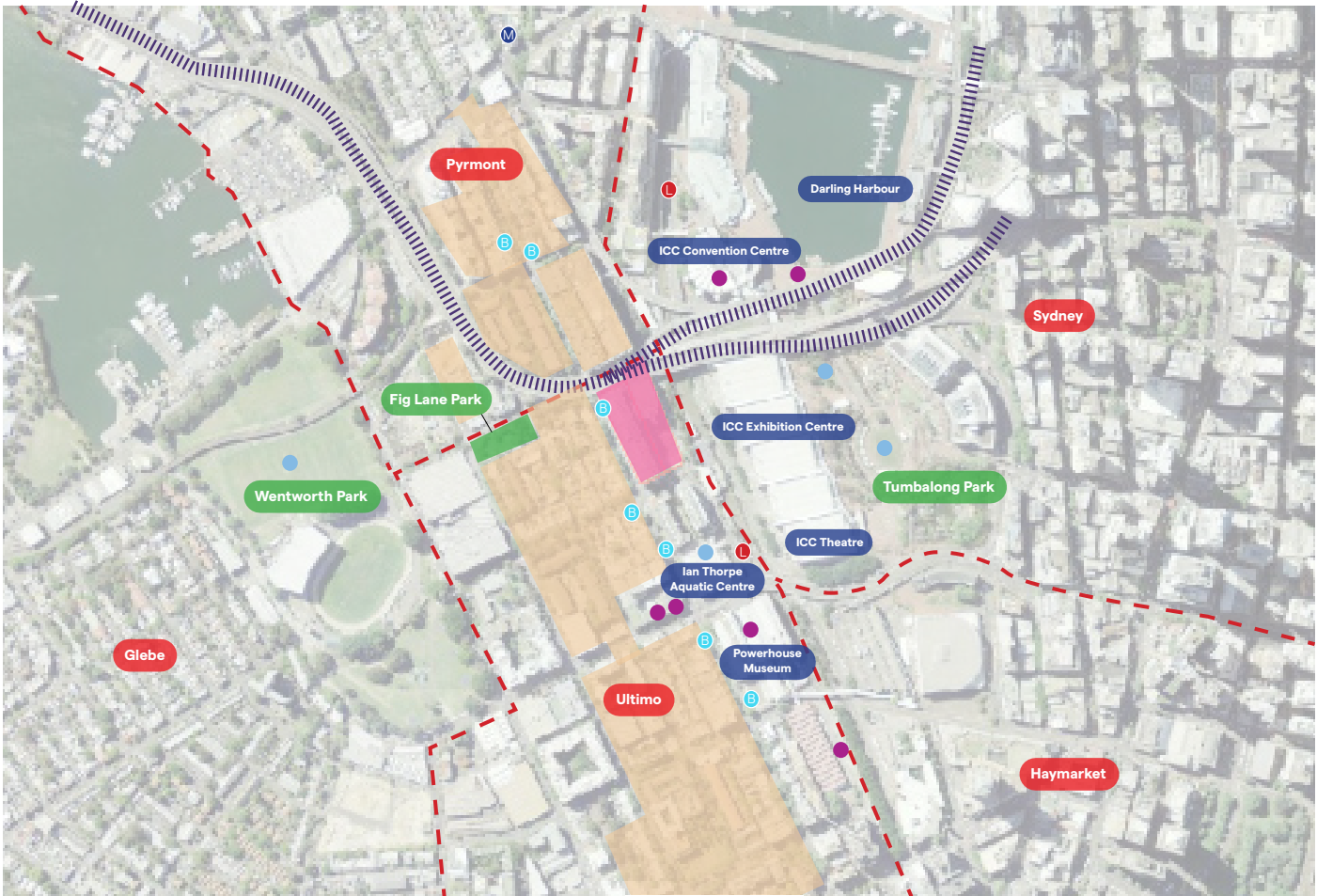
Cultural and entertainment facilities provide opportunities for workers to relax, socialise and connect after work and for personal enrichment. These amenities also contribute to a dynamic community atmosphere.

