

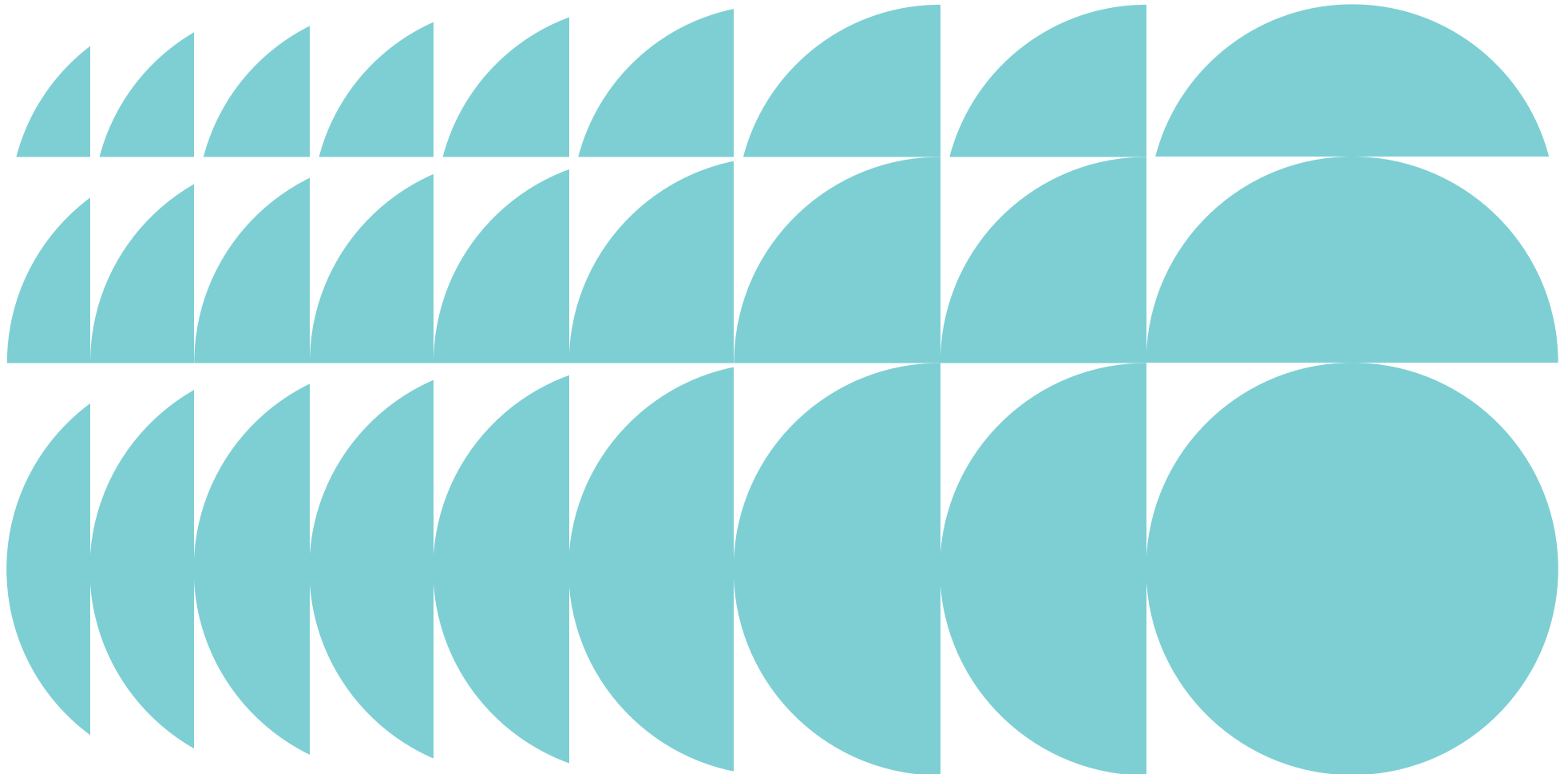
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## Issues and Opportunities Background Paper

Northern Beaches Social Infrastructure Study  
September — 2019

Issue B — Job No 218999



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### Appendix A - Thematic Summary of Existing Plans and Policies

# Executive Summary

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**Northern Beaches Council plays a key role in providing social infrastructure to support and sustain liveability, community health, wellbeing, and participation. Social infrastructure can bring people together, provide spaces for people to connect, create and learn.**

This Background Paper provides an overview of existing social infrastructure in the Northern Beaches that will inform the preparation of the Northern Beaches Social Infrastructure Study (SIS) and the Northern Beaches Local Strategic Planning Statement. The SIS will clearly articulate current social infrastructure supply and demand, with regard to current use patterns, accepted benchmarks for provision and best practice trends.

The Northern Beaches population is anticipated to grow by some 12% over the next 20 years. This represents a population increase of approximately 32,490 new residents across the LGA. Provision of high quality social infrastructure including community facilities, open space and recreation facilities, will be important to supporting community health and wellbeing outcomes.

There are a number of key challenges that will impact the future delivery of social infrastructure across the Northern Beaches over the coming years. For example, the LGA encompasses a large geographical area with very distinctive local communities who engage with different types of activities and uses depending on location and interests. Balancing the types and mixture of social infrastructure to cater for different expectations will remain an ongoing challenge in the future.

Furthermore, some of Council's existing community, sport and recreation facilities are isolated, located away from public transport and walkable catchments and are not accessible for all ages and abilities. Many facilities are also ageing and are not designed to support multipurpose activities or usage. Over the next 20 years, the rising cost of delivering social infrastructure will also continue to make the future delivery and upgrade of the existing social infrastructure network increasingly difficult amongst Council's many competing priorities.

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## Executive Summary

Broadly, some of the key opportunities for social infrastructure identified in this Background Paper are as follows:

- Delivering on strategic drivers for social sustainability in the Northern Beaches;
- Supporting new ways of living and working;
- Evaluating the existing network of social infrastructure;
- Delivering flexible, adaptable spaces that meet changing community needs over time; and
- Exploring innovative models and partnerships for providing social infrastructure.

The next stage of the project will undertake a community needs analysis involving an assessment of existing supply, demand and gaps for social infrastructure. This analysis will be presented in the forthcoming Social Infrastructure Study. The SIS will also deliver clear guidance on how social infrastructure may best be provided and managed to sustain liveability and community wellbeing in the Northern Beaches, now and into the future.

Creative and performing arts venues, such as the popular Glen Street Theatre, are an important component of social infrastructure provision for communities.

*Source: Northern Beaches Council*





# INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Introduction

### 1.1.1 Overview

Northern Beaches Council plays a key role in providing social infrastructure to support and sustain liveability, community health, wellbeing and participation. Social infrastructure is the mix of facilities, places, spaces, programs, projects, services and networks that maintain and improve quality of life in a community. This Study focuses on "hard" social infrastructure, including community facilities, open space, sport and recreation facilities that can bring people together, provide spaces for people to connect, create and learn.

Community facilities provide an important touchpoint for Council to connect with the community through the delivery of amenity and services. Social infrastructure can be provided in many ways and can be in the form of a building, facility or space ('hard' infrastructure) or a program, activity or service ('soft' infrastructure).

This Background Paper provides an overview of existing social infrastructure in the Northern Beaches that will inform the preparation of the Northern Beaches Social Infrastructure Study (SIS), which will clearly articulate current social infrastructure supply and demand, with regard to current use patterns, accepted benchmarks for provision and best practice trends. It will identify current and future gaps in provision and provide

recommendations for existing and proposed Council facilities, as well as opportunities for innovative delivery models. The SIS will also deliver clear guidance on how social infrastructure may best be provided and managed to sustain liveability and community wellbeing in the Northern Beaches, now and into the future.

The key objectives of this project are to:

- Establish a baseline of existing social infrastructure, open space and recreation facilities and services, to understand the current social infrastructure context in the LGA and its links to the District and Region.
- Consider emerging trends shaping how social infrastructure is delivered and managed and what these trends mean for the Northern Beaches.
- Identify the existing and future social infrastructure needs, taking into consideration future growth across the LGA, activity centres, and best-practice social infrastructure and open space provision practices.
- Identify priorities for the future provision of social infrastructure and the role of Council, other levels of government and non-government agencies responsible for delivery.

The SIS will also inform Council's forthcoming Local Strategic Planning Statement (LSPS), Local Housing Strategy, Open Space Strategy and Social Plan. It will also inform the harmonisation of Council's Local Environmental Plan (LEP), with regards to social infrastructure planning.

The Study will be broadly undertaken in three stages as shown below.

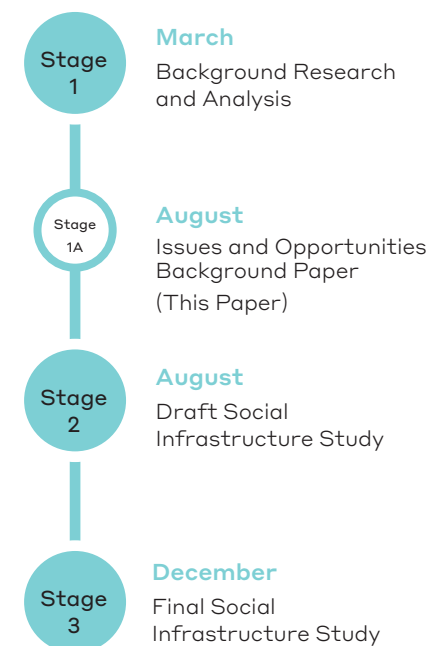


Figure 1. Project Method

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## Introduction

### 1.1.2 Scope of the Study

Council provides a range of social infrastructure that supports active, engaged and healthy communities. Council as well as state government provides a range of regional, district and local social infrastructure that provides key community services. Types of social infrastructure are discussed in Section 3.

Alongside other Council assets it is also acknowledged that there are many other facilities that provide key community benefits to local residents both within and outside the Northern Beaches LGA. Some of these facilities are owned and operated by private and not for profit organisations, such as RSL clubs, surf life saving clubs or religious organisations. When preparing the Draft SIS the location, distribution and availability of these facilities and services will be considered in the context of their relationship to the Northern Beaches' existing network of facilities.

### 1.1.3 Purpose of this Paper

This Background Paper will provide the basis for the preparation and further detailed assessment to be undertaken as part of the Draft SIS. It has been informed by desktop research and analysis, site visits and preliminary discussions with Council staff and other consultants (via an Inception Meeting held in March 2019, and a Technical Working Group Meeting held in April 2019).

### 1.1.4 Approach

This Background Paper will:

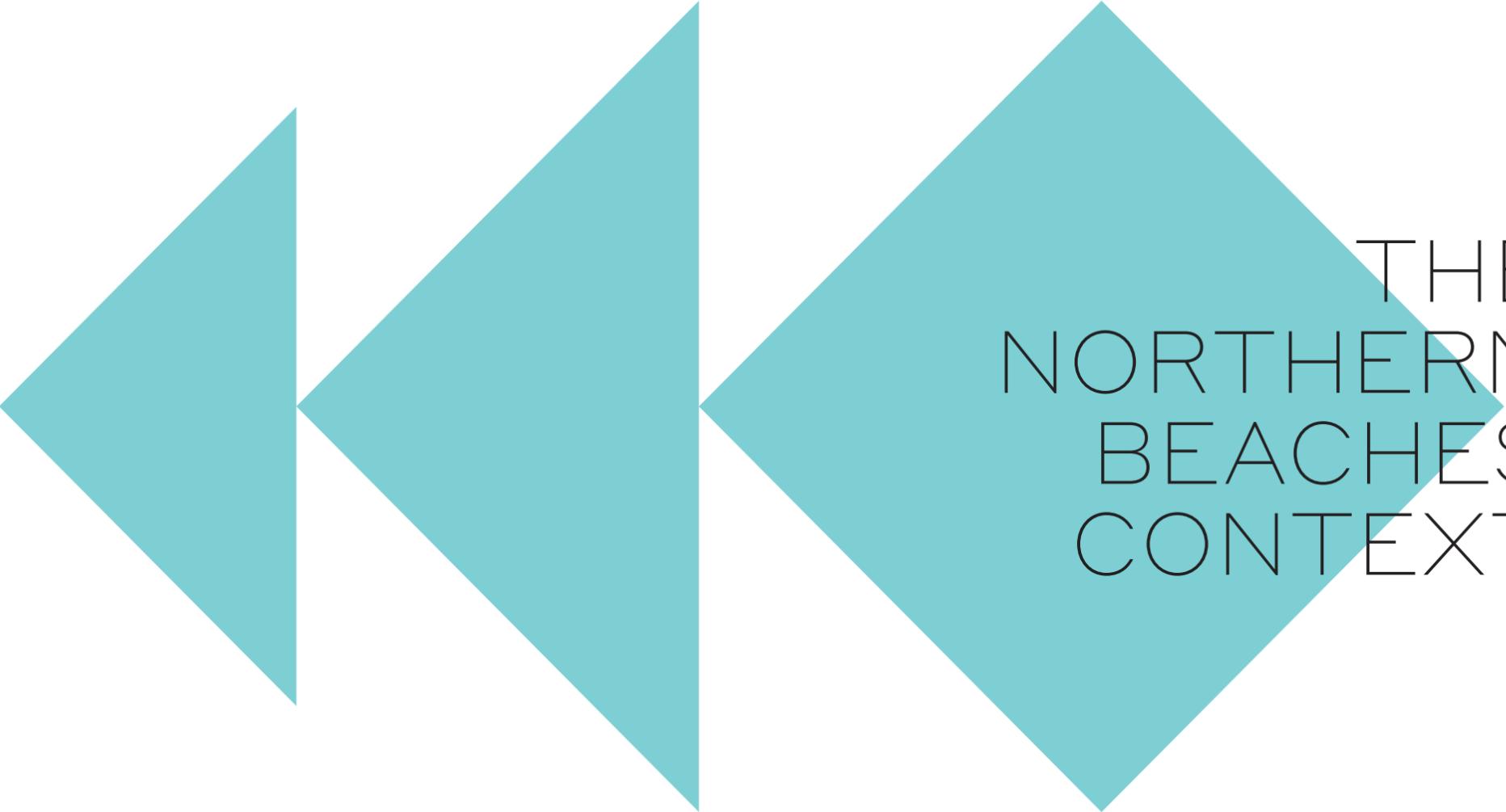
- Describe and contextualise the Northern Beaches LGA's existing inventory of community facilities, open space and sport and recreation facilities;
- Provide a summary overview of the existing and future community profile and demographic context;
- Present preliminary findings of background research and analysis to date, incorporating preliminary feedback from Council staff and information from relevant strategies and plans and;
- Identify key issues, challenges and opportunities for social infrastructure in the Northern Beaches.



Multipurpose, flexible and adaptable spaces in centrally located and accessible community centres, such as this community meeting room at the Avalon Recreation Centre, enable use by a range of community members for a diversity of purposes.

