



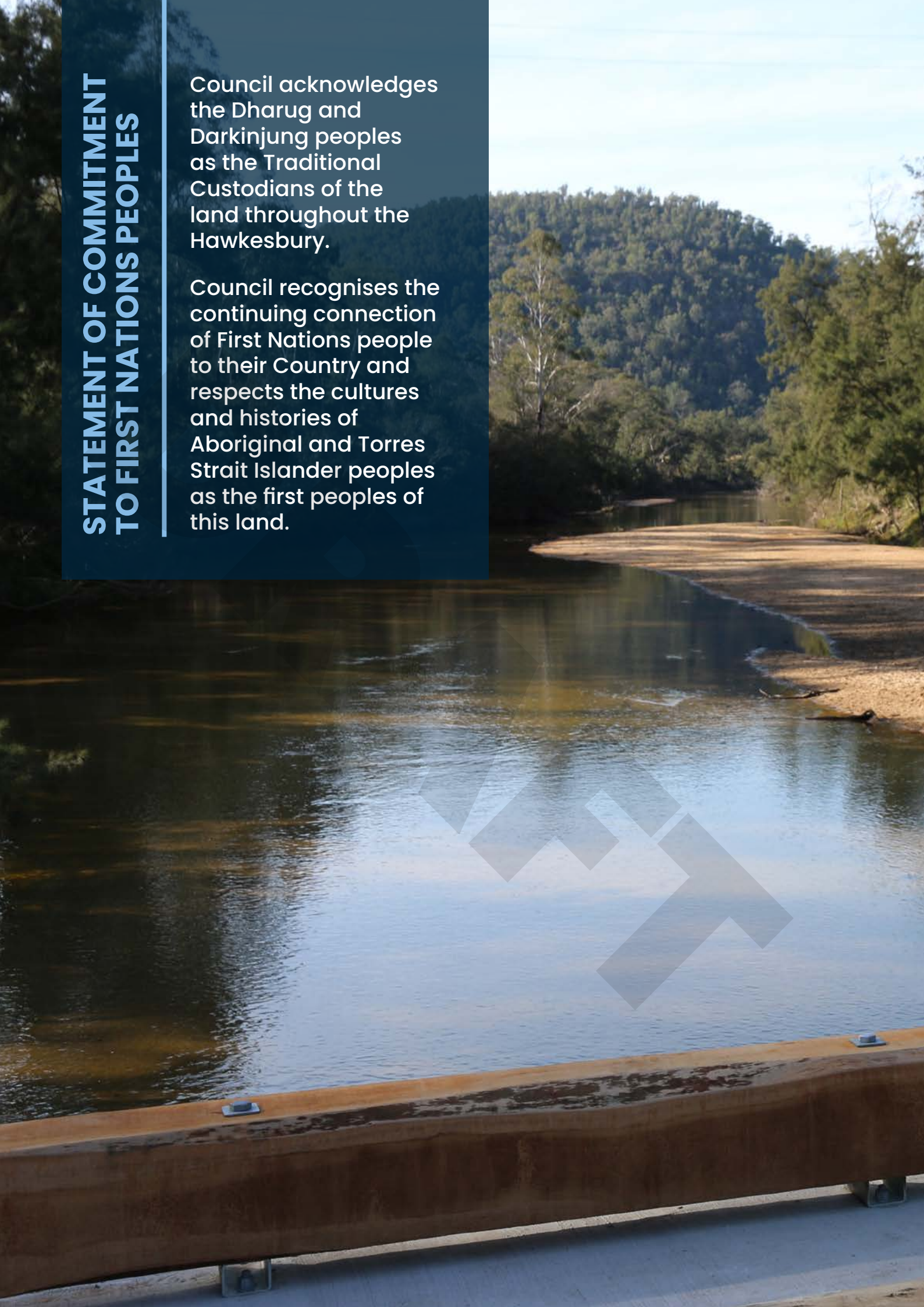
HAWKESBURY CITY COUNCIL

SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE ASSESSMENT AND STRATEGY 2024-2034

STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT TO FIRST NATIONS PEOPLES

Council acknowledges the Dharug and Darkinjung peoples as the Traditional Custodians of the land throughout the Hawkesbury.

Council recognises the continuing connection of First Nations people to their Country and respects the cultures and histories of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the first peoples of this land.





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The Hawkesbury Community

67,581 (2021)
Population



77,211 (2041)
Population

4.8% (2021)
Aboriginal & Torres
Strait Island peoples
3.4% (New South Wales)



23.1% (2021)
children and young people
0-17 years



14.8% (2021)
older people
65+ years



12.8% of
households have no internet
connection (2021)
11.2% (Greater Sydney)



87% of dwellings
are single houses (2021)



9.6% of dwellings
are semi-detached (2021)
-0.8% (2016-2021)



\$53,200 (2021)
median household income
25.6% high income households
18.5% low income households



70% owned
19.8% private rental
3.3% social housing



31.7% are
2 people households (2021)



21.8% are lone person
households (2021)



16.7% are
3 people households (2021)



16.4% are
4 people households (2021)

48.3%
(16,080 people) of residents
travel outside of the LGA to
work (2021)



15.9% have bachelor
or higher degree (2021)
33.4% (Greater Sydney)



13% of
the population
do some form of
volunteering (2021)
11.6% (Greater Sydney)



5.6% of
people are living
with disability (2021)
5.2% (Greater Sydney)



33.2% have long term
health conditions (2021)
27.5% (Greater Sydney)

The Hawkesbury Community



30

Community Halls and
Community Centres



220

Parks, Open Spaces
and Playgrounds



106

Sports Fields and Courts



3

Swimming Pools and
Indoor Recreation
Facilities



2

Libraries



10

Cultural and
Creative Spaces

Executive Summary

The Hawkesbury Social Infrastructure Assessment and Strategy (the Strategy) provides an integrated framework that guides future decisions about the planning, delivery, funding and management of local social infrastructure across the Hawkesbury LGA over the next ten years.

The research, strategic directions and priority recommendations have been informed by engagement with over 300 residents, volunteers, community and sporting group members and Aboriginal community members.

Population benchmarks are used nationally to assess the provision of social infrastructure as it provides one standardised measure to determine the level of infrastructure required to service the number of people in a given area. Whilst population benchmarks have been included within this Social Infrastructure Assessment Strategy, it is important to note that this is just one lens through which the provision of social infrastructure in the Hawkesbury has been considered within this Strategy.

Given the size of the local government area, and that much of Council's social infrastructure is located in areas subject to high risk natural hazards, the consideration of the future provision and enhancement of social infrastructure will be made with regard to the quality, accessibility and useability of social infrastructure, in addition to population benchmarking drivers.

Policy Insights



Social infrastructure and open space should be places that are better for the community, where all people feel welcome, included and valued, as well as better for people because they feel safe, comfortable to interact and enjoy healthy lives.



The quality of a public space is just as important as the quantum.



Sport and recreation activities are connected to health, education and community infrastructure to tackle challenges such as physical inactivity and social isolation.



Key considerations in the future planning and design of social infrastructure should include how they support participation and inclusion, especially for older people, young people, people with disability, cultural diversity communities and the LGBTIQA+ community.



Designing with Country contributes to a better understanding of, and better support for, a strong recognition of Aboriginal culture in the built environment.



Protecting and acknowledging Aboriginal and European heritage and its transition into innovative, creative and adaptive reuses is a priority.



Social infrastructure and open spaces should be durable, integrated, multi-functional, connected and accessible to a wide variety of users.

Improve efficiency and service quality in the social infrastructure sectors through co-location and divestment of legacy assets.

Place Considerations

Distance and spatial distribution of villages across the LGA is challenging

The Hawkesbury LGA is expansive and spans over 2,776km² which results in the access to facilities, spaces and services being unequal for residents depending on where they live. This spatial disparity is also exacerbated in times of natural disasters which disconnects villages and communities from the rest of the LGA.

The planning of social infrastructure and open spaces must go beyond the numbers and establish population benchmarks that guide provision and also consider the geographical and spatial aspects of the Hawkesbury and plan for the whole of the LGA, while also ensuring each individual village is well serviced and can build local connections.

Majority of the population is concentrated in the southern part of the LGA

The majority of the LGA is dominated by nature reserves and national parks in the northern and central areas, concentrating most of the population centres in the southern portion of the LGA. These areas have also grown the most from 2016–2021. The distribution of community facilities should seek to service communities as close to where they live as possible to build community networks. Where possible walkable access should occur in higher density areas and in smaller villages that have a defined core.

Low densities and limited housing diversity

The Hawkesbury LGA is dominated by separate dwellings. The main centres of Richmond–Clarendon (ABS district) and Windsor–Bligh Park (ABS district) provide the most diversity in housing types. Visitation and utility of community facilities, particularly open space, can be challenging in an environment of low density where people have to travel further to access facilities. The quality and amenity of social infrastructure assets plays a big part in attracting the community to come together in public spaces and making these assets a preference for community functions.

Many consider their place to be welcoming

The PlaceScore Survey (2018) identified that many consider an existing strength of their place is that it is welcoming to all people with opportunities to interact with neighbours and locals. However, many also identified that the evidence of recent public investment was one of the weakest attributes.

Recent flooding and fires have diverted resources and funding to aid recovery, though social infrastructure is inviting when it looks well maintained and “loved”. There are opportunities across the LGA for minimal intervention that may increase the community’s perceptions around adequate investment in public facilities and spaces.

Community resilience and recovery is a part of the Hawkesbury LGA

With successive stressors from bushfires to COVID to floods, many services have had to expand their offerings to meet the needs of their communities. For example, a number of the community services, including drop-in services have adopted a case management model to help connect customers with a range of wrap-around services to help them recover. In most cases, this has been done without the benefit of additional funding.

Many services evolved and adapted their offerings to better support the increasingly complex and diverse needs of their clients. This means that future community facilities need to be adaptable and flexible as well as located in areas that communities across the LGA can access during natural disasters.

Big ticket funding should also be complemented with local initiatives

Council have recently been successful in securing significant funding through the Western Sydney Infrastructure Grants Program for the upgrade of key social infrastructure. Recent upgrades to community halls and playgrounds in St Albans, Colo Heights and Bilpin have also been completed. Works should not be limited to the big ticket items but also consider smaller, localised initiatives and works to improve the maintenance of existing infrastructure.

People & Demographic Considerations

The community is getting older

The LGA has an older population, largely comprised of people over the age of 45. The cohort of people 65 years and over are growing, accounting for 14.8% of the population. As aged care support continues to promote 'aging in place' community facilities will have increasing importance in mitigating instances of social isolation and as distribution hubs for providing social services and programs close to where people live.

The types and quality of community spaces should meet accessibility standards and provide flexible spaces that provide seated exercise classes or spaces to deliver digital literacy support.

Higher rates of illness and long term health conditions

The residents of the Hawkesbury have higher rates of long term health conditions compared to Greater Sydney. Open spaces and facilities can have a positive influence on these conditions. For example, higher rates of arthritis and heart disease may be supported by active recreation spaces, while mental health conditions supported by opportunities to create local social bonds through community centres or libraries.

Strong culture of volunteering

The Hawkesbury LGA has a higher proportion of its population doing some form of volunteering than the Greater Sydney area. Through the engagement discussions there is a strong and proud volunteering culture across the communities of the Hawkesbury and this extends to the management and operation of community facilities and sporting fields. However, the aging population means that greater emphasis on this culture being intergenerational is important to maintain the reliance on local volunteers and management committees.

The Hawkesbury is a community with strong sporting and outdoor recreation participation

The Hawkesbury LGA has high levels of participation in sport and recreation – 86.9% of adults and 73.9% of children. Many of these sports and recreation activities reflect general participation trends, such as walking and swimming, though some reflect the rural and natural environment of the Hawkesbury with equestrian and bush walking both in the top 10 activities based on participation.

Greater acknowledgment of Aboriginal Community, Culture and knowledge

There is a large proportion of residents who identify as Aboriginal, at nearly five% of the total population. Community spaces may be collaboratively designed with the local First Nations community to consider the significance of areas and support ways the local First Nations communities would like to come together.

The history, culture and creativity of the Hawkesbury is key to community identity

There is a strong visibility of the colonial heritage and history of the Hawkesbury. However, First Nations culture and history is not as visible but by no means less important to the community. There is also a strong cultural and creativity network throughout the Hawkesbury that not only provides opportunities for local residents to enjoy and learn but also has economic benefits relating to cultural tourism for the local economy and building on the already strong food culture within the Hawkesbury.



Community Insights

The community value community facilities as being places of connection and safety – psychological and physical – that bring people together. However, to achieve this they must also be well maintained, inclusive, welcoming, and safe.

The most important aspects that the community identified that makes a great community facility is having outdoor space/area; for it to be flexible or multipurpose spaces and provide play spaces for children. Amenities such as air conditioning and commercial style kitchens were also elements that increased the comfort and usability of the facilities.

A consistent theme across stakeholders engaged was the issue of affordability and access to facilities and spaces. This was identified by both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people in community and local organisations.

Facilities that provided equitable access for people with disability, older people and provided specific space for young people in the Hawkesbury LGA were considered important priorities by the community.

The community described great open spaces as being places for the community to connect but should be well maintained, safe and cater for all ages.

For recreation and sporting facilities the most important aspects for the community were having shaded areas and shelters, seating; lighting and other safety features and adequate car parking.

For parks and open spaces the community identified having access to public toilets, shaded areas, trees and shelters as being valued and important. Other amenities, such as car parking, seating and tables, signage and landscaping were also important.

Children and young people through drawings and conversations commonly expressed a desire for parks and open space to provide adventure and exploration, water and natural elements.

There was also acknowledgment that Dharug and Darkinjung culture is important to the Hawkesbury's character and identity but required more visibility. The community expressed a desire to celebrate the Hawkesbury's dual histories – Aboriginal and colonial but acknowledged that more work was required.

The opportunity for more public representation and pride in Aboriginal Culture was a consistent theme that emerged in discussions with Aboriginal people and organisations as well as non-Aboriginal community members. This included representation in public spaces, local council buildings and broader social infrastructure.

Future Demand Analysis Insights

Utilising a series of approved population-based benchmarks, the following summarises the anticipated future social infrastructure and open space demand across the Hawkesbury LGA to 2041:

- Community spaces are well provided for through to 2041. However, this is fragmented with the majority of spaces identified as single use, aging community halls.
- Highly concentrated district community centres significantly impede access, especially for residents north of the Hawkesbury River.
- Existing Council operated cultural facilities are highly concentrated in the one centre and are relatively small.
- There is a surplus of library space through to 2041, predominantly due to the large area of the Hawkesbury Central Library in Windsor but limited service north of the river.
- The total open space benchmark of 4 hectares per 1,000 people suggests that the Hawkesbury has a large surplus of Council managed open space through to 2041, in excess of 880 hectares, across all three size hierarchies [regional, district and local].
- Existing play spaces will continue to meet demand through to 2041. New play spaces will however, continue to be provided in new urban development close to homes.
- It is anticipated that there will be a surplus of fields in 2041 with additional fields being provided through the funded redevelopment and upgrades.
- Netball and tennis courts are both well provided for through to 2041. There is a provision gap for multipurpose courts in 2041, with currently no outdoor purpose-built basketball courts in the LGA.
- Fields and courts are primarily concentrated in Richmond and Windsor. Not all sports are evenly catered for, however only specific sports indicating a shortfall across the LGA, including AFL and basketball.
- The two aquatic facilities [one regional and one district], meet the demand through to 2041. There is existing demand for up to one indoor multipurpose facility (that would include a minimum of three indoor courts with ancillary uses such as a gym, café, change rooms), growing to one and a half indoor facilities by 2041.
- Services and social infrastructure will be required for people to age within their communities as the Hawkesbury community continues to get older.
- Recent upgrades to community halls and playgrounds in St Albans, Colo Heights and Bilpin have also recently been completed.



Windsor Community Pop Up
(source: Impact Policy)

Social infrastructure is the facilities, spaces, services and networks that support the quality of life and wellbeing of our communities. It helps us to be happy, safe and healthy, to learn, and to enjoy life.

- Infrastructure Australia

About the Hawkesbury

The Hawkesbury greater region is home to what is referred to in research as the “deepest history of all” in Australia.¹ The Dyarubbin, the Dharug name for the Hawkesbury–Nepean River, has run for at least the past 90 million years.² The river’s traditional owners, The Dharug people, have accompanied this river and Country for at least the past 50,000 years, with the Darkinjung region neighboring them on their north and west.³

The Hawkesbury was first settled by Europeans in 1794, making it the third oldest European Settlement in Australia.

The Hawkesbury is a unique area located in the Hawkesbury Valley, in the north-west area of Greater Sydney. The Hawkesbury City Council Local Government Area (LGA) is the largest in the Sydney Metropolitan Region, covering approximately 2,776km².

The Hawkesbury LGA sits between the urban areas to the east (bounded by the Hills Shire and Central Coast LGAs) and the south (bounded by Blacktown and Penrith LGAs) and rural areas to the west (bounded by the Blue Mountains and Lithgow LGAs) and to the north (bounded by Singleton Shire and Cessnock LGAs).

This urban rural divide is also reflected in the geography and landuse of the Hawkesbury LGA. The predominately urban areas are located in the south eastern corner of the LGA focused on the main centres of Richmond and Windsor. This area also includes the North West Growth Area which lies in part of the Hawkesbury LGA with the remainder in Blacktown LGA.

The remainder form a larger peri-urban and rural hinterland. This includes areas within the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area, State Conservation Areas and Metropolitan Rural Areas that support primary production, tourism and recreation assets as well as numerous rural villages.

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1. Karskens, G. (2020a) *People of the river: lost worlds of early Australia*. Crow's Nest, NSW: Allen & Unwin, p.3
 2. *The History of the Hawkesbury River: The Dharug people & the first Settlers* (no date) Hawkesburyriver.com. Available at: <https://hawkesburyriver.com/the-history-of-the-hawkesbury-river/> (Accessed: December 13, 2022).
 3. Hawkesbury City Council et al. (2021) *Hawkesbury Local LGA Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Study - GML Heritage (Public Version)*. rep, p.23.

Purpose of this Strategy

The purpose of the Hawkesbury Social Infrastructure Strategy (the Strategy) is to provide an integrated framework that guides future decisions about the planning, delivery, funding and management of local social infrastructure across the Hawkesbury LGA over the next ten years.

This strategy builds on the Hawkesbury Community Strategic Plan (CSP) vision and priorities as well as the aspirations and needs that the community expressed through the engagement undertaken.

The five strategic directions that underpin the vision consider the emerging trends, opportunities and challenges of the Hawkesbury LGA and communities. Importantly, this strategy is founded on the existing strengths and assets within the Hawkesbury and the focus areas that Council will prioritise. It's primary aim is to support the health and wellbeing of all Hawkesbury residents.

Population benchmarks are used nationally to assess the provision of social infrastructure as it provides one standardised measure to determine the level of infrastructure required to service the number of people in a given area. Whilst population benchmarks have been included within this Social Infrastructure Assessment Strategy, it is important to note that this is just one lens through which the provision of social infrastructure in the Hawkesbury has been considered within this Strategy.

Given the size of the local government area, and that much of Council's social infrastructure is located in areas subject to high risk natural hazards, the consideration of the future provision and enhancement of social infrastructure will be made with regard to the quality, accessibility and useability of social infrastructure, in addition to population benchmarking drivers.

Strategy approach

The approach was to first understand the social, economic, environment, and cultural strengths, challenges and influences shaping community life in the Hawkesbury LGA. These included the existing policy settings, the community needs and current experience, participation trends, existing social infrastructure assets and the predicted future demand analysis, based on population growth, changing needs and community expectations.

A baseline analysis report that details the research and engagement findings has been prepared by The Planning Studio and SGS Economics and Planning.

This Strategy has also been informed by engagement with over 300 residents, volunteers, community and sporting group members and Aboriginal community members.

The engagement with Aboriginal community members was designed and delivered by Impact Policy AU who are a First Nations consultancy, accepted by the Aboriginal community and with longstanding connection and relationship to Aboriginal communities across Sydney.

The engagement aimed to be an important input to the primary research and data collection, to understand key local challenges that will drive the delivery of social infrastructure and open spaces and ensure this strategy is informed by the voices of the Hawkesbury communities, including children and young people.



Defining Social Infrastructure

Social infrastructure is an important part of our everyday lives – from community centres and libraries to museums, cultural spaces and education facilities.

The definition of social infrastructure is broad and varying. The Australian Infrastructure Audit defines social infrastructure as “the facilities, spaces, services and networks that support the quality of life and wellbeing of our communities” (2019:388). Definitions also refer to the contribution to community cohesion and resilience.

Open space comes in a variety of forms, from structured parks and sportsfields to natural ecosystems. All open space types have a role in supporting the social, health, environmental and economic needs of communities.

The GANSW Greener Places Design Guide, describes outdoor recreation as providing for a range of activities, including formal sport, self directed exercise, appreciation of nature, socialising, picnicking, walking and informal group activities.

The types of open space are considered in two categories – structured and unstructured recreation. It is important that both structured and unstructured are considered when planning for open space. This enables diverse choice and opportunity that caters for broad recreational needs and interests.

The types of community infrastructure and open spaces considered in this strategy is outlined in Figure 1. This strategy guides the planning, design and delivery in consideration of the range of community infrastructure and open spaces owned and managed by Hawkesbury City Council and/or its delegates (e.g. The Hawkesbury Sports Council and community hall management committees).

Social infrastructure hierarchy and distribution

The distribution of social infrastructure assets and open space assets should provide access to as many people as possible. The type and scale of infrastructure varies for different locations and to service different spatial and population catchments. The geographical and environmental context of an LGA also influences the hierarchy and distribution of social infrastructure.

There are currently no universal standards or approaches to the planning of social infrastructure in NSW. In the absence of these, most councils have established their own approaches, which has resulted in the adoption of different social infrastructure benchmarks in different places. For the purpose of this analysis and strategy, the hierarchy of social infrastructure and open space is defined in Table 1.

Hierarchy	Population (pop)	Catchment	Examples
Regional	Whole of LGA or 100,000+	Whole of LGA 15km+ catchment, 30+ minute cycle or drive	- Central library - Museum, Gallery or theatre - Regional park/sports (size: 15+ha)
District	20,000-50,000	5-15km catchment, 15-30 minute walk, cycle or drive	- District branch library - Multipurpose community centre - District park/sports (size: 5-10ha)
Local	5,000 - 20,000	1-5km catchment, 15 minute walk, cycle or drive	- Local branch library - Community centre/hall - Local park (size: 1-5ha)
Neighbourhood	< 5000	500m catchment, 10 minute walk or cycle	- Single use community hall - Community-based childcare - Small park (size: 0.4-1ha)

Table 1: Social Infrastructure Hierarchy



Figure 1: Types of social infrastructure + open space (source: The Planning Studio)

Our Strengths, Challenges and Values

To effectively plan, design and deliver social infrastructure and open space that will meet the needs of our communities now and in the future, we will:

build on our local strengths, existing assets and characteristics that make the Hawkesbury special and our communities welcoming.

face current and future challenges by working together and seeking practical and equitable solutions that prioritise greater understanding, connections and resilience within our communities.

be guided by our collective values and aspirations starting with providing opportunities for everyone across the Hawkesbury to be active participants in the future of their places and communities.

What we value about social infrastructure and open space is ...



being close to where people live, and creating central places for villages and communities to gather and meet.



supporting the lifestyle and identity of the Hawkesbury, especially the network of green spaces, bushland and the natural surrounds.



supporting community connections and bringing people together to get to know one another.



providing space for sharing local stories, cultures and histories.



providing infrastructure and facilities that support our community to be resilient.



allowing an expression of Dharug and Darkinjung culture which is essential to the Hawkesbury's character and identity.



reflecting, through the design and function, the heritage, local community, character and environment of the Hawkesbury.



providing affordable spaces for communities and local entrepreneurs to thrive and create more opportunities locally.



being inviting, accessible and inclusive for all people in our community by ensuring facilities and spaces are safe, easy to access, welcoming and where people feel they belong.

The strengths to build on ...

- We have a generous community. Our LGA has a higher proportion of residents engaging in some form of volunteering than the Greater Sydney proportion.
- We are a community that like being active and outdoors with high levels of participation in sport and recreation – 86.9% adults and 73.9% children in the Hawkesbury – while also connecting people through their local sporting and recreation clubs.
- Our community feel that the Hawkesbury and their area is welcoming to all people and provide opportunities to interact with neighbours and locals.
- Our community are adaptable, resilient and have shown that in times of emergency that they will 'roll up their sleeves' and provide ongoing support to others, as we recover and rebuild.
- The Hawkesbury LGA is set within a beautiful landscape, centred around Dyarubbin, [the Hawkesbury–Nepean River] and surrounded by extensive natural areas and open spaces.
- We are proud of our heritage and local stories, which contributes to the Hawkesbury's strong identity. Our cultural and creative infrastructure and communities provide a space, the skills and enthusiasm to express our identity and what makes the Hawkesbury unique.
- We are well placed with the existing provision of social infrastructure and open space to cater for future growth across the Hawkesbury LGA.

The challenges to consider ...

- There is little visibility of Dharug and Darkinjung culture, stories, history and place significance.
- There is an uneven distribution of existing social infrastructure and open space, especially for communities north of the river, with the majority of facilities and services clustered around Richmond and Windsor.
- We have a substantial provision of local public open space, which provides for our community, but requires significant resources to manage and maintain.
- The geography and scale of the Hawkesbury LGA creates a spatial disparity and inequitable access to social infrastructure based on where you live.
- The community management communities are the backbone and custodians of local community facilities, but improved governance, transparency, access and management succession planning is needed.
- The threats from natural disasters such as flooding and bushfire impacts on accessibility for our smaller villages and disrupts the availability of sports fields, open spaces and facilities.
- Some of our social infrastructure and open spaces are single, aging and not of a high quality. Many need significant investment to provide a more contemporary standard and offering.
- We have an aging population with the LGA mainly comprised of people over 45 years old. Social infrastructure is important in reducing social isolation and for providing social services and programs close to where people live.
- Our residents have, on average, higher rates of long term health conditions compared to Greater Sydney. Open spaces and facilities can have a positive influence on these conditions.
- Lack of spaces for young people for recreation, learning, to create and experiment outside of schools and local sporting clubs.

Capitalise Social Infrastructure

The strategic framework guides the planning, design, delivery and management of Hawkesbury City Council's community infrastructure and open space assets. Aligned to the Hawkesbury community vision, aims to achieve an integrated, accessible network of spaces and facilities that are well-located, multi-functional and cost-effective to respond to the changing needs of communities across the Hawkesbury.

To align and achieve the Hawkesbury community's vision, a series of objectives, focus areas and actions aim to deliver the strategic intent and community expectations. While the strategy is a starting point and takes a wider view of the social infrastructure and open space provision, the objectives and focus areas are specific guideposts that Hawkesbury City Council and the Hawkesbury community can use to tackle competing priorities and challenges and make decisions in the best interest of everyone that calls the Hawkesbury home.

The **social infrastructure objectives** have been informed by the research and engagement, reflecting the changing trends, experiences and expectations of the Hawkesbury communities and more broadly, to align with contemporary social infrastructure and open spaces planning principles and delivery approaches.

The objective combined with the priority focus areas, will guide the strategic planning and decision making about future social infrastructure and open space provision across the Hawkesbury LGA and to achieve the Hawkesbury Community Strategic Plan vision and outcomes.

The Hawkesbury Community Vision

We see the Hawkesbury as a vibrant and collaborative community living in harmony with our history and environment, whilst valuing our diversity, striving for innovation, a strong economy and retaining our lifestyle and identity.

The Hawkesbury Community Strategic Plan (CSP) provides an overarching vision that reflects the community aspirations and future priorities for the area. This vision and priorities guide all other local plans and policies, including the Hawkesbury Social Infrastructure Strategy.

In 2024, the Hawkesbury LGA will continue to be **a great place to live**, through the continued partnerships with the community and key service providers to support a connected, healthy and inclusive Hawkesbury. Through leadership, stewardship and education, the natural and historic built **environments will be protected, valued and enhanced** in a culturally sensitive way.

Our **strong local economy** will build places that are vibrant, attractive and welcoming to residents and visitors, which treasures and celebrates our shared history, environment, local economy and lifestyles. Everything centres on our strength as a community of which **Council is a respected civic leader** through consistent, transparent and engaged decision making that community can understand.



Supporting connected and resilient communities

Social Infrastructure can be the physical heart of communities, places to gather, meet, connect, refuge, celebrate, debate and build social capital and place identity. Providing adequate spaces and places will support a connected, resilient Hawkesbury community and assist them to build strong and lasting connections. The spatial distribution of facilities and spaces is fundamental to supporting local communities, especially villages remote from main city centres. It is also critical when natural disasters and emergencies limit access to and from the village.



Encouraging learning, exploration, creativity and productivity

Our social infrastructure, open spaces, community groups and local clubs all provide opportunities to discover and learn new skills, be creative and support businesses and our local economy.

Galleries, museums, maker spaces and libraries are places where our local stories are produced, presented and told. Schools, sporting fields and community halls are places to gather, learn & connect. Our natural landscapes, parks and community centres are where we explore, discover and learn about our cultures, and the world around us by sharing our individual experiences and skills. Young people expressed a desire for adventure type experiences in the parks and playgrounds.



Connecting to Country, Culture and Community

The Hawkesbury is an important place for Dharug and Darkinjung people. Acknowledging our varied identities, stories, cultures, as well as grounding ourselves in the place and surrounding environment of the Hawkesbury is the foundation of a connected, welcoming and generous community.

Our collective stories and cultures make us who we are as individuals and as a community. Social Infrastructure supports individuals to connection with culture and for us all to share and learn about our varied histories, traditions and stories – Indigenous, non-indigenous and culturally diverse.



Caring for ourselves and our environment

Centred around Dyarubbin – Hawkesbury River, the beautiful natural areas and landscapes are integral to the Hawkesbury identity and lifestyle highly valued by residents and visitors. The National Parks, bushland, abundance of open spaces, recreation and sporting facilities, support healthy communities and improve both physical and mental health outcomes.

Being physically active is more than just utilising pools, courts and ovals. It is also about having equitable and free access to green, natural spaces – be it on the water, cycling along the river, picnicking in the park or hiking through bushland.



Sustainable governance and sharing of resources

Social infrastructure and open spaces across the Hawkesbury LGA will be planned, designed and managed with our communities. We value our passionate volunteers and will actively work with local management committees, lessees and other community organisations to implement sustainable governance models that deliver social value and financial viability, improve accessibility and transparent governance. Continuing our strong local partnerships and sharing of resources will allow us to be responsive to the changing community needs and ensure the long term sustainability and viability of our assets.

Priority Focus Areas and Assessment Framework

Guided by the social infrastructure objectives, the **four priority focus areas** outlined below will help to prioritise the actions, locations, timeframes and strategic partnerships required to achieve the community vision for the Hawkesbury LGA.

The priority focus areas are based on the baseline analysis, engagement discussions, policy directions, anticipated future and the expressed needs of our Hawkesbury community.

Priority Focus Area

Build an equitable, accessible and integrated social infrastructure network across the Hawkesbury LGA that connects our community to facilities, services and each other.

Priority Focus Area

Activate, improve and consolidate existing social infrastructure to be multipurpose adaptable and flexible and respond to our changing community needs and expectations.

Priority Focus Area

Strengthen community resilience and sense of belonging by valuing and making visible our cultures and diverse stories as the foundation of a welcoming and generous community.

Priority Focus Area

Build on our local strengths, attributes, partnerships and commitment by our community to effectively plan and manage social infrastructure in a sustainable and financially responsible way.

A criteria-based framework can contribute to the assessment of social infrastructure requirements in providing an initial and transparent estimate of the scale of likely requirements. The **Hawkesbury Social Infrastructure Assessment Framework** links to existing and established performance and evaluation criteria to ensure consistency and validity.

An assessment framework provides a consistent baseline and a starting point for decisions. It should not be viewed as providing a final answer.

Rather, the assessment framework should be utilised with some flexibility and caution, and be supplemented by other considerations specific to the local context.

The assessment framework developed is bespoke for the Hawkesbury context but has utilised existing frameworks and tools that measure and evaluate social value and the effectiveness of social infrastructure as a guide.⁴

Access

This aims to provide equitable spatial, social, economic, and cultural access to social infrastructure and support participation in community life to build inclusive communities.

Please note that this criterion doesn't include physical accessibility, which is included in quality.

Quality

The value of the community is demonstrated through the look, feel and experience of social infrastructure

Spatial

- The network of social infrastructure considers the physical and spatial aspects of the Hawkesbury as well as the LGA's scale and geography of the LGA and the impacts of natural disasters and other shock events.
- Areas of low provision, high need and/or growth areas are identified and prioritised.

Social and Cultural

- Provides a place for the community to come together that is central and supports local connection and sharing.
- Equitable access to social, health and community services, skills development and learning throughout life: including but not limited to. Childhood development, training and education attainment, and community development, digital preparedness, cultural understanding, and creative experiences.
- Protects and provides respectful and sensitive access to places that are culturally significant, and historically important which allows us to learn about and understand the past and present, local stories and for the continuation of culture, traditions, and connections to Country, Cultural, community and shared experiences.

Participation

- Understanding community vulnerabilities and the varying agency and/or challenges to participate in the planning of social infrastructure or more generally in community life.
- Supports involvement in local community and civic life and activities and participation in local social, community and civic groups.
- Equitable access means providing an invitation to the whole of the community to participate means offering diverse opportunities to do so and recognising that there may be specific social, community and cultural groups that require specific consideration.

Economic

- Ability to access facilities, spaces, and programs regardless of financial situation. Affordability is a key barrier to access.
- Opportunities in the local economy and job opportunities, provides spaces to grow ideas, businesses and innovation and supports the contemporary approaches to work.

- Considers the needs of communities and improving or maintaining quality of life, well-being, connection, and culture for all people who in turn will make it a place that is used and cared for.
- Plan and design spaces and places that are safe and feel welcoming to all cultures, genders, sexualities, ages, abilities, incomes, or background.
- The look, feel, provision and experience support a strong sense of pride and belonging that people have in the Hawkesbury and their neighbourhood.
- Social infrastructure is designed and planned with Country and Community. Physical structures sit gently in its surrounding environment and provides comfort, amenity and is fit for purpose. It is accessible (physically and psychologically), provides facilities for a diversity of users, is well maintained, and feels looked after.

Quantum

Understanding the established demand and future need as a numeric, population-based approach. This should never be considered in isolation of the access and quality criteria

- Use of established and logical population-based benchmarks to adequately plan and provide for facilities and spaces that cater to the current and future community needs.
- Understand the how, who are using or not using social infrastructure and the what its being used for (or not) – don't forget to consider the why or what or who is missing.
- Understand the user experience, expectations and connections to place (both positive and negative).

Sustainable

Responding to the present and planning for the future need, capacity and resourcing.

Understanding the benefits, impacts and resourcing through multiple lens – social, cultural, environmental, economic and governance.

- Meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations or will significantly influence the behaviour and sustainability of communities.
- Compatible with the existing and future infrastructure network, system, or place. Consider whether it is part of a program of current and/or future works or is a key enabler, catalyst or 'first piece' in a transformational program of future work.
- Ensure that it considers wider system resilience, sustainability, and redundancy by considering alternative design, construction and management approaches that are more resilient and can recover with minimal costs. Infrastructure that is climate and economically resilient as well as fiscally sustainable.
- Ease of implementation and deliverable solutions that respond to the problems and opportunities and does not compromise other considerations or minimises impacts.
- Local capability and capacity (financial, resourcing, skills/expertise, community need and support) to deliver, manage and/or operate effectively in the long term, and the operational model, and whole-of-life costs, have also been considered to optimise outcomes throughout the asset's lifecycle.

Strategic Alignment

There is alignment to local strategic goals, a clear fit with the community, and responses to local needs

- Responds to evidence-based needs and/or local causes and effects as well as responding to long term drivers, (such as climate change and population growth) and trends (changes in behaviour, expectations, activities, infrastructure needs).
- Alignment and contribution to relevant goals, objectives, policies, and strategic plans (local, state and federal).
- Buy-in from community, identified stakeholders and beneficiaries that have been part of a genuine engagement process, where their views and experience have been heard and understood.
- Contemporary and best practice design, planning and operational models are implemented that respond to how locals live, work and experience the space, individually and as a community.

4. Assessment framework information sources:

Australian Government (2023), *Measuring What Matters Framework*, The Treasury. <https://treasury.gov.au/policy-topics/measuring-what-matters/framework>
Scanlon Foundation Research Institute (2023) *Australian Cohesion Index September 2023* <https://aci.scanloninstitute.org.au>
Infrastructure Australia (2021) *Infrastructure Australia Assessment Framework* <https://www.infrastructureaustralia.gov.au/publications/assessment-framework>
NSW Government (2020) *Greener Places An urban green infrastructure design framework for New South Wales*, Department of Planning, Industry and Environment <https://www.governmentarchitect.nsw.gov.au/policies/greener-places>
NSW Government (2021) *NSW Public Spaces Charter. Ten Principles for public space in NSW*, Department of Planning, Industry and Environment.



Richmond Swimming Centre (source: The Planning Studio)

Value of Social Infrastructure

Well functioning cities, towns and places require a diversity of activities that provide social, economic, cultural and environmental value for local communities and other benefits that go beyond the local scale. A network of social infrastructure assets are critical to unlocking the inherent value that exists within the Hawkesbury.

Social infrastructure assets such as schools, sporting clubs, and libraries are commonly the connector in local communities, while facilities such as hospitals, universities, museums and maker spaces provide economic value. These facilities also add social value by providing local business and employment opportunities or being a catalyst for direct and indirect investment and an attraction for new residents.

More than just a building, but a place to build communities

The way people use public spaces and community facilities transforms them into meaningful places with layers of shared experiences, collective memories and a mixture of identities. When people feel attached to local places and have a strong sense of belonging they will more likely adopt, use and care for the space themselves and their community⁵.

Social infrastructure provides valuable opportunities to connect with others in the community, to find “your people”, and share common interests.

Digital connectivity is also a powerful tool in building broad and diverse communities of interest that can cross traditional spatial boundaries, provide access to learning and information and enable greater participation.

Creates a physical ‘heart’ of communities

Public space is where public life happens. It includes the streets we walk or cycle in, the town squares we socialise in, libraries we learn in, community halls we gather in and parks, playgrounds and sports fields where we relax or play. Social infrastructure can be an anchor or a destination within local places and communities, big or small.

They are places the local community come together. They can be places of celebration, of respite and refuge, and places to share knowledge and find “your people”. They are places to discuss ideas and common interests, discover new skills, explore culture and creativity.

Connects to local Aboriginal cultures, stories and Country

Aboriginal Peoples, have been caring for Country in a connected, spiritual way, passing on this continuing responsibility and custodianship through generations. Country is associated with Aboriginal people’s cultural groups, it is where their ancestors still walk, and the places to which they belong. Country is known in physical, spiritual, and cultural ways ... [and] holds all these individual aspects together harmoniously, storing knowledges like an eternal library. Being in and activating public spaces as an extension of Country is part of caring for Country⁶.

Knowledge sharing can help bond people together. It is vitally important that Aboriginal people retain authorship and control of their cultural knowledge and how it is shared with others. Aboriginal people must be invited to co-design and co-manage projects rather than just be asked to provide their cultural knowledge, stories, and insights to help develop projects⁷.

5. Department of Planning, Industry & Environment (2021) *NSW Public Spaces Charter*

6. Hromek, D (2021) *Statement of Country in NSW Public Spaces Charter*, Department of Planning, Industry & Environment.

7. GANSW 2020 *Draft Connecting with Country Framework*

Contributes to social and environmental health and wellbeing outcomes

Social relationships and human connection can impact our physical and mental health. Communities that have adequate provision for health services, education and prevention programs, as well as parks and open spaces will likely have improved social and wellbeing outcomes.

The design of the built environment is also an important contributor to health. Biophilic design draws from our innate attraction to nature and natural processes to improve the many spaces we live and work in. Connecting people with nature by implementing biophilic design principles in the design of community spaces can help to reduce stress, enhance creativity and clarity of thought, improve health and well-being of individuals, and communities and the surrounding environment.

Social infrastructure that is accessible by direct, safe walking and cycling connections that can be used by people of all ages and abilities also contributes to wellbeing. This creates greater social equity as the ability to access programs is not only for those on high incomes or that live in the strategic centres.

Supports productivity, learning and creativity

Culture and creativity are ways individuals and communities express their identity – who they are and what they want to be. Libraries, galleries, museums, theatres, multipurpose community centres and public art offers an insight into this identity. They offer an invitation to explore interests, learn new things, and encourage creative expression through art, performance, and cultural experiences.

Providing spaces and services that encourage learning and productivity such as meeting rooms, co-working spaces, creative studios and maker spaces offer room for collaboration, networking and entrepreneurship.

They can also positively contribute to the local economy by activating urban centres, fostering innovation and creativity and generate new business and job opportunities that retain investment in the local area. They are attractors for locals and tourists alike to visit and experience, boosting the local tourism and visitor economy. This can provide a revenue stream and stable employment to support local creative and tourism sectors.

Strengthens community resilience

Providing equitably distributed infrastructure that can withstand disaster and support community refuge and recovery is an important element of a resilient community. This infrastructure helps to strengthen community wellbeing and cohesiveness everyday, and during extreme challenges.

The social costs of natural disasters, while not as well defined as the economic costs, are just as significant and may not be as tangible or visible. Natural disasters have wide-ranging, immediate social impacts and into the long term. They impact health and wellbeing, employment and community networks which can profoundly affect the long term resilience of communities and their ability to effectively recover.

Invites civic participation and involvement

Providing opportunities for economic and civic participation for all our communities is critical to ensuring everyone is able to prosper and thrive. Public spaces are places that promote equity, inclusion, social justice and democracy. They should allow free expression, collective action, public debate and opportunities for people of all backgrounds to participate in civic life.⁵

Ongoing engagement with communities help with the planning, design, delivery and management of social infrastructure and open space so it responds to the local needs and expectations.

Social Infrastructure Trends

Equitable distribution is not just the population quantum but also where they are located

The recent pandemic, bushfire and flooding events have demonstrated the importance of equitable distribution of social infrastructure. This is especially important for areas like the Hawkesbury where villages are spatially dispersed and some areas are at high risk of isolation in a natural emergency or shock event.

When access is limited by events such as natural disasters, public health priorities or the environmental and physical constraints of an area, the distribution pattern of social infrastructure can highlight areas that are not being serviced adequately.

There has been a general shift in the expectations of communities for high quality local public open spaces and community infrastructure which are easy to access, convenient and affordable. Therefore, the provision has to respond to the context as well as the planning metrics.

Resilience is the new approach to adapt and grow

Resilience is the combination of the community relationships where people trust each other and work together and our collective capacity and ability to solve problems through shared skills, knowledge, equipment, and other resources. Building this takes a long time and communities must be supported to form strong social connections, share ideas and information, and seek support where and when it is needed.

Social infrastructure not only provides the physical spaces to access critical services and support, they also are catalysts for the collision of ideas, creativity, knowledge, problem solving and increasing our understanding of each other.