The following are types of cultural facilities in the area:

- Ultimo Community Centre: A hub for local residents, providing spaces for recreational activities, community gatherings, and various programs aimed at enhancing social well-being.
- Jessie Street National Women's Library: A specialist library located within the Ultimo Community Centre that collects and preserves materials highlighting Australian women's contributions across various fields.
- Powerhouse Museum Ultimo: Institution focusing on applied arts and sciences. The museum is undergoing a \$250 million heritage revitalisation to expand exhibition and learning spaces, enhancing its role as a dynamic creative industries precinct.
- International Convention Centre Sydney (ICC Sydney): Facility offering integrated convention, exhibition, and entertainment spaces.
- IMAX Sydney theatre / cinema
- Australian National Maritime Museum: Showcases Australia's maritime history, including historic vessels and interactive exhibits.
- Sea Life Sydney Aquarium and Wildlife Sydney Zoo: Australia's marine and terrestrial animals.



Figure 7: Social locality surrounding the site.



Community Profile

A community profile identifies the demographic and social characteristics of a proposal's likely area of social influence. This is an important tool in understanding how a community currently lives and that community's potential capacity to adapt to changes arising from a proposal.

The community profile has been developed based on data from Profile id for the City of Sydney LGA, which has itself been drawn from the ABS Census data. The following provides a summary of the key community characteristics, including categories such as age, household, education, employment, health and wellbeing.

It is noted that the DigiCo SYD1 data centre has a team of around 45 employee, and that the data centre is operational 24 hours of the day, 7 days of the week.

Demographic + Resident Character

The City of Sydney Local Government Area (LGA) is home to 231,086 people with a population density of 8,660 persons per square km. The site is located in Ultimo, an inner-city suburb of Sydney. Ultimo has an estimated resident population of 9,316 (2023) people living in 3,745 dwellings.

The average household size within the Ultimo area is 2.06 persons per dwelling, which is larger than the average household size of the LGA at 1.89 persons per dwelling.

Travel to Work

Residents within the Ultimo profile area are more likely to travel to work by public transport (train, bus, tram, ferry) at 14.5%, most likely owing to the well serviced provision of transport in the inner-city urban area. 13.5% of people walked to work, 3.1% rode their bike and 10.8% of people travelled in cars to work.

The walking and use of public transport proportions of methods of travel to work are higher than the Sydney LGA, though the proportions of people traveling in cars is less.

In 2021, 41% of Ultimo residents reported as working from home. (Please note that this data was collected in 2021 during the Covid-19 pandemic, which may influence these statistics).

Local Crime Statistics

Crime statistics obtained from the NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research (BOCSAR) represents incidents recorded by NSW Police.

This SIA has considered the local BOSCAR statistics from 2021 to 2024. Of the most commonly occurring offenses reported in the Sydney LGA, Malicious damage to property; Theft from motor vehicle; Theft of motor vehicles; Theft (break & enter non-dwelling); Robbery; and Non domestic violence related assault offenses had the highest density of incidents. The trends of these crime hotspot offenses were all decreasing and the two-year trends were mostly stable for each offence.

The site is captured well within the highest offence zones in the locality of the Sydney LGA. The area surrounding is a large entertainment, cultural and recreational precinct with high foot traffic many hours of the day.

Economic Characteristics

Across the Sydney LGA, 25.6% of the population earn an income of \$2,000 or more per week in 2021. Within the Ultimo area, 13.1% of resident's have an income of \$2,000 or more per week.

Residents that earn less than \$1,000 per week in the Ultimo area represented 55.3% of the total population, which is higher to the proportion when considering the whole of the Sydney LGA at 38%.

The income characteristics are a reflection of the work and industries that residents are engaged in. There are 15.5% of the Ultimo population employed in the professional, scientific and technical services sectors and 14.4% in the accommodation and food services industry. Education and training and retail workers account for 9.1% and 8.8% respectively.