*Source: Northern Beaches Council*

**2.0**



THE  
NORTHERN  
BEACHES  
CONTEXT

# 2.1 Community Profile

## 2.1.1 Overview

The Northern Beaches Community Profile provides an indication of demographic trends and patterns. Analysis of these patterns will inform future trends and needs. For the purposes of this Background Paper, the key LGA demographics and statistics are summarised opposite. Emerging themes and trends will be further analysed as part of the development of the Draft SIS.

Council has commissioned SGS Planning and Economics to prepare a suite of baseline demographic data for use in the Draft SIS.

### Population

**265,468**

*In the Northern Beaches (2016)*

### Median Age

**40**

*In the Northern Beaches 2016*

### Median Income

**\$2,510**

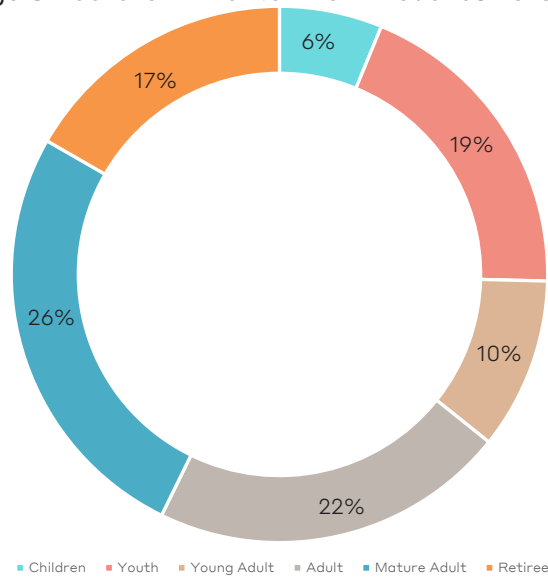
*per week per household  
(\$130,520 per annum per household)*

### Education

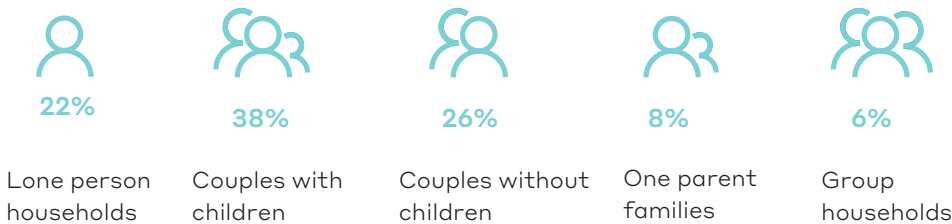
**36%**

*Bachelors degree or higher*

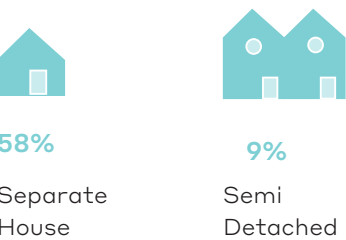
### Age Structure in the Northern Beaches 2016



### Household Structure



### Household Type



### Average Household Size 2016

**2.72**  
persons per household

---

## Community Profile

### Ethnicity

The community of the Northern Beaches is predominantly from Australian and other Anglo backgrounds. The most multi-culturally diverse suburbs are Dee Why-North Curl Curl, Beacon Hill-Narraweena and Forestville-Killarney Heights. A summary of key statistics include:

- 48.24% of the resident population are of British ancestry;
- 20.73% of the resident population are of Australian ancestry;
- 15.40% of the resident population classified in the "other" category;
- 6.93% of resident population are of Irish ancestry;
- 4.63% of the resident population are of Southern European ancestry; and
- 4.08% of the resident population are of Western European ancestry.

The suburbs of Manly-Fairlight, Dee Why-Curl Curl, Freshwater-Brookvale and Narraweena make up approximately 50% of the number of overseas migrants in the past five years.

- 11% of the resident population in Manly are overseas migrants;
- 8% of the resident population in Brookvale-Dee Why are overseas migrants;

- 5% of the resident population in Frenchs Forest are overseas migrants;
- 4% of the resident population in Mona Vale are overseas migrants;
- 4.1% of the resident population in Narraweena; and
- 3% of the resident population in Terrey Hills are overseas migrants.

### Indigenous population

0.6% of the Northern Beaches resident population identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander descent. Key communities are located in the suburbs of Beacon Hill-Narraweena and Warriewood-Mona Vale.

### Levels of advantage and disadvantage

The majority of the Northern Beaches LGA is relatively 'advantaged' when measured against a range of indicators however, there are some areas within the LGA which are home to less advantaged communities.

Levels of advantage can be measured by SEIFA scores. Locations with the lowest SEIFA scores (most disadvantaged) across the Northern Beaches are:

- Narraweena; and
- Dee Why.

Suburbs with highest SEIFA scores (most advantaged) include:

- Balgowlah;
- Clontarf;
- Seaforth;
- Frenchs Forest; and
- Belrose.

Overall, the Northern Beaches LGA is within the highest SEIFA categories, as reflected in the high living standards, skilled population and overall opportunities available to residents.

### Volunteering

In 2016 21.9% of the Northern Beaches resident population reported doing some form of voluntary work. The number of volunteers increased by 6,342 people between 2011 and 2016.

Volunteering is an important aspect of communities that contributes to sustaining social connectedness and supporting programs and activities across the Northern Beaches network of facilities, spaces and recreational facilities.

## 2.2 Future Community Profile



### Growth trends

**Between 2016 and 2036, the Northern Beaches community is forecast to increase by 32,490 people, representing a total growth of 12.2%.**

The future population of the Northern Beaches is projected to experience incremental growth over the next 20 years. This growth must be factored into future recommendations for social infrastructure, also considering relative concentrations of age structure and population density to provide accurate and useful recommendations.

Growth provides opportunities to draw on rates-based models, developer contributions, planning agreements or partnership models, to fund new social infrastructure. However, such growth also requires careful consideration and planning to ensure that social infrastructure provision keeps up with population demands and expectations, both in terms of quantity, quality and type.



### Changing household composition

**Over the next 20 years, lone person households are expected to increase significantly.**

Although the Northern Beaches LGA has a higher than average level of affluence and advantage when compared to other LGAs in Greater Sydney, issues of social isolation, loneliness and depression remain prevalent and relevant issues for consideration. In this context, social infrastructure will play a vital role in supporting social sustainability and connecting people with services, groups and activities that enable interaction and participation in daily life and foster social connectedness and social capital building.

37.3% of households across the Northern Beaches comprise of families with children. It is expected this trend will continue. Areas which are expected to consist of higher concentrations of families include Dee Why, Frenchs Forest and Manly.



### Ageing population

**Over the next 20 years, the number of older people will increase by 15,843 persons representing 37.5% growth.**

In the context of the Northern Beaches, this is a notable shift in age structure. An active and engaged community leads to resilient and vibrant neighbourhoods, particularly amongst the older generations.

As the population of the Northern Beaches ages, it will be important to ensure that social infrastructure facilities are accessible for people of all ages and abilities. Facilities that are unable to accommodate all users immediately create barriers to usage.

Another consideration will be balancing the needs of older residents with the younger population to ensure that social infrastructure provision is multi-generational and enables equity of access.

Opportunities for intergenerational interaction are also important to plan for through the co-location and function of facilities provided.



### Cultural diversity

**28.9% of residents in the Northern Beaches are born overseas and this trend is expected to continue.**

Social infrastructure, proximity to services and housing affordability are major determinates for residents when deciding where to live. Areas with higher concentrations of residents born overseas (proportionate to the Northern Beaches LGA) include: Brookvale (5.3%), Dee Why (4.8%) and Narraweena (4.1%).

It is important that social infrastructure is inclusive and accommodating to diverse cultural and language group communities. Flexibility of multipurpose venues can ensure greater opportunities for events, ceremonial, cultural or social activities specific to particular communities.

## 2.3 Key Social Plans, Policies and Strategies

### 2.3.1 The North District

The North District Plan (refer to **Figure 2**) sets the strategic framework for planning for Northern Beaches' future. Growth precincts and city-shaping infrastructure such as the Northern Beaches B-Line bus infrastructure, the Northern Beaches to Chatswood bus improvement and the Frenchs Forest Health and Education Precinct will deliver transformative change and investment over the next 20 years.

The plan sets out a number of high-level directives which impact social infrastructure planning for the Northern Beaches. These are summarised as:

- Working together to grow a Greater Sydney: increasing the use of public resources such as open spaces and community facilities.
- Celebrating diversity and putting people at the heart of planning: increasing walkable access to local centres.
- Designing places for people: increasing access to open spaces.

- Developing a more accessible and walkable city: Increasing the percentage of dwellings located within 30 minutes by public transport of a metropolitan centre/cluster.
- Valuing green spaces and landscape: increasing the urban tree canopy and expanding the Greater Sydney Green Grid.

Key implications arising for this study from the North District Plan are:

- The importance of planning for Frenchs Forest Health and Education Precinct to ensure provision of social infrastructure that meets the needs of a growing community.
- The regional importance of “great places” such as the beaches, Narrabeen Lake and Pittwater.
- Planning for older populations and for youth.
- The need to plan for future social infrastructure to be flexible, multipurpose, accessible and sustainable.
- Supporting and encouraging healthy active lifestyles.



Figure 2. North District Plan  
Source: Greater Sydney Commission

### 2.3.2 *Shape 2028:* Northern Beaches Community Strategic Plan 2018-2028

*Shape 2028* is Council's overarching, long-term strategy for the Northern Beaches LGA. The Plan establishes the vision, aspirations, goals and strategies for the Northern Beaches through to 2028 across a range of themes. It outlines the following overarching vision:

*Northern Beaches – a safe, inclusive and connected community that lives in balance with our extraordinary coastal and bushland environment.*

To implement the vision, the Plan establishes a suite of key directions:

- Protection of the Environment;
- Environmental Sustainability;
- Places for People;
- Community and Belonging;
- Vibrant Local Economy;
- Transport, Infrastructure and Connectivity;
- Good Governance; and
- Partnership and Participation.

The themes which are relevant to the development of the SIS are discussed further opposite.

#### Places for people

Northern Beaches aspires to be a welcoming, accessible collection of communities characterised by high levels of community health and wellbeing. The following goals are relevant to this Study:

- Goal 7: Our urban planning reflects the unique character of our villages and natural environment and is responsive to the evolving needs of our community.
- Goal 8: Our neighbourhoods inspire social interaction, inclusion and support health and wellbeing.
- Goal 9: Our community is healthy, active and enjoys a broad range of creative, sporting and recreational opportunities.

Strengthening the bond between people, the built and natural environments further supports individual and collective wellbeing. There is great value in creating opportunities for community interaction within villages and centres.

The Plan outlines the need to create villages and centres which are vibrant, accessible and support residents' quality of life. It encourages community collaboration in the development of open spaces and neighbourhoods.

#### Community and belonging

Northern Beaches will be a safe, supportive and culturally diverse LGA which achieves the following goals:

- Goal 10: Our community is stimulated through a diverse range of cultural and creative activities and events.
- Goal 11: Our community feels safe and supported.
- Goal 12: Our community is friendly and supportive.

Social infrastructure plays a critical role in supporting sense of community and belonging. The quality and provision of social infrastructure will play a major role in supporting communities through the delivery of community facilities and services that meet their needs and aspirations. This includes provision of social infrastructure that supports the needs of volunteer and community groups.

The Plan also identifies the importance of recognising and celebrating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and embracing the diversity of local neighbourhoods.

### 2.3.3 Draft Community Centres Strategy

In 2018 Council commissioned the development of a Community Centres Strategy to identify, assess and make recommendations for the future management and use of Council's 37 community centres over the next 20 years. The Draft Strategy will be reported to Council for public exhibition.

The Draft Strategy sets the following guiding principles for the provision of community centres:

- Multi-purpose, flexible and available for a range of social, recreation, community and cultural services, activities and programs;
- Centrally located within strategic centres in visually prominent and accessible locations that are close to public transport;
- Co-located and integrated with other community uses and facilities;
- Designed to be welcoming and safe environments;
- Accessible and inclusive places that have universal access and cater for multiple users;
- Managed and planned through collaboration and shared use arrangements between Council and other agencies.
- Supported by good governance and centre management practices;
- Marketed to improve community awareness and

access to information;

- Designed in collaboration with the community; and
- Facilities that are planned for the future.

Preliminary recommendations relevant to the Draft SIS include:

- Improve utilisation rates of existing centres;
- Maximise fair and equitable access to existing centres through discouraging exclusive use of community centres;
- Update the current Community Centre Policy;
- Investigate the potential for a Regional Community Centre within the Local Government Area;
- Increase the number of District/Sub-regional community centres to service the Northern Beaches;
- Develop a community centre marketing strategy;
- Creating inviting, accessible and welcoming community centres; and
- Investigate management models for non-Council managed and/or owned facilities to maximise floor space available to the community.

These recommendations will be taken into account in the development of the Northern Beaches Social Infrastructure Study.

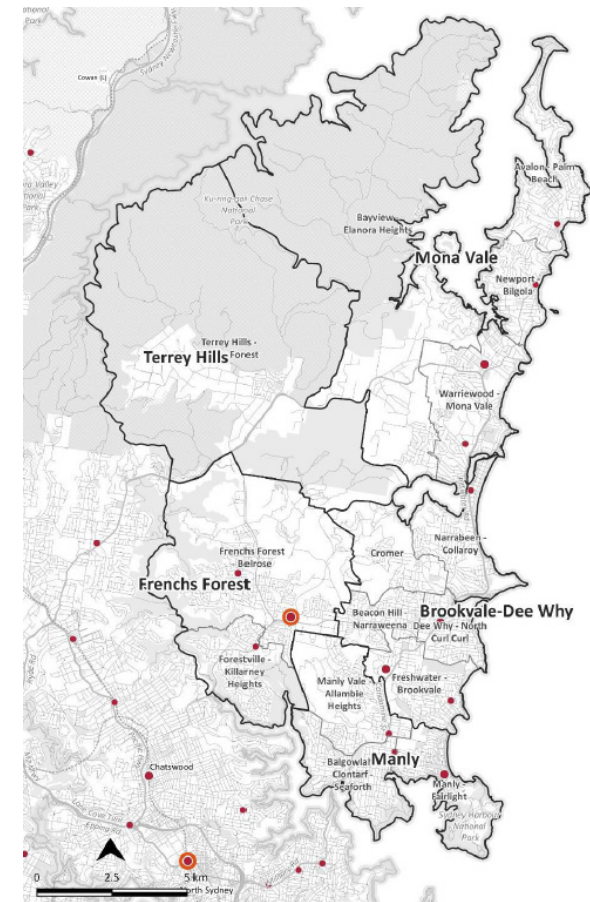


Figure 3. Draft Map from Community Centres Study  
Source: SGS Economics

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## 2.4 Key Open Space and Recreational Plans, Policies and Strategies

### 2.4.1 Sportsgrounds and Golf Courses Background Paper

In 2017 Council undertook extensive investigations into likely future demand for sportsgrounds. Current projections indicate there will be a substantial undersupply of land for sport reaching a shortfall of more than 40 Ha by 2031.

