

Shellharbour **OPEN SPACE & RECREATION**

Needs Study 2020



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This Needs Study was prepared by the Institute for Public Policy and Governance (IPPG), University of Technology Sydney (UTS). We are an interdisciplinary research, consulting and training organisation providing leadership and expertise in public administration, policy, research, stakeholder engagement, strategic planning and capacity building. We utilise a unique combination of skills, techniques and perspectives to offer long-term sustainable solutions to governments, organisations, businesses and communities.

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Note: Appendices referenced in this Needs Study are contained in a separate compendium.

Acknowledgement of Country

This Study acknowledges the Wodi Wodi and Dharawal people as the Traditional Owners of the land which is now known as Shellharbour local government area. The authors of this Study pay their respects to Wodi Wodi elders past, present and future, and to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who now reside within this area.

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Executive Summary

In late 2018, Shellharbour City Council (Council) engaged the Institute for Public Policy and Governance (IPPG) at the University of Technology Sydney (UTS) to develop an Open Space and Recreation (OSR) Needs Study (Study) and an OSR Strategy (Strategy) to guide Council decision making on open space and sport and recreation facilities across the Shellharbour Local Government Area (LGA) for 2020-2030. The new Study and Strategy will replace Council's 2010 Open Space, Recreation and Community Facilities Needs Study which has guided the planning and development of open space, parks, sporting fields and community facilities over the last nine years.

This report is the Needs Study that contains the evidence and analysis that was used to shape the Strategy. The Study includes a review of key Council's current and planned open space, sport, recreation, and aquatics facilities, as well as the findings from a desktop policy and research review, including in relation to industry-accepted benchmarks regarding open space and recreation planning. The Study also includes the findings from a large community and stakeholder engagement initiative that occurred throughout 2019, which was influential in shaping the OSR Strategy directions and recommended actions.

At the highest level, this Study found that Shellharbour is doing very well at providing its residents with adequate amounts of open space; that is to say, the Shellharbour community has available to them a large number of passive, active and environmental open spaces across the LGA. Importantly, these spaces come in a variety of sizes and locations, and support a wide range of passive and active participation, further contributing to the positive open space provisions in the Shellharbour LGA.

The Study includes detailed analysis of specific open spaces and recreational facilities, including assessments of overall quality using an 8-point open space design review framework. This analysis allowed UTS to identify specific activities or precincts needing further consideration by Council over the next decade to ensure the ongoing quality of open spaces in Shellharbour. These include:

- Providing sufficient resources to maintain quality standards
- Improving links between existing open space assets, facilities, and users
- Adopting an inclusive approach to all OSR planning and design
- Pursuing more shared-use and multi-use options
- Investigating options for a local indoor pool combined with/ without a leisure centre
- Use of best practice OSR planning, including in all growth areas.

Background and context

Government policy – general open space planning

There is a growing focus on open or “public” space in NSW government policy. This is exemplified by the 2019 creation of a new government portfolio entitled the Ministry for Planning and Public Spaces, which has been given \$150 million to both develop new parklands and improve existing ones in NSW. This includes a NSW Government commitment to support Council-led open space strategies that is intended to deliver improved outcomes for the public. In addition, there are two additional NSW Premier's priorities that relate to open space, namely to have “greener public spaces” and a “greening [of] our city”.

These commitments complement local government actions aimed at improving the open space within its LGA for the benefit of its community. Separately, at the federal government level, there is support for infrastructure planning that features quality open, green space integrated into all other planning considerations at all levels of government.

Active open space planning

Studies undertaken by Sport Australia indicate that sport in Australia is changing, driven by access to new technologies; changing lifestyle and health factors, like obesity and sedentariness; demographic factors such as ageing; and the majority of people being time-poor. Sport and recreational facility planning needs to recognise these national trends and consider accommodating multiple uses and providing for a range of recreational and fitness activities, not just organised sport.

With respect to active open space planning, the NSW Office of Sport recommends sports planning be conducted using a regional sports “hub” model which directly links local sports facilities with regionally significant sports facilities, which in turn links with more substantial primary sports centre or “hubs” comprising co-located sport and recreation facilities, sports services and sports administration.

In the past, the NSW Office of Sport has made significant funding available for regional sports facilities that meet certain regional criteria. There is scope for Council to discuss possibilities for potential funding with the Office.

With respect to play spaces, inclusive design is the current focus of the NSW Government, governed by the Everyone Can Play guideline. The NSW Department of Planning has made funding available for councils to upgrade or develop new inclusive play spaces.

Local planning documents

Understanding the local planning framework used by Shellharbour City Council was an important component of the Needs Study. The Shellharbour Community Strategic Plan provides a mandate for the development and improvement of open space in order to provide diverse opportunities for sport, recreation and enjoyment. Community engagement for the purposes of the Plan found the community placed high value on the quality of recreational facilities and access to local natural assets.

When making decisions about any development applications for open space, submitted as part of a broader development process, the Shellharbour Development Control Plan requires Council to consider issues such as whether the development: serves a public purpose; is designed to meet the needs of the community; encourages multiple uses; supports water management; is able to be economically maintained; is connected to community and residential uses; supports the retention and incorporation of natural and cultural features; and minimises risks to public assets and infrastructure. Council is required to also take into account development restrictions on the basis of environmental sensitivity or cultural heritage significance.

Under Shellharbour's Local Infrastructure Contributions Plan there are various open space developments that are earmarked for developer contributions. This mechanism provides Council with a mechanism to assist in the provision and management of open space in a sustainable way.

Benchmarking

This Study provides guidance on amount and types of open space as recommended in various government "benchmarks". However, UTS notes that, as of December 2019, there are no government open space guidelines operating in NSW, as the draft Open Space for Recreation Guide produced by the Government Architect of NSW (GANSW) has been withdrawn. Benchmarks traditionally prescribed population ratio standards for open space. For example, the NSW standard has been 2.83ha per 1,000 population since the 1940s. However, benchmarks are gradually moving away from prescriptive population ratio standards and towards "demand" or so-called "needs-based" measures.

The draft GANSW Guide however did define a set of useful performance indicators for open space planning that UTS has adapted for use in Shellharbour. In the Study UTS has applied an eight-point open space design review framework (set out in Sections 2.5.2.1 and Attachment 1.2) and applied this system to individual precincts (Section 8). We have also provided benchmarks based on the GANSW guide in respect of the provision of local, district and city-wide parks in Shellharbour (Attachment 2.1) and open space generally (Attachment 2.1). The category of icon parks – referring to parks of particular significance or special value to the community – have also been retained from the 2010 Park and Recreational Space Guidelines which were included as part of Council's 2010 Open Space, Recreation and Community Facilities Needs Study. In all open space assessments the LGA exceeds the benchmarks not only based on 2019 population ratios, but will also do so in 2031 assuming current open space provisions are maintained.

Separately UTS has also provided indicative benchmarks on numbers and types of sportsfields based on the Parks and Leisure Australia Guidelines for Community Infrastructure (set out in Attachment 2.2) as these guidelines provide the clearest, albeit prescriptive measures for different varieties of active open space.

About the Shellharbour area

Geography and landscape of Shellharbour

Shellharbour is a region defined by its natural assets and topography, including Lake Illawarra in the north, the coastline in the east, and the escarpment in the west which largely prevents western development but also provides numerous places of ecological and biodiversity significance. Built features of the environment, specifically the Princes Highway, divides the LGA into east and west sections. Medium density development has typically occurred in the eastern part of the LGA, although this is changing with new greenfield developments occurring in the west.

Geographic factors which will continue to influence Shellharbour's open space planning are the proximity to water bodies on the eastern side of the LGA, leading to vulnerability to inundation, and higher density developments in the west, and to an extent, Shell Cove in the south. Additionally, Shellharbour contains reserves and national parks which contribute to open space for residents and tourists but for which careful consideration must be given to environmental protection.

Shellharbour City Council's Coastal Zone Management Plan highlights that a large amount of public open space in the LGA is at risk of erosion, inundation and/or is flood prone. This has major implications for recreational planning, maintenance and open space asset management now and into the future. The Plan also identifies a number of specific assets at severe risk in the short and long term, and recommends hazard management actions be fully incorporated into current and future open space planning processes.

Demographics of Shellharbour: Trends and key findings

UTS conducted an analysis of the demographic trends occurring in the Shellharbour LGA which will impact upon OSR planning over the coming ten years. Key findings included:

- An ageing population with a substantial growth in the proportion of people aged 60 or over. Currently this segment of the population tends to fall short on recommended physical activity guidelines
- Differences in growth patterns across the LGA, with the west projected to grow in population at twice the rate of the east up to 2031, due to greenfield developments in new release areas.
- Shift from low density to more medium density housing, resulting in reduced access to private open space. There will also be more people living in non-private dwellings by 2031.
- Persistent numbers of young families and children, particularly in the new release areas of Shell Cove, Flinders, Tullimbar and Calderwood.
- Compared to similar LGAs, the Shellharbour LGA is home to high numbers of young people, with under 25-year-olds representing approximately a third of the population in 2019, a percentage which is expected to remain similar up to and beyond 2031.

These demographic trends have a number of planning implications, which include the following:

- The ageing population in Shellharbour suggests more age-appropriate activities may be required, which may include organised and non-organised sports and recreation.
- Generally there will be growing demand for child-friendly, youth-friendly and family-friendly open spaces and recreational facilities.
- Shifts to medium density living will have implications in relation to community expectations and needs for improved access to high quality public open space.
- Further consideration needs to be given to how to best cater for different cohorts within the 0-24 age bracket, including with respect to access to parks with amenities, play spaces and built facilities such as skate parks, as well as to organised sports and recreation options that cater for younger age groups.
- There will be a need to ensure that future open spaces and recreational facilities are inclusive of all generations and demographic and socio-economic groups.
- Most residents need access to quality, green open spaces and affordable recreation opportunities in safe walking distance from their homes.

Shellharbour's Open Spaces and Facilities

In this Study, all open spaces have been classified using a matrix that defines both the type (active, passive, environmental, ancillary) and hierarchy (local, district and city-wide) of the open space area (see Section 5.2). Section 5.3 models open spaces based on population size, and provides a guide for the amount of open space in both at a precinct and LGA-level that will be needed over the coming decade. Using open space to population ratios demonstrates that general open space provision as between the east and the west is relatively similar, however this does not tell the whole story, as there is a clear disparity in *passive* open space (parks) as between east and west (see below – passive open space provision).

It is important to remember that about 70% of the LGA's population lives in the eastern suburbs. This proportion will decrease in the future, to about 66% by 2031. Therefore, the future balance of open space between east and west should reflect future population patterns.

Passive open space provision

Passive open space- referring to land set aside for parks, gardens, nature reserves and bushland corridors- is provided to support passive recreation, play and unstructured physical activity. Currently this is not evenly distributed across the LGA, with approximately 75% of open spaces (or 90% of park areas) located in the eastern precincts. The eastern precincts house all higher tier city-wide parks located in their boundaries.

The Study finds that there is no need for supplementary passive open space provision across the LGA based on established benchmarks at both an LGA-wide and precinct level (see analysis at Attachment 2).

Active open space provision

As at 2019, the Shellharbour LGA is generally well provisioned with respect to active open space- referring to land set aside for the primary purpose of formal outdoor sports including team sports, training and competitions. This includes a wide variety of local, district and city-wide parks, active reserves, sports fields, plus skate parks, cycle tracks, and sports facilities supporting wide range of organised sports. UTS notes that Council has plans to make improvements to a number of specific active facilities, as well as constructing new sports fields in Calderwood and Shell Cove.

Environmental and ancillary reserves also play an important role in the LGA. They may either provide passive recreation opportunities, contribute to a greener Council area, and /or create connections between spaces that are key to a more walkable and cyclable LGA. These reserves can also act as useful connectors or links to or between other open spaces. This interconnectivity and access could be given further consideration over the coming decade.

Demand and Community Feedback

Community feedback was sought to understand the community's use of, and desires for, public space in the community. These insights were reached through collection of information from the community via a statistically representative phone survey, an online survey that all community members were invited to complete, a questionnaire sent to all local sports clubs and associations, plus an open invitation to attend a community workshop.

Shellharbour community satisfaction surveys commissioned separately by Council in 2019 indicated that satisfaction with open space and recreation assets was high, had improved between 2017 and 2019, and was generally higher than comparable councils (apart from views on playgrounds). Assets identified as performing above average, and that had a strong impact on overall satisfaction, included sporting fields, parks, reserves and other open spaces.

When this data was assessed with the results of the engagement findings, the key messages and themes included:

- The need for ongoing, well-resourced maintenance of open space and recreational facilities to maintain or even upgrade quality to encourage community participation
- The importance of upgrading or adapting facilities to ensure that they are accessible and inclusive to all members of the community, and respond to changing levels of demand
- The value in open spaces and facilities that feel safe, are well maintained and have adequate amenities such as shading, seating and drinking fountains.
- The need to balance the provision of good quality local facilities in close proximity to residential areas, with large multi-use facilities that can support a variety of passive and active activities.

Other points of relevance include the fact that participation trends in sport and recreation vary across a number of variables including age, gender and postcode. As such the Study notes the importance of understanding both the drivers and barriers to participation as this can help inform an approach to open space and recreation planning that addresses potential inequalities.

Shellharbour's Aquatic Facilities

At present, Shellharbour provides four public swimming pools (including one ocean pool), as well as a range of clubs and associations that enable participation in a range of active and passive aquatic activities, including swimming, rowing, sailing, surf lifesaving, surfing and aqua-aerobics. Most of these activities take place along the Shellharbour and Lake Illawarra foreshores.

Demand and Community Feedback

Throughout the engagement (particularly in the phone and online survey), specific questions were asked of the community in relation to their use of pools and the ocean.

The key themes and messages expressed by the community included:

- The value in having pool facilities that were close to home, offer value for money or are free, are accessible to all, and are clean and well supervised
- A community preference for access to a heated indoor pool (within or without a broader leisure centre) that can deliver a range of water-based activities all year round
- The importance of having a variety of pool facilities available, including a range of sizes, locations and water temperatures, and affordable swimming lessons (or other class options)

- The need for upgraded facilities, including more shaded or undercover areas, be co-located with other services such as cafés, and have well maintained and safe amenities.

Taken together, the key findings in the Study have been used to shape the principles, directions and actions contained in the Shellharbour OSR Strategy 2020-2030 (see separate document). Importantly, the findings were synthesised and analysed collectively to inform the OSR Strategy and were not merely transcribed from one document to the other. As such, the Study's findings should be considered holistically.

* * * *

Glossary of Terms

Below is a list of key terms that were the focus of this Study.

- **Active open space:** land set aside for the primary purpose of formal outdoor sports for the community. Active open space supports team sports, training and competition and typically features sports facilities such as playing fields, change rooms, grandstands and car parks.¹ May accommodate unstructured community or individual use when not required for its primary purpose and could include informal lawns, play, picnic and other facilities in the peripheral.² Active open space is inclusive of sportsgrounds, and sportsfields.
- **Active reserve:** individual active open spaces.
- **Aquatics** refers to all water-related activities, inclusive of swimming, boating, ocean and lake based activities.
- **All water-based facilities** including all swimming pools, harbourside and lakeside infrastructure. The analysis also includes the relationship between these facilities and adjacent parklands, play spaces and picnic/BBQ areas.
- **Bushland:** passive open space that includes vegetation which is either a remainder of the natural vegetation of the land or, if altered, is still representative of the structure and floristics of the natural vegetation. Bushland can include biodiversity corridors, reserves, national parks and wetlands. Many of these spaces provide more limited recreation or public access opportunities than other open space types.³
- **Community:** a group of people living in the same area or place, or a group of people having certain characteristics, attitudes, and interests in common.⁴
- **Courts** refers to marked sports areas suitable for playing netball, basketball or tennis. Some courts are multi-purpose, and when combined can also be used for modified football (soccer), for example six-a-side.
- **Features and facilities** include both natural and built elements of open space design that can support different roles and functions, for example: seating, water fountains, public toilets, fencing, play features, footpaths, barbeque areas, gardens and landscape barriers. These are sometimes referred to as 'embellishments' in open space planning.
- **Health and wellbeing:** health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.⁵
- **LGA:** local government area.
- **Open space:** land that has no buildings or other built structures, which is accessible to the public, including green space.⁶
- **Park:** in relation to land, means an area of open space used for recreation, not being bushland.⁷
- **Parkland:** settings ranging from open areas (usually grassed for unstructured leisure activities and play) through to bushland, coastal reserves and foreshores, and includes associated (normally low-key) facilities such as seating, shelters, barbeques, playgrounds as well as trails.⁸
- **Passive open space:** land set aside for parks, gardens, linear corridors, conservation bushland nature reserves. These areas are made available for passive recreation, play and unstructured physical activity.⁹

¹ Greater Sydney Commission 2016, *Greater Sydney Public Open Space Audit*.

² Parks and Leisure Australia 2013, *Open Space Planning and Design Guide*.

³ Greater Sydney Commission 2016, *Greater Sydney Public Open Space Audit*.

⁴ Government Architect of NSW, *Glossary*.

⁵ World Health Organisation 1946, *Constitution of the World Health Organisation*.

⁶ Government Architect of NSW, *Glossary*.

⁷ Local Government Act 1993 (NSW), Dictionary.

⁸ Parks and Leisure Australia 2014, *National Position Paper – Parkland*.

⁹ Greater Sydney Commission 2016, *Greater Sydney Public Open Space Audit* Parks and Leisure Australia 2013, *Open Space Planning and Design Guide*.

- **Play space:** a place that is designated primarily for children's play, including playgrounds and recreation grounds.¹⁰
- **Precinct:** For the purposes of the Local Infrastructure Contributions Plan, the Shellharbour Council area has been divided into 'Precincts' based on the infrastructure provided within the catchment as a result of growth. The boundary for each of these Precincts is set out in Figure 5 in Section 3.2. The nine Precincts are identified as: Warilla, Shellharbour, Blackbutt, Oak Flats, Albion Park Rail, Rural East, Albion Park, Rural West and Calderwood.¹¹
- **Private open space:** land on private property which is not always accessible to non-owners and non-members, such as privately owned golf courses and racecourses and internal open space provided in unit blocks. Together, public and private open space contribute to the total open space resource in NSW.¹²
- **Public open space:** open space which is publicly owned and managed by local, State or federal government and is accessible to the public.¹³
- **Recreation:** the broad range of passive and active activities that people undertake when engaging in leisure for fun, relaxation, or fitness. Recreation can be undertaken indoors or outdoors, and covers a diverse range of activities that help communities stay physically and emotionally healthy and to interact and connect with each other.¹⁴
- **Sports space:** a public area that is commonly used for organised sporting activities, although may be available for other recreational uses at non-sporting times. A sports space may be a grassed playing field or area, bitumen or acrylic hard-courts, or synthetic surfaced areas. It includes additional infrastructure required for its successful use, such as adequate run off and buffer spaces, pavilions and training facilities (i.e. cricket practice nets).¹⁵
- **Sportsfield:** one specific playing field, set within a sportsground.
- **Sportsground:** an area set aside for sports, usually with one or more playing fields and/or courts, usually accompanied by other features such as amenities for players and spectators and a potential grandstand.¹⁶ Part of active open space.

* * * *

¹⁰ Shackell, A., Butler, N., Doyle, P. & Ball, D. 2008, *Design for play: A guide to creating successful play spaces*, Play England and UK Department for Children, Schools and Families.

¹¹ Shellharbour City Council, *Local Infrastructure Contributions Plan 2019*.

¹² Government Architect of NSW 2018, *Open Space for Recreation Guide*, Draft for discussion, Issue No. 01 – 2018, page 17.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Government Architect of NSW, *Glossary*.

¹⁵ Parks & Leisure Australia 2014, *National Position Paper – Sports Space*.

¹⁶ Definition adapted from Macquarie Dictionary.

1 Introduction

This section provides the background to development of this Open Space and Recreation Needs Study for Shellharbour LGA. It also discusses the purpose, scope and methodology used in the Study.

In late 2018, Shellharbour City Council (Council) engaged the Institute for Public Policy and Governance at the University of Technology Sydney (UTS) to develop an Open Space and Recreation (OSR) Needs Study (Study) and an OSR Strategy (Strategy) to guide Council decision making on open space and sport and recreation facilities across the Shellharbour Local Government Area (LGA) for the 2020-2030 period.

The new Study and Strategy will replace Council's 2010 *Open Space, Recreation and Community Facilities Needs Study* which has guided the planning and development of open space, parks, sporting fields and community facilities over the last nine years. The companion OSR Strategy aims to guide how Council will plan, implement and manage current and future open space, sport, recreation and aquatics facilities throughout the LGA to encourage passive and active activities and enjoyment for all in the community. The Study and Strategy do not cover community facilities.

This report is the OSR Needs Study 2019 that contains the evidence that has shaped the Strategy.

The Study consists of a review of all of Council's current and planned open space, sport, recreation, and aquatics facilities, as well as the findings from a desktop policy and research review, including on industry-accepted benchmarks and population ratios, and best practice open space and recreation planning. The Study also includes the findings from a large community and stakeholder engagement initiative that occurred throughout 2019, that has been influential in shaping the priorities and recommended actions in the OSR Strategy.

1.1 Purpose and scope

The Study contains the data and analysis from a range of sources, including community feedback to provide the evidence-base for the OSR Strategy. The Study examines Shellharbour's recreational infrastructure across the LGA, outlines population trends, summarises local community and other stakeholder needs and expectations, plus analyses broader benchmarks and trends that need to be factored into Council's future planning and assets management.

More specifically, the Study has:

- Reviewed the current situation in Shellharbour LGA with respect to open space, including the following:
 - Review of the current Council policy framework, key relevant documents and reports with regard to active and passive open space and recreation, including aquatics.
 - Status of existing items and controls outlined in the 2010 *Shellharbour Open Space, Recreation and Community Facilities Needs Study Report*
 - An analysis of current and projected demographics of the LGA up to 2031.¹⁷
 - An analysis of existing open space and recreation facilities, assets and services for active and passive recreation across the LGA.
- Distilled the outcomes of an extensive community engagement program to:
 - Identify the aspirations of stakeholders in relation to active and passive open space, aquatics, recreation provision and management
 - Document challenges affecting Shellharbour's open space network, aquatics and recreation, including any impacts of population growth in release areas.
- Investigated future planning information and policy trends, including:
 - An assessment of Council's existing plans and approaches to open space and recreation provision against industry benchmarks, standards and other relevant government policies and guidelines. This includes an assessment of the relevance of key Council planning

¹⁷ See note on the use of the year 2031 in Section 1.4 below.

instruments including its Local Infrastructure Contributions Plan and Assets Management Plan.

- Reviewed projected demand for active and passive open space allocation, including aquatics and future asset needs against demographic projections up to 2031. This included consideration of:
 - Future organised sport trends within the LGA
 - Gaps in provision, including investigating areas of under-provision and over-provision of passive and active open space
 - New recreational opportunities that may be appropriate within the LGA, including consideration of the co-use of open space areas and utility of environmental and ancillary reserves.

1.2 Background

1.2.1 2010 Needs Study

In 2010, Council commissioned the *Shellharbour Open Space, Recreation and Community Facilities Needs Study* (2010 Needs Study) in order to plan for the community's open space needs up to 2021. The 2010 Study focused on three key issues:

- Passive open space (or parks)
- Active open space (or sporting grounds)
- Community facilities.

The key findings of the Study were:

- **Passive open space:** The LGA has a large number of parks of various types include local, district and city-wide spaces. Some parks however were “spatially inadequate” or the quality of the parks was below suggested standards. This was particularly the case for smaller local parks further away from the foreshore.
- **Active open space:** Sportsgrounds and sportsfields were generally well provided across the whole LGA and generally maintained to a high standard, although the ancillary facilities, including storage areas, canteens and toilets, were of a much poorer standard and often unused as a result.
- **Community facilities:** Council operated a range of community facilities which were generally maintained to a high standard, with a number of new centres opening prior to 2010. It was identified that there were opportunities to “build upon the social and cultural capital through the implementation of various new facilities” in the following 15 years.

The 2010 Study proposed an open space prioritising process for use in future master planning and upgrades to parks and sports grounds, plus the identification of other future key community and cultural projects.

This Needs Study and companion Strategy aims to update and build on the 2010 plan, with the exception of community facilities, which are not dealt with in this Needs Study or in the Strategy.

1.3 Methodology

UTS used a mixed methodology to undertake the OSR Needs Study, comprising both quantitative and qualitative analysis as follows:

1.3.1 Desktop review

UTS conducted a targeted desktop review of key documents providing background information to the subject. This included:

- Federal and State legislation, regulations and policies related to open space, sport and recreational planning (see Sections 2.1 and 2.2).
- Current Illawarra-Shoalhaven regional planning documents and strategies related to future planning (see Section 2.3).
- Relevant Shellharbour City Council planning instruments, policies, guidelines and master plans (see Section 2.4), including:

- The findings of previous open space studies conducted by Shellharbour Council (see 2010 study described at Section 1.2.1 above)
- A variety of other LGA OSR Needs Studies, Strategies and planning tools
- Current research on benchmarks and planning (see Section 2.5)
- Demographics analysis (see Section 4).
- Existing participation data in respect of open space (see Section 6).

The References listed at the end of this documents contains a list of all core documents reviewed.

1.3.2 Stakeholder and community engagement

Shellharbour Council has a strong commitment to community and stakeholder engagement and participation in the planning process. As such, the UTS Study involved an extensive range of community engagement activities set out in Table 1 below. The core focus of these was to:

- (a) understand current use and attitudes to open space and recreational facilities; and
- (b) identify areas for improvement and future needs.