In the Ultimo area, 23% of households were purchasing or fully owned their home in 2021. 58.1% were renting privately, with 63.2% of renting households paying \$450 or more per week in rent in 2021.

Age

The residents of Ultimo (2021) are predominantly the young workforce, aged between 25 to 34 years old (35.8%) and those aged between 35 to 49 (21.7%).

In the Sydney LGA, the largest proportion of residents is similar to that of Ultimo. 25 to 34 year olds make up 32.2% and parents and homebuilders, 35 to 49 year olds account for 24.3%.



Figures 8-13: Localised Crime Hotspots - Ultimo Suburb October 2023-September 2024 (Source: BOSCAR)

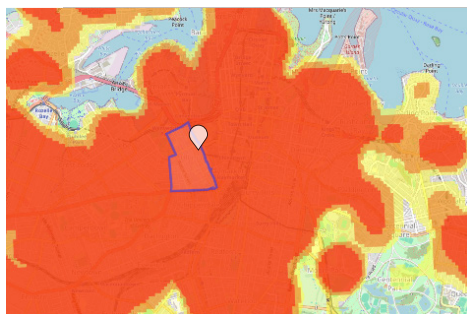


Figure 8: Malicious Damage to Property, October 2023-September 2024

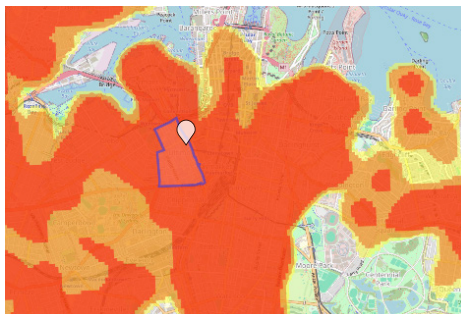


Figure 9: Theft (Steal from Motor Vehicle), October 2023-September 2024

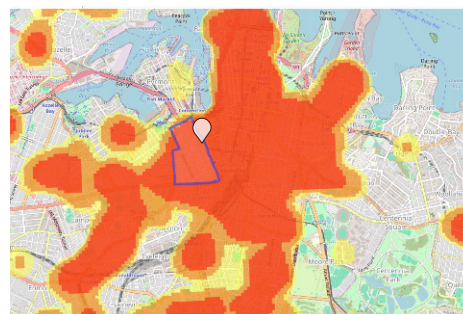


Figure 10: Theft (Break & enter non-dwelling), October 2023-September 2024

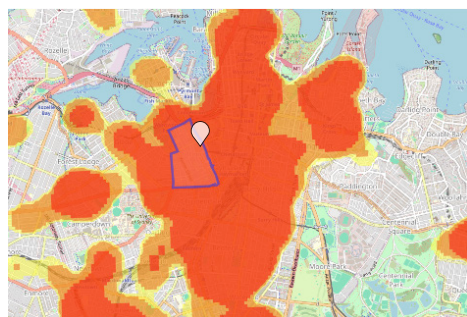


Figure 11: Incidents of Robbery, October 2023-September 2024

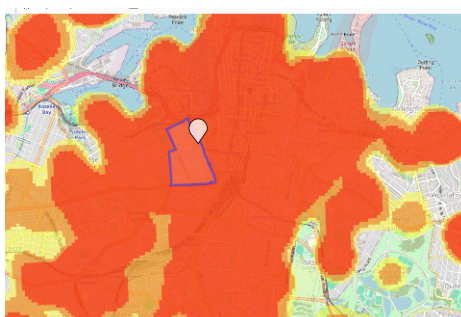


Figure 12: Incidents of assault (Non-Domestic), October 2023-September 2024

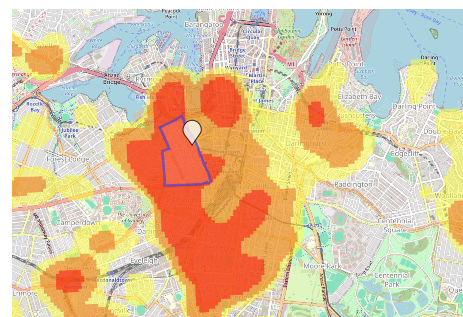


Figure 13: Theft (Motor vehicle), October 2023-September 2024



The site

Offence Type	Incidents [LGA 2021-2022]		Incidents [LGA 2022-2023]		Incidents [LGA 2023-24]		2-year trend [LGA]	10-year trend [LGA]
	No. of incidents	Rate per 100,000 pop'n	No. of incidents	Rate per 100,000 pop'n	No. of incidents	Rate per 100,000 pop'n		
Malicious damage to property	2021	930	2036	933.5	2161	990.8	Stable	-2.7%
Theft from motor vehicle	753	346.3	731	335.2	815	373.7	Stable	-9.2%
Theft (Break & enter non-dwelling)	325	149.6	357	163.7	285	130.7	-20.2%	-6.3%
Robbery	123	56.6	181	83	203	93.1	Stable	-6.5%
Non domestic violence related assault	2543	1170.4	2834	1299.4	2907	1332.9	Stable	-1.2%
Theft (motor vehicle)	237	109	298	136.6	381	174.7	Stable	-0.1%

Table 4: Number of recorded incidents and trends for Sydney LGA (source: NSW BOSCAR Statistics)

The Ultimo area (2021) has a higher proportion of tertiary education and independence (18 to 24 years) at 19.9% in comparison to the Sydney LGA's 11.7%, but lower numbers of older workers and pre-retirees (50 to 59 years) and empty nesters and retirees (60 to 69 years).

From 2016 to 2021, the population of Ultimo decreased by 1,416 people. The largest changes in the age structure across this time period were:

- 18 to 24yrs (Tertiary education and independence) -1,874 people
- 25 to 34yrs (Young workforce) -196 people
- 35 to 49 yrs (Parents and homebuilders) +345 people
- 50 to 59yrs (Older workers and pre-retirees) +124 people

Household Type

Along with age, household and family structure is one of the most important demographic indicators. It reveals the area's residential role and function, and provides key insights into the level of demand for social spaces, services and facilities as most are related to age and household types.

The predominant household and family structures in Ultimo (2021) were Lone persons (34.3%), Couples without children (25.5%), and Group households (16.9%). These percentages are only slightly higher or lower when compared to the proportion of household type across the Sydney LGA (38.3%, 28.2%, and 10.8% respectively).

The percentage make up of all other household and family structures in Ultimo are greatly similar to that of the LGA.

The number of households in Ultimo decreased by 293 between 2016 and 2021, with Group households (-277) and unclassifiable households (-242) experiencing the highest decreases, and Lone persons (+171) and Couples with children (+116) experiencing the highest increases.

Cultural Background

The Sydney LGA has a smaller proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (1.4%) than compared to Greater Sydney which is 1.7%.

Overall, the LGA's population has a lower proportion of Australian citizens when compared to Greater Sydney (64.7% v 80.8% respectively).

The four largest ancestries in the Sydney LGA (2021) are English (25%), Australian (16.8%), Chinese (16.8%) and Irish (10.7%). The analysis of the smaller Ultimo area varies with higher numbers of Chinese (31.4%) and Thai (7%) ancestries, and lower numbers of English (13.4%) and Australian (9.1%).

Level of Disadvantage

Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA) measure the relative level of socio-economic disadvantage and/or advantage based on a range of Census characteristics.

A higher score on the index means a lower level of disadvantage, or a higher level of advantage. Indicators of advantage that are used within the index include professional occupations, high income, higher education levels, high rent, large dwellings etc. While Indicators of disadvantage include unemployment, low incomes or education levels, single parent families, low skilled occupations, poor English proficiency.