Climate Change

As the impacts of climate change become more evident, increasing the resilience of communities is vital to protect lives and promote sustainable development.

The recent bushfire and flood crisis⁸ and pandemic, have drawn attention to the important role social infrastructure plays in not just shaping a response, but also in the recovery and long term resilience of local communities. Community and centres in particular play a key role in crisis and disaster response and recovery as they are able to be flexible and responsive to emerging local needs.

Climate change is anticipated to manifest in a host of environmental changes, including higher urban temperatures and increased frequency of natural disasters. Community facilities and open spaces must be located, designed, and built to withstand a warmer, drier climate as well as extreme weather events.

Open spaces as places for active and passive recreation, gathering and reflecting

Public open spaces, parks and pathways are essential to support community connection, health and wellbeing. They provide for a diversity of uses, from formal sporting fields and ovals, to skate parks and pump tracks, places for yoga, meditation and exercise to picnics, walking the dog or quiet reflection.

They are also important place markers and cultural sites and support greater biodiversity and our learning of the natural environment. They provide places to run, walk, play and relax and are critical to the social, health (both physical and mental), environmental and economic wellbeing of communities and neighbourhoods.

8. NSW Government (2023) *Connecting with Country*, GANSW

9. Museums and Galleries NSW, 2010, *Value Added! The economic and social contribution of cultural facilities*

Acknowledgment of Country and Culture

First Nations people's connection to Country can provide invaluable insight into our design, and understanding of place and its connection to the surrounding environment, its past and present.

The NSW Government's Connecting with Country Framework acknowledges that the *"constant change demands that we keep reimagining our way of living. And it takes leadership to think about renewal and change in this way. We must be willing to challenge the usual way of doing things"*.⁸

By walking alongside Aboriginal Traditional Custodians, Elders and knowledge holders, everyone can be part of the care and custodianship of Country, our places and communities and through that, increase understanding, build new relationships with, and be connected to the world around us and with each other.

Social infrastructure and open spaces are critical to ensure that local Aboriginal Culture and identity is visible, acknowledged, respected and as part of the world's oldest living culture, something that we all feel proud that this is part of our identity.

New ways of living and working

How we live, work and create is changing, and these new patterns need to inform the design and management of facilities. It is important to design spaces that are flexible enough to be readily and efficiently adapted over time. Changing working trends (e.g. working from home and the start-up economy) require new and different type of spaces (ie. co-working and maker spaces). For example, the function of libraries has expanded to accommodate working, studying, meeting, sharing and learning opportunities.

The lines between home and work, personal and profession have blurred and therefore when and how we seek information, exercise, meet up with friends or want to learn something new must also change. For social infrastructure and open space provision, this means rethinking the management of facilities and spaces – when are they open and available, at what times will the community participate and what infrastructure is in place to support this. Digital and smart technology continues to play a role to increase accessibility and availability.

The sharing economy

Cultural infrastructure is defined in Create NSW's Cultural Infrastructure Plan 2025+ to include buildings and spaces that accommodate or support culture. It is more than just traditional museums, galleries, and theatres; including all places where the cultural sector and broader community come together to create, share, learn and store products.

There has been an increase in the community's desire to again experience in how to make things and learn new creative skills, which usually require expensive and specialist equipment. Maker spaces and co-working spaces, street libraries and community pantries are part of the community sharing economy that can boost the local economy as well as facilitate greater community involvement, and help to create new social networks and strengthen the sense of community.

Local governments play a key role in facilitating cultural activities, events and festivals, and several studies have demonstrated the economic benefits of cultural investment for local economies.⁹ These benefits can both direct employment opportunities, and increase visitation and expenditure in local areas.

'Single use' social infrastructure does not support positive outcomes for communities

Not that long ago every community had their own hall, usually managed by a local group of volunteers who would rely on hall rentals to keep the doors open and the lights on. Community halls are special places, that hold a lifetime of collective and individual memories. They are the places we gather, mourn, celebrate, share and connect and positively impact our sense of community and communality.

Governments and communities are increasingly realising the benefits of co-locating and integrating services and facilities as it attracts a range of users and provides spaces to carry out different activities and meet a variety of needs in a single location. This more contemporary and sustainable model, offering flexible spaces enables users to share spaces and deliver a range of services and programs, while also reducing the need for multiple trips, and contributes to providing more accessible and sustainable environments.

Walkable and Rideable Places

Living locally and having the ability to meet most daily needs within a 20-minute return walk from home, with access to safe cycling and local transport options is an increasing trend in city planning. There are particular challenges in creating this in areas that have lower population and housing densities and a lack of established infrastructure.

The Hawkesbury has limited public transport services. The five stations – Mulgrave, Windsor, Clarendon, East Richmond and Richmond – service areas south of the river with limited bus services to towns and villages north of the river and no bus services to villages beyond Glossodia and Wilberforce.

This lack of public transport across the LGA and in particular for the outer villages also means that considered, place-based planning of social infrastructure that is integrated with active transport planning is required. We must think differently about the spatial distribution and design of facilities to ensure everyone has access to adequate facilities, spaces and services, especially for those within the community with limited mobility or access to private vehicles.

The provision of safe and direct walking and riding networks and paths supports increased equality for the community in their accessibility to social infrastructure and open spaces as well as providing additional recreational and transport options.



General social infrastructure planning principles

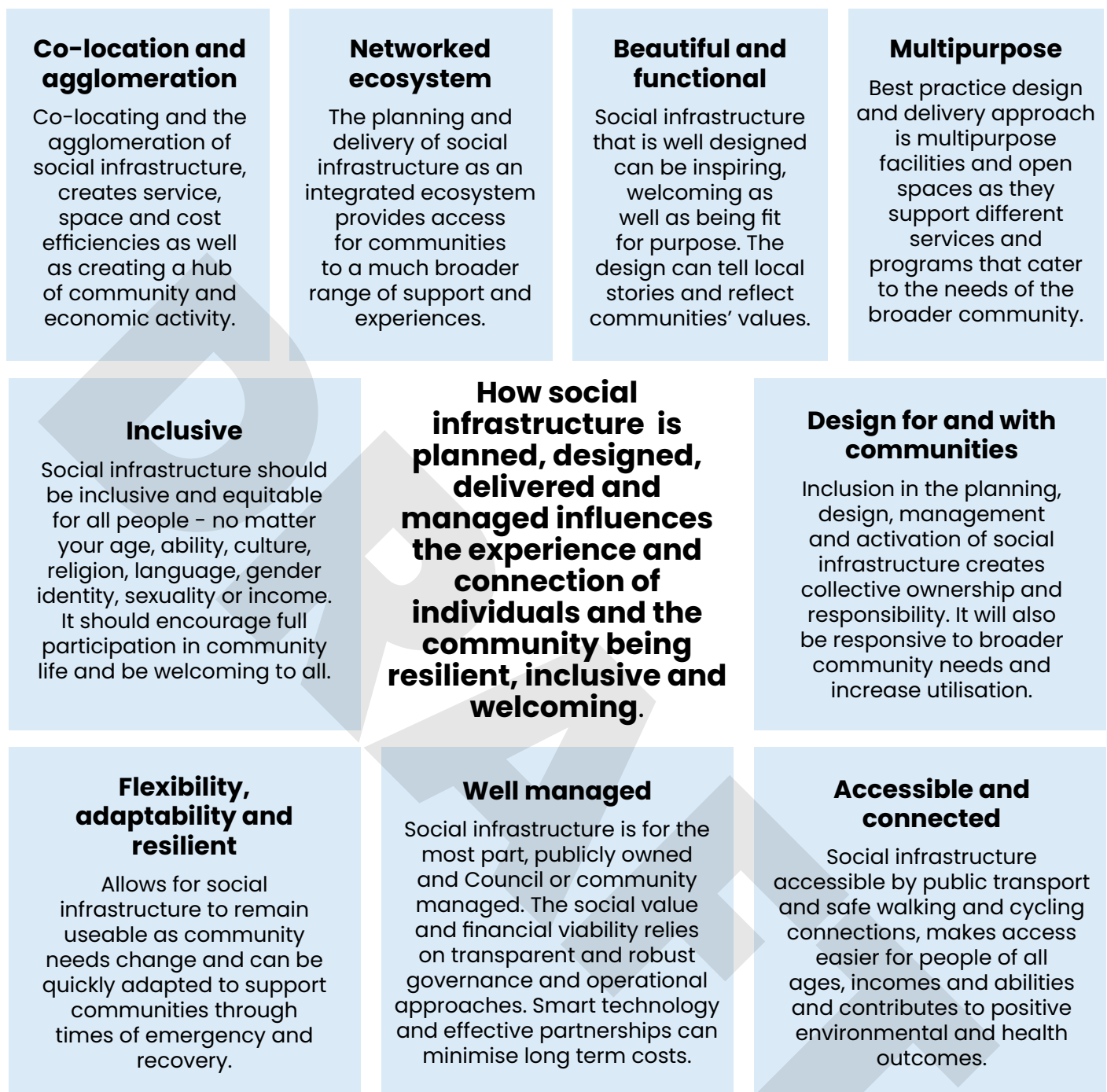


Figure 2: Principles guiding the planning, design and delivery of social infrastructure (source: The Planning Studio)

Governance and funding of social infrastructure

Government, whether local, state or federal is central in enabling people to participate in community and civic life. Hawkesbury City Council has a significant role in the planning, delivery and management of social infrastructure assets.

The role of Hawkesbury City Council in the implementation of a contemporary approach to social infrastructure and open space planning, design and delivery is as:



Researchers:

Continuously review the evidence and data to better understand, and develop policies and plans to implement best practice approaches that support positive outcomes.



Connectors:

Engage in ongoing discussions with communities and stakeholders to understand their needs, aspirations and involve them in the planning and governance of facilities and spaces. Council also connects organisations to encourage knowledge sharing.



Leaders:

Are thoughtful and responsible custodians of their community's assets, aspirations and wellbeing. Local governance frameworks and decision-making is driven by responding to the needs of their communities.



Facilitators:

That plan, finance, deliver and manage facilities, infrastructure, places and spaces that strengthen the social capital of communities. They also facilitate programs and activities that provide for the interests and services of the community.



Supporters:

That work in partnership with local organisations and groups to unlock existing community capacity to achieve shared goals. Support can be financial, providing resources, or sharing skills and knowledge. This can be through informal support or a formal partnership to plan, deliver and manage social infrastructure assets or provide essential community services.



Advocates:

That use their knowledge, influence and voice to make positive change through partnerships with business, industry, neighbouring councils and other levels of government. The position to advocate is boosted by having a variety of ideas, credibility in the diversity of people and 'strength in numbers'. Through this, Council can gain funding, new facilities, and commitment to ongoing research, dialogue and action to support the needs of their communities.

There are a range of models that can be used to effectively fund, operate and manage social infrastructure and open space. These include:

Developer Contributions:

Charged by councils, under an approved contributions plan, when new development occurs. They help fund local infrastructure like parks and community facilities.

Planning Agreements:

Contributions made by developments for public infrastructure. Generally proposed in areas that are not subject to a specific contributions plan, or where the yields being proposed are in excess those planned for.

Capital Works Program:

Allocation of funding for social infrastructure through Council's annual budget process for renewals and upgrades of existing assets or development of new assets supported by the operational budget for maintenance and upkeep.

Grant Funding:

Provided through federal and state governments, made available to communities, local government and NGO's towards the provision of infrastructure and programs.

Partnerships, sharing or joint ventures, which can involve a commercial partner gaining rights to develop government-owned land in return for the construction of social or other infrastructure, sometimes associated with a cash payment. Partnerships may also be formed with other government agencies through shared use agreements.

Government Managed:

Government delivers and manages the activities or programs within the facility – the 'traditional' model of local government social infrastructure provision, whereby all operating costs are borne by government agencies, whether they own or lease the facility.

Long Term Community Lease:

Provides exclusive use of the facility to a community-based organisation (which may be a not-for-profit or for-profit social enterprise) – at a subsidised, low or no cost.

Fixed Term Licence Agreements:

Selected community-based organisations hold a licence to occupy spaces for a fixed fee and period during designated hours. This enables the use of some of the facility by other groups outside the licence hours.

Section 355 Committees:

A common governance approach utilised by Councils across NSW. Section 355 of the Local Government Act 1993, allows a Council to exercise its functions through the establishment of a committee and delegated specific responsibilities.

Hire of Bookable Spaces/Venue:

Managed by state or local government, local lessees/management committees or private property owners.

Community Insights and Ideas

Community engagement was integral to the Hawkesbury Social Infrastructure Strategy being a plan that is written for the Hawkesbury community and that their voices, insights and ideas are the foundation of the objectives, priority focus areas and recommendations.

300+ members of community groups, local organisations, the Aboriginal Community and communities across the Hawkesbury participated in conversations about their experience and expectations of social infrastructure provision – now and in the future.

This section provides an overview of community engagement findings that inform the development of the Hawkesbury Social Infrastructure Strategy. The engagement program was split into two phases.

Phase 1 Engagement was conducted from September 2022 through to December 2022. This included interviews with key local stakeholders and engagement with Aboriginal communities.

Phase 2 Engagement was conducted between February and March 2023, which was aimed at understanding the insights and ideas from the broader community, how they used community facilities and open spaces, and what their aspirations and expectations are for the provision of social infrastructure in the future.

In addition to the general community engagement, Impact Policy undertook specific engagement with the Hawkesbury Aboriginal communities. The findings of this engagement process have been incorporated into the following summary, with the full report provided in a separate document.



Community Facilities

The community value community facilities as being places of connection and safety – psychological and physical – that bring people together. However, to achieve this they must also be well maintained, inclusive, welcoming, and safe.

The most important aspects that the community identified that makes a great community facility is having outdoor space/area; for it to be flexible or multipurpose spaces and provide play spaces for children. Amenities such as air conditioning and commercial style kitchens were also elements that increased the comfort and usability of the facilities.

A consistent theme across stakeholders engaged was the issue of affordability and access to facilities and spaces. This was identified by both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people in community and local organisations.

Facilities that provided equitable access for people with disability, older people and providing specific space for young people in the Hawkesbury LGA were considered important priorities by the community

A consistent theme in relation to the value and benefit of community facilities is that they support community connections and increase understanding.

The community participants also acknowledged how community facilities supported the sharing of local stories, culture, and history. Many talked about community facilities contributing to the attraction of the Hawkesbury in terms of the lifestyle afforded here and the local identity.



Public Spaces and Places

Engagement discussion and the survey responses reinforced that the benefits of parks, open space and recreation facilities is multi-faceted. Consultation and engagement, especially with young people and families focused on the public and open spaces. In particular, the opportunity for increasing the development of playgrounds and public spaces.

The community described a great open space as being places for the community to connect but should be well maintained, safe and cater for all ages.

For recreation and sporting facilities the most important aspects for the community were having shaded areas and shelters, seating; lighting and other safety features and adequate car parking.

For parks and open spaces the community identified having access to public toilets, shaded areas, trees and shelters as being valued and important. Other amenities, such as car parking, seating and tables, signage and landscaping where also important.

Children and young people – through drawings and conversations – commonly expressed their preference for parks and open spaces to provide adventure and exploration, water and natural elements.

The community identified the key benefits of open spaces, parks, playgrounds, sporting and recreation facilities is that they are a great way to bring the community together and getting to know each other.

They also identified that they support and improve health and wellbeing outcomes and are integral to the lifestyle offered in the Hawkesbury.

The provision of parks and open spaces was also commonly discussed in relation to accessing the natural environment. Bushland and national parks are beneficial to individuals as well as being important to the Hawkesbury's character and identity.



Representation of Aboriginal Culture and Community

The opportunity for more public representation and pride in Aboriginal Culture was a consistent theme that emerged in discussions with Aboriginal people, organisations and non-Aboriginal community members. This included representation in public spaces, local council buildings and broader social infrastructure.

Aboriginal organisations and individuals also talked about the need to consult with, include and promote the use of Dharug language across the Hawkesbury LGA so as to promote the reawakening, revitalisation of and nurturing of Aboriginal languages.

Confirming the discussions with local Aboriginal people and organisations undertaken by Impact Policy, over half of the survey respondents agreed that Dharug and Darkinjung culture is important to the Hawkesbury's character and identity.

It is important to also note that a small proportion (13%) of the survey respondents disagreed that the local Aboriginal culture was important and about one-third held a neutral viewpoint.

While some in the community felt that local Aboriginal culture is currently visible throughout the LGA, others didn't agree and felt it needed to be increased.

There was an expressed desire to celebrate the Hawkesbury's dual histories – Aboriginal and colonial but acknowledgment that more work was required.

Aboriginal Community Engagement

Impact Policy commenced this consultation with an analysis of Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations across the Hawkesbury LGA. Eleven Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations were identified.

From this Impact Policy contacted all organisations to connect and introduce themselves and the social infrastructure project. They explored capacity for participation and any advice or guidance from a Cultural perspective as to what would be the most appropriate mechanism for community consultation.

From this scoping exercise, it was identified by community members that there was existing work happening with local Government around the development of Reconciliation Action Plans (RAP) and engagement with Aboriginal communities has already been undertaken, though there had been little communication around this work.

Once details of existing Aboriginal community governance representatives on the Council's RAP committee had been obtained, Impact Policy reached out as part of a process of Cultural respect and protocol prior to further engagement with the broader community.

Overview of engagement

The consultation with Aboriginal community members occurred through the following methods of engagement:

- Over the phone consultation with Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations;
- Face to face meetings and yarning with Aboriginal staff and stakeholders;
- Online survey for community feedback at Aboriginal community event; and
- Face to face engagement at Aboriginal community event (Merana Christmas Party) with over 150 registered attendees.

The following organisations were engaged through this project:

- Dalmarri
- Dharug Aboriginal Custodian Corporation
- Deerubin Local Aboriginal Land Council
- Dharug Strategic Management Group
- Muru Mittagar
- Merana Aboriginal Association for the Hawkesbury
- Narang Bi-rong Aboriginal Corporation
- Ngadhi Family Services
- Aboriginal Counselling
- Greater Western Aboriginal Health Service
- Sydney Region Aboriginal Corporation

¹⁰ (2020) Darkinjung Local Aboriginal Land Council. Available at: <https://www.darkinjung.com.au> (Accessed: December 21, 2022).

¹¹ Richmond Community Services Inc (2022).

¹² Merana Aboriginal Community (no date) Facebook. (Accessed: December 21, 2022).

Local Aboriginal Land Councils and Community Organisations

There are two Local Aboriginal Land Councils closely connected with the Hawkesbury and Richmond region, the **Deerubbin Local Aboriginal Land Council** and the **Darkinjung Aboriginal Land Council**. With Deerubbin being recognised as within the boundaries identified within the Aboriginal Land Rights Act NSW (1983).

Beginning in 1983, the Deerubbin Local Aboriginal Land Council has now become one of the largest private landholders in Western Sydney. Since 2007, their council and board have specifically worked towards supporting Aboriginal people grow in their Aboriginality and understanding of their culture, history, and tradition.

The Darkinjung Local Aboriginal Land Council boundaries include the Hawkesbury River to the South.¹⁰ This land council aims to improve the community's health and wellbeing through various policies.

Incorporated in 2003, Merana is "the first Aboriginal organisation in the Hawkesbury LGA and was established to support all Aboriginal people in the community".¹¹

Merana provide Aboriginal people and communities with a voice and raises awareness on Aboriginal issues both locally and nationally. They also aim to "develop, support and implement programs, positions and resources that meet the needs identified by the Aboriginal people."¹² They do so through a range of "services, programs, cultural activities, special events and advocacy."¹²



Summary of findings

The feedback following consultation has been broken down into three key themes of social infrastructure, public spaces and place and representation of Aboriginal culture and the community. These are the interpretations from Impact Policy as to priorities and opportunities identified by Aboriginal community members for the improvement of access to and representation of Aboriginal people and Culture

For Aboriginal families a common theme was the opportunity to gather and connect together on Country and the lack of public spaces that are Culturally appropriate for specific events and dates of Cultural significance was a regular theme that came up in conversations with participants.

There are examples of public spaces that have been designed with Country that incorporate Aboriginal ways of knowing, doing and being into their creation. These places have provided opportunities for Aboriginal communities to host corroboree celebrations and community events and are in line with how Culturally community delivers events and gatherings.

A consistent theme that emerged through many conversations was the importance of local council recognising dates of significance for Aboriginal people such as 26 January, Sorry Day, Reconciliation Week and NAIDOC week celebrations.

Specifically to mob on Dharug country but particularly within the Richmond community was the need for recognition within public spaces around truth telling and the shared history between the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal community.

Whilst there is an identified need for truth telling and recognition that the impacts of colonial history were not favourable for all members of the community within the Hawkesbury LGA. What is significant is the opportunity here for truth telling and to also recognise that through that there is a celebration of the resilience, survival and shared history of Aboriginal people across Dharug country.

Social Infrastructure

A consistent theme across stakeholders engaged was the issue of **affordability and access to local council buildings and spaces**. This was identified by both Aboriginal people in community and local organisations.

Further to economic barriers, **accessibility and use of social infrastructure was an identified need**. This includes support for Aboriginal community events and dates of significance.

The theme of family centred spaces was one that was highlighted across different community members. It was recognised that while there was a range of different spaces and places across the LGA, there was a **gap in places for Aboriginal families as a whole to come together that were appropriate for young children in terms of facilities and design** as well as being able to cater for Elders and/or Aboriginal people living with mobility issues.

Public Spaces and Places

Consultation and engagement especially with young people and families made reference to public and open spaces. In particular, the opportunity for increasing the development of playgrounds and public spaces.

Animals and Country incorporated into public spaces and playgrounds was a significant theme across families, but particularly young people who talked about opportunities to play and connect with public spaces that incorporated animals and totems into their design for play.

To Dharug people, some of the animals young people described represent totems significant to Country while others are of Cultural significance, these often included native animals such lizards, Goanna, Cockatoo and Eagles.

Representation of Aboriginal Culture and Community

The opportunity for more public representation and pride in Aboriginal Culture was a consistent theme that emerged. This included representation in public spaces, local council buildings and broader social infrastructure.

Ways in which this was identified included through increasing the use of Aboriginal language and place names as well as in the representation and use of artwork in the buildings and social spaces to recognise and celebrate Aboriginal Culture and knowledge.

There was much feedback around the work happening specific to the revitalisation of Aboriginal languages in NSW.

Community members described the significant process that had been made in the Dharug language space and there was consistent reference about the need to consult, include and promote the use of Dharug language across the Hawkesbury LGA so as to promote the reawakening, revitalisation of and nurturing of Aboriginal languages.

Common references when discussing recognition of Aboriginal Culture was the suggestions around Acknowledgment of Country and more representations of this through physical Acknowledgments of Dharug people as the traditional owners of Country in public and social spaces.

The facilitation of this for many public spaces is a significant representation of commitment to reconciliation and Aboriginal communities.

“There is good stuff happening, like street signs etc but what would be great would be to see more and more language in public spaces where we come together to yarn and connect places like parks, on buildings and stuff like that”.

- **Aboriginal community member**

Recommendations

Engagement across the Hawkesbury LGA for the most part has been positive, despite initial challenges in participation and engagement. However, it identified that there is much work to be done to increase Aboriginal community engagement and participation in the Hawkesbury LGA.

The following opportunities for further thinking on the preparation of the social infrastructure strategy and how Council can invest-in, aim to guide further thinking and increase the engagement of Aboriginal people and projects particularly with a social and community impact.

- Engagement has identified a clear opportunity for local council to invest in the rebuilding of strong and long-term relationships with the Aboriginal community.
- Through place design and development of social infrastructure there remains an identified gap in representation of Aboriginal Culture, knowledge and recognition of Country's shared history. Its inclusion would greatly support the access of, Cultural safety within and journey towards Reconciliation across the Hawkesbury LGA.
- The Hawkesbury LGA has a strong and active Aboriginal community, including some thriving Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations that are servicing all demographics of the Aboriginal community.
- Investment into the development of local governance and community engagement through the Hawkesbury City Council would strengthen the ability to think strategically about Social Infrastructure from a Cultural standpoint into the future. This could include considerations of development of Dharug youth advisory committees or broader Aboriginal community advisory groups and structures.
- Many community organisations identified over consultation or consultation fatigue as a barrier to participation. This reinforced the importance of community events to engage with the Aboriginal community, which is a place they feel safe and adds value to the community.

General Community Engagement

The following activities were undertaken in Phase 1 and Phase 2 to engage with local stakeholders and the Hawkesbury community:

- **Online survey:** 135 responses received (75% completion rate) available on Council's Have Your Say website from December 2022 to 19 March 2023.
- **Stakeholder Interviews:** with Sports Council (x2 – in person and online) and various community facilities and sporting facilities management groups and individuals.
- **Community Pop-Ups:** engaging with approximately 118 people across the 6 pop-up locations over 4 days (Tuesday, Saturday and Sunday).
- **Community and stakeholders workshops:** were held both in person (x2) and online (x1) with 20 registrations and 12 attendees. The Planning Studio conducted separate meetings with stakeholders and community members that expressed interest in participating but were unable to attend one of the workshops.
- **Children's engagement activities:** were conducted at all community pop-ups, the Aboriginal Community event and sent to local schools and scout groups. 50 activity sheets were received from children aged 4-16 years.

The following provides a summary of the key questions asked, insights provided and themes that emerged from discussions across all engagement activities.

"A challenge for the Hawkesbury is legacy expectations that Council used to build a hall for every village ... [and] this approach may no longer be practical or best practice, even for an area with the geography of a dispersed rural community"

- Workshop Participant



Figure 3: Richmond Pool Community Pop-Up
(source: The Planning Studio)

The importance of having access to local community facilities and open spaces was a key question and point of discussion along with the aspects that the community values most about them.

Workshop participants and those that dropped into the 'pop-ups' discussed the importance of designing open spaces, community, and recreational facilities so that they celebrate the region's heritage, local community, and environment.

Importance of social infrastructure to the Hawkesbury community

Overall, the majority of the Hawkesbury community that engaged with us to inform this strategy were in agreement that the provision of social infrastructure within the Hawkesbury was important.

The key reasons that the community articulated why social infrastructure was important was the improved community connections and health benefits they supported by bringing people together and to get to know each other. They also expressed the importance about open spaces, parks, and bushland being integral to the identity and character of the Hawkesbury and combined with community facilities, are a significant reason that people want to live in the Hawkesbury.

Specific to community facilities, the community felt that they enable everyone to share our local stories, culture, and history which in turn increases understanding. Over 90% of survey respondents agreed that open spaces, playgrounds, sporting, and recreation facilities specifically support the community's health and wellbeing.

Given multiple natural disasters that the Hawkesbury community have experience over the past 2 years, it was not surprising that 86% of survey respondents felt the importance of community facilities was supporting community resilience, especially during emergencies.

"Peppercorn has become a community safety hub during the floods and extreme weather as it provides internet access, air conditioning and bathrooms while also facilitating activities to make it a comfortable living space."

- Workshop Participant

What makes a great community facility?

Workshop participants agreed that great community facilities must be **well maintained, inclusive, welcoming, and safe**. Community facilities are also considered by the community as being **places of connection and safety – psychological and physical – that bring people together**.

The most important aspects of **community facilities** valued by the community were:

- Outdoor area (54% of responses and 'pop-up' participants);
- Air conditioning (42% of responses, workshop participants and 'pop-up' participants);
- Flexible or multipurpose spaces (41% of responses),
- Children's play space (36% of responses and 'pop-up' participants),
- Commercial kitchen (34% of responses); and
- Building design and landscape features (34% of responses and workshop participants)
- Internal and external lighting (workshop participants).
- Parking (workshop participants and 'pop-up' participants)
- Wi-Fi and general amenities (workshop participants)

Location was raised as another critical component with Hawkesbury Leisure and Learning Centre used as an example of a community facility that is a co-located, one-stop-shop with flexible lighting.

Parking, Wi-Fi, amenities, and air conditioning were also considered important, particularly with regard to safety and accessibility for all people.

What makes a great open space, sporting and recreation facility?

Workshop participants agreed that great open spaces are **places for the community to connect**. They should be well maintained, safe and cater for all ages.

For **recreation and sporting facilities** the most important aspects for the community were:

- Shaded areas and shelters (62% of responses; workshop and 'pop-up' participants);
- Car parking on site (55% of responses and 'pop-up' participants);
- Seating and tables (46% of responses and workshop participants);
- Lighting and other safety features (35% of responses and workshop participants);
- Showers and changerooms (34% of responses);
- Children's play space (33% of responses);

While the most important aspects of **parks and open spaces** for the community were:

- Public toilets (84% of responses 'pop-up' participants);
- Shaded areas, trees and shelters (67% of responses, workshop and 'pop-up' participants);
- Car parking on site (56% of responses);
- Seating and tables (52% of responses, workshop 'pop-up' participants);
- Landscaping (52% of responses);
- Children's play space (42% of responses).
- Signage and wayfinding (workshop participants and 'pop-up' participants)
- Public art reflecting local knowledge and stories (workshop participants)
- Lighting (workshop participants and 'pop-up' participants)
- Fences (workshop participants)



What is the ideal 'dream' park for children and activities they like to do with friends

Children's activity sheets were available at all community pop-ups, the Merana Community Christmas event and sent to local schools and scout groups.

Children and young people were given the opportunity to draw their dream park. Through these drawings and conversations with children the themes commonly expressed were for parks and open space to provide adventure and exploration, water and natural elements. Other common items that were drawn included:

- swings (13 drawings)
- water elements / pools (12 drawings)
- climbing wall / monkey bars (10 drawings)
- slides (9 drawings)
- animals (7 drawings)
- trees / green spaces (7 drawings)
- flying foxes / zip line (5 drawings)
- adventure play (4 drawings)
- nature play (4 drawings)
- Merry Go Round (3 drawings)
- See Saw (3 drawings)
- shelter (1 drawing)
- bathroom (1 drawing)
- sports (1 drawing)

Activities that children and young people said they liked to do with friends was to play: 'where you can build'; cooking and food activities; doing arts and crafts. They also identified an interest in learning about Country and culture – "we get to learn about us" – and learning together – "we make new friends so you are never alone".



Figure 4: Dream Park Drawing
(Source: 1st Grose Vale Scouts, Michaela / Eamon aged 11/9)



Figure 5: Dream Park Drawing
(Source: Community Pop-Up, Louis / Ruby aged 9)

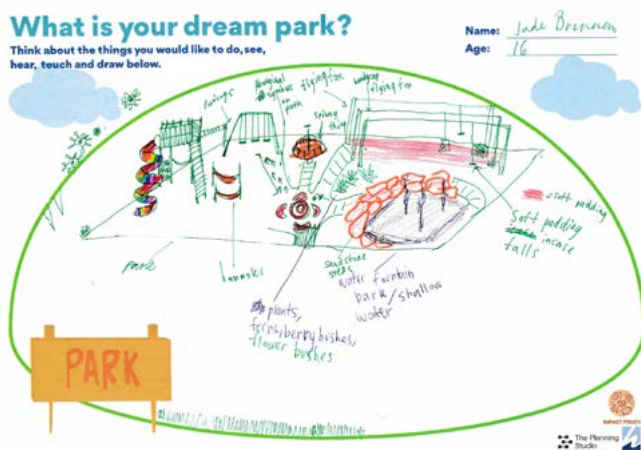


Figure 6: Dream Park Drawing
(Source: Merana Community Event, Jade aged 16)



Figure 7: Dream Park Drawing
(Source: Merana Community Event, Elenzar aged 7)

Supporting the community where they live

The use and access of community facilities and open spaces by the community is one indicator of its effectiveness in providing for the local community.

Two-thirds (66%) of survey respondents indicated that they regularly use community facilities and open spaces for recreation purposes. The average time that respondents are spending at these facilities is 30–60 minutes.

Of those respondents that regularly use the facilities and spaces, 44% are active members of a community organisation/group and 30% attend events/activities organised by Council.

While the primary mode of transport that residents use to get to the park or community facility is by car (95%), more than one-third of respondents also walked (35%) and 12% cycle.

This reflects the spatial distribution of the parks and community facilities across the Hawkesbury LGA, with the larger, district scale social infrastructure located in Richmond and Windsor, with most villages across the LGA serviced by at least a small park, playground and community hall.

The expansion of the local walking and cycling network would assist in increasing the number of people who travel by walking and cycling. This was highlighted as a significant gap in infrastructure for the region on multiple occasions throughout the engagement process.

Overall, half of survey respondents agreed they have good access to community facilities, open spaces, playgrounds, sporting, and recreation facilities where they live. This was also reinforced by discussions. However, 20% expressed a neutral view and 32% of respondents disagreed that they have good access to community facilities where they live.

While there was a strong view that access was good, three-quarters of respondents (75%) would like to see more community facilities open spaces, playgrounds, sporting, and recreation facilities within their area.

Benefits of community facilities and supporting community needs

The majority of survey respondents (84%), workshop participants and community members that 'popped in' agreed that **community facilities support community connections and increases understanding**.

The community participants felt that community facilities supported the sharing of local stories, culture, and history. Many talked about how community facilities contributed to the attraction of the Hawkesbury in terms of the lifestyle afforded here and the local identity.

Given multiple natural disasters that the Hawkesbury community have experienced over the past 2 years, it was not surprising that the majority of workshop, drop in and survey participants (85.5%) agreed that community facilities support resilience, especially during emergencies.

Over half of survey respondents (55%) agreed or strongly agreed that community facilities in the Hawkesbury supports the needs of the community, with 28% expressing a neutral viewpoint.

Benefits of open spaces and supporting community needs

Engagement discussions and the survey responses reinforced that the benefits of parks, open space and recreation facilities is multi-faceted.

The community identified the key benefits of open spaces, parks, playgrounds, sporting and recreation facilities is that they are a **great way to bring the community together and getting to know each other**.

They also identified that they support and improve health and wellbeing outcomes (90% of survey respondents) as well as being integral to the lifestyle offered in the Hawkesbury.

Survey respondents (85%), workshop participants and community members that attended the pop-ups talked about how access to the natural environment, bushland and national parks is beneficial to themselves as well as being important to the Hawkesbury's character and identity.

When asked about the current quality of open spaces, playgrounds, sporting, and recreation facilities in the Hawkesbury LGA, one-third of survey respondents disagreed that they are currently of a high quality, with 39.4% remaining neutral.

While 42% of survey respondents felt that the current open spaces, playgrounds, sporting, and recreation facilities support the needs of the community, 30% disagreed and under one-quarter expressed a neutral viewpoint.

Importance and visibility of Aboriginal Culture

Confirming the findings from the engagement with local Aboriginal Elders, individuals and groups undertaken by Impact Policy, over half of survey respondents agreed or strongly agreed that Dharug and Darkinjung culture is important to the Hawkesbury's character and identity. However, 12.5% disagreed or strongly disagreed that the local Aboriginal culture was important and 32% held a neutral viewpoint.

There was a mix of views regarding the current visibility of Dharug and Darkinjung culture and stories within the Hawkesbury City Council area. Of the total responses, 29% felt Dharug and Darkinjung Culture is visible and reflected within the Hawkesbury LGA, but an almost equal number of respondents, disagreed about the visibility of Aboriginal culture. Over one-third of respondents (37%) were neutral or indicated they 'did not know'.

Workshop participants discussed the need to identify, share, and celebrate what's local and the lack of pride in the Hawkesbury. This discussion tied into the importance of celebrating the Hawkesbury's Aboriginal and colonial history. One participant suggested that 'each shop be given a banner for the colonial history and indigenous history of their building.' Another participant commented that 'community facilities aren't just buildings, they represent a sense of place and identity.'

Access for people with disability and older people

In discussion with a local accessibility advocate they commented that there is a *'large hidden population of people with a disability living in the Hawkesbury and currently a lack of services and facilities that cater to this demographic'*.

They also talked about the majority of playgrounds in the Hawkesbury not being designed to suit the needs of children with a disability. *'Parks and playgrounds aren't accessible for children with physical and mental disabilities, for example there are no wheelchair swings or sensory facilities for neuro-diverse children.'* It was suggested that future playgrounds should be designed to make them more accessible and safer for all.

Workshop participants and survey respondents also identified the need for equitable access, and for facilities and spaces to consider the access needs of older people and people with disability, particularly older community facilities to make sure everyone can easily use them. One survey respondent asked that Council *'ensure disability access and toilet facilities at all sporting fields and complexes.'*

"Our community facilities are very important to our community and I would like Council to bring them all up to a high standard. Any new developed areas must have good community facilities before the houses go in".

– Survey Response

Challenges with existing social infrastructure in the Hawkesbury

Affordability

Increasing costs for hiring community facilities was identified as being a significant barrier for community.

Workshop participants discussed the lack of affordable meeting spaces in the Hawkesbury. They noted that Covid-19 has changed the way we work and highlighted the importance of adapting our existing facilities to meet the changing needs of the community.

One participant said that Windsor library offers three study spaces however, these rooms aren't available for commercial use. It was suggested that community facilities could be made available to small businesses and not-for-profit organisations as a way to boost the local economy, increase utilisation and create more connections within the community.

Lack of connection between groups

Workshop participants felt that there was a lack of connection and communication between community groups across the Hawkesbury. It was discussed that better integration and coordination would be beneficial to the wider community in terms of the activities and services offered.

One participant suggested that Council could appoint a Community Directory Officer, who could liaise between community groups and advocate for greater connection and cohesion.

Increased communication was also seen as a way to improve knowledge sharing amongst groups and create a channel for Council to provide information on local issues. Participants also felt that Council's website and directory needed to be updated on a regular basis as the information was often out of date. However, they did commend Council on their social media pages and suggested that the website be managed by the social media team.

Some facilities are currently under-utilised

The older community halls were identified as currently being under utilised and workshop participants suggested this was due to a number of factors such as hire costs, lack of awareness/ advertising, lack of multi-use spaces and the absence of amenities such as Wi-Fi.

A community member who responded to the survey observed that 'the community facilities which have been recently upgraded or built are wonderful, mostly well thought out with appropriate amenities.'

They suggested that 'rather than continuing to build so many new spaces and do large renovations and improvements to spaces that are already reasonable, it would be great to put some more attention into other parks and facilities as well. Many wouldn't need a complete refurbishment, but adding improvements- particularly ensuring lawns and open spaces are nicely turfed and maintained, trees and landscaping would go a long way to improving our community spaces.'

Lack of spaces for young people and children

The Hawkesbury has numerous playgrounds for younger kids, but teenagers aren't catered for in the same way.

Through the survey responses, discussions at workshops, and with families at the community pop-ups, the need for more bike tracks and BMX pump tracks was identified. A number of people also commented that they had observed how popular the existing basketball courts are amongst young people.

One survey respondent identified the 'need to have some upgrades in Glossodia as there is nothing good here for kids and we need safe pathways so we don't have to walk on the road.'

Discussion at one of the community workshops highlighted that the main priority from a cultural point of view is to invest in youth programs that give young people an opportunity to learn and grow.

Community centres like HCOS and Glossodia Community Centre are at capacity, especially in terms of before and after school care. One of the issues is lack of transport, HCOS is able to pick-up children from school to take them to after-school care, but Glossodia Community Centre doesn't have this resource. The existing social infrastructure isn't able to support the growth in population from new housing developments like Redbank and Jacaranda.

Community identity and designing for place

Workshop and pop-up participants discussed the importance of designing open spaces, community, and recreational facilities so that they celebrate the region's heritage, local community, and environment.

Two workshop participants suggested involving community groups like the men's shed or Hawkesbury Woodcraft to build and design display boards or benches for parks and open spaces. Participants agreed that the introduction of gas lamps in Windsor Mall was a great step forward and added to a sense of place. They believed that this approach could be adopted for future designs throughout the Hawkesbury.

Maintenance of community facilities

Workshop and pop-up participants who were also part of a community group or community management committee commented on the increasing costs to maintain the physical buildings, which was impacting on other opportunities.

They acknowledged that maintenance of Council owned community facilities can be costly, especially for basic upkeep in the form of lawn mowing, tree pruning and leaf clearing.

It was suggested that tree removal at multiple facilities would reduce leaf litter on the buildings gutters and alleviate safety concerns over falling trees especially at childcare facilities. Another participant suggested that for some of the basic maintenance upkeep, a more coordinated approach would help to reduce costs, rather than individual groups organising the work.

"Having a couple of coffee trucks with some snacks that move around the facilities would also make parks and playgrounds areas where people might stay for longer."

- Survey Participant

Sporting facilities and resilience

There was a general agreement amongst Hawkesbury Sports Council members, workshop participants and some survey respondents that there aren't enough sporting facilities to meet the needs of the existing community.

There was also much discussion that this has been exacerbated by the floods, which rendered some facilities unusable for entire seasons, like Colbee Park, which hasn't been used now for four seasons.

The Sports Council discussed that they are actively looking for sports grounds and other alternatives that aren't on the flood plain, however there is a lack of land available for redevelopment. They suggested that identifying and redeveloping existing facilities by making them more resilient through the upgrade of drainage systems and redesign of clubhouses, change rooms, storage, and other amenities.

Walking and cycling paths

Workshop participants expressed their concern over the lack of walking and bicycle tracks, which they believed added to the sense of disconnection within the community. Participants discussed the importance of creating more bicycle tracks to connect villages and towns with open spaces.

The health and wellbeing benefits as well as the connection with the surrounding natural areas and bushland in the Hawkesbury were also discussed. One workshop participant mentioned that 'walking is the fastest growing activity' and a survey respondent suggesting that there is a 'need for more walking trails along the Hawkesbury and Nepean Rivers.' The under supply of walking paths also raises safety concerns for children.

There was also discussion that the lack of public transport meant that it was hard for older people or people who can't drive to access facilities and spaces outside of their immediate area.

The community's future priorities and



Figure 8: Wilberforce Pop Up (Source: The Planning Studio)

Identified opportunities

The main priorities that came out of the engagement process were to create greater community connection, and identity through the celebration of heritage both indigenous and colonial and prioritise creating spaces for young people.

The Hawkesbury is a place of strength, resilience and community spirit which could be elevated through the effective delivery and prioritisation of actions as Council plans for future social infrastructure provision.

Participants also discussed how open spaces could be used more effectively as a way for community to connect through the establishment of local nurseries and gardening groups. They also expressed the need to ensure there were appropriate open spaces for young people.

The opportunity to increase the use of existing community facilities through the growth of user groups and awareness was discussed. A few participants also suggested opening up the community facilities to small businesses and provide localised co-working type spaces that could also benefit the local economy.

Appendix D provides a summary of survey responses specific to each of the facilities and open spaces/parks received.

"Our river, proximity to the mountains and our cultural history should be optimised. Then could be promoted, celebrated and become attractions not only for residents but visitors."

– Survey Participant

Community Insights and Ideas

The Strategy sits within a broader policy, planning and social context. This section provides an overview of the baseline analysis – the people, places and policy context – that influences the future planning of the Hawkesbury LGA’s social infrastructure and open space network.

Policy Context

United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

The United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is a framework of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The Goals relevant to the Strategy include:

3 Good Health and Wellbeing: ‘Ensuring healthy lives and promoting wellbeing for all at all ages is essential to sustainable development’. Within the Hawkesbury LGA, the design and provision of quality public spaces and community facilities will contribute to improved health and wellbeing outcomes, including mental health.