Table 1: UTS Stakeholder and community engagement methodology

Method	Date	Purpose
External engagement		
IDEAS LOUNGE	May 2019	Council convened two drop-in sessions at the Civic Centre for the public to raise any issues or provide ideas to feed into the current OSR planning process.
YOUTH COUNCIL	May 2019	Council consulted with four members of Shellharbour Youth Council to discuss the OSR priorities of youth in the LGA.
USERS SURVEY	May-Jun 2019	51 responses were received to a Council survey of current users of Council's sportsfields, courts, aquatic and recreation facilities, including local sporting clubs, associations and schools. The survey gathered demographics on current users of facilities, whether numbers were increasing or decreasing, as well as any challenges users currently face. Appendix F contains a summary of sport participation rates gathered from the Users survey.
STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS	Jun 2019	12 one-on-one interviews were conducted with key stakeholders including government agencies, local service providers, and sporting/ recreation associations. These 45 minute- one hour semi-structured interviews gathered evidence in relation to past and existing use of facilities and participation in sports. Appendix G contains a list of organisations and bodies that participated in interviews with UTS staff.
TELEPHONE SURVEY	Aug 2019	401 respondents participated in the random dial Computer Aided Telephone Interview (CATI) telephone survey (each approximately 10 minutes long). These participants were selected using demographic quotas representative of the LGA. Respondents were asked about their current use of OSR facilities, and also about their satisfaction levels, current needs and future expectations. Appendix B contains a summary of the results of the telephone survey.
ONLINE SURVEY	Aug-Sept 2019	96 responses were received to an online survey hosted on Council's "Let's Chat" webpage. The survey contained the same questions used in the telephone survey. Appendix C contains a summary of the results of the online survey.

COMMUNITY AND STAKEHOLDER WORKSHOP	14 Nov 2019	A small group of community members attended the two hour workshop widely promoted through Council networks. The workshop was designed to seek feedback on the proposed OSR Strategy outline, principles and directions, as well as identify potential OSR priorities and actions to be taken forward.
AQUATIC WORKING GROUP	Ongoing	Participation and gathering of feedback from Council's regular discussions with community representatives regarding the current use of swimming pools and investigation of future needs.
PLANNED PUBLIC EXHIBITION	Dec 2019 - Feb 2020	The final draft Study and draft Strategy will be placed on exhibition in early 2020 for 42 days. It is anticipated that community feedback will be sought via the <i>Let's Chat</i> platform. UTS will be provided with all results for further analysis.
<u>Internal engagement</u>		
SHELLHARBOUR COUNCIL OSR WORKING GROUP	9 Apr 2019	Two hour workshop with key internal Council staff to discuss project with open space working group
	1 Oct 2019	Two hour workshop to present the key findings arising from the UTS OSR community engagement methodology and gather staff's feedback
	26 Nov 2019	Two hour workshop to discuss the Draft UTS OSR Needs Study and proposed Strategy and gather final feedback.
COUNCILLOR BRIEFINGS	16 Apr 2019	One hour workshop to introduce the UTS OSR Needs Study and Strategy approach and to gather early advice on the engagement process and other aspects of the brief
	1 Oct 2019	One hour workshop to present the key findings arising from the UTS OSR community engagement methodology and gather the Councillor's feedback.
	26 Nov 2019	One hour workshop to discuss the Draft UTS OSR Needs Study and proposed Strategy
STAFF FEEDBACK	Ongoing	Regular document exchanges and discussions with key Council staff regarding the history and future planning regarding OSR across the LGA.

Source: Institute for Public Policy and Governance UTS

1.4 About the Report

This OSR Needs Study is divided into nine sections:

- **Section 1 – Introduction** to the project.
- **Section 2 – Background and context** outlines the major government policy trends that are impacting on open space, sport and recreation planning at the local level. It also discusses regional and local plans and strategies that are relevant to open space planning.
- **Section 3 – About the Shellharbour LGA** describes the physical environment of the Shellharbour area, as well as each of its internal precincts. It also discusses major infrastructure, cultural heritage, and tourism in the area.
- **Section 4 – Shellharbour people and population trends** describes the people that live in the Shellharbour LGA and the projected changes in population over the coming decade. It also discusses how the population varies geographically across the different suburbs and precincts that make up the LGA.
- **Section 5 – Open Space in Shellharbour LGA** provides an analysis of the existing supply of open space and recreation facilities in Shellharbour LGA, and within each precinct.
- **Section 6 – Recreation Participation, Demand and Stakeholder Views** focuses on organised sports and recreation activities in Shellharbour. It also reviews NSW trends in sport and recreation

participation and compares this to participation rates in Shellharbour, as understood through community engagement results.

- **Section 7 – Aquatics** focuses on all water-based activities within the LGA, inclusive of swimming, boating, ocean and lake based activities. It also provides an assessment of Shellharbour's four public pool facilities.
- **Section 8 – Precinct-based OSR Analysis** uses NSW Government Architect Draft Guidelines (see Section 2.5) as the benchmark for a precinct-by-precinct analysis of open space and recreation issues, now and in the next 10 years based on population projections.
- **Section 9 – Summary of Findings** provides some high level indicative directions arising from the Needs Study that will be used to inform the OSR Strategy.

A **Glossary of Terms** has been provided at the start of the document, and a list of **References** is included at the end of the report.

A set of **Appendices** to this report are contained in a separate compendium. This includes the results of the community engagement activities described above, as well as other more detailed content referenced in the Needs Study.

It is also acknowledged that this Needs Study and its accompanying strategy are designed to span the decade between 2020 and 2030. However, throughout the document, reference is made to population projections to 2031. This number was chosen as it represents profile i.d. projections to June 30, 2031 which provides council with full population projection numbers to December 31, 2030. This ensures that all open space provision calculations throughout the document account for a complete population by end 2030, rather than cutting the likely population number short by using the projected June 2030 population number.

Additionally, using the 2031 population projection allows the demographic analysis in Section 4 to analyse population trends in five year increments, therefore providing a more complete and robust outline of population trend in Shellharbour LGA.

* * * *

2 Background and context

This section outlines the major government policy trends that are impacting on open space, sport and recreation planning at the local level. It also discusses local and regional plans and strategies that are relevant to open space planning.

2.1 State Government open space, sport and recreation planning and policy

There is a growing public policy debate on the need for Australians to have access to open space, especially as cities become more urbanised and households are increasingly less likely to have access to large backyards. This stems from the view that open space, and other recreation spaces and facilities, play a central role in community health and wellbeing, as well as being associated with social cohesion, liveability and environmental protection. This view gets played out in state policy, as outlined below.

2.1.1 Creation of Ministry for Planning and Public Spaces

In early 2019, the NSW Government created a new portfolio, adding “public spaces” into the responsibilities of the renamed Department of Planning and Public Spaces. As explained by NSW Premier Gladys Berejiklian, this reflects the importance the State Government puts on open space planning, as “access to green and open space is crucial for communities to thrive”. The expanded portfolio will allow for a “dedicated champion for public spaces to be placed at the heart of Government”.¹⁸

The new Minister for Planning and Public Spaces – Rob Stokes – has been tasked with identifying and protecting publicly owned land for use as parks or public spaces. This includes administering \$150 million to both develop new parklands and improve existing ones. The portfolio has a public interest mandate, with legislation planned to ensure Crown Land reserved for recreational purposes cannot be sold, leased or change purpose without approval by the Minister that any change is “in the public interest.”¹⁹

While particularly focused on managing urban pressures of people living in Greater Sydney, the Government has acknowledged that other parts of NSW also experience challenges with open space, with many rural subdivisions occurring without the construction of planned open spaces, or in some instance footpaths, making it hard to walk.²⁰

Key Findings:

→ NSW's new Ministerial Planning and Public Spaces portfolio includes a commitment to develop new parklands and improve existing ones. This includes a state government pledge to support Council-led open space strategies that will deliver improved outcomes for the public.

2.1.2 NSW Government, Premier's Priorities

Successive NSW Governments have set out their key policy priorities that the Premier is committed to implement. There are two current Premier's Priorities that link to open space planning:

- **Greener public spaces** – Increase the proportion of homes in urban areas within 10 minutes' walk of quality green, open and public space by 10 per cent by 2023.
- **Greening our city** – Increase the tree canopy across Greater Sydney by planting one million trees by 2022.

The first Government priority acknowledges that “walkable, connected and accessible public spaces promote healthier lifestyles and bring people together. A network of welcoming and connected public spaces will create communities where people love to live.” Delivery of this priority will “take a local-based approach”

¹⁸ NSW Government 2019, 'New Minister for Public Spaces, protections for public land, \$150 million for new parks', 3 February 2019.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Fitzsimmons, C. 2019, 'Public Spaces Minister plans to buy Sydney's "forgotten land" for open space', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 5 May 2019.

and the NSW Government pledges to “work with local government and communities across NSW to identify the improvements that will offer the greatest benefit to them.”²¹

The second priority, “greening our city”, relates to the biodiversity, comfort and aesthetics of that open space. With respect to increasing the urban tree canopy, the NSW Government provides that:

“Trees play an important role in creating great open spaces for communities, enhancing the experience of outdoor recreation and exercise. Green canopy enhances the amenity of local parks and streets and is crucial in providing vital shade that reduces ambient temperatures and mitigates the urban heat island effect.”²²

While the performance measure for this priority is specific to Sydney, the direction nonetheless has potential implications for the Shellharbour LGA.

Key Findings:

→ Local government in NSW has the support of the current State Government to investigate ways in which it can develop and improve the open space within its LGA for the benefit of its community.

2.1.3 NSW Government Architect, Greener Places Policy

Aligned to the above Premier’s Priorities, the NSW Government Architect (GANSW) – an independent state government agency – has drafted a Greener Places Policy to guide the design, planning and delivery of green infrastructure across NSW. The policy is currently in draft form and is being exhibited for comment.

The draft Greener Places Policy defines “green infrastructure” as “the network of green spaces, natural systems and semi-natural systems including parks, rivers, bushland and private gardens that are strategically planned, designed, and managed to support good quality of life in the urban environment.” GANSW explains the objective of the Greener Places policy in the following way:

“The aim is to create healthier and more liveable cities and towns by improving community access to recreation and exercise, supporting walking and cycling connections, and improving the resilience of our urban areas”.²³

The foreword of the policy states:

“Green infrastructure is essential infrastructure and should be integrated into all community planning. GANSW want all suburbs to have an established tree canopy, well-designed parks, and connected open spaces. Green infrastructure does more than just look good; it creates healthier, safer and more prosperous cities”.²⁴

According to GANSW, well-designed green infrastructure reflects four key principles:²⁵

1. Integration – combine green infrastructure with urban development and grey infrastructure.²⁶ This reflects what GANSW describes as “a global transition away from single purpose ‘grey infrastructure’ to more multi-purpose infrastructure that mimics nature, provides critical ecosystem services and promotes healthy and active living.”
2. Connectivity – create an interconnected network of open space that “connect[s] with town centres, public transport hubs, rivers, creeks and employment and residential areas” and “includes physical and functional connections that benefit people and wildlife.”
3. Multifunctionality²⁷ – deliver ecosystem services simultaneously. Multifunctionality “represents the ability of Green Infrastructure to deliver multiple ecosystem, environmental and other services simultaneously.” Multifunctional green spaces “should be high quality and high performing, producing ecological, social, environmental and economic benefits”.
4. Participation – involve stakeholders in development and implementation. “Participation relates to a planning process that is open to all and incorporates the knowledge and needs of diverse parties. It involves stakeholders in the development and implementation of neighbourhood, local, district and regional Green Infrastructure policies and actions.”

²¹ NSW Government 2019, *Premier’s Priorities – Greener public spaces*.

²² NSW Government 2019, *Premier’s Priorities – Greening our city*.

²³ Government Architect of New South Wales 2017, *Greener Places Establishing an urban Green Infrastructure policy for New South Wales* (draft for discussion).

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Grey infrastructure is defined as “the human-engineered infrastructure for water resources such as water and wastewater treatment systems, piped drainage and reservoirs”: *Greener Places Policy*, page 56.

²⁷ Government Architect of New South Wales 2017, *Greener Places: Establishing an urban Green Infrastructure policy for New South Wales* (draft for discussion).

GANSW has also drafted a number of guideline documents to enable the enactment of the Greener Places Policy once adopted. Up until very recently, this included the “Open Space for Recreation Guide” however we note that this draft Guide has been withdrawn and we understand is being re-evaluated (see below Section 2.5.2). Despite the Guide’s withdrawal, we have still included the draft Guide’s proposed series of performance criteria in Attachment 1 because we consider it provides a thought-provoking series of high level guidelines when thinking about open space planning.

Key Findings:

→ The NSW Government Architect acknowledges that there are public benefits to not just planning and delivering open space, but also to the design of that space taking advantage of, and enhancing existing green infrastructure.

2.1.4 NSW Office of Sport, Regional Sports Hubs model

In August 2017, the NSW Office of Sport released a paper outlining a Regional Sports Hub model, which included promotions of regionally significant sports facilities. The characteristics of Regional Sport Hubs are described by the Office of Sport as:

- Primary centres of co-located sport and active recreation facilities, sub-elite sport support services, sport administration offices
- Potential to incorporate both Centres of Excellence concept and community facilities
- Part of a regional network of hubs identified through Regional Sport and Active Recreation Plans.²⁸

The model notes there may more than one hub within a given region depending on economic development priorities, demographic and sport participation figures, sport trends and accessibility constraints. Regionally Significant Sport Facilities are defined as:

- Scale-able multi-sport or regionally significant facility for a sport or multi sports
- Related to a Regional Sports Hub

Figure 1 below illustrates the hub model.

Figure 1: NSW Office of Sport, draft Regional Sports Hubs model, August 2017



Source: NSW Government Office of Sport, *Regional Sports Hub Model – Draft Report, August 2017*

Associated with this model the NSW Office of Sport committed a large amount of money for regional investment, part of which was the Regional Sports Infrastructure Fund. Under the Fund, grants of between \$1 million and \$10 million were available for regional sport hubs or regionally significant sport facilities. The Fund was intended to ensure that NSW has a network of spaces and places that enable quality sport and active recreation participation and performance at all levels. The Fund objectives were to:

²⁸ NSW Government Office of Sport 2017, *Regional Sports Hub Model – Draft Report, August 2017*, page 4.

- Increase the number and type of regional level sporting facilities
- Improve the standard of existing regional level sporting facilities
- Increase participation opportunities in sport
- Provide infrastructure that enables economic growth and boost productivity

There is scope for Council to discuss with neighbouring councils about whether regional solutions could serve sports or aquatic needs in the area. UTS notes that the deadlines for grant applications on the NSW Office of Sport website have passed,²⁹ but it may be that the NSW Office of Sport still has some funding available for regional sports facilities as part of the Regional Sports Hub model.

Key Findings:

→ The NSW Office of Sport recommends sports planning be conducted using a Regional Sports hub model, that directly links local sports facilities with regionally significant sports facilities with more substantial primary sports centres or “hubs” comprising co-located sport and recreation facilities, sports services and sports administration. In the past, the Office has made significant funding available for regional sports facilities that meet certain regional criteria and there is scope to discuss possibilities for any extra funding with the Office.

2.1.5 NSW Department of Planning, *Everyone Can Play* Guideline

There is a growing emphasis in NSW government policy on “inclusive” planning – planning that is heavily influenced by universal design thinking and considers the different ways in which people of different ages and abilities might use a space. The overall aim of inclusive planning is to focus on how to improve how people – with diverse needs – interact with and enjoy public spaces.

Universal design theory involves seven key principles:

1. Equitable use	5. Tolerance for error
2. Flexibility in use	6. Low physical effort
3. Simple and intuitive to use	7. Size and space for approach and use
4. Perceptible information	

Inclusive planning and universal design principles are highly relevant to open space planning. A recent open space policy that reflects this is *Everyone Can Play – A Guideline to Create Inclusive Play Space* developed by the then Department of Planning and Environment. While not a building standard, the Guideline contains a set of best practice recommendations for local government and others about how to create “inclusive” play spaces.

Inclusive play spaces are not just physically accessible for children with different levels of abilities, but also designed so that they are usable and comfortable for everyone, and maximise play opportunities and social integration for people of all ages and cultures.³⁰

To develop the Guideline, the NSW Government conducted a wide review of play space design theory and consulted with the community about its needs in collaboration with a large advisory group made up of 55 council, community and industry representatives. The Guideline recommends that play space professionals (councils, developers, designers, planners and manufacturers) consider the following three key elements when designing or assessing play spaces:

1. **Can I get there?** Consider location, layout, signage, wayfinding and accessibility to ensure everyone can find their way to, in and around the play space.
2. **Can I play?** The play experience, including the equipment and surfacing, should allow everyone to experience a variety of challenging and engaging play opportunities in a way that suits them.
3. **Can I stay?** Consider safety, facilities, landscape and the wider environment to ensure everyone can stay at the play space for as long as they would like.

The Guideline provides a valuable evaluation checklist for local government and anyone designing a new play space or assessing an existing one. Further, the *Everyone Can Play* Evaluation Checklist provides a set of criteria which will assist Council to assess its play spaces according to the Guideline.³¹ Under the Checklist the relevant assessor can mark whether there is “no change”, “potential change”, or “change”

²⁹ NSW Government Office of Sport, *Regional Sports Infrastructure Fund*.

³⁰ NSW Department of Planning, Industry and the Environment 2019, *Everyone Can Play – A Guideline to Create Inclusive Play Spaces*, page 28.

³¹ Reference from page 51 onwards of the *Everyone Can Play* Guideline.

required to various elements of the play space to meet the Guideline. Some examples of the types of elements assessable under the Checklist include:

Table 2: Everyone Can Play Evaluation Checklist

Can I get there?	No change	Potential change	Change required
<u>Location</u>			
• Information about the play space is available before I go.			
• Accessible car parking bays are provided.			
• There is a public transport link (bus stop, train station, light rail) close to the play space.			
<u>Layout</u>			
• The layout of the play space can easily be understood by a first-time user.			
• The play space has signage or a map to aid navigation.			
• There are pause points at the entry and exit to view and assess play opportunities on arrival.			
<u>Signage</u>			
• Signage is located at a height that is easy to read for all play space users, including children and those in wheelchairs			
• Pictographs and braille are provided on key instructional and safety signage			
<u>Access</u>			
• There is an orientation path or circulation path within the play space.			
• Access gates can be operated by an adult using a wheelchair or mobility device			

Source: Extract from *Everyone Can Play Guidelines*, 2019.

Key Findings:

→ The NSW *Everyone Can Play* Guideline provides useful, practical best practice recommendations for the design of play spaces and in relation to inclusive design of open space more broadly. The Department of Planning has also made available funding for councils to upgrade or develop new inclusive play spaces.

2.2 Federal Government open space, sport and recreation planning and policy

2.2.1 Open space planning and design – Smart Cities Plan

In 2016, the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet under the then Turnbull Government commissioned a “Smart Cities Plan”, the development of which was intended to contribute to Australia’s progress against the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 11: *Sustainable Cities and Communities* (SDG 11). SDG 11 aims for cities to be made: “inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable”.³² While the Prime Minister has changed since 2016, the Smart Cities Plan appears to remain current federal policy, since the 2019 federal election.

The Smart Cities Plan mentions the role of green urban spaces in the liveability of cities, providing: “one of the advantages of living in a regional city is access to green open space and amenity.”³³ A desire to live close to jobs, services and amenities means people increasingly opt for higher density housing in many Australian cities. As a result, the plan argues, high quality urban design which allows for access to parks and

³² United Nations, *Sustainable Development Goals, Goal 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities*.

³³ Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet 2016, *Smart Cities Plan*, page 13.

open spaces becomes a necessity. According to the plan, green, sustainable cities – with tree coverage and green spaces – provide significant benefits to their residents. They improve the quality of air and water, reduce the heat island effect, protect biological diversity and threatened species, and enhance general amenity. They also give people greater connection with nature and provide important places for recreation and healthy lifestyles.

The Plan introduces the concept of “City Deals”, whereby federal funding for specified cities is linked to reform and the delivery of certain actions and accountabilities, including “investments that improve environmental outcomes, enhancing public spaces, facilities and active transport options, reducing emissions and pollutants, or improving the sustainability performance of buildings and infrastructure.”³⁴

One strength of the Smart Cities Plan was its the recognition of the interconnections between different economic, social and environmental drivers and the need to plan to give due consideration to factors such as jobs, housing transport, the build environment, role of human capital plus changes being brought about by economic transitions, technology change and environmental challenges.

Key Findings:

→ As it is focused on high density urban areas, the Federal Government’s Smart Cities Plan does not directly impact on Shellharbour Council’s open space strategy, however it does illustrate national support for infrastructure planning that features quality open, green space integrated into all other planning considerations at all levels of government.

2.2.2 Planning and delivery of sporting and recreation facilities

2.2.2.1 National trends in sports and recreation – Sport Australia

In 2018, the Australian Government, through Sport Australia, released its national action plan for sport, *Sport 2030*. This document sets out the strategic priorities of Sport Australia for the next 12 years.

Sport Australia has also created a “Drivers of Participation Framework”, described as “a toolkit to support organisations to design and deliver participation outcomes, to get more Australians moving more often.”³⁵ Both the Plan and the Framework outline trends in sports and recreation which will change and affect how governments should plan for and accommodate sports and recreation. Some of the relevant trends identified include:

- **Time poor:** In general, Australians have less time to spend on sport and recreation. Many Australians look for sporting and physical activities that work around their other commitments, instead of the other way round.
- **Less organised sport:** Traditional sports now compete with less organised physical activities like yoga, bushwalking, cycling, gym and outdoor running. Sports are being challenged to capture the interest and involvement of diverse audiences with a greater focus on holistic and healthy “lifestyles” and mental health rather than loyalty to specific organised sports.
- **Fitness products:** Australians are increasingly relying on modified sport products designed to track personal exercise patterns (for example “fitbits”), at the same time as having over participation rates in traditional organised sports.
- **Women in sport:** The gap has narrowed between men’s and women’s interest in sport. Women are being empowered to participate in sport through recent campaigns like the “This Girl Can” initiative.
- **New technologies:** Technology is having a major influence on how spectators, participants and home-viewers observe, engage and consume sport.
- **Ageing:** The Australian population is becoming older and less fit. Currently only 25% of Australians over 65 meet current physical activity guidelines.³⁶
- **Unfit kids:** Australian children are moving less. Only 19% of 5-17 year olds are meeting the recommended guideline of 60 minutes of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity each day, and the same age group spends an average of two to three hours on screens.
- **Obesity and sedentary lives:** Australia has one of the highest obesity rates in world. 56% of Australian adults are living sedentary or low-activity lifestyles.

³⁴ Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet 2016, *Smart Cities Plan*, page 22.

³⁵ Sport Australia, *Drivers of Participation Framework*.

³⁶ That is: Department of Health 2017, *Physical Activity and Sedentary Behaviour Guidelines*.

- **Investment and performance:** In Australia, a “two-speed” sport economy has developed. Some sports and especially elite sports programs receive large amounts of government and corporate funding and prestige. Others are struggling to keep afloat and rely on government support in an environment where there will continue to be immense pressure on public spending.
- **Competition:** Other countries have emulated Australia’s investment and innovation in sports that occurred in the 1980s and 1990s. Many have now surpassed Australia in performance.³⁷

Key Findings:

→ Sport in Australia is changing, driven by access to new technologies; changing lifestyle and health factors like obesity and sedentariness; demographic factors such as ageing; with the majority of people being time poor. Sports and recreational facility planning need to recognise these national trends and look to accommodating multiple uses, and providing for a range of exercise and fitness activities, not just organised sport.

2.2.2.2 Drivers of Participation – lessons for planners

Sport Australia’s Drivers of Participation Framework also identified barriers to participation in sport, which sports clubs must try to minimise, as much as possible, to maximise participation in sport and recreation³⁸. The barriers, explanations and potential lessons to planners in local government have been summarised in Table 3:

³⁷ Sport Australia, *Sport 2030 – National Sport Plan*; Sport Australia, *Drivers of Participation Framework – Trends that impact sport participation*; Sport Australia, *Drivers of Participation Framework – Barriers to participation*.

³⁸ Sport Australia, *Drivers of Participation Framework – Barriers to participation*.

Table 3: Sport Australia barriers to participation in sports and recreation, plus potential lessons for open space planners

Barrier	Explanation	Potential lessons for planners
Time	Participation trends demonstrate that Australian families are increasingly busy, and convenience is key. People are less willing (or able) to commit time for training and games in team sports. Additionally, more activities are competing for the limited free-time, including gaming and screen time activities.	<i>Locating sports facilities near residents and making them easily accessible (i.e. centrally located, near public transport, and with plenty of parking) may help ameliorate time constraints.</i>
Cost	Participation in sport often involves significant investment which can be a major barrier for Australians, particularly families where all members may wish to participate in a number of sports. Costs include fees, uniform, travel and equipment.	<i>Enabling no-cost activities – including through providing play spaces, skate parks, running and cycling track, parks to do informal sports activities – may encourage individuals and families to remain healthy and active outside of organised sport.</i>
Access	Access can be a barrier that effects participation in many ways. It may include location (particularly in rural and remote locations), building accessibility for people with disabilities and special needs, availability of infrastructure (such as amenity blocks) or a lack of transportation.	<i>Consider physical accessibility in the planning of sports facilities in order to maximise participation. This includes access to associated infrastructure such as toilets, showers, water fountains and park benches.</i>
Risk	Fear of injury as people age or for young children can stop people from participating. Other risks which may impact participation include child safety concerns and the safety of facilities and equipment.	<i>Ensure that sports facilities are well maintained and safe to use and encourage all organised sport and recreational activities show due diligence in terms of risk management and risk mitigation.</i>
Awareness	Even for well-designed activities, people may not know how or where to access participation opportunities. They may also have a narrow view of a sports offerings, poor association with a particular brand or sports code, plus misconceptions about what type of people can participant- for example preconceptions about age, gender, or ability.	<i>Ensure that sporting and recreational activities and facilities are well publicised and that inclusive participation messages are a core part of all public notices and advertising. Also ensure signage and council information (including online) highlights the range of activities available and who to contact for more information.</i>
Environment	Infrastructure which is inaccessible, unwelcoming environments, poor venue quality, location and venue safety can all have a negative effect on a participant's experience or their interest to become involved	<i>Ensure that sports facilities are of good quality, well-lit, usable and aesthetically appealing to a wide cross section of potential users. This may require a focus on adding new infrastructure such as benches for the elderly or changing facilities for young families.</i>

Source: Sport Australia, Drivers of Participation Framework, plus analysis by UTS regarding possible lessons for planners.

2.2.3 Open spaces and health and wellbeing – Healthy Spaces and Places

There is a great deal of academic research that demonstrates the link between usable, accessible open green space for recreation, and human health and wellbeing. This research highlights the role public health officials can play in urban and regional planning. Over coming decades, a key public health focus will be on how to influence planning and built environment design and enhance community access to open space and walkability in order to combat inactivity and poor nutrition trends that are emerging as a real health challenge across most western advanced societies.³⁹

“Healthy Spaces and Places” was a national program between the Australian Local Government Association, the Planning Institute of Australia and the Heart Foundation, funded by the Australian Department of Health and Ageing. The program produced a manual for those working in the built and natural environment to help tackle Australia’s major preventable health issues by encouraging walking, cycling and public transport use. It serves as a resource for professionals in the design, health and property development industries, governments and community institutes.