Council had more than 50,000 active playing members of sport in 2017 and had spent substantial sums in improving capacity of existing facilities.

Following the community review of issues and options for future provision- six key actions were developed, in order of Priority

- Allocate sports fields based on needs and participation growth basis;
- Improve the capacity and resilience of existing sports fields;
- Build new and upgrade existing sports fields in new housing development areas;
- Partner with schools to provide additional sports fields for the community;
- Install synthetic surfaces in some existing sports fields to enable greater use; and
- Convert suitable open space to sportsgrounds including some golf course land as needed.

### 2.4.2 Prior Open Space and Recreation Planning for Warringah (2015) and Pittwater (2014) Councils

A new Open Space and Recreation Strategy will be prepared in 2019. Prior plans identified that the Northern Beaches was well supplied with regional open space, national parks and state reserves. The extensive foreshore areas, waterways and beaches provide a substantial part of the open space and recreation infrastructure for the LGA and these assets need to be protected and valued.

Key directions identified included:

- Improving equity in access to open space and park based recreation opportunities;
- Investing in and adding value to existing public open space assets;
- Providing multi-use spaces for intergenerational use and increase opportunities for an ageing population, children and young people;
- Recognising the increasing importance of trail and path networks as core recreation infrastructure;
- Investigating use of golf course land for other sport and active recreation outcomes;
- Need to increase supply of sporting land and plan for expansion of indoor sport facilities and provision of new facilities;
- Continued rationalisation of the open space estate to maximise environmental and recreation benefits; and
- Recognising shifting participation preferences such as increased outdoor recreation, fitness related activities and endurance sports.

### **2.4.3 Frenchs Forest Social Infrastructure Planning – Open Space and Recreation Provision**

The Frenchs Forest Hospital Precinct will be a new Planned Precinct based around the newly completed Northern Beaches Hospital.

The Precinct is expected to add an additional 4,360 dwellings and 2,300 jobs over the next 20 years. An additional 2000 jobs will also be generated by the new hospital. A key part of the development is the creation of a new town centre on the grounds of the existing Forest High School, and relocation of the school to Aquatic Reserve.

Meeting the future needs of these residents will require a mix of new parks and open space; improvements and upgrades of existing sporting areas; new built facilities in the town centre and better active transport opportunities to connect residents to open space, sport and recreation spaces and places.

Dee Why PCYC – a contemporary facility managed by PCYC and providing sport, recreation and other programs supporting the community.



**3.0**



SOCIAL  
INFRASTRUCTURE  
IN THE NORTHERN  
BEACHES

## 3.1 Social Infrastructure in the Northern Beaches

### 3.1.1 Existing Social Infrastructure

There is a variety of social infrastructure distributed across the Northern Beaches which provides a range of facilities, services, programs and activities.

Many of these facilities include community spaces which are available for hire. Some social infrastructure is provided by the State government or other government agencies, such as hospitals, schools and emergency services. This type of social infrastructure is typically classified as 'regional' or 'district' level. Other social types of social infrastructure is provided by Council - these primarily include smaller local level infrastructure that support the day-to-day needs of residents.

Social infrastructure can also be provided by private organisations including schools, aged care, shopping centres and healthcare services.

When assessing the supply and demand of existing social infrastructure, established benchmarks can be applied to regional, local and district facilities. The Draft SIS will clearly set out the types of social infrastructure that will be assessed and the relevant benchmarking standards.

The maps on the following pages show the different types of regional, district and local infrastructure organised by the following themes:

- Health;
- Education;
- Local Community Facilities; and
- Other Community Facilities.

#### Types of Social Infrastructure

##### Regional

- Hospitals
- Higher education (universities/TAFEs)
- Major cultural and civic facilities such as function centres, exhibition spaces or performing arts centres

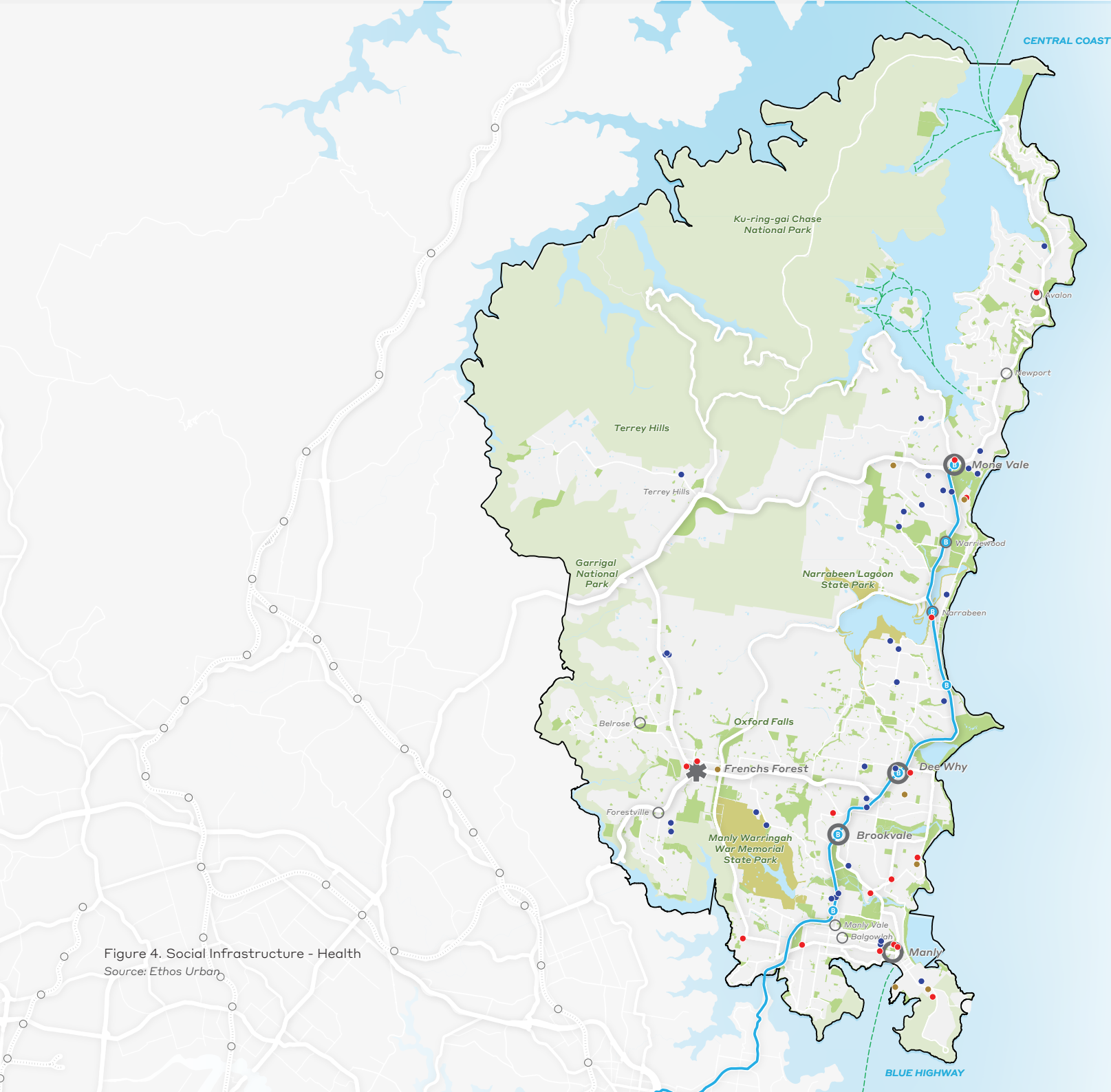
##### District

- Medical and health centres
- Secondary schools
- District libraries
- Emergency services (police, fire, ambulance and SES services)
- District open space
- Community facility (min 1,000 sqm GFA)

##### Local

- Integrated multipurpose facilities
- Libraries
- Local community facilities (min 150sqm GFA)
- Child care centres & preschools
- Cultural and creative spaces
- Club houses, including surf life saving clubs
- Beach and ocean pool club houses
- Environment education centres
- Aged care facilities
- Community gardens
- Men's sheds
- Places of worship
- Community service hubs\*

\*A recent Council resolution establishes 'new community service hubs' in existing Council owned or managed facilities. The first hub will be located in Raglan Street, Manly with others to follow in Dee Why, Mona Vale and Frenchs Forest as opportunities become available. These hubs will provide office and programming space for not for profit community organisations (who are predominantly State and Federally funded). They will also provide valuable social services to the most vulnerable members of the Northern Beaches community including homeless persons, migrants, victims of domestic violence and youth.



Northern Beaches LGA

B-Line

Ferry

Open Space

National Park

State Park

Centre Hierarchy

Health and Education Precinct

Strategic Centre

Local Centre

Health

Aged Care

Hospital

Health

Figure 4. Social Infrastructure - Health

Source: Ethos Urban

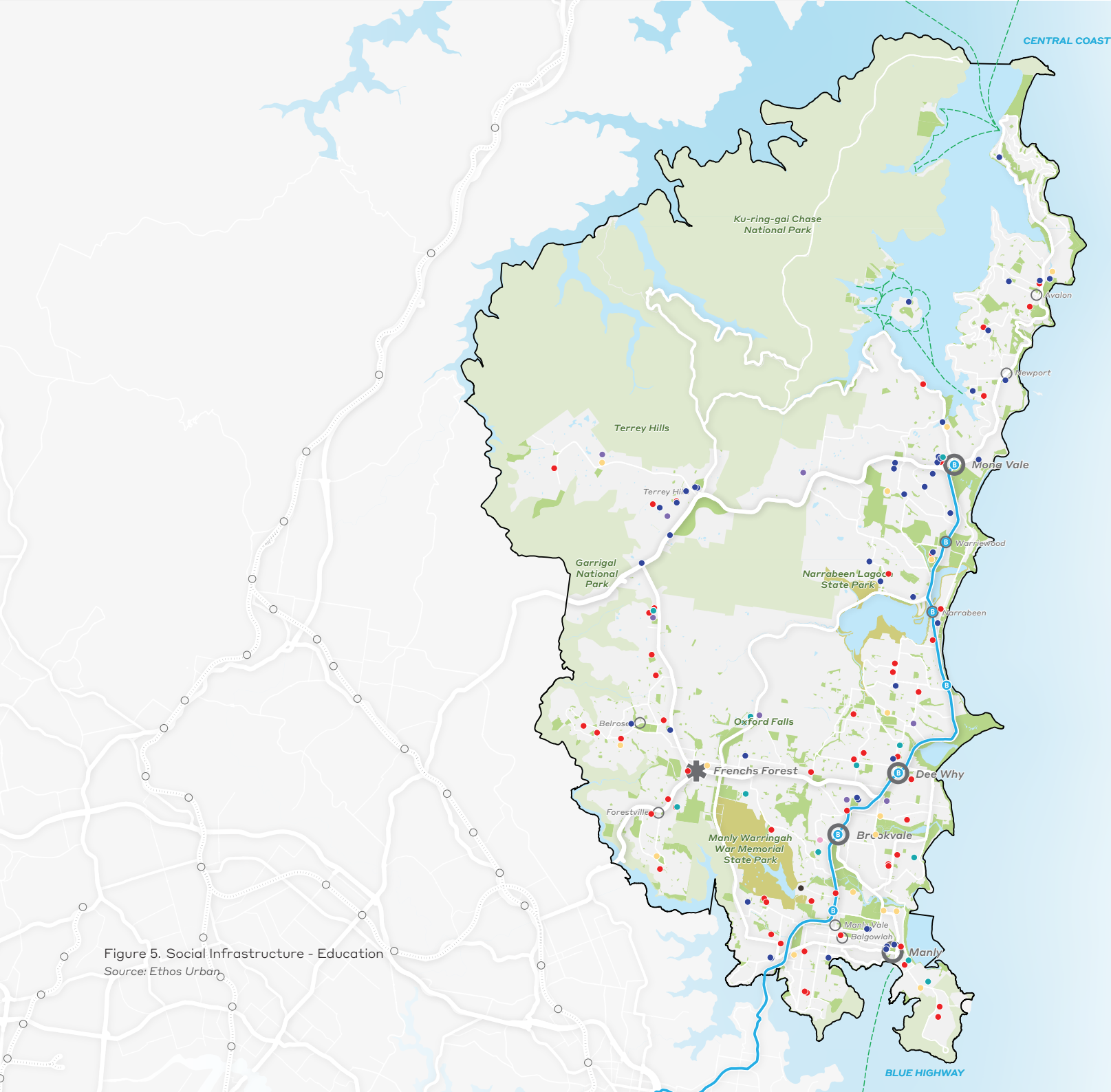


Figure 5. Social Infrastructure - Education  
Source: Ethos Urban

- Northern Beaches LGA
  - B B-Line
  - Ferry
  - Open Space
  - National Park
  - State Park
- Centre Hierarchy**
- ✱ Health and Education Precinct
  - O Strategic Centre
  - O Local Centre
- Education**
- Childcare / Preschool
  - Primary School
  - Primary/Secondary School (combined)
  - High School
  - Education - Other
  - TAFE
  - University







## Social Infrastructure in the Northern Beaches

### Types of Social Infrastructure in the Northern Beaches

#### Integrated Multipurpose Facility

##### Avalon Recreation Centre

Avalon Recreation Centre is located next to Dunbar Park. It is an excellent example of an integrated multipurpose facility as it provides a series of adaptable programming spaces. The centre includes a sports hall, meeting room, kitchenettes and four activity rooms for hire (including one with sinks for art classes). The spaces make up a centre which is suitable for functions, classes, meetings, sports, workshops and exhibitions. The Recreation Centre is also home to the Avalon Community Library, the Avalon Early Childhood Centre, the Avalon Youth Hub and a Council Customer Service Centre.



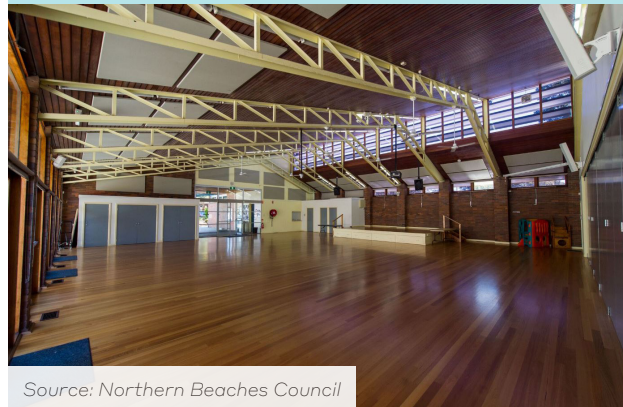
Source: Northern Beaches Council

#### Local Community Facility

##### Mona Vale Memorial Hall

Situated within the Village Park in Mona Vale, the Memorial Hall is an example of a local community facility as it is predominately single use space with no space for casual social interaction.