4 Quality Education: ‘Obtaining a quality education is the foundation to improving people’s lives and sustainable development’. Providing opportunities for the community – both young and old – to continuously learn new skills and improve their understanding of the world around them is critical. Access to quality early education and school services as well as providing opportunities through libraries, cultural spaces, and parks will also contribute to the community’s cohesion and connection.

10 Reduced Inequalities: ‘To reduce inequalities, policies should be universal in principle, paying attention to the needs of disadvantaged and marginalised populations.’ Libraries and public spaces are non-transitional and welcoming for all people to use and enjoy, no matter your age, income or where you are from.

Providing infrastructure that is universally designed to provide equitable access and affordable, particularly for socially, economically and transport disadvantaged residents is key to improving resilience and supporting those struggling with the general costs of living are still able to learn, live and be healthy.

Designing Places and Spaces

Greener Places | Greener Places Design Guide [GANSW]

The Greener Places document outlines four principles to help deliver green infrastructure in NSW. These principles have been incorporated into the overall social infrastructure principles proposed to inform the future planning within the Hawkesbury. Principles are:

- **Integration:** combine green infrastructure with urban development and grey infrastructure
- **Connectivity:** create an interconnected network of open space
- **Multi functionality:** deliver multiple ecosystem services simultaneously
- **Participation:** involve stakeholders in development and implementation

The Draft Greener Places Design Guide provides a consistent approach to design, plan, and deliver green infrastructure. The guide recommends a performance based approach, encouraging consideration of its purpose, activities it will support and what opportunities are available.

The six core criteria, include:

- Accessibility and connectivity
- Distribution
- Size and shape
- Quantity
- Quality
- Diversity

Hawkesbury Regional Open Space Strategy 2013

The Regional Open Space Strategy (ROSS) has been the guiding strategic document by which the recreational open space within the Hawkesbury LGA are planned and managed. The ROSS sets out the objectives under the following five themes, which remain relevant for this social infrastructure assessment and the development of the strategy:

- Recreation and Leisure
- Access and Circulation
- Cultural Heritage and Natural Environment
- Landscape Character and Identity
- Management and Maintenance

Urban Greening Strategy 2023 [Hawkesbury City Council]

The Urban Greening Strategy will provide strategic alignment to both internal and State Government policies and will assist to coordinate Council's current cross-organisational projects that contribute to increasing canopy cover and greening.

The Strategy identifies three key goals with objectives and actions under each of these:

- Existing areas of urban green are protected and enhanced;
- Green links are created where they are most needed; and
- Our community stewards our urban greening.

Better Placed [GANSW]

Better Placed outlines seven objectives on how a built environment, including public buildings, can be well-designed and:

- Is a better fit.
- Is better for the community [where all people feel welcome, included and valued].
- Is better for people [because they feel safe, comfortable to interact and enjoy healthy lives].
- Is better functioning also responding to changes over time.
- Delivers better value [economically, socially, environmentally and culturally, and highly valued].
- Reflects a better look and feel.

Country and Aboriginal Culture

Connecting with Country [GANSW]

Connecting with Country is a framework for understanding the value of Aboriginal knowledge in the design and planning of places and how to respond to Country when planning, designing and delivery projects.

The guidance contributes to a better understanding of, and explores opportunities for design to support connection to Country in built environment projects as well as consideration of design opportunities at various scales whether that be at a precinct scale through to an individual building. All of these elements should be the basis for the future design of social infrastructure within the Hawkesbury.

Resilient Infrastructure

Resilient Sydney [100 Resilient Cities]

'Sydney is a metropolis that is connected, inclusive and resilient. We are one city.'

This strategy sets a direction and vision to strengthen Sydney's ability to survive, adapt and thrive in the face of increasing global uncertainty and local shocks and stresses. The provision of accessible social infrastructure is one of the important ways to achieve this vision and the five supporting directions, all which have relevance to the development of the Hawkesbury Social Infrastructure Strategy.

Staying Ahead: State Infrastructure Strategy 2022-2042 [NSW]

The 2022 State Infrastructure Strategy notes that *'community wellbeing is supported by access to open and recreational spaces, such as parks, sporting and cultural facilities, as well as infrastructure that supports walking and cycling (active transport)'* [pg.72]. It also identifies that integrating open space and active transport infrastructure into existing assets is one of the key design principles highlighted by the NSW Government Architect.

The Strategy also recognised the importance of local community facilities and multi use assets in the prevention, preparedness, response and recovery and increasing community resilience.

Joint Use of Schools Facilities and Land Policy, [Department of Education]

'Joint use' is where the Department and other parties make significant investments (land and/or capital) in new facilities, upgrading or maintaining facilities. The asset is typically shared between the school and the other parties over an extended period of time, or the lifetime of the asset. These projects are voluntary and may include cost-sharing for maintenance of school grounds and buildings, and improved access to available social infrastructure.

Culture and Creativity

NSW Cultural Infrastructure Plan 2025 and [CreateNSW]

The Plan articulates the strategic priorities for NSW to be a place where culture is recognised as an integral part of communities to ensure that:

- Everyone can access the infrastructure they need to make culture part of their everyday lives.
- There is an increased availability of affordable, fit-for-purpose and sustainable space to support growth of the cultural sector and creative industries.
- Cultural infrastructure delivery and funding is supported by partnerships across NSW Government, local councils, cultural organisations, philanthropists and business.
- Greater Sydney become a leading cultural capital in the Asia-Pacific and continue to grow the visitor economy, employment and growth.
- Creativity and access to culture thrives across NSW through a strategic and coordinated approach to cultural infrastructure planning.

NSW Arts and Cultural Policy Framework [CreateNSW]

The Framework provides directions on how to effectively invest NSW Government's \$300 million annual funding for enhancing arts and culture throughout the NSW. The Framework also provides actions to support Western Sydney's arts and cultural sector, including the expansion of arts and cultural facilities being available to people in Western Sydney identified as a priority.

Hawkesbury Cultural Plan 2006–2011

The Hawkesbury Cultural Plan recognises that culture is more than the arts providing a sense of belonging. Representing connections between people and places, and celebrating local distinctiveness, helps to create understanding and provides the foundation for local artistic expressions and participation.

The cultural plan identifies the following strategic goals to achieve the desired cultural outcomes for the Hawkesbury:

- **Goal 1:** Embed cultural services into the business of Council.
- **Goal 2:** Develop the cultural precinct as the hub of a network of cultural activities.
- **Goal 3:** Encourage programs that value the Hawkesbury's rich history and heritage.
- **Goal 4:** Integrate cultural industry development into local economic planning.
- **Goal 5:** Foster cultural programs that celebrate Hawkesbury's cultural landscape and its role in cultural identity.

While this document was prepared 15+ years ago, the goals and themes identified are still relevant to understanding the cultural landscape and its value within the Hawkesbury LGA.

Caring for older people & people with disability

Age Well in NSW: Seniors Strategy 2021–2031 [Department of Communities and Justice]

Older people are the backbone of many local organisations and volunteer-driven organisations like the RFS, CWA, mens sheds, art galleries and sport clubs. The Hawkesbury has a strong volunteering culture. The strategy considers how to continue supporting this, and to also encourage involvement of younger people and intergenerational connections.

The focus areas identified in the Strategy are key considerations in the future planning and design of social infrastructure considerations include:

- Living in age-friendly environments,
- Participation and inclusive communities,
- Staying safe, active and healthy

Hawkesbury Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2023–2026

Council recognises that access and inclusion are fundamental to creating a healthy and cohesive Hawkesbury. The Hawkesbury Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2023–2026 (DIAP) outlines Council's commitment via four focus areas:

- Improving community attitudes and behaviours towards people with disability
- Building more liveable communities
- Increasing employment opportunities & support for those with disability seeking & engaging in employment
- Improving systems and processes to be more accessible and inclusive

These focus areas have been considered in the preparation of the Strategy and in particular how Council can ensure that community facilities and public open spaces are accessible to everyone.

Inclusive public and active spaces

Everyone Can Play [DPE]

Everyone Can Play is a set of design principles and best practice recommendations for play spaces in NSW, focusing on inclusive play spaces. An inclusive play space invites people of all ages, abilities and cultures to come together to socialise and thrive.

The guidelines also explore the concepts around nature and water play as well as place and play. Given the Hawkesbury identity is intrinsically linked with the natural environment, exploration of these ideas have been incorporated into the Strategy directions.

Her Sport, Her Way: Women in Sport Strategy [Office of Sport]

The Women in Sport Strategy focus areas include participation; places and spaces; leveraging investment; and leadership. Equitable allocation of playing spaces, training venues and other resources is identified as key need to increase participation. Improving the quality of existing surfaces, lighting and amenities is critical to reducing immediate barriers for women and girls.

NSW Public Spaces Charter [DPIE]

The NSW Public Spaces Charter focuses on the quality of a public space as being just as important as its availability. To define quality, the Charter identifies ten principles. The quality of a public space is reflected not only in its physical form—how its designed, maintained and integrated with its environment—but also through the activities it supports and the meaning it holds. It is what makes people feel safe, welcome and included—a place where they want to keep coming back. The Charter poses four key questions to evaluate the quality of public spaces:

- Am I able to get there?
- Am I able to play and participate?
- Am I able to stay?
- Am I able to connect?

Strategic landuse planning

Greater Sydney Regional Plan [NSW Government]

The Greater Sydney Region Plan sets a 40 year vision and establishes a 20-year plan to manage growth and change. The strategic framework of this Plan is around ten directions and planning objectives. The following objectives are relevant to this Strategy.

Objective 6: Services and infrastructure meet communities' changing needs acknowledges that changing demographics across Sydney and that this will affect the types and distribution of services and infrastructure required in neighbourhoods.

It also identifies that good accessibility to local services for young people, older people and culturally and linguistically diverse communities is an important for physical and mental wellbeing and to grow and age within their community.

Objective 7: Communities are healthy, resilient and socially connected which is influenced by good planning and strong social networks. It acknowledges that this help communities respond to the challenges of urban life and give people access to knowledge, resources and opportunities. The Plan identifies that *'great places are shaped by healthy and connected communities that share values and trust, and can develop resilience.'*

Objective 8: Greater Sydney's communities are culturally rich with diverse neighbourhoods

which brings a richness and a wide array of skills, languages, cultures and experiences. The Plan also identifies that Aboriginal people have longstanding and continuing connections with Country, community and culture across the region which is fundamental to heritage, culture and identity.

The Plan advises that a *'place-based planning approach that recognises cultural diversity in communities and responds to the different ways in which people engage and contribute provides increased opportunities for community participation.'*

Objective 9: Greater Sydney celebrates the arts and supports creative industries and innovation

and identifies that growing the arts sector will draw greater participation from both residents and visitors, boosting the economy and attracting investment.

The Plan also identifies that 'more facilities to support arts and culture are required in the Central River and Western Parkland cities to balance the three cities' despite the strong and distinctive arts culture that already exists.

Objective 12: Great places that bring people together

Objective 31: 'Public open space is accessible, protected and enhanced'. The plan also highlights that the key considerations for planning open spaces are quantity, quality and distribution.

Objective 32: 'The Green Grid links parks, open spaces, bushland and walking and cycling paths.' The Green Grid is a long-term vision for a network of high quality green areas – from regional parks to local parks and playgrounds – that connect centres, public transport and public spaces to green infrastructure and landscape features. Within the public realm it includes enhanced waterway corridors, transport routes, suburban streets, footpaths and cycleways.

Western District Plan [NSW Government]

The District Plan acknowledges that 'planning decisions need to support new infrastructure in each city – including cultural, education, health, community and water infrastructure – to fairly balance population growth with infrastructure investment.'

Decisions are required to equitably enhance local opportunities, inclusion and connection to services. Actions outlined in the Western District Plan that inform the development of this Strategy include:

- Sequence infrastructure provision using a place-based approach.
- Consider the adaptability of infrastructure and its potential shared use when preparing infrastructure strategies and plans.
- Maximise the utility of existing infrastructure assets and consider strategies to influence behaviour changes, to reduce the demand for new infrastructure.

The Plan also emphasises the importance of providing high quality open spaces, where the key considerations for planning open space are quality, quantity and distribution.

Nature based recreation, significant opportunities within the Hawkesbury, are activities to connect communities to the natural landscape. However, the demand also needs to be managed to minimise impacts on biodiversity.

Priorities to achieve this, include; providing services and social infrastructure to meet people's changing needs (W3); fostering healthy, creative, culturally rich and socially connected communities (W4); creating and renewing great places and local centres, and respecting the District's heritage (W6) and delivering high-quality open space (W18).

Community Strategic Plan 2022–2042 [Hawkesbury City Council]

The Hawkesbury Community Strategic Plan (CSP) provides an overarching vision that reflects the community aspirations and future priorities for the area. This vision and priorities guide all other local plans and policies, including the Hawkesbury Social Infrastructure Strategy which will be developed from the four CSP community outcomes and objectives.

Community Outcome 1: Great place to live

outcome is for Council's continued partnerships with the community and key service providers to support a connected, healthy and inclusive Hawkesbury. Factors such as the aging population, addressing intergenerational equity, nurturing the community to be socially responsive, inclusive and culturally sensitive, providing opportunities for the community to connect and improve social interactions will be considered.

Community Outcome 2: Protected and valued environment

outcome is through leadership, stewardship and education, the natural and historic built environments are protected and enhanced in a culturally sensitive way. Factors such as impacts on the natural and historical environments and the integration of sustainability principles will be considered.

Community Outcome 3: Strong economy

outcome is to be a place that is vibrant, attractive and welcoming to residents and visitors and which treasures and celebrates our shared history, environment, local economy and lifestyles. Factors such as the creation of strong and successful town centres in Windsor and Richmond and support of all centres and villages will be considered.

Community Outcome 4: Reliable council

outcome is to be a respected civic leader through consistent, transparent and engaged decision making that community can understand. Important factors such as the development of strong partnerships and authentic community engagement to build respect, resilience and connectedness is identified.

The operational responsibilities such as managing aging assets and being financially sustainable for future generations is a foundation of the Social Infrastructure Strategy.

The long term objectives that have informed the Hawkesbury Social Infrastructure Strategy include:

- Enable a shared responsibility for community resilience, community safety and disaster management (1.1)
- Encourage and enable our community to participate in a healthy lifestyle (1.2)
- Provide the right places and space to serve our community (1.5)
- Build on a sense of community and wellbeing (1.6)
- Encourage broad and rich celebration of our local culture and significant heritage (1.7)
- Value, protect and enhance our historic built environment as well as our relationship to Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal history (2.1)
- Value, protect and enhance our natural land-based environment (2.2)
- Creating an integrated and well-maintained transport system (3.1)
- Celebrate our creativity and cultural expression (3.5)
- Encourage an informed community (4.2)
- Build strong relationships and shared responsibilities (4.4)
- Facilitate the delivery of infrastructure through relevant agencies and Council's works (4.8).

Local Strategic Planning Statement 2040 [Hawkesbury City Council]

The Hawkesbury LSPS 2040 is based on the vision and values of the Hawkesbury Community Strategic Plan 2017–2036, and how this vision gives effect to the Greater Sydney Region Plan and Western District Plan, based on local characteristics and opportunities.

The LSPS identifies that *'infrastructure in the Hawkesbury has not kept pace with the demands of the growing population. The size of the LGA, together with the dispersed nature of settlements is a significant challenge.'* Priorities relevant to the Strategy include:

Planning Priority 1: Ensure infrastructure aligns with current needs and future growth.

Planning Priority 4: Protect and promote Aboriginal and European heritage and its transition into innovative, creative and adaptive reuses.

Planning Priority 5: Manage, enhance and celebrate the distinctive heritage character of our towns, villages and naturally landscaped environment.

Hawkesbury Active Transport Plan

The Hawkesbury Active Transport Plan forms part of Hawkesbury City Council's wider strategic policy. It aligns with the vision and future direction of the region set out in local planning frameworks such as the Local Strategic Planning Statement and Hawkesbury Liveability Project Master Plan and Public Domain.

The document outlines the following objectives that frame the actions recommended in the plan:

1. Provide a safe, reliable and resilient active transport network that contributes to the prosperity and liveability of the Hawkesbury residents.
2. Improve walking and cycling access for people of all ages and abilities for travel to and from key areas of high population, schools and train stations.
3. Provide efficient, reliable and quality infrastructure that support 30-minute sustainable transport journey times
4. Encourage a shift from private transport towards multi-modal journeys by integrating active and public transport networks.

An effective public and active transport network is critical to increasing accessibility to community facilities and public spaces, especially for those without access to private transportation.

Key opportunities to support greater accessibility to social infrastructure identified in the Draft Active Transport Plan, include:

Create a cycling network that aligns with the Greater Sydney cycleway corridor network.

Build off the WestInvest cycleway from Windsor to Richmond to create a strategic network that services the centres of Hawkesbury.

There is a general lack of End-of-Trip (EOT) facilities, such as bike parking within strategic centres and points of interest. Need to provide parking and other amenities to capitalise off the cycling network by making cycling or more attractive transport mode.

Develop local networks to support cycling within suburbs. Look to connect residential hubs to key land uses like town centres or recreational centres.

Provide adequate infrastructure to help support and facilitate travel across communities, thereby increasing the usage of active transport.

Provide adequate signage for safety, particularly in examples with on-road cycling, as well as highlight the available modes of transport.



The Hawkesbury



Current Population

As of the 2021 Census, the population of Hawkesbury LGA was 67,581. Most people live in the southern portion of the LGA. The most densely populated areas are North Richmond, Richmond, Windsor, Bligh Park and the border community in Riverstone.

SGS Economics and Planning undertook a population analysis which has been utilised for the benchmarking of future demand. Population provided by the NSW Government are refined by Statistical Area 2 (SA2).

The 2021 SA2 boundaries are not entirely contained within the Hawkesbury LGA. For the purpose of demographic profiling, adjacent SA2s have also been referenced to understand the community makeup on the fringes of Hawkesbury, particularly the major growth areas in the south west that form part of the North West Growth Area.

- Most people live in the southern portion of the LGA with the most densely populated areas being North Richmond, Richmond, Windsor, Bligh Park and the border community in Riverstone
- Most growth has occurred in Richmond – Clarendon (10%) increase from 2016–2021, followed by Pitt Town – McGraths Hill (8.4%) and Dural – Kenthurst – Wisemans Ferry (7%). (Figure 9)
- The distribution of population clusters is also around district and town centres including those above and Glossodia, Freemans Reach, Kurrajong Heights, Bowen Mountain, Pitt Town and Wilberforce. (Figure 10)
- Most of Hawkesbury's population is aged between 45–64 years, with the median age in Hawkesbury 39 years, the same as for NSW (39) and Australian (38) median age.
- People aged 65–84 years are the most dramatically growing demographic, accounting for 14.8% of the Hawkesbury population in 2021, and consistently increasing across the three time periods.
- Population density of the school aged population (aged 5–19) are clustered around North Richmond, Pitt Town and the area around Glossodia and East Kurrajong. There are higher concentrations of school aged children on the fringe in the neighbouring Hills Shire LGA.
- Compared to Greater Sydney, Hawkesbury has above average rates of arthritis, asthma, cancer, diabetes, heart disease, kidney disease, lung disease and mental health conditions.
- The top five ancestries in the Hawkesbury LGA as reported at the Census are North-West European, Oceanian, Southern and Eastern European, Southern and Central Asian, and North-East Asia

Dharug and Darkinjung Country and Community

Richmond and the Hawkesbury greater region is home to what is referred to in research as the 'deepest history of all' in Australia.¹³ While Dharug people are recognised as the traditional owners across the region, the Aboriginal community across the Hawkesbury is represented by family groups from several Aboriginal tribes, clans and nations.

Though Country and demographics have shifted as a result of the impact of colonisation, connection to Country, Culture and community remain strong. According to the 2021 Census:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People are 4.8% of the total Hawkesbury population – Aboriginal (4.7%) and Torres Strait islander (0.07%)
- Median ages are 25 and 22, respectively. Though those between the ages 5–14 (22%) and 15–24 (18.2%) make a large proportion of their populations, older age groups still make a significant part of the ATSI population.
- Revitalisation of Aboriginal Culture and knowledge is strong and represented in the revival of Aboriginal Languages being spoken or practiced in the family home. Aboriginal languages spoken across the Hawkesbury include Gamilaraay (0.1%), Wiradjuri (0.1%), Gumbaynggir (0.1%) and other unidentified languages.
- Not unlike many Aboriginal communities across Greater Sydney, 87% of Aboriginal people classify themselves as Australian Aboriginal they also identify as Australian (50%), English (19%), Irish (5.2%), and Scottish (4.5%).¹⁴
- The majority are one family Aboriginal households (75%) are couples with children (34.7%)¹⁴ with one parent (22%), couples with no children (18.5%) and other single family situations (1.4%).¹⁵ A smaller portion of the Aboriginal population live in multiple family households (5.05%), most of which are couples with children (3.35%) but are also one parent families (1.35%) and couples with no children (0.35%).¹⁵

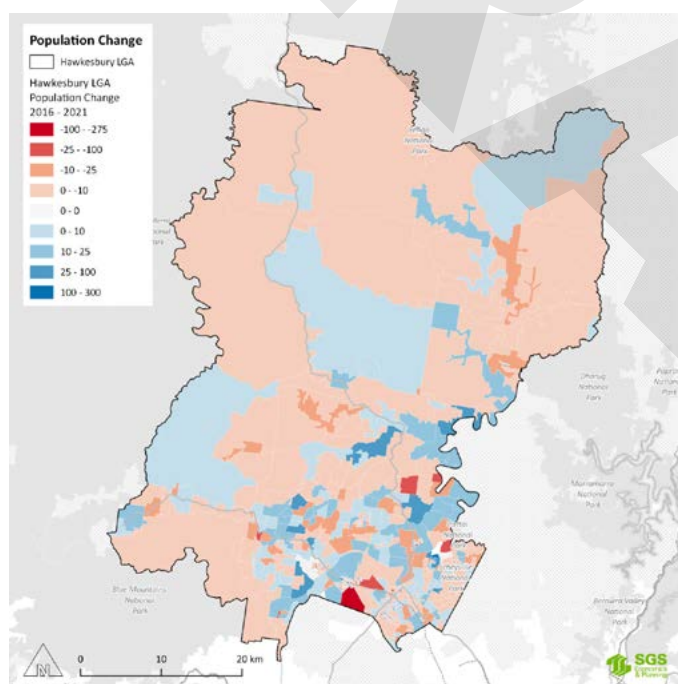


Figure 9: Hawkesbury LGA Population Change (Mesh Block), 2016–2021 Census (Source: SGS Economics and Planning, 2022)

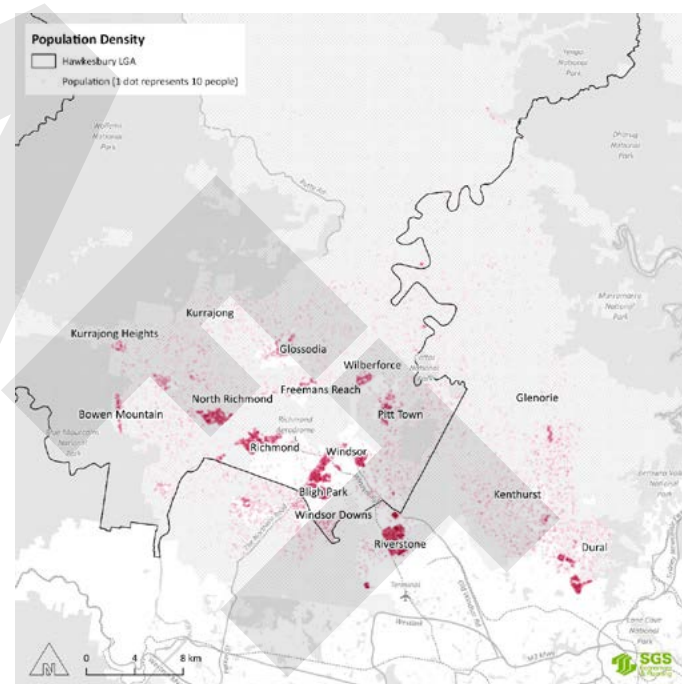


Figure 10: Population Density (Mesh Block), 2021 Census (Source: SGS Economics and Planning, 2022)

13. Karskens, G. (2020a) *People of the river: lost worlds of early Australia*. Crow's Nest, NSW: Allen & Unwin, p.3

14–15. Australian Bureau of Statistics (2022a); Australian Bureau of Statistics (2022b).



Participation Trends

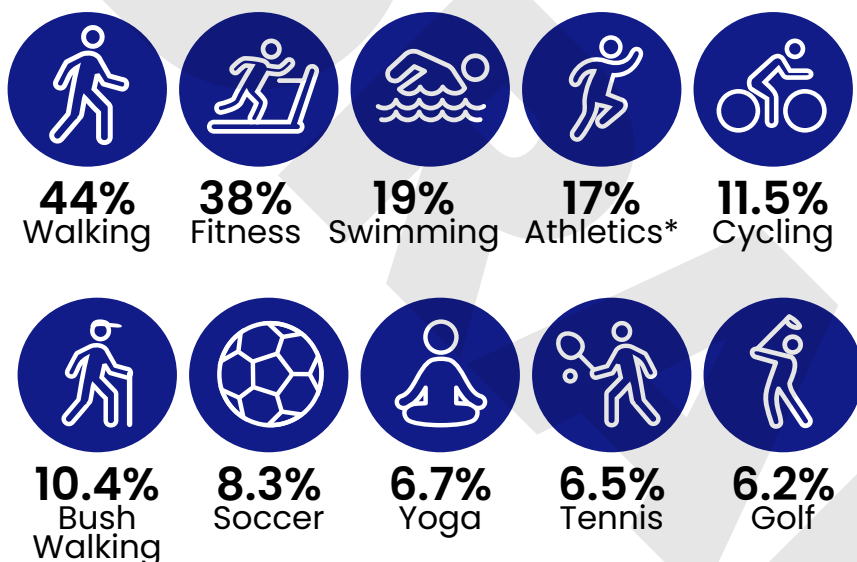
The following provides an overview of general participation trends for a range of sporting, recreation and community activities that inform the Social Infrastructure Strategy.

Sport and Recreation Participation

Sport has always been a key part of Australian life — and for communities across the Hawkesbury LGA this is no exception. Participation and being part of a local club helps to shape our sense of identity and provides both social and health benefits. They are often the heartbeat of local communities and build a strong sense of belonging.

According to the Australian Sports Commission (ASC) AusPlay Survey for 2022 (January–December), participation nationally in recreational type activities, has increased significantly (by more than 20% between 2001 and 2022) while participation in sport activities has remained steady over the same period (57% in 2001 and 62% in 2022). Figure 11 illustrates the most popular sport and recreation activities for adults and children in NSW.

TOP 10 ACTIVITIES ADULTS



TOP 10 ACTIVITIES CHILDREN

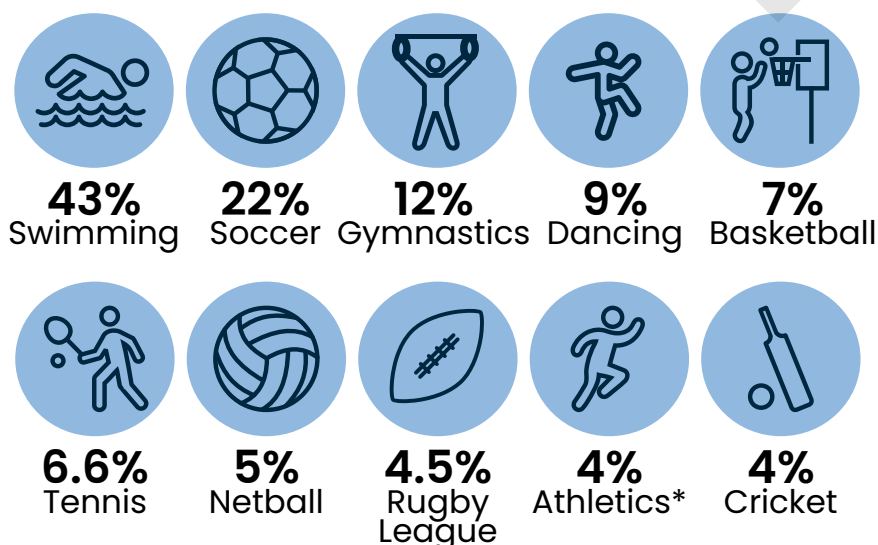
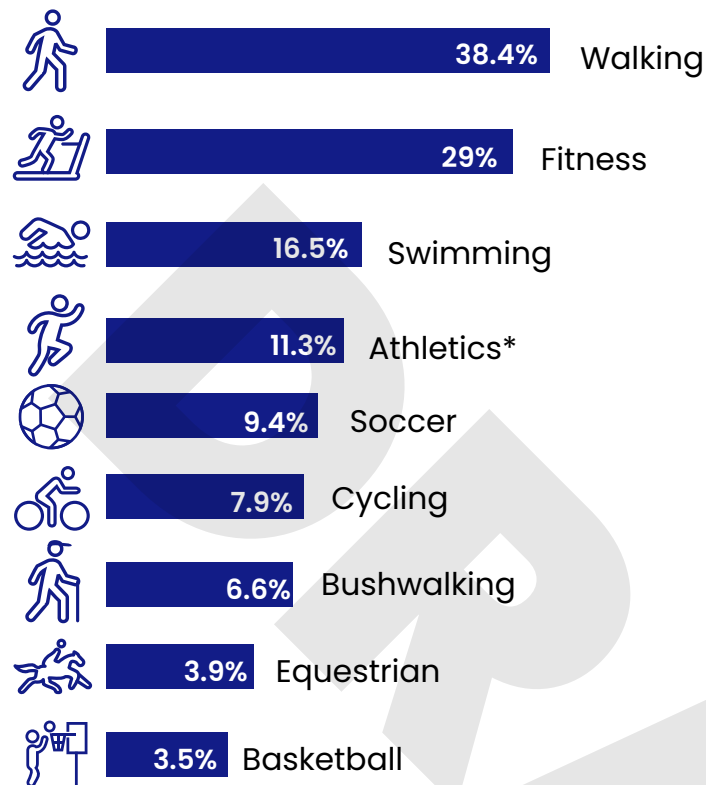


Figure 11: Top 10 activities for adults and children in NSW (source: AusPlay Jan–Dec 2022)

* Athletics includes running and jogging.

Participation rates in Hawkesbury City Council LGA

AusPlay data shows that 86.9% of adults and 73.9% of children participate in sport and recreation. The types of sporting and recreation activities that have the highest participation rate within the Hawkesbury LGA for all age groups are:



* Athletics includes running and jogging.

For children and young people (under 25 years), the activities with the highest participation rates within the Hawkesbury LGA are:

- Soccer - 24.1%
- Swimming - 23.8%
- Fitness/Gym - 16.6%
- Running/Athletics - 11.7%

For adults, activities with the highest participation rates include:

- Walking (recreation) - 46.8%
- Fitness/Gym - 34.3%
- Swimming - 13.4%
- Running/Athletics - 11.1%
- Cycling - 10.2%
- Bush walking - 8.4%
- Golf - 4.6%
- Equestrian - 4%
- Motor cycling - 3.5%
- Tennis - 3.4%



The Hawkesbury is a place where people like to get outdoors

In 2019, DPE (now DPHI) conducted a survey into the recreational habits and aspirations of 6,800 people across Greater Sydney. Figure 12 illustrates the most population activities with walking, hiking, running (85%) having the greatest participation rates.

The characteristics of the Hawkesbury LGA, surrounded by national parks, waterways and bushland support a range of outdoor activities such as swimming, fishing, water recreation, hiking, walking, running, walking the dog, picnicking and relaxing in nature. Discussions with the Hawkesbury community throughout the engagement supported the importance of outdoor recreation as a lifestyle choice, for health and fitness and to connect with the natural world.

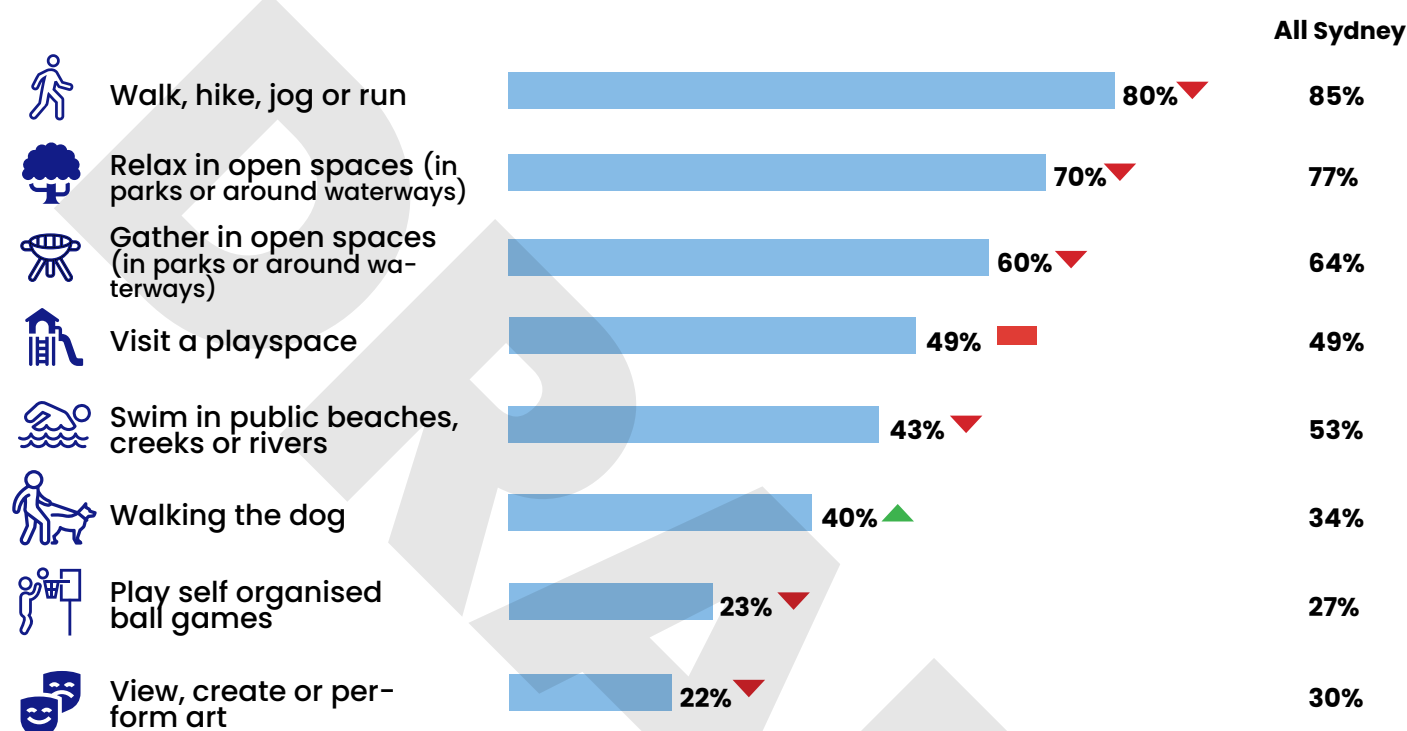


Figure 12: Participation in outdoor recreation – Western District. (Source: DPE 2019 Greater Sydney Outdoor Study)

Cultural Participation

Participation in cultural activities increases our individual and collective creativity, makes us happier, improves our health and favours our personal growth. Culture also provides space for stories, traditions, histories, and identity to be expressed in various forms. By allowing for the sharing of culture and knowledge, it in turn increases understanding, and awareness which is the basis for more inclusive communities and greater wellbeing.

The Australia Council for the Arts conducted a national arts participation survey in 2019 based on a nationally representative sample of 8,928 Australians.

The survey results showed that Australians increasingly recognise the positive impacts of the arts. Nearly every Australian – 98% of us – engage with the arts in some way, whether it be through listening to music, reading, engaging online, creatively participating, attending arts in person or engaging with the arts of our cultural background or community.

The attendance rate for libraries and archives remains steady across all household income quintiles (at 20–21%), further reinforcing the important role of non transactional community facilities and the provision of free and affordable spaces and activities to ensure equitable access to arts and culture.

ABS data for attendance at cultural venues and events (NSW 2021–22) by adults (15 years and over), reveal the following attendance rates:

44% – Cinema

19% – Library or archive

16.5% – Art gallery

15.6% – Live music concert or performance

14.6% – Museum

7.8% – Musicals or operas

7.7% – Theatre performance

4.4% – Dance performance

6.4% – Other performing arts

Cultural institutions and infrastructure, supported by local organisations provide a creative energy, one that encourages expression, experimentation and exploration. They are the places that support the creation, exhibition and archiving of local stories, culture and creative expression.

Cultural events and venues such as galleries, theatres and maker spaces contribute to providing a point of difference for residents and visitors, thus increasing the attraction of places for residents, both existing and future and inviting visitors to experience the local culture and creativity.

Cultural and creative participation contributes to a sense of local identity and can be a significant connector between each other, the past, present and future and our places. Arts activities and projects can be a way to express who the Hawkesbury is, its history and its aspirations providing a strong sense of local identity.

“It has been a positive experience providing a service to the community, supported a sporting organisation and providing social interaction.”

– Survey respondent talking about their volunteering experience

Strong Culture of Volunteering

The Hawkesbury LGA has a higher proportion of its population doing some form of volunteering than the Greater Sydney proportion.

Through the engagement discussions there is a strong and proud volunteering culture across the communities of the Hawkesbury and this extends to the management and operation of community facilities and sporting fields. However, the aging population means that greater emphasis on this culture being intergenerational is important to maintain the reliance on local volunteers and management committees.

Volunteers provide an irreplaceable service to the community. Volunteering benefits communities, the economy, and the health and wellbeing of volunteers. Volunteering broadens the networks and professional skills of the volunteers themselves.¹⁶

Many communities face the challenge of a declining number of volunteers, given the average age and the rate of volunteering is declining

Within the Hawkesbury LGA, 13% of the population reported doing some form of voluntary work in 2021. This was a greater proportion than Greater Sydney (11.6%). However, the number of volunteers in Hawkesbury City decreased by 2,428 people between 2016 and 2021, which could be in part due to the COVID-19 pandemic and 2022 floods.

In general terms, the most common type of organisation that individuals volunteered for was sport and recreation organisations with one-quarter of respondents. Other types of organisations that had at least one-fifth of volunteers or undertook volunteer work for were community services, welfare and homelessness organisations (22.2%) and religious, faith-based and spiritual organisations (20.5%).¹⁷

The most common reasons people volunteer are about ‘personal satisfaction / to do something worthwhile’ as a reason for volunteering and to ‘help others / the community.’ Other reasons include ‘social contact’, ‘use skills / experience’ and ‘to be active’.¹⁷

For non-volunteers, the most common barrier is ‘work / family commitments’, or that there are ‘no suitable opportunities’ or because ‘nobody asked’.¹⁷

16. Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2017, in NSW Volunteering Strategy 2020–2030 [January 2020]

17. Biddle, N., Boyer, C., Gray, M., & Jahromi, M. (2022) Volunteering in Australia: The Volunteer Perspective. Volunteering Australia, <https://volunteeringstrategy.org.au/wpcontent/uploads/2022/10/Volunteering-in-Australia-2022-The-Volunteer-Perspective.pdf>



Participation Trends

Department of Planning & Industry 2022 projections show the Hawkesbury population is expected to grow by 24 per cent to 77,211 by 2041.

Contained wholly within the LGA, the Kurrajong-Ebenezer SA2 is anticipated to grow the most (18.7 per cent) while the Bilpin-Colo-St Albans SA2 population is projected to decline by 5.0 per cent. The areas of Pitt Town McGraths Hill and Yarramundi - Londonderry on the southern fringe of Hawkesbury are identified to be the fastest growing areas in the Hawkesbury region, influenced by development as part of the North West Growth Area.

Due to the small population of Blue Mountains – North, the projections model collapses the SA2 into new groupings and so cannot accurately project for this geography. As the population is so small, any growth or decline would be immaterial to the benchmarking for asset provision.

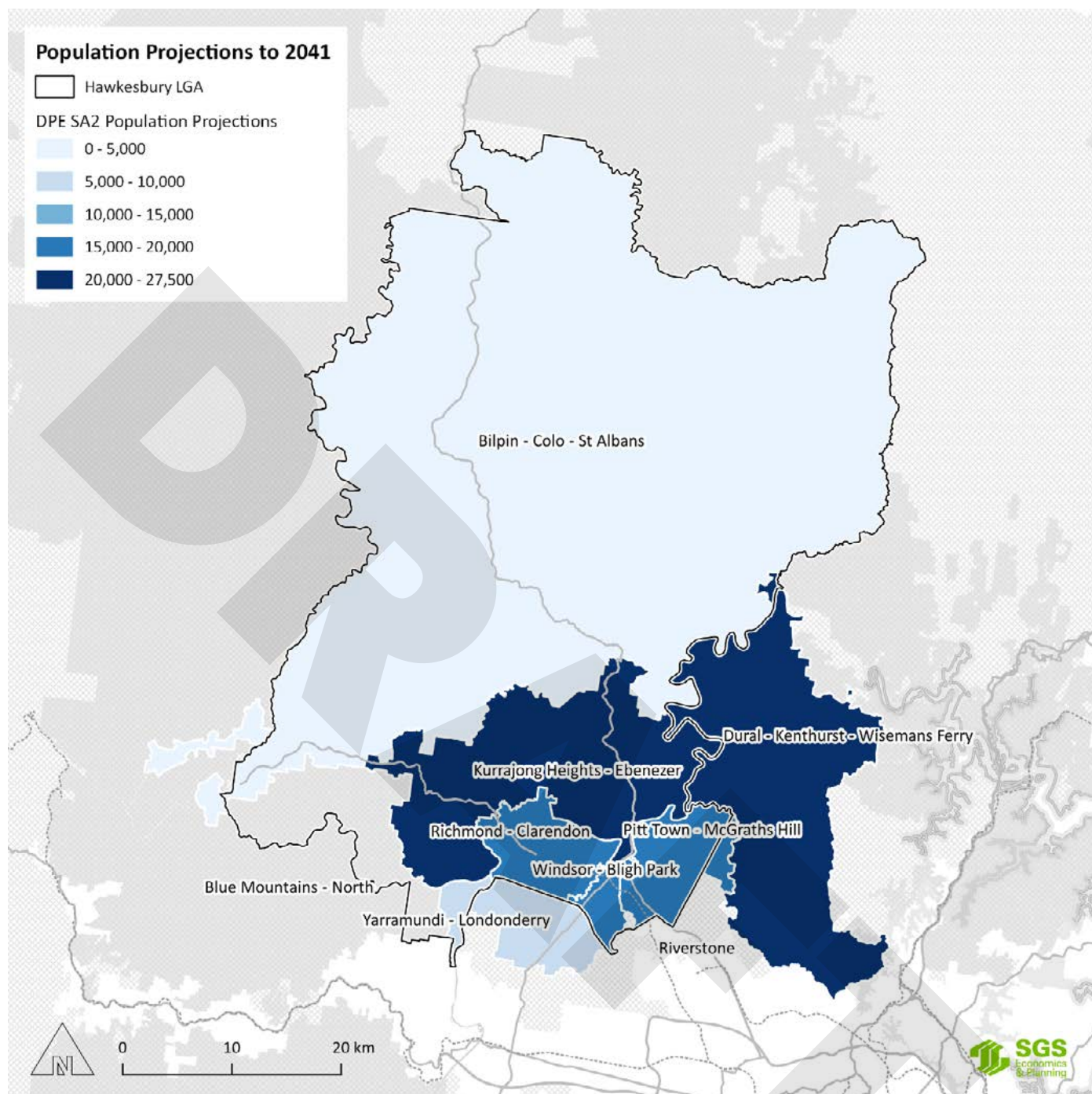
The projections for Dural – Kenthurst – Wisemans Ferry and the population of Riverstone are provided as context for how Hawkesbury's immediate neighbours are expected to experience population change and how this may exacerbate the use of community facilities and open spaces for the LGA [See Table 2].