The Healthy Spaces and Places Manual makes a direct link between planning and human physical activity and health. It points out that improving access to public open space has the potential to increase levels of physical activity, and to have mental health benefits and reduce healthcare and other costs. More specifically, the research highlights the benefits from participating in sport and physical activity. These include:

- **Improved physical health and wellbeing** – with reduced risk of lifestyle related diseases, higher survival rate in relation to other diseases, improved quality of life and long term health, and, in young people and children, healthy growth and development
- **Improved mental health** – builds individual self-esteem and self-image, reduces stress, improves concentration and enhances memory and learning
- **Enhanced social outcomes** – encourages social interaction and development of social skills, improves social networks and social capital, increases community cohesion and pride, safer communities
- **Reduced healthcare costs** – improved physical health and the building of stronger families and communities helps lower health-care costs, reduces the costs of social intervention and plays a role in reducing crime and social dysfunction.⁴⁰

Separate but related is the evidence that there are similar health benefits associated with access to vegetated areas such as parks, open spaces, and playgrounds. Moreover, there is a substantial body of evidence demonstrating that increased walking improves physical and mental health. For example, physical inactivity is a major public health risk with nearly half of all Australians not meeting the minimal 30 minute physical activity recommendation. Further, worldwide trends highlight that mental health is now a leading cause of burden of disease.⁴¹ To address this, the Manual states:

“Planning for active living calls for a commitment to applying healthy planning principles to all levels of the planning system, at every stage of the planning process and in every planning project”.

The Manual also sets out a series of design principles that help to support healthy communities, which include:

- **Active transport** – travel modes that involve physical activity, such as walking and cycling, and include the use of public transport that is accessed via walking or cycling
- **Aesthetics** – the attractiveness of a place or area affects the overall experience and use of a place (e.g. walking, cycling, viewing and talking). An attractive neighbourhood invites people to use and enjoy its public spaces and to feel safe
- **Connectivity** – the directness of links and the number of connections in a path, street or road network, and for Healthy Spaces and Places, the ease with which people can walk and cycle around a neighbourhood and between places
- **Environments for all people** – places that are safe and easily accessible for everyone, regardless of age, ability, culture or income, with a suitable range of facilities and services that are available to all

³⁹ De Ville, K.A. & Sparrow, S.E. 2018, ‘Zoning, Urban Planning, and the Public Health Practitioner’, *Public Health Law* 14(3) 303-316.

⁴⁰ Healthy Spaces and Places, *Design Principles – Parks and Open Space*.

⁴¹ Ibid.

- **Mixed land use** – complementary uses, such as houses, shops, schools, offices, libraries, open space and cafes, are co-located to promote active transport to and between different activities. People are more likely to walk, cycle or take public transport when they can conveniently undertake multiple activities at one destination
- **Parks and open space** – land reserved for passive recreation, sport and recreation, preservation of natural environments, green space and/or urban stormwater management
- **Safety and surveillance** – perceptions of safety influence the nature and extent that people use spaces and places. Design that aims to reduce crime can enhance the physical, mental and social wellbeing of a community
- **Supporting infrastructure** – facilities that encourage regular and safe physical activity, such as walking (footpaths, lighting, water fountains and signs), cycling (bike paths, bike lockers, signs and showers), public transport (safe shelter, lighting and signs), social interaction (seating, shade, shelter and toilets) and recreation (seating, play equipment and facilities).

Key Findings:

→ *The Healthy Spaces and Places Manual provides evidence and support for the proposition that there is a clear link between planning and public health and physical activity. The Manual provides a series of helpful design principles for the planning and development of open spaces, endorsed by the Federal Government.*

2.3 Key regional planning instruments

In addition to the State and Federal Government policies, the Illawarra Region is guided by a number of other policies and strategies that inform the planning of open space, sport and recreation. Each of the key documents are summarised below, together with a consolidated summary of findings relevant to shaping the OSR Strategy.

Relevant regional policy and planning instruments include:

- **Illawarra-Shoalhaven Regional Plan 2036**

This plan applies to the region that encompasses the Kiama, Shellharbour, Shoalhaven and Wollongong LGAs and provides the strategic policy, planning and decision-making framework to guide the region to sustainable growth up to 2036. The plan focuses on developing a strong, diverse and competitive economy, supported by a sustainable built environment that makes efficient use of urban lands, promotes energy efficiency and supports healthy communities. The Regional Plan 2036 makes reference to neighbourhood design that encompasses landscaping and walking and cycling paths which promote social inclusion, community wellbeing and environmental sustainability. Action 3.3.3 of the Regional Plan identifies the need to modernise existing, ageing infrastructure and redevelop under-utilised single sport facilities into multipurpose facilities with extended hours of use. The plan is supported by the following key principles, all of which are relevant to Council's OSR Strategy:

- identify and protect land with high environmental value and recognise cultural heritage values;
- support the sustainable use of land and water resources and build resilience to natural hazards and climate change;
- support a strong, resilient and diversified economy that will enable the community to respond to environmental, economic and social challenges;
- integrate transport and land use planning, and support improvements in active transport (walking and cycling), public transport and transport infrastructure (including freight);
- take a balanced approach to housing that provides choice, affordability, and supports the orderly supply of land for development;
- increase housing density around centres that have access to jobs and transport and are already appealing to residents;
- encourage urban design that reduces car dependency, improves the public domain, promotes energy efficiency and supports healthier environments; and
- improve infrastructure coordination.

- **Illawarra Regional Biodiversity Strategy 2011**

In 2011 the Wollongong, Shellharbour and Kiama councils (Illawarra Councils) put together a biodiversity strategy for the region. The aim of this Strategy was to outline how the Illawarra Councils will help meet national and state biodiversity targets and respond to regional issues by identifying key priorities for the next five years. This was especially in the context of climate change, which brings new and significant pressures to biodiversity as a result of a range of physical changes to the environment, including changes to average temperatures, rainfall, rising sea levels, increased incidence of storm events, and bushfire. It is well recognised that areas of high biodiversity, with more resilient ecosystems, are better able to adapt and respond to change and disturbance. The Strategy acknowledges that local government is on the frontline when it comes to managing biodiversity. Together, the Illawarra Councils are responsible for an area of approximately 109,000 hectares and they all share similar geography – a narrow urban and rural coastal plain framed by the Illawarra escarpment. This, among other things, led to the desire for a coordinated regional approach.

- **Illawarra Shoalhaven Sport & Active Recreation Plan 2018-2023**

The Illawarra Sport & Active Recreation Plan is complementary to the Illawarra Shoalhaven Regional Plan 2036 developed by the NSW Department of Planning and Environment. It is also informed by the Australian Sports Commission's National Sports Plan and the Office of Sport's 2018-2022 Strategic Plan. The plan takes into account the opportunities provided by Metro Wollongong and its network of regional and urban centres as key places for sporting and active recreation activities to occur. Relevant strategies to the open space strategy include:

- Strategy 1.1: Utilise school facilities after hours
- Strategy 1.3: Support adapted (modified) sport and active recreation formats
- Strategy 2.4: Provide support to under-represented groups to access sport and active recreation opportunities
- Strategy 2.7: Support sport and active recreation clubs to attract new participants
- Strategy 4.1: Establish a Regional Sporting Hub and explore locations for sub-hubs
- Strategy 4.3: Focus on quality facility design and equipment
- Strategy 4.5: Plan for female friendly sporting facilities
- Strategy 5.1: Maintain and enhance existing successful sporting and active recreation events.

2.4 Key local planning instruments

2.4.1 Shellharbour Community Strategic Plan 2018-2028

Shellharbour City Council developed a new 10-year Community Strategic Plan (CSP) for the period 2018-2028. Under NSW's Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework for local government, the CSP is Council's most important document. It reflects the needs and aspirations of the Shellharbour community and its goals and strategies sit above all of Council's other plans (asset management, service delivery, operational plans etc). As stated in the CSP, Council is committed to reporting to the community on its progress against the CSP strategies at regular intervals.

Table 4 documents the CSP objectives and strategies that are **relevant** to the OSR Strategy.

In fact, a great many of the strategies in the CSP are relevant to the OSR strategy. This is to be expected given Shellharbour's reputation as a coastal region where access to open space and enjoyment of the natural environment are key components of its appeal to residents.

Community engagement carried out by Council in 2017, when shaping the CSP, communicated a number of strong messages relevant to open space, sport and recreation planning. What was deemed important to residents included:

- Feeling safe and being involved in the local community.
- Having access to a range of recreational facilities to provide opportunities for active and healthy lifestyles
- Having access to a range of community and cultural services and facilities, are vibrant, accessible and well maintained.⁴²

⁴² Shellharbour City Council, *Shellharbour Community Strategic Plan 2018-2028*, page 23.

Table 4: Shellharbour Community Strategic Plan – Strategies relevant to OSR planning

Objectives	Strategies	Relevant performance indicators
1.1 Vibrant, safe, creative and inclusive	1.1.1 Deliver and promote events and activities for our community 1.1.3 Keep Shellharbour a friendly environment where people feel safe 1.1.4 Provide a liveable community that is accessible and inclusive 1.1.6 Provide responsive community services and programs across the City	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An increase in community members participating in community, arts and cultural events, activities and organisations An increase in the number of Shellharbour residents who feel connected to their community An improvement in the proportion of people who feel and are safe within our City An increase in community members who are satisfied with our facilities
1.2 Active and healthy	1.2.1 Provide access to services and facilities where people can live, learn and play 1.2.2 Provide diverse opportunities for sport, recreation and enjoyment in the City's parks, open spaces and facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An improvement in the proportion of people who are and feel healthy Increased community participation in sporting and passive recreational opportunities An increase in community members who are satisfied with the range and quality of our recreational facilities
2.1 Protects, promotes and enhances its natural environment	2.1.2 Deliver plans and programs that enhance and protect biodiversity in our natural areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An increase in the number of residents who spend time caring for the natural environment
2.3 A city that is connected through places and spaces	2.3.2 Undertake land use planning in a socially, economically and environmentally responsive manner 2.3.4 Facilitate the development of the built environment to meet community needs 2.3.6 Deliver sustainable whole of life asset management for the community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An increase in community satisfaction with the quality of our community assets
3.1 Plans, builds and manages infrastructure for the community	3.1.1 Provide the community with a range of infrastructure delivered in a sustainable manner 3.1.2 Maintain the City's assets to meet community needs and the delivery of services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An increase in utilisation and satisfaction of our assets and facilities Increase our asset renewal ratio

Source: Shellharbour City Council, Community Strategic Plan

Engagement with young people found that the following issues were the most important to them:

- Skate park improvements
- Providing a variety of activities and entertainment
- Community events and programs.

Other things young people identified that they liked about Shellharbour related to its natural assets and open space. They included going to the beach, the skate park, surfing, playing in parks.

When canvassing the general community, 69% of respondents wanted more resources for the maintenance of Council's assets.

Key Findings:

→ The Council's Community Strategic Plan provides a mandate for the development and improvement of open space in order to provide diverse opportunities for sport, recreation and enjoyment. Community engagement for the purposes of the Plan found the community placed high value on the quality of recreational facilities and access to local natural assets.

2.4.2 Shellharbour Development Control Plan 2016

Shellharbour's 2016 Development Control Plan (DCP) provides provisions and design guidelines for specific types of land uses across the LGA. While DCPs are not statutory documents, under section 4.15 of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* (NSW), they must be considered by Council in determining a development application.

In relation to greenfield subdivisions (see Section 3.3.1), the DCP provides that public open space must:

- be appropriately sized, located, and designed to meet the needs of the community;
- encourage multiple uses;
- support water management;
- be able to be economically maintained;
- be connected to community and residential uses;
- support the retention and incorporation of natural and cultural features; and
- minimise risks to public assets and infrastructure.⁴³

Overall, the DCP seeks to create open space areas that have public value and "serve a public purpose". At the same time, it discourages the use of excessively steep or remote areas, and certain drainage areas, as open public space.

At the time of the DCP's publication, all open space design proposals had to align with the 2010 Open Space and Recreation Needs Study (see Section 1.2.1 above) and this had to be resolved at the development application stage.⁴⁴ Full details of open space design and embellishment must be submitted to Council prior to it dedicating any land or assets to open space. Detail must also be to the satisfaction of Council in relation to other factors including assets renewal and maintenance; community safety; landscape design and maintenance; and property administration and ownership.

The DCP further requires that Council's Local Infrastructure Contributions Plan (see below at Section 2.4.3) be referred to, to determine whether open space is required to be provided and if so how much is to be provided. The basic premise is that 90% of all residential lots are within 400m walking distance to an open space area. The proximity of the development to the existing open space will be considered as part of the assessment.⁴⁵

If there is no requirement triggered to provide additional open space, a monetary contribution is levied towards the upgrade of existing open space as per the LIC Plan.

⁴³ Shellharbour City Council, *Shellharbour Development Control Plan 2016*, page 87.

⁴⁴ Ibid page 88.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

The DCP also provides guidance about situations or areas where development may be restricted, or require detailed assessment before going ahead, for example areas of archaeological or Aboriginal cultural heritage significance.⁴⁶

Key Findings:

→ When making decisions about any development applications for open space, submitted as part of a broader development process, the Shellharbour Development Control Plan requires Council to consider issues such as whether the development: serves a public purpose; is designed to meet the needs of the community; encourages multiple uses; supports water management; is able to be economically maintained; is connected to community and residential uses; supports the retention and incorporation of natural and cultural features; and minimises risks to public assets and infrastructure. Council is required to also take into account development restrictions on the basis of environmental sensitivity or cultural heritage significance.

2.4.3 Shellharbour Local Infrastructure Contributions Plan 2019

Under section 7.11 of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* (NSW) Councils can impose a condition on relevant development consents requiring a contribution towards the provision of certain infrastructure, public amenities or public services within the area that may be required as the result of increased demand arising from the proposed development. The contribution may be in cash or in-kind and may be allocated to new infrastructure or those already constructed in anticipation of demand.

Council's Local Infrastructure Contributions Plan 2019 (9th Review) (LIC Plan) outlines the type, location and level of contributions made by developers of certain developments for the provision of a wide range of community, recreation and sporting infrastructure. The Plan seeks to ensure that the community's needs for open space and community infrastructure are adequately met now and in the future as the population increases. Under the LIC Plan, Council can levy developers for a variety of developments that create an extra demand for public services and facilities in the area, including:

- Residential development (including subdivision, medium density and secondary dwellings)
- Rural and residential development
- Non-residential development (i.e. commercial, retail, industrial buildings)

When determining whether a particular infrastructure item should be included in the LIC Plan, Council has considered whether there is a nexus (or linkage) between new development and the need for the infrastructure. Developers are required to contribute towards the cost of providing community infrastructure and services in a manner that is:

- fair and reasonable;
- consistent and certain; and
- adequately and publicly accounted for.

In the "Principles" set out in the LIC Plan, it is encouraged that infrastructure be provided in a holistic manner and has multiple uses.

The LIC Plan adopts a three tier structure to ensuring a nexus in relation to the provision of Open Space and Recreation facilities:

- **City Wide infrastructure:** items that benefit the residents of the City as a whole. All development in the LGA will pay a contribution toward these items.
- **City East and City West infrastructure:** passive and active open space items that service the community at a broader district level. Therefore, sporting fields and Passive Open Space Embellishment within the Open Space category are levied on a City East or City West basis, either side of the Princes Highway
- **Precinct infrastructure:** the Shellharbour Council area has been divided into nine "Precincts" (listed in Figure 5 in Section 3.2) based on the infrastructure provided within the catchment as a result of growth

⁴⁶ Areas of archaeological or Aboriginal cultural heritage significance are set out in a map on page 292 and a table on page 293 of the DCP.

- **Special purpose Benefit Area infrastructure:** self-contained areas throughout the City that have specific needs with respect to infrastructure.

Development contributions only fund the cost of a facility attributed to new development to the extent that an OSR facility is utilised by the existing population and this proportion of the cost is funded by Council.

Table 5 below sets out the infrastructure identified in the LIC Plan as being eligible for contributions from the relevant developers.

Table 5: Infrastructure across the LGA identified in the Local Infrastructure Contributions Plan 2019

Tier	Location	Infrastructure
City East	Precincts 1, 2, 3, 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shell Cove Sporting Fields • Benson Basin Sporting Fields • City Centre Youth Recreation Facility (remaining item for construction in Harrison Park – feasibility in progress). • Upgrade Existing Active Open Space • Upgrade Passive Open Space
City West	Precincts 5, 6, 7, 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Croom Sporting Complex – City West Sporting Fields (fully funded) • Albion Oval Touch Football Fields • Terry Reserve Sporting Fields • Con O’Keefe Reserve • Tullimbar Sports field • Upgrade Existing Active Open Space • Passive Open Space Embellishment
	Precinct 9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Calderwood Sportsfield • Passive Open Space Embellishment⁴⁷
City Wide	Various precincts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beach foreshore (recoupment) • Shellharbour City Stadium (recoupment) <p>City-wide projects that have been delivered and fully funded using development contributions include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lake Illawarra Foreshore • Shellharbour Cycleways • City Park (Stage 1) • Blackbutt Reserve • Oak Flats Cycleway • Macquarie Shores Cycleway • Tongarra Road Cycleway • Croom Netball Courts

Source: Shellharbour City Council Local Infrastructure Contributions Plan 2019

2.4.4 Calderwood Voluntary Planning Agreement

The Calderwood Urban Development Project is not subject to Council’s LIC Plan as the development is subject to a voluntary planning agreement between Council and Lendlease (Calderwood VPA). VPAs represent alternative mechanisms for the provision of infrastructure – they are legal agreements between developers and government agencies (including councils) for the provision of funds or works by the developer for infrastructure or other works typically negotiated at the time of rezoning. The funds or works do not have to have a direct nexus with the proposal but should be related. They must achieve an outcome other than the facilitation of a development and deliver a planning benefit. This means that the proposed development, when considered as a package within the VPA, results in a positive planning outcome. When instigated at the rezoning stage, VPAs can be used to support new development.

⁴⁷ These items will be provided under the Calderwood Voluntary Planning Agreement.

The Calderwood VPA addresses the local infrastructure requirements that relate to the project including the provision of open space and recreational facilities. Under the VPA Lendlease will provide a full hierarchy of parks (local, district and city wide) and sporting fields. They will also make a monetary contribution towards facilities that are not to be provided onsite including the city-wide open space facilities currently identified in the LIC Plan.

Key Findings:

→ Under Shellharbour's Local Infrastructure Contributions Plan there is a considerable amount of proposed open space development that has already been earmarked for developer contributions, a great deal of which has in fact already been provided in anticipation of future demand. This mechanism provides Council with a viable supplement to income that can assist in the provision and management of open space in a sustainable way.

2.4.5 Local coastal and other waterway management plans

2.4.5.1 Shellharbour Coastal Zone Management Plan 2018

The Shellharbour Coastal Zone Management Plan (CZMP) was gazetted in 2018 and covers the area extending from Windang Island in the north to Bass Point in the south. It defines the level of risk from coastal hazards and provides practical actions to address the risks to assets and land from coastal hazards (erosion, recession, inundation and slope instability) up to 2010. Of relevance to this Study, the Plan includes the following objectives:

- "Protect and preserve beach amenity, maintain and improve public access arrangements to beaches and estuary foreshores and headlands, support recreational uses and protect the cultural and heritage environment
- Ensure the ecologically sustainable development and use of the Shellharbour coastline."⁴⁸

The CZMP identifies a number of open space Council assets that are currently at extreme or high erosion risk due to sea level rise and extreme weather events:

Table 6: Open space assets in Shellharbour LGA at extreme or high erosion risk

Asset	Location	Extreme or High Erosion Risk (no. of assets)		
		Present day	2050	2100
Beaches, dunes & access ways	All beaches	All beaches	All beaches	All beaches
Surf clubs	By 2050: Shellharbour SLSC & Seaspray Function Centre (North Beach)	None	1	1
Tourist parks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shellharbour Beachside Tourist Park (South Beach). • Also unknown risk⁴⁹ to Shellharbour Beachside Tourist Park on Boat Harbour. 	1	1	1
Reserves and Recreational Lands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Little Park & Facilities (Boat Harbour), Bassett Park & Facilities (South Beach). By 2050: add Warilla Beach Reserve & Facilities, Bradsley Park & Facilities (southern North Beach). • Unknown risk⁵⁰ for Shellharbour Reserve (Boat Harbour). 	2 (2 – unknown)	4 (2 – unknown)	4 (2 – unknown)

Source: Shellharbour Coastal Zone Management Plan, April 2018, Table 1-1: Assets at Extreme or High Risk from Coastal Erosion

The CZMP developed an approach for managing current and future risk:

⁴⁸ Shellharbour City Council, *Shellharbour Coastal Zone Management Plan*, April 2018, page 3.

⁴⁹ The CZMP provides that the level of risk is "unknown" where: (a) assets are located immediately landwards of Warilla seawall that may or may not, be built to suitable engineering standard to provide protection from erosion; or (b) assets are located immediately landward of a section of shoreline that is potentially erodible, but that was not assessed in the hazard study.

⁵⁰ See above.

“Prioritising which risks to treat was based upon Council’s (and the community’s) tolerance to risk, as shown in [Table 7 below]. Extreme and high risks are considered intolerable, requiring treatment as a priority over lower levels of risk. For coastal risks with long timeframes, a second prioritisation exists relating to the estimated timeframe of impact... Extreme and high risks at the present day require immediate treatment. However, risks identified as extreme or high by 2050 or later may still be considered tolerable in the present day.”

That tolerance for risk scale is set out below at Table 7.

Table 7: Council’s risk tolerance scale – coastal hazards

Risk level	Action required	Tolerance
Extreme / High	Eliminate or reduce the risk or accept the risk provided residual risk level is understood	Intolerable
Medium	Reduce the risk or accept the risk provided residual risk level is understood	Tolerable
Low	Accept the risk	Acceptable

Source: Shellharbour Coastal Zone Management Plan, April 2018, Table 3-1: Risk Tolerance Scale

This will mean that some open space assets at *current* high or extreme risk, will need immediate treatment. For recreation facilities under risk of erosion or inundation, the CZMP provides that hazard management action may include:

- Relocation (as the first preference, see note below)
- Retrofit/redesign (which may include protection, see below)
- Use of relocatable structures
- Manage to fail
- Sacrifice of asset, then replacement landward of immediate impact area, when damages occur (likely to only be appropriate for minor recreational facilities such as beach accesses).

The CZMP notes that it is preferable for major assets to be relocated outside of hazard impact zones, which allows natural beach movement and reduces impact on adjacent land uses. For example, for car parks or tourist parks, facilities could be relocated, and sites reconfigured, retaining the general amenity of the asset without the need for protection, and allowing some loss of land within the park.

Where relocation is not feasible, the Plan notes that any decision to “protect” an asset should involve careful consideration of adjacent land uses, and consultation with other Council and NSW Government departments. It notes that protection structures may cause erosion of adjacent land. Where the structure additionally protects adjacent land, shared funding arrangements may be available (e.g. private landholders or other asset owners such as Sydney Water). Further, the plan notes that future coastal infrastructure works (e.g. seawalls, groynes, boat ramps) must be designed and built to coastal engineering standards.

This Needs Study does not analyse in detail the implications of the CZMP for each individual open space asset. The key message that emerges from our review of the critical risks identified in the CZMP is that all actions undertaken under the upcoming OSR Strategy must take into account, and operate in the context of, those risks, in order to minimise the possibility of harm to human life, wildlife and Council property.

Key Findings:

→ Shellharbour City Council’s Coastal Zone Management Plan highlights that a large amount of public open space in the LGA is at risk of erosion, inundation and/or is flood prone. This has major implications for recreational planning, maintenance and open space asset management now and into the future.

→ The Plan also identifies a number of specific assets at severe risk in the short and long term, and recommends hazard management actions be fully incorporated into current and future open space planning processes.

2.4.5.2 Draft Coastal Management Program for Lake Illawarra 2019

A draft Coastal Management “Program” for Lake Illawarra has been prepared by the Lake Illawarra Estuary Management Committee, after the Lake Illawarra Authority was disbanded in 2014. At this time responsibilities of the Authority were transferred to Wollongong and Shellharbour Councils (together with a number of State agencies).

The draft Program was subject to community consultation from 31 July to 11 September 2019. The Program outlines the strategic direction and specific actions that can be implemented over the next 10 years to address the threats to the Lake- – defined as a coastal lake open to the sea.

The draft program notes the various watercourses and drainage lines that drain into the Lake, including the five major ones:

- Macquarie Rivulet
- Mullet Creek
- Brooks Creek
- Duck Creek
- Horsley Creek.

2.4.5.3 Other waterway management plans and implications

An Estuary Management Plan exists for Elliot Lake which provides actions to address community use and risks for the lake.

Another 13 natural wetlands also exist in the Shellharbour LGA, at Dunmore, Killalea and Albion Park. Other human-made wetlands include Myimbarr Community Park, City Pond (Harrison Park) and Flinders Village Green.

Given the large number of low lying wetlands and waterways, and also considering sea level rises and foreshore erosion, a large portion of public open space in the LGA is flood-prone and should be managed accordingly. As described in Council's CZMP and the draft Illawarra Coastal Management Program, tidal inundation may lead to some areas of public foreshore being lost. This also has an effect on opportunities for additional recreational uses. While this is more likely to become a threat in the longer term (i.e. beyond the 10 year span of the OSR Strategy), this risk should be considered as it has implications for current and future recreational asset management. The final Lake Illawarra Coastal Management Program, in particular the management actions, should be carefully reviewed with flood risks in mind.

Key Findings:

→ While the Draft Lake Illawarra Coastal Management Program is yet to be finalised, its management actions need to be carefully reviewed given the flood risks to open space and recreational facilities, in and around the LGA's many local waterways.