In 2021, the Sydney LGA's Index of Relative Socio-Economic Disadvantage (SEIFA) was 1,031 and for the Ultimo area this score was higher at 960. This means that the Ultimo area is more disadvantaged when compared to Sydney LGA, but both are still some of the more advantaged areas in Australia.





A proposal may cause a range of direct and indirect social impacts which can have a positive, negative or neutral impact on the existing community. An SIA assesses the expected and perceived impacts which are considered to have the most significant impacts on the community and identified stakeholder groups.

Area of Social Influence

Considering the outcomes from the social baseline, the area of social influence is the immediate context, the Ultimo and City of Sydney LGA.

Within the areas of social influence, the following individuals and communities are likely to be impacted by the proposal:

- Current workers
- Future workers
- Community and neighbouring residents
- Existing local businesses and workers within the social locality of the development proposal site

Impact Assessment Findings

The expected and perceived impacts of the development proposal are assessed against the current social baseline and by the predicted changes that are likely as a result of the proposed development that would occur aligned to the amended controls.

These impacts have been informed by the contextual information outlined in the previous sections of this SIA and have been assessed against the SIA criteria described on page 8 and 9 from the perspective of the community and other affected stakeholders.

It is recognised that there is already a data centre building sitting and operating within this site. The development proposal is a vertical extension of the existing building and use, and will result in a combined GFA of 41,190sqm.

The following outlines the assessment conclusions against the social impact categories and the social baseline.

Acoustic impact

[Impact Categories: Health and Wellbeing | Way of Life]

Data centres can generate significant amounts of noise from the cooling fans and systems necessary to maintain optimal server temperatures. Continuous exposure to such noise impacts can significantly affect nearby residential areas, leading to reduced quality of life, sleep disturbances, and increased stress levels.

DigiCo SYD1 is operational 24 hours of the day, seven days of the week. The proposed future expansion will comprise 32 cooling towers, 14 chillers and 66 generators.

An acoustic assessment of the potential acoustic impacts from systems operation of the data centre following its redevelopment and during construction was undertaken by Pulse White Noise Acoustics. The potential acoustic impacts considers the current and future workers at the site, the community and neighbouring residents and existing local businesses and workers in the social locality.

The nearest noise sensitive receivers to the project site (of approximately 40m south, 30m west and 50m north) include 10 residential properties, 3 commercial buildings and 1 hotel. The proposed development could potentially have an impact on these receivers, affecting their acoustic amenity and wellbeing.

It is noted that the Western Distributor, which is located within proximity to the site and social impact locality, is a dominant noise source, contributing significantly to the existing noise environment. The existing noise from the road traffic is above acceptable levels for the area, which are unlikely to reduce in the near future.

The operational noise assessment suggests that feasible and reasonable mitigation measures will likely be needed to manage noise impacts.

Recommended measures include an acoustic louvre wall along the edge of the data centre to minimise noise from cooling towers and acoustic mitigation on backup generator exhausts. With these mitigations in place, operational noise levels are expected to comply with trigger levels at the nearest receivers.

Construction has the potential to cause noise and vibration impacts to the surrounding environment, creating some disturbances which may impact neighbouring residents, businesses and workers negatively.

Construction noise levels are generally expected to remain within management limits. However, minor to moderate exceedances may occur at a few nearby sensitive receivers during louder activities, especially when crane is in operation.

To minimise potential impacts, mitigation measures recommended in the Acoustic Assessment should be implemented and therefore no further measures are suggested.

Accessibility

[Impact Categories: Accessibility | Health and Wellbeing]

Social impacts to accessibility can arise from changes in how people access and use infrastructure, services and facilities, whether provided by a public, private, or not-for-profit organisation.

Changes to accessibility that have the greatest, but short term impacts are likely to occur at the construction stage. The accessibility impacts anticipated are likely to be as a result of short-term traffic and pedestrian route changes, changed property access arrangements, and changes to parking availability.