Table 2: DPE SA2 Population projects to 2041 (Source: ABS Census 2021, DPE NSW CPA Projections 2022)

SA2	2021 Census	2041 Projection	Change	Change [%]
Bilpin - Colo - St Albans	2,846	2,705	-141	-5.0
Blue Mountains - North*	7	-	-	-
Kurrajong Heights - Ebenezer	21,161	25,112	+3,951	18.7
Pitt Town - McGraths Hill	11,414	19,226	+7,812	68.4
Richmond - Clarendon	15,239	16,767	+1,528	10.0
Windsor - Bligh Park	15,264	15,782	+518	3.4
Yarramundi - Londonderry	7,504	9,420	+1,916	25.5
Hawkesbury LGA	62,353	77,211	+14,858	23.8
Dural - Kenthurst - Wisemans Ferry	22,479	23,756	+1,277	5.7
Riverstone*	13,844	-	-	-

***Note** DPE projections for 2041 use 2016 SA2 boundaries, which for Riverstone included Marsden Park. Table 2 excludes the forecasts for this SA2 as its population sits outside the Hawkesbury LGA boundary and the projections would not accurately reflect the growth expected in the SA2. The population for Blue Mountains – North is too small and is amalgamated into a wider geography, as the totals are so small the 2041 projection for this SA2 have been excluded.

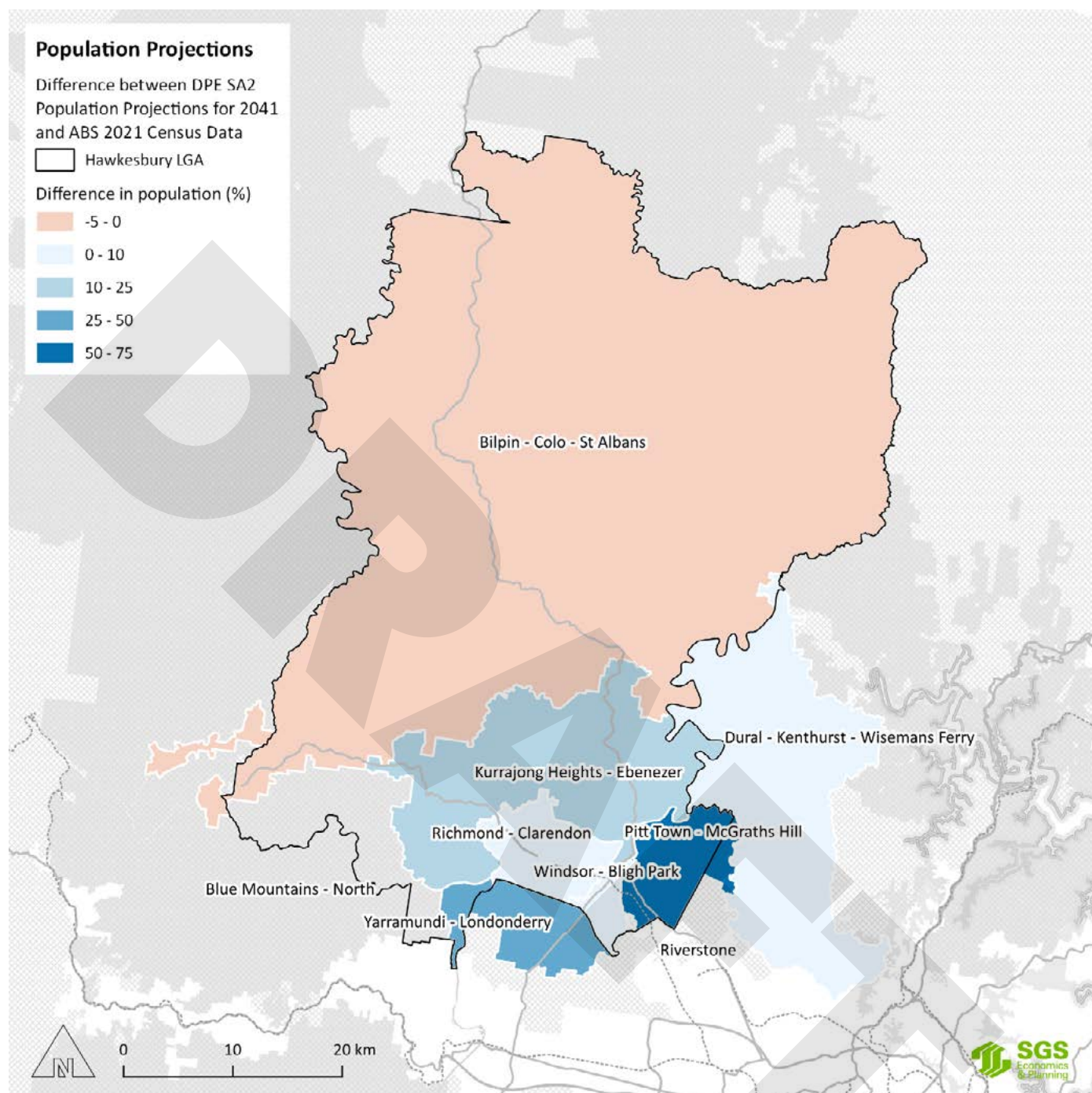
Figure 13: DPE SA2 projected population for 2041 [2022] (Source: DPE NSW CPA Population Projections 2022 in SGS Economics and Planning Baseline Analysis 2023)



***Note** DPE projections for 2041 use 2016 SA2 boundaries, which for Riverstone included Marsden Park. Figure above excludes the forecasts for this SA2 as its population sits outside the Hawkesbury LGA boundary and the projections would not accurately reflect the growth expected in the SA2. The population for Blue Mountains – North is too small and is amalgamated into a wider geography, as the totals are so small the 2041 projection for this SA2 have been excluded.

Figure 14: Percentage change between 2021 census and DPE SA2 projected population

(Source: ABS Census 2021, DPE NSW CPA Population Projections 2022 in SGS Economics and Planning Baseline Analysis 2023)





Hawkesbury: Place and Character

Hawkesbury boasts a rich tapestry of landscapes from its river views of the winding Hawkesbury River and four other rivers, to the UNESCO World Heritage listed area that provides a picturesque backdrop. The farms, rural towns and villages, heritage, scenic and cultural landscapes, escarpments, and the National Parks make the Hawkesbury a unique and special place.

Geography

The Hawkesbury LGA covers 2,776km² of land. Positioned at the north-west boundary of Greater Sydney, the LGA falls within the Western City District.

It sits between the urban areas to the east (bounded by the Hills Shire and Central Coast LGAs) and the south (bounded by Blacktown and Penrith LGAs) and rural areas to the west (bounded by the Blue Mountains and Lithgow LGAs) and to the north (bounded by Singleton Shire and Cessnock LGAs – see Figure 15).

The Hawkesbury River is a significant cultural, social and recreational asset that also enhances livability and the local economy through natural-based and cultural tourism opportunities.

Of the total land area of the Hawkesbury LGA, 71% is contained within National Parks, Nature Reserves and State Recreation Areas.

The character of each town and village within the Hawkesbury is distinct, and offers a range of experiences including the serenity of a lush bushland landscape with picturesque views, water activities, or the historic villages which offer farm gate experiences with historic pubs, churches and grave sites.

This urban rural divide is reflected in the geography and landuse of the Hawkesbury LGA. The predominantly urban areas are located in the south eastern corner of the LGA focused on the main centres of Richmond and Windsor.

This area also includes the North West Growth Area within part of the Hawkesbury LGA with the remainder in the Blacktown City Council LGA.

The remainder form a larger peri-urban and rural hinterland. This includes areas within the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area, State Conservation Areas and Metropolitan Rural Areas that support primary production, tourism and recreation assets as well as numerous rural villages.

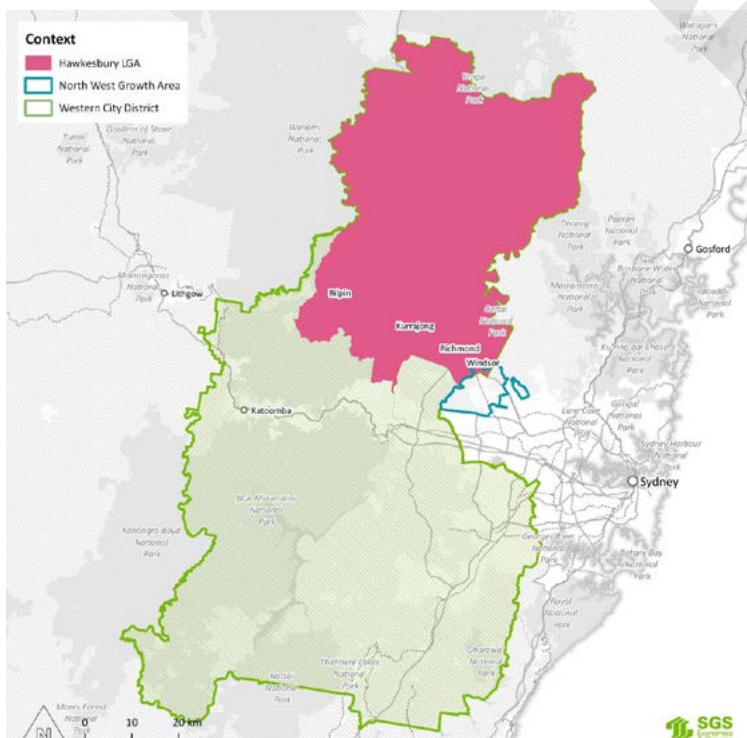


Figure 15: Hawkesbury LGA Geographic Context
(Source: SGS Economics and Planning, 2022)

Flooding and Bushfire Risk

The Hawkesbury LGA is one of four LGAs that are both flood and bushfire affected areas. The Hawkesbury-Nepean Valley has one of the most significant flood risk exposures within Australia.

Infrastructure NSW's Flood Strategy Resilient Valley, Resilient Communities states that *'the (Hawkesbury-Nepean) Valley has a high flood hazard, with both historical and geological evidence of widespread flooding across the Valley. Climate change may further increase the severity and frequency of the flood hazard in the future.'*¹⁸

Within the Hawkesbury Local Government Area, the risks to life and property are significant given the depths of floodwaters and local and regional evacuation constraints. During major flood events, significant areas of land are inundated, flood islands are formed, isolating communities, and these islands have the potential to be fully inundated.

Approximately 15,172 buildings are within the floodplain, 13,418 of which are residential dwellings. If evacuation does not occur, risks to life are increased through isolation. Depths of floodwaters are high within the Hawkesbury Local Government Area and therefore most existing buildings are subject to potential failure during a flood.

In July 2022, Hawkesbury LGA experienced the biggest flood event since 1978. This flood exceeded 13.93m, exceeding both the March 2022 flood (13.71m) and the 2021 flood (12.91m).¹⁹ It was estimated that 85% of community organisations and services were directly affected by the March and July floods and the demand on services significantly increased.

A key issue impacting on the ability of certain sections of the community to prepare themselves for bush fire and flood is due to the high numbers of property owners travelling out of the area to work.²⁰

Hawkesbury Community Hubs

As part of the flood recovery effort, the Hawkesbury Community Hubs provide in person access to community-based and non-government organisations and recovery services.

The weekly hubs at Bowen Mountain Park Hall, Wilberforce School of Arts, Colo Heights Hall and St Albans School of Arts, are a Bushfire Community Recovery and Resilience Fund Project through the joint Commonwealth/State Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements.

They continue to provide recovery services and support including financial counselling, mental health support and legal assistance.

These Community Hubs have continued to operate and now also include regular community exercise, arts programs and general gathering opportunities.

The first week of each month at Wilberforce, Colo Heights and St Albans is the Services Hub with a range of federal and state government agencies, such as Services Australia, NSS Department of Primary Industries, NSW Health and SES are available to provide advice, support and assistance for residents recovering from the impacts of the floods.

18. Hawkesbury Flood Policy 2020, Hawkesbury City Council

19. Infrastructure NSW Hawkesbury-Nepean River March and July 2022 Floods Review: Hydrology, Riverbank Erosion, and Flood Mitigation Scenarios, February 2023

20. Hawkesbury Bush Fire Management Committee 2017 Bush Fire Risk Management Plan

Households and dwellings

In the Hawkesbury LGA, the dominant form of housing is separate houses, followed by semi-detached dwellings. The main centres of Richmond – Clarendon and Windsor – Bligh Park provide the greatest diversity of housing type, with the largest proportion of semi-detached stock. Richmond – Clarendon and Pitt Town – McGraths Hill have the highest percentages of flats or apartments.

In the Hawkesbury LGA, the proportion of separate houses has been gradually increasing since 2011, while the proportion of semi-detached dwellings and flats or apartments have increased marginally (from 9.3 per cent in 2011 to 9.6 per cent in 2021 for semi-detached dwellings, and a small decrease from 3.7 per cent to 2.9 per cent for flats or apartments over the same period). Meanwhile, the percentage of other dwellings has decreased over time.

From 2016 to 2021, there has been an increase in separate houses in each SA2, shown in Table 3. The exception is Blue Mountains – North which has limited residential housing. It is important to consider that small randomisation adjustments have been made to the data of this SA2 to protect the confidentiality of data and therefore may not be wholly accurate.

The proportion of semi-detached dwellings has not changed much across SA2s over the five years from 2016 to 2021, but there has been notable growth in Pitt Town – McGraths Hill, which saw flats and apartments increase by 3.5 per cent. Pitt Town – McGraths Hill grew the second fastest in terms of population, and this increase in housing and population density will increase demand for social infrastructure to service larger local populations (see Table 3).

For most of the LGA, couple families with children are the dominant household type. For areas where lone person households are a significant proportion of the population, such as Yarramundi – Londonderry, Riverstone, Richmond – Clarendon and Blue Mountains – North, community halls and facilities serve an important socialisation function (see Figure 15).

While it was noted earlier that small randomised adjustments have been made to the data of Blue Mountains – North to protect the confidentiality of data and therefore may not be accurate, most households in this SA2 are lone person households and group households.

Urban release & development areas

North West Growth Area: Vineyard Precinct

Part of the Hawkesbury LGA is within the North West Growth Area, an area designated by the NSW Government as suitable for large scale Greenfield land releases. In the case of Hawkesbury, the release areas are also located within a relatively short distance of the Richmond rail line.

The south west corner of the LGA sits within the North West Growth Area and includes intensification areas of released or rezoned land including the Vineyard development Stages 1 and 2.

Within the Hawkesbury, Vineyard Precinct – Stage 1 has been rezoned and includes a proposed primary school, around 27 hectares of open space focused on the Killarney Chain of Ponds and adjacent land for new playing fields, parks and cycleways, a village centre and up to 2,300 new homes.

Approximately 500 homes within Stage 1 have access to water, sewer and electricity services and an electricity substation by Endeavour Energy will supplement the remaining properties in Stage 1 while lead-in sewer mains are delivered. The rezoning of stage 2 is deferred until confirmation of essential services.²¹

The draft indicative layout plan (ILP), for Stage 1 of the Vineyard Precinct includes the following social infrastructure provisions:

- 8ha sports fields.
- 16.1ha parks and recreation areas
- 2.8ha primary school

It notes that 'a village centre including a supermarket and some community facilities are planned to meet the local shopping needs of future residents. Nearby open spaces will comprise parks and paths around waterways, as well as places for organised sport, including four sports ovals. All up, over 24 hectares will be provided for open space for the new community'.²²

21. Department of Planning & Environment <https://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/plans-for-your-area/priority-growth-areas-and-precincts/vineyard#stage-one-rezoning> (accessed 2 February 2023)

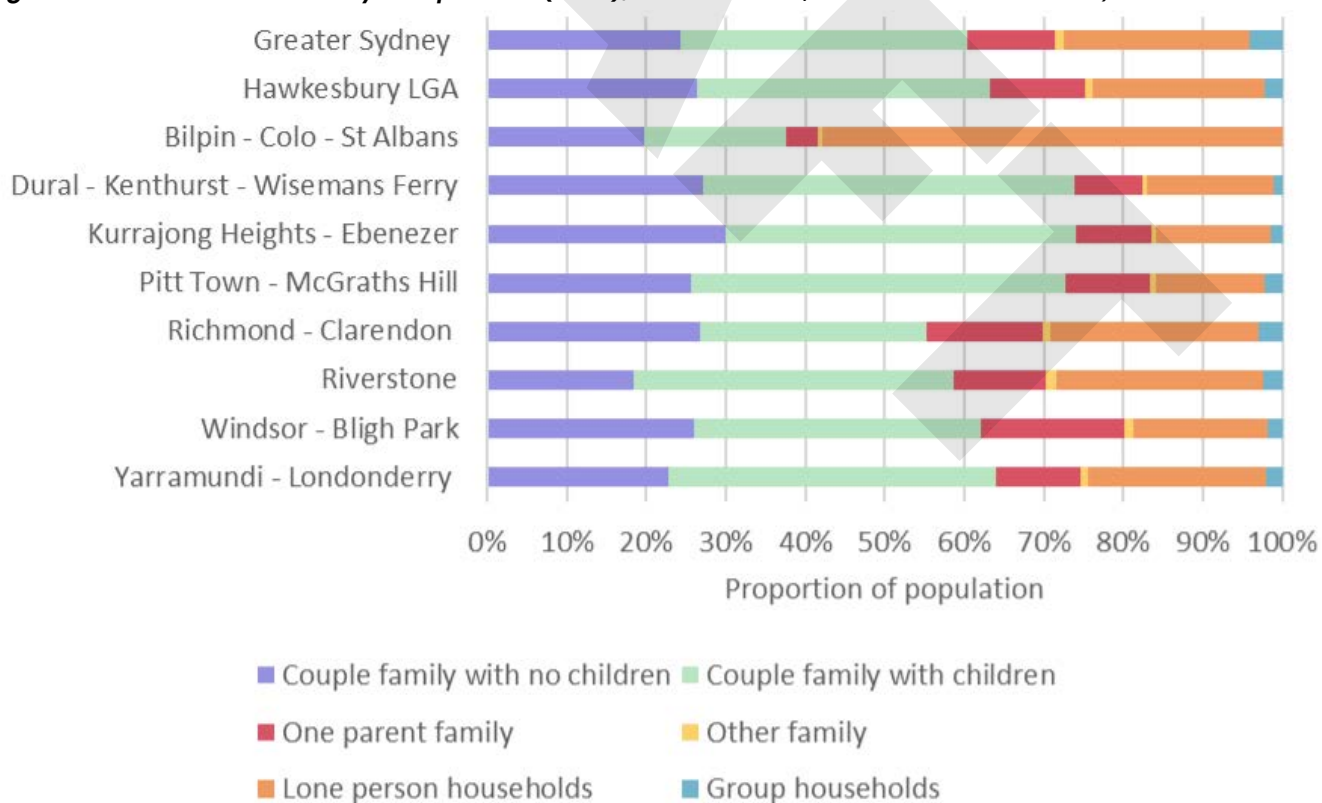
22. Department of Planning & Environment 2016 Vineyard Precinct Planning Stage 1

Table 3: Dwelling numbers by SA2, 2021 Census (Source: ABS Census 2016 – Population and Housing General community profile and ABS Census 2021 – Population and Housing General community profile)

SA2	Number of dwellings in 2021				Percentage change from 2016–2021			
	Separate house	Semi-detached	Flat or apartment	Other dwelling	Separate house	Semi-detached	Flat or apartment	Other dwelling
Bilpin – Colo – St Albans	982	3	4	5	13.8	0.0	0.4	-0.8
Dural – Kenthurst – Wisemans Ferry	6,188	276	248	70	7.8	0.1	1.7	-0.8
Kurrajong Heights – Ebenezer	7,037	19	29	32	6.2	-0.1	0.0	-0.4
Pitt Town – McGraths Hill	3,275	37	179	64	8.6	-2.5	3.5	0.2
Richmond – Clarendon	4,301	1,106	343	9	12.1	1.3	-0.1	0.1
Riverstone	4,203	112	29	10	-	-	-	-
Windsor – Bligh Park	4,358	1,032	104	11	2.4	0.3	0.9	-0.1
Yarramundi – Londonderry	1,759	18	18	15	7.3	-0.1	0.5	0.2
Hawkesbury LGA	20,0151	2,198	660	121	7.4	0.0	0.7	-0.1
Greater Sydney	1,020,631	234,000	561,998	8,216	5.3	0.4	5.8	-0.1

*As limited information is available and it has a small population Blue Mountains – North SA2 has been excluded.

Figure 16: Household and family composition (SA2*), 2021 Census (Source: ABS Census 2021)



Jacandra Development, Glossodia

The Jacaranda Development is a plan to build 580 houses at Glossodia, to upgrade the roads within and around the site, to build community facilities, to create parks and to conserve bushland. The approved planning proposal³³ and Voluntary Planning Agreement (VPA)³⁴ includes the following community and open space infrastructure provision:

Refurbishment and extension to Glossodia

Community Centre including additional office and storage space; refurbished and upgrade of facilities and amenities; extension to the before and after school care (min 12 places); and new playground (200m²) and shade structure (1000m²).

Refurbishment and extension to preschool, including additional office and staff amenities space; extension to long day care centre (12 places); refurbished and upgrades to existing amenities and facilities.

Redevelopment of Woodbury Reserve (15), including fitness Trail; dog off-leash area; BMX track; upgrade to playing fields; upgrades and additional amenities and infrastructure.

Lakeside Park (new park – 10.89ha), including small playground (5-12 yrs), nature based play elements and junior skate surround; shelters and picnic facilities (additional item suggested in the Planning Proposal was for a 3,600m² active recreation space/kick about space and a smaller active recreation space of 900m²).

Village Green (new park – 14.51ha), including small playground (5-12 yrs), and junior skate surround; main active recreation space (approx. 14,400m²); 2x flexible multipurpose recreation spaces (approx. 3,600m² each); district playground and junior skate surround; multi purpose court; multiple passive recreation areas along the creek line that link the recreation nodes; shelters and picnic facilities/BBQs.

Central Reserve conservation and passive open space – approx 14.01ha.

Redbank Precinct, North Richmond

The Redbank Precinct is located approximately 4km north west of Richmond. The land is undulating and generally falling to the north into Redbank Creek, which joins the Hawkesbury River.

Development of the parks and regeneration of the bushland and riparian zone form part of the development approval conditions. The future public land will be dedicated to Council as the new residential development progresses.

Maintenance of the dedicated community land for a period of five years rests with the North Richmond Joint Venture under conditions set in a Voluntary Planning Agreement until those responsibilities are transferred to Council.

The following are the proposed parks to be upgraded or new parks delivered as part of the Redbank Precinct:

Bell Park: a linear park between Belmont Park and Redbank Creek that includes a residual farm dam. Future facilities proposed include walking paths and associated recreation facilities.

Belmont Park: an area of primarily Cumberland Plain Woodland on Grose Vale Road.

Yeobarnie Park: a linear park draining to Redbank Creek that includes residual farm dams. Future facilities proposed include walking paths and associated recreation facilities.

Yeomans Park: a linear park leading to Peel Park and Redbank Creek that includes residual farm dams. Future facilities proposed include walking paths and associated recreation facilities.

Three pocket parks on Grose Vale Road: intended to provide opportunities for the public to view the Redbank Creek valley and representation of the former Keyline water management system in the landscape.

Peel Park: a 9.7ha district park and recreation facility has been designed to equally provide for passive and active recreation. The design considers the existing and future recreation needs of the community and contains flexible spaces that can adapt to changing needs.

In March 2023, Redbank Communities commenced a significant upgrade of Peel Park as part of its development agreement with Council. The upgrade includes installation of new playground, basketball/netball courts and skate plaza; amenities building; cricket pitch & practice nets; park lighting and landscaping; car parking and paths.

Woodbury Reserve, Glossodia

The significant upgrade to Woodbury Reserve is in line with the existing Masterplan, which was adopted following extensive community consultation.

The reserve is already an important passive and active recreation space for the residents in Glossodia and north of the river and these works will provide for much needed sporting, recreation and community uses. The proposed upgrade includes:

- BMX pump track is also currently under construction with additional funding from the State Government's Open Spaces Program: Places to Play grant and Federal Government;
- Playground, multi-purpose courts and designated dog off-leash area;
- New amenities building and additional shelters with barbecue facilities;
- Improved access to natural areas and shared path network with better connection.

Fernadell Park, Pitt Town

Fernadell Park is a 9 hectare open space in Pitt Town. Council have developed a master plan and Plan of Management that included engagement with community. The redevelopment includes:

- Multi-purpose fields and sports lighting;
- Toilets and change rooms suitable for female and male players; kiosk/equipment storage;
- Youth facility;
- District level inclusive play space;
- Shelters, BBQ amenities, and associates items;
- Outdoor Fitness equipment;
- Integrated Community Centre – to allow for the provision of multiple community resources.

Fernadell Park Community Centre

The redevelopment of Fernadell Park also includes an integrated community centre as well as community, youth and event spaces within the redeveloped park.

The Fernadell Park community hub is a 1,000m² multipurpose facility co-located with a range of park and recreation uses. The detailed design of this facility is subject to further community engagement and design, however the Plan of Management states that the community hub would include:

- community room for large events and activities;
- meetings room;
- amenities (toilets, medical room, store and equipment rooms);
- outdoor cafe; and
- Kitchen/kiosk.

Prospective new facilities

The Woodbury Reserve, Fernadell Park and Fernadell Community Centre projects were funded under the NSW Government's Western Sydney Infrastructure Grants Program. Council has received additional funding under this Grants Program to redevelop key social infrastructure assets across the region. Council will continue to work with the community to determine the priorities for use of this funding, in accordance with the benchmarks and community needs as expressed in this Strategy.

Existing social infrastructure across the Hawkesbury

An audit of the existing provision of social infrastructure and open space has been undertaken to inform this strategy. The facilities and spaces have been mapped to enable an understanding of the spatial distribution of facility types. This was compiled from Council's spatial data and existing open space and recreation data (where provided), and desktop review of information available online.

A physical assessment was undertaken for some of the facilities, however, due to the 2022 flood events, some facilities were not available within the assessment time frame (See Appendix B)

An accessibility catchment analysis was completed to each asset for walking distance and drive time, to determine areas of low and high localised provision. In combination with quantitative benchmark assessments, distribution analysis helps identify areas of greatest need, being those areas that have low provision or poor access.

Accessibility maps were generated for each facility type to show travel catchments based on use of the road network for pedestrian travel and car travel. Accessibility here is defined as physical proximities via the road network assuming a base state of no-traffic, driving catchments here are not intended to reflect actual drive times.

The blended urban/rural nature of the Hawkesbury influences the accessibility of community facilities. It is not expected that all residents will be in walking distance of facilities.

Existing facilities in the Hawkesbury LGA have been identified through different sources and include both Council managed and private facilities.

Mapping both public and private facilities provides the widest appreciation of the opportunities for where and how the community of the Hawkesbury can come together.

Facility types

The audit undertaken included the following types of existing social infrastructure assets:



Community Centres and Halls



Libraries, Cultural Facilities and Creative Spaces



Open Spaces, Parks and Playgrounds



Recreation and Aquatic Facilities

It should be noted however, that demand for and use of community infrastructure does not adhere to jurisdictional boundaries. The Hawkesbury LGA will provide services to people outside its resident population, and likewise people will travel outside Hawkesbury to use facilities close to places of work or as part of commuting patterns.

Social Infrastructure Assessment Approach

Our approach to undertake the social infrastructure assessment is to understand:

Current Provision

- Types of facilities and spaces
- Location and spatial distribution
- Service catchment and hierarchy

Function and Form

- Types of activities they support
- Quality of amenities and facilities
- Design

Experience Assessment

[via community engagement]:

- Current user experience
- Community needs and expectations
- Participation trends

Benchmarks and Best Practice

- Population benchmarking
- Comparative benchmarking
- Lessons from best practice
- Changing trends and influences
- Demographics



Community Centres and Community Halls

Community centres, halls and community hubs are critical to supporting the health and wellbeing of communities. They provide spaces to socialise, create and connect with others, and support the provision of community, health and social services.

Multipurpose and flexible community facilities and spaces is the established best practice design and delivery approach for community centres, or community hubs. This model moves away from the provision of smaller, specialist facilities to larger, more adaptable spaces which can accommodate multiple user groups and community needs. This model helps to maximise accessibility and usability as a community's demography changes over time.

The Hawkesbury CSP also endorses this model through strategy 4.3.3 of the CSP, which identifies the provision of quality shared spaces including meeting spaces accommodating public art, cultural and environmental amenity to enhance our community's health and lifestyle.

For smaller towns and villages, these hubs are usually a central meeting place for the community to connect, share knowledge and resources and celebrate. By co-locating and clustering social infrastructure and activities, a greater diversity of people are supported and it also enables the coordination and support for public transport and other basic services.

Importantly for the Hawkesbury, many community halls, especially those on the western side of the river are used to provide food and co-ordinate shelter for people whose homes are now inaccessible or damaged by floods, as seen in the recent floods and the use of Wilberforce, Bowen Mountain, Glossodia, Kurrajong Heights, North Richmond and Ebenezer community centres and halls.

The Hawkesbury CSP, Community Outcome 1 intends for *'Council's continued partnerships with the community and key service providers to support a connected, healthy and inclusive Hawkesbury. Factors such as the aging population, addressing intergenerational equity, nurturing the community to be socially responsive, inclusive and culturally sensitive, providing opportunities for the community to connect and improve social interactions will be considered.'*

To achieve the goals of supporting a diverse community where everyone feels welcome and respected, the CSP identifies the provision of community and cultural services through a range of affordable and accessible facilities.

Existing Provision

There are thirty (30) community centres and community halls across the Hawkesbury LGA:

- Five community centres,
- Seventeen (17) community halls and
- Eight (8) scout, girl guides and CWA halls and meeting spaces.

Figure 22 illustrates the location and spatial distribution of community centres and halls across the LGA. While not assessed as part of this work, Figure 23 illustrates the location of schools across the LGA. Schools, through shared use arrangements can provide access to additional local community and recreation spaces outside of school hours.

The community centres serve a district (LGA wide) function with most being within a 10 minute drive of a train station. Despite this, only the Richmond Neighbourhood Centre is walkable from the Richmond Station with access further inhibited by limited river crossings from the north and east.

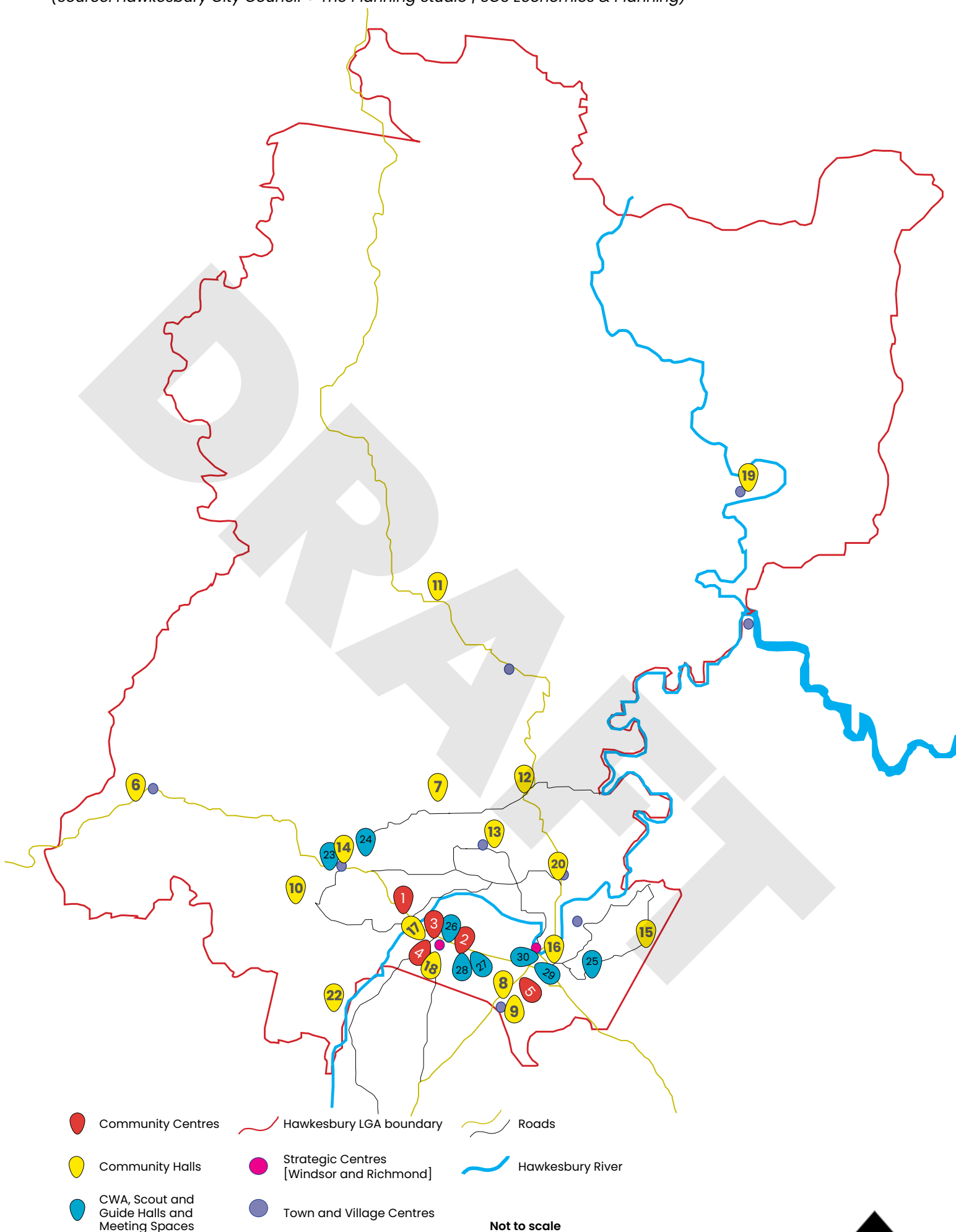
Driving accessibility to community centres is highest in the denser populated southern edges of the LGA, with most major towns being within a 15 or 30 minute driving catchment. Drive times to the community centres worsen in the northern parts of the LGA with no local provision, increasing to over 45 minutes drive time to access a centre.

Community halls are more widely distributed than community centres and service local communities outside the major centres. The 17 community halls are spread across the northern and southern banks of the Hawkesbury River, with more distributed local access, including two community halls serving the northern areas – St Albans and Colo Heights.

Of the 17 community halls, 12 are managed by a local community management committee and all of the community centres are run by community organisations. Committee members are volunteers who meet on a regular basis to manage the day-to-day running of the facility, which also includes the funding, maintenance and upkeep of the building. The committees also usually decide on what services and additional facilities are available through the community centre.

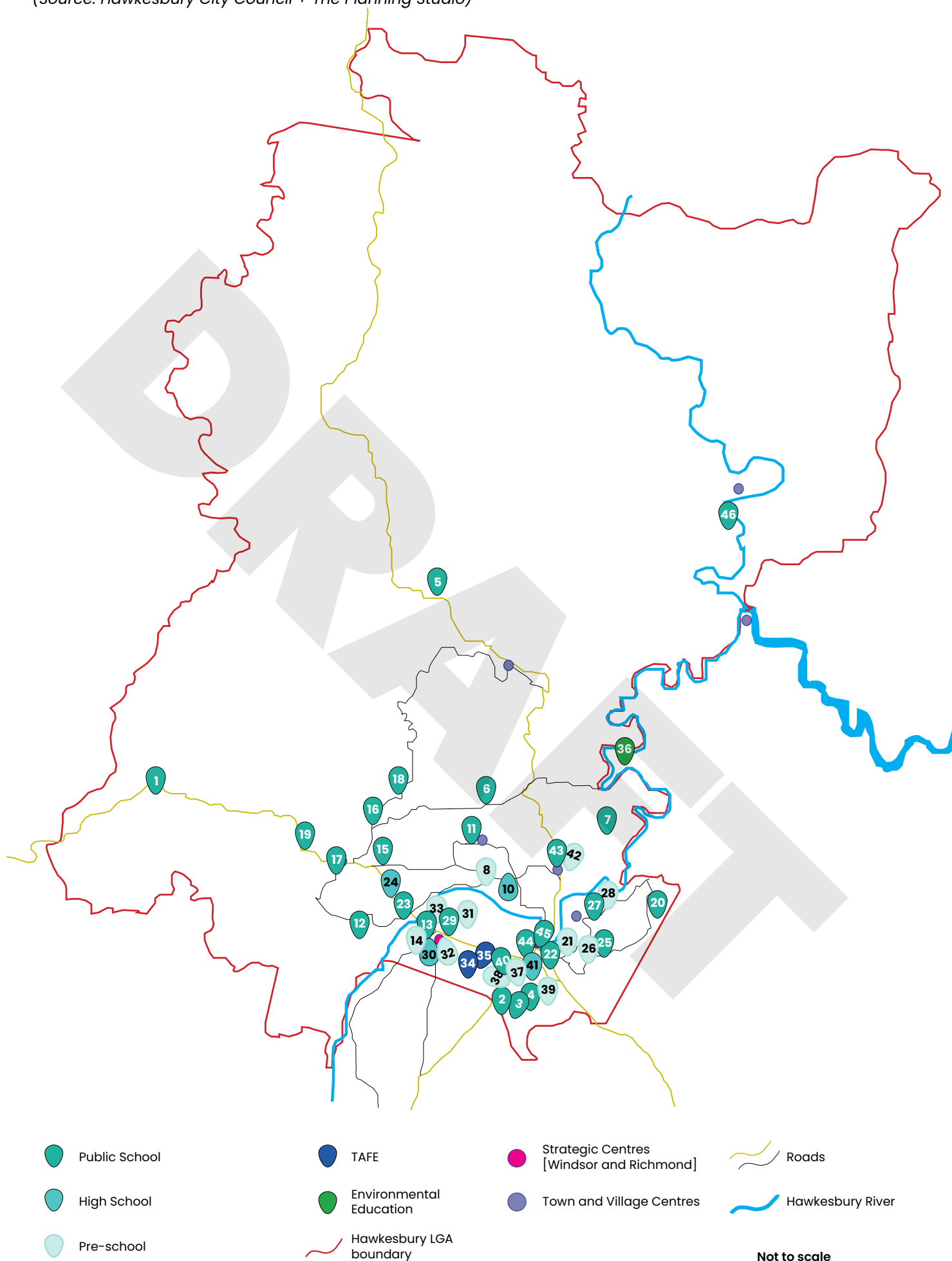
These facilities vary in size, quality, functionality and amenities provided. The majority of these halls are small, older facilities that, in some locations will require upgrades. Appendix B has a summary of these facilities.

Figure 16: Location of community centres and community halls across the Hawkesbury LGA
 (Source: Hawkesbury City Council + The Planning Studio | SGS Economics & Planning)



Map	Location	Name	Hierarchy	Operated by
Community Centres				
1	North Richmond	North Richmond Community Centre	District	North Richmond Community Centre Inc.
2	Richmond	Opal Cottage	District	North West Disability Services [non-Council]
3	Richmond	Richmond Community Centre	District	Richmond Community Services Inc Management Committee
4	Richmond	Hawkesbury Learning and Leisure Centre	District	Peppercorn Services Inc. [non-Council]
5	South Windsor	South Windsor Family Centre	Local	Peppercorn Services Inc. [non-Council]
Community Halls				
6	Bilpin	Bilpin District Hall	Local	Community Management Committee
7	Blaxlands Ridge	Blaxlands Ridge Community Centre	Local	Hawkesbury City Council
8	Bligh Park	Bligh Park Neighbourhood Centre	Neighbourhood	Community Management Committee
9	Bligh Park	Tiningi Community Centre	Local	Community Management Committee
10	Bowen Mountain	Bowen Mountain Hall	Local	Community Management Committee
11	Colo Heights	Colo Heights (Horrie Eley) Hall	Neighbourhood	Hawkesbury City Council
12	East Kurrajong	East Kurrajong School of the Arts	Neighbourhood	Community Management Committee
13	Glossodia	Glossodia Community Centre	Local	Community Management Committee
14	Kurrajong	Kurrajong Community Centre	Local	Community Management Committee
15	Maraylya	Maraylya Hall	Local	Community Management Committee
16	McGraths Hill	McGraths Hill Community Centre	Local	Hawkesbury City Council
17	Richmond	Hawkesbury Skills Centre and Hawkesbury Mens Shed	Local	U3A and Mens Shed Inc [non-Council]
3	Richmond	Richmond Community Centre Hall 3 The Annex	Neighbourhood	Hawkesbury City Council
18	Richmond	Richmond School of Arts	District	Richmond School of the Arts Trustee Board
19	St Albans	St Albans School of Arts	Local	St Albans School of the Arts Management Committee
20	Wilberforce	Wilberforce School of Arts	Local	Wilberforce School of the Arts Management Committee
21	Windsor	Peppercorn Place	Neighbourhood	Peppercorn Services Inc. [non-Council]
22	Yarramundi	Yarramundi Community Centre	Local	Hawkesbury City Council
Scout + Girl Guides Halls and CWA Spaces				
23	Kurrajong	CWA Hall	Local	Country Womens Association [non-Council]
24	Kurrajong	Grose Vale Scout Hall	Local	NSW Scouts [Crown]
25	Oakville	Oakville Scout Hall	Local	NSW Scouts [Crown]
26	Richmond	CWA Rooms	Local	Country Womens Association [non-Council]
27	Richmond	1st Hawkesbury Scouts	Local	NSW Scouts [Crown]
28	Richmond	Girl Guides Hall	Local	Girl Guides NSW [Crown]
29	Windsor	CWA Rooms	Local	Country Womens Association [non-Council]
30	Windsor	Girl Guide Hall	Local	Girl Guides NSW [Crown]

Figure 17: Location of education facilities across the Hawkesbury LGA
 (Source: Hawkesbury City Council + The Planning Studio)



Map	Location	Name	Map	Location	Name
Education					
1	Bilpin	Bilpin Public School	24	North Richmond	Colo High School
2	Bligh Park	Bligh Park Public School	25	Oakville	Oakville Public School
3	Bligh Park	Windsor Park Public School	26	Oakville	Oakville Pre-School Learning Centre
4	Bligh Park	Chisholm Catholic Primary School	27	Pitt Town	Pitt Town Public School
5	Colo	Colo Heights Public School	28	Pitt Town	Milestones Early Learning
6	East Kurrajong	Kurrajong East Public School	29	Richmond	Richmond Public School
7	Ebenezer	Ebenezer Public School	30	Richmond	Richmond High School
8	Freemans Reach	Jasmine Preschool	31	Richmond	Teach A Tot Pre-School
9	Freemans Reach	Freemans Reach Public School	32	Richmond	Richmond Preschool Kindergarten Association Inc
10	Freemans Reach	Hawkesbury High School	33	Richmond	Richmond Before & After School Care Centre
11	Glossodia	Glossodia Public School	34	Richmond	Western Sydney University
12	Grose Wold	Grose View Public School	35	Richmond	TAFE
13	Hobartville	Hobartville Public School	36	Sackville	Brewongle Environmental Education Centre
14	Hobartville	Hobartville Long Day Pre-School Inc	37	South Windsor	Greenhills Child Care Centre Inc
15	Kurmond	Kurmond Public School	38	South Windsor	Windsor Pre School Association Inc
16	Kurrajong	Hawkesbury Independent School	39	South Windsor	Collith Avenue Before and After School Care Pty Ltd
17	Kurrajong	Kurrajong Public School	40	South Windsor	Windsor South Public School
18	Kurrajong	Comleroy Road Public School	41	South Windsor	Bede Polding College
19	Kurrajong North	Kurrajong North Public School	42	Wilberforce	Wilberforce Pre-School Kindergarten Inc
20	Maraylya	Maraylya Public School	43	Wilberforce	Wilberforce Primary School
21	McGraths Hill	McGraths Hill Childrens Centre Inc	44	Windsor	St. Matthew's Catholic Primary School
22	McGraths Hill	Windsor High School	45	Windsor	Windsor Public School
23	North Richmond	Richmond North Public School	46	Central Macdonald	Macdonald Valley Public School



Libraries, cultural facilities and creative spaces

Libraries are some of the top visited and trusted public institutions in Australia. As spaces where people of all ages and backgrounds are welcome, public libraries help to build social capital by providing a free place where people can meet (formally and informally), participate in programs, learn, attend events, and feel connected to their community and place.