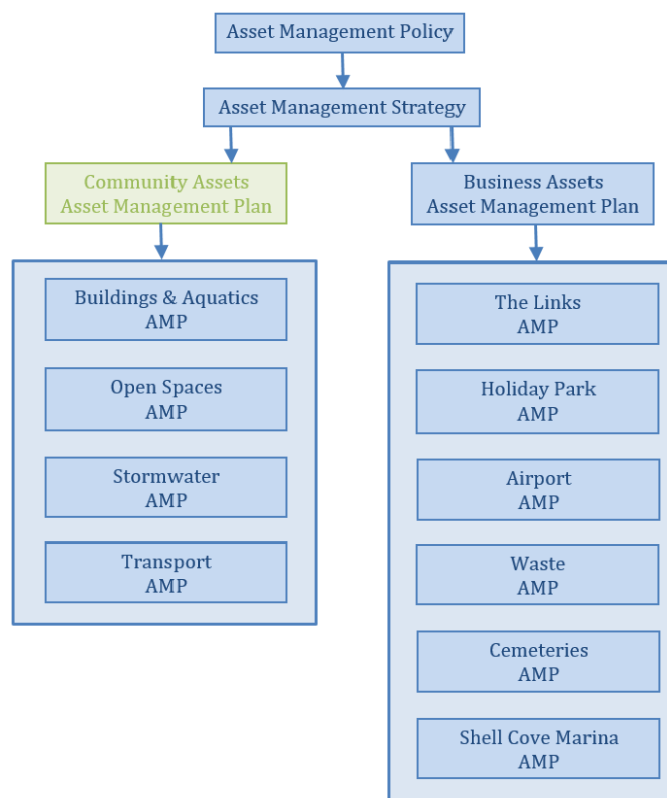
2.4.6 Other Shellharbour planning and policy instruments, strategies and reports

UTS has also considered the following Council plans, strategies and reports to guide the key findings set out below throughout this document:

- Shellharbour Safety Strategy 2016-2021
- Shellharbour City Council, Make Play Grow 2015-2019
- Young Shellharbour: Shellharbour Youth Plan 2018-2021
- A Healthy Ageing Strategy for Shellharbour 2015-2017
- Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2017-2021
- Shellharbour Events Strategy 2018-2021
- Shellharbour City Council Delivery Program (2018-2021) and Operational Plan (2018-2019)
- Dog Friendly Spaces Strategy, 2019-2029

UTS has also reviewed the following draft documents:

1. **Draft Community Assets Management Plan.** The draft Community Asset Management Plan (CAMP) analyses the current state of the community assets managed by Council and the sustainability of these assets for the next ten years. The draft CAMP sets out the following arrangements in respect of asset management, noting that open space assets will be managed as a separate portfolio from buildings and aquatics, stormwater and transport (see Figure 2 below). The CAMP is an important tool to action the OSR Strategy as it includes options for funding allocations and cost reductions to ensure financial sustainability and the maintenance of open space assets.

Figure 2: Shellharbour City Council asset management planning structure

Source: Shellharbour City Council, draft Community Assets Management Plan, December 2019

2. **Draft Cemetery Strategy Recommendations 32-35** – this is proposed to be reported to Council on 17 December 2019. These recommendations are specific actions that relate to open spaces.
3. **Ocean Pool Council Report** – this report was prepared in 2018 to address the provision of ocean pools in Shellharbour.
4. **Biodiversity Offset Sites** – this report was prepared in May 2018 for Council to consider potential sites for biodiversity offsets. Not all the sites were adopted, however, the report provides information in relation to Council considering such initiatives on public open spaces that are suitable.
5. **Shellharbour Draft Local Housing Strategy 2019** – the draft Strategy has been developed to address the appropriate provision of all forms of housing for Shellharbour, by broadly addressing and responding to housing demand/supply issues and their policy implications.

If and when these documents are adopted by Council, they will need to be factored into how the OSR strategy is implemented.

2.4.7 Findings impacting on OSR Planning

A review of the above regional and local policy and planning documents has raised a number of implications for this Needs Study:

2.4.7.1 Future growth

- Shellharbour is a major regional centre identified for higher density residential development, with Warilla and Albion Park identified as suburban urban centres servicing local areas and surroundings
- The West Lake (Figtree, Unanderra, Dapto, Tullimbar, Calderwood and Oaks Flat) and East Lake (Shell Cove, Warrawong, Warilla and Shellharbour Centre) Illawarra corridors have been identified as key locations for future housing growth to achieve the 2036 housing targets, with the following 12,700 lots rezoned in 2010:
 - Approximately 6,900 approved lots in West Dapto

- Approximately 4,800 approved lots in Calderwood
- Approximately 1,000 approved lots in Tallawarra⁵¹
- Council and regional strategies support enhancing public spaces including parks, and walking and cycling paths to promote recreational opportunities, community wellbeing and healthy lifestyles, social inclusion and environmental sustainability.

2.4.7.2 Environment

- Shellharbour is within a region of high environmental value: natural landscapes including the coastline and Lake Illawarra, natural corridors and waterways are to be protected under Council strategies
- Some forms of public open space can provide a range of recreation opportunities to the community as well as play an environmental role, including stormwater management, bushland/woodland, fauna and flora habitat
- Bass Point Reserve, Blackbutt Reserve and Croom Reserve are priority sites for biodiversity protection (e.g. bush restoration works). The wetlands surrounding Lake Illawarra also provide the greatest biodiversity within the Illawarra catchment (fauna and flora)
- Lake Illawarra is recognised as nationally important in the Directory of Important Wetlands in Australia, and also includes social and cultural values in the form of Aboriginal sites of archaeological significance near the Lake.⁵² Killalea Lagoon and Minnamurra Estuary are also recognised as nationally important
- Natural assets including State and national parks offer a range of walking and adventure based activities including mountain biking, hiking, trail running, kayaking and sky diving, but may not be sufficiently accessible.

2.4.7.3 Open and recreation spaces

- Council's strategies suggest there is scope to incorporate a more inclusive approach to the planning, development and upgrade of play spaces, parks, sporting and recreation facilities, outdoor exercise equipment, paths of travel, using universal design techniques. This also includes the beach, with solutions potentially including more ramp access and/or beach matting.
- In relation to play spaces, Shellharbour Council has previously reported that it was preferable for an existing district or city-wide park or the provision of a new district or city-wide park (as a requirement of Council's Development Contributions Plan or a Planning Agreement) to be embellished to an all-inclusive play space standard, as opposed to smaller parks of a local level. This is because higher level parks are more likely to receive other facilities and features which would complement all-inclusive additions such as toilets, adequate parking etc.
- Additional outdoor exercise equipment that can be used by all ages and abilities can promote healthy ageing, as part of the planning and development of "age friendly neighbourhoods"
- Age-friendly environments result from a planning and designing process that considers elements such as accessibility, seating, footpaths, parking, wayfinding, signage, lighting, toilets as part of public domain, open space and recreation development
- Better lighting in open spaces can contribute to improved safety and longer usage
- Spaces that target a particular sport/activity are important for active recreation and user groups, however spaces that are open for everyone are also important to promote community wellbeing and cohesion. Family-friendly and youth-friendly spaces also support social and cultural connectedness
- Using space flexibly can support a range of community activities which need to be supported by a management system (bookings, fees, charges, maintenance etc.). This can include a range of active recreation, creative and cultural uses including music, literacy and theatre
- Recreational areas that target young people are also important and can incorporate sports, recreation, arts and learning activities

⁵¹ NSW Department of Planning and Environment 2015, *Illawarra-Shoalhaven Regional Plan*.

⁵² Australian Department of the Environment and Energy 2019, *Directory of Important Wetlands*.

- Council seeks to activate the whole Council area (events and cultural activities) and a number of open spaces have been identified as adequate locations for events, including the stadium, Reddall Reserve, Albion Oval, Blackbutt Reserve, Macquarie Park, Harrison Park, Albion Park Showground.⁵³
- A range of open space and recreation asset planning and upgrade works have been identified in Council's budgets, which will affect the overall supply of facilities in the Council area and needs to be considered
- Council and regional strategies support building a network of open, green and natural spaces, which uses a range of linear parks and other connections to link public and natural reserves. Street plantings can also contribute to creating green connecting corridors.

Figure 3: Illawarra Shoalhaven Regional Plan - key housing locations



Source: Department of Planning and Environment, Illawarra Shoalhaven Regional Plan 2015

2.4.7.4 Sport planning

- An active community can be supported through sustained participation growth, improved access to sports facilities and programs, and integrated physical activity during school days
- There are opportunities to redevelop and expand existing sporting and active recreation infrastructure, including redevelopment into multipurpose facilities with extended hours enabling year-round usability, and the use of artificial turfs to reduce water and energy consumption
- School facilities should be considered for after-hours use by the community and sport clubs, although we note that the policy of the NSW Department of Planning, Industry and the Environment is to co-locate new schools with Council owned sporting fields which is likely to limit the ability of school facilities to fill the gaps in provision
- Sport participation could be increased by adapting sports to all regardless of age and/or ability, as well as through improved public/shared transportation solutions
- Regional sporting hubs have been identified as the WIN Stadium in Wollongong and the Shoalhaven Sporting Complex. The need for another regionally significant sport facility should be considered in this Study in the context of other facilities and future growth
- Female friendly sporting facilities should be developed in order to create supportive environments

⁵³ Shellharbour City Council, *Event Strategy 2018-2021*.

- Utilisation of sport facilities should be maximised, although not reaching over-utilisation
- Barriers to participation have been reported to be “affordability, an over-emphasis on competition over other motivators such as socialising, and stereotypes regarding sports”⁵⁴.

2.4.7.5 Events

- Council seeks to activate the whole LGA for the hosting of events and cultural activities.
- A number of open spaces are identified as suitable locations for events including:
 - Shellharbour City Stadium
 - Boonerah Point Reserve
 - Reddall Reserve
 - Albion Oval
 - Blackbutt Reserve
 - Macquarie Park
 - Harrison Park
 - Albion Park Showground
 - Shellharbour Harbour
 - Shellharbour Airport
- The use of these spaces for events and special activities may create additional usage and demand for other passive open spaces.

2.5 Standards and benchmarking principles

2.5.1 Standards in open space planning

For many years, planners have used specified population ratio standards to conduct open space planning. In NSW the standard has been 2.83 hectares of open space per 1000 population since the 1940s. However, fixed population ratio standards have been subject to widespread criticism in recent decades because their “one-size-fits-all” approach is too restrictive and not sufficiently contextual.⁵⁵ As such, efforts have been made to move away from the use of standards and to encourage the adoption of other approaches to the planning of open space and recreation generally, such as demand-based or needs-based models.⁵⁶

“Benchmarks” are relevant or helpful as guidance only and cannot, in a vacuum, provide concrete advice on how to plan open space. All the relevant research suggests that the benchmarking approach for open space is dependent on the factors of the local environment. That is, one approach may work well for particular locale (for example a very dense urban environment), and not so well for another, even within the same LGA (for example a sparsely populated peri-urban area). Assessing open space needs can occur when current needs and participation rates are reviewed along with population and participation projections for the future. We outline our approach to reviewing benchmarks in the context of this Study below.

2.5.2 Open space benchmarks/standards in NSW

We note that there is currently no open space “benchmark” policy or guideline operating in NSW. We have had conversations with staff in the new “open space” team of the NSW Department of Planning who have confirmed that a draft “Open Space for Recreation Guide” which was produced by GANSW (see below Section 2.5.2.1) has been pulled from the website and is now being re-evaluated. The Department is in fact keen to consult with industry and councils on benchmarking approaches in the future. For the moment there is no established policy and that is likely to remain the case for some time. That being the case, we have used a mixed method approach to our benchmarking – adapting the draft GANSW standards for precinct benchmarking (see Section 2.5.2.1 below) and Parks and Leisure Australia (PLA) Guidelines for active open space benchmarking (see Attachment 2.2).

⁵⁴ Sport Australia, *Sport 2030 – National Sport Plan*.

⁵⁵ Veal, A.J., Pugalis, L., Piracha, A., McAuliffe, C. & Roy, A. 2018, *From standards to post-standards: A review of guidelines on planning for open space and recreation in high-density areas*, Report for Landcom and UrbanGrowth NSW Development Corporation, Sydney, page 6.

⁵⁶ Veal, A.J. 2013, ‘Open space planning standards in Australia: in search of origins’, *Australian Planner* 50(3) 224-232.

2.5.2.1 NSW Government Architect – draft Open Space for Recreation Guide

Between 2018 and November 2019, GANSW had available on its website a draft “Open Space for Recreation Guide” (GANSW Guide) which was described as one of the guidance documents being produced to enable the enactment of the Greener Places Policy (see explanation above at Section 2.1.3). We developed this document and most of our benchmarking work on the basis that this would be the new NSW policy. Then in November, the document was removed from the GANSW website. Our recent conversations on 22 November 2019 with the Department of Planning confirm that while the final Greener Places policy will possibly be released by Christmas, the draft GANSW Guide is likely to be replaced by a different policy.

Until the draft GANSW Guide was removed from the GANSW website, it appeared to be the replacement for the 2010 guidelines and therefore the government standard.⁵⁷ The Guide provided “performance criteria” and indicators for high quality open space, which we have set out in Attachment 1.2. As benchmarks are guidelines only, and there is no clarity about which guidelines will soon apply in NSW in the future, we have chosen to use the draft GANSW Guide as part of our benchmarking approach in this Study. The proposed approach outlined in the draft GANSW Guide can be summarised as follows:

- The planning and provision of open space for recreation needs a state-wide, **performance-based** approach tailored to the recreation needs of the community, with clear criteria for achieving the desired outcomes.
- Planners are encouraged to **look beyond “blunt” tools such as spatial standards or percentages of land area**, and consider the range of recreation opportunities required and what strategies are available to achieve them.
- Rather than specifying a specific suite of parks and the land areas required for them, a set of **performance outcomes** have been proposed that identify the range of recreation opportunities to be provided and the characteristics of an acceptable solution to cater for recreation needs in open space.⁵⁸ This requires consideration of the range of recreation opportunities that should be provided, and then to identify the solutions for providing them within existing public open spaces or in new parks and public spaces.⁵⁹
- Performance-based planning is linked to the concepts of **needs and opportunities**. The Guide makes reference to a “demand” or needs based approach, it would appear the Manual to follow will be the source of more information.

In Attachment 1.2 we have set out our eight-point open space design framework, based on and adapted from the draft GANSW Guide. The framework contains the following performance criteria:

1. **Quantity:** A picture of the existing provision is important to understand what is provided. In particular, quantity of land available, along with size and shape, are critical in adequately meeting sporting needs. There are minimum areas needed for different sporting outcomes.
2. **Access and distribution:** The ability of residents to gain access to public open space within an easy walk from home, workplace, and schools is an important factor for quality of life. The geographic distribution of open space is a key access and equity issue for the community. Residents and schools have access to open space within an easy 400m walking distance. There is access to district open space within 2km/25-minute walk, and regional open space within 5-10km/30-minute travel time. For the purpose of this assessment, only passive and environmental open space of a size of 0.3ha or more has been included in a GIS analysis of 400m walkable catchments (see Attachment 4 for results and explanatory notes on the methodology adopted for this analysis). The assessment will however consider whether some active reserves also contribute to passive recreation. Active reserves have been excluded to show what the impact of potentially fencing off some areas, as suggested during the engagement by a number of sports stakeholders, would be on general accessibility.
3. **Physical attributes and safety:** Physical attributes, most importantly the size and shape and surface of open space has a direct bearing on the capacity of that open space to meet and accommodate specific passive and active recreation activities. A desirable size for a local park is 3,000 square metres, with other considerations such road frontages, visibility. Spaces must be large enough to accommodate the expected types of activities depending on where the space sits in the open space hierarchy. While sizes may fluctuate, some spaces might be found too small to continue to be maintained as public open space.

⁵⁷ Veal et al. 2018, pages 28 and 31.

⁵⁸ Government Architect of New South Wales 2018, *Open Space for Recreation Guide*, Draft for discussion, Issue No. 01 – 2018, page 28 (emphasis added).

⁵⁹ Ibid, page 40.

4. **Demographic growth and profile:** The socio-demographic evolution of an area, nature and type of residents is important to guide the provision of open space. Planning for future recreation needs assesses the demand arising from urban growth and develops the range of strategies required to meet demand.
5. **Quality and sustainability:** The quality of open space features and facilities (natural and built) and ongoing maintenance and management is critical to attracting use and activation of the open space network. Key characteristics of open space that influence quality include visual and physical accessibility, landscape setting, condition of facilities and amenities, maintenance, adjacent land uses, amount of vegetation and environmental role. Sustainability – referring to the potential for flooding, natural and extreme weather events and climate change – also must be considered as part of a review of the quality of any open space.
6. **Diversity:** The range of open space setting types within a given area will determine the diversity of recreation opportunity for a community. It is important to ensure that there is a diverse range of types and sizes of open space and of facilities. A diversity of different recreation opportunities include: local play for the very young, youth recreation spaces, active recreation spaces, fitness and exercise spaces, off-leash dog parks.
7. **Hierarchy, role and integration:** Parks have a local, district or city-wide (in a regional LGA like Shellharbour this is more sensibly phrased as “regional”) role and each category in the hierarchy serves different needs.
8. **Community and stakeholder use:** Open space is used differently by different user groups, and it is important to understand which spaces are used by which groups, when, how, how often, and if needs are being met. While effective use of existing parks and other open space areas is encouraged, all parks have a capacity. New demand for open space from increased density or new housing development can impact existing functioning parks. Planning should account for the capacity of an existing asset and set limits on its ability to accommodate new demand.

We have conducted an assessment of each precinct against our eight point performance criteria, which is set out in Section 8.

2.5.3 Active open space planning

In assessing active open space needs (i.e. land set aside for formal sports) we have used the Guidelines for Community Infrastructure produced by Parks and Leisure Australia (PLA). We chose these because they were helpfully specific about active open space needs in particular. We note that these Guidelines are not statutory documents or policy – they are guidance documents only, as all benchmarks are.

We adapted the PLA guidelines in combination with our understanding of participation rates in certain sports and recreation types, as well as with population and participation projections for the future. This analysis is set out in Attachment 2.2. UTS has combined this information about future population and requirements in Sections 4-7 in this Study.

Key Findings:

→ Open space “benchmarks” are gradually moving away from prescriptive population ratio standards and towards demands or needs based benchmarks. Unfortunately, currently there is no benchmark policy in NSW, as earlier drafts are being re-evaluated by the Department of Planning. In the absence of clear guidelines, we have adopted a mixed method approach to our benchmarking, which is set out in Section 8 (precinct-based benchmarking) and Attachment 2.2 (active open space benchmarking).

* * * *

3 About Shellharbour LGA and Council

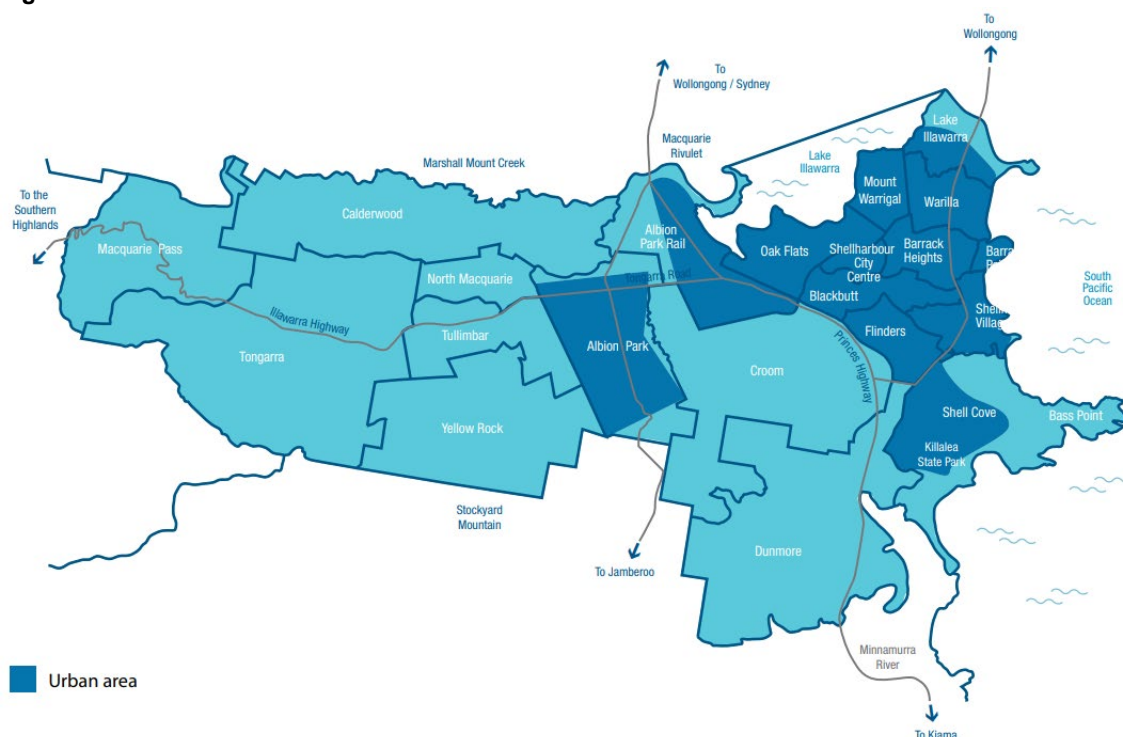
This section describes the physical environment the Shellharbour area, as well as each of its internal precincts. It also discusses major infrastructure, cultural heritage, and tourism in the area.

The Shellharbour LGA is located within the Illawarra region, which also encompasses the Wollongong, Kiama and Shoalhaven LGA. The Shellharbour LGA is surrounded by the Wollongong LGA to the north, Kiama LGA to the south, Wingecarribee LGA to the west, and the South Pacific Ocean to the east. Shellharbour is located within a broader coastal region of NSW colloquially known as the South Coast. The Shellharbour City Centre is located approximately 1.5 hours from the Sydney CBD.

3.1 Urban and non-urban areas

As illustrated by Figure 4 below, less than half of the LGA consists of urban areas, with a majority of urban areas located to the east of the Princes Highway, with the exception of the Albion Park, Albion Park Rail and Croom suburbs and ongoing development in the eastern portion of Calderwood/Tullimbar.

Figure 4: Shellharbour LGA boundaries



Source: Shellharbour Community Strategic Plan 2018-2028

Shellharbour consists of two distinct types of urban areas:⁶⁰

- **Established suburbs** with a majority of older households being progressively replaced by younger households and families. This is happening in conjunction with infill development and density increases. These comprise Albion Park, Albion Park Rail, Barrack Heights, Lake Illawarra, Mount Warrigal, Oak Flats, Shellharbour – Barrack Point and Warilla.

⁶⁰ Informed Decisions 2019, *Shellharbour City Council Population Forecast*, available at: <https://forecast.id.com.au/shellharbour/drivers-of-population-change?WebID=150>

- **Greenfield and larger redevelopment sites** attracting family households (particularly in greenfield areas) and also the retiree markets. These comprise Flinders, Shell Cove, Rural Balance (including Calderwood and Tullimbar estates) and Blackbutt - Shellharbour City Centre.

Non-urban areas include:

- Rural areas including primary production areas and extractive industries in Croom, Dunmore and Bass Point
- The Shellharbour Airport
- Large open space areas including National Parks, nature reserves and environmental conservation and management areas, including the following which will be further discussed in this Study:
 - Macquarie Pass National Park
 - Bedderoo National Park
 - Macquarie Pass State Conservation Park
 - Bass Point Reserve
 - Blackbutt Reserve
 - Killalea State Park.

Further analysis of parks and reserves is set out in Section 5.5.

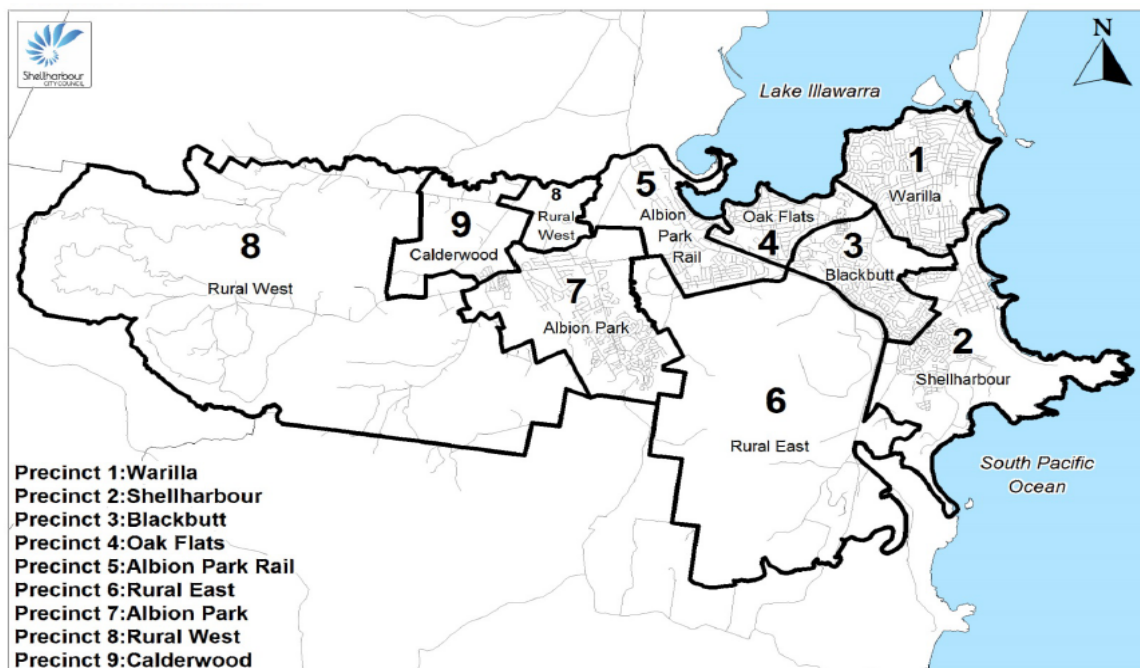
3.2 Precincts

The Shellharbour LGA is divided into nine “precincts” under its Local Infrastructure Contributions Plan 2019 (LIC Plan), (further detailed in Table 8 below). Figure 5 indicates their locations. Each precinct falls within the East or West portion of the LGA.

The LIC Plan uses the Princes Highway as the boundary between east and west, based on the assumption that the sporting infrastructure located in the “East” and in the “West” is likely to serve the communities respectively living in the eastern portion and western portion of the LGA.

In order to inform Council’s strategic and statutory documents, including future reviews of the LIC Plan, this Study follows the same East/West and precinct structure.