The Memorial Hall is fully accessible and suitable for functions, classes, meetings, workshops and exhibitions featuring a large main hall (stage included) and Wi-Fi access. Parking is also provided in the adjacent car park.



Source: Northern Beaches Council

#### Library

##### Glen Street Library

The Glen Street Library forms part of a cultural hub, located adjacent to Glen Street Theatre in Belrose. The facility is an example of a district library facility providing a significant resource collection of books and media, IT facilities as well as spaces for social interaction and reading.

The library provides seven computers, two children's computers, a family history research computer, free Wi-Fi and affordable printing facilities. Two meeting rooms and a multi-use function space (seating up to 30 people) is available for hire.



Source: Northern Beaches Council

## Social Infrastructure in the Northern Beaches

### Child Care Centre/Preschool

#### Belrose Children's Centre

The Belrose Children's Centre is one of Council's long-day child care centres. It has a capacity for 78 children, and cares for children aged six weeks to six years. The centre operates under the National Quality Framework and Regulations, and follows the Australian Government's Early Years Learning Framework to guide the children's development.

The Centre is co-located with the Belrose Community Centre, and is located within the south of Belrose, adjoining the suburb of Frenchs Forest.



Source: Northern Beaches Council

### Cultural and Creative Space

#### Tramshed Arts and Community Centre

The Tramshed Arts and Community Centre is an example of a cultural and creative facility which offers a range of spaces for creative enterprise and community members. The facility is newly renovated with views of Narrabeen Lagoon, located near Berry Reserve. It includes three halls (with capacities of 100, 100 and 125), two meetings rooms (with capacities of 10 and 6) and a pottery room (featuring a slab roller, three kilns and ten wheels).



Source: Northern Beaches Council

### Other

#### Fresh Water Surf Life Saving Club

Given the Northern Beaches LGA's coastal location, Surf Life Saving Clubs are an important part of the social infrastructure, providing essential support to those who visit the beaches. The Freshwater Surf Life Saving Club is located on Freshwater Beach. Not only does it serve the community with surf lifesaving club patrols but also hires out four function rooms which cater to a range of activities and events.



Source: Freshwater SLSC

## 3.2 Open Space and Recreation in the Northern Beaches

### 3.2.1 Existing Provision

The current open space and recreation Infrastructure in Northern Beaches includes:

- 244.87 hectares of sporting open space (includes all POS with a primary use for sport);
- 141.08 hectares of urban parks;
- 171.83 hectares urban parks with natural areas;
- 726.62 hectares of natural areas;
- 1317.81 hectares of foreshore and ocean beaches; and
- 11,368 hectares of national parks;

Existing provision by type of facility includes:

- Golf courses covering 453 hectares catering for over 10,000 members– including 7 golf courses on 180 Ha of public land;
- Aquatic Centres (only 2 council owned), swimming enclosures and rock pools;
- Netball and tennis court complexes;
- Indoor sport centres;
- Outdoor courts for recreation;
- Skateparks;
- Dog parks (off-leash areas);
- Playgrounds and outdoor exercise equipment;
- Bowling greens;
- Recreation tracks and trails (walking and cycling); and
- Picnic areas.

Refer to **Figures 9 and 10** for a map of existing provision.



Figure 8. St Matthews Farm





## Open Space and Recreation in the Northern Beaches

### Types of Sport and Recreational facilities in the Northern Beaches

#### Sporting Fields

Lionel Watts Reserve,  
Frenchs Forest

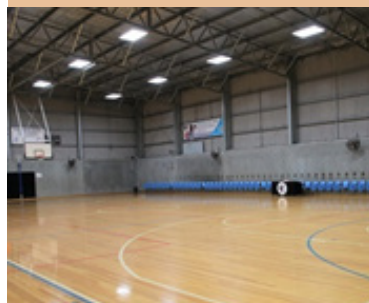
Multiple use sporting precincts support a range of sports and provide recreation opportunities for surrounding residents. The ability to share access and other infrastructure makes them more efficient. A master plan is underway for this reserve.



#### Indoor Sport Centres

Northern Beaches  
Indoor Sports Centre ,  
Warriewood

Large multi-use centres provide for a diverse range of uses and are most successful when located to be highly accessible to a range of users. Built in 2001, NBISC features 6 full sized basketball/netball courts and 7 Volleyball Courts spread across two sports halls (East & West).



#### Youth Facilities

Mona Vale Skate Park

Activating public open space with facilities designed for young people meets a key need for no cost recreation and legitimate spaces for youth to socialise and be active. Skateparks and outdoor courts are popular approaches but new facilities such as parkour and bouldering walls are also emerging.



#### Aquatic Facilities

Andrew Boy Charlton  
Aquatic Centre, Manly

Aquatic facilities support community recreation, sport and fitness. Large centres like this are supported by the rockpools, enclosures and beaches to provide multiple opportunities for aquatic activity.



#### Public Parks

Bert Payne Park, Newport

Foreshore parklands are integral to the Northern Beaches lifestyle with extensive coastal areas serviced by 69 foreshore parklands. Activating these spaces requires the provision of a diversity of opportunities including play, picnic facilities, pathways and of course access to beaches and public amenities.



**4.0**



KEY  
THEMES

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## 4.1 What We've Heard

### 4.1.1 Engagement with Council Staff

The development of this Background Paper has been informed by two meetings/workshops with Council as follows:

- Inception meeting: involving a Council Staff knowledge sharing session (held in March)
- Collaborative consultant workshop: to discuss LSPS priorities and share preliminary findings with various consultant groups (held in April)

At each of these meetings, a range of representatives provided feedback and input across various Council departments including strategic planning, environment, property and community services.

A summary of the key issues and opportunities identified across the two sessions are provided below.

#### Issues and Challenges

- There is no existing or comprehensive LGA- wide Social Infrastructure Study to support Council's decision making.
- Differing approaches (historically) to provision of social infrastructure types across the former three LGAs which have been integrated to form Northern Beaches Council. This has left a legacy of buildings and spaces that are not connected by strategic planning frameworks.

- Competing demands across different communities for open space and social infrastructure.
- Perceptions of socio-spatial divide between the 'north' and the 'south' of the LGA.
- Differences in types of usage and expectations for provision of social infrastructure between coastal and inland communities.
- Housing and land prices in many areas across the LGA are higher than average, particularly in waterfront locations. This makes provision of new infrastructure challenging.
- High dependency on motor vehicles and accessibility challenges with the existing public transport network.
- Lack of connectivity and accessibility between the foreshore areas and western portions of the LGA.
- Large and diverse geographical area with many different communities, residential settings and population densities.
- High levels of employment self-containment across the LGA, increasing pressure on social infrastructure.
- Many streams of concurrent studies and strategies are presently being prepared. Integration and alignment between these studies will be required at a strategic level.

#### Opportunities

- Delivery of new and renewed social infrastructure to support growth and change across the LGA.
- Integration of social infrastructure provision with Council's strategic priorities for innovation, technology and digital connectivity.
- Delivery of innovative and efficient resource use (energy, water and waste) and work towards net zero emissions by 2050.
- Delivery of the new Frenchs Forest community as a low carbon, high efficiency precinct.
- Creating community hubs to cater for a range of services, adapting to the changing needs of an evolving population.
- Integration and activation of surf lifesaving clubs within the broader network and recognition of the important role they play in the community.
- Opportunities for greater connection between east and west of the LGA, providing residents greater access to Macquarie Park and Chatswood. Especially relevant when high number of commuters travel daily to Macquarie Park, Ryde and Parramatta for work.
- Growth and renewal of Brookvale as an enterprise hub offering residents opportunities to live and work within the area.
- Potential to influence other plans currently being prepared by Council, for example Council's Destination Management Plan.

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## 4.2 Key Themes: Social Infrastructure

### 4.2.1 Location and Distribution

A summary of some of the initial observations prior to the comprehensive supply and demand analysis has identified the following:

- General patterns of spatial distribution across the LGA reveal that the majority of social infrastructure is located along coastal settlements and within the south-eastern suburbs.
- There is a lack of social infrastructure provision in Frenchs Forest. The nearest local community facilities (other than Yoyo's Forest Youth Centre) are provided in the satellite suburbs of Belrose, Forestville, and Allambie Heights.
- The geographical and spatial layout of Frenchs Forest is largely segregated by large arterial roads (e.g. Warringah Road and Forest Way) and anchored by the Forestway Shopping Centre and the Northern Beaches Hospital. This makes accessibility and walkability challenging.
- The south east of the LGA has the highest concentration of social infrastructure within the Northern Beaches LGA. For example, Manly has a high concentration of facilities within an 800m catchment from the town centre however there is currently no integrated multipurpose facility. This is the highest density than any other centre within the LGA.
- Manly's connectivity to Sydney CBD via the 'Blue Highway' also makes it a popular place to visit and work. This places increasing demand on social infrastructure.
- In coastal villages, facilities generally tend to be clustered around local centres. There is a much stronger correlation of facilities located in proximity to local centres in the coastal villages, when compared to the facilities located in the inland and bushland suburbs of the LGA where facilities are more dispersed.
- In Dee Why, social infrastructure is generally clustered around the Council Municipal Chambers to the north of the B-Line stop and the main town centre.
- Located in geographical proximity, residents of each centre have access to a broader range of services and facilities than town centres which are more isolated for example Terrey Hills.
- Some local centres such as Terrey Hills are isolated from district level services. Access to higher order social infrastructure, requires residents to drive to larger town centres.
- There are also a number of other isolated communities nestled in the Ku-Ring-Gai Chase National Park. All these communities are almost solely accessed by boat and have no provision of social infrastructure (except for Scotland Island, which has a community centre and kindergarten).
- There is a wide variety of facilities available in the town centres of Warriewood and Narrabeen. Given the close proximity of each centre, these facilities would be accessed and used by the residents of both centres (and the surrounding areas).
- Social infrastructure in Narrabeen and Warriewood represents a good example of 'clustered' distribution.
- Avalon, Newport, and Mona Vale are the three primary town centres of the northern portion of the LGA. Whilst geographically proximate, these towns each have quite distinct communities and have different needs. It should not be assumed future needs are the same.
- A conceptual density analysis of existing facilities across Council's strategic centres reveals a number of interesting patterns, as summarised in **Figure 11**.

As part of the development of the SIS, a detailed catchment-by-catchment analysis will be undertaken in accordance with the social infrastructure typologies outlined in Chapter 3. This will further evaluate the distribution of social infrastructure and the diversity of facilities within each planning catchment.

### 4.2.2 Accessibility and Connectivity

'Accessibility' can have different meanings to different people and used in many contexts. In reference to Social Infrastructure, this Paper acknowledges the following interpretations:

- **Physical accessibility:** Ensuring that social infrastructure is able to be accessed and used by all members of the community - people of all ages and abilities (e.g universal design).
- **Locational accessibility:** Ensuring that social infrastructure is provided in locations which are easily accessible by walking, cycling, public transport, and (if required) private vehicle. Social infrastructure is best located in areas which people are drawn to and are frequently accessing, such as town centres.
- **Geographical connectivity:** Refers to broader strategic networks to ensure that facilities are appropriately connected to each other, to provide a strong, cohesive network of social infrastructure across the LGA.
- **Technological connectivity:** This refers to the importance of facilities providing appropriate technology to support and enhance their use, and can include WiFi, computers, projectors, and other more specialised technologies (as required).

The following observations in relation to accessibility and connectivity of Northern Beaches existing social infrastructure network are outlined below:

- The Northern Beaches is a highly car dependent LGA. Within each community and town centre, there should be a range of local social infrastructure that is within walking distance.
- The B-Line is the only high frequency public transport connection 'in and out' of the Northern Beaches. There is some correlation between B-Line stops and provision of social infrastructure however there are also further opportunities to explore co-location of future social infrastructure adjacent to or integrated into new proposed B-Line stops (i.e. between Dee Why to Chatswood and Mona Vale to Macquarie Park).
- Review of relevant strategies and plans indicates that many of Council's facilities are not fully accessible or compliant with relevant legislative requirements. Ensuring that social infrastructure is accessible for people of all ages and abilities should be a key priority for Council.
- Contemporary models of social infrastructure provision are exploring ways to re-invigorate existing social infrastructure through provision of free wi-fi, PA and audiovisual facilities and other modes of digital connectivity.

- Currently in Manly there are no multipurpose community facilities. This is a major gap identified in the Draft Community Centres Strategy.
- The Community Centres Strategy also identifies a significant gap in the provision of community centre floor space in Dee Why in relation to the dense population. The only community centre space is the Police Citizens Youth Club (PCYC) facility which is suited to a particular demographic use.

The forthcoming draft SIS will provide a qualitative assessment of the accessibility in relation to these considerations.

Key Themes: Social Infrastructure

Social Infrastructure: conceptual densities and distribution



Figure 11. Examples of distribution of social infrastructure in key centers  
Source: Ethos Urban

### 4.2.3 Quality and Condition

The Northern Beaches contains a wide range of social infrastructure of varying ages and condition. Older facilities tend to be more single-use, and present opportunities for refurbishment to enable them to cater for wider sectors of the community. Newer facilities move toward more integrated, multi-use provision for example the Avalon Recreation Centre.

Other recently opened facilities include:

- Tramshed Arts and Community Centre (re-opened after refurbishment); and
- PCYC Northern Beaches centre at Dee Why (new build).

Overall however, Council has a large proportion of facilities that are ageing, and are either in need of repair and maintenance works, or are dated and do not meet the current and future needs of the community. Examples of this have been identified in the draft Community Centres Strategy prepared by TAP Consulting, include YOYO's Forest Youth Centre at Frenchs Forest, and the Mona Vale Memorial Hall.

As part of the draft SIS, we will be working with Council to undertake a high-level assessment of the existing condition of all relevant social infrastructure.

### 4.2.4 Usage, Utilisation and Capacity

Social infrastructure is used for a wide variety of sports, gatherings, classes, activities, and events, ranging from playgroups to language classes, exercise groups, drama & dance groups, choirs, and painting & pottery classes.

The utilisation of facilities varies greatly across the LGA. Some are highly utilised, with some even becoming 'victims of their own success', such as the recently opened PCYC at Dee Why, which has been so popular that it has reached capacity.

Others, potentially due to location, level of maintenance, or age, have lower utilisation, as they are not sufficiently meeting the needs of the present community. Such facilities present opportunities for renovation and revitalisation to ensure they meet the needs of current and future communities.

Community facilities for hire are an important part of the social infrastructure network. Council has 37 facilities and spaces which are available for hire by the community. Different types of users include:

- Casual hirers: include parents hiring venues for children's parties, or local organisations hiring a facility for a single event.