Over time, libraries have been expanding their roles beyond the availability of books and research to become community and cultural hubs, providing vital public spaces and increasingly becoming important 'third places' outside home and work where people exchange ideas, enjoy activities, and build relationships. Libraries are increasingly co-located with arts and cultural facilities and services, such as art galleries, theatres and function centres.

The strong creative ecosystem across the Hawkesbury LGA is reflected in the number of smaller, local community arts and craft spaces across the LGA. These maker spaces provide opportunities for people to tap into their inner creativity and learn new skills, and more like-minded creatives to share their ideas and spaces for creative and cultural production.

Existing Provision

Within the Hawkesbury LGA there are:

- Two (2) Libraries (1x District; 1x Branch);
- Three (3) regional cultural spaces; and
- Eleven (11) local community arts and cultural spaces.

There are two library branches servicing the Hawkesbury community, both of which are Council operated. The Hawkesbury Central Library in Windsor offers a wider range of services and programs, the Richmond Branch Library is a smaller branch service with reduced operating days and hours. Both are located south of the River.

Appreciating that the library branches have different intended catchments based on their service offering, the accessibility maps adopt the same catchments to understand where residents can expect to be able to access these services walking or within reasonable drive times.

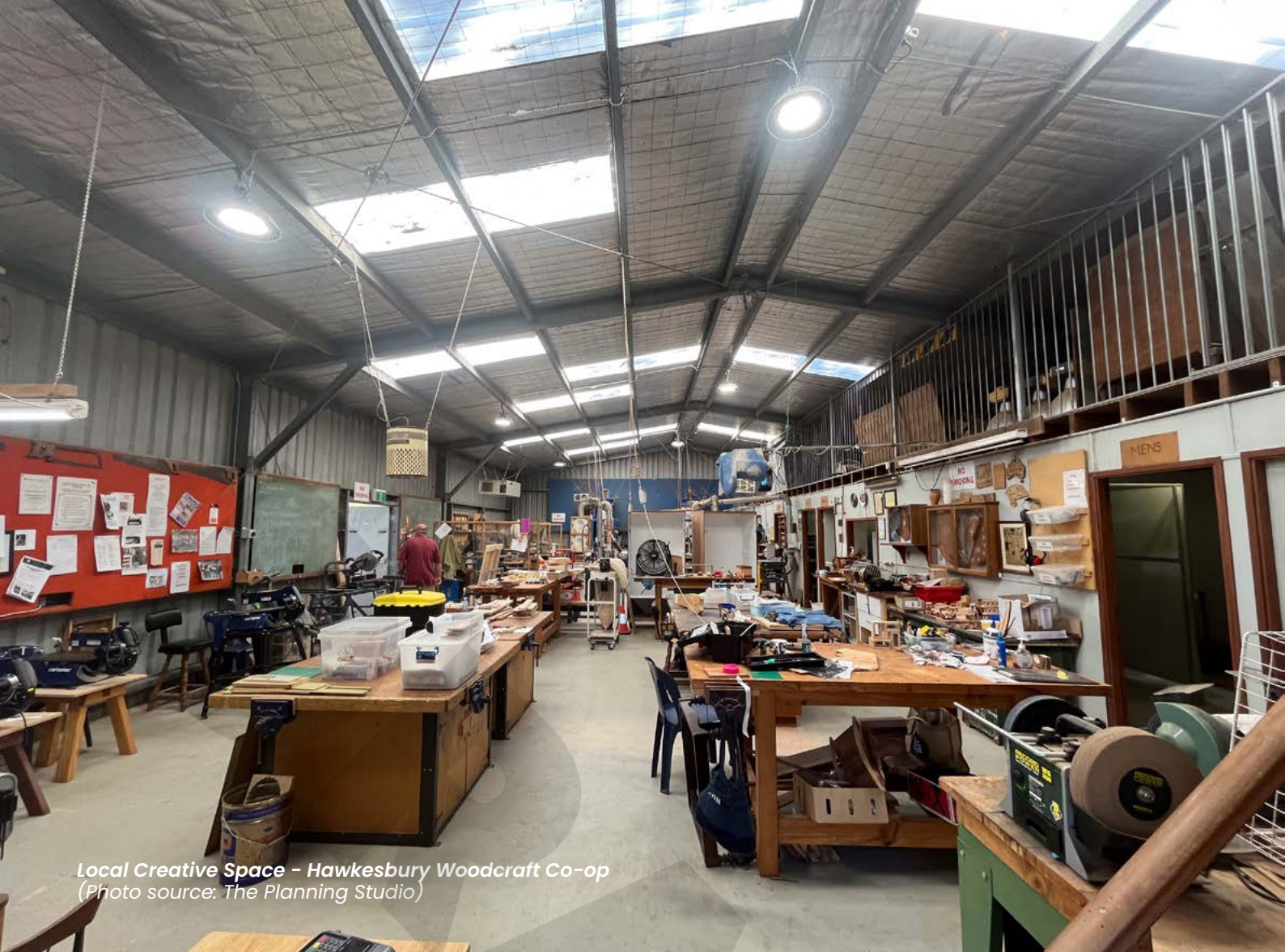
The libraries are located in Richmond and Windsor, and service most of the southern part of the LGA within a 30-minute drive. Access for the northern parts of the LGA increases to over an hour drive for some communities.

Residents north of the river are heavily constrained and reliant on driving to access library services. This may be particularly onerous for core populations such as children and older people who are less independently mobile. Libraries are often catalyst community hubs, able to provide a diversity of services and often suitable as a distribution facility type.

The Deerubbin Centre in Windsor and the Hawkesbury Regional Museum in Windsor are operated by Council. The Deerubbin Centre comprises both the Hawkesbury Regional Gallery and the Hawkesbury Central Library with community meeting rooms and commercial space. Some of the local arts and cultural spaces are community halls and spaces that, through the engagement, have been identified as a cultural or performance space.



District Library, Windsor
(Photo source: The Planning Studio)

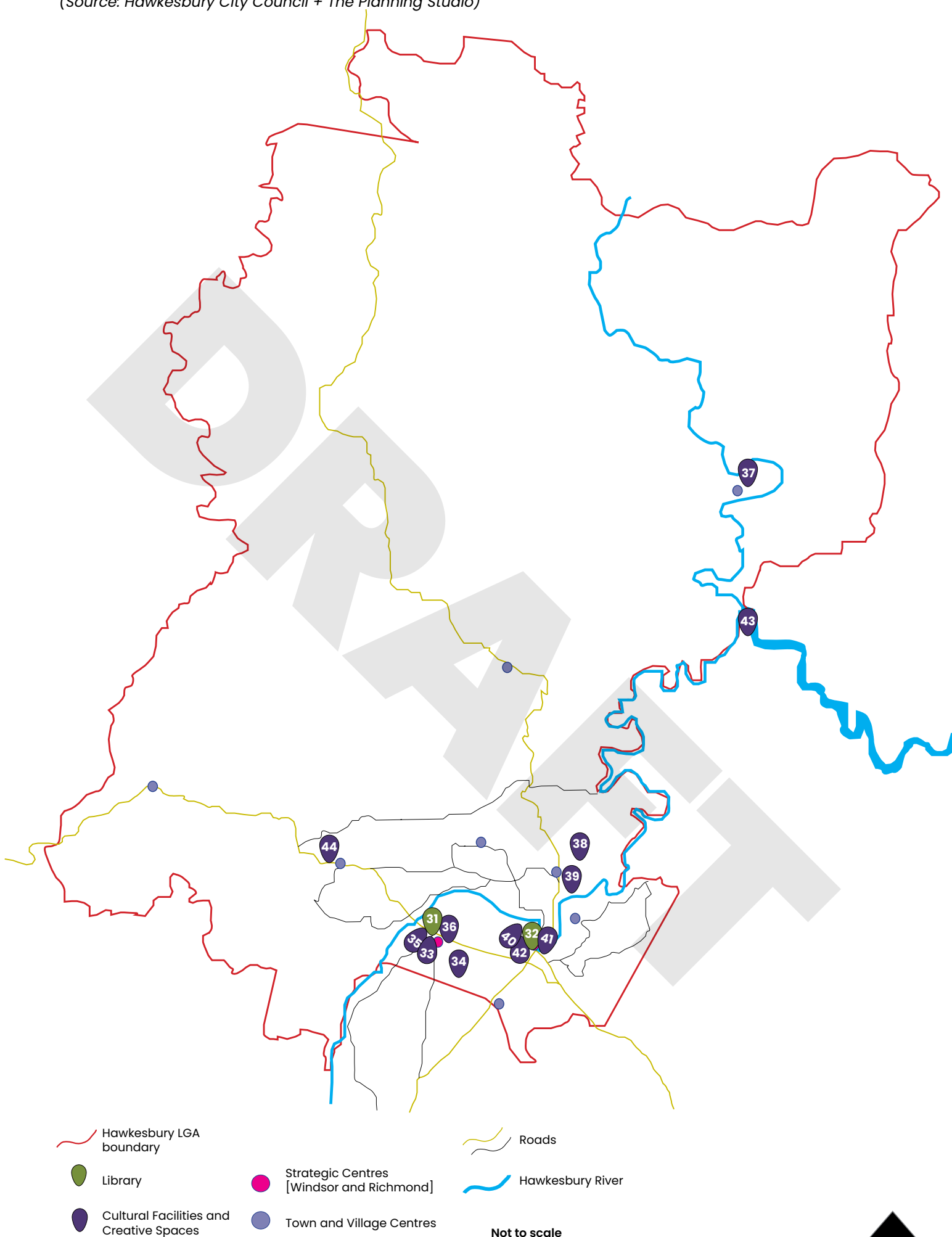


Local Creative Space – Hawkesbury Woodcraft Co-op
(Photo source: The Planning Studio)



Regional Cultural Space – Hawkesbury Regional Museum
(Photo source: The Planning Studio)

Figure 18 Location of libraries, cultural facilities and creative spaces across the Hawkesbury LGA
 (Source: Hawkesbury City Council + The Planning Studio)



Map	Location	Name	Hierarchy	Operated by
Libraries				
31	Richmond	Richmond Branch Library	Local	Hawkesbury City Council
32	Windsor	Hawkesbury Central Library	District	Hawkesbury City Council
Cultural Facilities and Creative Spaces				
33	Richmond	Richmond – The Band Room	Local	Hawkesbury City Council
34	Richmond	Hawkesbury Community Arts Workshop Piggery Lane Studios	Local	Community Management Committee
35	Richmond	Mens Shed	Local	Hawkesbury Valley Mens Shed Inc.
36	Richmond	Richmond School of the Arts	District	Richmond School of the Arts Trustee Board
37	St Albans	School of the Arts	Local	St Albans School of the Arts Management Committee
38	Wilberforce	Hawkesbury Woodcraft Co-op	Local	Hawkesbury Woodcraft Cooperative
39	Wilberforce	The Australiana Pioneer Village	Regional	The Friends of The Australiana Pioneer Village Society Inc.
40	Windsor	Hawkesbury Regional Gallery	Regional	Hawkesbury City Council
41	Windsor	Hawkesbury Regional Museum	Regional	Hawkesbury City Council
42	Windsor	Hawkesbury Remakery	Local	Private [Social Enterprise]
43	Wisemans Ferry	The Ferry Artists Inc. Gallery	Local	Private [Social Enterprise]
44	Kurrajong	Kurrajong Radio Museum	Local	Private



Open Space, Parks and Playgrounds

Open space within the Hawkesbury LGA has been categorised into four types: local, community, district and regional, determined by size. National Parks have been excluded from the totals, focusing only on Council managed open space. These categories have been used to derive accessibility catchments and do not reflect quality or amenity.

Covering such a large and low density environment the Hawkesbury LGA has a large per capita allocation of open space, sitting at 1,189 hectares per 1,000 people, noting that this does not take into consideration the distribution or quality of the open space as either active or passive. Open space is further complemented by large parcels of National Park which have not been shown in the maps below.

Table 4 identifies that the majority of open space is of a regional scale (59 per cent) meaning 15 hectares or above, while local and community scale open spaces are the most regularly provided with the highest numbers of open space parcels (98 and 77 respectively).

Local scale open space is the most distributed asset type across the LGA's towns and villages. Figure 25 collates all open space, with Figures 27 and 28 showing the distribution of each category of open space. The towns of Richmond and Windsor are the only centres to have all four size allocations of open space.

Open space category	Size (ha)	Attributes	Number of spaces	Existing provision (m ²)	Existing provision (ha)	Proportion of LGA total
Local	0.4 – 1	For local residents Within walking distance For passive recreation with some active uses	98	356,960	35.69	3%
Community	1 – 5	For local residents Within walking distance Includes passive and active recreation Provides for some organised sports, where appropriate	77	2,010,442	201	17%
District	5 – 15	For LGA residents Can accommodate larger groups Includes passive and active recreation Some organised sports	27	2,474,899	247	21%
Regional	15+	For LGA residents and broader community outside the LGA Supports passive and active recreation Can host organised sports Access to unique settings and attributes that create a destination for people across the region.	18	7,052,288	705	59%
Total			220	11,894,589	1189	100.0%

Table 4: Open space categories and attributes

(Source: Parks and Leisure Australia WA (2022), Hawkesbury City Council, + SGS Economics & Planning)

Local open space

Smaller scale local open space may be more typical in higher density environments or as complimentary to commercial centres. When looking at the more densely populated centres of Richmond, North Richmond, Windsor and Bligh Park, as well as growing centres in Glossodia, the majority of the centres fall within a 200m catchment of a local open space.

Overlaying sports and recreation assets serve as a high level indication of the active or passive nature of these open space parcels, as to whether they encompass formal recreation facilities. For the most part, playgrounds are co-located within local open space walkable catchments.

Community and District open space

Community open spaces between one to five hectares are the most distributed open space across the LGA. This size of open space parcel may more typically include active uses such as play or exercise equipment and complements residential areas. Community open space parcels are, to a great extent, within the walkable catchments of sports fields and courts.

District open space is larger in size and typically provides for a range of both passive and active uses, such as formal recreation equipment. The accessibility maps identify that not all district open spaces have a co-located sport and recreation asset, suggesting that a larger number of these open spaces are for passive use.

In some instances, a community's locally accessible open space asset may be of a higher category, for example in Glossodia, there is local open space and regional open space. The placement of larger regional scale open space in the centre, south and west of the LGA is complimented by the locations of National Park assets in the north, east and west that can more readily service residents on those fringes for passive recreation.

Regional open space

The placement of larger regional scale open space in the centre, south and west of the LGA is complimented by the locations of National Park assets in the north, east and west that can more readily service residents on those fringes for passive recreation.

Appendix C lists the parks identified across the Hawkesbury LGA. Please note that this list does not include stand alone bushland areas, drainage and riparian areas, lookouts, nature strips or access strips.

Playgrounds

Playgrounds are the most regularly distributed facility type across the LGAs towns and villages. They are spatially located within the residential areas and closely correspond with local scale open space. Due to the distributed nature, almost all of the population centres of the LGA are within a 30 minute drive time to a playground, the majority of these are within a 15 minute drive time.

In addition to the assets listed (Appendix C), new playground facilities are flagged as part of the Kurmond Place Plan, North Richmond Place Plan, and Village Precinct Plan for Pitt Town, further increasing local access to playgrounds.

The new playgrounds as part of the Redbank development and the recently upgraded playgrounds such as Charles Street Reserve and Governor Phillip Park Playground provide a high quality amenity with a diversity of equipment and play choice. These playgrounds include climbing elements, which engagement with children identified as being significantly popular and cater for a broader age range. Most of these playgrounds also include sensory and educational elements.

Many playgrounds are set in reserves adjoining residential areas. These playgrounds do not offer high amenity and in most cases have aging and average to poor standard play equipment with limited to no shade and seating.

Especially in play grounds that are co-located or set within the main town and village centres, there is an opportunities to provide spaces for play that cater to a much broader age range and provide nature-based, and water experiences as well as opportunities for climbing and adventure activities.



Governor Phillip Park Playground
(Source: The Planning Studio)

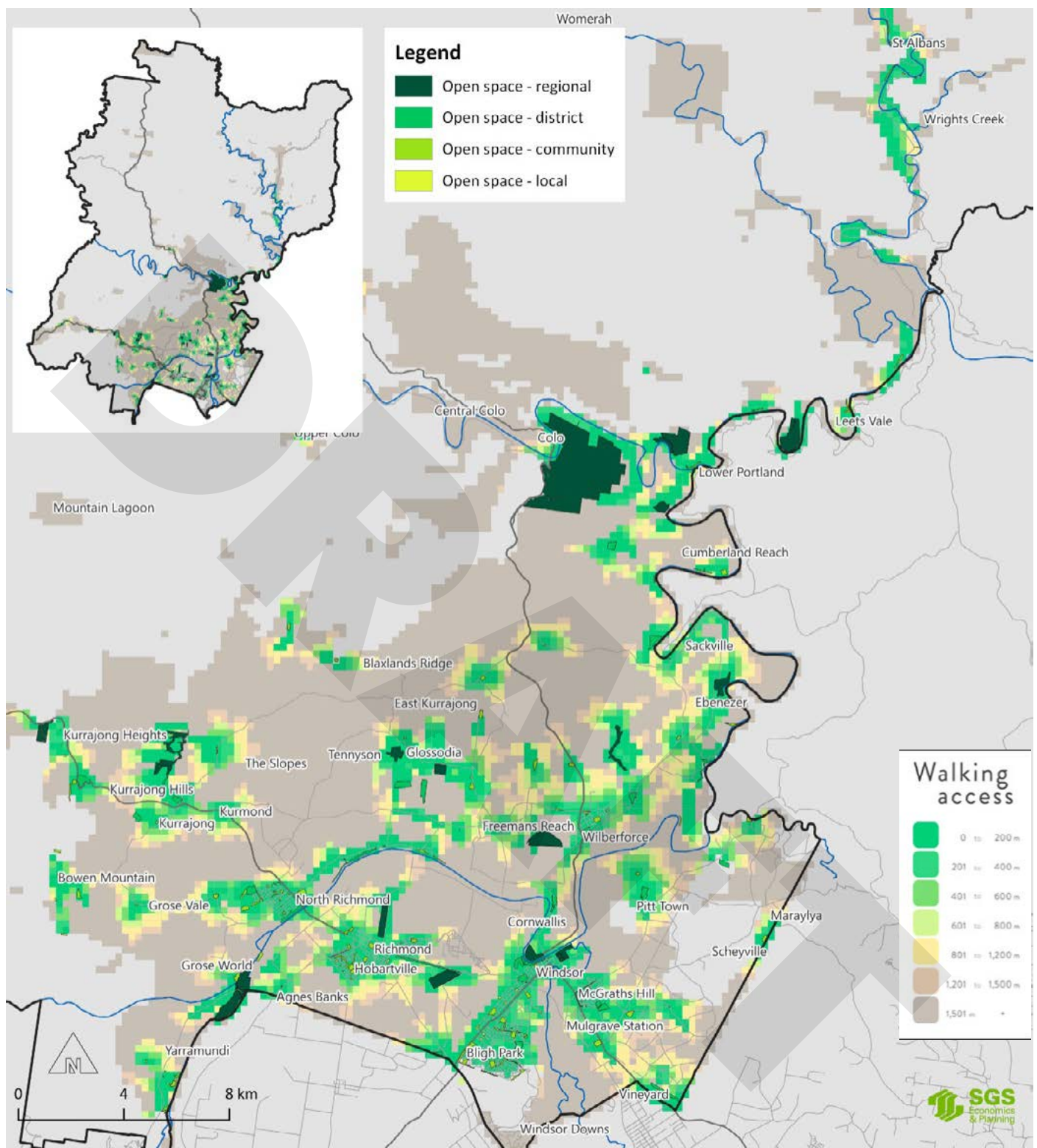


Figure 19: Hawkesbury LGA, all open space walking catchment 2022
(Source: SGS Economics & Planning)

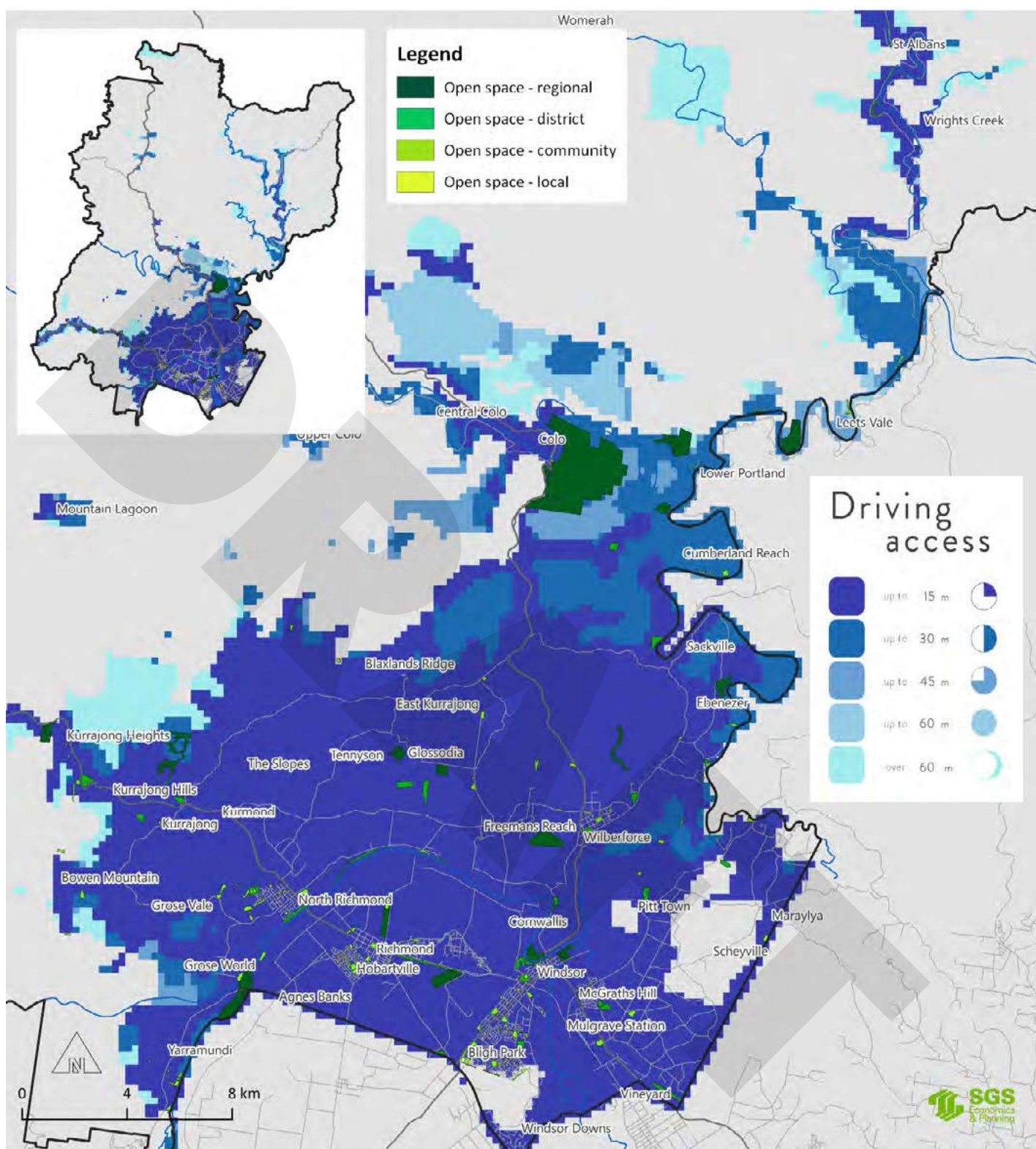


Figure 20: Hawkesbury LGA, all open space driving catchment 2022
(Source: SGS Economics & Planning)



Sport, Recreation and Aquatic Facilities

The provision of sporting infrastructure or competition level, training and unstructured or casual sport and recreational opportunities should include a range of offerings catering to different ages, sporting and recreation activities and interest groups, such as open grassed areas, playgrounds, skate parks, fitness stations, walking and cycling tracks, picnic shelters and toilets.

Best practice provision usually is a cluster of a least two multipurpose sports fields and/or groupings of outdoor multipurpose courts that can accommodate training and competitions for multiple sports, amenities, on-site parking, and set-backs or buffer zones. These facilities also should include supporting amenities such as toilets and change rooms, canteen and barbeques, group meeting rooms and storage for different sporting groups.

The scale of sporting and recreation facilities vary depending on the catchment that it is servicing. The industry standard for district facilities is between 2–5ha in size and approximately 25 minutes walk or 2km from most homes and local sporting provision being within 5–15 minutes from most homes and more for local training and casual activities.

Tables 5 and 6, along with Figure 27 show the locations of sports fields and sports courts to demonstrate clusters of existing active sport and recreation assets. The accessibility mapping shows that the clustering of sport and recreation facilities creates activity hubs where assets are within walking distance of one another.

This practice of clustering assets can improve passive surveillance by encouraging different groups to participate in activities close to one another, can allow for reduced travel costs by enabling multi-purpose trips, and support community socialising and interaction between different groups accessing different asset types.

Due to the distributed nature of sport and recreation assets across the LGA, most towns and villages in Hawkesbury fall within a 15 minute drive time to an asset, this drive time will typically provide access to multiple asset types, however, certain sports are catered for in only one or two locations which will increase travel time for particular competitions such as netball or baseball.

Sports fields

For this analysis, sports fields across the LGA have been counted as single fields, with the types of sports catered for separately documented in Table 5. Sports fields have been counted using this method to ensure that multi-purpose fields are not counted twice so as not to misrepresent the availability of fields within the LGA.

There are roughly 39 sports fields distributed across the Hawkesbury LGA, where some of these are half fields or training fields but not full competition sizes. Of the 38.75 fields, eight of them host multiple sports. Most fields host cricket pitches, followed by soccer and rugby. The least catered for sport fields are for AFL and athletics.

The Bensons Lane linear complex, north of the Richmond town centre, hosts the highest concentration of sport and recreation assets. This site is flagged as being at flood risk, with assets unusable for long periods of time during wet weather events. Other sports fields across the LGA are typically provided in the larger townships, some catering to different sports. Sports fields are not delivered in the smaller villages such as St Albans or Wisemans Ferry in the north, or Bilpin in the west.

The location of the McMahon Park oval in Kurrajong improves the driving accessibility for residents to the west, noting this field provides cricket and athletics facilities only. Residents north of Lower Portland sit within a 45 – 60 minute drive time to access sporting fields, noting that some sports are only catered for in specific locations and these catchments may be larger for certain competitions.



Icely Park (Source: The Planning Studio)

Sports courts

Sports courts across the Hawkesbury LGA are typically concentrated, with clusters for specific sports all housed together for competition purposes but reducing opportunities for regular access or local training. The assessment identified that the concentration of court spaces is only in six centres – Richmond, North Richmond, Freemans Reach, Pitt Town, South Windsor/Bligh Park, and McGraths Hill – and most located south of the river.

Hawkesbury has a large number of netball courts, nearly all of which are concentrated in one facility at the Mileham Street Courts in South Windsor (34). Fourteen of the 24 tennis courts are provided in Ham Common (33) in Richmond. Hawkesbury has no single use basketball courts. Bensons Lane and Colbee Park collectively host all of the baseball diamonds.

Multipurpose courts are fewer in number but dispersed across the LGA. There are opportunities for Council to upgrade small scale, single use courts across the LGA to multi use courts to provide for a greater diversity of activities.

Aquatic and indoor recreation facilities

Larger, multipurpose facilities consolidating a range of offerings for recreation activities, lessons, training and competition are also important community meeting places. The importance and prominence of these facilities will continue to increase, particularly as temperatures rise and the community seek cool places to gather in the summer months.

Incorporation of a range of facilities and amenities in a single centre such as indoor and outdoor recreation, competition and lesson pools, water play areas and features, rehabilitation pools, gyms and fitness centres, change rooms and showers, and food outlets. Facilities should provide a range of programs for people of all ages and abilities, with a focus on health and fitness as well as promoting social interaction and inclusion.

The Hawkesbury Oasis pool in South Windsor is a YMCA facility providing a 25 metre indoor pool, indoor play pool and 50 metre outdoor pool, with ancillary services including group fitness studios, steam room, sauna and a creche. The indoor function means the Oasis centre is the only year round pool access in the Hawkesbury LGA.

The Richmond Swimming Centre is an outdoor venue with a 50 metre pool, wading pool, toddler pool and recreation spaces for basketball and playground. The pool operates through summer and shoulder periods and is closed between May and September.

Walkable access for the aquatic facilities is limited to residents in Richmond and South Windsor, however, being district and regional assets there is a greater commuter expectation to access these facilities. While the majority of the LGA falls within a 30–60 minute drive time to access the facilities, the more populous centres of Richmond, North Richmond, Windsor, Kurrajong and Pitt Town sit within a 15 minute drive time.

Equestrian and Adventure Activities

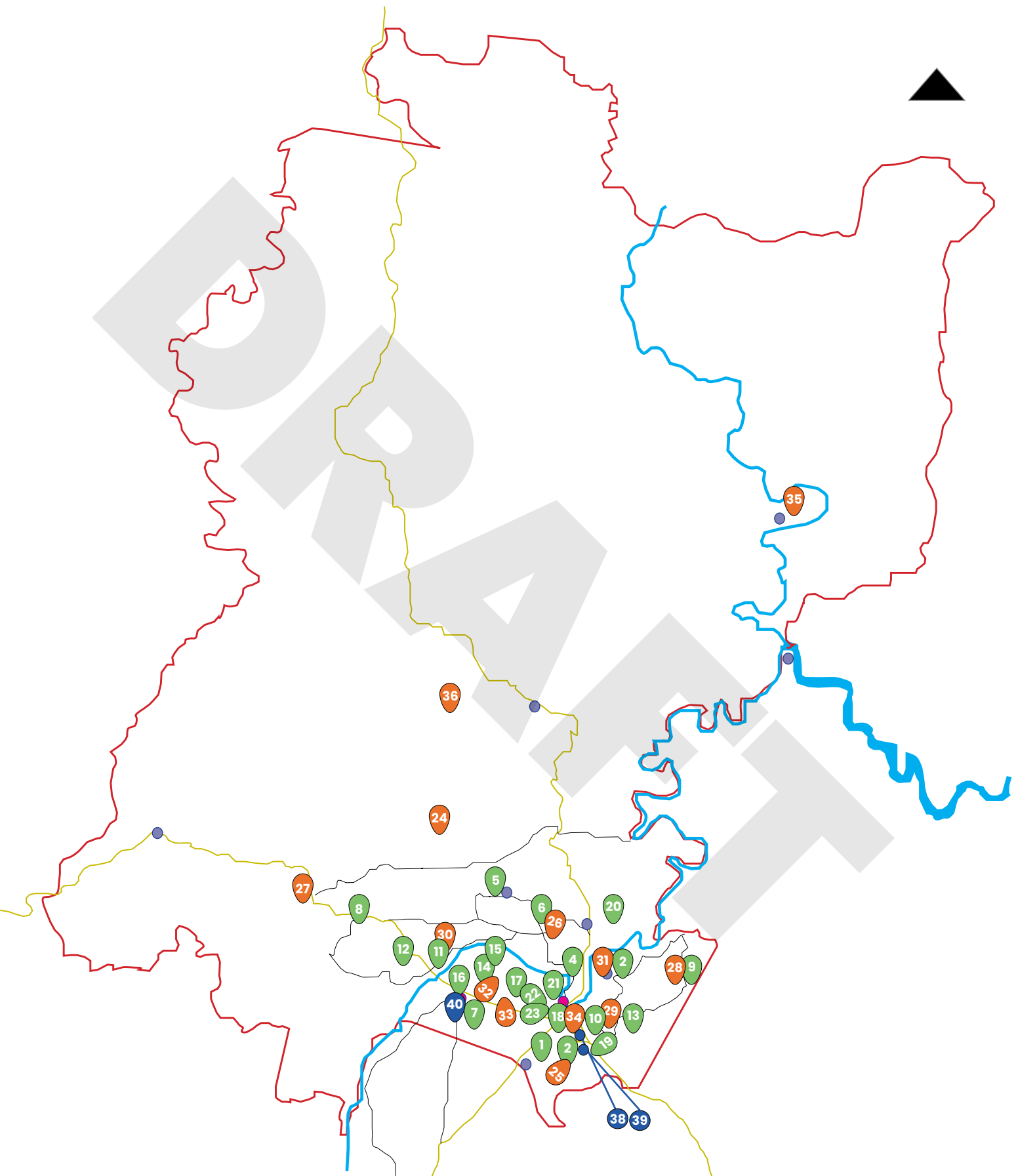
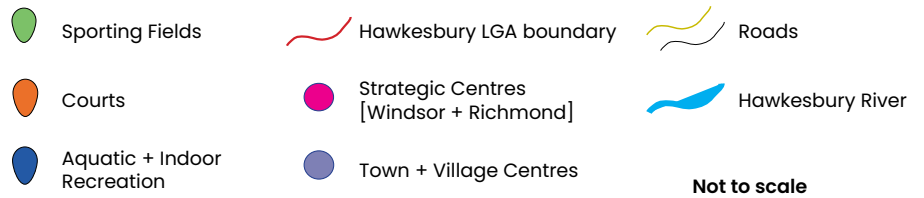
The Colbee BMX track will be complemented by a new pump track to be built in Bligh Park. Council has also commissioned a design for a new BMX pump track at Peel Park.

Given the rural nature of the Hawkesbury LGA, equestrian sports are also one of the most popular and participated in sports locally.

Across the Hawkesbury LGA there are 28 equestrian facilities and riding schools. While all are privately owned facilities, given the participation rates specific to the Hawkesbury they are an important part of the sport and recreation ecosystem in the Hawkesbury LGA. Figure 28 shows the distribution of these facilities along with existing BMX and skate facilities.

Figure 21: Hawkesbury LGA, sporting fields and courts, aquatic + indoor recreation facilities

(Source: Hawkesbury City Council + The Planning Studio | SGS Economics & Planning)



	Sports Field Name	Location	Total Fields	Provided for sports				
				Soccer	AFL	Cricket	Rugby	Athletics
1	Bounty Reserve	Bligh Park	1	1				
2	Colonial Reserve	Bligh Park	1			1	1	
3	Brinsley Oval	Pitt Town	1			1		
4	Breakaways Ovals	Freemans Reach	2			2		
5	Woodbury Reserve	Glossodia	2	2		1		
6	Glossodia Park	Glossodia	1			1		
7	Tamplin Field	Hobartville	1				1	1
8	McMahon Park	Kurrajong	1			1		1
9	Maraylya Park	Maraylya	1			1		
10	Colbee Park	McGraths Hill	1.75	1.75		1		
11	Turnbull Oval	North Richmond	1.5			1	1.5	
12	Peel Park	North Richmond	2			2		
13	Oakville Oval	Oakville	1	1		1		
14	Bensons Lane	Richmond	8	6	2	3	1	
15	David Bertenshaw Field	Richmond	1	1				
16	Richmond Oval	Richmond	1			1		
17	Icely Park	Richmond	2	2				
18	Berger Road	South Windsor	2				5	
19	Vineyard Oval	Vineyard	1			1	1	
20	Woodlands Ovals	Wilberforce	2	2		2		
21	Deerubbin Park	Windsor	3.5				3.5	
22	Don't Worry Oval	Windsor	1			1		
23	McQuade Oval	Windsor	1			1	1	
Total - Hawkesbury LGA			38.75	18.75	2	22	14.5	2

	Court Location	Suburb	Provided for sports				
			Baseball	Basketball	Netball	Tennis	Multi Use
24	Blaxland Ridge Crown Reserve	Blaxland Ridge					1
25	Bligh Park Crown Reserve	Bligh Park					1
26	Freemans Reach Reserve	Freemans Reach				2	1
27	Powell Park	Kurrajong Heights				2	
28	Maraylya Park	Maraylya				2	
29	Colbee Park	McGraths Hill	4				
30	Turnbull Oval	North Richmond			1		3
31	Pitt Town Memorial Park	Pitt Town				2	
32	Bensons Lane	Richmond	6				
33	Ham Common	Richmond				14	
34	Mileham Street Netball Courts	South Windsor			25		
35	St Albans Reserve	St Albans				2	
36	Colo Heights Reserve	Upper Colo					2
Total – Hawkesbury LGA			10	0	26	24	8

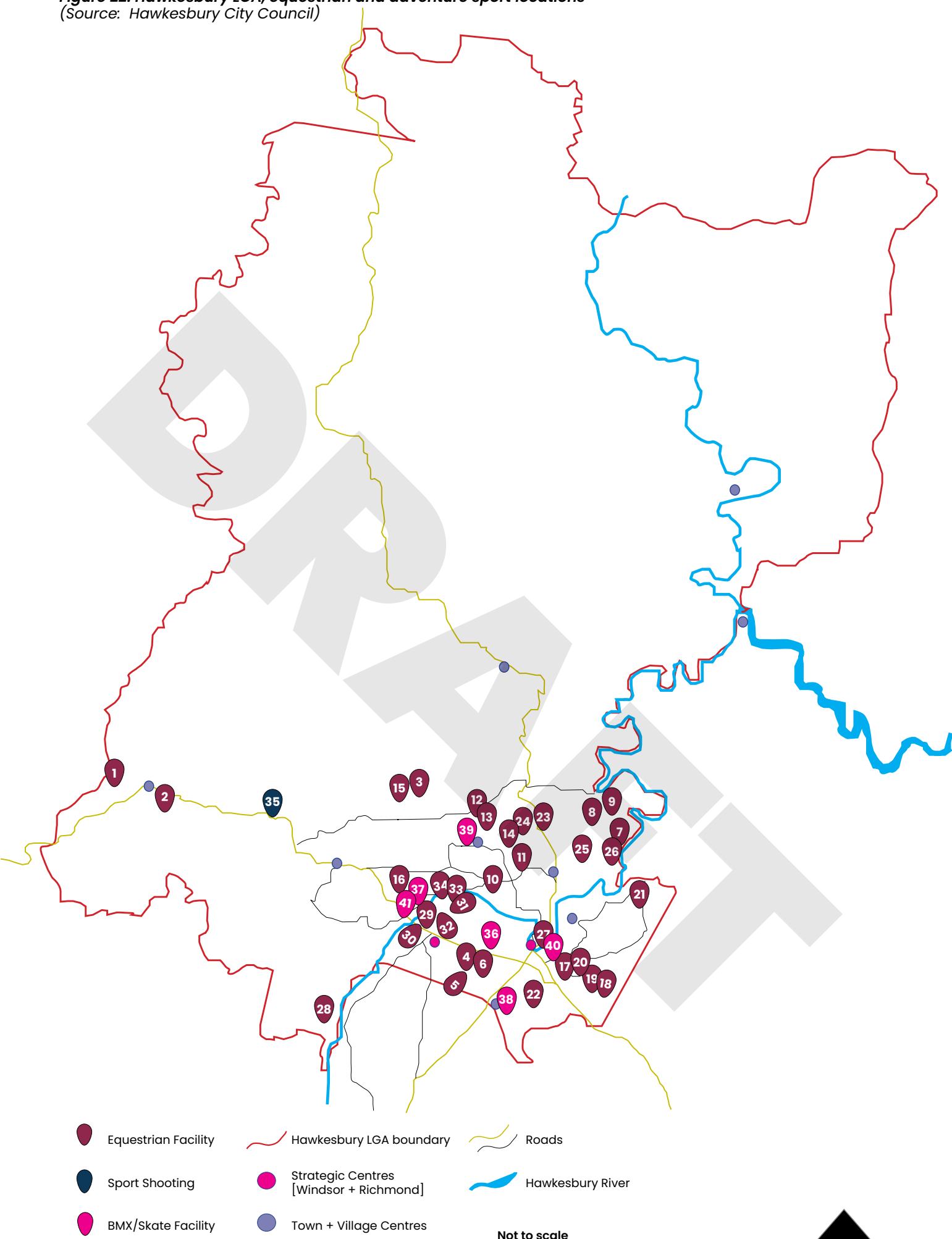
Table 5: Hawkesbury LGA, existing sports courts, types and location 2022
(Source: Hawkesbury City Council, Hawkesbury Sports Council + SGS Economics and Planning)

	Facility	Suburb	Type	Primary Facilities	Other Facilities Activities
37	Richmond Swimming Centre	Richmond	Aquatic	Outdoor 50m pool, wading pool, shaded toddlers pool (open September –April only)	Half size basketball court Children's playground picnic + open space areas multi purpose club room
38	Hawkesbury Oasis	South Windsor	Aquatic	indoor heated leisure pool and 25m pool, outdoor 50m heated pool, spa, sauna, and steam room.	Fitness Gym Crèche School holiday programs
39	Hawkesbury Indoor Stadium (PCYC)	South Windsor	Indoor Recreation	6 multipurpose indoor courts for basketball, badminton futsal, netball, volleyball and mini soccer.	Fitness Gym School holiday programs Small meeting room Party facilities (ie.dance-floor)

Table 6: Hawkesbury LGA, existing aquatic and indoor recreation facilities, types and location 2022
(Source: Hawkesbury City Council, Hawkesbury Sports Council + SGS Economics and Planning)



Figure 22: Hawkesbury LGA, equestrian and adventure sport locations
 (Source: Hawkesbury City Council)



	Activity Facility	Location
1	Bowens Creek Equestrian	Bilpin
2	Eden Equine	Bilpin
3	Sydney Equine Assisted Learning	Blaxlands Ridge
4	Sydney Jump Club	Clarendon
5	Hawkesbury Riding Club	Clarendon
6	Platinum Park	Clarendon
7	Maybelle Farm Equestrian Centre	Ebenezer
8	KEA Rider Training Centre	Ebenezer
9	Yandoo Park	Ebenezer
10	Tic Toc Equestrian	Freemans Reach
11	Evans Park	Freemans Reach
12	Glosslands Equestrian Centre	Glossodia
13	Tathren Stud and Riding School	Glossodia
14	SJC Equestrian	Glossodia
15	Rosebank Riding Stables	Kurrajong
16	Into the West Equestrian	North Richmond
17	Bernadat Equestrian	Oakville
18	Hawkesbury Horse & Home	Oakville
19	Calm Wood Equestrian Centre	Oakville
20	Vines Pony Club	Oakville
21	Scheyville Horse Riding Trails	Scheyville National Park
22	Leaning Willow	South Richmond
23	Colleen Brook	Wilberforce
24	Fasher Horses	Wilberforce
25	Woodlands Pony Club	Wilberforce
26	River Ridge Equestrian Park	Wilberforce

	Activity Facility	Location
27	VaultAbilities Sydney Vaulting Group	Windsor
28	Hawkesbury Valley Equestrian Centre	Yarramundi
29	Windsor Polo Club	Richmond
30	Kilarney Polo Club	Richmond
31	Sydney Polo Club	Richmond
32	Arunga Polo Club	Richmond Lowlands
33	Riverlands Polo Academy	Richmond Lowlands
34	Kurri Burri Polo Club	Richmond Lowlands
35	Kurrajong Pistol Club	Kurrajong Heights
36	Clarendon Skate Park (Ham Common)	Clarendon
37	Hanna Park Skate Park	North Richmond
38	BMX Pump Track (Colonial Park)	Bligh Park
39	BMX Pump Track + Mountain Bike (Woodbury Reserve)	Glossodia
40	BMX Club Pump Track (Colbee Park)	McGraths Hill
41	BMX Pump Track (Peel Park)	North Richmond

Future Demand Assessment

Future demand for facilities across the Hawkesbury LGA has been assessed using a range of asset-based and floorspace benchmarks, applying the LGA 2021 population and projected populations to 2041 to Council owned and managed assets (see Appendix A).