Figure 5: Precincts of Shellharbour



Source: Shellharbour Local Infrastructure Contributions Plan 2019

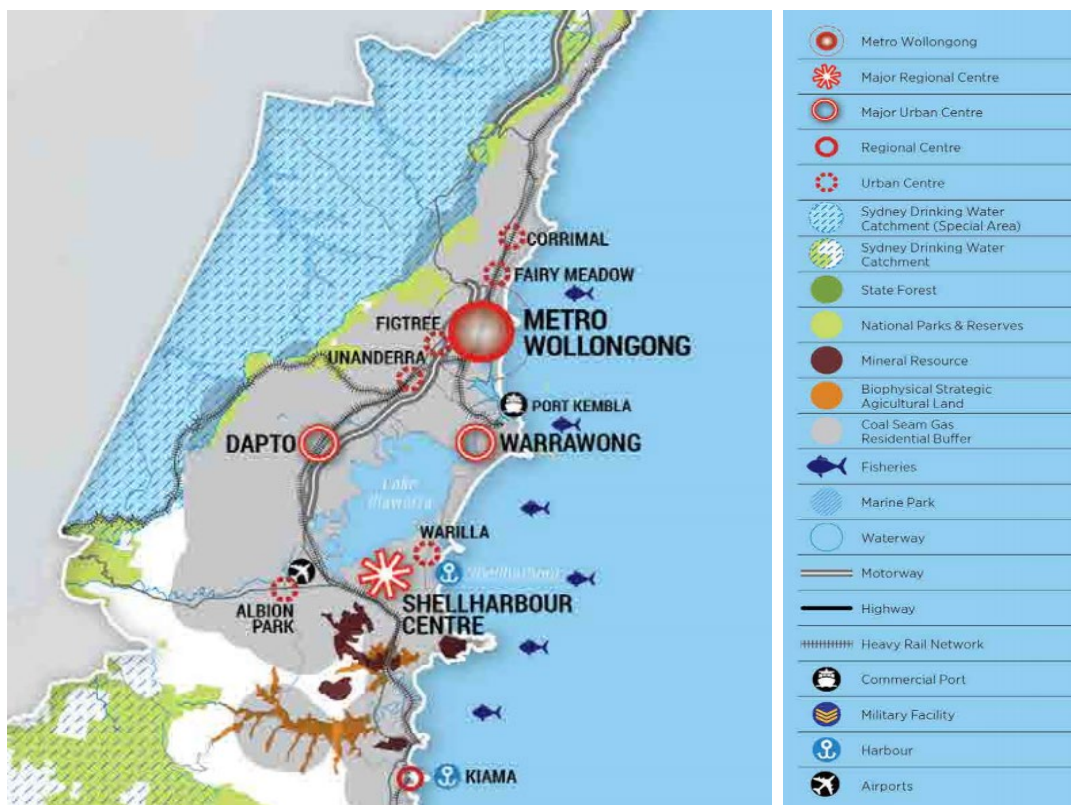
Table 8: Precincts and suburbs of Shellharbour LGA

Precincts	Suburbs
East	
Precinct 1 Warilla	Warilla, Lake Illawarra, Mount Warrigal and Barrack Heights
Precinct 2 Shellharbour	Barrack Point, Shellharbour Village, Shell Cove and part of Dunmore
Precinct 3 Blackbutt	Blackbutt, Flinders and Shellharbour City Centre as well as the locality of Balarang
Precinct 4 Oak Flats	Oak Flats
West	
Precinct 5 Albion Park Rail	Albion Park Rail
Precinct 6 Rural East	Parts of Dunmore and Croom
Precinct 7 Albion Park	Albion Park and Tullimbar
Precinct 8 Rural West	Rural lands to the west of Albion Park, Yellow Rock, Tongarra, Calderwood, and includes the Macquarie Pass National Park
Precinct 9 Calderwood	Calderwood Urban Development Area

3.3 Topography and natural resources

The urban distribution of the Shellharbour LGA largely reflects the natural and topographic context of the area. In particular, Shellharbour is significantly influenced by its coastal location which includes the Pacific ocean coastline in the east, as well as the foreshores of Lake Illawarra in the north (which extend between Shellharbour and Wollongong), and the significantly smaller Elliot Lake estuary, south of the Lake. The coastal character of the LGA affects its vulnerability to sea inundation (previously discussed in Section 2.4.5).

Figure 6: Illawarra Shoalhaven Regional plan – Shellharbour's resources



Source: Department of Planning and Environment, Illawarra Shoalhaven Regional Plan 2015

The Illawarra escarpment in the west is another significant topographic element which has had implications for urbanisation and prevents expansion of the Greater Wollongong urban area. The escarpment offers a number of active recreation opportunities particularly for hiking, trail running and mountain biking enthusiasts.

The natural landscape across the LGA is habitat for a variety of fauna and flora species, including 13 Endangered Ecological Communities (EECs) as defined and identified by the NSW *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016*. The EECs that exist in Shellharbour are listed in Appendix A.

The major topographic elements have influenced the urban development of Shellharbour, which has long been focused on the coastline and eastern portion of the LGA. More recently, residential development has decentralised away from the coastline, to the west along Illawarra Highway (Calderwood, Tullimbar) and to the south (Shell Cove).

3.4 Major Infrastructure

The Princes Highway traverses the LGA from north to south, with the South Coast train line (running from Sydney to Bomaderry) running parallel to the highway, thereby creating a physical barrier between the eastern and western portions of the LGA. This physical barrier adds to the already visible East/West divide noted earlier in relation to urban development.

There are three NSW Intercity trains stops in the LGA – at Albion Park Rail, Oak Flats and Shellharbour Junction – part of the network on the South Coast line, plus a bus network which connects the urban areas described in Section 3.1.

NSW Roads and Maritime Services (RMS) is currently building an extension of the M1 Princes Motorway between Yallah and Oak Flats to bypass Albion Park Rail. The bypass will traverse the Croom Regional Sporting Complex and the RMS have reconfigured sporting fields and associated buildings and amenities directly impacted by the bypass project.

The Shellharbour Airport is located in Albion Park Rail, in the central portion of the LGA, adjacent to the Princes Highway.

3.5 Cultural Heritage

3.5.1 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage

The traditional custodians of the Shellharbour LGA land are the Wodi Wodi people, part of the Dharawal people who lived in coastal areas south of Sydney. This Study acknowledges the Wodi Wodi as the First Peoples of this area and the Traditional Custodians of the land now known as Shellharbour LGA. Historically, significant numbers of Wodi Wodi people lived around Lake Illawarra and many other locations including Tullimbar, Macquarie Rivulet, Shellharbour Village and Bass Point localities. While Lake Illawarra provided a valuable source of food, the traditional owners of the land also had a spiritual connection to the Lake and its surroundings.

The Shellharbour LGA contains sites of Aboriginal cultural heritage value including artefact occurrences, coastal and estuarine middens, burial sites, and a few examples of scarred trees and rock shelter sites with other others disturb or removed through colonisation, and the impacts of urban development, logging, quarrying and other agricultural or industrial activities.

The most common and current Aboriginal cultural heritage sites occurring within the coastal landscape are shell middens. Further inland, the most common site type are small scatters of stone artefacts, sometimes referred to as “open camp sites.”⁶¹ Landscape zones of archaeological sensitivity also exist across the LGA, as noted in Council’s Development Control Plan.

Bass Point Reserve located south of Shellharbour village is considered to be one of the most significant Aboriginal archaeological sites in NSW. It is of state heritage significance for both Aboriginal archaeological values and European historical values. The Reserve provides insight into pre-European contact in NSW due to the presence of 12 midden sites and one camping / meeting place and is listed on the State Heritage Register.⁶²

⁶¹ Navin Officer 2000, *Shellharbour City Council Area Aboriginal Heritage Study*.

⁶² NSW Office of Environment and Heritage, *Bass Point Reserve – file no. 12/03599*.

Today, 3.8% of the people in the Shellharbour LGA identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, significantly higher than the NSW average of 2.9%. See Section 4 for more detailed demographic information.

3.5.2 Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage

Significant European sites listed by Shellharbour City Council in its Local Environmental Plan 2013 (NSW) under the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* (NSW) are:

- Albion Park Showground including both ovals, for being “unique within Shellharbour and a major event place in the Illawarra”
- Beverley Whitfield Pool, for its “high historic, social and aesthetic significance”
- Blackbutt Reserve, as “the largest natural woodland reserve in the Illawarra, and the last remaining viable remnant of coastal plain forest in the Illawarra region”
- Illawarra Escarpment Landscape Conservation Area, for its values that “encompass scenic, ecological, historic and indigenous cultural, social (including tourist and recreational), visual, and natural history”.
- Shellharbour Foreshore Conservation Area.

3.6 Tourism

Tourism is a major part of the Shellharbour economy. In 2017, Shellharbour received 3,000 international visitors, 102,000 domestic overnight visitors and 323,000 domestic day visitors.⁶³

As identified in the South Coast Destination Management Plan 2018-2022, which incorporates Shellharbour, Shellharbour contains a number of regional assets including the Shellharbour Airport, Shell Cove Marina, and Lake Illawarra, which can deliver growth opportunities. The Plan recognises the useful context provided by the previous Destination Management Plan 2013-2020.⁶⁴ The previous Plan positioned the LGA as a child friendly city, which offers a “range of quality coastal, lake and hinterland attractions and experiences”, and offers cycling, mountain biking, surfing and scuba diving. The family market was therefore a key priority for the LGA. This Plan identified Lake Illawarra as a key attraction and destination to be further developed with walkways, viewing areas and jetty infrastructure.⁶⁵

Key reserves were also identified for improvements for visitors (Blackbutt, Bass Point, Myimbarr Community Park wetlands, Killalea State Park, as well as Macquarie Pass National Park). The new Shell Cove Boat Harbour and Marina was also expected to drive additional visitation with growing coastal/maritime tourism.

Sporting tourism is another priority in the Plan, with the Croom Regional Complex identified as a potential Centre of Excellence for both training and competition subject to additional accommodation being provided. There are clearly opportunities for sports and recreation in Shellharbour to attract tourists.

Key Findings:

→ Shellharbour is a region defined by its natural assets and topography, including Lake Illawarra, the coastline, and the escarpment that prevents the western development but also provides numerous places of ecological and biodiversity significance. The Princes Highway divides the LGA into east and west sections. Development has typically occurred in the eastern part of the LGA, although there is new greenfield development occurring in the west. Open space planning will be influenced by both the vulnerability of the eastern portion of the LGA to inundation, and the possibility for higher density building in the west. Shellharbour contains reserves and national parks which contribute to open space for residents and tourists but for which planning must take into account environmental protection.

* * * *

⁶³ Tourism Research Australia, Local Government Area Profiles, Shellharbour, 2017.

⁶⁴ Destination Sydney Surrounds South, *Destination Management Plan 2018-2022*, page 52.

⁶⁵ South Coast Regional Tourism Organisation, *South Coast Destination Management Plan 2013-2020*.

4 Shellharbour people and population trends

This section describes the people that live in the Shellharbour LGA and the projected changes in population over the coming decade. It also discusses how the population varies geographically across the different suburbs and precincts that make up the LGA.

Open space and recreation planning are strongly influenced by demographic, housing and cultural trends. As the population of Shellharbour grows, more people seek to enjoy the open spaces provided in the LGA, potentially in different ways. This section analyses existing and future population characteristics in the Shellharbour LGA based on a demographic and growth analysis and review of ongoing or future strategic residential projects.

This section includes both historic and forecast population and housing data sourced from publicly available online tools presented by .id, the population experts. Historic data are from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Census of Population and Housing (2006 and 2016), presented in the Shellharbour City Council Community Profile and Social Atlas tools. Forecast data are generated by .id, the population experts, and presented in the Shellharbour City Council Population Forecast tool.

Throughout this section, it is important to note the historic and forecast data differ slightly in terms of population and household counts for 2016. This is due to the different measures of population used between the two datasets. The historic data refer to the Usual Resident Population (URP) in Shellharbour on Census night (68,460 in 2016). The Usual Resident Population is generally an under-estimate due to people missed in the Census and those overseas on Census night.⁶⁶ Forecast data refer to the Estimated Resident Population (ERP) at 30 June each year (70,492 in 2016). The ERP is derived from the URP, but includes adjustments for people missed in the Census and those overseas on Census night.⁶⁷

The draft Housing Strategy has also been reviewed to ensure consistency between the two documents.

4.1 Existing Population and Characteristics

At the 2016 Census, the Usual Resident Population of Shellharbour LGA was 68,460, with the Estimated Resident Population recorded at 72,240 as of 30 June 2018 (see Table 9).

The population grew 13.5% between the 2006 and 2016 Censuses, slightly slower than the NSW population growth rate of 14.2% over the decade. The tables throughout this section below describe the population of Shellharbour according to a range of key Census variables, with comparisons between 2016 and 2006, and between Shellharbour and NSW as a whole. These comparisons demonstrate how Shellharbour has changed over time, and in relation to its broader context.

4.1.1 Gender, age, cultural background and disability

Table 9 and Table 10 provide an overview of the Shellharbour population in terms of gender, age, cultural background and disability. Key points include:

- There is a higher proportion of females than males in Shellharbour, which reflects the broader NSW context.
- Shellharbour has an ageing population. The majority of population growth between 2006 and 2016 was in the 50+ age groups, however those aged 18 to 24 also grew faster than the broader population. There was slight negative growth among school-aged children and those aged 35 to 49.
- Compared to NSW, Shellharbour has a higher proportion of school-aged children and those aged 50 to 84, and a lower proportion aged 18 to 49 and 85+.

⁶⁶ Australian Bureau of Statistics 2016, *Population Measures*.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

- Shellharbour has a relatively large and growing proportion of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people compared to NSW more broadly. The proportion of people identifying as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander rose from 2.3% to 3.8%, above the NSW average of 2.9% in 2016.
- The proportion of Shellharbour residents who were born in Australia is higher than the NSW average, and increased slightly between 2006 and 2016.
- Only 1.6% of Shellharbour residents in 2016 had low proficiency in English – that is, they did not speak English well, or did not speak English at all. That proportion remained relatively stable since 2006.
- Over 4,500 Shellharbour residents require assistance in their day-to-day lives due to disability. This represents 6.7% of the LGA population; a slightly higher proportion than the statewide percentage of 5.4%.

Table 9: Population by age and gender, Shellharbour City LGA and NSW, 2006 and 2016

Person characteristics	2016			2006			Shellharbour % change 2006-16
	Shell. (count)	Shell. (%)	NSW (%)	Shell. (count)	Shell. (%)	NSW (%)	
<u>Gender</u>							
Male	33,444	48.9	49.3	29,619	49.1	49.3	+12.9
Female	35,015	51.1	50.7	30,716	50.9	50.7	+14.0
<u>Service age group (years)</u>							
Babies and pre-schoolers (0 to 4)	4,335	6.3	6.2	4,198	7.0	6.4	+3.3
Primary schoolers (5 to 11)	6,532	9.5	8.8	6,737	11.2	9.3	-3.0
Secondary schoolers (12 to 17)	5,644	8.2	7.1	5,674	9.4	8.2	-0.5
Tertiary education and independence (18 to 24)	6,085	8.9	9.0	5,729	8.7	9.2	+6.2
Young workforce (25 to 34)	8,009	11.7	14.3	7,420	12.3	13.6	+7.9
Parents and homebuilders (35 to 49)	13,139	19.2	20.0	13,357	22.1	21.9	-1.6
Older workers and pre-retirees (50 to 59)	9,279	13.6	12.8	7,335	12.2	12.7	+26.5
Empty nesters and retirees (60 to 69)	7,667	11.2	10.8	5,276	8.7	8.7	+45.3
Seniors (70 to 84)	6,393	9.3	8.9	4,485	7.4	8.2	+42.5
Elderly aged (85 and over)	1,377	2.0	2.2	571	0.9	1.7	+141.2
Total population	68,460	100	100	60,332	100	100	+13.5

Note: Based on place of usual residence.

Source: ABS Census of Population and Housing 2006 and 2016; compiled and presented in profile.id by .id, the population experts.

Table 10: Cultural background and disability indicators, Shellharbour City LGA and NSW, 2006 and 2016

Person characteristics	2016			2006			Shellharbour % change 2006-16
	Shell. (count)	Shell. (%)	NSW (%)	Shell. (count)	Shell. (%)	NSW (%)	
<u>Indigenous status</u>							
Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander	2,623	3.8	2.9	1399	2.3	2.1	+87.5
<u>Country of birth (top three 2016)</u>							
Australia	52,951	77.4	65.5	45,643	75.6	69.0	+16.0
UK	3,994	5.8	3.0	4,393	7.3	4.1	-9.1
Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	806	1.2	0.2	868	1.4	0.3	-7.1
<u>Proficiency in English</u>							
Speaks English not well or not at all	1,062	1.6	4.5	996	1.7	3.7	+6.6
<u>Need for assistance with core activities</u>							
Has need for assistance	4,593	6.7	5.4	2,910	4.8	4.2	+57.8
Total population	68,460	100	100	60,332	100	100	+13.5

Note: Based on place of usual residence.

Source: ABS Census of Population and Housing 2006 and 2016; compiled and presented in profile.id by .id, the population experts

4.1.2 Households and dwellings

Table 11 and Table 12 illustrate the following key characteristics of households and dwellings in Shellharbour:

- The most common household type in Shellharbour is couples with children, who form 34.1% of all households, slightly above the NSW proportion of 31.5%. However, couples with children were the slowest-growing household type between 2006 and 2016. Their share of all households fell from 37.3% in 2006.
- The fastest-growing household types are group households and lone person households, yet family households overall still account for almost three quarters of all households in the LGA.
- The vast majority of Shellharbour households own their home outright or with a mortgage, and are more likely to do so than the average NSW household. However, the proportion of households renting their dwelling grew slightly over the decade.
- Separate houses remain by far the most common dwelling type in Shellharbour, representing four in five dwellings in the LGA. Yet the number of medium density dwellings grew faster between 2006 and 2016. There was a reduction in the number of high-density dwellings, which now comprise only 0.1% of all dwellings.

Table 11: Selected household characteristics, Shellharbour City LGA and NSW, 2006 and 2016

Household characteristics	2016			2006			Shellharbour % change 2006-16
	Shell. (count)	Shell. (%)	NSW (%)	Shell. (count)	Shell. (%)	NSW (%)	
<u>Household type</u>							
Couples with children	8429	34.1	31.5	8037	37.3	31.8	+4.9
Couples without children	6242	25.2	24.2	5368	24.9	24.1	+16.3
Single parent families	3430	13.9	10.7	2903	13.5	10.8	+18.2
Other families	223	0.9	1.2	177	0.8	1.2	+26.0
<i>Total family households</i>	<i>18,324</i>	<i>74.1</i>	<i>67.6</i>	<i>16,485</i>	<i>76.5</i>	<i>67.9</i>	<i>+11.2</i>
Lone person	4856	19.6	22.4	3992	18.5	22.8	+21.6
Group household	460	1.9	3.9	349	1.6	3.5	+31.8
<u>Housing tenure</u>							
Owned outright	8152	33.0	30.7	7232	33.6	33.2	+12.7
Owned with a mortgage	8523	34.5	30.4	7600	35.3	30.2	+12.1
Rented	6324	25.6	30.3	5435	25.2	28.4	+16.4
Total households	24,729	100	100	21,556	100	100	+14.7

Source: ABS Census of Population and Housing 2006 and 2016; compiled and presented in profile.id by .id, the population experts.

Table 12: Dwelling type, Shellharbour City LGA and NSW, 2006 and 2016

Dwelling type	2016			2006			Shellharbour % change 2006-16
	Shell. (count)	Shell. (%)	NSW (%)	Shell. (count)	Shell. (%)	NSW (%)	
Separate houses	20,866	79.0	64.9	18,697	81.6	69.1	+11.6
Medium density ^a	4978	18.8	17.9	3767	16.4	16.9	+32.1
High density ^b	19	0.1	15.3	132	0.6	12.4	-85.6
Caravans, cabin, houseboat	355	1.3	0.8	273	1.2	0.9	+30.0
Total private dwellings	26,428	100	100	22,922	100	100	+15.3

^a 'Medium density' includes all semi-detached, row, terrace, townhouses and villa units, plus flats and apartments in blocks of 1 or 2 storeys, and flats attached to houses.

^b 'High density' includes flats and apartments in 3 storey and larger blocks.

Source: ABS Census of Population and Housing 2006 and 2016; compiled and presented in profile.id by .id, the population experts.

4.1.3 Selected medians and averages

Table 13 below presents selected demographic indicators expressed as medians and averages. It is evident from these data that:

- The median age of Shellharbour residents rose substantially between 2006 and 2016, and is now higher than NSW as a whole, in contrast to 2006 when it was lower. This again points to an ageing population in Shellharbour (see also Table 9).
- The average number of people per household decreased slightly between 2006 and 2016, which reflects the growth of smaller household types identified in Table 12, such as couples without children, single parent families and lone person households.
- Shellharbour's median weekly household income, monthly mortgage repayment and weekly rent all rose between 2006 and 2016, yet each remained lower than NSW as a whole.

Table 13: Selected medians and averages, Shellharbour City LGA and NSW populations, 2006 and 2016

Selected medians/averages	2016		2006	
	Shellharbour LGA	NSW	Shellharbour LGA	NSW
Median age	39	38	35	37
Average people per household	2.7	2.6	2.8	2.6
Median weekly household income (\$)	1,343	1,486	983	1,036
Median monthly mortgage repayment (\$)	1,846	1,986	1,500	1,517
Median weekly rent (\$)	340	380	200	210

Source: ABS Census of Population and Housing 2006 and 2016

4.1.4 Population by suburb

The Shellharbour demographic profile is generally reflective of its regional nature where lower density housing predominates and there are higher proportions of residents in older age groups than in metropolitan areas. However, existing and future residential development projects may impact on the demographic and housing profile of the LGA. These impacts will vary across the different suburbs within the LGA. Table 14 below shows the evolution of population by suburb from 2006 to 2016, and key findings are as follows:

- There has been a faster population increase in the eastern suburbs as compared to the western suburbs.
- In the East, development in Shell Cove and Flinders has driven population growth, followed by growth in Blackbutt – Shellharbour City Centre, Shellharbour – Barrack Point and Warilla.
- In the West, growth has been driven by the start of development in the area defined as “Rural West” in Profile.id, which incorporates the master-planned Calderwood and Tullimbar release areas, and development in Albion Park (see Table 20).

Table 14: Population trends by suburb, Shellharbour LGA, 2006-2016

Suburb	2006 (count)	2011 (count)	2016 (count)	2016 (% of LGA)	% change 2006 to 2016	ERP 2018 (count)
East						
Barrack Heights	5,884	6,010	5,885	8.6	0.0	6,095
Blackbutt - Shellharbour City Centre	3,106	3,177	3,548	5.2	+14.2	3,688
Flinders	4,153	5,198	6,679	9.8	+60.8	7,350
Lake Illawarra	3,143	3,137	3,200	4.7	+1.8	3,312
Mount Warrigal	4,950	4,680	4,818	7.0	-2.7	4,959
Oak Flats	6,395	6,301	6,408	9.4	+0.2	6,675
Shell Cove - Dunmore	3,057	4,233	5,840	8.5	+91.0	6,463
Shellharbour - Barrack Point	3,852	3,945	4,253	6.2	+10.4	4,722
Warilla	6,096	6,222	6,507	9.5	+6.7	6,724
Total East	40,636	42,903	47,138	68.9	+16.0	49,988
West						
Albion Park – Rural West	12,668	13,616	14,333	20.9	+13.1	15,247
Albion Park Rail - Croom	7,029	7,055	6,975	10.2	-0.8	7,005
Total West	19,697	20,671	21,308	31.1	+8.2	22,252
Total	60,335	63,605	68,460	100.0	+13.5%	72,240

Source: ABS Census of Population and Housing 2006 and 2016.

4.2 Future Population and Housing

4.2.1 Population Forecasts

Table 15 below shows the estimated population and household projections⁶⁸ for the Shellharbour LGA from 2016 to 2031. As explained in the opening to this section, the 2016 population counts shown in these forecast data differ slightly from those shown in the Census data above, because forecast data are expressed in terms of the Estimated Resident Population at 30 June each year rather than the Usual Resident Population on Census night.

Key findings are as follows:

- The total population is forecast to increase by 23.2% (or 16,332 residents) between 2016 and 2031. Growth is forecast to be highest between 2021 and 2026, before slowing down towards 2031.
- The average household size is forecast to continue decreasing from 2.7 to 2.6.
- The number of people living in non-private dwellings will increase faster than the general population. The majority of these are likely to be people living in nursing homes or accommodation for the retired or aged.

⁶⁸ Population and household counts for 2016 in forecast data differ slightly from those in the historic data discussed in the previous section. This is because those historic data refer to each person's 'Place of Usual Residence' as stated in the Census, while forecast data are based on the Estimated Resident Population (ERP) at each point in time.

Table 15: Shellharbour LGA Population Forecasts – Key Indicators

Key Indicators	2016	2021	2026	2031	% change 2016-31
Population	70,492	75,953	82,293	86,824	+23.2%
Change in population (5yrs)	N/A	+5,461	+6,340	+4,531	N/A
Average annual % change (5yrs)	N/A	+1.50	+1.62	+1.08	N/A
Households	25,595	28,071	30,592	32,457	+26.8%
Average household size	2.72	2.67	2.65	2.63	-3.3%
Population in non-private dwellings⁶⁹	821	1,005	1,278	1,438	+75.2%
Dwellings	26,585	29,145	31,875	33,766	+27.0%

Source: Population and household forecasts, 2016 to 2031, prepared by .id, the population experts, May 2019.

As shown in Table 16, all age groups are forecast to grow in number between 2016 and 2031, although at varying rates. Fastest growth is forecast among seniors and the elderly (aged 70 and over), followed by empty nesters and retirees (60 to 69) and parents and homebuilders (35 to 49). Slowest growth will be among older workers and pre-retirees (50 to 59) and young adults aged 18 to 24. The relative ageing of the population over the next 10-15 years can be seen in the changing proportions of 0 to 17 year-olds and those aged 60 and over:

- The proportion aged 0 to 17 will fall from 24.5% in 2016 to 23.9% in 2031.
- The proportion aged 60 and over will rise from 21.7% in 2016 to 26.8% in 2031.

Over the next decade, changes in population age structure will be accompanied by changes in the structure of households. Table 17 shows how the number and proportion of different household types is forecast to change between 2016 and 2031. Key findings include:

- By 2031, 78% of all households will be family households – a slight increase from 2016.
- Couples without dependents will see the fastest growth of any household type, but couple families with dependents will remain the most common household type in Shellharbour by 2031.
- Lone person households will increase in number by around 25%, and by 2031 will continue to comprise around 20% of all households.
- The proportion of one parent families will fall slightly due to slower growth relative to the other household types.