- Regular hirers: parent-run playgroups, sole traders or small businesses who operate classes (such as art or language classes) out of Council facilities, local sporting organisations who regularly use fields for training and matches, and many more.

Some Council facilities are exclusively used and managed by other organisations, an example being the PCYC Northern Beaches facility at Dee Why, which is run by the Police and Citizens Youth Club (PCYC NSW).

Each user group has different needs, expectations, approaches, and perspectives in relation to their use of social infrastructure. A consideration of existing users will be incorporated into the analysis undertaken as part of the Draft SIS, to ensure that recommendations meet the diverse needs of the community at present and into the future.

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## 4.3 Key Themes: Open Space and Recreation

### 4.3.1 Developing an Open Space and Recreation Strategy

Council is about to commence the preparation of a detailed Open Space and Recreation Strategy. This will need to ensure that the analysis of existing public open space takes into account of:

1. The purpose and function of individual public open space areas, particularly:
  - where can secondary uses contribute to recreation outcomes;
  - how the overall green space network contributes to urban greening; and
  - the intended purpose of parks and sporting areas and their effectiveness in meeting that purpose.
2. Opportunities to rationalise the estate to allow for reinvestment to improve capacity of functional parks and sporting areas.
3. Distribution of and access to key opportunities supporting sport, active recreation, outdoor recreation and coastal and waterside areas.

The development of the strategy will need to consider:

- The latest planning guidance from NSW government including the Open Space for Recreation Guide (GANSW- Draft) and improving local access to public open space opportunities.
- Areas of under provision affecting current residents and the strategies for addressing this.
- Planning for growth around the planned precincts, growth areas and areas of urban intensification, particularly:
  - ensuring there are new supplies of land for sport and organised recreation;
  - adopting place based planning and ensuring great public open space areas support growth; and
  - ensuring that new or upgraded and expanded parks have the size and capacity to accommodate growth.
- the importance of paths and trails in activating linear open space; connecting people to parks and providing for active recreation.

### 4.3.2 Future Population Growth and Changing Participation Trends

Open Space and Recreation infrastructure is integral to the social, physical and environmental health of communities. Activity participation trends should be considered with regard to demographic changes, especially the context of an ageing population in the LGA.

The most recent indications from the Ausplay Survey 2018 shows that of the top 15 activities for residents in NSW the following participation levels were recorded in **Table 1**.

The findings of this analysis includes the following:

- Walking is six and a half times higher than the highest field sport (soccer);
- Of the top 15 activities, there is a clear trend for more individual-based activity and fitness and exercise related activities; and
- Swimming is still a high participation activity.

## Key Themes: Open Space

The key observations from the report (Ausplay Survey 2018) include:

- City and rural residents had a higher participation rate in physical activity (41% for 3 times a week) compared to remote .
- Part-time workers and retired persons had the highest percentage of participation in physical exercise at 3 times a week or more.
- The higher the household income the higher the rate of participation.
- 45 plus females participate more in gym /fitness than formal sports
- For children, organised participation outside school hrs. by age indicated:
  - 5-8 Y.O. 90%
  - 9-11 Y.O. 95%
  - 12-14 Y.O -92%

For children (up to 15 years) participation in the top 10 is outlined in **Table 2**

Activity	% of population
Walking (Recreational)	43.6%
Fitness/Gym	35.1%
Swimming	16.6%
Athletics, track and field (includes jogging and running)	15.1%
Cycling	10.0%
Football/soccer	6.8%
Bush walking	5.5%
Tennis	5.1%
Yoga	5.0%
Golf	4.8%
Surfing	3.6%
Pilates	2.7%
Cricket	2.7%
Basketball	2.6%
Touch football	2.3%

**Table 1** – Top 15 sport and recreation activities for residents in NSW

Activity	% of population
Swimming	33.0%
Football/soccer	18.4%
Dancing (recreational)	9.5%
Gymnastics	9.0%
Netball	6.5%
Athletics, track and field (includes jogging and running)	6.2%
Tennis	5.4%
Basketball	4.9%
Cricket	4.4%
Australian football	4.3%

**Table 2** – Top 15 activities for children up to 15 in NSW

### 4.3.3 Planning and Providing Sport and Active Recreation Infrastructure

Sport and active recreation infrastructure includes: outdoor sporting spaces and facilities; indoor facilities; aquatic facilities; specialised and regional facilities (such as stadiums); and the trail and path networks that activate foreshores, linear parks, natural areas and other public spaces.

#### Current provision

Prior open space, sport and recreation studies and an initial review of current provision has highlighted the following issues and observations:

- There will be a substantial undersupply of land for sport reaching a shortfall of more than 40ha in the LGA by 2031. Many sporting fields and facilities are being heavily used now.
- Sport and recreation opportunities are not evenly distributed and the eastern part of the LGA has the majority of parks and infrastructure for passive and recreation.
- The national parks, beaches, Pittwater, Middle Harbour and Narrabeen Lagoon contribute significantly to the outdoor recreation opportunities for Northern Beaches residents. However these are major regional resources

creating demand for access, recreation and amenity infrastructure far in excess of the LGA's population. While this regional use is an integral part of the local economy it does have a cost for council.

- Connections, particularly public transport and active transport, between eastern and western areas are limited. Creating major issues for many residents and restricting access to sport and recreation participation. Improving active transport networks and integration with public transport should be priorities.
- There are opportunities with the Frenchs Forest Precinct to increase open space, sport and recreation facilities supply.
- The level of access to public open space within 400m of residences varies greatly across the LGA with transport corridors, waterways and main roads forming barriers to access.

#### Strategic priorities emerging

1. Meeting current and future sporting field needs will require changes in managing resources to ensure that maximum use is facilitated. This may mean that Council has to take a far more active role in booking access and maintaining assets. In effect this means that rather than past approaches where land was leased to a specific

club to manage, council will need to allocate access on hours required rather than seasons or years.

2. Providing access to sporting facilities will also need to consider changing needs and participation numbers. Some sports are declining significantly in participation and have very low utilisation of land. Encouraging amalgamations and relocations may be required to free up underutilised resources.
3. Investing in existing assets to improve their capacity (such as increasing provision of synthetic fields) is a core strategy, but it will not solve the growing unmet demand. It is critical that new housing development areas include provision of additional land for sport in planning.
4. Multiple use strategies will also be critical and partnering with schools to provide shared use facilities for both outdoor and indoor sport and recreation is essential.
5. All public open space areas should be considered as offering recreation opportunities (subject to environmental assessment). Linear open space and conservation areas can include trail and path based opportunities, small recreation nodes and nature based activity. Sporting areas should provide for informal recreation as well as formal sport. Specific surfaces and facilities may need access control but surrounding areas and

## Key Themes: Open Space

marginal spaces can make valuable contributions to sport and recreation opportunities and to urban greening.

6. More focus is needed on encouraging multi-generational spaces which encourage a range of age groups to use public space. Particularly with increased aged members and young people-sharing and interaction provides for good social outcomes.
7. Opportunities for rooftop sport and active recreation.

### Impact of growth

Future growth will see demand for these facilities increase and although specific activities may change, additional capacity will be needed. Based on current participation data for NSW and Australia, the additional population means, approximately:

- 6,700 more sport participants;
- more than 2600 outdoor court users;
- 2100 or more indoor sport court users;
- 10,000 or more indoor recreation users for a range of activities including yoga, martial art, boxing, dancing etc.
- 17,000 or more people walking regularly on paths, in parks, natural areas and beaches; and

- Increased demand for access to beaches, waterways and the sea both for active and passive recreation and as destinations.

With an increasing population that is more active outdoors, Council is presented with an increasing amount of challenges managing contested public space. Key concerns include:

- Council can not provide more beaches, natural areas or waterways- these are generally a fixed resource. Increased demand will mean strategies to manage increased access to some areas and to disperse demand across both time and space.
- Land suitable for sport is limited and upgrading the capacity of existing assets can only go so far. Reallocating the purpose of some sporting lands to reflect changing participation will be needed.
- Activating natural areas, recreational areas and foreshores with trails and paths and recreation areas will help address needs.
- In some cases acquisition of land may be required if it can't be achieved as a result of urban development.



Figure 12. Dee Why PCYC – contemporary facility managed by PCYC and providing sport, recreation and other programs supporting the community

## 4.4 Emerging Planning Approaches to Open Space and Recreation

### 4.4.1 The Urban Green Infrastructure Policy (NSW)

This draft policy was released by the NSW Government Architect late in 2017 for public review and discussion. The Greener Places<sup>1</sup> document recommends the creation of a networked urban ecosystem of green space that encompasses parks and open spaces to help create a healthier, more liveable and resilient place to live.

The policy advocates for green infrastructure to be considered as essential infrastructure throughout the urban design process, from strategy to construction and maintenance.

The objectives of the draft policy are:

- To protect, conserve and enhance NSW's network of green and open natural and cultural spaces.
- To secure a network of high quality, high performing and well-designed green space,

establishing a crucial component of urban infrastructure to address the environmental challenges of the twenty-first century.

- To promote healthy living, encouraging physical activity, social cohesion, and enhancing wellbeing by providing liveable places for the NSW community.
- To create a more strategic approach to planning for green infrastructure, encouraging early and integrated investment through statutory planning.
- To deliver better tools for the delivery of green infrastructure across NSW.

The document outlines four principles of green infrastructure supported by a range of implementation principles. There are three manuals/ tool kits that support the policy; one of these is currently in draft "Open Space for Recreation Guide".



St Matthews Farm, Cromer is a successful multiuse sports ground, used by Rugby league and soccer with a club house and canteen. While it is primarily a formal sport precinct it has been enhanced with informal active recreation facilities for young people including a ½ basketball court and skate park facilities for passive recreation.

<sup>1</sup>Source: <https://www.governmentarchitect.nsw.gov.au/policies/greener-places>

### 4.4.2 Open Space for Recreation Draft Guidelines

The NSW Government Architects has proposed the adoption of Opportunity Based Planning for Open Space for Recreation\*.



\*note – a revised consultation draft is due for release later this year. The draft discussed here was previously released for comment but has been withdrawn pending the release of the new version

The draft “Open Space for Recreation Guide” (OS4R)- Government Architect NSW 2018 represents a significant shift away from a population, based standard and reviews the importance of spatial standards suggesting that while the amount of land is important it should be tied to recreation opportunity outcomes and performance criteria that ensure the outcome is functional.

Nevertheless, in the Northern Beaches, which was established at the time when the population-based standard was used for determining the quality of open space, it is intended to aim to retain the provision of open space at 2.13Ha of active open space and 2.13Ha of passive open space per 1,000 people.

The Guide recognises that a critical issue in provision is access and that for higher density urban areas the access radius may need to be smaller in recognition of the higher population loads to be supported and the additional impacts of vertical communities.

In summary the draft guide recommends provision outcomes and performance criteria to suit different urban settings (e.g. high density, greenfield, brownfield etc.) .

The draft guide offers the following strategies for providing open space for recreation:

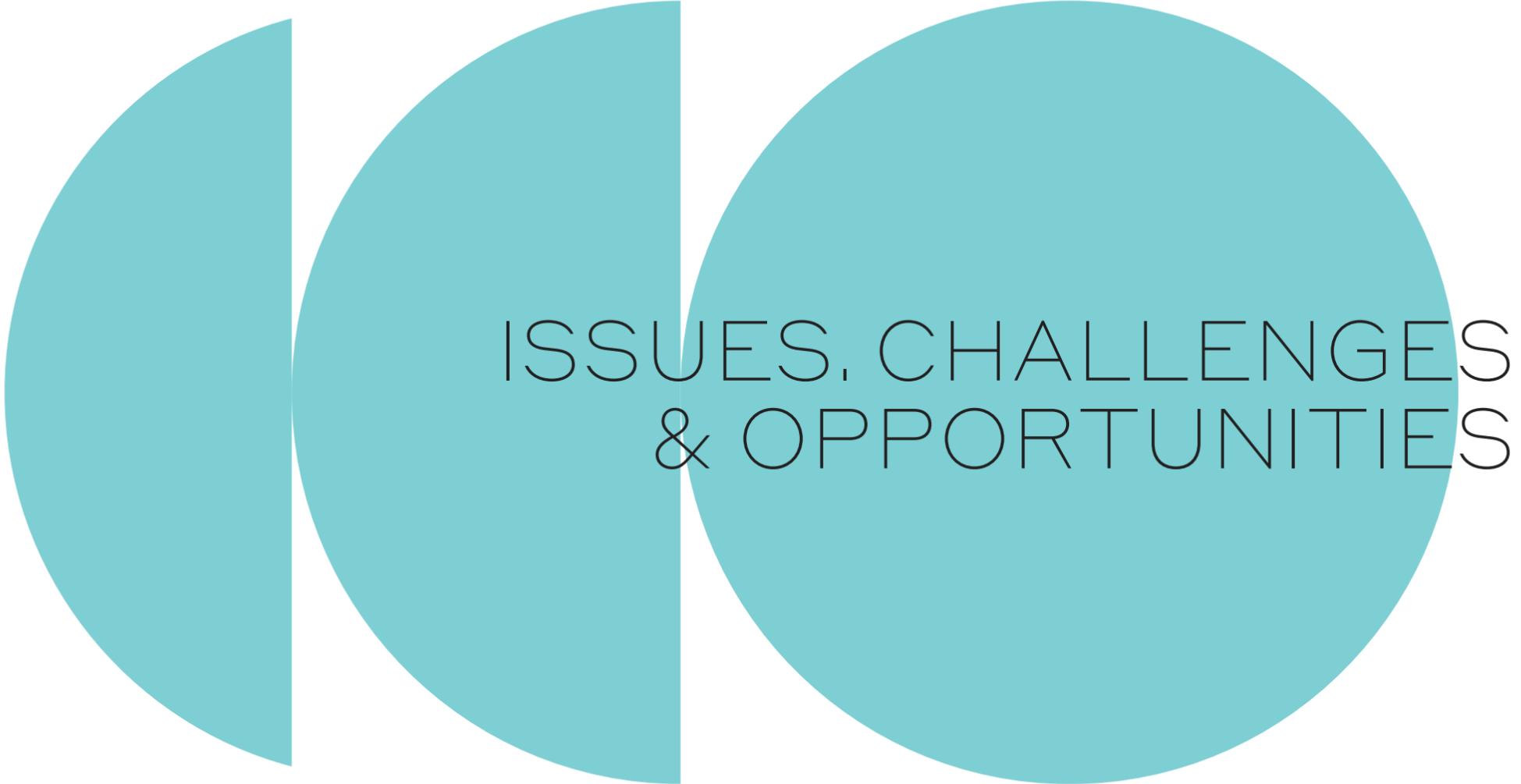
- Improve the provision and diversity of open space

for recreation;

- Understand the demands on existing open space and plan for open space in new and growing communities;
- Improve the quality of open space for better parks and facilities;
- Use open space to connect people to nature;
- Link to the network of green space;
- Encourage physical activity by providing better parks and better amenity;
- Provide open space that is multifunctional and fit for purpose;
- Design versatile, flexible spaces; and
- Consider life cycle costs, management and maintenance.