Benchmarks used in this analysis have been drawn from a compilation of best practice provisions from similar contexts to ensure the blended urban/rural nature of Hawkesbury is appropriately factored into the assessment. Classifications of open space are based on the size of the asset and do not reflect quality or amenity. These considerations are alternatively explored through site specific investigations and community engagement.

Benchmarks take an historic approach to the assumptions of future demand and calculating the quantum of community assets that would be required. The output of benchmarking is a numeric expression of demand, that enables the comparison of like for like infrastructure across time and geography.

It is important to note that benchmarking processes are not without limitation and they do not take into account:

New and innovative methods for infrastructure delivery or current leading practice which may not be aligned with current benchmark assumptions;

How people engage with and generate demand for infrastructure due to their technological, accessibility, cultural and urban density contexts;

The suitability of spaces including the condition of assets and the range of users serviced;

The ability of assets to be more efficiently utilised and satisfy a higher level of demand than benchmark outputs suggest;

The practicality to deliver infrastructure, especially types with significant floor space or land area requirements particularly in places of high land value or with constrained land availability;

Varying views as to the acceptable standard and level of infrastructure provision against which benchmarking is to be set; and

No acceptable or established standards for new and emerging types of spaces such as incubator spaces, maker spaces, and co-working spaces.

It is important that provision standards be interpreted as a guide only, and used in conjunction with other necessary assessment steps, such as undertaking audits and detailed consultation with responsible agencies to confirm their likely provision strategy and service and facility delivery models.

There are three primary approaches to determine the likely future provision for social infrastructure. These benchmarks are usually a standardised industry approach or ones that are bespoke to the location and adopted as the foundation measure of future demand and provision.

Population is used to give an indication of the number and size of social infrastructure facilities and spaces that would ideally be provided if opportunity exists. However, future demand and provision also needs to consider whether feasibility is demonstrated, funding is available and the local context and site opportunities and limitations.

Accessibility/Spatial are used to understand how easy it is for people to access social infrastructure by foot, bike, public transport or car. In an LGA such as Hawkesbury City Council, the proximity of social infrastructure facilities and spaces is an important assessment tool that has been used, given the spatial distribution of the local residential population.

Comparative looks at similar places and/or precincts in terms of population size and distribution, demographic profile, place context and physical landuse characteristics and benchmarks the types of social infrastructure that have been delivered for comparative purposes. This also includes the consideration of acknowledged and leading examples that can be used to set a 'stretch target' for the future design, delivery and management of social infrastructure and open spaces.

The population benchmarks used specifically for the analysis of social infrastructure provisions across the Hawkesbury LGA are provided in Appendix A.

These Council approved benchmarks have been developed from a range of sources and comparable locations. They apply a mix of floorspace and number of assets per capita thresholds, to help unpack total provision expectations.

For some facility types there are multiple benchmarks according to the hierarchy of the asset. This range is used to assist more nuanced discussions around asset need. Due to the scale and geography of the Hawkesbury LGA, proximity benchmarking has also been considered as part of the future demand analysis.

The assessment of future demand is not just purely a numeric consideration. This is especially important for the rural villages of the Hawkesbury as the total population catchment may not result in there being a need for infrastructure provision.

Other factors such as the distance from the main centres and accessibility, the LGA's geography, character, environmental context and the local flooding and bushfire risk are critical factors in understanding the future demand provision of social infrastructure and open spaces.

The quantitative benchmark analysis has been run using council owned and managed (including sports council managed) assets only. This is to understand provision opportunities within council governance and control.

Using the benchmarks identified specific for the Hawkesbury LGA and applied to the 2041 population projections, Table 7 and 8 summarises the per capita demand assessment for each facility type.

The table uses a key to summarise the results while the potential implications for each facility type are discussed further. The discussion of benchmark findings for each asset type ties in considerations of distribution with private assets and how these may serve to complement the councils register.

Future Provision Analysis Summary

[population benchmarks only]

Community Facilities/Spaces: are well provided through to 2041, suggesting a surplus of over 2,000m² however this is fragmented across a high number of aging community halls, that are individually managed with limited flexibility to allow for multi use.

Cultural Facilities: across the LGA is well provided for through to 2041, adopting the floorspace benchmark, though smaller creative and cultural spaces are reliant on community and/or privately run spaces. The addition of the creative spaces in the North Richmond Community Centre redevelopment will provide access to smaller spaces.

Library space: based on the floorspace benchmark suggests has a surplus through to 2041, predominantly due to the large area of the Hawkesbury Central Library in Windsor. Opportunities to provide distributed smaller branch libraries in growth areas such as new development zones in Glossodia or Vineyard, or perhaps the utilisation of existing community halls, would support greater accessibility.

Open Space: the total open space benchmark of 4 hectares per 1,000 people suggests that the Hawkesbury has a large surplus of council managed open space through to 2041, in excess of 880ha.

Playgrounds: existing play spaces will continue to meet demand through to 2041, with a notional surplus of 17 play spaces.

Playing fields: the benchmark suggests a surplus of up to 16 fields in 2041 with some additional fields flagged for future delivery in Jacaranda, Peel Park and Fernadell Park that will further increase this total surplus. However, they are primarily concentrated in Richmond and Windsor, and not all sports are evenly catered for.

Sports Courts: netball and tennis courts are both well provided for through to 2041, with high numbers of additional courts. Multipurpose courts have a gap in provision of one court in 2041, and currently no purpose-built basketball courts in the LGA with only one existing multipurpose court having basketball equipment.

Indoor recreation facility: existing demand for up to one indoor multipurpose facility (that would include a minimum of three indoor courts with ancillary uses such as gym, café, change rooms), growing to one and a half indoor facilities by 2041.

Aquatic facility: the 2 facilities [one regional and one district], meet the total per capita benchmark through to 2041.

Table 7: Future demand assessment based on approved benchmarks for Hawkesbury LGA to 2041 – Community + Cultural Facilities

	Indicates gap in provision at the LGA scale
	Indicates existing provision is likely sufficient across time horizons
	Indicates additional considerations OR suitability for additional facilities despite benchmark

Facility	Approved Benchmark (m ² / no. of facilities)	Current Provision	2021 Need	2021 Gap	2041 Need	2041 Gap
Community Spaces	80m ² per 1,000 people	8,685m ²	5,377m ²	3,308m ²	6,177m ²	2,508m ²
Community Centres	1 local facility per 20,000 people	4 facilities	3.4 facilities	0.6 facilities	3.9 facilities	0.1 facilities
	1 district facility per 30,000 – 50,000 people	0 facilities	1.3 – 2.2 facilities	-2.2 to -1.3 facilities	2.6 to 3.9 facilities	-3.9 to -2.6 facilities
Community Meeting Spaces [Local]	1 space per 6,000 people	29 spaces	11.2 spaces	17.8 spaces	12.9 spaces	16.1 spaces
Cultural Facility /Space	20m ² per 1,000 people	3,106m ²	1,344m ²	1,762m ²	1,544m ²	1,562m ²
	1 local space per 30,000 people	1 local space	1.2 local spaces	-1.2 local spaces	1.6 local spaces	-1.6 local spaces
	1 district space per 60,000 people	0 district facilities	1.1 district facility	-1.1 district facility	1.3 district facility	-1.3 district facility
	1 regional space per 150,000 people	2 regional facilities	0.4 regional facilities	1.6 regional facilities	0.5 regional facilities	1.5 regional facilities
Libraries	31.0m ² per 1,000 people, plus 20% for circulation space	4,971m ²	2,500m ²	2,471m ²	2,872m ²	2,099m ²
	1 District (branch) Library per 20,000–35,000	1 Branch Library	1.9 to 3.4 facilities	-0.9 to -2.4 facilities	2.2 to 3.9 facilities	-1.2 to -2.9 facilities
	1 Central Library per 100,000 people	1 Central Library	0.8 facility	0.2 facility	0.8 facility	0.2 facility

Table 8: Future demand assessment based on approved benchmarks for Hawkesbury LGA to 2041 – Open Space + Recreation Facilities

	Indicates gap in provision at the LGA scale
	Indicates existing provision is likely sufficient across time horizons
	Indicates additional considerations OR suitability for additional facilities despite benchmark

Facility	Approved Benchmark (m ² / no. of facilities)	Current Provision	2021 Need	2021 Gap	2041 Need	2041 Gap
Open Space + Parks	4 hectares per 1,000 people	1,189 hectares	268.8 hectares	920.2 hectares	308.8 hectares	880.2 hectares
	1 Local open space per 1,500 – 3,000 people	98 local open spaces	22.4 to 44.8 spaces	75.6 to 53.2 spaces	25.to 51.5 spaces	72.3 to 46.5 spaces
	1 Community open space per 3,000 people	77 spaces	22.4 spaces	54.6 spaces	25.7 spaces	51.3 spaces
	1 District open space per 15,000 – 25,000 people	27 district spaces	2.7 to 4.5 spaces	22.5 to 24.3 spaces	3.1 to 5.1 spaces	21.9 to 23.9 spaces
Playgrounds	1 play space per 2,000 people.	56 play spaces	33.6 play spaces	22.4 play spaces	38.6 play spaces	17.4 play spaces
Sport Fields	1 field/ oval per 3,500 people	38.75 fields	19.2 fields	19.5 fields	22.1 fields	16.7 fields
	1 AFL oval per 6,000–8,000 people	2 ovals	8.4 to 11.2 ovals	-6.4 to -9.2 ovals	9.7 to 12.9 ovals	-7.7 to -10.9 ovals
	1 cricket oval per 5,000 – 8,000 people	22 ovals	8.4–13.4 fields	8.6–13.6 fields	9.7–15.4 fields	6.6 to 12.3 fields
	1 rugby (league/union) field per 5,000 people	14.5 fields	13.4 fields	1.1 fields	15.4 fields	-0.9 fields
	1 soccer pitch per 4,000–6,000 people	18.75 pitches	11.2 to 16.8 pitches	1.9 to 7.5 pitches	12.9 to 19.3 pitches	-0.6 to 5.9 pitches
Outdoor Courts	1 multipurpose outdoor court per 10,000 people	8 courts	6.7 courts	1.3 courts	7.7 courts	0.3 courts
	1 basketball court per 3,000–4,000 people	0 courts	16.8 to 22.4 courts	-16.8 to -22.4 courts	19.3 to 25.7 courts	-19.3 to -25.7 courts
	1 netball court per 5,000 people	26 courts	13.4 courts	12.6 courts	15.4 courts	10.6 courts
	1 tennis court per 8,000 people	24 courts	8.4 courts	15.6 courts	9.7 courts	14.3 courts

	Indicates gap in provision at the LGA scale
	Indicates existing provision is likely sufficient across time horizons
	Indicates additional considerations OR suitability for additional facilities despite benchmark

Table 8 continued

Facility	Approved Benchmark (m ² / no. of facilities)	Current Provision	2021 Need	2021 Gap	2041 Need	2041 Gap
Aquatic Facility	1 facility per 40,000–50,000 people <i>[generic benchmark]</i>	2 facilities	1.3–1.7 facilities	0.7 – 0.3 facilities	1.5–1.9 facilities	0.5 – 0.1 facilities
	1 local facility per 30,000 people	0 local facilities	2.2 local facilities	-2.2 local facilities	2.6 local facilities	-2.6 local facilities
	1 District facility per 75,000 people	1 district facility	0.9 district facilities	1.1 district facilities	1.0 district facilities	1.0 district facilities
	1 Regional facility per 150,000 people	1 regional facility	0.4 regional facilities	-0.4 regional facilities	0.5 regional facilities	-0.5 regional facilities
Recreation Facility	1 athletic facility per 250,000 people	2 athletic facilities	0.3 athletic facilities	1.7 athletic facilities	0.3 athletic facilities	1.7 athletic facilities
	1 BMX/ pump track per 5,000 – 10,000 people	2 tracks (1 existing & 1 committed)	6.7 to 13.5 tracks	-4.7 to -11.4 tracks	7.7 to 15.4 tracks	-5.7 to -13.4 tracks
	1 multipurpose indoor facility per 50,000–100,000	0 facilities	0.7 to 1.3 facilities	-0.7 to -1.3 facilities	0.8 to 1.5 facilities	-0.8 to -1.5 facilities
	1 Regional Sports Facility with aquatics per 250,000 people	0 facilities	0.3 facility	-0.3 facility	0.3 facility	-0.3 facility

Source: SGS Economics and Planning 2022.

Note: The floorspace benchmark for cultural facilities assumes a total floorspace for the Deerubbin Centre excluding the Hawkesbury Central Library as a total of 2,540 square metres taken from the Deerubbin Centre Grand Opening Commemorative Booklet.

Areas of Identified Need

The following draws together the accessibility mapping and population density to understand the distribution of community facilities as it relates to the LGA total population and a suburb perspective to offer a more granular assessment of access.

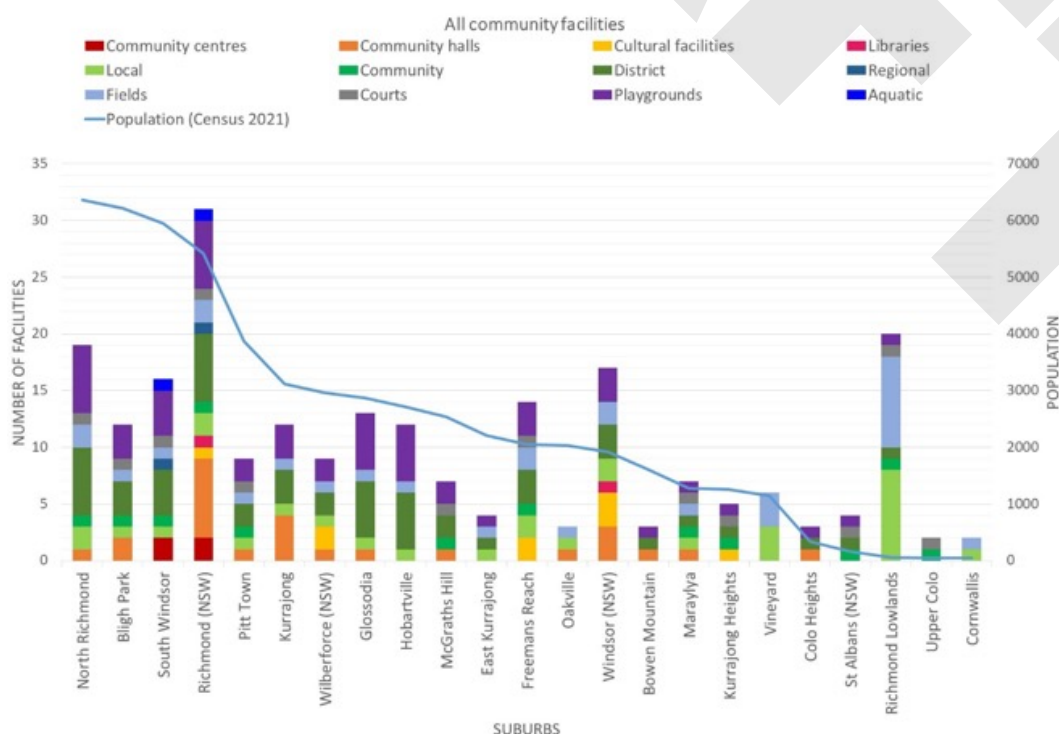
LGA Perspective

The accessibility modeling adopts the urban settlement areas sourced from mesh block geographies, however, some population falls outside the mesh block pattern. To remain consistent with the accessibility modelling, percentages refer to a generalised population, representative of roughly 96% of the total Hawkesbury population.

These percentages account for all mapped community facilities whether public or privately operated. Percentages in this 'LGA Perspective' are indicative of total population and used to reflect trends in relation to distribution.

In general, the **rate of community infrastructure follows the distribution of population, with the majority of assets in the more populous suburbs**. Figure 29 below shows the distribution of suburbs with community facilities. Suburbs with comparatively larger populations (greater than 300) but no locally provided assets, are all neighboured by areas with community facilities and generally fall within a 20-40 minute driving catchment of those assets.

Figure 23: Distribution of social infrastructure by suburb
(Source: SGS Economics and Planning)



Open Space

- 56% of the population are within 200m of open space, and 64% are within 400m.
- 79% of the population within 1.5km of open space.
- Community scale open space is the most accessible to the largest population, with 35% of people within a 200m walkable catchment.
- Local and community open spaces are expected to be walkable for a resident catchment.
 - 31% of the population are within a 200 metre walking catchment of local scale open space and 45% are within 400m.
 - 47% of people are within an 400m walking catchment of a community scale open space and 57% are within 800m.
- District and Regional open space is expected to provide more active uses and would more typically house destination sports courts and fields. 45% within a 1.2km walking catchment of a district open space and only 19% within a 1.5km walking catchment of a regional open space.

Community Facilities

- 65% of the population is within a five minute drive time to a community hall, the highest percentage for a five minute catchment of any asset category, indicating community halls are the most readily accessible community facility. 98% of the population are within a 30 minute drive catchment.
- Community centres are centralised hubs of service delivery and are therefore suited to a longer drive catchment. 83% of the population is within a 20 minute drive, jumping to 93% within a 30 minute drive catchment.
- Cultural facilities are predominantly privately operated and will have fluctuating availability and offerings. Noting this, 97% of the population are within a 30 minute drive of a cultural facility.
- Only 28% of the population are within a 5 minute drive catchment of a library, only seven per cent are within a walkable 800m catchment.
- Just over half the population (54%) are within a 10 minute drive catchment of a library, increasing to 85% within 20 minutes.

Sport and Recreation

- Playgrounds are anticipated to be the most readily accessible active recreation asset, typically designed to be used by local residents within a walkable catchment of where they live.
- Only 25% of the population are within a 200m walking catchment of a playground, 38% within 400m and 56% within 800m.
- Sports fields are within a 30 minute drive catchment of 91% of the population. This does not, however, account for certain sports only being accommodated in specific locations, so for some competitions this drive time may be significantly increased.
- Sports courts are serving 87% of the population within a 15 minute driving catchment, indicating that courts and fields are not always provided in tandem. As with sports fields, certain court sports are only accommodated in specific locations, so for some competitions drive time may be significantly increased.
- Aquatics facilities have a larger suitable catchment, with people anticipating a longer commute to access such a major piece of infrastructure. 95% of the population are within a 45-minute driving catchment of at least one the two aquatics centres.

Suburb Perspective

The suburb perspective adopts the ABS SAL boundaries and populations to explore how community facilities are distributed at a more granular scale. This helps describe proportionally which centres have a lot of provision and which have less, to guide areas of interest for further exploration of acquisition, repurpose or disposal.

The five suburbs with the highest populations are North Richmond, Bligh Park, South Windsor, Richmond and Pitt Town. Of these, Richmond has the highest diversity of facilities as well as the highest total number of assets. With the exception of Richmond, the other top four populous suburbs provide only one type of facility (North Richmond, Bligh Park and Pitt Town provide community halls, while South Windsor provides a community centre).

Community halls are the most commonly provided type of facility, with a total of 30 distributed across the LGA. The 30 community halls are located within 14 suburbs. Four suburbs have more than one community hall. Of those with multiple community halls, Bligh Park has the largest resident population (6,220) and has two halls, Richmond (5,418) has seven halls as well as having the only two Community Centres, Kurrajong (3,113) has four halls and Windsor (1,915) has three halls.

The most populous suburb, North Richmond (6,358) has only one community hall.

The population of Richmond sit within a 10 minute drive catchment of all facility types. Richmond Lowlands has a spike of facilities including the sports fields complex along Bensons Lane, despite having no direct population. Being directly adjacent to the Richmond town centre these most directly serve the population of Richmond and North Richmond.

For North Richmond, nearly the entire population is within a 15 minute driving catchment of facility types, pushing to 20 minutes for sport and recreation facilities due to having to cross the river to access the majority of assets at Bensons Lane in the suburb of Richmond Lowlands.

All sport and recreation assets are provided in combination with some type of open space, indicating there is always some active open space in each suburb.

Where open space is provided, more than one size category is typically present, suggesting it is serving different community needs within the suburb (active or passive uses). The three exceptions are Oakville, Bowen Mountain and Vineyard.

Figure 24: Community facilities access, SAL>500, 2021 (Source: SGS Economics and Planning)

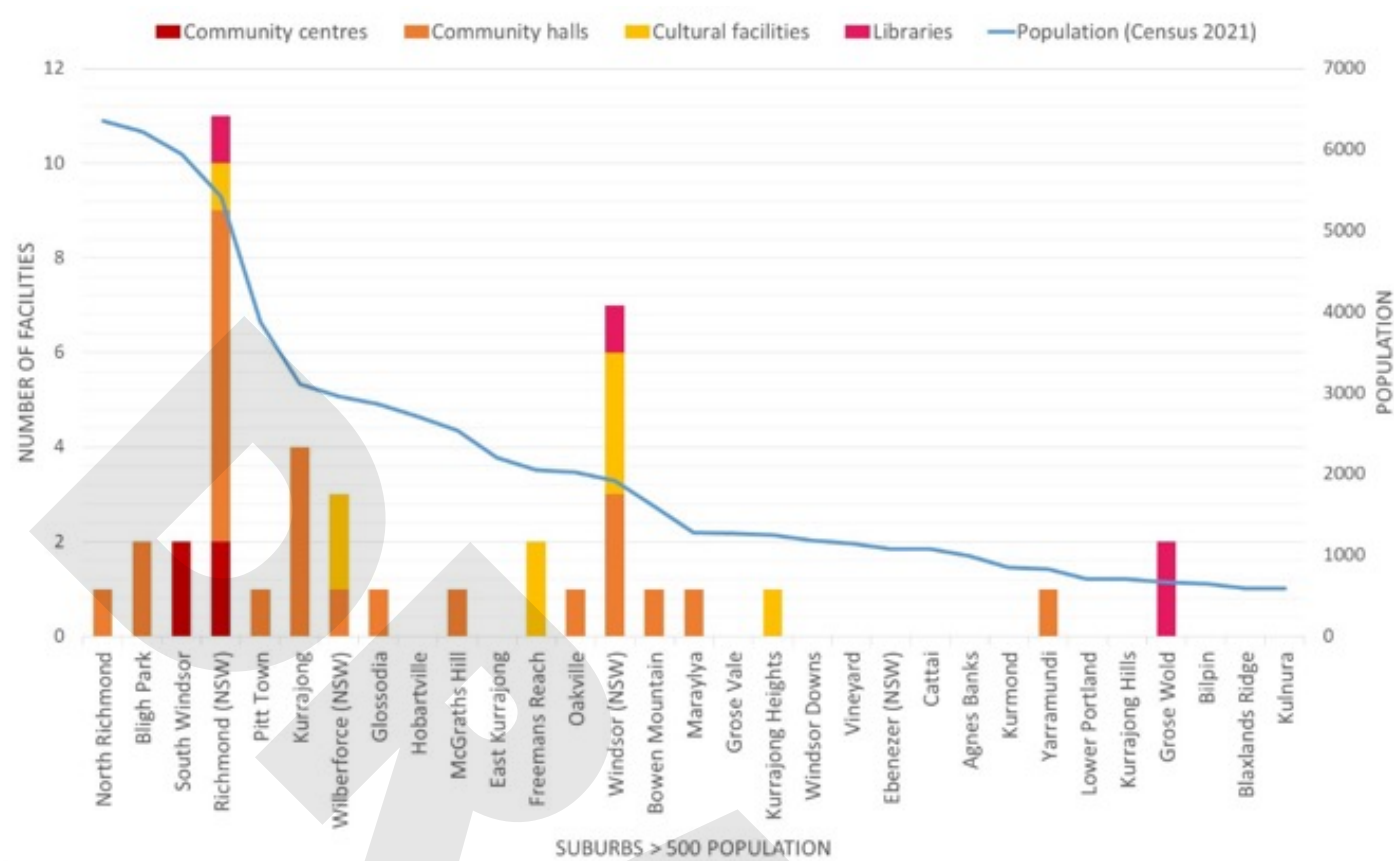
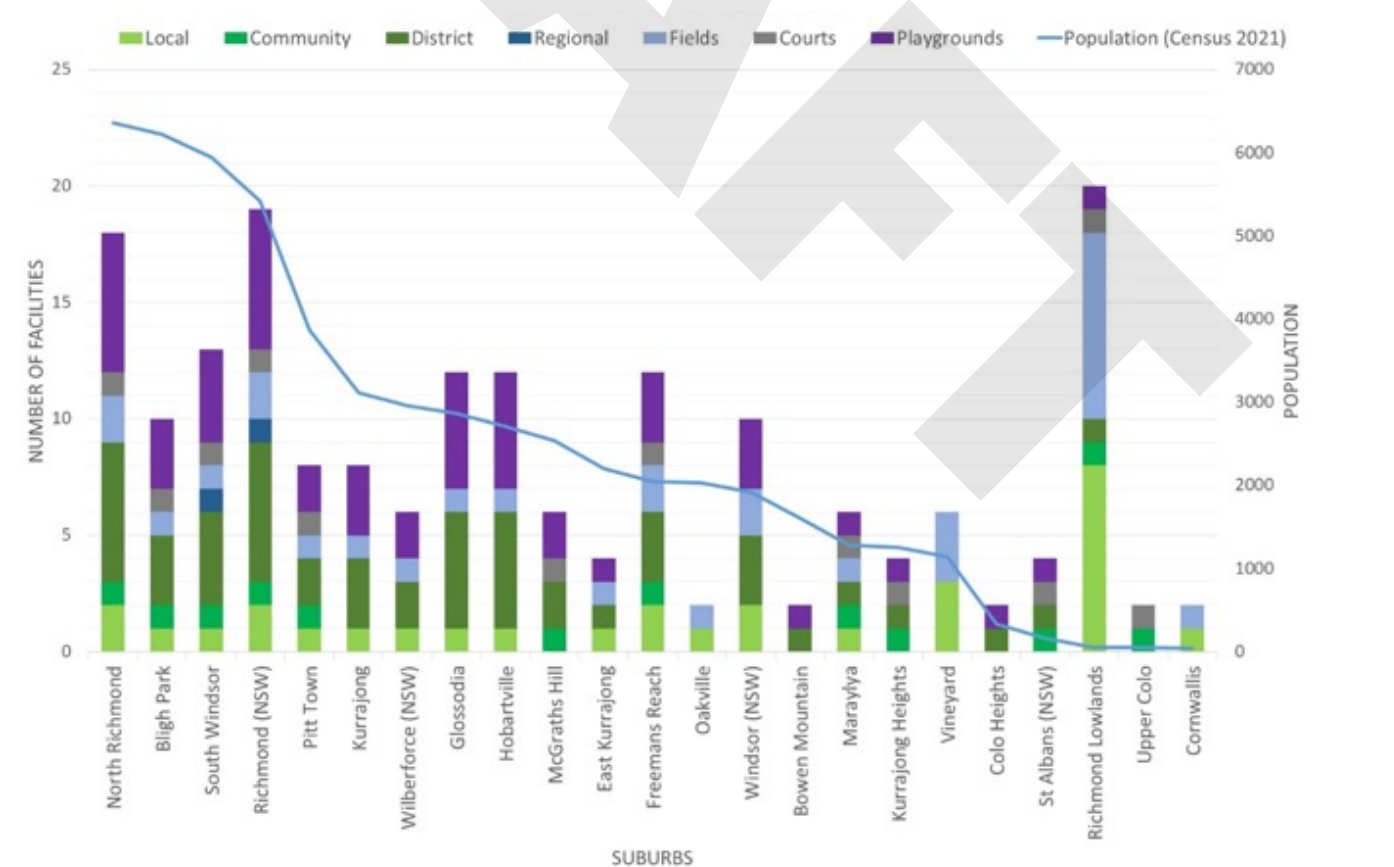


Figure 25: SAL by open space and sport and recreation facilities, 2021 (Source: SGS Economics and Planning)



Strategic Framework & Future Priorities

The Hawkesbury Community Vision

We see the Hawkesbury as a vibrant and collaborative community living in harmony with our history and environment, whilst valuing our diversity, striving for innovation, a strong economy and retaining our lifestyle and identity.

Guided by the social infrastructure objectives, the four priority focus areas outlined below will help to prioritise the actions, locations, timeframes and strategic partnerships required to achieve Hawkesbury LGA's community vision.

This section details each of the priority focus areas and provides recommended actions and priorities.

Priority Focus Area

Build an equitable, accessible and integrated social infrastructure network across the Hawkesbury LGA that connects our community to facilities, services and each other.

Priority Focus Area

Activate, improve and consolidate existing social infrastructure to be multipurpose adaptable and flexible and respond to our changing community needs and expectations.

Priority Focus Area

Strengthen community resilience and sense of belonging by valuing and making visible our cultures and diverse stories as the foundation of a welcoming and generous community.

Priority Focus Area

Build on our local strengths, attributes, partnerships and commitment by our community to effectively plan and manage social infrastructure in a sustainable and financially responsible way.



Supporting connected and resilient communities

Social Infrastructure can be the physical heart of communities, places to gather, meet, connect, refuge, celebrate, debate and strengthen cohesion.

Providing adequate spaces and places will support a connected, resilient Hawkesbury community and assist them to build strong and lasting connections. The equitable distribution of facilities and spaces is fundamental, especially villages remote from main city centres. It is also critical when natural disasters and emergencies limit access to and from the village.



Encouraging learning, exploration, creativity and productivity

Our social infrastructure, open spaces, community groups and local clubs all provide opportunities to discover and learn new skills, be creative and support businesses and our local economy.

Galleries, museums, maker spaces and libraries are places where our local stories are produced, presented and told. Schools, sporting fields and community halls are places to gather, learn & connect. Our natural landscapes, parks and community centres are where we explore, discover and learn about our cultures, the world around us by sharing our individual experiences and skills. Young people expressed a desire for adventure type experiences in the parks and playgrounds.



Connecting to Country, Culture and Community

The Hawkesbury is an important place for Dharug and Darkinjung people. Acknowledging our varied identities, stories, cultures, as well as grounding ourselves in the place and surrounding environment of the Hawkesbury is the foundation of a connected, welcoming and generous community.

Our collective stories and cultures make us who we are as individuals and as a community. Social Infrastructure supports individuals connection with culture and for us all to share and learn about our varied histories, traditions and stories – Indigenous, non-indigenous and culturally diverse.



Caring for ourselves and our environment

Centred around Dyarubbin – Hawkesbury River, the beautiful natural areas and landscapes are integral to the Hawkesbury identity and lifestyle highly valued by residents and visitors. The National Parks, bushland, abundance of open spaces, recreation and sporting facilities, support healthy communities and improving both physical and mental health outcomes.

Being physically active is more than just utilising pools, courts and ovals. It is also about having equitable and free access to green, natural spaces – be it on the water, cycling along the river, picnicking in the park or hiking through bushland.



Sustainable governance and sharing of resources

Social infrastructure and open spaces across the Hawkesbury LGA will be planned, designed and managed with our communities.

We value our passionate volunteers and will actively work with local management committees, lessee and other community organisations to implement sustainable governance models that deliver social value and financial viability, improves accessibility and transparent governance.

Continuing our strong local partnerships and sharing of resources will allow us to be responsive to the changing community needs and ensure the long term sustainability and viability of our assets.

Contemporary planning practice is for local social infrastructure and open space to operate as part of a network of facilities, services and services that work together to meet a broad range of community needs across a local area or the whole of the LGA. Additionally, accessibility for residents to community facilities is important to create a network of interconnected facilities.

In an expansive area like the Hawkesbury, with geographically dispersed villages that can easily be disconnected due to flooding or bushfire, require the planning of smaller social infrastructure hubs that provide flexible, multipurpose spaces that cater for a range of activities and services.

Planning social infrastructure to maximise community participation means locating it close to public transport and walking/cycling networks in activity centres, co-location with and integrating it with surrounding land uses. The community told us that improved walking and cycling routes are important for access as well as improving health outcomes.

While areas in the southern parts of the Hawkesbury LGA, particularly the larger centres of Richmond and Windsor, currently have good access to social infrastructure, residents and villages north of the Hawkesbury River do not. This accessibility is further limited by the lack of public infrastructure and active transport options throughout the LGA.

Some of our smaller villages north of the River and growing areas such as Kurrajong require further planning and feasibility assessment to identify ways to make improvements to existing infrastructure that will respond to the needs of our communities as well as the spatial and environmental challenges.

There is an opportunity to review the portfolio of existing assets, particularly in centres and villages north of the River to explore ways to improve existing infrastructure and spaces to deliver greater benefit and access to the community in a more contemporary and cost effective way.

Delivering on our CSP objectives

- 1.5 Place the right places and spaces to serve our community.
- 1.6 Build on a sense of community and wellbeing.
- 2.4 Encourage our community to make more sustainable choices.
- 3.4 Support the revitalisation of our town centres and growth of our business community.
- 4.7 Encourage informed planning, balanced growth and community engagement.

Community insights:

While the primary mode of transport that residents use to get to the park or community facility is by car (95%), more than one-third of respondents also walked (35%) and 12% cycle.

Being located close to home was the top reason that influences the community's decision to visit a particular facility in the Hawkesbury LGA.

Almost half of survey respondents (47.11%) agreed or strongly agreed that they had good access to community facilities where they lived, though 31.73% either disagreed or strongly disagreed.

Over half of survey respondents (52.89%) agreed or strongly agreed, that they have good access to open spaces, playgrounds, sporting, and recreation facilities where they live.

Multiple participants commented there was a lack of connection and communication between community groups.

There was acknowledgment through discussions that the expectation that 'every village has a hall' may no longer be practical or best practice, even for an area with the geography of a dispersed rural community.

Lack of places for Aboriginal families as a whole to come together that are appropriate and can cater for young children and for Elders and/or Aboriginal people living with mobility issues.

Below is a summary of the indicative social infrastructure needs for the Hawkesbury LGA in the future based on the population benchmarks and also key considerations from the background research and audit.

Facility	Current Provision Benchmark Gap [2021]	Future Provision Requirement [2041]	Additional Considerations
Community Centres	1-2 district centres	3-4 district centres	Highly concentrated district community centres significantly impede access. Opportunities to expand local scale community centres may more effectively service the distributed nature of the Hawkesbury population, otherwise exploring district centres in centrally located growth areas such as Glossodia may improve access in the north who currently have no local provision.
Community Hall	Sufficient provision	Likely sufficient provision	The suburb of Richmond has the highest number of community halls (7) as well as hosting two of the four community centres. While the most populous suburb, North Richmond, has one hall. Understanding fitness for purpose, booking and utilisation rates for those suburbs with multiple halls (Bligh Park, Richmond, Kurrajong and Windsor) will help to highlight suitability for disposal or reuse of 'surplus' and/ or under-performing assets.
Cultural Facility or Spaces	Sufficient provision	Likely sufficient provision	Despite total floorspace being likely sufficient through to 2041, existing council operated cultural facilities are highly concentrated in the one centre (Windsor). Where necessary, Council should explore more distributed access through the creating shared uses in community halls.
Libraries	Sufficient provision	1-2 district (branch) libraries	Despite total floorspace likely being sufficient through to 2041, existing council operated libraries are highly concentrated in two centres (Richmond and Windsor). Council should explore more distributed access for branch services in growth areas such as Glossodia.
Open Space	Sufficient provision	Likely sufficient provision	There is a surplus at all scales of open space across the LGA. Ensuring communities have a mix of active and passive spaces will improve the utility of these assets. Consider re purposing under-utilised or passive open spaces to accommodate more active uses demonstrating a shortfall, such as certain types of fields, courts or indoor centres to reduce maintenance and improving utility of otherwise passive open spaces.
Playgrounds	Sufficient provision	Likely sufficient provision	The total number of play spaces is sufficient through to 2041, however, ensuring new assets are located within walkable distances of residential areas will improve access and utility of the spaces.

Sports Courts	8-10 basketball double courts, 1x indoor facility with indoor multi-purpose courts	9-13 double basketball courts, 1x indoor facility with indoor multi-purpose courts)	Only specific sports are indicating a shortfall across the LGA. Participation rates and local competitions should be referenced to understand if these assets are best widely distributed for local access or concentrated for competition purposes.
Sports Fields	6-9 AFL fields	8-11 AFL fields, 1x rugby field, 1-6 soccer fields	Opportunity exists to convert some passive open space to locate new court / fields.
Adventure Recreation	Minimum 5 local spaces for adventure recreation	Minimum 8 local spaces for adventure recreation	Opportunity exists to convert some passive open space to accommodate BMX tracks which are equitably spaced and close to home to increase walkability.

How this could be implemented?

Relevant Objectives

1.1	Ensure planning for new social infrastructure and open spaces includes improved links to existing park infrastructure or addresses new infrastructure requirements, especially in areas with have a lower existing provision and access.	Supporting connected, resilient communities Sustainable governance and sharing resources
1.2	Review and implement relevant recommendations of the Hawkesbury Active Transport Plan to support planning (and advocacy) for increased public transport and enhanced connections to community facilities and open spaces by bike or walking.	Supporting connected, resilient communities Sustainable governance and sharing resources
1.3	Investigate the provision of a library kiosk to service areas north of the river. Consideration should be given for the re purposing of an existing facility, also providing community spaces for working and studying.	Supporting connected, resilient communities Encouraging learning, exploration, creativity and productivity
1.4	Undertake detailed property/infrastructure condition assessment of existing buildings and spaces to identify social infrastructure that requires renewal/upgrades. Priority should be given to areas across the LGA that have limited provision of social infrastructure.	Supporting connected, resilient communities Sustainable governance and sharing resources
1.5	Improve accessibility for people with disabilities and child safety in the design of new infrastructure and as existing facilities and spaces are being reviewed and upgraded.	Supporting connected, resilient communities Encouraging learning, exploration, creativity and productivity Sustainable governance and sharing resources



Wilberforce
School of Arts

Social Infrastructure should be able to adapt to the changing community needs and also who the community is. We need to ensure we are getting the most out of them in how we design, build and manage social infrastructure assets.

Enhancing the utilisation of existing facilities relies on activity and accessibility. Social infrastructure needs to be activated to encourage utilisation and embed the facility into the community network.

The future demand analysis shows that across most social infrastructure types, the Hawkesbury LGA has adequate provision to 2041 in terms of floorspace. However, the distribution, location and quality of the existing spaces is fragmented and unequal across the LGA.

The community told us there are opportunities to improve existing community facilities and open spaces, such as improving amenities such as air conditioning, storage for regular hirers or kitchen facilities to increase use and functionality.

The Hawkesbury LGA has a larger number of aging, poor-quality and single-purpose assets, many of which need some improvement. While many are reasonably well used and important assets to the community, the maintenance burden of small, fragmented and single use facilities and space can be significant and over time will be less frequently utilised, if not already under-utilised.

‘Co-locating’ social infrastructure and creating more multipurpose spaces for a range of activities will increase capacity and create a more economically, environmentally and socially sustainable networks. Multipurpose facilities can be adapted as community needs and interests change and co-locating a range of uses in one space reduces the floor space and maintenance required.

Where existing social infrastructure is well located and growth/change is expected there may be opportunities for it to be renewed or upgraded to be more contemporary, flexible and multipurpose, and designed for the environmental conditions (i.e. flooding and bushfire protection).

Delivering on our CSP objectives

- 1.1 Enable a shared responsibility for community resilience, community safety and disaster management.
- 1.2 Encourage and enable our community to participate in a healthy lifestyle.
- 2.2 Value, protect and enhance our natural land-based environment with an emphasis on using local resources and key partnerships.
- 2.4 Value, protect and enhance our waterways and wetlands with an emphasis on using local resources and key partnerships.
- 4.8 Facilitate the delivery of delivery through relevant agencies and Council's own works.

Community insights:

The Hawkesbury community value and acknowledge the importance of community facilities, recreation facilities, open spaces, and parks.

The design and high quality amenities, connection to nature and purpose-built facilities were three of the top four factors that influences the community's decision to visit a particular facility in the Hawkesbury LGA.

Over half of respondents (54.8%) agreed or strongly agreed that community facilities in the Hawkesbury supports the needs of the community.

The community identified a lack of spaces within the Hawkesbury LGA for young people and felt that improving this should be a priority.

Almost half of survey respondents (42%) agreed or strongly agreed that the current open spaces, playgrounds, sporting, and recreation facilities in the Hawkesbury support the needs of the community, while 30% disagreed or strongly disagreed.