There are 45 employees at DigiCo. 14 of the 45 employees work non-typical hours (between 6AM-6PM) for contract and security purposes. The remaining 31 employees work general office hours (between 9AM-5PM). The number of employees and patterns of employment activity will remain as is following the proposed redevelopment.

MBC Group prepared Access Capability Statement which outlines the findings of an assessment of the referenced architectural documentation for the proposed development against the Deemed-to-Satisfy provisions of the National Construction Code Series Building Code of Australia 2019.

Compliance for the site is achievable subject to compliance with:

- Accessible paths of travel from site boundary to building entrance (Pyrmont St); and
- Continuous accessible paths of travel.

It is noted that the construction phase of any large development with the likely change of access regimes may also impact way of life through temporary road closures, changed parking availability, or restrictions on property access, though any changes would likely be temporary.

Based on the development proposal it is expected to have a low to medium impact on the accessibility of people living, working and visiting the site, the greater likelihood of impact being throughout the construction phase.

To mitigate the negative impact, particularly throughout the construction phase, it is recommended any changes to traffic and/or pedestrian access should be clearly communicated and a safe, barrier free alternative access should be provided that prioritises the safety and access of people in and around the sites.

Safety

[Impact Categories: Safety | Way of Life | Environment]

The design of spaces and places can contribute to an individual or general perception of safety and vulnerability. The level of vulnerability that an individual feels is also influenced by various characteristics, such as gender, age, cultural background, ability, and sexuality.

A person who is confident in their environment is more likely to be observant and interact with other people in the area and therefore increasing natural surveillance and activation of public and communal spaces. In general, people engaging in criminal and anti-social behaviour are often deterred in areas with high levels of natural surveillance.

The incorporation of Universal Design and CPTED principles should be implemented to ensure that all privately and publicly accessible areas across the buildings are physically accessible and inclusive.

Visual changes such as the presence of construction equipment, temporary fencing and hoarding, and the removal of vegetation may also contribute to a decreased feeling of safety in which workers at adjacent commercial properties and residents of properties opposite the site would most likely experience an increased negative impact.

Based on the development proposal it is expected to have a low to medium impact on the accessibility and safety of people working and visiting the site, the greater likelihood of impact being throughout the construction phase.



Weaving culture into the redevelopment

[Impact Categories: Culture | Environment]

The stories and connections to Country are of cultural importance to places and buildings. This includes individual and shared beliefs, customs, values, language and traditions related to cultural and social identities and backgrounds. How these are expressed, represented, celebrated and valued impact a society.

There are no cultural, scientific, aesthetic or historical Aboriginal heritage constraints to the redevelopment of the study area, and as such, the redevelopment has been deemed suitable to go ahead without any further Aboriginal heritage requirements.

The Connecting with Country Framework prepared by Ngurra Advisory provides the following three implementation recommendations to further guide the project. These include:

- Applying First Nations themes across the project - including the development of an opportunity register that will detail where the themes can be applied and the specifics of their implementation
- Continuing connections with Elders - for ongoing design validation
- Connecting with First Nations business - who can assist in the delivery of a number of design deliverables such as art, lighting and landscaping.

These recommendations can provide a positive social impact through the opportunities for workers of DigiCo to learn more about Country and the place they come to work, and the cultural traditions to acknowledge and increase understanding of the Gadigal and broader First Nations community.

Conclusion

This Social Impact Assessment has been undertaken to assess the potential social impacts arising from the development proposal for 390-422 Harris Street and 273 Pyrmont Street, Ultimo.

The proposal meets the requirements of set out in DPE's Social Impact Assessment Guidelines 2022, which provides a standardised approach for assessing social impacts across all state significant projects.

The assessment has been prepared by April McCabe, Partner + Director, The Planning Studio who is a highly qualified and experienced urban and social planner.