The draft guide focuses on the following performance criteria:

1. Accessibility and Connectivity
2. Distribution
3. Size and Shape
4. Quantity
5. Quality
6. Diversity.



ISSUES, CHALLENGES  
& OPPORTUNITIES

## 5.1 Delivering on Strategic Drivers for Social Sustainability in the Northern Beaches

**The development of a new Social Infrastructure Study presents an opportunity for Council to align its delivery of social infrastructure and open space with priorities and key directions contained within the North District Plan and other strategic plans.**

Current metropolitan strategic planning frameworks influence the provision of social infrastructure by emphasising placemaking, walkable neighbourhoods, and the “30 minute city” concept. Essentially, these drivers seek to locate services, employment, and community facilities in close proximity to housing.

Provision of social infrastructure is key to supporting the social sustainability of the Northern Beaches community as it changes over the next 20 years.

Social infrastructure can strengthen local democracy and participation by building communities' capacity to actively sustain social inclusion and cohesion, vibrant and resilient neighbourhoods, and community health and wellbeing. Social infrastructure is also essential to catalysing individual and community activity through facilitating creativity and enterprise, and delivering spaces that support economic vibrancy across a variety of business sectors.

Many of Council's contemporary strategies identify opportunities to activate town centres and enhance sense of place through place making. For example, many of the objectives of Council's Event Strategy

seek to promote and support social cohesion and promote belonging, health and wellbeing outcomes for all.

Well-designed and high quality social infrastructure is a key contributor to vibrant and engaging places and contribute to the distinctive character and identity of local neighbourhoods. Community insights collected as part the Northern Beaches Community Insights Report consistently identified the need for more places for people to gather, connect and interact within the community.

The preparation of the Draft SIS presents an opportunity to better understand the role of contemporary and best practice policies, models and strategic directions (both metropolitan and local). These include:

- North District Plan (Greater Sydney Commission);
- Joint Use of School Facilities and Land Policy (Department of Education);
- People Places (State Library NSW);
- The Urban Green Infrastructure Policy (NSW Government Architect);
- Shape 2028: Northern Beaches Community Strategic Plan 2018-2028 (Northern Beaches Council); and
- Disability Inclusion Action Plan (Northern Beaches Council).

### Key Issues & Challenges

- Delivering socially sustainable outcomes requires an integrated approach and whole-of-Council alignment across a range of priorities and drivers. This is challenging in the context of Council's current pipeline of strategic planning and policy making.
- Over time, the cost of delivering social infrastructure will continue to increase making the future delivery and upgrade of the existing social infrastructure network increasingly difficult amongst Council's many competing priorities.
- The importance of social infrastructure in sustainable and healthy cities is widely acknowledged as a priority at state and federal levels, but the responsibility for planning, funding and managing falls to local government.
- Land is typically more expensive where the demand is greatest. In the context of the Northern Beaches, this is particularly applicable for high amenity town centres and foreshore/beach environments.

## Delivering on Strategic Drivers for Social Sustainability in the Northern Beaches

### Key Opportunities

- Planning for the long-term provision of social infrastructure to support liveability and community wellbeing objectives.
- Support the development of creating places foster community identity and promote vibrant and diverse places to support local enterprise.
- Increased provision of multi-use facilities will assist sustainability by ensuring high social returns on assets.
- Investigating new and sustainable ways of delivering social infrastructure that will enable the provision and upgrading of facilities, so that they can continue to meet community needs and expectations.
- Partnerships with other providers and other agencies to facilitate shared provision.
- Re-imaging the role of other types of social infrastructure in contributing to place and fostering community connections. For example, surf life saving clubs and scout halls.
- Emphasising placemaking and activating existing social infrastructure to enhance and support the daytime and night-time economies.

### Case Study: Castle Hill Library and Community Centre

#### Overview

The Castle Hill Library and Community Centre was built in 2004, and is located at 14 Pennant St in Castle Hill. The Centre's facilities include:

- A 2,000m<sup>2</sup> community centre, incorporating a 500 seat flexible theatre and four meeting rooms (with capacities of 20, 40, 90 and 180 people, respectively);
- A 1,900m<sup>2</sup> library, incorporating a café and Council customer service centre;
- Underground parking; and
- An early childhood health centre.

Above the centre is an eight storey residential apartment building. To deliver the centre, the then Baulkham Hills Shire Council (now the Hills Shire Council) acted as the developer for the site, commissioning a development and construction company to build the whole development. Council then sold the units, and used the proceeds from that to subsidise the cost of the Centre's construction.

This has meant that a facility which would have cost approximately \$24 million to deliver instead cost Council \$8-10 million, due to the income generated from the sale of the apartments above. The original intent was for the Centre to be entirely self-funded by delivering an additional four levels of residential apartments (for 12 levels total), however the additional height was not approved.

#### Relevance to the Northern Beaches

The Castle Hill Library and Community Centre provides a creative example of a local government taking a different approach to deliver community facilities, in a situation where Council's limited funds would have made financing the Centre outright impossible. However, this example also presents a cautionary tale, as Council found taking the apartments to market to be a challenging process, and so would likely consider an alternate arrangement, such as a Public Private Partnership (PPP) for future similar projects.

#### Key Links

<http://www.pioneertheatre.com.au>

<https://www.watpac.com.au/project/castle-grand-apartments-library-and-community-centre/>



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## 5.2 Supporting New Ways of Living and Working

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Successful social infrastructure planning requires effective forecasting and responding to social and economic trends, including the needs of growing and emerging communities, and new patterns of living and working.

Council's current Community Strategic Plan, *Shape 2028*, has a vision for the Northern Beaches to be a 'safe, inclusive and connected community'. Social trends likely to impact the Draft SIS include:

- Provision of more medium and high density housing in some locations;
- Growth in numbers of independent entrepreneurs who are unlikely to operate on the basis of commuting to the CBD;
- Increase in residents working outside typical working hours who will benefit from great spaces to work, close to home; and
- An ageing population.

These trends will be particularly prevalent in the future for the Northern Beaches, which is expected to see strong growth in the number and proportion of 'young adults' in the LGA.

The increase in higher density living can create the risk of increased social isolation, loneliness and disconnection. Provision of community facilities – as 'third spaces' for people to spend time and connect with others is a critical means to mitigate this risk to community wellbeing.

Current geographical distributions of social infrastructure throughout the LGA is mixed in terms of their responsiveness to the density of the surrounding area. For example, while there

are clusters of facilities in some higher density areas, such as around Dee Why, other areas of higher density, such as Narrabeen-Collaroy have comparatively fewer facilities. Some areas will also require further analysis to determine if they achieve the desired mix and provision of facilities – for example, while the Manly area has a higher concentration of social infrastructure (commensurate with its higher density), the facilities are predominately smaller, localised centres. There is a lack of larger multipurpose facilities.

Opportunities for a new university campus in Frenchs Forest presents a transformative opportunity to provide new social infrastructure associated with future development. New models for re-imaging and activating communal learning spaces within vertical campuses are starting to occur across Sydney (e.g. Western Sydney University's campus in Parramatta).

The Draft SIS will further explore the need and demand for community facilities, and identify future opportunities for provision as relevant. It will also focus on provision in locations that have existing clusters of amenities, including retail areas, and areas that are highly accessible by public and active transport or through car parking provision.

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## Supporting New Ways of Living and Working

Ensuring there are opportunities to connect with natural areas and green spaces along with local access to public spaces and places that support physical activity will be critical in supporting both an increased urban density and the diversified realm of work and independent employment.

Trends indicate the rise of the active city and increasing participation in walking, running, cycling and other forms of self-directed or social group exercise. Venues for sport and recreation are no longer confined to formal fields and facilities but include all open spaces, bikeways, pathways, roads and waterways.

Participation will increasingly evolve as working hours change and there will be increased demand for access before work, during working days and after work. More night time opportunities will be needed and increased acceptance of commodified sport (pay play and away sport) are all indications of this shift.

Demand for sporting spaces is unlikely to decline, however the individual activities/ sports and times of demand will change. Many sports are developing new participation platforms for new members and some codes are seeing significant growth in participation of women. Economic pressures on clubs and sports associations are also seeing increased attempts to expand playing seasons and to improve revenue through additional competitions, and use of venues as spaces for hire.

### Key Issues & Challenges

- The Northern Beaches LGA has a relatively high degree of self containment (i.e. communities who live and work in the LGA) and accessibility/connectivity is constrained by only a collection of arterial roads and public transport services. This emphasises the need to foster, support and re-imagine the role of local community facilities.
- Residents in high-density neighbourhoods such as Manly, Queenscliff, Dee Why, and Narrabeen/Collaroy need good access to community facilities that enable them to socialise and recreate outside their homes, placing increasing pressure of demand and existing infrastructure.
- Balancing the types and mixture of facilities to cater for different expectations remains an ongoing challenge.
- Population changes will require Council's existing social infrastructure network to meet a diverse range of needs and activities.
- Providing additional land to accommodate increased demand from population growth or increased participation is difficult and often costly. However, it is essential the main areas of population growth include new open space and recreation facilities in planning.
- In some locations, open space and recreation facilities are not easily accessible in terms of walkability or connection to public transport links.
- Older facilities may struggle to meet the increased demands of multi-use and co-use approaches. In some cases retrofitting may allow increased use in others it may be necessary to redevelop or relocate.
- Some organised sports are declining, while personalised, individualised fitness activities (often undertaken in public space) is increasing as are new modes of participation in established sports. This is placing new pressure on existing sporting spaces and public parks which host many of the new fitness and exercise related participation.
- Managing self-interests, historical involvement, contributions and political influence, particularly in relation to encouraging groups to share facilities and change their arrangements.

### Key Opportunities

- Foster co-working and collaborative, multipurpose spaces in locations identified for innovation and knowledge-intensive industries such as Frenchs Forest Health and Education Precinct and Brookvale.
  - Explore opportunities to deliver new models of 'community lounges' as part of any future education/university campus within Frenchs Forest.
  - Housing in the Northern Beaches is trending towards proportionately greater numbers of medium and high density housing typologies. Increased populations, particularly at higher density, can support commercial and cost recovery models of facilities provision.
  - Open up existing single-use facilities to a broader range of users to enhance activation and utilisation through upgrades and contemporary refurbishments. Particularly in location with a more clustered level of provision - e.g. Manly, Dee Why, Narrabeen and Warriewood.
  - Some community centres could potentially be re-envisioned as co-working hubs, start-up or makers spaces for use by a broad range of community members, enhancing economic as well as social vibrancy in local neighbourhoods.
  - Investigate opportunities to co-locate or enhance social infrastructure provision around existing and future B-Line Stops to support the 'integrated multipurpose' model of provision.
  - Parks, natural landscapes, walking and cycling paths all play an important role in fostering healthy active lifestyles. This means that a much broader range of public open space can provide for recreation needs. Ensuring multiple use approaches to all land assets will assist in future planning.
- There is opportunity to increase the provision of synthetic fields which have an increased capital cost but can increase capacity to accommodate formal sport.
  - The projected increase in the active ageing population is a valuable resource for Council, as many older people are interested in participating in volunteering and community service to support their area.
  - New models of provision can see community facility and sport and recreation facility needs integrated into large multi-use centres which increases their sustainability and flexibility in response to changing demands.
  - For high density areas there are a number of innovative approaches to social infrastructure provision that include:
    - Large central public open spaces which combine multiple uses and interface with public retail realms;
    - Use of floor space within residential towers to provide community facilities, sport and recreation centres and informal community space;
    - Rooftop parks, sports courts, and synthetic fields.
  - An evidence based analysis of land use for sport and correlating participation numbers should allow some rationalising of current sport and recreation land and provide opportunities for more effective use of the resource.
  - Shared use arrangements with schools can offer a range of opportunities for education and community use of the same facilities including sports fields, courts, indoor sport and program rooms to support a range of community based programming.

## Supporting New Ways of Living and Working

### Case Study: iHarvest Coworking Sunshine

#### Overview

iHarvest Coworking Sunshine is an initiative of Brimbank City Council, which provides an affordable coworking space for start-ups, entrepreneurs, freelancers, and business. The space features desks, meeting rooms, breakout areas, a private phone booth, and a workshop area. iHarvest members also have access to a separate kitchen and outdoor terrace.

The workshop area is also used for the iHarvest Program, which is an ongoing series of events (classified as either Masterclasses, Mentoring, or Meetups) open to current and future entrepreneurs and startups. The iHarvest Program is funded by LaunchVIC, an agency set up by the Victorian Government, which is responsible for developing Victoria's startup ecosystem.

iHarvest is located on Level 4 of the Brimbank Community and Civic Centre. This 7-storey building was opened in 2016, and is the central hub for Brimbank City Council, housing municipal offices, council chambers, a customer service centre, community meeting spaces, exhibition spaces, a two-storey library, and children's outdoor play space.

#### Relevance to the Northern Beaches

iHarvest Coworking Sunshine demonstrates a model for Council to support and create co-working opportunities to encourage innovation and entrepreneurship within their LGA, and within an integrated, multi-use community facility, like Brimbank City Council have achieved with the Brimbank Community and Civic Centre.

#### Key Links

<https://iharvestcoworking.com.au/>

<https://www.brimbank.vic.gov.au/news-and-events/media-releases-2018/december-2018/iharvest-coworking-sunshine-open-business>



Source (both images): iHarvest Coworking Sunshine

## 5.3 Revitalising the Existing Network of Social Infrastructure

Renewal of the existing social infrastructure network will need to focus on efficient, cost-effective responses to growing community need. For example, there may be opportunities to refurbish older, existing facilities that have a single user group, to make them accessible to a broader range of users.

Council's Community Strategic Plan establishes a vision for the Northern Beaches as 'a safe, inclusive and connected community that lives in balance with our extraordinary coastal and bushland environment'. Social infrastructure plays an important role in achieving this vision, especially through facilitating inclusion and connection across the community. As a legacy from the former Warringah, Pittwater and Manly Councils there is a diverse range of social infrastructure across the Northern Beaches, however there is currently no comprehensive future plan or strategy for these facilities.

The design and 'attractiveness' of social infrastructure and open space plays an important role in creating positive experiences and perceptions within the community, and over time will result in increased usage.

A number of Council's facilities are also located adjacent or within public parks, reserves, and other public open spaces. While this presents some challenges around usage and activation, it also presents opportunities to increase the integration and interaction of outdoor and indoor spaces, essentially mutually increasing the space and capacity of both the building and open space facilities. Overall there are opportunities to revitalise and renew the network of social infrastructure in a way that enhances their appearances, increases their functionality and respects local character.