About one-third of survey respondents felt that currently open spaces, playgrounds, sporting, and recreation facilities and spaces in the Hawkesbury LGA were not of high quality.

How this could be implemented?

Relevant Objectives

2.1	Working with local Aboriginal people to identify culturally appropriate facilities and open spaces for families as a whole to come together, host corroboree celebrations and community events and are designed for young children and Elders and/or Aboriginal people living with mobility issues.	Supporting connected, resilient communities Connecting to Country, culture and community Care for ourselves and our environment
2.2	Explore opportunities in growth area such as Glossodia or Kurrajong to expand a local scale community centres and /or create a larger district scale facilities to more effectively service the distributed nature of the Hawkesbury population and improve access in the north.	Supporting connected, resilient communities Encouraging learning, exploration, creativity and productivity
2.3	Ensuring communities have a mix of active and passive spaces will improve the utility of the surplus of open space assets. Consider opportunities to reactivate under-utilised or passive open spaces to accommodate more active uses such as fields, courts or indoor centres, where a population benchmark shortfall is identified to reduce maintenance and improving utility of otherwise passive open spaces.	Care for ourselves and our environment Encouraging learning, exploration, creativity and productivity
2.4	Deliver the new BMX pump track and mountain bike trails at Woodbury Reserve, Peel Park and Colonial Reserve and investigate opportunities for increasing spaces, including the reactivation/upgrade to existing facilities, that are an invitation for young people.	Supporting connected, resilient communities Encouraging learning, exploration, creativity and productivity
2.5	Aligned to objectives and assessment criteria outlined in this strategy to achieve best practice social infrastructure design and delivery outcomes, review existing social infrastructure and identify the suitability for the upgrade or 'recycling' of 'surplus' and / or under-performing assets.	Supporting connected, resilient communities Sustainable governance and sharing resources

Social infrastructure should support people of all ages, abilities, incomes, genders, cultures, languages, religions, lifestyles and experiences. They help to strengthen social connections and encourage a productive, generous and welcoming community.

All public space is on Country, which is at the core of every Aboriginal person's identity and sense of belonging. It is the place from which Aboriginal languages and cultures are derived, which determine families, kinship and communities²³.

In discussions with the Aboriginal Community, they told us that to Dharug people, animals including native animals such as lizards, Goanna, Cockatoo and Eagles, represent totems significant to Country and some are of Cultural significance.

The Hawkesbury is known for its natural, rural character, which is highly valued by the community and contributes to the identity and lifestyle of the area. There is also a strong creative ecosystem within the Hawkesbury with many local artists and makers and opportunities for social infrastructure to support this local identity (e.g. via providing space for events, showcasing the work of local artists and makers) which supports new employment and emerging enterprise with co-working spaces or local market squares.

The PlaceScore survey (2018) identified that many residents consider an existing strength of their place is that it is welcoming to all people with opportunities to interact with neighbours and locals. However, many also identified that the evidence of recent public investment was the weakest attributes.

Resilience is the combination of community relationships. Building this takes a long time and communities must be supported to form strong social connections, share information, and seek support where and when it is needed.

Social infrastructure in the Hawkesbury should continue to be inclusive of all people to encourage the social and civic participation of all residents. Their role in building connections across neighbourhoods and intergenerational understanding and trust, is critical to strengthen community resilience, wellbeing and belonging.

Delivering on our CSP objectives

- 1.6 Build on a sense of community and wellbeing.
- 1.7 Encourage a broad and rich celebration of our local culture and significant heritage.
- 2.1 Value, protect and enhance our historic built environment as well as our relationship to Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal history.
- 3.5 Celebrate our creativity and cultural expression.
- 4.2 Encourage an informed community.
- 4.4 Build strong relationships and shared responsibilities.

Community insights:

Over three-quarters of survey respondents (83.65%) agreed or strongly agreed that community facilities support community connections and increases understanding.

Almost three-quarters of survey respondents agreed or strongly agree that community facilities are important to share our local stories, culture, and history. Workshop participants also discussed the importance of designing open spaces, and social infrastructure in a way that celebrates the region's heritage, local community, and environment.

There was a mix of views regarding the current visibility of Dharug and Darkinjung culture and stories within the Hawkesbury LGA – 28.8% felt Dharug and Darkinjung Culture is visible and reflected, but an almost equal number of respondents, (27.8%) disagreed.

The opportunity for more public representation and pride in Aboriginal Culture was a consistent theme that emerged through engagement with local Aboriginal people. This included representation in public spaces, local council buildings and broader social infrastructure.

Most agreed or strongly agreed that having open spaces, playgrounds, sporting, and recreation facilities is a great way to bring the community together and getting to know each other.

Community facilities aren't just buildings, they represent a sense of place and identity.

– Hawkesbury Resident

How this could be implemented?

3.1	Work alongside local Aboriginal people, through culturally appropriate processes, seek opportunities to increase the use of Aboriginal language and place names as well as in the representation and use of artwork in the buildings and social spaces to recognise and celebrate Aboriginal Culture and knowledge.	Connecting to Country, culture and community Supporting connected, resilient communities Encouraging learning, exploration, creativity and productivity
3.2	Where appropriate, explore opportunities to upgrade and activate some of the existing community halls for local cultural and creative uses to create a more distributed access through the LGA of these types of activities and create opportunities for local storytelling and cultural expression.	Connecting to Country, culture and community Supporting connected, resilient communities Encouraging learning, exploration, creativity and productivity
3.3	Given the limited accessibility to the local pools for many and the increasing heat, opportunities to enhance access to the Hawkesbury River for a range of water-based activities, in safe locations that also have adequate infrastructure should be explored.	Supporting connected, resilient communities Care for ourselves and our environment Encouraging learning, exploration, creativity and productivity
3.4	Ensure that the upgrade, renewal and / or redevelopment of social infrastructure is designed with and for the communities that will use it, through co-design processes and community engagement.	Supporting connected, resilient communities Encouraging learning, exploration, creativity and productivity Connecting to Country, culture and community Sustainable governance and sharing resources
3.5	Identify opportunities for the integration of public art within, on or adjacent to community facilities and open spaces that enhance the sense of place, stories and community. Specific programs can be designed to encourage young people, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and can be for works that are temporary or permanent.	Supporting connected, resilient communities Encouraging learning, exploration, creativity and productivity Connecting to Country, culture and community

Meeting community needs requires a whole-of-community response to alleviate the pressure on existing services and infrastructure. Partnerships and advocacy are critical to achieving the Strategy's priorities and actions and moving towards new models that service the needs of our community fairly and viably.

Adapting to changing community needs also means proactively planning for the delivery of infrastructure in growth areas, as these come online. Council should develop a process to identify opportunities for strategic partnership with landholders and developers to deliver needed social infrastructure, especially in the urban growth areas.

Having quality data and information is the key to good strategic planning and decision making. Council need effective and coordinated access and oversight to important data such as utilisation, asset management and maintenance information. Reviewing existing governance arrangements and systems and investing in new systems will support more targeted investments, greater value and outcomes.

Social infrastructure will require regular and ongoing maintenance and replacements costs which will impact on our budget. This Strategy sets-up a transparent framework by which Council's existing assets, particularly in centres and villages north of the River can be assessed. Future capital works should be prioritised to deliver greater accessibility to more people, with a contemporary approach.

The Hawkesbury LGA has a strong and proud culture and this extends to the management and operation of community facilities and sporting fields. However, with the aging population, this requires support for communities to have more coordinated strategic and succession planning if Council are to maintain their reliance on local management committees.

Ongoing engagement is key to community resilience and it encourages community to be able to input ideas to increase usage and be part of shared solutions.

An effective engagement framework helps to get everyone on the same page and working to the same end game. It also informs decisions about the appropriate approaches and tools to undertake the engagement and what training and support is needed to build the community's capacity to be the facilitators of their own local community's resilience.

Delivering on our CSP objectives

- 1.3 Increase the range of local partnerships and plan for the future.
- 1.4 Facilitate the delivery of infrastructure through relevant agencies for Council's own works.
- 3.3 Promote our community as the place to visit, work and invest.
- 4.1 Provide representative, responsive and accountable governance.
- 4.3 Build strong financial sustainability for now and future generations.

Community insights:

The most common and consistent feedback from community was the lack of information or 'loop back' from Council following engagement to the community about the outcomes and next steps.

Increasing costs for hiring community facilities and the lack of affordable spaces was identified as significant barriers for use and access by both the local Aboriginal community and wider Hawkesbury community.

Workshop participants suggested that there are opportunities to increase the use of existing community facilities through the growth of user groups and awareness.

Many Aboriginal community organisations identified over consultation or consultation fatigue as a barrier to participation.

Engagement has identified a clear opportunity for local Council to invest in the rebuilding of strong and long-term relationships with the Aboriginal community.

How this could be implemented?

4.1	Streamlined booking processes, supported by Council across all spaces, including utilisation data collection will improve access to and utilisation of spaces across the portfolio.	Supporting connected, resilient communities Sustainable governance and sharing resources
4.2	Explore opportunities to support the utilisation, sharing and adaption of community halls for local cultural and creative uses to create more distributed access through the LGA of these types of activities and create opportunities for local storytelling and cultural expression.	Sustainable governance and sharing resources Connecting to Country, culture and community Encouraging learning, exploration, creativity and productivity
4.3	Invest in the development of local governance and community engagement to strengthen the strategic thinking about social infrastructure from a Cultural standpoint into the future.	Connecting to Country, culture and community Supporting connected, resilient communities Sustainable governance and sharing resources
4.4	Undertake a comprehensive review of the existing governance arrangements for social infrastructure and open space within the Hawkesbury LGA. This is to align with strategic planning needs, increase diversity in the people engaged and ensure that any governance models are sustainable and financially responsible in the long term.	Supporting connected, resilient communities Sustainable governance and sharing resources
4.5	Improved coordination between Council and local community management committees regarding the prioritisation of minor and major works and minimise the risk of conflicts of interest to avoid duplication (works, funding applications) across related capital works.	Sustainable governance and sharing resources
4.6	Investigate opportunities to increase access to non-Council owned community spaces for public use through shared and joint use arrangements, agreements and equitable fees and charges.	Sustainable governance and sharing resources
4.7	Continue to work with NSW emergency services around utilisation of Council owned social infrastructure in crisis events such as natural disasters.	Sustainable governance and sharing resources Supporting connected, resilient communities



Appendix

- A: Hawkesbury Social Infrastructure Benchmarks
- B: Community Centres and Halls Audit
- C: Hawkesbury Open Space, Parks and Playgrounds
- D: Community Feedback (specific to facilities and spaces)

Appendix A: Hawkesbury Social Infrastructure Benchmarks

Facility	Scale / Type	Approved Benchmark	Source
Community Facilities			
Community Spaces	General	80m² per 1,000 people	Parramatta Community Infrastructure Strategy 2020
Multipurpose Community Centre	Local	1 facility per 20,000 people	Greater Macarthur and Wilton Priority Growth Area Social Infrastructure Assessment
	District	1 facility per 30,000 to 50,000 people	
	Regional	1 facility per 50,000+ people	
Community Meeting	Local	1 space per 6,000 people - Minimum 20m² per space [approx. 14 people]	Penrith Regional City Infrastructure Strategy 2008 [SGS] sourced from GCC.
Cultural Facility/ Space	General	20m² per 1,000 people	Wollongong Community Infrastructure Strategy
	Local	1 space/facility per 30,000 people	Shared Community Facilities Review Report (Mecone 2022 Draft)
	District	1 facility per 60,000 people	
	Regional	1 facility per 150,000 people	
	Major	1 facility per 250,000 people	
Libraries	Generic	31m² per 1,000 people	People Places: A Guide for Public Library Buildings in NSW [State Library of NSW 2019]
	Central	1 facility per 100,000 people	Western Sydney Aerotropolis Draft Social Infrastructure Strategy [2021, GHD for WSPP]
	Branch	1 facility per 20,000 to 35,000 people	
Open Space and Recreation			
Open Space	Generic	4ha per 1000 people	ACT National Capital Commission
Parks	Local	1 space per 1,500 to 3,000 people	PLAWA Community Infrastructure Guidelines 2020
	Community	1 space per 3,000 people	
	District	1 space per 15,000 to 25,000 people	

Facility	Scale / Type	Approved Benchmark	Source
Playspace	Generic	1 space per 2,000 people	PLAWA Community Infrastructure Guidelines 2020
	Local	1 space per 1,500 people	Newcastle Parks and Recreation Strategy 2014
	District	1 space per 10,000 people	
	Regional	1 space per 150,000 people	
Sporting Fields and Outdoor Courts	Generic	1 multipurpose field/oval per 3,500 people	PLAWA Community Infrastructure Guidelines 2020
	Cricket	1 oval per 5,000 to 8,000 people	
	Soccer	1 pitch per 4,000 to 6,000 people	
	AFL	1 oval per 6,000 to 8,000 people	
	Rugby	1 field per 5,000 people	Newcastle Parks and Recreation Strategy 2014
	Generic	1 multipurpose outdoor court per 10,000 people	PLAWA Community Infrastructure Guidelines 2020
	Netball	1 court per 5,000 people	
	Basketball	1 court per 3,000 to 4,000 people	
	Tennis	1 court per 8,000 people	Tennis Australia (2018)
	Athletics	1 facility per 250,000 people	
Aquatic Facilities	Local	1 facility per 30,000 people	Parramatta Community Infrastructure Strategy 2019 Parks and Leisure Australia 'Guidelines for Community Infrastructure, 2012'
	District	1 facility per 75,000 people	
	Regional	1 facility per 150,000	
Indoor recreation	District	1 multipurpose facility per 50,000 to 100,000 people	Parramatta Community Infrastructure Strategy 2019 PLAWA Community Infrastructure Guidelines 2020
	Regional	1 multipurpose facility per 250,000 [combined with aquatic facilities]	
Adventure Recreation	Local	1 skate/pump track facility per 5,000 – 10,000 people (aged 5-24 years)	Parks and Leisure Australia, Guidelines for Community Infrastructure 2012
	District	1 skate/pump track facility per 25,000 people	
	Regional	1 skate/pump track facility per 150,000 people	
Outdoor Youth Plaza	Regional	1 facility per 50,000 people [aged 5-25 years]	Randwick Open Space and Recreation Needs Study 2020

Appendix B: Community Centres and Halls Audit

A high level audit of the existing community facilities has been undertaken to gain a better understanding of the type of community facility, what activities they currently support, and the function, design and quality of the facility.

A physical assessment was undertaken for some of the facilities, however, due to the 2022 flood events, some facilities were not available within the assessment time frame. Therefore, an assessment from the outside supplemented by desktop research and the engagement discussions was used.

This community facilities audit and assessment was intended to be a high level analysis and was not intended to be a detailed asset condition and quality assessment.

This was compiled from Council's spatial data and existing open space and recreation data (where provided), and desktop review of information available online. The following provides a summary of all Council owned community facilities, the spaces and amenities provided and the types of community organisations and/or activities regularly undertaken at the facilities.

Multipurpose Community Facility

North Richmond Community Centre opened in November 1985. Managed by North Richmond Community Centre Inc. and owned by Hawkesbury City Council.

The three centres make up the North Richmond Community Complex. The Community Centre has two large halls, meeting room, a large foyer, a kitchen and office spaces.

In 2003 the Youth Centre, known by local young people as NRGY (North Richmond Generation Youth), was built. The Youth Centre has a hall and two offices, one at the Music Studio for the Music School program.

The Chas Perry Hall is the Fun Factory Out of School Hours Care Service for primary school aged children.

They are set in a peaceful environment, surrounded by greenery, with a playground right next to it and only 5 minutes walk from North Richmond Shopping Centre. All buildings are well maintained and have plenty of parking.

Building Spaces and Amenity

- Staffed Centre
- Hall 1 [50 people]
- Hall 2 [50 people]
- 2x meeting rooms/ office spaces [10 people]
- Youth Hall [35-40 people]
- Chas Perry Hall [OOSH - 45 places]
- Large fenced outdoor space
- Disability access
- Full kitchen
- On site parking

Facility Utilisation

This is a leased facility, which hosts a range of activities for families, children and young people and health and social programs and groups. Organisations include:

- Hawkesbury Community Outreach's 'Mobile Minders'
- Paint Hawkesbury REaD
- Fun Factory Out of School Hours Care Service
- North Richmond Youth Project
- Cafe Connections Project [pop-up Cafe]



2 North West Disability Services [Opal Cottage]

46 Bourke Street, Richmond

A purpose built facility developed in partnership with the North Richmond Community Bank (Bendigo Bank), "The Richmond Cub", Rotary Clubs of the Hawkesbury and Hawkesbury City Council. The facility is located 50m from East Richmond Station, a 5-minute walk from North Richmond Shopping Centre with a playground right next door.

North West Disability Services is a non-profit community organisation established in 1982. The NWDS also manages 'The Secret Garden' a not-for-profit 'Community Hub' located on 15 acres at the Western Sydney University campus in Richmond. The focus of the garden is to provide a space that draws community groups, organisations, and individuals from all walks of life together in a welcoming environment.

Building Spaces

Disability Support Facility

- Staffed Centre
- Large multipurpose area
- Kitchenette facilities
- Program rooms and spaces
- Fenced outdoor space
- Disability access
- On site parking

Facility Utilisation and Amenity

This is a facility owned and run by a not for profit organisation. The facility hosts a range of activities specifically for people with disability including social activities, arts, health and wellbeing, life skills and specialist and support programs.



20 West Market Street, North Richmond

Multipurpose Community Facility

Richmond Neighbourhood Centre was built by Hawkesbury City Council for use by the local community. This is a Council owned facility, with Richmond Community Services Inc, (which is made up of local and interested people who are also financial members), is responsible for the governance of the centre and the employment of a manager of the staff to assist in providing services to the local community.

Merana Aboriginal Community Association for the Hawkesbury Inc. is the first Aboriginal organisation in the Hawkesbury LGA. Merana was incorporated in 2003 to support all Aboriginal people in the community, give Aboriginal people a voice and to raise awareness of Aboriginal issues. Their objective is to develop, support and implement programs, positions and resources that meet the needs identified by the Aboriginal people.

Building Spaces		Facility Utilisation and Amenity	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staffed Centre Hall 1 [50-60 people] Meeting room Hireable Office spaces 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disability access and amenities Commercial kitchen Heating and cooling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Merana Aboriginal Community Association for the Hawkesbury Inc. Before & After School & Vacation Care Hawkesbury Neighbourhood Aid 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Asuria Employment Service Hawkesbury Amusement & Sports Club Windsor Bridge Club Parents Connect



114 March Street, Richmond

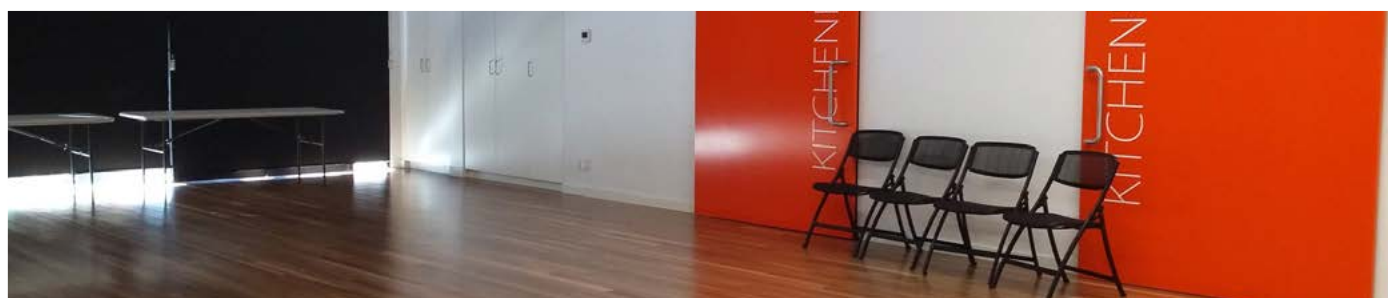
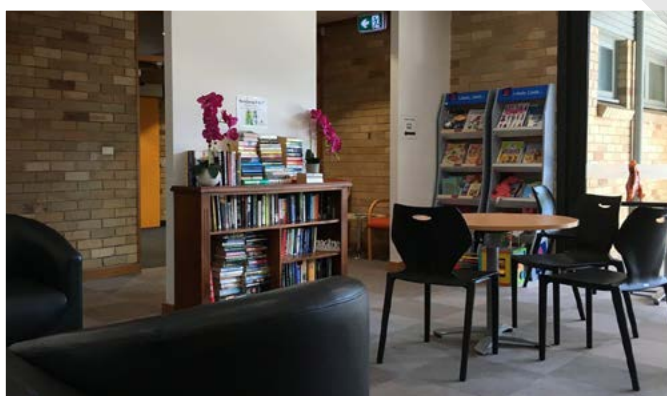
Multipurpose Community Facility

Hawkesbury Leisure and Learning Centre is a new facility, which opened in 2016 and is located in the heart of the Richmond town Centre, close to the shopping precinct, the train station and across from Richmond Oval/Park.

The multi-purpose activity spaces include smaller meeting and consultation rooms, a wet-area/art studio and a dividable activity hall with a sprung-wooden floor to accommodate exercise classes, dancing and other physical activities. The activity hall also has a removable wall allowing for one large open space. Each of the activity spaces has a storage room and kitchenette.

The centre also has a senior's café, an informal lounge and reading area, a small audio-visual theatrette and technology room. Amenities are modern and spacious, including ladies, men's and disabled toilet, shower and a nappy changing room. Several double glass doors lead onto a covered courtyard area. There is a designated drop off zone, for delivery of large equipment.

Building Spaces		Facility Utilisation and Amenity
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staffed Centre Multiple and flexible spaces [up to 200 ppl] Meeting and consultation rooms Large hall space 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disability access and amenities AV equipment Sprung floor and wet areas Storage Kitchen spaces 	<p>This is a Council owned facility that is leased and managed by Peppercorn Services Incorporated. The facility hosts family support programs, community development and groups. Key partner organisations are Macquarie Community College, Hawkesbury Connect Interagency, Hawkesbury Action Network Against Domestic Violence and Redress Support Services – Women's Cottage. More than 20 community groups use the Centre each month.</p>



Greenhills Way, South Windsor

Community Facility

The South Windsor Family Centre is the location of the Peppercorn Services Inc's Children & Families team and the focus of the activities is with children, young people and families. The South Windsor Family Centre has supported playgroups providing play and learning opportunities for children and their families – mums and dads, grandparents, and carers of children from birth up to 6 years. They also provide practical workshops for parents to build their skills, supporting school students with science and educational workshop and school starter programs.

The centre has a large community hall and meeting room with adjoining kitchen area that is available for hire by the community. The centre is located within the South Windsor sporting precinct, close to the PCYC, the Hawkesbury Sports Council office and various sporting fields and courts.

Building Spaces

- Staffed Centre
- Large Hall
- Meeting room
- Office space
- Enclosed outdoor space
- Children's play space
- Disability access and amenities
- Kitchen facilities
- AV equipment

Facility Utilisation and Amenity

This is a Council owned facility that is leased and managed by Peppercorn Services Incorporated. The facility hosts family support programs, activities and programs for babies, children and young people. The facility is older but well maintained and has a generous outdoor space to expand the capacity of the indoor areas.



6 Bilpin District Hall

Bells Line of Road, Bilpin

Stand alone Community Hall

The Bilpin District Hall was upgraded in 2020, which included the installation of retractable shade structures. In 2022, an additional upgrade included a new sprinkler system, heavy duty door and window screens, door upgrades, and a 120,000L water storage tank and pump for use during bushfires.

A 10kW solar energy system, awning and storage extension, and a community message board were also constructed. A community artwork project was also installed in the playground – a mural of tiles designed by local residents expressing their feelings and emotions around the fire and their recovery.

The Hawkesbury Community Outreach Services runs a mobile preschool (ages 3–5yrs) Thursday–Friday, 9am–3pm during school terms at this centre. The hall also hosts the Bilpin Markets every Saturday. It runs a range of community programs, local cultural activities, and is also used for government information and exhibitions, including as a Polling Booth and as a staging area in times of emergencies (i.e. bush fires).

Building Spaces		Facility Utilisation and Amenities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unstaffed • Single Hall [100 people] • Kitchen [Domestic] • Disability access 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outdoor space with shade structures • Community garden • On site parking 	<p>This is a Council-owned, community committee managed facility. The facility hosts a local farmers market every Saturday and is primarily used for community activities. Recent upgrades have updated the look and feel of the facility and made it more fire resilient.</p>



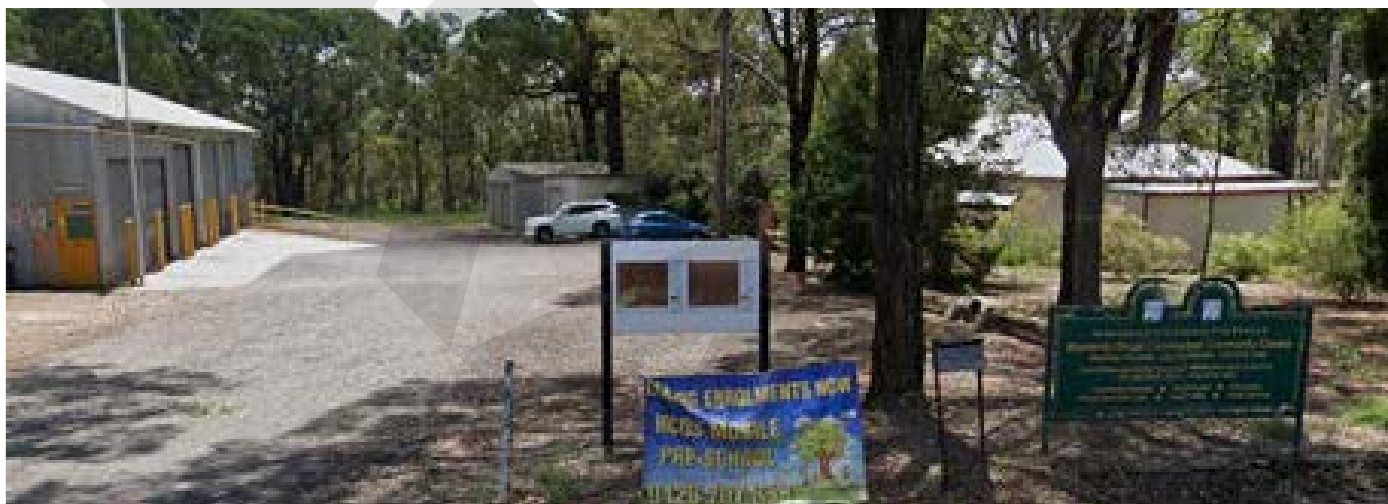
227 Blaxlands Ridge Road, Kurrajong

Stand alone Community Hall

The Blaxlands Ridge Community Centre has two halls and a meeting room available for hire for with capacity for up to 110 guests. It is located next to the Blaxland Ridge Tennis Courts and Rural Fire Service Shed on Blaxlands Ridge Road.

The centre has a fully enclosed children's play area is located beside one of the halls. The Hawkesbury Community Outreach Services runs a mobile preschool (ages 3-5yrs) Monday-Wednesday, 9am-3pm during school terms at this centre.

Building Spaces		Facility Utilisation and Amenity
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unstaffed Capacity 110 people [2 halls and meeting room] Kitchen [Domestic] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enclosed play area On site parking Disability access 	<p>This is a Council-owned and managed facility primarily used for local community hire for community-led activities. HCOS does run a mobile pre-school weekly at this venue. Appears to be well maintained, although building and equipment are showing signs of age.</p>



8 Bligh Park Neighbourhood Centre

4 Sirius Road, Bligh Park

Stand alone Community Hall

The Bligh Park Neighbourhood Centre, was built in 1987 and is located next to the Bligh Park Shopping Centre. The main hall has capacity for up to 80 people and has a room divider to split the area, (if required) and a lounge area for 7 to 10 people.

The centre has an outdoor children's play area, community garden and multipurpose court. The hall has a domestic kitchen and two serveries facing into the hall. Amenities include ladies, men's and accessible toilets and a nappy changing area.

The adjacent car park provides parking for 40 vehicles, with additional street parking at the front of the centre.

Building Spaces		Facility Utilisation and Amenity
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staffed Main Hall [80 ppl] Meeting Room [10 ppl] Kitchen [Domestic] AV equipment Outdoor space 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Multipurpose court [basketball and soccer] Skateable space Covered outdoor areas Children's play space Community garden On site parking 	<p>This is Council-owned, and managed by Bligh Park Community Services Inc. (BPCSI). The facility appears to be well maintained, providing a quality community space. The centre has a high roof set with windows providing natural lighting. The centre has fans and heaters for cooling and heating. A covered space is provided outdoors and can be used for activities, BBQs etc. The facility is utilised for a combination of regular programs and activities to one off community hire of hall and meeting rooms.</p>



9 Tiningi Youth Centre and Meeting Rooms

Colonial Drive, Bligh Park

Stand alone Community Hall

The Tiningi Youth Hall was built/opened in 1994 and is located within a natural bushland setting. The main hall has capacity for up to 150 people, while the meeting room, can seat up to 30 people and is suitable for small to medium groups.

The buildings also have generous outdoor spaces, which include shaded areas and an outdoor basketball court, which has limited shade.

The venue provides ladies, men's and accessible toilets, a nappy changing room, fans and heating for cooling and warming in the hall with parquet flooring in the main hall. The main hall provides a larger kitchen and meeting room with a smaller kitchenette style equipment. Access gates provide easy street delivery of large equipment.

Building Spaces

- Staffed
- Main Hall [150 ppl]
- Meeting Room [30 ppl]
- Kitchen [Domestic] and servery to main hall
- Outdoor space with basketball court
- On site parking
- Disability access

Facility Utilisation and Amenity

This is Council-owned, and managed by Bligh Park Community Services Inc. (BPCSI). The facility appears to be well maintained, with updated amenities, light and airy spaces, providing a quality youth-focused space. The hall's high roof allows for natural lighting and the double glass doors lead onto a flat terrace and fenced grass area providing an increased capacity with the indoor/outdoor space.



Stand alone Community Hall

The Bowen Mountain Community Hall is located in Bowen Mountain Park within a natural bushland setting. The hall itself reflects its natural surroundings, with the design reminiscent to that of a log cabin, with the use of split logs.

The hall is one main room of approximately 78m² and provides a small serving kitchen (hot water urn, no cooking) and cooling/heating. Male, female and disabled toilet facilities are provided outside the rear of the hall which have limited opening times. The hall relies on tank water.

The hall overlooks the children's play area and the park which provides picnic tables and outdoor BBQs. There are lockable gates at the access points to the park and community hall.

Building Spaces

- Unstaffed
- Single Hall [capacity 30-60 ppl]
- Kitchen [serving only with hot water urn]
- Disability amenities
- Outdoor space
- On site parking

Facility Utilisation and Amenity

This is Council-owned and managed by the Bowen Mountain Park Management Committee [voluntary]. While the facility is basic, it appears to be well maintained. It being co-located in the park means that the capacity and use can expand into the outdoor areas. The look and feel of the facility is in keeping with the local environment and community.

It is one of Council's community hub locations with activities every Monday including exercise classes, playgroup, arts and craft, skills and once a month a Service NSW and Service Australia hub.



Stand alone Community Hall

Horrie Eley Community Hall is located in a bushland setting beside the Colo Heights Rural Fire Brigade shed and Colo Heights Public School in Colo Heights Reserve. The Hall is a single hall with capacity for up to 55 people.

In 2022, the hall and surrounding recreation precinct was upgraded to be more fire resilient with a new roof ceiling, painting, sprinkler system, heavy duty screens on doors and windows, door upgrades and a 120,000L water storage tank and pump for community use during bushfires. The toilet and kitchen was also upgraded, a solar power system was added, and air conditioning installed. The adjoining recreation precinct also got a new multi-sports court, replacement of the tennis shelter, and improvements to the picnic area and oval.

A community artwork project was also installed on the hall – a mural of tiles designed by local residents expressing their feelings and emotions around the fire and their recovery.

Building Spaces		Facility Utilisation and Amenity
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unstaffed Capacity 55 people [1 hall] Kitchen [Domestic] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On site parking Disability access Bushfire resilient 	<p>This is a Council-owned and managed facility primarily used for local community hire for community-led activities. It is one of Council's community hub locations with activities every Thursday including exercise classes, playgroup, arts and craft, skills and once a month a Service NSW and Service Australia hub.</p>

Stand alone Community Hall

The East Kurrajong School of Arts was officially opened in 1924. The stage was added and a piano purchased in 1925, the super-room being added in 1926.

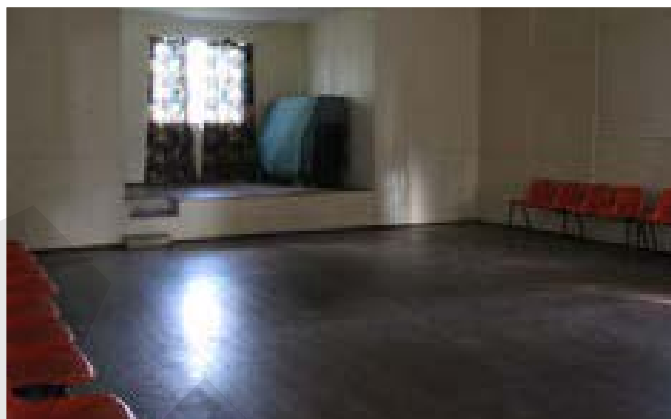
The hall today has one main hall area, with a small stage and dance floor (110.6m²), supper room and kitchen (88m²). It is co-located with Stanley Park and the East Kurrajong RFS Shed. There is also a children's play space to the rear of the hall. The hall hosts weekly exercise and yoga classes and a monthly twilight market. They host an open day the first Tuesday of each month.

Building Spaces

- Unstaffed
- Capacity 55 people [1 hall]
- Kitchen [Domestic]
- On site parking
- Disability access
- Bushfire resilient

Facility Utilisation and Amenity

This is a Council-owned and managed facility primarily used for local community hire for community-led activities. It is one of Council's community hub locations with activities every Thursday including exercise classes, playgroup, arts and craft, skills and once a month a Service NSW and Service Australia hub.



Stand alone Community Hall

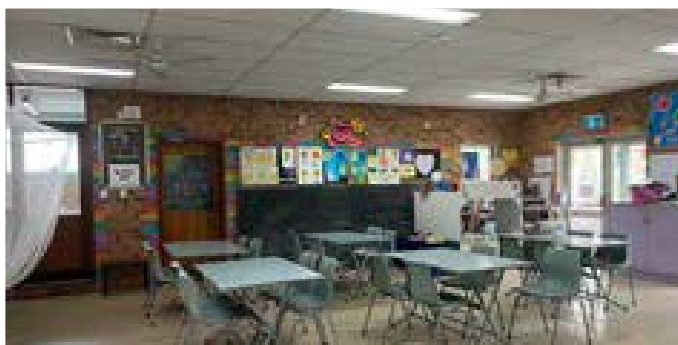
The Glossodia Community Centre is located next to the Glossodia Shopping Centre and Woodbury Reserve.

The centre has one main hall available for hire. This hall is a large space with natural light and its own entrance, verandah and access to a backyard with play equipment. The capacity of this hall is approximately 60 people seated.

The second hall centre is used for the Glossodia OOSH, which has access to its own enclosed play area. The centre has two office/meeting spaces and a small entrance foyer. It also has two smaller spaces, that are currently being used as a food bank and storage and the second as a space for young people.

Other facilities available are a fully equipped domestic scale kitchen, providing cooking facilities, modern amenities, heating and cooling and disabled access. This will also be upgraded as part of the Jacaranda development.

Building Spaces		Facility Utilisation and Amenity
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staffed Main Hall [60 ppl] Meeting Room [30 ppl] Small space [storage and food bank] Small youth space [10 ppl] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kitchen [Domestic] AV equipment Two enclosed childrens play areas On site parking Disability access 	<p>This is Council-owned, and managed by the Glossodia Community Information and Neighbourhood Centre Inc. which is a local volunteer management committee. The facility is well maintained, providing high quality amenity and is highly accessible. The stand alone building being used as the space for young people is old and in need of an upgrade. It hosts a variety of regular free programs for children, young people and adults, and paid activities such as exercise and dance (which the main hall has full length mirrors for).</p>



Stand alone Community Hall

The Kurrajong Community Centre is located in McMahon Park, co-located with a large oval, and enclosed children's play space. The wrap around verandah also provides an outdoor, covered space for activities, which expands the capacity of the inside environment.

This facility is the 'homebase' of the Hawkesbury Community Outreach Services Organisation. The primary activities are those run by HCOS including before and after school care, family support services, educational programs for young people and general community support and development activities, including seniors coffee mornings, arts and exercise activities.

Building Spaces	Facility Utilisation and Amenity
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staffed • Single Hall [100 ppl] • Kitchen [domestic] • Disability access and amenities • Outdoor space, including access to children play space • On site parking 	<p>This is a Council-owned, facility, managed by Hawkesbury Community Outreach Services (HCOS), a not for profit organisation with a voluntary Management Committee. The facility is well maintained and provides high amenity. It being co-located in a park setting means that the capacity and activities can expand into the outdoor areas. Utilisation is primarily related to HCOS activities and those related to individual hire.</p>



346 Boundary Road, Maraylya

Stand alone Community Hall

Maraylya Hall is co-located with Maraylya Park, which has a large playing oval, and recently upgraded tennis courts (available for separate hire). The facility is a single hall with a small kitchen, verandah area and an enclosed play area and outdoor space, with seating and a small, unshaded hard standing area. The hall toilet block was upgraded in 2021.

Building Spaces		Facility Utilisation and Amenity
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unstaffed • Capacity 100 people • Kitchen [Domestic] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small playspace • On site parking • Disability access 	<p>This is Council-owned and managed by the Maraylya Progress Association. The centre is not available for functions such as 18th and 21st birthday parties, high school after parties and 'rages'. While the facility is an older building, it is well maintained and provides adequate amenity. It is also well located being part of a wider community area with Maraylya Park.</p>



1 Phillip Place, McGraths Hill

Stand alone Community Hall

McGraths Hill Community Centre is located behind the McGraths Hill shops. The community centre has available for hire, a larger main hall and two smaller spaces suitable for small meeting or gatherings.

The facility has a fenced outdoor area that can be used as a children's play area and the main hall has direct access to the undercover verandah area, which provides additional activity space. The facility is fully accessible including ramp entry and wheelchair accessible toilet and has a small kitchen space (no cooking facilities) and serving counter.

Building Spaces	Facility Utilisation and Amenity
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unstaffed • Main Hall [100 ppl] • Two Meeting Room [10 ppl each] • Kitchenette • Outdoor space • Disability access • On site parking 	<p>This is Council-owned, and managed by Council. The hall appears to be well maintained, with good amenity and basic, updated facilities providing a quality community space. The covered verandah and fenced outdoor space allow for increased capacity of the facility. The primary use of the venue is for community events and functions. Co-located with the local shops provides a local community focal point.</p>



23 Bosworth Street, Richmond

Local community facility

Hawkesbury Skills Incorporated has care and control of the Hawkesbury Skills Centre, located in Richmond Town Centre, within easy walking distance of public transport. Hawkesbury Skills Incorporated is run by a volunteer committee, who facilitates the use of the premises by many community based non-profit organisation's for the benefit of the community.

The facility has two spaces available for hire; meeting room (30 chairs) and tutorial room (15 chairs), off-street parking, verandah, kitchen and amenities. Activities include things such as a Mens Shed, U3A for education and social activities, education for driving offenders, Historical and Art Society, local church use, Boxing Club and various community activities.

Building Spaces	Facility Utilisation and Amenity
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small meetings rooms (up to 20 ppl est.) • AV equipment • Mens Shed (tools and machinery) • On site parking • Disability access 	<p>The Centre is on crown land, and managed by Hawkesbury Skills Inc. The facility is a small, older cottage that has been adapted for community use. The site has an outdoor shed used for the range of making and building activities by the Hawkesbury Mens Shed.</p>



Community/Performing Arts Facility

The Richmond School of Arts is located next to Richmond Park and across the road from the Richmond Library in the heart of Richmond Town Centre. It is a multi-functional complex supporting an extensive range of community activities, predominantly arts and cultural activities - the Richmond Players, has staged performances here continuously since 1954. The building was constructed and opened in 1866 by the Richmond Literary Institute. The RLI Trustees (volunteer members), continue to be responsible for the management and operation. The facility has three hireable spaces:

The Ron Rizzoli Theatre (135m²) with state-of-the-art lighting system, sound system, air-conditioning, retractable back screen with projector, piano, stage with Proscenium arch, an acoustic ceiling as well as its own foyer and box office.

The Murray Wing (146m²) which is a more recent addition that has a sprung dance floor, full gallery lighting with audio-visual system, a large commercial kitchen, piano and is air-conditioned. Commercial kitchen facilities and rear access for caterers.

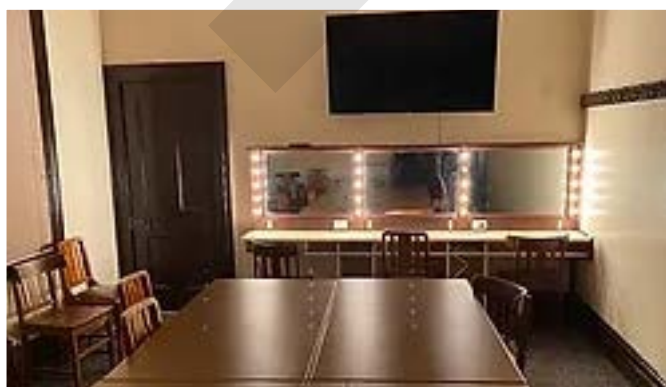
The Meeting/Green Room that is a smaller multipurpose spaces used for meetings, small group activities or as a space for performers to prepare.

Building Spaces

- Unstaffed
- Theatre space [168 ppl]
- Event space [120 ppl]
- Meeting space [25-30 ppl]
- Performance lighting and sound equipment
- AV equipment
- Commercial kitchen
- Disability access and amenities
- Off street parking

Facility Utilisation and Amenity

This facility is owned and managed by the Richmond School of Arts Trustee Board. The building is listed as a local heritage item and is well maintained. It is part of a community hub in the Richmond Town Centre, with Richmond Park/Oval and Richmond Library in close proximity. This facility functions predominantly as a district cultural facility with the Hawkesbury LGA and provides the amenity and facilities that are required for performing arts activities.



Stand alone Community Hall

The St Albans School of Arts was built by local residents in 1936 and located in the village of St Albans, a short walking distance from St Albans Park. The facility provides a single hall that has a small stage area. The facility provides a small domestic style kitchen and disabled access.

In 2022, fire resilience improvements were made at the hall with the installation of a new sprinkler system, heavy duty door and window screens, and door upgrades. A 10kW solar energy system, air conditioning, new stairs and a retaining wall were also installed. Further funding has been awarded to upgrade the hall to “create a refuge and social hub in Macdonald Valley” and to enhance the cultural life of the community.