⁶⁹ According to the ABS, non-private dwellings are 'establishments which provide a communal type of accommodation.' In 2016, the majority of residents living in non-private dwellings were in dwellings classified as nursing homes or accommodation for the retired or aged (not self-contained).

Table 16: Shellharbour LGA Population Forecasts by Age Group

Service age group	2016		2026		2031		Change 2016-31	% change 2016-31
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%		
Babies and pre-schoolers (0 to 4)	4,684	6.6	5,494	6.7	5,695	6.6	+1,011	+21.6
Primary schoolers (5 to 11)	6,805	9.7	7,953	9.7	8,300	9.6	+1,495	+22.0
Secondary schoolers (12 to 17)	5,815	8.2	6,475	7.9	6,783	7.8	+968	+16.6
Tertiary education and independence (18 to 24)	6,515	9.2	6,594	8.0	6,889	7.9	+374	+5.7
Young workforce (25 to 34)	8,605	12.2	9,583	11.6	9,834	11.3	+1,229	+14.3
Parents and homebuilders (35 to 49)	13,415	19.0	15,475	18.8	16,523	19.0	+3,108	+23.2
Older workers and pre-retirees (50 to 59)	9,350	13.3	9,311	11.3	9,494	10.9	+144	+1.5
Empty nesters and retirees (60 to 69)	7,608	10.8	9,472	11.5	9,413	10.8	+1,805	+23.7
Seniors (70 to 84)	6,344	9.0	9,381	11.4	10,828	12.5	+4,484	+70.7
Elderly aged (85 and over)	1,351	1.9	2,556	3.1	3,066	3.5	+1,715	+126.9
Total persons	70,492	100.0	82,293	100.0	86,824	100	+16,332	+23.2

Source: Population and household forecasts, 2016 to 2031, prepared by .id, the population experts, May 2019.

Table 17: Shellharbour LGA Household Type Forecasts

Household type	2016		2026		2031		Change 2016-31	% change 2016-31
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%		
Couple families with dependents	8,852	35.6	10,126	33.1	10,587	32.6	+1,735	+19.6
Couples without dependents	6,603	25.8	9,323	30.5	10,133	31.2	+3,530	+53.5
One parent family	3,455	13.5	3,584	11.7	3,762	11.6	+307	+8.9
Other families	887	3.5	802	2.6	825	2.5	-62	-7.0
Total family households	19,797	77.3	23,835	77.9	25,307	78.0	+5,510	+27.8
Lone person households	5,305	20.7	6,263	20.5	6,628	20.4	+1,323	+24.9
Group households	496	1.9	492	1.6	522	1.6	+26	+5.2
Total households	25,598	100.0	30,590	100.0	32,457	100	+6,859	+26.8

Source: Population and household forecasts, 2016 to 2031, prepared by .id, the population experts, May 2019.

4.2.2 Future housing

As shown earlier in Table 12, approximately 80% of the existing housing stock in Shellharbour consists of separate houses, with a further 19% consisting of medium-density dwellings (semi-detached, row, terrace, townhouses and villa units, plus flats/apartments in blocks of 1 or 2 storeys, and flats attached to houses), and less than 1% high density dwellings (flats/apartments in three or more storey blocks).

Dwelling forecasts do not provide a breakdown by dwelling type, however the likely future changes in the balance of dwelling types can be understood using recent ABS building approvals data. Table 18 shows the number of new residential dwellings approved for construction for the past three financial years, by dwelling type. The data reveal that for the past two financial years, over half of all new residential dwellings approved have been in medium or high density developments. This suggests that the number of Shellharbour residents living in medium and high density dwellings will increase, at least in the short term, as these new dwellings are constructed and occupied. With typically smaller amounts of private open space in such dwelling types, this will in turn shape future demand for access to public open space.

Table 18: Residential dwelling approvals by dwelling type, Shellharbour LGA, 2016-17 to 2018-19

Dwelling type	2016-17 (count)	2016-17 (%)	2017-18 (count)	2017-18 (%)	2018-19 (count)	2018-19 (%)
Separate houses	375	59.5	257	30.9	731	48.3
Medium density^a	255	40.5	306	36.8	296	19.5
High density^b	0	0.0	268	32.3	488	32.2
Total	630	100.0	831	100.0	1,515	100.0

^a 'Medium density' includes all semi-detached, row, terrace, townhouses and villa units, plus flats and apartments in blocks of 1 or 2 storeys, and flats attached to houses.

^b 'High density' includes flats and apartments in 3 storey and larger blocks.

Source: ABS Building Approvals, Australia, Aug 2019, 8731.0

Council undertook a Housing Preferences Survey in 2019. A majority of respondents (84%) lived in a separate house, and a majority (76%) would not prefer to live in another dwelling type. Those who would prefer to live in another building type represent specific demographic groups, including 18-34 year olds, young couples without children, recently arrived residents (less than 2 years), and those who live in some types of townhouses or apartments.

As previously explained, two distinct housing markets are currently identified in Shellharbour, based on Profile ID data:

- Established suburbs, with a majority of older households, some of which will be replaced by younger households and families in conjunction with infill development and higher density increase: Albion Park Rail, Barrack Heights, Lake Illawarra, Mount Warrigal, Oak Flats, Shellharbour - Barrack Point and Warilla.
- Greenfield and larger redevelopment sites attracting family households (particularly in greenfield areas) and retiree markets: Flinders, Shell Cove, Rural Balance (including Calderwood and Tullimbar estates) and Blackbutt - Shellharbour City Centre.

Future development is forecast to continue in all of these areas as shown by the population forecasts in Table 19.

Table 19: Population forecasts by suburb, Shellharbour LGA, 2016-2031

Suburb	2016	ERP June 2018	2021	2026	2031	Change 2016-31	% change 2016-31
East							
Barrack Heights	6,042	6,095	6,117	6,127	6,142	+100	+1.7
Blackbutt - Shellharbour City Centre	3,675	3,688	4,626	5,896	6,571	+2,896	+78.8
Flinders	6,937	7,350	7,206	7,242	7,315	+378	+5.4
Lake Illawarra	3,298	3,312	3,480	3,714	3,805	+507	+15.4
Mount Warrigal	4,965	4,959	4,924	4,798	4,836	-129	-2.6
Oak Flats	6,636	6,675	6,905	7,177	7,465	+829	+12.5
Shell Cove	5,845	6,463	7,369	9,328	9,256	+3,411	+58.4
Shellharbour - Barrack Point	4,417	4,722	4,365	4,510	4,552	+135	+3.1
Warilla	6,684	6,724	6,805	6,992	7,185	+501	+7.5
Total East	48,499	49,988	51,797	55,784	57,127	+8,628	+17.8
West							
Albion Park Rail	7,064	7,005	7,102	7,050	7,079	+15	+0.2
Albion Park	13,603	15,247	13,856	14,162	14,394	+791	+5.8
Rural Balance	1,325		3,198	5,298	8,223	+6,898	+520.6
Total West	21,992	22,252	24,156	26,510	29,696	+7,704	+35.0
Total	70,491	72,240	75,953	82,294	86,823	+16,332	+23.2

Note: Some suburb names differ from those listed for the historic population data in Table 14 due to slight changes in geographic boundaries and names used by .id for population forecast data. The rural parts of Albion Park Rail – Croom, Albion Park – Rural West and Shell Cove – Dunmore have been combined into a single area called Rural Balance. The 2018 ERP counts by locality do not separate Albion Park and Rural Balance.

Source: Population and household forecasts, 2016 to 2041, prepared by .id, the population experts, May 2019.

By 2031, there are expected to be over 8,600 additional residents in the East. This growth will be led by ongoing infill development in Blackbutt – Shellharbour Centre, and development in Shell Cove, which is an ongoing greenfield development described in Table 20 below. There will be lesser growth in Barrack Heights, Flinders and Mount Warrigal where development has slowed down.

Over 7,700 additional people are expected in the West by 2031. The vast majority of growth will be a consequence of ongoing developments in the area defined as Rural Balance in Table 19 above, which encompasses two key greenfield development areas – Calderwood Urban Development Project and Tullimbar. These developments are further detailed in Table 20.

Table 20: Key Residential Greenfield Developments

	Shell Cove Waterfront Precinct ⁷⁰	Calderwood Urban Development Project	Tullimbar ⁷¹
Approval date	2011 (concept plan). Modified in 2017 (approved in 2019)	2010	2004
Total dwellings	1,556	4,800 + another 1,700 currently proposed to a total 6,500 homes	2,000
Estimated population	9,256	12,400	5,000
Progress (based on Forecast.id)	Additional 1,315 dwellings by 2041 (i.e. on top of 2016 Census)	Additional 2,905 dwellings by 2041 (i.e. on top of 2016 Census)	Additional 1,233 dwellings by 2041 (i.e. on top of 2016 Census)
Housing mix	Detached housing, terrace homes and apartments	Majority of 1-2 storey detached dwellings with 2-4+ mixed housing zones Retirement living units + aged care homes	Terrace homes, studio apartments, detached housing
Community facilities	Town centre incl. supermarket, retail and dining Community centre, library	Town centre - proposed Primary school High school Community Centre	Primary school Village Centre
Open Space and Recreation	8.5ha useable open space ⁷² of open space and recreational areas including 4 local parks including 3 playgrounds and passive play areas. The remainder can be made up of foreshore, bushwalking or bike riding areas. 1 shared use sports field Total 8.5ha of open space	Open space network – passive/active + retain environmental land/riparian corridors Approved: 33.2ha now Current application: increase to 47.4ha Includes: District park of 3.2ha opened in December 2018 including climbing frame, half basketball court, playground, outdoor exercise equipment and water features Total of 11 local parks (with one due in 2019), 4 district parks (including that already opened mentioned above), two city parks Sports fields – total area of 15.84ha	Oval / Parkland Environmental linear reserves 1 park playground
Target demographic	Families with children Retirees and downsizers	Families with children Retirees and downsizers	Families with children Retirees and downsizers

The West Dapto Urban Release Area, located north of Shellharbour in Wollongong LGA, may also have an impact on Shellharbour's open space and recreation facilities, particularly those located in the West part of the Council area, with an additional 56,500 people moving into the release area in the next 50 years.⁷³

⁷⁰ Urbis 2017, *Market Outlook Shell Cove*; Frasers Property 2018, *Shell Cove Boat Harbour Precinct Revised Concept Plan Designed Report*, February 2018.

⁷¹ Premier's Council for Active Living NSW, *PCAL Case Study Walking and Cycling Routes: Tullimbar Village*.

⁷² Frasers Property 2018, *Shell Cove Boat Harbour Precinct Revised Concept Plan Designed Report*, February 2018.

⁷³ Wollongong City Council, *West Dapto Vision 2018*.

4.3 Precinct population patterns

As discussed earlier, Shellharbour LGA is comprised of nine 'precincts' under its Local Infrastructure Contributions Plan. Part of this needs study consists of a precinct-by-precinct assessment, to guide Council in a more localised approach and to assist the review of asset management planning and contributions plans. While the previous sections have considered Shellharbour as a whole and its constituent suburbs, this section provides an overview of the demographic context of each precinct.

Table 21 below shows summary population data for each precinct and will be referred to throughout this section. Appendix D contains the tables of key demographic indicators and population forecasts that inform the analysis for each precinct.

Although there are nine individual precincts, the following analysis will combine Precincts 6-9 for the following reasons:

- Demographic forecasts are only available for a "Rural Balance" area comprising Precincts 7-9.
- The Tullimbar growth area is contained within Precinct 7 Albion Park.

Table 21: Summary of precinct populations (current and forecast)

Precinct	2016				2031			
	Total pop.	% of LGA pop.	% aged 0-17	% aged 60+	Total pop.	% of LGA pop.	% aged 0-17	% aged 60+
Precinct 1: Warilla	20,989	29.8	22.2	26.3	21,968	25.3	21.9	30.6
Precinct 2: Shellharbour	10,262	14.6	26.4	20.3	13,808	15.9	23.3	29.0
Precinct 3: Blackbutt	10,612	15.1	26.4	17.1	13,886	16.0	25.0	22.8
Precinct 4: Oak Flats	6,636	9.4	21.5	24.5	7,465	8.6	21.6	30.8
Precinct 5: Albion Park Rail	7,064	10.0	22.8	24.2	7,079	8.2	21.6	32.2
Precincts 6-9: Albion Park, Rural East, Rural West, Tullimbar, Calderwood	14,928	21.2	27.5	17.1	22,617	26.0	27.0	21.4
Shellharbour LGA	70,492	100.0	24.5	21.7	86,824	100.0	23.9	26.8

Source: Population and household forecasts, 2016 to 2031, prepared by .id, the population experts, May 2019.

4.3.1 Precinct 1: Warilla

Warilla is currently the most populous precinct in the LGA, comprising almost 30% of all residents (see Table 21). However, this proportion is forecast to fall to around 25% by 2031 due to a relatively slow rate of growth compared to other precincts. Warilla has a relatively older population than other precincts. Between 2006 and 2016, the fastest-growing age groups were those aged 70 to 84 and 85 and over. In 2016, over one quarter of the population was aged 60 and over – the highest proportion of any precinct – and this is forecast to grow to over 30% by 2031. The proportion aged 0 to 17 is expected to fall very slightly between 2016 and 2031.

Lone person households are the most common household type in Warilla, representing over 27% of all households. However, by 2031 it is expected that they will be overtaken by couples without dependents, who are forecast to increase in number by almost 20%. The most common dwelling type is separate houses, although the number of medium-density dwellings grew faster between 2006 and 2016.

4.3.2 Precinct 2: Shellharbour

In 2016, the Shellharbour precinct represented 15% of the LGA population. This is forecast to increase slightly to 16% by 2031, mostly due to development in Shell Cove. Between 2016 and 2031, the Shell Cove population alone will increase by over 3400 residents, or 58%. The Shellharbour precinct is relatively younger than other precincts, with an above-average proportion of residents aged 0-17 and a below-average proportion aged 60 and over, relative to the rest of the LGA. Yet in the coming years there is expected to be a dramatic increase in the 60 and over age groups, with their share of the precinct population rising from 20% in 2016 to 29% in 2031.

Currently, the most common household type in the Shellharbour precinct is couples with dependents at 42% of all households. However, by 2031 it is expected that they will be overtaken by couples without dependents, who are forecast to increase in number by almost 78%. The most common dwelling type is separate houses, although the number of medium-density dwellings grew faster between 2006 and 2016.

4.3.3 Precinct 3: Blackbutt

The Blackbutt precinct contains the Shellharbour City Centre and the largest centre zone in the LGA, which includes the Stockland Shopping Centre. The precinct is a shopping destination as well as an employment hub and contains a number of community facilities, including the new civic centre. The precinct's share of the LGA population is forecast to grow from 15% in 2016 to 16% in 2031, due in part to new residential development, mostly in the form of 1-3 bedroom apartments south and east of the centre. Seniors housing is also expected with about 430 new seniors' dwellings by 2028, including a village green.

The population of the Blackbutt precinct is relatively younger than others, with over 26% aged 0 to 17, and only 17% aged 60 and over. Consistent with the rest of the LGA, an ageing population is forecast for the precinct, however by 2031 those aged 0-17 will still comprise one quarter of residents. Reflecting the precinct's age structure, the most common household type is couple families with dependents. This will still be the case in 2031, however their proportion is expected to fall from 43% to 38%. Couples without dependents and lone person households are forecast to grow at faster rates than all other household types.

In 2016, Blackbutt had the highest proportion of medium density dwellings among any of the precincts in the LGA, at 30%. Further, given the forecast residential development, it is expected that new dwelling forms will have smaller amounts of private open space. Residents will therefore need access to quality public open space that is easily accessible for all generations. Workers and visitors of the precinct would also benefit from a space that provides informal recreational opportunities that are easily accessible and safe.

4.3.4 Precinct 4: Oak Flats

Oak Flats was the smallest precinct by population in 2016, comprising just 9% of the LGA population. It has a relatively older population, with a higher proportion of residents aged 60 and over than the LGA average, and a lower proportion aged 0 to 17. Modest population growth of around 12.5% is forecast between 2016 and 2031. Strongest growth is predicted among school-aged children, parents, seniors and the elderly aged. Oak Flats is the only precinct where the 0 to 17 age group is expected to increase its share of the population by 2031. Meanwhile, a decline is expected among young adults (18 to 34), older workers and pre-retirees, and empty nesters and retirees. The most common household type is currently couple families with dependents, however by 2031 the most common will be couple families without dependents. Oak Flats has a particularly high proportion of separate houses, at 85% of all dwellings.

Based on the above, it is essential to ensure that there is open space easily accessible by all generations, including parents with prams and older residents.

4.3.5 Precinct 5: Albion Park Rail

The Albion Park Rail precinct represents 10% of the LGA population, and is forecast to have the slowest growth of any precinct between 2016 and 2031, falling to around 8% of the LGA population. Albion Park Rail is characterized by a relatively older population, with an above-average proportion of residents aged 60 and over. Further, it is forecast to age more dramatically than any other precinct. By 2031, it will have the highest proportion of people aged 60 and above, at over 32%. There will be declines in the number of people in all age groups from 0 to 69, while the number of residents aged 70 and over will increase by over 600. By 2031, the most common household type will be couple families without dependents. Lone person households will grow faster than any other household type and comprise over one quarter of all households by 2031.

Based on these trends, it will be important to ensure that this precinct is provided with quality open space that is easily accessible to older residents and supports their preferred modes of open space usage.

4.3.6 Precincts 6-9: Albion Park, Rural East, Rural West, Calderwood

In total, this area is currently the second-largest precinct by population, representing 21% of the LGA. This proportion is forecast to increase to 26% of the LGA by 2031, with the population growing much faster than any other precinct area, at over 51%. This significant growth will be largely driven by development in the greenfield growth areas of Calderwood and Tullimbar. There is only limited growth expected in the suburb of Albion Park.

This area currently has a younger population than any of Precincts 1-5, with 27% of residents aged 0 to 17 and only 17% aged 60 and over. Although the population will age overall between 2016 and 2031, this part of the LGA will remain the youngest. All age groups will increase in number, with the fastest percentage growth among seniors, the elderly aged, and babies and preschoolers.

It is therefore important to consider the diverse needs of both younger and older communities in this high-growth area.

4.4 Socio-economic disadvantage

Socio-economic circumstances of residents also affect demand for different types of open spaces. The ABS produces an index called the SEIFA Index of Relative Socio-Economic Disadvantage (IRSD), which measures the relative level of socio-economic disadvantage of a geographic area based on Census data. Table 22 lists the suburbs of Shellharbour LGA in descending order according to their score on the index – the higher the score, the less disadvantaged the area, relative to other geographic areas in Australia. The percentile is also provided, which can be interpreted as 'the approximate position of this small area in a ranked list of Australia's suburbs and localities.'⁷⁴ For example, a percentile of 75 indicates that the area has a higher index score than 75% of all Australia's suburbs. Figure 7 depicts IRSD scores for SA1s, which are very small geographic areas for which SEIFA data is released.

Table 22 and Figure 7 indicate that levels of socio-economic disadvantage vary widely across the LGA. The highest levels of socio-economic disadvantage are clustered in the north-eastern suburbs that comprise the Warilla precinct – Warilla, Lake Illawarra, Barrack Heights and Mount Warrigal. These suburbs tend to have lower levels of projected population growth and older recreational and open space facilities. Lower levels of disadvantage are found in the south-east of the LGA, with Shell Cove – Dunmore by far the least disadvantaged suburb.

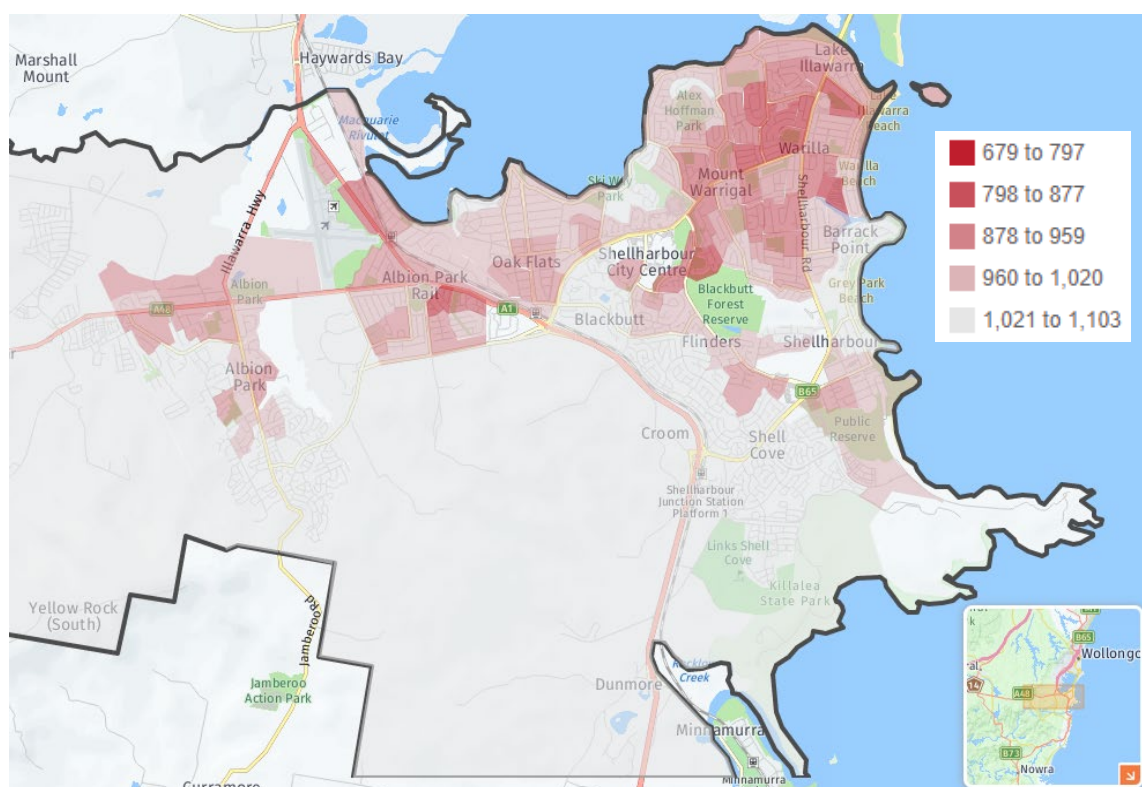
⁷⁴ Informed Decisions (2019), *Shellharbour City Council Community Profile*, available at: <https://profile.id.com.au/shellharbour/seifa-disadvantage-small-area>.

Table 22: SEIFA Index of Relative Socio-Economic Disadvantage by suburb, 2016

Suburb	2016 index	2016 percentile
Shell Cove - Dunmore	1083.3	92
Flinders	1037.1	69
Albion Park - Rural West	1022.0	59
Shellharbour - Barrack Point	1010.5	52
Blackbutt - Shellharbour City Centre	983.8	36
Oak Flats	979.6	34
Albion Park Rail - Croom	940.7	19
Mount Warrigal	938.9	18
Barrack Heights	918.2	13
Lake Illawarra	865.2	6
Warilla	857.3	6
Shellharbour City	976.0	32
New South Wales	1001.0	45

Source: ABS Census of Population and Housing 2016. Compiled and presented in profile.id by .id, the population experts.

Figure 7: Index of Relative Socio-Economic Disadvantage by SA1, Shellharbour LGA, 2016



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing, 2016 (Usual residence data). Compiled and presented in atlas.id by .id, the population experts.

4.5 Travel patterns

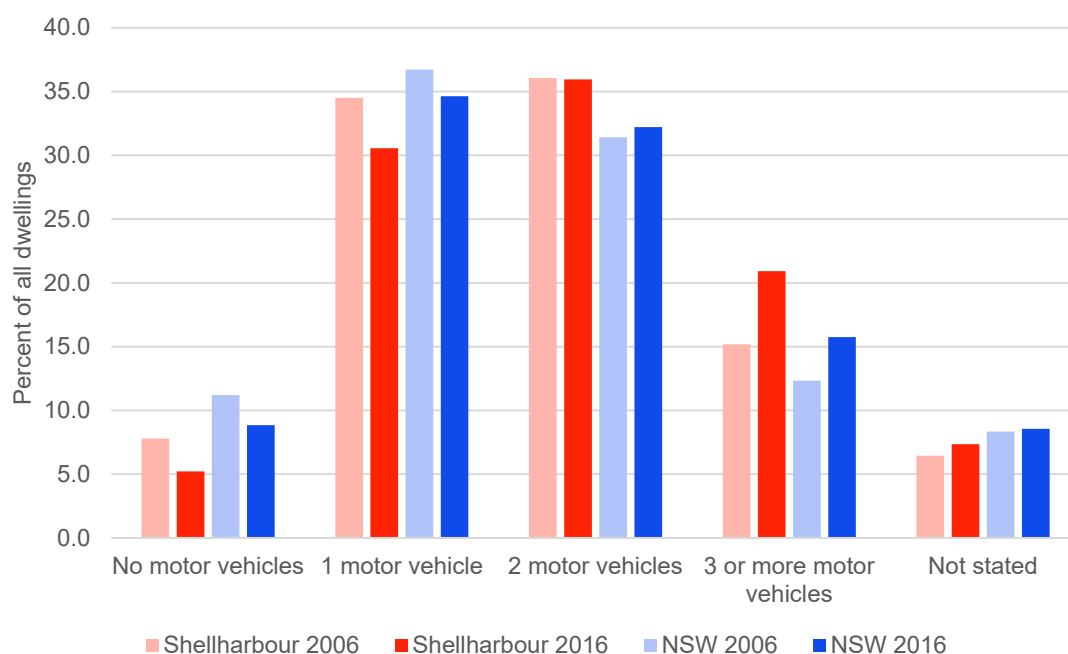
Socio-economic circumstances are linked to travel behaviour, which is another important driver of demand for open space.

The Australian Census contains two variables that can be used to gauge information about people's travel patterns:

- Number of motor vehicles owned per dwelling.
- Method of travel to work.

The former provides an indication of households' level of access to cars. Figure 8 compares the level of car ownership in Shellharbour LGA over time, and with NSW as a whole. The number of cars per dwelling appears to have increased between 2006 and 2016 in both Shellharbour and NSW, with higher proportions of households owning three or more motor vehicles, and less not owning a motor vehicle at all. Shellharbour households also tend to have greater access to motor vehicles than the average NSW household.