### Key Issues & Challenges

- Some community facilities within the Northern Beaches are isolated and located away from public transport and walkable catchments and are not accessible.
- The LGA encompasses a large geographical area with very distinctive local communities. Both a strategic and localised 'networked' response to provision of social infrastructure is required.
- Contemporary benchmarks provide an overlay for existing supply, however do not take into account qualitative considerations such as quality, condition or population densities.
- Many of Council's facilities comprise a mixture of 1970s-1990s brick buildings. Many of these commonly require basic refurbishment to ensure they are accessible for all.
- There are many diverse communities across the Northern Beaches and the types of activities and uses will vary depending on location. For example coastal communities will have different expectations than inner-urban or rural villages.

## Revitalising the Existing Network of Social Infrastructure

### Key Opportunities

- Increase the flexibility of existing facilities to ensure spaces can adapt to community needs and facilitate social connections and inclusion.
- Deliver on other strategic objectives from Council, for example provision of free wi-fi, digital connectivity and universal access for all abilities.
- A mixture of 'small fixes' (short term) and larger capital works upgrades. An example of this is ensuring all Council facilities over time are universally accessible.
- Create a truly integrated network of different types of social infrastructure.

### Case Study: 'City Spaces' Re-branding

#### Overview

The City of Sydney has recently undertaken a re-branding exercise to promote the role of smaller venues for hire across the City. Now known as 'city spaces', the City have identified the important role that these smaller spaces play in supporting the vibrancy of local neighbourhoods and streets.

In recognition of the increasing population density and the challenges associated with acquiring new land for open space or community uses, the City have started a coordinated approach involving:

- Small scale capital works, cosmetic upgrades and other refurbishments to improve the quality and amenity of the smaller venues.
- Promotion of the unique assets of each venue in contributing to the local identity and character of the different neighbourhoods.
- Focus on localising community facilities with facilities and programs to reflect the local residents needs and interests.
- Integration with City of Sydney's What's On Page
- Updates to the website to increase usability, searchability and information about each venue.

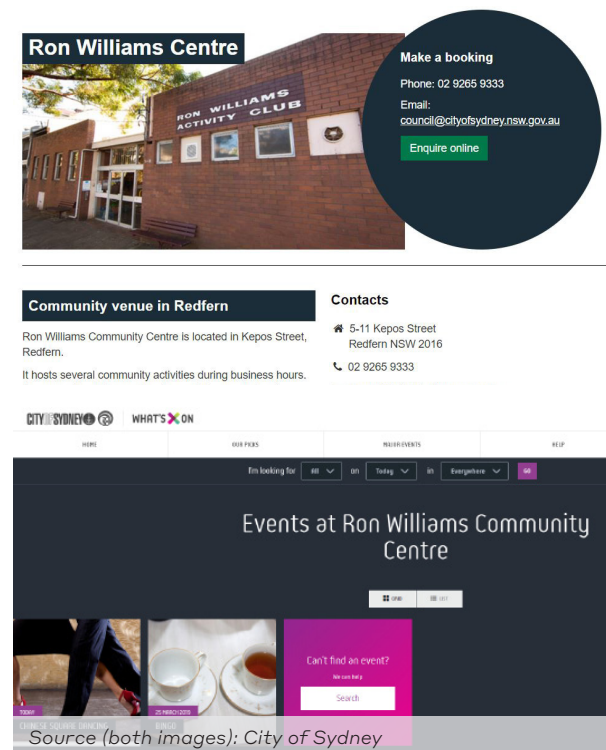
#### Relevance to the Northern Beaches

The City of Sydney's approach to its community facilities hire program has seen the revitalisation and upgrade of their smaller community venues across the LGA. Many of the City's smaller venues, like the Northern Beaches, are unstaffed and have varying levels of usages throughout the day and on the weekend.

#### Key Links

<https://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/community/community-services>

<https://whatson.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/>



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## 5.4 Delivering Inclusive, Flexible, Adaptable Spaces That Meet Community Needs

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Inclusive, flexible, adaptable and multipurpose spaces and places will be required to meet emerging and future community needs (for example, fitness equipment for seniors in/around parks). However, understanding current and future needs requires continual community engagement to determine the precise facilities likely to be required.

The way that people and communities live, work and recreate is changing, and these new patterns need to inform the design and management of facilities. Challenges arise when change takes place rapidly or are not foreseen. It is important to design spaces that are flexible enough to be readily and efficiently adapted over time.

For example, the “high street” model of community facility delivery, such as the Avalon Recreation Centre, provides a multi-functional, flexible space in a local centre, co-located with other services and commercial facilities that meet daily living needs. This delivery model encourages utilisation of readily accessible facilities, as well as social interaction across diverse sectors of the community, bringing people together and enhancing community cohesion. This however, may require property acquisition and/or consolidation of existing assets. It is also acknowledged that not all facilities can adopt this model, and therefore there is a need to innovate to determine appropriate contextual responses to activating facilities.

It is important social infrastructure is inclusive, responding to the needs of people of all ages, genders, cultural backgrounds, socio-economic status as well as those with different types/levels of ability. With an ageing population, it is important to note that nearly 1 in 10 people over 65 years are living with dementia and thus their special needs should

be considered and acknowledged through social infrastructure design and delivery.

The provision of spaces and places for recreation and sport requires new thinking to reflect limited resources and the need to ensure that maximum return from investment is achieved.

Northern Beaches Council has already begun a number of collaborations such as within Frenchs Forest Planned Precinct to develop multi-use spaces. The impact of shifting participation does mean that it is important for parks sport and recreation infrastructure to support some level of reconfiguration and adaptation. For built facilities location and design, and partners in the capital cost of the facility reflect success. For formal sporting spaces, flexibility can be best achieved with larger multi-use precincts and planning provision in higher level terms such as:

- Spaces for rectangular fields
- Spaces for oval fields
- Court sports
- Aquatics
- Flexible indoor program spaces

All of these can be configured as demand changes to accommodate a range of similar format uses.

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## Delivering Inclusive, Flexible, Adaptable Spaces That Meet Community Needs

### Issues & Challenges

- Changing community needs. What is a priority now might be very different to what is a priority in 10 years' time.
- Contemporary trends are indicating a shift by organised community groups to use cafés and other private spaces to host events over Council facilities (e.g. book clubs, organised community groups, meet-ups).
- Balancing the need for flexible and multi-use spaces with the need for purpose-built spaces for specific uses (e.g. gallery and exhibition space).
- Many older sport and recreation facilities and sporting spaces were not designed around multiple use, making retro fitting difficult.
- Older facilities within the LGA have not been designed with multi-functionality in mind. Some facilities lack essential features such as toilets, lighting and carparking.
- Although some facilities are ageing and in need of replacement, and some sporting uses may have declining participation, community sentiment and a sense of ownership can create resistance to change.
- New management structures and funding models that encourage multi-use facilities have been slow to emerge and be accepted by local governments and communities.
- Perceptions around what public spaces should be delivered, can be difficult to shift and contemporary examples of successful approaches are needed to assist community understanding.
- The size and shape of the LGA requires provision of district or higher level facilities in a number of strategic locations due to the extent of travel times and general GSC guidance around the 30 minute city.

### Opportunities

- Increase the flexibility of existing facilities to ensure spaces can adapt to community needs and facilitate social connections.
- Improve the digital technology available in some facilities to enable greater connectivity (e.g. installation of PA equipment in choice venues and free wi-fi).
- Deliver a connected network of community facilities that are easily accessible for all users.
- Better understand the social activities that drive quality of life and harness opportunities to partner with local business to enhance and deliver a new 21st century network of community facilities (cafés, restaurants, pubs).
- Ensure the Northern Beaches is supported by social infrastructure that is relatively equitably distributed to provide access for all residents, workers and visitors.
- Increase focus on provision of high quality public open space precincts supporting a range of uses and anchoring growth areas.
- Investigate development of community hubs which provide multiple use facilities meeting sport, recreation and community facility needs.
- Expand partnerships with the education sector to deliver outdoor and indoor sport facilities and potentially new play spaces or active recreation nodes.
- Consider new models of provision that enhance the cost-effectiveness and financial sustainability of sport and recreation facilities through increased commercial or partnership operating models.
- Consider converting older facilities to alternative uses, where they are no longer needed to serve a local population. Or disposal of assets to enable investment in new facilities where there is current or future under provision.

## Delivering Inclusive, Flexible, Adaptable Spaces That Meet Community Needs

### Case Study: Juanita Nielsen Community Centre

#### Overview

The Juanita Nielsen Community Centre is located at 31 Nicholson St in Woolloomooloo. Originally a warehouse, the building was converted to a Community Centre in 1983, and extensively renovated in 2015-16.

The Centre provides a diverse range of facilities and services to meet the needs of the equally diverse Woolloomooloo community it serves. These include:

- A community gymnasium, which offers a variety of equipment and classes, and has affordable concession memberships and operates an outreach program;
- An entrepreneurial co-working space, which provides an opportunity for startups and local small businesses to collaborate and work for free;
- An After Hours School Care program;
- A reclaimed rear laneway behind the centre which has been redesigned to become a pocket park which is used as outdoor space for the After Hours School Care program, and is open to the public when not in use by the Centre;
- A range of flexible community rooms which are capable of hosting a range of meetings, events, and workshops (including cooking, painting, sewing, and creative arts workshops).

#### Relevance to the Northern Beaches

The Juanita Nielsen Community Centre provides a shining example of how to design and provide a facility which is able to meet the diverse needs of a community which features a broad demographic range. It is an example of a facility with flexibility as an integral element, which helps to ensure the facility will be able to adapt to changing community needs well into the future. The Centre is also an excellent example of a sensitive refurbishment and reuse of a heritage-listed building.

#### Key Links

<https://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/explore/community-centres/juanita-nielsen-community-centre>

<https://drivenxdesign.com/gov17/project.asp?ID=15991>



Source: Urbanite

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## 5.5 Exploring Innovative Models and Partnerships

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Innovative thinking is needed to look at new ways to provide spaces and places. The conversion of rooftops to synthetic fields and courts, libraries as part of commercial centres, conversion of road space to public space, and public private partnerships in providing built sporting facilities are all examples.

Innovative approaches to social infrastructure are also required to take account of changing trends in living, working and recreating. Co-working spaces, libraries re-envisioned as lifelong learning hubs and flexible, adaptable multipurpose models are required to meet demand from young entrepreneurs, start-ups and emerging businesses.

Sustainability of provision is another critical consideration for growing communities. One of the key strategies that has been adopted by many councils is that of partnership with community groups and clubs to deliver programs and services out of council facilities (such as sport clubs providing competitive sport opportunities). But times have changed and many clubs are struggling to manage facilities and provide activities. In part this is due to declining volunteerism but other factors such as: poor governance; declining participation; and competition from new sports often contribute.

In some cases these partnerships extend to the club or group leasing facilities and being responsible for maintenance of the community asset. These partnerships have also seen community groups undertaking capital developments and improvements with funds they have sourced independently of council (such as grants).

Partnerships currently tend to focus on schools and education. An infrastructure study can inform opportunities to expand scope to other government

groups, for example, government sport and recreation groups partnering with commercial land owners of golf courses to encourage the sharing facilities, addressing shortages of supportive infrastructure. This could be achieved through initiatives such as the utilisation of hard surface locations for parking on weekends.

To facilitate renewal of facilities and spaces in the context of population growth and limited funding, Northern Beaches Council can seek to explore shared use models, partnerships with community service providers and the private sector, and models that take account of new development to deliver new social infrastructure.

There are new models which respond to contemporary trends, in particular better consideration of commercial opportunities to generate revenue that offsets those activities needing support are now more accepted in social infrastructure planning. Including retail space, leasing to commercial managers, seeking private capital, integrating facilities into key precincts that activate areas are all evident in major cities.

The most important issue is the planning undertaken for future facilities, in particular the preparation of rigorous feasibility studies that develop sustainable models and provide clear indications of any subsidies that may be required.

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## Exploring Innovative Models and Partnerships

### Issues & Challenges

- At present there is a knowledge gap of existing social infrastructure across the Northern Beaches and within the broader/adjoining area.
- Increasing financial demands on local government, combined with rising infrastructure costs and increasing expectations from the community.
- Increasing costs of development of social infrastructure, not adequately met by development contributions or rates-based funding models.
- Importance of open space and recreation infrastructure in creating sustainable and healthy cities is acknowledged as a priority by state and federal governments but they are rarely interested in supporting recurrent costs, preferring to contribute capital only. Much of the responsibility to ensure planning, and feasibility falls to local government.
- The provision of sport relies heavily on community clubs, many of whom report declining volunteerism and increasing financial and organisational stress.
- Increasing financial pressures from controls on rates, borrowings and developer charges impacts a council's ability to deliver new infrastructure.
- Some ageing facilities lack the flexibility to respond to the need for reconfiguration and redevelopment either due to legacy issues, community values or site constraints.

### Opportunities

- Deliver new integrated multipurpose hubs in growth areas such as the Frenchs Forest Planned Precinct, Dee Why Town Centre, Manly and the Warriewood Valley Release Area.
- Establish social infrastructure through community hubs for example flexible, multipurpose spaces that can accommodate a range of uses in one location.

These provide improved access to a range of services, encourage compatible uses and supporting partnerships between service providers – and are also a cost-effective way of delivering essential community services.

- Facilitate shared use of social infrastructure, including school facilities – maximising the use and efficiency of spaces and buildings for community use by opening up facilities that are currently underutilised or only available to a single user group.
- Explore opportunities to enhance the cost-effectiveness and financial sustainability of social infrastructure by exploring additional revenue schemes (VPA).
- Deliver integrated land use outcomes that benefit the community and encourage collaboration and partnerships.
- Establish partnerships with other providers and other agencies to share provision and operational costs as well as ensure maximum utilisation levels.
- Utilise more semi-commercial and revenue opportunities to cross subsidise social infrastructure and establish facilities that can be individually sustainable.
- Explore innovative partnerships and the potential for private sector development to build recreation facilities as part of adding value to commercial and mixed-use developments.
- Introduce more flexibility in planning schemes and sport and recreation facilities planning to consider floorspace solutions for new facilities where council rents space rather than building a new facility.
- Invest in the social capital of communities through programs that strengthen community groups and clubs' viability. This could include both skills training and assisted processes for amalgamations and financial viability strategies.

## Exploring Innovative Models and Partnerships

### Case Study: Campbelltown Writers' Retreat

#### Overview

The Campbelltown Writers' Retreat is a dedicated place for writers. Located in a former school in a bushland setting at Wedderburn, 12km from the Campbelltown CBD, the Retreat provides a peaceful setting for writers to focus on their works.

The Retreat is a partnership between WestWords, a not-for-profit registered charity, and Campbelltown City Council. It is delivered and managed by WestWords, and works on an affordable membership model. Membership can be purchased on a weekly, monthly, or six-monthly basis, with membership costs working out to a daily rate of between \$3.42 (for the six-monthly membership) and \$5.70 (for the weekly membership option).