Overall, the assessment and evaluation against the established categories of social impact demonstrates that the proposal is likely to have a low to neutral social impact to the people and place within the immediate locality and can adequately manage and mitigate negative social impacts that result from the proposal.

Activities can be effectively mitigated through the implementation of a range of measures, as well effective coordination and planning of potentially disruptive activities.

Appendix C of the Social Impact Assessment Guideline for State Significant Projects sets out review questions. It is required that this be included in the preparation of an SIA. The table on the following pages responds to these questions and indicates where the required information sits within this report.



	Impact Area	Document location
General		
1	Does the lead author meet the qualification and experience requirements?	Yes [Declaration on TOC page]
2	Does the lead author meet the qualification and experience requirements?	Yes [Declaration on TOC page]
3	Would a reasonable person judge the SIA report to be impartial, rigorous, and transparent?	Yes
Social locality and social baseline		
4	Does the SIA report identify and describe all the different social groups that may be affected by the project?	Yes [Social Baseline and Areas of Social Influence]
5	Does the SIA report identify and describe all the built or natural features that have value or importance for people, and explain why people value those features?	Yes [Social Baseline]
6	Does the SIA report identify and describe historical, current, and expected social trends or social changes for people in the locality, including their experiences with this project and other major development projects?	Yes [Social Baseline]
7	Does the social baseline study include appropriate justification for each element, and provide evidence that the elements reflect both relevant literature and the diversity of views and likely experiences?	Yes
8	Does the social baseline study demonstrate social-science research methods and explain any significant methodological or data limitations?	Yes [Social Impact Methodology]
Identification and description of social impacts		
9	Does the SIA report adequately describe likely social impacts from the perspectives of how people may experience them, and explain the research used to identify them? When undertaken as a part of SIA scoping and initial assessment, has the plan for the SIA report been detailed?	Yes. The method and approach for preparing the SIA is outlined on page 8-9.
10	Does the SIA report apply the precautionary principle to identifying social impacts, and consider how they may be experienced differently by different people and groups?	Applied to the assessment
11	Does the SIA report describe how the preliminary analysis influenced both the project design and EIS Engagement Strategy?	Yes Social Baseline
Community Engagement		
12	Were the extent and nature of engagement activities appropriate and sufficient to canvass all relevant views, including those of vulnerable or marginalised groups?	Engagement completed by another qualified consultant
13	How have the views, concerns and insights of affected and interested people influenced both the project design and each element of the SIA report?	Non-Applicable
Predicting and analysing social impacts		
14	Does the SIA report impartially focus on the most important social impacts to people at all stages of the project, without any omissions or misrepresentations?	Yes [Social Impact Assessment]
15	Does the SIA report analyse the distribution of both positive and negative social impacts, and identify who will benefit and who will lose from the project?	Yes [Social Impact Assessment]
16	Does the SIA report identify its assumptions, and include sensitivity analysis and alternative scenarios? (including 'worst-case' and 'no project' scenarios where relevant)	Considered in the assessment

	Impact Area	Document location
Evaluating significance		
17	Do the evaluations of significance of social impacts impartially represent how people in each identified social group can expect to experience the project, including any cumulative effects?	Yes [Social Impact Assessment]
18	Are the evaluations of significance disaggregated to consider the likely different experiences for different people or groups, especially vulnerable groups	Considered in the assessment
Responses, monitoring and management		
19	Does the SIA report propose responses that are tangible, deliverable, likely to be durably effective, directly related to the respective impact(s) and adequately delegated and resourced?	Yes [Social Impact Assessment]
20	Does the SIA report demonstrate how people can be confident that social impacts will be monitored and reported in ways that are reliable, effective and trustworthy?	The Planning Studio has been engaged as an independent expert and provided appropriate recommendations for consideration.
21	Does the SIA report demonstrate how the proponent will adaptively manage social impacts and respond to unanticipated events, breaches, grievances and non-compliance?	The SIA recommends ongoing monitoring and proposes a coordinated approach as part of the day-to-day operation of the site.





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