Figure 8: Number of motor vehicles per household, Shellharbour and NSW, 2006-2016



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Census of Population and Housing 2006 and 2016*.

Table 23 demonstrates how the level of car ownership varies spatially across the LGA, by focusing on the proportion of households who did not own a car in 2016. For example, almost 9% of households in the Warilla precinct – well above the proportion of 5.2% for the whole LGA. This is likely related to the higher levels of socio-economic disadvantage in Warilla, as discussed earlier. On the other hand, only 2% of households in the Shellharbour precinct – which has relatively low levels of disadvantage – did not own a car.

These findings suggest that it may be important to ensure residents of the Warilla precinct are able to access open space and other sport and recreational opportunities without needing to rely on a car, with a possible preference for activities within walking distance.

Table 23: Households without a car, Shellharbour LGA Precincts, 2016

Precinct	Households without a car	Total households	% of total households
Precinct 1 Warilla	721	8,075	8.9
Precinct 2 Shellharbour	67	3,419	2.0
Precinct 3 Blackbutt	142	3,464	4.1
Precinct 4 Oak Flats	108	2,383	4.5
Precinct 5 Albion Park Rail	118	2,492	4.7
Precincts 6-9 Albion Park, Rural East, Rural West, Calderwood	129	4,646	2.8
Shellharbour LGA	1,290	24,729	5.2

Source: ABS Census of Population and Housing 2016. Compiled and presented in atlas.id by .id, the population experts.

The second Census indicator of travel patterns is the main method of travel to work (Table 24). This refers to the main mode of transport used to travel to work on the day of the Census. Although this variable indicates travel patterns to work rather than open spaces, it provides a broad understanding of the degree to which Shellharbour residents prefer or have access to certain forms of transport. It is evident that residents of Shellharbour LGA are heavy car users in comparison to the rest of the state, with almost 78% of employed persons using a car to get to work in 2016, compared to around 62% of NSW employed persons.

Car usage also increased in Shellharbour, from around 75% in 2006. In large part this reflects the regional character of the LGA, with lower levels of access to public transport in contrast to metropolitan areas.

Table 24: Main method of travel to work, Shellharbour LGA and NSW, 2006-2016.

Main method of travel to work	2016			2006			Shellharbour % change 2006 to 2016
	Shell. (count)	Shell. (%)	NSW (%)	Shell. (count)	Shell. (%)	NSW (%)	
Train	628	2.1	11.2	423	1.7	8.3	+48.5
Bus	278	0.9	4.4	218	0.9	3.8	+27.5
Tram or Ferry	6	0.0	0.3	4	0.0	0.2	+50.0
Taxi	21	0.1	0.2	29	0.1	0.3	-27.6
Car - as driver	21,766	73.5	57.8	17,239	68.7	56.4	+26.3
Car - as passenger	1,461	4.9	4.3	1,634	6.5	5.7	-10.6
Truck	307	1.0	1.0	394	1.6	1.6	-22.1
Motorbike	109	0.4	0.6	179	0.7	0.6	-39.1
Bicycle	77	0.3	0.7	110	0.4	0.7	-30.0
Walked only	386	1.3	3.9	438	1.7	4.4	-11.9
Other	299	1.0	1.2	193	0.8	1.0	+54.9
Worked at home	830	2.8	4.8	625	2.5	4.8	+32.8
Did not go to work	3,192	10.8	8.7	3,088	12.3	10.5	+3.4
Not stated	252	0.9	1.0	515	2.1	1.9	-51.1
Total employed persons aged 15+	29,612	100.0	100.0	25,089	100.0	100.0	+18.0

Source: ABS Census of Population and Housing 2016. Compiled and presented in profile.id by .id, the population experts

Key Findings:

→ The Shellharbour LGA population trends raise a number of important issues in terms of Open Space and Recreation planning for the next ten years and beyond:

→ Most of the growth in the east will be in Blackbutt/ Shellharbour City Centre and Shell Cove, and to a lesser degree Lake Illawarra. In the west, the new growth areas of Calderwood and Tullimbar will drive a substantial proportion of the growth. These areas need to be addressed as they bring additional and potentially different needs.

There will continue to be shifts in the age profile of the LGA:

→ The proportion of people aged 60 or over will continue to grow, as will that of couples without dependents

→ While there will be a larger proportion of people aged 60+, currently this segment of the population tends not to meet the physical activity guidelines suggesting more age-appropriate activities may be required.

→ Population ageing is forecast across all precincts, however by 2031 the precincts of Albion Park Rail, Oak Flats and Warilla will have distinctly older age profiles (albeit that infill development tends to attract younger households).

→ Shellharbour City is home to a high and growing number of young people and families in the new release areas of Shell Cove, Flinders, Tullimbar and Calderwood.

→ There will be growing demand for recreation and exercise opportunities for older age groups (65+) which include organised and non-organised sports and recreation. Trends in relation to recreation for older age groups are explored in Section 6.

→ A growing population of older people may also result in an evolution in housing typology, with more retirement villages and independent living units that are designed with less private open space.

→ Notwithstanding the ageing trends, the proportion of children under 12 will remain reasonably constant over the coming 10 years at around 16%. Their access to open space and recreation also needs to be considered, as well as those of their parents (the proportion of people aged 35 to 49 will remain around 19% through to 2031), and of young people aged 12 to 24.

→ There will be growing demand for child-friendly, youth-friendly and family-friendly open spaces and recreational facilities. Further consideration needs to be given to how to best cater for different cohorts within the 0-24 year bracket, including in terms of their access to parks with amenities, play spaces and built facilities such as skate parks, plus organised sports and recreation opportunities that cater for younger age groups

→ More attention will need to be given to neighbourhood designs in order to ensure green and healthy neighbourhood that are crucial particularly for children's wellbeing, with evidence showing the impacts of green spaces on mental health and seniors' wellbeing.

→ There will be a shift from low density to more medium density housing, with reduced private open space and implications in relation to community expectations and needs for improved public open space. There will also be more people living in non-private dwellings.

→ According to the National Sport Plan, community members that are less likely to be active are those over 65 years of age, people with a disability, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, people from a culturally or linguistically diverse background, living in a regional area, and living in low income households. There will be a need to ensure that future open spaces and recreational facilities are inclusive of all generations and demographic and socio-economic groups.

Key Findings (continued):

→ The diversity of socio-economic characteristics across the LGA will need to be taken into account when planning open spaces.

→ Suburbs in the north-east around the Warilla precinct tend to have some of the highest levels of disadvantage not only in the LGA, but in all of Australia. They also have lower levels of car ownership, highlighting the importance of ensuring most residents have access to quality open spaces and affordable recreation opportunities in walking distance from their homes.

* * * *

5 Open Space in Shellharbour LGA

This section provides an analysis of the existing supply of open space and recreation facilities in Shellharbour LGA, and within each precinct and provides a guide for the amount of open space in both the LGA and each precinct that will be needed by 2031

5.1 Public Open Space Provision

This section also models open spaces based on population size, and provides a guide for the amount of open space in both the LGA and each precinct that will be needed by 2031.

5.2 Open Space Hierarchy

Parks and open spaces vary in size, form, and the range of functions that they perform. To understand how parks are classified, it is important to understand the two ways that open spaces are defined, that being through **hierarchy** (local, district and city-wide) and **type** (active, passive, environmental, ancillary).

An open space hierarchy refers to a tiered classification of open spaces based on the types of use each attract and their function in the broader supply of open space. Shellharbour LGA already uses a three-tier hierarchy of open space to classify their open spaces, and the below description is considered to provide a guide to ensuring that these classifications remain relevant into the future.

The characteristics described under each hierarchy tier have been influenced by industry best practice and the NSW Government Architect's guidelines. The three tiers are:

- **Local:** refers to open space areas that serve a neighbourhood, and are located close to or within residential areas for informal and play activities with basic facilities.
- **District:** refers to open space areas that serve multiple neighbourhoods including larger areas that include both passive and active recreation opportunities and may contain sportsfields or courts.
- **City-wide:** refers to open space areas that serve an entire LGA, or multiple LGAs. Importantly, these areas are not always larger than other parks, but instead offer a wider range of uses, have higher visitation rates and attract a wider range of users.

Open space "type" refers specifically to the key characteristics of the space and the type of use it facilitates. These include:

- **Active open space:** public land set aside for the primary purpose of formal outdoor sports for the community. Active open space supports team sports, training and competition and typically features sports facilities such as playing fields, change rooms, grandstands and car parks.⁷⁵
- **Passive open space:** public land set aside for parks, gardens, linear corridors, conservation bushland nature reserves. These areas are made available for passive recreation, play and unstructured physical activity.⁷⁶
- **Environmental reserves:** Public land that includes linear parks, bushland, national parks and state reserves. They provide a range of purposes and may also have recreational value, as well as act as linkages between areas.
- **Ancillary reserves:** Residual spaces of a small size with sometimes no particular recreational value. However they may act as linkages between areas as well and contribute to the walkability/cyclability of the LGA.

Further information about the open space hierarchy used in this Needs Study is set out at Attachment 1.3.

⁷⁵ Greater Sydney Commission 2016, *Greater Sydney Public Open Space Audit*.

⁷⁶ Greater Sydney Commission 2016, *Greater Sydney Public Open Space Audit*; Parks and Leisure Australia 2013, *Open Space Planning and Design Guide*.

Table 25: Open Space Hierarchy

Characteristics	Local	District	City wide
Passive Open Space	Desirable minimum size: 3000m ² . 5 mins safe walking access / within 400m of 80% of houses and 500m of 100% of houses	Within 15–20 mins safe walking distance or 10 mins cycling. Generally, should be accessible within 1500m	Not necessarily larger than other parks but have higher visitation and attract a wider range of different users. Offers a wider range of facilities. Can be considered a destination. Needs to be accessible by public transport and key road networks.
Active Open Space	N/A	Large areas with fields and/or courts and ancillary facilities including change rooms, amenities, parking, etc. Typically, 10ha or more	Large areas with fields and/or courts and ancillary facilities including change rooms, amenities, parking, etc. Typically, 20ha or more
Environmental Reserves	Linear parks	Linear parks	National parks and state reserves
Ancillary Reserves	Linkage spaces	N/A	N/A

Source: Government Architect of NSW, *Open Space for Recreation Guide*.

UTS recommends closely reviewing the hierarchy and design principles, set out at Attachment 1.3, as it contains much more information about the sizing, placement and design issues applicable to each category of park

Key Findings:

- Open space hierarchies and classifying park types assist in the strategic planning and approach to providing a variety of well-considered open spaces.
- An existing open space hierarchy approach is already applied to all open spaces in Shellharbour LGA. It is important that over time, these classifications are updated to reflect the changing role and function of open spaces over time.
- Similarly, the application of an open space 'type' should be reviewed over time to reflect any change in the role and function of the space.

5.3 Population-based Open Space Analysis

The Shellharbour LGA currently has 470 open space areas, or just over 926 hectares. Collectively, this represents 12.8ha of open space per 1,000 people in the Shellharbour LGA, including all active, passive, environmental and ancillary areas. Across the LGA there is:

- 12.4ha of open space per 1,000 people in the east
- 13.7ha per 1,000 people in the west.

Table 26 further breaks down these ratios by Precinct.

Table 26: Shellharbour LGA Open Space rates per population

Precincts	Estimated Resident Population		Open space	2018 provision rate (ha per 1,000 people)	2031 provision rate (ha per 1,000 people)
	2018 (June)	2031	Ha		
East					
Precinct 1 Warilla	21,090	21,968	176.1	8.3	8.0
Precinct 2 Shellharbour	11,185	13,808	223.9	20.0	16.2
Precinct 3 Blackbutt	11,038	13,886	167.6	15.2	12.1
Precinct 4 Oak Flats	6,675	7,465	53.9	8.3	7.2
Total East	49,988	57,127	621.4	12.4	10.9
West					
Precinct 5 Albion Park Rail	7,005	7,079	89.4	12.8	12.6
Precinct 6 Rural East	15,247	22,617	215.5	14.1	9.5
Precinct 7 Albion Park					
Precinct 8 Rural West					
Precinct 9 Calderwood					
Total West	22,252	29,696	304.8	13.7	10.3
Total	72,240	86,823	926.2	12.8	10.7

Source: Shellharbour City Council Asset GIS data

The above breakdown does not however tell the whole story. While there are slightly higher levels of general open space in the west than the east, the east is much more heavily serviced in terms of parks (see Section 5.4 below). UTS recommends both data sets be used to inform decision making.

It should also be acknowledged that in addition to the above, the LGA has 438ha of environmental land within its boundaries, providing a significant amount of space for both active and passive recreation, particularly along the coastline and lake foreshore. As discussed in more detail below, a quarter of environmental land is provided in the western precincts of the LGA, mostly adjacent to the Croom Sporting complex or in the form of linear parks. Environmental reserves, including bushland, state and national parks (particularly Killalea State Reserve) also provide further recreational space for residents and visitors.

The above points serve to underscore the points discussed in Section 2.5.1 of this report, namely that focusing on a quantitative approach has clear limitations, particularly as it is not always an accurate measure of the existing provision of open space.

Key Findings:

→ It is important to remember that about 70% of the LGA population lives in the eastern suburbs. This proportion will decrease in the future, to about 66% in the next 10 years, and 62% by 2041. Therefore, it is important that the future balance of open space between east and west reflects the future population patterns

→ It is essential that open space planning reviews the data (number and hectares) on existing open space provision, however must also keep in mind the broader context of the area, look at the types of open space available in each precinct, and be aware of the role that state and national parks play.

5.4 Passive Open Spaces

5.4.1 Passive Open Space Supply Audit

There are approximately 275 hectares of parks (passive open space) in Shellharbour LGA, contained within a total of 194 council reserves.

As documented in Table 27, passive open space is not evenly distributed across the LGA. This reflects historical urban development patterns in the area, as noted in Section 3.1 of the study. For example, about 75% of passive open spaces are located in the eastern precincts of the LGA, which represents nearly 90% of actual park area. All city-wide parks are also located in the eastern precincts.

Table 27: Shellharbour Passive Open Space

Precincts	Local		District		City-wide		Total	
	#	Ha	#	Ha	#	Ha	#	Ha
East								
Precinct 1 Warilla	26	10.8	20	34.3	1	8.5	48	53.6
Precinct 2 Shellharbour	25	9.3	17	30.3	n/a	n/a	42	39.5
Precinct 3 Blackbutt	19	7.4	14	17.2	2	102.1	36	126.7
Precinct 4 Oak Flats	5	0.6	11	18.2	n/a	n/a	16	18.9
Total East	75	28.2	62	99.9	3	110.6	139	238.7
West								
Precinct 5 Albion Park Rail	9	3.3	7	6.7	n/a	n/a	16	10.0
Precinct 6 Rural East	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	
Precinct 7 Albion Park	27	6.5	5	15.9	n/a	n/a	32	22.4
Precinct 8 Rural West	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Precinct 9 Calderwood	3	1.0	1	3.2	n/a	n/a	4	4.2
Total West	39	10.8	13	25.8	0	0	52	36.6
Total	114	39.0	75	125.8	3	110.6	191	275.3

Source: Shellharbour City Council Asset GIS data. Note: As numbers have been rounded, not all totals tally.

5.4.2 Passive Open Spaces in Shellharbour

5.4.2.1 Local Parks

There are 114 local parks in Shellharbour LGA, representing approximately 39ha. A majority of local parks are located in the eastern precincts, and more specifically in the Warilla and Shellharbour precincts (Precincts 1 and 2).

5.4.2.2 District Parks

There are 75 district parks in Shellharbour, representing approximately 126ha. A majority of district parks are located in the eastern precincts with a higher representation in the Warilla and Shellharbour precincts (Precincts 1 and 2). Notably:

- Little Park (which is within Shellharbour Reserve on the Shellharbour Village foreshore), whilst of a limited size, is considered as a destination by and for both locals and visitors, including the playground as per the results of the recent consultation on the upgrade of Little Park
- A new district-level park recently opened in Calderwood, which would be a central focus for the existing population. This park has not yet been dedicated to Council but has been included in calculations.
- McDonald Park, (Tongarra Road Albion Park Rail) has netball courts and tennis courts, with the existing playground programed to be upgraded to an all-inclusive play space, learn to ride and outdoor exercise equipment in 2019/20

5.4.2.3 City Wide Parks

There are five city wide parks in Shellharbour, representing a total of approximately 110ha. All are located in the Warilla and Blackbutt precincts (Precincts 1 and 3). Notably:

- **Blackbutt Forest Reserve:** which is home to a large area of bushland and walking tracks, as well as barbeque and picnic facilities and an amphitheatre.
- **Reddall Reserve (including Werang Island):** A masterplan was adopted by Council, October 2019 with a view “to incorporate a regional scale all-inclusive play space, as well as improved facilities, including potential new accessible toilet block, expansion and upgrade of the existing kiosk, development of the usable open space and an overall higher quality of landscape amenity”
- **Harrison Park** Master planning is expected to commence in 2020-2021 and a youth orientated recreation facility has been discussed as a potential future inclusion.

Maps for each precinct are provided in Attachment 3.

5.4.3 Precinct-based Passive Open Space Analysis

There is a clear geographical concentration of parks in the eastern precincts, which reflects historical urban and residential development patterns. A large proportion of the western portion of the LGA consists in rural or industrial land and also incorporates the airport, which reduces the need for open space. Notwithstanding, some western precincts are experiencing residential growth and will create new demand for open space.

Another consideration in assessing the overall supply of open space is the pattern of residential subdivisions, as this impacts the walkability of neighbourhoods. Many parks (particularly in the older residential areas of the LGA) are small, located in cul-de-sac streets with limited visibility, limited road frontages, and sometimes located in areas where topography limits useability. The high number of local parks in the eastern precincts is a reflection of this historical pattern.

A precinct analysis is provided below.

Precinct 1: Warilla

The Warilla precinct is located between Lake Illawarra and the ocean, at the north-eastern tip of the LGA.

The precinct's foreshore consists of both council-owned open space, privately owned land and Crown land. Four play spaces exist along the foreshore, within passive reserves. Council staff have indicated that the Lake foreshore attracts visitors from the rest of the LGA and adjacent LGA as well as from Greater Sydney, particularly during weekends and holidays. It is necessary to ensure that these areas are maintained to an adequate level, and also that residents of the precinct have access to other, quieter facilities if required.

The precinct contains one city wide park (Reddall Reserve), and is also adjacent to a second one (Blackbutt Reserve) in Precinct 3 located along its southern boundary.

The Warilla Swimming Pool is located in the centre of the precinct, within Shellharbour War Memorial Park, which offers informal open space and a full size basketball court, and is adjacent the Warilla Neighbourhood Centre.

Swimming is also possible on the coastline, as well as on Little Lake, which comes further inland into Warilla.

Precinct 2: Shellharbour

The Shellharbour Precinct is located in the eastern portion of the LGA, along the coastline. The Shell Cove development is currently still underway, between Killalea State Park, Bass Point quarry and the coastline, and will include a marina and additional open space reserves and play spaces.

The majority of open space in this precinct is contained within two reserves, Bass Point and Killalea State Park, which provide significant passive recreational opportunities.

The precinct also contains natural wetlands at Killalea State Park and man-made wetlands at Myimbarr Community Park, although these are not accessible to the public.

Precinct 3: Blackbutt

The precinct is located along the Princes Highway and railway line, with Oak Flats and Shellharbour Junction stations located at either extremity of the precinct. It incorporates the Shellharbour City Centre, including the Stockland Shopping Centre (including two play spaces) and new civic centre that includes the new council offices, City Museum and library. The front of the Civic Centre and surrounds have been designed to provide passive recreation opportunities to the public by having open grass areas, a network of accessible paths, seating, landscaping and water features that allow informal water play.

Blackbutt Forest Reserve represents approximately a quarter of the precinct and is the largest urban bushland reserve in the Illawarra region⁷⁷. It is home to a range of fauna and flora species, and is a significant asset for passive recreation. In addition, a number of mountain biking trails have been informally developed over time in the reserve. The Reserve is accessible via a number of road access points including a number of cul-de-sacs within the residential areas adjacent to the north. A fence has been established along Wattle Road, with limited access points from the west.

Harrison Park and Wentworth Cottage Park are also located in Blackbutt Precinct.

Precinct 4: Oak Flats

The Oak Flats precinct is relatively small and only contains the residential Oak Flats suburb (which has its own town centre). It is bounded by Lake Illawarra to the north, the Princes Highway to the south, the Horsley Creek Inlet to the west (with a pedestrian bridge over the inlet) and Lake Entrance Road to the east. There is an off-road cycleway link from Oak Flats to the Lake entrance giving it good interconnectivity to the open space along the lake foreshore and associated parks.

Portions of the foreshore east of Central Park and west of Kurrura Point are not publicly accessible and built in the form of private dwellings with private moorings.

Passive open spaces mostly only exist on the edges of the precinct, with the exception of:

- Kingston St Park which is adjacent the Oak Flats Swimming Pool (and includes a play space) currently categorised as active open space which should be categorised as passive open space
- Oak Flats Dog Park, publicly accessible outside of training hours currently categorised as active open space which should be categorised as passive open space
- Two small local parks (under 1,500m²) in the eastern portion of the precinct with limited useability and accessibility
- Nob Hill Park of approximately 3,000m² in the western portion of the precinct.

Some environmental reserves are more centrally located and provide limited recreational opportunities.

The environmental reserve located south of Kurrura Point also provides passive opportunities, although not accessible at all times, and can be subject to flooding.

Precinct 5: Albion Park Rail

A majority of the northern portion of the precinct (north of Tongarra Road and west of Princes Highway) consists of industrial and rural land, with the Shellharbour Airport representing approximately a third of the precinct. There are limited areas of open space around this portion of the precinct, mostly consisting of

⁷⁷ Tourism Shellharbour, *Blackbutt Forest Reserve*.

riparian corridors along the Macquarie Rivulet and wetlands around Koon Bay, which are held in both public and private ownership.

The rest of the precinct consists of older residential areas that have access to small passive reserves and environmental reserves along the southern edge of the precinct. Albion Oval is centrally located and provides recreational opportunities outside of training/games.

There are good connections between spaces in the precinct, particularly along the foreshore.

The precinct is also adjacent the Croom Regional Sporting Complex in Precinct 6 which provides significant recreation opportunities including wooded bushland.

Precinct 6: Rural East

The majority of the precinct consists of rural land and land used for quarrying purposes. There are no residential uses within this precinct.

Of particular note is the Croom Regional Sporting Complex which provides a variety of active recreation opportunities. While there are no local parks due to the lack of residential development, the Croom Sporting Complex provides active open space for all Shellharbour.

Precinct 7: Albion Park

The Albion Park precinct represents the western extremity of the Shellharbour urban area, and is separated from other precincts to the east by the Croom Regional Sporting Complex.

It consists of two distinct suburbs, Albion Park and Tullimbar. As part of Tullimbar's ongoing development, there are a number of new open spaces planned.

While residential development is still occurring in Albion Park, it is a more established suburb influenced by topography. Environmental land traverses the precinct from south-west to north-east thereby creating recreational opportunities and connections from the southern residential areas through to a significant portion of active recreation assets in the north of the precinct (Albion Park Showgrounds). Large parkland exists in the eastern portion of the precinct, completing the connection from active recreation assets to Tongarra Road and the rest of the LGA.

Precinct 8: Rural West

This precinct incorporates portion of the Macquarie Pass National Park and State Conservation Area, and rural areas of the LGA. There is no passive open space of note in this area, although the National Park and Conservation Area do provide recreational opportunities to residents of the LGA and the region in general, including bushwalking tracks, picnic facilities, and birdwatching.

Precinct 9: Calderwood

This precinct includes the master planned Calderwood area. While only three local reserves are currently identified in Council's GIS system, as well as some environmental reserves, it is noted that:

- The Calderwood Urban Development Project Concept Approval identifies a comprehensive network of open spaces
- A new district reserve was opened in 2019 near the entrance to the development (3.2 hectares), which includes picnic and barbeque facilities, a climbing frame for children, a half basketball court and a bowl swing.
- As noted above and further documented in Table 28, open space is not evenly distributed across the LGA. This reflects historical urban development patterns in the area, as noted in Section 3.1.3 of this report.
- About 75% of passive open spaces are located in the eastern precincts of the LGA, which represents nearly 90% of actual park surface. All city-wide parks are also located in the eastern precincts.

Key Findings:

→ While there is clear disparity between the relatively high numbers of passive open space areas / parks in the east of the Shellharbour LGA, compared to that in the west, this needs to be reviewed in the context of population densities.

→ Passive open spaces are a core element to open space provision, offering space for a variety of activities including unstructured exercise, casual play or sports games, and social gatherings.

Key Findings (continued):

→ Each precinct has a different residential and open space context that has impacted on the location, type and amount of open space available to that precinct.

→ While the amount of open space varies across precincts, the analysis has sought to demonstrate that provision should reflect residential patterns, population numbers and other considerations such as state or national parks in close proximity.

→ Depending on their size, available amenities and other functions, passive open spaces can cater to a local, district or city (LGA) wide catchment. These classifications can assist in deciding on resource allocation, and prioritisation of upgrades or maintenance works.

5.5 Active Open Spaces

5.5.1 Active Open Space Supply Audit

There are 29 active reserves in the Shellharbour LGA, representing close to 200ha. All active open spaces in the LGA are categorised as either district or city-wide open space in the open space hierarchy (see Table 28). Importantly, some of these reserves also incorporate, or are adjacent to other passive open space reserves, and are used to support a wide range of sports and recreational activities.

It should be noted however that many courts and aquatic facilities in the LGA are provided within passive open spaces, rather than representing stand-alone spaces. For example both Warilla Swimming Pool and a full size basketball court are located in Shellharbour War Memorial Park.

Out of these assets, approximately 10% were installed between the 1990s and early 2000s, so are likely to need upgrades or replacement in the next 10 years, including hockey, tennis, netball, and basketball facilities. Some have been identified for upgrade by Council.

Through the community engagement process a range of feedback was received on active open spaces. The facility matrix provided in Table 31 (Section 6.1.1) provides a summary of the commentary on specific facilities.