For the membership cost, members get 24/7 access to the Retreat and its facilities, which include dedicated spaces to write, free Wi-Fi, and a fully equipped kitchen. Members also get discounted rates for WestWords' regular writing workshops, held every 6-8 weeks, and showcase events, with guest writers and open mic sessions, held at either the Retreat, or WestWords' two other Writers' Centres at Parramatta and Katoomba. Membership also provides access to WestWords' resources for additional writing services, such as editorial and publication advice.

#### Relevance to the Northern Beaches

The Campbelltown Writers' Retreat is an interesting example where a local council has partnered up with a not-for-profit organisation to provide a community service which operates on an innovative and affordable subscription model. Further, it provides a use which activates and ensures utilisation of an out-of-centre Council building, both through the writers using the writing spaces, and also through the events WestWords operate at the Retreat.

#### Key Links

<https://www.westwords.com.au/projects/campbelltown-writers-retreat/>

<https://www.campbelltown.nsw.gov.au/ServicesandFacilities/Libraries/Adultandseniorsservicesandprograms/WestwordsCampbelltownWritersRetreat>



Source: WestWords

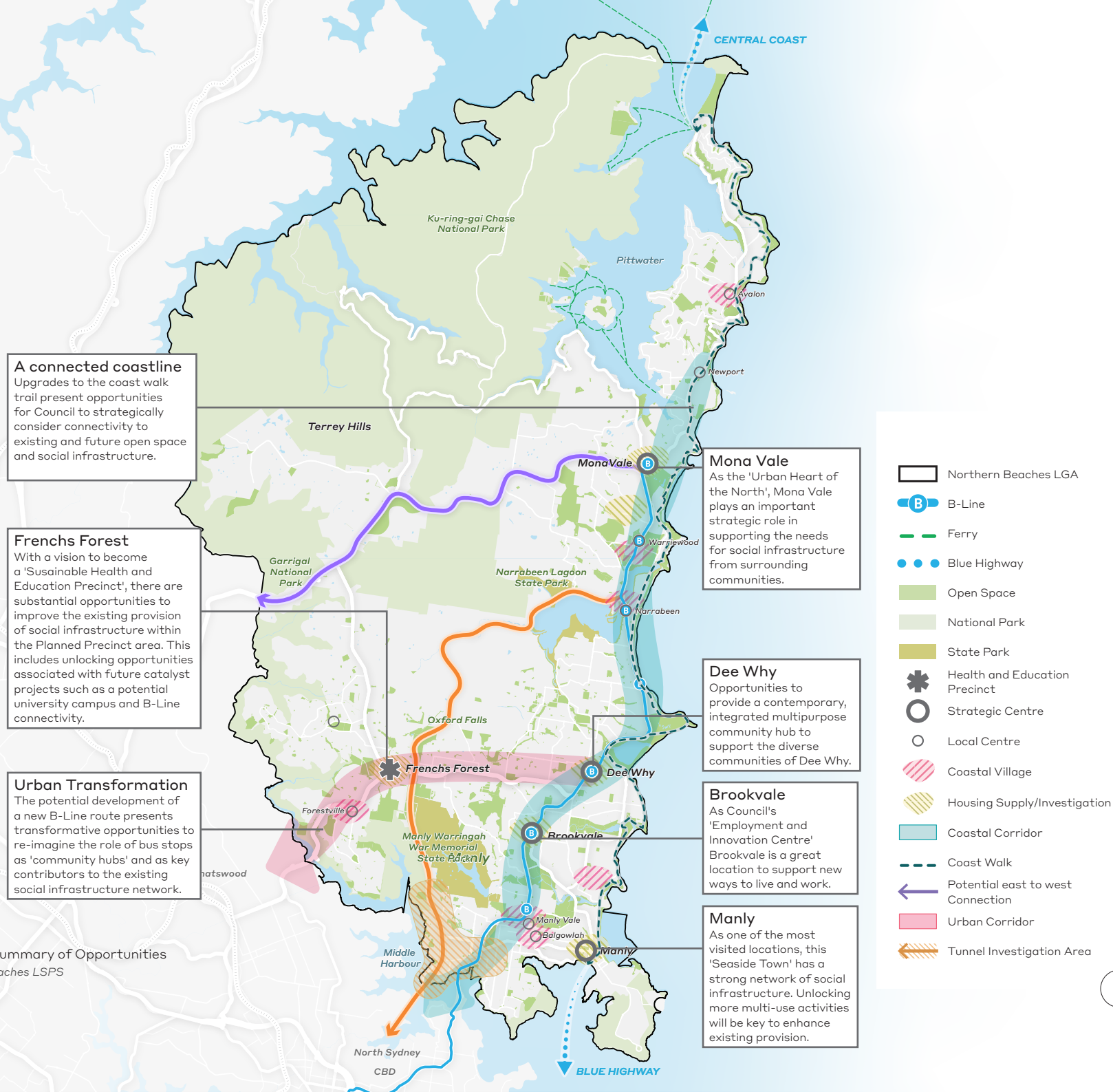


Figure 13. Northern Beaches Summary of Opportunities  
Source: Adapted from Northern Beaches LSPS

## 5.6 Next Steps

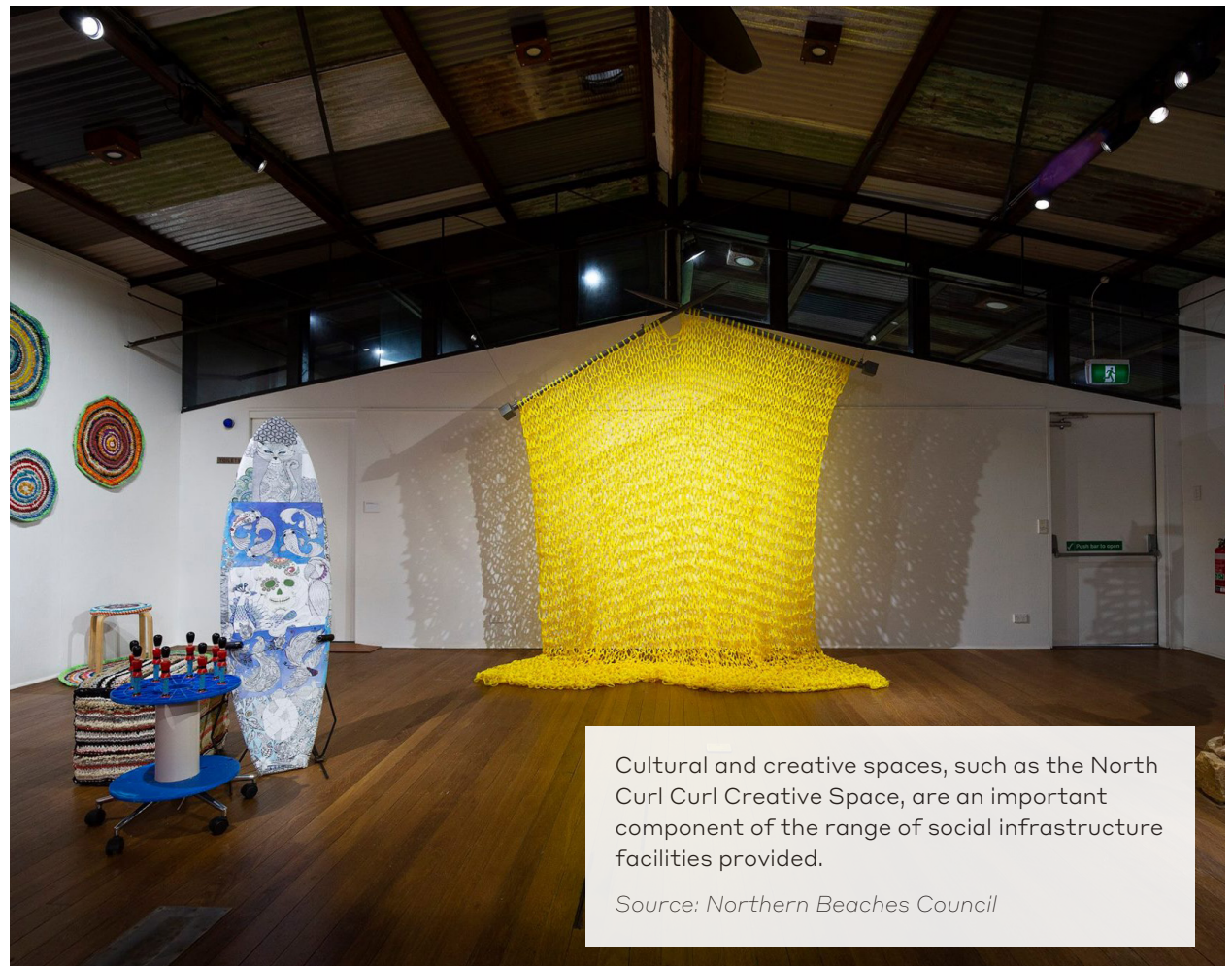
This Issues and Opportunities Background Paper has provided an overview of the existing social infrastructure provision within the Northern Beaches. It has also identified the high level planning policies and objectives that guide future provision of social infrastructure across the North District and identified opportunities for future provision.

The findings presented in this Paper will be further explored through the development of the Draft Social Infrastructure Study and shaped by additional analysis, benchmarking-based assessments and a comprehensive needs, demand and gap analysis.

The next stage of the project will undertake a community needs analysis involving an assessment of existing supply, demand and gaps for social infrastructure. This analysis will be presented in the forthcoming Social Infrastructure Study. The SIS will also deliver clear guidance on how social infrastructure may best be provided and managed to sustain liveability and community wellbeing in the Northern Beaches, now and into the future.

In summary the next steps of the project involve:

- Prepare Draft Social Infrastructure Study;
- Prepare Final Social Infrastructure Study; and
- Present key findings to Council.



Cultural and creative spaces, such as the North Curl Curl Creative Space, are an important component of the range of social infrastructure facilities provided.

*Source: Northern Beaches Council*

Libraries offer an active hub for the local community, especially those like the Glen Street Library, which provide a range of spaces, computers, and free WiFi, to meet the needs of a variety of users.

*Source: Northern Beaches Council.*





# APPENDIX

# Appendix A: Thematic Summary of Existing Plans and Policies

Name of Plan/Strategy	Date of Publication	Application	Theme
Hospital Precinct Structure Plan	August 2017	Frenchs Forest	French Forest Planned Precinct
Draft Northern Beaches - Demographic Analysis	April 2019	Northern Beaches	Demographics
Asset Management Strategy 2018-2019	2018	Northern Beaches	Asset Management
Northern Beaches Coast Walk Public Art Strategic Plan - Community Engagement Draft Report	February 2019	Northern Beaches	Public Art
Draft Northern Beaches Coast Walk - Public Art Scoping Study	February 2019	Northern Beaches	Public Art
Draft Northern Beaches Coast Walk - Public Art Strategic Plan	February 2019	Northern Beaches	Public Art
Draft Northern Beaches Community Centres Strategy - Baseline Report	August 2018	Northern Beaches	Community Centres
Mona Vale Performance Space - Community Engagement Report	September 2018	Mona Vale	Performance Spaces
Creative Art Space - Workshop Series Report	April 2018	Northern Beaches	Creative Spaces
Northern Beaches Digital Transformation Strategy	July 2017	Northern Beaches	Digital Transformation
Northern Beaches Council Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2017-2021	June 2017	Northern Beaches	Disability
Community Engagement Summary Report - Draft Arts and Creativity Strategy	November 2018	Northern Beaches	Arts and creativity
Draft Arts and Creativity Strategy - Connected Community 2028	November 2018	Northern Beaches	Arts and creativity
Draft Pittwater Waterway Strategy 2038	November 2018	Pittwater	Waterways
Draft Creative Warringah 2014-2020	June 2014	Warringah Council LGA	Arts and creativity
Move - Northern Beaches Draft Transport Strategy 2038	August 2018	Northern Beaches	Transport
Northern Beaches Walking Plan	April 2019	Northern Beaches	Active Transport
Northern Beaches Events Strategy 2019-2023	June 2018	Northern Beaches	Events
Frenchs Forest Open Space for Recreation Options Analysis - Frenchs Forest Hospital Precinct	March 2019	Frenchs Forest	French Forest Planned Precinct
Frenchs Forest Social Infrastructure Needs Study	September 2018	Frenchs Forest	French Forest Planned Precinct

Name of Plan/Strategy	Date of Publication	Application	Theme
Draft Frenchs Forest Green Plan	March 2019	Frenchs Forest	French Forest Planned Precinct
Greater Sydney Public Open Space Audit	December 2016	Greater Sydney	Green Infrastructure
Draft Greener Places	October 2017	Greater Sydney	Green Infrastructure
Warringah Council's Ageing Strategy - Living Well Warringah	February 2014	Warringah Council LGA	Elderly
Mona Vale Performance Space Survey	May 2018	Mona Vale	Arts and creativity
Mission Australia - Youth Survey Report 2018	2018	Australia	Youth
Mona Vale Performance Space Feasibility Study	May 2018	Mona Vale	Arts and creativity
Draft Northern Beaches Community Centres Strategy	November 2018	Northern Beaches	Social Infrastructure
Northern Beaches Community Centre Strategy - Draft Recommendations Report	November 2018	Northern Beaches	Social Infrastructure
Pittwater Public and Recreation Strategy	October 2014	Pittwater Council LGA	Public Space and Recreation
Playscore - Community Insights Report - Northern Beaches Town Centres and Village Centres	August 2018	Northern Beaches	Town and Village Centres
Shape 2028 - Northern Beaches Community Strategic Plan 2018-2028	April 2018	Northern Beaches	Community
Greater Sydney's Social Capital Its Nature and Value	October 2017	Greater Sydney	Social Capital
Northern Beaches Council Sportsgrounds Needs Analysis	December 2016	Northern Beaches	Green Infrastructure
Northern Beaches Sportsgrounds Strategy	July 2017	Northern Beaches	Green Infrastructure
Northern Beaches Council - Draft Urban Tree Canopy Plan	September 2018	Northern Beaches	Green Infrastructure
A Spirit of Play - Warringah's Open Space Strategy	November 2015	Warringah Council LGA	Green Infrastructure
Warringah Council - Recreation Strategy 2009	December 2009	Warringah Council LGA	Public Space and Recreation
Warringah Council's Youth Strategy 2013-2023	<b>2013</b>	Warringah Council LGA	<b>Youth</b>
Northern Beaches Council - Draft Mona Vale Place Plan	2017	Northern Beaches	Place Plan

Name of Plan/Strategy	Date of Publication	Application	Theme
Northern Beaches Council – Spotlight on Avalon	2019	Northern Beaches	Place Plan
Warringah Council – Multicultural Strategy 2015-2020	2015	Warringah Council LGA	Multicultural
Pittwater Council Youth & Families Emerging Issues Paper	N/A	Pittwater	Youth
Manly Youth Strategy	N/A	Manly	Youth