Building Spaces	Facility Utilisation and Amenity
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unstaffed • Hall [80-150 ppl] • Kitchen [Domestic] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On site parking • Disable access <p>This is a Council-owned hall, managed by the St Albans School of Arts Hall Committee. The facility is primarily used for local community hire for community-led activities. The simple corrugated iron exterior, is reminiscent of a colonial heritage. It is one of Council's community hub locations with activities every Friday including exercise classes, arts and craft, digital literacy and mental health support and once a month a Service NSW hub.</p>



531 Wilberforce Road, Wilberforce

Stand alone Community Hall

The Wilberforce School of Arts was opened in 1930, and comprises a large hall with a stage and a smaller side annex. It has a domestic style kitchen (with cooking facilities), and servery. Access through the kitchen leads to a back patio and a small enclosed outdoor space. Access for loading can be done via a driveway to the side of the hall. There is evidence of recent upgrades to the hall.

Building Spaces

- Unstaffed
- Hall [80-120 ppl]
- Kitchen [Domestic]
- Small stage
- Covered outdoor area
- Enclosed green space

Facility Utilisation and Amenity

This is Council-owned, and managed by the local volunteer management committee. It appears to be well maintained, providing a quality local community space.

It is one of Council's community hub locations with activities every Wednesday including exercise classes, arts and crafts, digital literacy and mental health support and once a month a Service NSW and Service Australia hub.



320 George Street, Windsor

Community meeting space

Peppercorn Place is located in the Windsor Town Centre, part of a community precinct anchored by the Deerubbin Centre. Peppercorn Place is the location for the coordination of a range of activities from Peppercorn Services Incorporated such as community transport, NDIS support coordination and emergency preparedness. There are several offices located in Peppercorn Place which are also available for long term hire. Peppercorn Place is wheelchair accessible, has onsite parking and a small enclosed, shaded outdoor space with seating and a small children's play area.

Building Spaces and Amenity		Facility Utilisation and Quality
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staffed • Office spaces • Disability access 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shaded, enclosed outdoor space • On site parking 	<p>This is a Council owned facility that is leased and managed by Peppercorn Services Incorporated. The facility is primarily used as office space for community organisations and some of the coordination of functions for Peppercorn Services activities. It is well located, and highly accessible.</p>

54 Thornbill Way, Yarramundi

Stand alone Community Hall

The Yarramundi Community Centre is co-located in the Thornbill Way Reserve and adjacent to playing fields and Nepean Park. It is set at the heart of the residential area of Yarrmundi.

The community centre has a the main hall [95m²] and a smaller office area. It provides a large domestic style kitchen space with cooking facilities, internal and external storage facilities and male and female amenities with a disabled access toilet. The centre also provides additional space with a substantial covered verandah area, which is directly accessible from the main hall and overlooks the fenced outdoor green space that can be used as a children's play area.

Building Spaces	Facility Utilisation and Amenity
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unstaffed • Hall [80-100 ppl] • Office space • Kitchen [domestic] 	<p>This is a Council owned and managed hall. The centre appears to be well maintained, providing a quality community space for local residents. Co-located with the sporting field and parkland, it provides substantial open space to compliment the use and amenity of this hall.</p>





Appendix C: Hawkesbury Open Space, Parks and Playgrounds

Open Spaces and Parks

Location	Name	Hierarchy	Size (ha)	Ownership	
Bilpin	Bilpin Oval	District	11.2	NPWS	Co-located with Bilpin Hall
Bilpin	Bilpin Park	District	6.8	Crown	
Blaxlands Ridge	Blaxlands Ridge Crown Reserve and Community Centre	Community	1.6	Crown	
Bligh Park	Strang/Youl Place Reserve	Community	1.867	Council	
Bligh Park	Birk Place Reserve	Local	0.157	Council	
Bowen Mountain	Bowen Mountain Park	Community	1.233	Council	
Bowen Mountain	Bowen Mountain Road Reserve	Local	0.614	Council	
Cattai	Cattai Bridge Reserve	Community	2.466	Crown	
Colo	Colo Park (Part Morans Rock Reserve)	Local	0.688	Crown	Canoe access to Colo River
Cumberland Reach	Cumberland Reach Reserve	Community	3.237	Council	
Cumberland Reach	Holmes Drive Reserve	Community	2.368	Council/ Crown	
East Kurrajong	Stanley Park	Community	1.854	Crown	Co-located with East Kurrajong School of the Arts. Soccer posts, no lines
Ebenezer	Charles Kemp Recreational Reserve	Regional	26.930	Council	Park and Bushland
Ebenezer	Ebenezer Park	Local	0.963	Crown	No Park infrastructure provided
Freemans Reach	Freemans Reach Reserve	Local	0.432	Crown	Tennis Court and Multi Use Court
Freemans Reach	Panorama Crescent Reserve	Local	0.076	Council	
Freemans Reach	Streeton Lookout	Community	2.586	Council	Park and Bushland
Glossodia	Ian Street Reserve	Local	0.070	Council	
Glossodia	Mitchell Park	Local	0.063	Council	
Glossodia	Grand Parade Reserve	Local	0.056	Council	
Glossodia	Chestnut Drive Reserve	Local	0.056	Council	Park and Bushland
Glossodia	Golden Valley Drive Reserve	Local	0.416	Council	

Location	Name	Hierarchy	Size (ha)	Ownership	
Hobartville	Hereford Street Reserve	Local	0.099	Council	
Hobartville	Tarragen Avenue Reserve	Local	0.499	Council	
Hobartville	Rutherglen Avenue Reserve	Local	0.429	Council	
Hobartville	Laurence Street Reserve	Community	4.358	Council	Park and Drainage
Hobartville	Minchin Avenue Reserve	Local	0.070	Council	
Hobartville	(Hughes Avenue Reserve	Local	0.163	Council	
Hobartville	Valder Avenue Reserve	Local	0.226	Council	
Kurmond	Jacqueline Place Reserve	Local	0.408	Council	Steep and difficult to maintain / use
Kurrajong	Overton Road Reserve	Local	0.567	Council	
Kurrajong	Matheson Park	District	6.400	Crown	Park and Bushland – Cultural site of first police station and convict camp and stockades
Kurrajong	Timms Hill Road Reserve	Local	0.452	Council	
Kurrajong	Kurrajong Memorial Park	Local	0.720	Council/ Crown	Event space and central to town
Kurrajong Heights	Shane Place Reserve	Local	0.202	Council	
Kurrajong Heights	Bennet Lane Reserve	Local	0.099	Council	
Kurrajong Heights	Powell Park	Community	1.935	Council	
Kurrajong Heights	Pinedale Place Reserve	Local	0.116	Council	
Leets Vale	Leets Vale Crown Reserve	Community	2.951	Council/ Crown	Private boat launching infrastructure at reserve
Lower Macdonald	Walmsley Road Reserve	Local	0.928	Council	
Lower Portland	Skeleton Rocks Reserve	Community	2.052	Crown	Park and Bushland Old ferry ramp used as boat ramp
Maraylya	Old Catai Oval	District	6.361	Crown	No Park infrastructure
McGraths Hill	Gomboree Reserve	Local	0.481	Council	
McGraths Hill	Gow Reserve	Local	0.116	Council	
McGraths Hill	Ivy Avenue Reserve	Local	0.774	Council	Linear park along Pitt Town Road
North Richmond	Campbell Street Reserve	Local	0.271	Council	Co-located with Scout Hall
North Richmond	Susella Crescent Reserve	Local	0.620	Council	
North Richmond	Hawkesbury Park	District	10.420	Council	Park and Bushland

Location	Name	Hierarchy	Size (ha)	Ownership	
North Richmond	Enfield Avenue Reserve	Local	0.139	Council	
North Richmond	Monti Place Park	Community	1.115	Council	Park and Drainage
North Richmond	Ignatius Park	Local	0.176	Council	
North Richmond	William Street Reserve	Local	0.321	Council	Part of the original alignment of the Kurrajong Rail
North Richmond	Morunga Park	Community	1.121	Council	
Oakville	Clark Reserve	Local	0.101	Council	
Pitt Town	Pitt Town Memorial Park	Local	0.649	Council	
Pitt Town	Bona Vista Park	Community	1.349	Council	
Richmond	Smith Park/Pughs Lagoon	Community	2.960	Council/ Crown	Park and Wetlands - Very popular with visitors and locals for picnics, photography etc
Richmond	(William Cox Drive Reserve)	Local	0.707	Council	Linear reserve along Castlereagh Road, includes former entrance to historic Hobartville Stud.
Richmond	Andrew Town Park	Community	1.536	Council	
Richmond	Pound Paddock	Local	0.420	Council	Part of this park is leased for community services - land area is for park portion only
Richmond	Richardson Park	Local	0.058	Council	
Richmond	Lions Park	Local	0.326	Council	
South Windsor	(Rickaby Park Reserve)	Community	1.366	Council	
South Windsor	South Windsor Park	Community	3.149	Crown	Netball Courts
South Windsor	McLeod Park	Local	0.452	Crown	
South Windsor	Frank Mason Reserve	Community	1.831	Council/ Crown	No facilities provided at this park. Adjacent to Bede Polding College. Park, (Council) Bushland and Electricity Easement (Crown)
South Windsor	(Bradley Road Reserve)	Local	0.861	Council	
South Windsor	(Ham Street Reserve)	Local	0.132	Council	No facilities provided at this park. Opposite Church St Reserve
South Windsor	Bereewan Park	Local	0.935	Crown	Adjacent to train station, no facilities

Location	Name	Hierarchy	Size (ha)	Ownership	
South Windsor	South Windsor Tennis Centre	Community	1.005	Council	Hawkesbury Sports Council Office is in the tennis centre building
Wilberforce	(Copeland Reserve)	Local	1.25	Crown	
Wilberforce	McKenzie Park	Local	0.732	Council	
Windsor	Paine Park	Local	0.082	Crown	

Playgrounds

Playground	Location	Hierarchy	Observations
Bilpin Oval	Bilpin	Local	A brand-new playground with shade sails was constructed and opened in 2022. A new toilet block, picnic shelters and pathways were built and upgrades were made to the car park and oval.
Bounty Reserve	Bligh Park	Local	Small, poor quality play equipment with limited play choice. No shade, access to public amenities. One poor quality seat provided.
Colonial Reserve	Bligh Park	Local	
Bowen Mountain Park	Bowen Mountain	Local	Set within a shaded, tree area of the park. Aged equipment, but well maintained. Diversity of play elements for both active and passive play. Amenities provided, no seating within play area for parents. Primarily for 2-10yrs.
Ham Common	Clarendon	District	Co-located with tourist information centre and is a rest stop for travellers. Ham Common is a linear park where the Clarendon Skate Park is located. Playground is fenced as located on a busy main road (Hawkesbury Valley Way). Play equipment has a transportation theme, which is aging. Swings and climbing elements are better quality, but limited play choices.
Colo Heights Reserve	Colo Heights	Local	Co-located with tennis courts and Colo Heights Hall. Playground area is shaded.
Freemans Reach Tennis Court	Freemans Reach		Co-located with tennis courts, single swing set. No seating or other play equipment.
Macquarie Park	Freemans Reach	District	Located on Hawkesbury Riverbank. Provides range of climbing elements and play choices. A new shade structure and seating within the play area. Small shade cloth structure over the main play element providing some shade. Close to park's public amenities, car parking and the Boathouse Cafe. Primarily for 2-12yrs.
Mitchell Park	Glossodia	Local	
Woodbury Reserve	Glossodia	Local	To be developed as part of the Woodbury Reserve Masterplan upgrades.
Laurence Street Reserve	Hobartville	Local	Small, standard play equipment of average quality with limited play choice. Limited shade from surrounding trees, no public amenities. One seat provided close to play area. Primarily catering 0-5yrs.

Playground	Location	Hierarchy	Observations
Rutherglen Avenue Reserve	Hobartville	Local	Well maintained, standard play equipment providing limited play choice. Little shade offered from surrounding trees, no public amenities. Multiple seat provided in play area and a shaded picnic table close by. Primarily catering 0-5yrs.
Tarragen Avenue Reserve	Hobartville	Local	Located in residential area, provides one swing set and one seat and lighting. No shade or amenities. Large grassed area.
Valder Avenue Reserve	Hobartville	Local	In residential area, provides one swing set and one seat. No shade or amenities.
Kurrajong Memorial Park	Kurrajong	Local	Play equipment appears new, with choice of play. Playground shaded by cloth shade structure. Provides sculptural elements reflecting native bird and animals and climbing elements and sensory elements. Primarily for 2-10yrs.
McMahon Park	Kurrajong	Local	Co-located with Kurrajong Community Centre. Play equipment in good condition. Seating provided in the playground area, though limited shade provided by trees. Playground fenced from the adjoining car park. Primarily catering 0-5yrs.
Powell Park	Kurrajong Heights	Local	Co-located with tennis courts. Play equipment average-poor condition, providing limited play choice. No shading of play area with one table/seat nearby in poor condition. Amenities in average condition.
Maraylya Park	Maraylya	Local	Co-located with tennis courts. Equipment average condition and play choice. No seating or shade. Toilets available. Primarily for 0-5yrs.
Ivy Avenue Reserve	McGraths Hill	Local	Equipment in good condition, limited play choice. Limited shading from surrounding trees, no seating or amenities. Located in residential area, located on main road (Pitt Town Road). Park fenced. Primarily for 0-5yrs.
Hawkesbury Park	North Richmond	District	Located on Hawkesbury Riverbank. Hanna Park Skate Park. No shade or seating provided in conjunction with skate park. Amenities provided, which appear to be new.
Ignatius Park	North Richmond	Local	Irregular shaped park area. Small standard play equipment which appears to be new with some play choice. No shade provided and one poor quality seat. No amenities. Primarily for 2-10yrs for surrounding residents.
Monti Place Park	North Richmond	Local	
North Richmond Park	North Richmond	Local	New looking and diverse equipment offering choice, limited and poor quality seating, shading from trees, within fenced park. No amenities. Primarily for 0-8yrs.
Ploughman Playground	North Richmond (Redbank)	Local	New playground as part of the Redbank development. Primarily climbing and slide/swing elements. Shade structures and seating provided in the play area and at the edges with shade sails over the multiple play areas. Water bubblers, no amenities. Primarily for 0-8yrs.
Yeomans Playground	North Richmond (Redbank)	Local	New playground as part of the Redbank development. Primarily climbing and slide/swing elements. Shade structures and seating provided at the edges with shade sails over the main play area. Water bubblers, no amenities. Primarily for 0-8yrs and older people with outdoor fitness station.

Playground	Location	Hierarchy	Observations
Redbank Village Centre	North Richmond	Local	Will be new playground as part of the Redbank development.
Peel Park	North Richmond	District	New district playground to be developed. Currently local playground with standard, aging equipment with limited play choice. No shade and some poor quality seating at the edges of play space and no amenities on site.
Susella Crescent Reserve	North Richmond	Local	Small playground with standard equipment set within residential area. Provides for some play choice – climbing, swing/slide elements. No shade and one seat provided at the edge of play space. No amenities and location of playspace at the rear of the reserve offers poor passive surveillance.
Bona Vista Park	Pitt Town	Local	
Pitt Town War Memorial Park	Pitt Town	Local	
Andrew Town Park	Richmond	Local	Small playground with standard equipment set within residential area. Provides limited play choice. Maintenance and condition of equipment average. No shade or seating provided. Location of playspace not clearly visible from street, limited passive surveillance.
Icely Park	Richmond	Local	Co-located with playing fields. Provides standard equipment, which are in good condition. No shade over playspace and one precinct table near playspace. Amenities only accessible when sports fields are in operation. Playspace is fenced from road.
Lions Park	Richmond	Local	
Richmond Park	Richmond	District	Small but well utilised playspace. Co-located with Richmond park and behind the Richmond Community Centre. Play equipment is aging and caters primarily for 0-5yrs. Seating available and playspace is well shaded by mature trees.
Bensons Lane Sporting Complex	Richmond Lowlands	Local	Co-located with soccer fields. Provides standard equipment, which are in good condition. No shade over playspace and no seating associated with playspace, although located near small seating area for fields. Amenities only accessible when sports fields are in use. Playspace is located near clubhouse.
Bradley Road Reserve	South Windsor	Local	
Church Street Reserve	South Windsor	Local	Located behind the Hawkesbury Oasis. Small playground set within the larger park area which appears to have been recently upgraded. Provides across multiple areas, climbing and swing elements, with specific equipment for infants. No shade over playspace. Seating located on the edge. Two large shelter with picnic tables and a small amenities block is located in close proximity to the play area. Catering for 0-12yrs.
Frank Mason Reserve	South Windsor	Local	Reserve backs onto Windsor Golf Course. Small playground with standard equipment set within residential area. Provides for some play choice. Limited shade provided by surrounding trees and no seating provided. Primarily for 0-5yrs.

Playground	Location	Hierarchy	Observations
Gosper Park	South Windsor	Local	Small playground with standard equipment set within residential area. Provides for some play choice. No shade and one unshaded seat provided. Primarily for 0-8yrs.
McLeod Park	South Windsor	Local	Located in park across from South Windsor Shops, a small playground with standard equipment set that appears to be new, provides for some play choice. Limited shade over main play area, with two small shelters with picnic tables located at the edge of the play space. A small amenities block is located on the other side of the park from the play area (approx. 60m).
St Albans Park	St Albans	Local	In 2022, a new playground with shade sails was constructed, with picnic shelters, pathways and a conversation circle to honour the history of the St Albans Writers' Festival. A community artwork project was also installed in the playground designed by local residents about the fires and their recovery. Located across from the Settlers Arms and where the St Albans Markets are held monthly.
McKenzie Park	Wilberforce	Local	Small playground with standard equipment set within residential area. Provides for some play choice. Limited shade from surrounding trees with only one seat provided. Primarily for 0-8yrs.
Wilberforce Park	Wilberforce	Local	Small playground set within the larger park area with standard equipment, which is in average condition. Provides for some play choice - climbing, swing/ slide elements. No shade over playspace. A picnic table and shelter located on edge of play space. No amenities close by. Catering for 0-8yrs.
Governor Phillip Park	Windsor	District	Newly upgraded, high quality with diverse equipment and play choice, including some sensory and adventure play (flying fox). Amenities and seating available. Limited shade within playground, but provided for in adjoining park. Primarily catering for 0-8yrs but options for older children.
McQuade Park	Windsor	Local	Co-located with playing fields. Provides standard equipment, which are in average condition. No shade over playspace and one seat at edge of playspace, although located near small rotunda. Amenities only accessible when sports fields are in use. Primarily for 0-5yrs.



Appendix D: Community Feedback

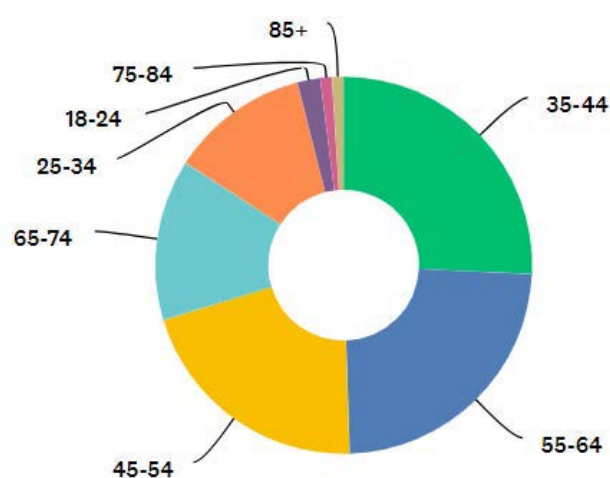
The following provides a summary of the feedback received from the community throughout the engagement from the survey and community pop ups. The feedback is presented by community facility, park, playground or sporting and recreation facility. Please note that not all facilities and spaces received feedback through the various engagement activities.

Online Survey

An online community survey was published on Council's Have Your Say page, and received responses from December 2022 until March 2023. The extended length of time allowed for this survey meant that responses accrued over the Christmas and summer holiday period. The online survey received a total of 135 responses, with a high completion rate of 75%.

About the respondents

- Of the total of 135 responses received, over half (59%) were from people that are active members of a local community organisation.
- While 25% (34) of participants did not identify their gender, the almost half (49% or 66 respondents) that did, identified as female, with 20% (28 participants) male and 5% preferred not to say.
- Over one-quarter (26%) of survey respondents were aged 35–44 years. Respondents aged 55–64 years made up 24% of the total surveys and 21% of survey respondents were aged 45–54 years old.
- Only 1.5% of survey respondents were aged 18–24 years and an additional 1.5% were aged 75+ years old. Respondents aged 25–34 years old constituted only 12% of the total responses received.
- Over three-quarters of respondents were residents of the Hawkesbury LGA (88%), with residents from neighbouring LGA's representing 4% of the total responses received.
- Of the total number of responses received, 3% of survey participants were Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander
- A total of 9% of respondents spoke a language other than English at home. Of the 9 that responded yes, Dutch, Maltese and French were listed as other languages spoken at home.
- A total of 2% of participants said that they have a disability and 9% were carers for someone with a disability.
- Respondents were most likely to live in Bilpin (11.9%), Kurrajong (9.9%), Richmond (8.9%) North Richmond (8.9%), or Windsor (6.9%).



Pie Graph of the age range of respondents
(Source: Q26 online survey via Survey Monkey)



Richmond Pool Pop up
(Source: The Planning Studio)

Community feedback on individual community facilities and open spaces.

(Source: Q7, 12, 17 online survey via Survey Monkey + pop-ups feedback)

Facility / Suburb	Community Feedback
Bensons Complex	<p>Need a non-share field for AFL.</p> <p>Bensons Oval 1 has no disabled parking, poor disabled access from car park to amenities or playing areas i.e. no sealed access.</p> <p>There are no disabled toilet facilities.</p> <p>The facilities are very outdated but it looks like work is getting done finally with grants available.</p> <p>The complex is well maintained and located. Some deciduous trees (so shade in summer, open in winter) off of playing fields and low maintenance garden edging around fence line would improve this complex even further.</p> <p>Establish walking trails between Bensons Lane and RAAF, Richmond to Clarendon.</p>
Bilpin District Hall	<p>Access to bathroom facilities is poor.</p> <p>The hall could have an upgrade to its parking facility. There are lots of pot holes that limits parking.</p> <p>The acoustics in the hall could be improved to allow better use of the stage for events.</p> <p>More "lightweight" collapsible tables for easy assembly for activities in the hall.</p> <p>It's very dated, needs accessible bathrooms and outside awnings.</p> <p>All the facilities at this hall are good, they are currently upgrading various facilities e.g. umbrellas, air conditioning etc.</p> <p>It is fine, but could have better facilities for older people - accessible toilet for example. And can't park very close to the shelter, with no path to get there.</p> <p>The hall is well cared for and the committee that manage it do a great job - it is affordable given the somewhat remote location that only services a very small and spread out community and is unattractive as a destination for residents from more populated suburbs - it could do with a better parking area and lighting, as well as signage.</p> <p>More outside shelter from weather would be better.</p> <p>Terrible bathrooms down steep stairs very dangerous. Bad parking, impossible to book.</p> <p>Unattractive surroundings, bad parking area, and no decent signage of events held in hall.</p> <p>My child attends the preschool there and when we have a chance we attend playgroup. It's very well set out for this, the parking isn't the best for bigger events however. For example, the markets don't have the greatest parking.</p> <p>It is a bush setting, but the access is not great from the car park into the facility. It always looks drab, could do with a face lift. It is not near the town and now there is a pathway that goes there from town centre but doesn't connect any streets where people live so they still have to drive as it is unsafe to walk there, would have been better to extend the pathway from the service station down and to the Bilpin cider place and beyond.</p>
Bilpin Oval	<p>The play area that was newly built with the same funds that St Albans had is considerably smaller and no where near as good.</p> <p>The oval is not mowed or maintained very well. It is a big tourist area and could be a lot better.</p> <p>This is a high visitation spot with irregular mowing, and rubbish pick up. The spot though, is incredible with a bush walk and nature all around.</p>

Facility / Suburb	Community Feedback
Blaxland Ridge Community Centre	The building is not maintained, the lawns need mowing, there is mould growing inside on the roof, and the weeds touch the gutters in some places.
Bona Vista Park	Needs to be repaired – drainage and lawn maintenance are the main issues.
Bounty Reserve	Facility could do with upgrade to kids play area and possibly introduce outdoor gym equipment so adults can workout while kids play.
Brinsley Park	<p>These facilities are in high demand yet have inadequate parking, terrible surface and in times of wet weather are completely unusable.</p> <p>Parking is a key issue, there are often litter and other issues, again no accessible access or bathrooms easy to use.</p> <p>The playing fields need to be upgraded.</p>
Bowen Mountain	<p>It is overall pretty good. Is the only park accessible to me within walking/cycling distance.</p> <p>It is however, not very easy access (lack of footpaths), nor has wider functionality</p> <p>Care of this location is sporadic and rare. The roads to access areas are unsafe.</p> <p>Beautiful place, serene, good facilities.</p> <p>The bark chips on the ground are hard to get a pram around in. Equipment is old.</p> <p>More parking to increase the capacity and usability of the community hall.</p> <p>A new playground.</p>
Colbee Park	<p>Floods frequently, needs better drainage system.</p> <p>No play equipment for kids, who may be there to watch their siblings play sport.</p> <p>One of the few BMX tracks in the area.</p> <p>Needs a toilet block.</p> <p>Serious continual flood damage – have been unable to host any baseball matches in last season. Teams have had to travel elsewhere.</p> <p>Colbee Park needs some upgrading but overall the park has a good view of the main pitch.</p> <p>Needs a dog park and more picnic tables shelter and proper toilet not one unisex toilet.</p>
Colo Heights (Horrie Eley) Hall	<p>Paving needs improving and a rail on the stairs would be a benefit to elderly residents.</p> <p>The direct access to the car park is of concern for children. would recommend maybe a front fenced courtyard.</p> <p>Need another room.</p> <p>Access to the hall is poor due to the gardens.</p> <p>The outside of the hall and park don't look very nice they look over grown and need updating.</p>
Deerubbin Park	<p>Damage during flooding caused delays – fencing etc.</p> <p>The building is no longer fit for purpose and requires major structural redesign for amenities and storage for existing groups that use the grounds and buildings.</p> <p>Accessibility is poor at the moment with the works going on. Inadequate parking when there are sporting events. But otherwise good. Some more covered picnic table areas would be good.</p> <p>Good park could use more kids play equipment.</p> <p>Extension of the walking trail.</p>

Facility / Suburb	Community Feedback
East Kurrajong	New swimming pools in villages.
Ebenezer and Colo River	Need new boat ramps.
Freemans Reach Tennis Courts	Love this facility! Could be improved through better bins. It's a great facility but it needs walking paths to and from as there are barely any in the area.
Governor Philip Park	<p>Its one of the better parks in the Hawkesbury.</p> <p>The park is always maintained well, however since the floods the Upper Hawkesbury Racing Boat Club building has become an eyesore. Congratulations to the council staff who look after the parks and gardens.</p> <p>It would be great if the Governor Phillip Park walk could join up with The Terrace walk from the bridge.</p> <p>There is a lot that needs fixing since the floods.</p> <p>The issue with the sink hole outside of the UHPBC club house, over grown weeds and plants around boat ramp.</p> <p>Poor toilet facilities.</p> <p>The facility is well maintained and fit for purpose. It would be great to see the club house rebuilt sooner rather than later for the club to use and get back to running events that support the local community.</p> <p>Great walking path, river access and boat ramp, fantastic playground for kids, amenities are wonderful.</p> <p>New club house for the Upper Hawkesbury PowerBoat Club.</p> <p>Café to attract visitors.</p> <p>Repairs to the riverbank.</p>
Glossodia Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - It needs fixing up.
Hawkesbury Central Library (Windsor)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There are issues with access into the facility and parking for after hours meetings. - Nice spacious welcoming peaceful, elevator for prams, things to engage the little kids. - Excellent free activity for young children, staff are always friendly, helpful and encouraging. Kids have fun by learning and it's useful to be able to have new content to read or music to listen to without having to purchase books yourself. I'd like to catch the train in but often drive because the trains don't run very often and sometimes they cancel trains last minute. - An Access audit was undertaken covering the Deerubbin Centre in 2021, however very few of the recommendations have been implemented - Beautiful facility.
Hawkesbury Leisure and Learning Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Never any easy parking available. - The rooms echo when attending meetings. - Council need to maintain the building so it stays in good repair.

Facility / Suburb	Community Feedback
Hawkesbury Oasis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Bathrooms are a bit dirty and can be very overcrowded at times - Car park needs shade trees, more indoor seating would be good, cafe needs attention. - It was very well designed for its time, however there is no way to separate the 25m pool from the children's splash pool so the 25m pool is often closed when an "incident" occurs. Needs ramp access into the 25m pool separated from the children's splash area so that the 25m pool doesn't get contaminated and people with a disability and older people can access the 25m pool. - Needs additional spas, sauna and steam rooms. - Not enough parking plus too many disabled parking spots. - Access is ok but it is a long way from my home over 45 minutes (Colo Heights). It would be great to have another pool closer to us. - Its a nice centre that is starting to look tired. With the WestInvest money I hope that it gives it a nice upgrade to city standards. Ventilation on hot indoor days etc. - Too expensive.
Hawkesbury Regional Art Gallery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Excellent being able to bring kids into the activities room and have a free activity for them to do. Also great to allow them to experience culture and see the different exhibits. - Staff are always excellent.
Hawkesbury Regional Museum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lawns are always tidy, close proximity to council chambers, unlike areas elsewhere in the Hawkesbury.
Icely Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Facilities could do with updating. - The park could be improved with better parking, up-to-date signage, and a walking path around the park that leads all the way down the road heading towards Richmond lowlands looking at the nice outlook.
Kurrajong Community Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - It gets very hot in there and one side has no fence so the doors can't be opened when children are there. There's only one toilet. The outdoor space has no shade. - Needs an extension to cope with increasing demand and need for extra space. - Outdoor area (park) needs maintenance. - The grounds and building are well maintained. There is lots of extras, playground, BBQs, air conditioning. - The best part of this facility is used for a daycare/oosh and is not really available for the community due to the large amounts of furniture and toys that are left there when not in use. - The number on the sign to book the venue is invalid.
Macquarie Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Needs public toilets, seating and BBQ facilities. - Add fencing to playground.
Maraylya Hall	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Not many local facilities out that way.
McMahon Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pretty good but the outside toilets need an upgrade. - The park has discarded goal posts that are unsightly and picnic tables and seats need an upgrade. - Toilets ages away from the park. - The park is aged, footpath isn't all the way around. - McMahon park is not an easy park to maintain in my opinion because it is so varied and steep in parts. I always admire the way the current ground keepers provide excellent care of this park and as I visit it daily, I appreciate their efforts to no end. - There's no shade and no enclosed fence. Being right next to the car park it needs an enclosed fence. Parts of it are old and worn. But it needs shade and a fence. - The space is always well maintained, there is a drinking fountain and park there with ample parking. - Used frequently for sport and recreation we spend a lot of time in this space but it is one of the furthest parks away from where we live which is disappointing. - Good park, the play area is getting a little old however.

Facility / Suburb	Community Feedback
McQuade Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Clean tidy and has amenities. - It's badly deteriorated. The newly rebuilt water feature is all dead weeds, rubbish and it stinks. Waterfall is usually turned off, is dirty and unkempt. Very few picnic tables and chairs. This park used to be (30-40 years ago) a well looked after feature park on entry to Windsor town, meeting place for school formals, site for wedding photos, picnic and play space for families. The playground underlay is in very poor condition, there's one seat in poor condition, the key shade tree was cut down and the equipment very dated. Although my granddaughters love going there to see the ducks and play in the playground and I think it needs replacing. - Great location - additional parking would be fantastic and the play ground could use an upgrade. The small pergola by the bowling club needs repairing, toilets could be upgraded and the facilities inside the changing rooms would look great with a new layout and fittings.
Memorial Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There's no play equipment for older kids.
Milham Reserve	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Courts need maintaining, bathrooms need improvement (most don't have a seat). - Every time you try to use the courts you have to sweep glass off them, some form of deterrent to discourage teenagers from sitting at the clubhouse, drinking beer & throwing the bottles around would be great.
Navua Reserve	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Facilities are basic and need to be improved. This site has lots of potential.
North Richmond Community Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - It's a bit tired and needs a good refresh. - It's in a great location and ideal space for the inclusion of all people. Expanding resources would add further value to this existing service. - Great Centre but too expensive for private functions.
Oakville Oval	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There aren't any real parking spaces to cater for the amount of vehicles in football season, the bathrooms aren't well maintained, there isn't accessible footpaths, parking or access. - Car park is atrocious, parking around the oval is terrible and creates dangerous driving situations. There is not enough seats in shade/shelter. The club house discharges sink water onto the ground. The oval itself has no drainage and is unusable after small amounts of rain. And in height of summer is a dust bowl.
Pitt town Tennis Courts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Parking needs improving as well as accessibility and on-site toilets. There should also be more covered/shaded seating and bubblers. - Very well maintained courts, easy to access, limited parking. - Could be more accessible to public.
Powell Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Equipment is aged, tiny shelter and not conducive to play with the hill. - This park has amazing potential in an area that doesn't have a huge number of parks to choose from. It is in need of a face lift at the very least, and with some care could be the most beautiful grassy area for playing and other community activities (rather than a large open weeded space) if the space had some TLC. Some garden spaces or border gardens and plants would also help make this a far more welcoming area.
Richmond Branch Library	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Small space to provide other indoor activities on premises during rainy days. - Friendly staff and helpful in every way. Still maintain the 'country' feel of the Hawkesbury which I've witnessed change over the 70 years I've lived here.
Richmond Community Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The educators thoroughly clean the service on a daily basis, ensuring it is hygienically clean for all users. - The building is dated, but not much can be done about this. We do our best to make it feel welcoming.

Facility / Suburb	Community Feedback
Richmond Oval	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There's no play equipment for older kids. - It is in a great location, and close to many facilities. - New tables would make a picnic more pleasant. - It would be great to have more picnic tables. - Bins are full and rubbish on tables quite often. - The facilities provided at the park are inadequate for the number of people that use it. - The playground needs to be updated. There are fantastic parks in other Council areas and Hawkesbury should improve this amenity. Hawkesbury needs one park that is exceptional that will draw in tourism from surrounding suburbs and boost the local economy. - Parking is an issue around Richmond, with limited parking for those wanting to spend a day with friends at the park. - The kids play area is starting to fall apart & is dirty. - It's surrounded by local businesses, can get there from home by walking or cycling, has public toilets close to the park, which is well shaded by large trees so protected from sun and rain. Paths are wide and user friendly. Kids can play there for hours. Often bump into friends also attending the park by chance. Nice to see many other community members using the park, sitting on the benches, walking their dogs. There's a water station there to fill up bottles or get a drink if we forgot our own. - The playground definitely needs upgrade and maintenance! A look at the new Redbank design and structural playgrounds could help council update and improve this facility. - Great public facility, well maintained. Pathways need topping up. - Oval had been refreshed but grandstand internals need restoration. - I like walking around the oval and sometimes will sit and eat or drink a cuppa. It is a pleasant space.
Richmond Tennis Courts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Centre is in desperate need of an upgrade, the courts have fallen into disrepair. - Many of the courts are run-down and have trip hazards. - The tennis courts are in urgent need of repair while the building needs at least an upgrade to function more adequately. - The court surface is threadbare and unsafe, most courts have lights that don't work and the fences are falling down. The clubhouse is also a trip back to the 1970's. - The Richmond Tennis Centre's building is 50 years old and needs to be upgraded. All the tennis courts, the lighting and fencing need an upgrade to be fit for purpose. - The centre is very run down. The building and courts need a lot of work. The amenities are very outdated.
Richmond School of Arts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - This is an outstanding facility but is totally unaffordable - there are also restrictions on the use of the facility that I think are unfair and require revision - but particularly there are lucrative private businesses that have full time permanent leases on spaces in the School of Arts that should be available to the community. - Love it! Beautiful historical place, wonderful community feel, high quality entertainment, well priced. - one respondent commented that the building itself is great, but their experience with the management committee was not positive. - It's a heritage building so difficult to keep well maintained. - Although a small venue, its history and long-term use for performance and theatre makes it very special. We should be treasuring and maintaining our heritage and showing residents and visitors that we respect and honour our history. This could benefit from sensitive renovation - e.g. the curtains at the entry, the back stage area.

Facility / Suburb	Community Feedback
Richmond Swimming Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The swim centre has a great outdoor open pool and is very clean and inviting with plenty of space. - Like the open air of the site, great water quality. Lacks shade and accessibility to the pool. - Very dated. Needs a face lift and perhaps a bigger pool. Needs a lot more trees planted and green space. A kids water park could be installed. Upgraded membership options and perhaps ability to book a lane for lap swimmers. - The pool is dated, needs a lot more trees and shady areas. Needs a bigger pool due to expanding population. Could open later (e.g. 8pm) for longer during the year and switch on the lights. Could put a water park in for children. - More shade and tables needed. Bathrooms need love. - The facilities at this pool are mediocre compared to surrounding councils. - Slides/water play equipment in other councils are a huge drawing card. We travel to Penrith/St Marys and Springwood to use their facilities as Richmond pools are lack lustre. - With the recent, tragic deaths of many in our local rivers, Hawkesbury council really need to look at providing alternate, safer options for residents to cool down. - Other councils have fantastic amenities, safe lagoon pools (e.g. Southbank Brisbane), water play in parks (Penrith has multiple water play splash parks), slides and bucket play centres at pools (e.g. Penrith/St Marys/Springwood).
South Windsor Family Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Needs to be maintained on the outside of the building to keep it looking fresh and not an old building. Can't be found on a lot of GPS devices with its address.
St Albans School of the Arts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The hall needs an upgrade to ensure it's more accessible – installation of ramps and raising of building to make it more resilient to flooding. - Parking is poor.
St Albans Playground	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - New shade sails need to be re-installed so they don't catch leaf litter. - More lighting for safety.
St Albans Park (and general village)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - New swimming pools in villages. - Need a local library and day care. - Installation of shower blocks at St Albans campsite. - RFS fire shed needs to be upgraded, so electrical equipment can be moved upstairs with truck access on the ground floor + more accessible with ramp instead of stairs.
Stanley Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - It is barely maintained and when it is mowed only sections are mowed. No council input invested in a long time. - A new playground, a concrete walking/cycling track around the edge of the park would be very beneficial to local residents considering we have no footpaths in the area, but want to exercise and let our children play at a park with others.
Tamplin Field	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Needs new updated signage and more shaded, green spaces. Could add outdoor futsal court. Lights should be regularly turned on at night to allow safe use after dark. Should have integrated bicycle tracks connecting the drain opposite to Richmond with bicycle signage. - Needs new signage, better green space, better parking and putting the lights on a night (the lights are there but are not on). Could put outdoor futsal courts in as well. - One respondents commented that they felt it is usually in a bad state, and they reported some significant safety concerns, making it particularly hard to let young children roam freely or creating an uncomfortable and potentially unsafe environment for women. - The fencing is quite bad to keep young kids in (its completely open at the back to the storm water channel). - Better visibility from lights etc could help, also it looks pretty dodgy so if it was cleaned up and made to look nice I think it would do a lot to make this more of a safe family friendly park, its location is right in the middle of Hobartville, next to some small shops and a school so it has great potential.

Facility / Suburb	Community Feedback
Turnbull Oval	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Needs updated amenities and Basketball court. - Would love a park for older kids. - Needs an upgrade desperately. Toilets are very old, dirty and dark, the car park needs to be fixed with marking for car spaces and canteen area is very outdated and small. - A good facility that needs a refresh. Ground maintenance could be improved.
Vinyard Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Close to get to. Parking is a little limited and needs canteen and storage facilities for hirers. - North West Magpies Rugby League train here but when daylight savings start they have to move to another venue as there is no lighting - families then need to travel up to 1/2 hr to a different venue instead of keeping local to Vineyard, which is very convenient for majority of team.
Wilberforce School of the Arts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - It is an old building but has a charm about it and extremely well maintained. - Has so much potential but so old and outdated and no space for guest parking.
Woodbury Reserve	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Needs a netball court and storage. - The redevelopment doesn't include club house or amenities. Could be used as a place of refuge if showers and toilets are available. - The current facility is dated and located down a lane where the road is breaking up so unless you know about it you would think this can't be right. - There are too many steps with no / minimal ramps. - Further measures need to be taken to protect threatened species. - The reserve needs monitoring from destruction by motorbikes.
Woodlands Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Bins need emptying regularly, grass needs better mowing, fencing has totally failed, lighting is extremely poor.
Yarramundi Community Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Drab dated space, not so family friendly as no playground for kids, it's clean and tidy but very ordinary.
Yarramundi Reserve	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Construct a safe footpath/bike lane along Springwood Rd to Yarramundi Reserve. - Poor access for people with disability. - Looks terrible with all the trees pushed over.

	Community / Recreational Facility	Survey Responses
1	Richmond Oval	18
2	Hawkesbury Central Library (Windsor)	15
3	Bilpin District Hall	15
4	Hawkesbury Oasis	15
5	McMahon Park	11
6	Governor Philip Park*	10
7	Richmond Swimming Centre	9
8	Kurrajong Community Centre	8
9	Richmond School of Arts	7
10	Richmond Tennis Courts	7
11	Bowen Mountain	6
12	Tamplin Field	5
13	Bensons Complex	5
14	McQuade Park	5
15	Richmond Branch Library	4
16	North Richmond Community Centre	4
17	Deerubbin Park	4
18	Colbee Park	4
19	Hawkesbury Regional Art Gallery - Deerubbin Centre	3
20	Colo Heights (Horrie Eley) Hall	3
21	Wilberforce School of Arts	3
22	Oakville Oval	3
23	Brinsley Park	3
24	Turnbull Oval	3
25	Freemans Reach Tennis Courts	3
26	Pitt town Tennis Courts	3
27	Yarramundi Reserve*	3
28	Tiningi Community Centre [Bligh Park]	2
29	Icely Park	2
30	Vinyard Park	2
31	Glossodia Park	2
32	Woodbury Estate	2
33	Peel Park	2

Most used/visited facilities and recreational spaces
(Source: Q5, 10, 14 online survey via Survey Monkey)

	Community / Recreational Facility	Survey Responses
34	Powell Park	2
35	Pughs Lagoon*	2
36	Bilpin Oval*	2
37	Hawkesbury Regional Museum	1
38	Blaxland Ridge Community Centre	1
39	Bligh Park Neighbourhood Centre	1
40	Maraylya Hall	1
41	Hawkesbury Leisure and Learning Centre	1
42	Hawkesbury Skills Centre	1
43	Richmond Community Centre (including The Annex)	1
44	South Windsor Family Centre	1
45	St Albans School of Arts	1
46	Yarramundi Community Centre	1
47	Milham Reserve	1
48	Berger Reserve	1
49	Bounty Reserve	1
50	Woodlands Park	1
51	Stanley Park	1
52	Bligh Park Tennis Courts	1
53	Macquarie Park*	1
54	Navua Reserve*	1
55	The Band Room – Richmond	0
56	Don't Worry Oval	0
57	Colonial Reserve	0
58	Breakaways	0
59	Maraylya Park	0
60	Windsor Tennis Courts	0
61	Birk Place Reserve*	0



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