

### 1. What is the Streets as Shared Space program?

The Streets as Shared Spaces (Round 2) program (SaSS) is run by NSW State Government. The purpose of SaSS is to fund trial changes to the streetscape, to support immediate community needs and test the case for more permanent changes that positively impact local economies, community health, and wellbeing. For more information visit: <https://www.dpie.nsw.gov.au/premiers-priorities/great-public-spaces/streets/streets-as-shared-spaces-program>

### 2. Why does Darby Street need a Streets as Shared Spaces trial?

The SaSS trial will provide an instant economic boost to the Darby Street business precinct which has suffered during the Covid-19 Pandemic. This will be achieved through a suite of streetscape activations linked with local art festivals, which will attract visitors from across the LGA and beyond.

The SaSS trial also offers an excellent opportunity to test ideas and generate lived experience of new ways to use the public domain. We will conduct community surveys and collect data (e.g. business takings, visitation, transport mode and traffic speed) during the trial to compare with pre-trial baseline data to ascertain what works and what doesn't work. This data and community feedback will help to inform future changes to the city, including a potential future upgrade of Darby Street which is a high priority under City of Newcastle's Local Centres Renewal Program.

### 3. How long will the trial run for?

The trial will run for approximately 6 months. It will be implemented in September 2022 and wrap up in February 2023. City of Newcastle will undertake pre-trial consultation and data collection before September 2022 followed by during trial consultation and data collection after September 2022.

### 4. What are the objectives?

The high-level objectives of the trial are:

- More people able to play and participate
- More people able to stay comfortably
- Increased walkability, accessibility, and connectivity
- Improved social connection between people
- Increased profitability of businesses within the precinct
- Increased safety, including reduced risk of Covid transmission.

Specific project objectives are:

- Make Darby Street safer for cyclists through the reduction of vehicle speed.
- Make it safer for pedestrians to cross Darby Street through reduction of vehicle speed and by trialling a temporary pedestrian crossing.
- Improve pedestrian access by widening the footpath on the eastern side of Darby Street between the Council Street intersection and Aidens Lane. This area is currently congested with outdoor dining taking up space on a narrow footway.

- Improve the local business environment by encouraging visitation and increasing space for outdoor dining.
- Attract visitors and encourage people to stay longer.
- Enhance after dark activation and boost the night-time economy.
- Increase safety from crime, through increased streetscape activation, particularly after dark.
- Use community feedback and data collected before and after the trial to inform potential permanent future changes.

### 5. What is proposed?

The trial proposes the following elements:

- Installation of traffic calming infrastructure to reduce traffic speeds (humps, narrowing, lights)
- Extended outdoor dining space and widened footpath between Sanctum and Goldbergs.
- A movable parklet
- A temporary mid-block pedestrian crossing
- A drop-off pick-up point
- Activation of Darby Street's Headphones courtyard with street furniture, surfacing and lighting
- Wall and ground murals linked with the citywide Big Picture Festival and Chalk the Walk Festival under the banner of the New Annual Festival, to promote visitation.
- Conversion of existing paid all day parking to the rear of Newcastle Art Gallery into free 2 hr parking spaces to compensate for approximately 16 on-street parking spaces lost as part of the trial.

### 6. Why does Darby Street need more outdoor dining space?

Darby Street is a popular 'Eat Street', but it has narrow footpaths which limit the opportunity for outdoor dining. Current outdoor dining on the footpath leaves limited room for pedestrians to move along the street, resulting in congestion.

Through the creation of additional space for outdoor dining, it will be possible for eateries to host more customers and provide sufficient circulation space (including adequate footpath width) to meet any current or future Covid-19 requirements.

### 7. Where will the extended outdoor dining/trading be?

We will convert 7 existing parking spaces into an additional 120m<sup>2</sup> of outdoor dining space outside the most concentrated run of restaurants (between Sanctum and Goldbergs cafés), using raised decking as per examples from the Strand at Dee Why. This will free up the full footpath width in front of businesses for pedestrian access and provide businesses with at least twice their current outdoor dining space in the parking lane extension. This footpath widening will stay in place for the full duration of the trial (approx 6 months).



*Proposed area of footpath/outdoor dining extension into parking lane (7 parking spaces)*



*View of existing parking lane – proposed for conversion into outdoor dining space*



*Example of footpath/outdoor dining extension into roadway – The Strand in Dee Why, Sydney*

### 8. What is a parklet?

A parklet is a parking space (or spaces) which have been converted for recreational use, such as outdoor dining or seating; parklets often include planting and shade. As part of the trial, we will provide a parklet taking up one parking space, which can be moved at the request of businesses.

This will give businesses outside of the extended outdoor dining area between Sanctum and Goldbergs cafés an opportunity to have extended outdoor trading for a short period. Research has shown that parklets generate an economic boost for businesses by creating an inviting space that encourages people to stay longer and connect with each other and businesses.

### 9. How will the Darby Headphones Courtyard be activated?

The Darby Street Headphones Courtyard is currently an under used space and presents an opportunity for additional activation. Seating and tables are proposed, to provide a Covid friendly place to eat takeaway food. Upgraded lighting will make it safer for people to use the courtyard to enjoy food, music and art, after dark. Wall and ground murals are proposed to unify the space and entice people into the courtyard from Darby Street. The new murals will be integrated into festival art trails to encourage visitation from across the LGA and beyond. We will also work with the Darby Street Traders group to repair the Headphones amplifier, which will be available for free use by musicians.



*Example of fun optical illusion footpath mural, (image courtesy of Danielle Littlechild – Zest Events)*

### 10. Why is it important to reduce traffic speed on Darby Street?

Darby Street is currently a 40km/h zone but does not have any speed control devices. Average speeds measured in January 2022 were 41.8 km/h, with the 85th percentile moving at 48.0 km/h. Darby Street is very busy with an annual average daily traffic volume of 9621 vehicles. The high traffic volume and speed makes it difficult for pedestrians to pedestrians and cyclists to move through the busy precinct safely.

Transport for NSW (TfNSW) data has demonstrated that the risk to pedestrians and cyclists is significantly reduced when vehicle speeds are lowered. The chance of survival for a pedestrian hit by a vehicle at 50 km/h is just 10% while for a vehicle at 30 km/h this jumps to a 90% survival rate.

Additionally, studies published in the Australasian College of Road Safety have proven that concerns around travel times are unfounded. A review of travel data in Sydney showed that a

reduction of speed limits from 50km/h to 30 km/h over a 14km urban journey affected travel time by less than one minute.

### **11. How will speed be reduced?**

We will install traffic calming infrastructure including signage, speed humps and cushions at intervals along Darby Street from the Newcastle Art Gallery to 188 Darby Street. The proposed road narrowing for extended outdoor dining will also help to reduce traffic speed.

City of Newcastle is collaborating with TfNSW on the possibility a 30km/ph speed limit trial, subject to the necessary TfNSW guidelines being developed.

### **12. Why does Darby Street need a trial pedestrian crossing?**

Safe places to cross Darby Street currently include two sets of traffic lights (at the intersection of Queen Street and south of Council Street) which are 270m apart. The wide gap between safe places to cross results in people crossing unsafely midblock (dodging in between parked and moving cars). For this reason, a pedestrian crossing is being trialled approximately half way between the two sets of existing traffic lights, at Darby Street's Headphones Courtyard.