Table 28: Active Open Space by Precinct

Precincts	Active reserves	
	#	Ha
Precinct 1 Warilla	10	37.7
Precinct 2 Shellharbour	5	28.2
Precinct 3 Blackbutt	1	3.5
Precinct 4 Oak Flats	3	15.6
Total East	19	85.0
Precinct 5 Albion Park Rail	2	13.0
Precinct 6 Rural East	1	56.0
Precinct 7 Albion Park	7	43.5
Precinct 8 Rural West	0	0
Precinct 9 Calderwood	0	0
Total West	10	112.5
Total	29	197.5

Source: Shellharbour City Council Asset GIS data

5.5.1.1 Key Regional Reserves

Croom Regional Sporting Complex

The Croom Regional Sporting Complex (Precinct 6) is currently referred to as a district park but warrants incorporation in the “city-wide” category. As previously mentioned, Roads and Maritime Services (RMS) is currently building an extension of the M1 Princes Motorway between Yallah and Oak Flats to bypass Albion Park Rail. The bypass traverses through the Sporting Complex and RMS have reconfigured sporting fields and associated buildings and amenities directly impacted by the bypass project. Croom Regional Sporting Complex includes an AFL/cricket oval and pitch, cricket practice nets, netball courts, junior rugby league fields, tennis courts, model car track, BMX track and synthetic hockey fields.

The Sporting Complex incorporates the existing Shellharbour City Stadium which has three multi-purpose courts used for junior and adult sports, including basketball, indoor football (soccer), netball, volleyball and badminton. The stadium is also available for hire and is used for a range of community events.

5.5.1.2 City-wide Active Reserves

Albion Park Showground

The Albion Park Showground (Precinct 7) hosts the annual Albion Park Show in January (2 day event). Outside this period, the two main ovals are used by various sporting codes and dog agility, while the indoor pavilion is used for gymnastics. There is also a Scout hall used by the local scouting club.

In 2014, the Council approved an Albion Park Showground Master Plan that identified a number of improvements to the site, this is gradually being implemented.

Terry Reserve

Terry Reserve is located adjacent to Croom Regional Sporting Complex (Precinct 6) (separated by Frasers Creek). The reserve contains 4 senior and 3 junior football (soccer) fields and an equestrian facility. The equestrian facility is used by clubs for training and competition purposes, and by members of the public and the local pony club who agist horses adjacent to Croom Road/East West Link. The bypass project included an underpass to provide access to the equestrian facilities for riders from agistment areas.

Myimbarr Community Park

The Myimbarr Community Park (Precinct 2) incorporates active recreation spaces and man-made wetlands, although these are not accessible to the public.

Three sportsfields were opened in 2009 and are used for sport including football, athletics, AFL, touch football and rugby league. In 2015, Shellharbour Junior Football Club moved from Barrack Heights as the club had outgrown the playing space, amenities and car parking space. The relocation occurred following Shellharbour Council approval for new lighting in 2016.

Croom Regional Sporting Complex

The Croom Regional Sporting Complex (Precinct 6) is currently referred to as a district park but warrants incorporation in the “city-wide” category. As previously mentioned, Roads and Maritime Services (RMS) is currently building an extension of the M1 Princes Motorway between Yallah and Oak Flats to bypass Albion Park Rail. The bypass traverses through the Sporting Complex and RMS have reconfigured sporting fields and associated buildings and amenities directly impacted by the bypass project. Croom Regional Sporting Complex includes an AFL/cricket oval and pitch, cricket practice nets, netball courts, junior rugby league fields, tennis courts, model car track, BMX track and synthetic hockey fields.

The Sporting Complex incorporates the existing Shellharbour City Stadium which has three multi-purpose courts used for junior and adult sports, including basketball, indoor football (soccer), netball, volleyball and badminton. The stadium is also available for hire and is used for a range of community events.

5.5.1.3 Play Spaces

There are just under 100 play spaces in Shellharbour LGA that are under the care of Council (including play spaces located within Council facilities such as family and day care centres).

In the 2018/19 Capital Works Program, Council spent \$700,000 to upgrade four play spaces to include rubber soft fall and inclusive elements. A total of \$1.2M has been allocated to playground renewals in the 2018-2021 Delivery Program). Consultations were undertaken late 2018, concept designs completed and construction is underway. Notably, these areas have been selected due to their highly accessible location and their need for upgrades:

- **Reddall Reserve** (Precinct 1)
- **Dawes Park** (Precinct 2)
- **Mood Park** (Precinct 7)
- **Frasers Reserve** (Precinct 7).

In addition, **Little Park** (Precinct 2) was recently upgraded to incorporate all-inclusive play equipment, while both Reddall Reserve and McDonald Park (Precincts 1 and 7 respectively) masterplans were adopted by Council in October 2019 and will incorporate all-inclusive play spaces designed with consideration towards the recently endorsed all-abilities play spaces were negotiated as part of the **Calderwood Urban Development Project** (Precinct 9), as part of the two-hectare 'City Park 2' and also at the **Waterfront** in Shell Cove (Precinct 2).

Shellharbour is also part of *Park and Play*- an activity of the Communities for Children Shellharbour initiative funded by the Australian Government. **Shellharbour Park and Play** provides a free, staffed, safe and enjoyable environment for children aged 0-5 years and their carers. Parks and outdoor play spaces (including public schools) are used on a rotating basis across the LGA, For example, the following parks have been used one day a week for two hours:

- Mood Park (Albion Park) (Precinct 7),
- Barrack Heights Public School (Barrack Heights) (Precinct 2)
- Central Park (Oak Flats) (Precinct 4)
- Warilla North Public School (Precinct 1).

5.5.1.4 Off-leash dog areas and agility parks

Shellharbour LGA has two dedicated dog agility areas, located in:

- Flinders (Precinct 3)
- Oak Flats (Precinct 4)

There are also 4 areas across the LGA that are available to exercise dogs off-leash including Albion Park Rail, Barrack Heights, Oak Flats, Shellharbour Village

- Areas of Croom Regional Sporting Complex, Croom Road, Albion Park Rail (excluding sportsfields and bushland) (Precinct 7)
- Southern end of Lake Entrance sports field, Messenger Street, Barrack Heights (Precinct 2)
- Vacant land at the southern end of Industrial Road and south western corner of Kingston and Moore Streets, Oak Flats (Precinct 4)
- Bass Point Tourist Road between The Shallows coastal reserve and the gravel loader, east-west to the high-water mark, Shellharbour (not including the beach area) (Precinct 2).

The success of Councils Dog agility parks and off leash areas instigated the preparation of a dog friendly spaces strategy adopted in September 2019, the purpose of the Strategy is to help guide the future provision of dog friendly spaces across the City.

Key Findings:

→ Active open spaces provide opportunities for sport and physical recreation, and as such take on a variety of forms, including sporting grounds and courts, play and outdoor exercise equipment, and other facilities that support leisure and sport pursuits.

→ Active open spaces are often provided alongside or within parks and reserves (for example, the tennis courts at Graham Park).

→ There is a growing need to ensure that active spaces offer an inclusive and accessible experience, while also being flexible and adaptable to different uses, where appropriate.

Key Findings (continued):

→ According to Council data, presently the Shellharbour LGA has:

- 29 active reserves, covering a total of 197.5 hectares
- A range of outdoor facilities comprising (among others):
 - 22 tennis courts
 - 29 netball courts
 - 21 cricket ovals
 - 20 rugby union / league fields
 - 19 full field football (soccer) fields
 - 5 AFL ovals
 - 4 aquatic facilities
 - 4 full basketball courts
 - 3 skate parks (and one more planned for Harrison Park in Warilla)
 - 2 athletic fields
 - 2 hockey pitches
 - 1 equestrian area
 - 1 BMX dirt track facility
- 1 sports stadium, with 3 indoor multi-sport courts

→ As at the end of 2019, Council committed to making a number of improvements to the following active facilities (some of which have already been completed):

- Cec Glenholmes
- Panorama Oval
- Geoff Shaw Oval
- Howard Fowles Sports Oval
- Morley Park

→ Council is also:

- Undertaking an upgrade to the Stadium
- Constructing new sportsfields at:
 - Calderwood
 - Shell Cove.

5.6 Environmental and Ancillary Reserves

5.6.1 Environmental Reserves

Environmental reserves are a broad category that encompass linear parks and corridors, wetlands (natural and human-made), riparian corridors, woodlands, bushland, drainage and stormwater management land. Environmental Reserves can be in Council or also private ownership. These reserves can play a number of different roles within a community including:

- Supporting environmental protection and conservation by providing a habitat for local fauna and flora. Some of these areas have been or are currently undergoing bush regeneration works.
- Drainage and stormwater management
- Creating connections between places
- Providing natural breathing spaces and green canopy

- Providing recreational opportunities with some of these areas providing picnic facilities, barbeques, playgrounds and toilet amenities, all the while remaining a natural environmental with lower levels of Council maintenance.

Within Shellharbour, environmental reserves include:

- **Bass Point Reserve** (Precinct 1) (total of 89 hectares), which is managed by Council.
- The eastern portion of the **Croom Regional Sporting Complex** (Precinct 6) (approximately 31 hectares)
- **Blackbutt Reserve** (Precinct 3) is centrally located in Shellharbour LGA, in which a significant portion of remnant coast plain forest is located
- Portion of the ocean and **Lake Illawarra** foreshores (Precincts 1, 2 4 and 5) and islands
- **Macquarie Pass National Park** is located in the eastern portion of the LGA (Precinct 8) and covers a total of 1,064 hectares. The northern tip of the Budderoo National Park is also within the LGA.

These parks contain a diverse range of habitats and wildlife including rainforest areas and rare and threatened flora and fauna species. These areas contain basic facilities to support recreational facilities such as bushwalking.

- **Killalea State Park** is located in the south-east portion of the LGA (Precinct 1), adjacent Shell Cove and Kiama LGA, in close proximity to urban areas of Shellharbour.

The Park is managed by NSW Crown Holiday Parks Trust and covers a total of 250 hectares. It provides a range of recreational opportunities, including bushwalking, fishing and access to surf beaches.

In 2009, Killalea was named a National Surfing Reserve which recognises not only the quality of the waves, but also the environmental value of the area.

The Killalea State Park also provides camping grounds, including unpowered sites and a large dormitory. It also hosts events such as Sculptures at Killalea and The Farmers Market.

While these reserves are not generally counted towards the provision of open space, they may provide a range of passive recreation opportunities, including walking, running, bush walking/trail, and mountain biking. They also create a potential walking and cycling network which could be further expanded, promoted, and protected.

Lake Illawarra, for example, is bounded by a number of environmental reserves which are highly valued and used by the local community, particularly for recreation such as fishing, sailboarding, boating, swimming, kayaking, and picnics, cycling and walking along the foreshores. The **Lake Illawarra Coastal Management Program** considers options to better maintain and improve of recreational uses along the foreshore. This includes:

- The provision of additional facilities – such as BBQs, picnic shelters, drinking water stations, toilets, outdoor exercise equipment, fish cleaning stations, lighting, dog bags, BMX / skate parks etc.
- Negotiating a public 'right of way' along the foreshore, as opportunities present themselves, with much of this already achieved by Shellharbour Council.

5.6.2 Ancillary Reserves

Ancillary reserves are small public open space areas which are unlikely to provide recreational opportunities, unless they are in a form of a linear corridor which may create walking or cycling connectivity between parks, the foreshore, centres, homes and jobs. While these reserves are not generally counted towards the provision of open space, their role in creating a walking/cycling network should not be underestimated.

They may also contribute to drainage and stormwater management, landscaping and urban design strategies, interface management between land uses, as well as generally to a greener environment and canopy cover.

See Attachment 3 for mapping details.

Key Findings:

→ Environmental and ancillary reserves play an important role in open space provision, however often fall outside provision calculations. As such, it is important to take these spaces into consideration in any review or study of open space provision, with particular regard to their hierarchy and type.

→ Environmental and ancillary reserves play an important role in the LGA, and may either provide passive recreation opportunities, contribute to a greener Council area, and create connections between spaces that are key to a more walkable and cycleable LGA.

→ These reserves can also act as useful connectors or links to or between other open spaces, so it is therefore important to give strategic consideration to their potential future use.

5.7 Open Space Management

All Council sportsfields are subject to the Shellharbour City Council Sportsfields User Policy with the exception of a small number of tracks, fields and courts which are subject to lease or license agreements.

The Policy seeks to ensure the efficient, equitable, accessible provision and allocation of sports and recreational activities by residents and minimize potential over-use. Sporting clubs are allocated home grounds, but the Policy states that sharing of facilities may be required, should there be sufficient demand.

Council also allocates grounds upon request to school groups, residents and community groups in consultation with the clubs. There is also growing demand from the private fitness training industry to utilise Council's open spaces, with a Policy in place to manage the allocation of fitness activities in a total of 16 public reserves across the Council area⁷⁸.

All sporting fields are also allocated a wet weather category. Category 1 fields are not to be utilised if closed by Council during wet weather. For Categories 2 & 3, sporting clubs have the opportunity to pay a wet weather bond and pay restoration works should there be damage.

5.8 Key Sports Facilities in Adjacent Local Government Areas

WIN Stadium: Formerly known as the Wollongong Showground, the WIN Stadium is now designed as a multi-purpose facility with the ability to host a variety of sporting or special events. With the addition of the new Western Grandstand, the venue now has a total capacity of approximately 23,000. The Stadium is mainly used for football (soccer), rugby league and rugby union. It is home to the St George Illawarra team (NRL). The facility is within a 25-minute drive from the centre of Shellharbour.

WIN Entertainment Centre: WIN Entertainment Centre in Wollongong is a multi-purpose indoor arena that is used for a variety of entertainment and sport purposes including basketball, and concerts. It is located approximately 30mins drive north of Shellharbour.

Wollongong University: Has a synthetic hockey field, cricket oval and also an indoor sports centre (cricket, hockey, netball, training running track), multi-purpose hall, squash courts and a 50m heated outdoor pool (competition standard) and tennis courts. The university is approximately 25mins drive from Shellharbour.

Illawarra Sports Stadium: The Illawarra Sports Stadium is a not-for-profit organisation established in 1992. The Stadium is home to the Illawarra District Netball Association (IDNA) which has a membership in excess of 3,500 members. Basketball has been a major user of the centre for the past twenty years, with 90 teams competing on a weekly basis. Recently Basketball has been relocated to the Snakepit in Wollongong by the Illawarra Basketball Association. The Uni Basketball League (UBL) now operates 2 days per week at the Stadium. The facility is within a 13-minute drive from Albion Park and 20 minutes from Shellharbour.

Beaton Park Leisure Centre: Located approximately 30minutes north of Shellharbour, Beaton Park leisure centre offers a 25m indoor swimming pool and swimming classes as well as gym facilities and group exercise options.

⁷⁸ Shellharbour City Council, *Use of Public Reserves by Commercial Fitness Groups & Personal Trainers*, Shellharbour City Council Policy Number POL-0069-v03.

Illawarra Hockey Stadium, Unanderra: The hockey stadium is located approximately 20mins north of Shellharbour and provides the region with a multi-sport facility, including an indoor hockey court and two turf courts. All courts are available for use for compatible sports, such as volleyball, and also provides space for community events.

Ian McLennan Sportsfields: To the north of Shellharbour, the complex is home to the South Coast United Football Club (Soccer). It also includes the first international standard synthetic sports field on South Coast, which opened in 2019.

Albert Butler Oval: The oval was recently redeveloped to accommodate a total of 3 full size sporting fields. It is home to the Wollongong Wolves Football Club (soccer). The redevelopment was also aimed at providing for a wide range of sporting organisations and community groups with the ambition to become a major sporting hub for the wider Illawarra community. The facility is within a 22-minute drive from the centre of Shellharbour.

Leisure Centre and Sports Complex: The Kiama Leisure Centre and Sports Complex offers a variety of sport and fitness facilities. For aquatic facilities, it includes a heated lap pool and children pool as well as a spa, swimming lessons and aqua-aerobics. Other facilities include a gym with free and pin-loaded weights, cardio equipment, a stretching area and a variety of fitness classes. There are also indoor courts for netball, basketball, hockey, volleyball, football (soccer), and badminton, and a gymnastics area.

The facility is within a 15-minute drive from the centre of Shellharbour.

5.9 Community feedback on Open Space

Through the process of community engagement for this needs study, feedback highlighted a number of themes around open space use, as detailed below. This information was gathered through phone and online surveys, as well as feedback from a community workshop (see Appendices B and C for further details).

- Open spaces usage varies across the type of open space, frequency and the residential location of the respondent. Key findings included:
 - A quarter of residents from Warilla, Shellharbour and Oak Flats (Precincts 1, 2 and 4) use the ocean/coastline on a daily basis;
 - Over a quarter of residents from Oak Flats (Precinct 4) use the lake/foreshore on a daily basis; and
 - Approximately a quarter of residents from Shellharbour and Blackbutt (Precinct 2 and 3) use their local park on a daily basis.
 - Almost a third of all respondents across all precincts indicated that they used their local park
 - Over a third of all respondents across all precincts indicated that they used the ocean/coastline on a weekly basis
 - Off-leash dog area use was particularly high in Shellharbour and Albion Park Rail (Precincts 2 and 5), with almost a quarter from each using dog parks on a weekly basis. In most precincts, however, most respondents do not use these facilities.
- In terms of **travel** most residents use private vehicles to access most open spaces and facilities in the LGA. Additionally:
 - The majority of all respondents across all precincts walk to their local park.
 - The majority of Shellharbour (Precinct 2) residents walk to local parks, the ocean and coastline, and playgrounds.
 - Residents from Albion Park Rail, Albion Park, Rural East, Calderwood and Rural West (Precincts 5-9) are most likely to drive to open space areas and recreational activities, which is understandable given their reduced proximity to facilities and spaces.
 - A majority of residents across the LGA also travel outside the LGA for sport or recreation, particularly in for respondents from Shellharbour and Blackbutt (Precincts 2 and 3).
 - Respondents from Oak Flats and western suburbs (Precincts 4 and 6-9) are less likely to travel outside the LGA.
 - Out of those who travel outside the LGA, a majority would travel between 11 and 30 minutes. About 30% would travel more than 41 minutes.

- Most residents are likely to walk to a playground, except in Precinct 1 Warilla where people are more likely to drive. Residents from Precincts Warilla, Shellharbour and Oak Flats (1, 2, and 4) also tend to walk to the ocean/coastline or lake/foreshore.
- Generally, the response data shows a trends of high levels of satisfaction with open space and recreation facilities all respondents across all precincts. More specifically:
 - The facilities with the highest rates of satisfaction included parks, sportsfields and playgrounds. These facilities were especially enjoyed by respondents from Shellharbour (Precinct 2). Contrastingly, playgrounds were also the facility with the highest dissatisfaction ratings (particularly in the western suburbs, or Precincts 5-9).
 - Indoor sport facilities received a particularly high satisfaction rating from respondents from Blackbutt and western suburbs (Precincts 3 and 6-9).
 - Dissatisfaction was notably higher in Precinct 5 (Albion Park Rail) in relation to the current provision of off leash dog areas (22%) and playgrounds (28%).
- As documented in Table 29: Top three respondent issues by Precinct, when respondents were asked to nominate their **top three open space issues**, playgrounds were the top issue in all precincts except for those from Shellharbour (Precinct 2). Other most commonly ranked issues were:
 - Parks
 - Off-leash dog parks
 - Sportsfields
 - Indoor sports facilities

Table 29: Top three respondent issues by Precinct

Precinct 1 (Warilla)	Precinct 2 (Shellharbour)	Precinct 3 (Blackbutt)
Top 3 issues		
1. Playgrounds 2. Off leash areas 3. Parks	1. Parks 2. Off leash areas 3. Playgrounds	1. Playgrounds 2. Parks 3. Sportsfields
Precinct 4 (Oak Flats)	Precinct 5 (Albion Park Rail)	Precincts 6-9 (Rural East, Albion Park, Rural West Calderwood)
1. Playgrounds 2. Parks 3. Indoor sport facilities	1. Playgrounds 2. Off leash areas 3. Parks	1. Playgrounds 2. Parks 3. Sportsfields

Source: Shellharbour City Council OSRN community engagement outcomes

- Respondents across the LGA expressed concerned with **maintenance in parks and sportsfields**. There was also some concern raised with vandalism and anti-social behaviour, leading to a perception of degraded facilities and safety issues. In addition, the community is concerned with **ageing facilities** and/or facilities in need of upgrades.
- On average about a quarter of respondents reported taking part in **organised or social sport**:
 - Residents from Warilla and Shellharbour (Precincts 1 and 2) are more likely to go to a park to socialise on a weekly basis. This could be because there is a shortage of good places to socialise in other precincts
 - Residents of Precincts 6-9 (Albion Park, Rural East, Rural West, and Calderwood) are more likely to take part in organised sport than other precincts.
 - Residents from Blackbutt, Oak Flats and Albion Park Rail (Precinct 3, 4 and 5) are more likely to walk their dog on a daily basis.

Key Findings:

→ The Shellharbour has access to a wide variety of open space and recreational facilities both within their LGA, and in neighbouring LGAs.

→ Open spaces across the LGA are used by different people for different purposes, highlighting the importance of providing a mix of open space options to cater to varying community requirements.

→ Local parks are valued as open spaces that offer close, walkable areas for recreational purposes such as playing, relaxing and exercising.

→ Travel outside the LGA for sport and recreation is common, and is often a requirement for participation in competitive sport, however this does not negate the need for quality open space and recreational facility provision in Shellharbour. This is particularly the case given the high amount (25%) of Shellharbour residents who take part in organised or social sport.

→ The community demonstrated a generally high level of satisfaction with open space and facility provision, although some spaces (such as playgrounds) had a more divided opinion amongst respondents. Levels of satisfaction also reflected local geographies, with some precincts demonstrating a higher level of satisfaction than others.

→ Broadly, the top 4 open spaces that the community had concerns around were: parks, off-leash dog parks, sportsfields and indoor facilities. These concerns included maintenance, safety and the age of facilities.

5.10 Open Space Summary

A summary of the open space audit is provided in Table 30 below:

Table 30: Summary of Open Space by precinct

Precinct	Passive open space		Active open space		Other key open spaces of note	Planned future open space
	Number	Hectares	Number	Hectares		
<u>East</u>						
Precinct 1 Warilla	48	53.5	10	37.6	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Environmental reserves along foreshore• Lake/ocean foreshore• Little Lake• Outdoor exercise equipment (Reddall Reserve, Strong Reserve)• Warilla pool	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reddall Reserve Master plan to be implemented.

Precinct	Passive open space		Active open space		Other key open spaces of note	Planned future open space
	Number	Hectares	Number	Hectares		
Precinct 2 Shellharbour	42	39.7	5	28.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental reserves along coastline and • Myimbarr Community Park wetlands (although there is no public access) • Outdoor exercise equipment (Barrack reserve and Eric Creary Park) • Bass Point Reserve • Killalea State Park • Beverley Whitfield Ocean pool and exercise equipment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sporting fields at Shell Cove
Precinct 3 Blackbutt	36	126.7	1	3.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Off-leash dog area/ dog agility park (Whittaker St) • Blackbutt Forest 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth recreational facility at Harrison Park • Sporting fields Benson Basin
Precinct 4 Oak Flats	16	18.8	4	15.9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oak Flats swimming pool • Outdoor exercise equipment (Skiway Park) • Lake foreshore 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ski Way Park and Central Park play spaces being redeveloped
<u>West</u>						
Precinct 5 Albion Park Rail	16	10.0	2	13.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skate Park (Albion Oval) • Outdoor exercise equipment (McDonald Park and Wilson Memorial Park) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • McDonald Park and play space master plan to be implemented
Precinct 6 Rural East	n/a	0	Croom Regional Sporting Complex	56.0		

Precinct	Passive open space		Active open space		Other key open spaces of note	Planned future open space
	Number	Hectares	Number	Hectares		
Precinct 7 Albion Park	32	22.4	7	43.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Albion Park Pool Outdoor exercise equipment (Frasers Reserve) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Albion Park Showground master plan being implemented
Precinct 8 Rural West	n/a	0	n/a	0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Macquarie Pass National Park and State Conservation Area 	
Precinct 9 Calderwood	4	4.2	n/a	0		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Calderwood Urban Development Project Concept Approval and Voluntary Planning Agreement

Key Findings:

→ In terms of open space available across the Shellharbour LGA, the natural environment plays a significant role, including through residents having access to the Macquarie Pass National Park in the west, the Killalea State Park in the south, the coastline and ocean available in the east plus access to Lake Illawarra in the north. Each of these areas of natural open space provide Shellharbour with a wide range of opportunities for both passive and active recreation.

→ Shellharbour is also home to a significant number of sport facilities including multiple sports grounds for sports such as cricket, AFL, football (soccer), rugby league and union, hockey and athletics, courts for tennis, netball and basketball, as well as an equestrian facility, a BMX track, a skate park, Olympic swimming pools and outdoor exercise equipment. In adjacent LGA, a short travel from Shellharbour, residents can also access indoor aquatic facilities and major recreation facilities.

→ Environmental and ancillary reserves play an important role in the LGA, and may either provide passive recreation opportunities, contribute to a greener Council area, and create connections between spaces that are key to a more walkable and cyclable LGA.

→ The management of active and passive open spaces varies according to ownership or licencing agreement, however Council has a key role in overseeing the use of these spaces. This includes identifying and implementing maintenance works, funding upgrades or decommissioning spaces. They also have a role to play in liaison and advocacy with district state and federal bodies.

→ Engagement with the community demonstrated that there is a mix of community opinions around the provision of open spaces and sport/recreational facilities.

Note: Details and analysis of aquatics facilities is provided at Section 7 of this study.

* * * *

6 Recreation Participation, Demand and Stakeholder Views

This section focuses on both organised sport and non-structured recreation activities in Shellharbour. It also reviews NSW trends in sport and recreation participation and compares this to participation rates in Shellharbour, as understood through community engagement results.

In order to better understand the value of open spaces, and other sports and recreation facilities in the Shellharbour LGA it is essential to know a little more about clubs and the individuals that use them. The local community's involvement in sport and recreation activities is heavily driven by the facilities and amenities available, therefore understanding the relationship between facilities and users, is a key consideration for this Needs Study.

Although privately run facilities are outside the scope of this study, for completeness all sport clubs, and active recreation and leisure pursuits available in Shellharbour LGA are included in this section.

6.1 Recreation Facilities

6.1.1 Recreation facilities in Shellharbour

Shellharbour LGA is home to over 50 sporting and recreation clubs, catering to a wide range of interests which use the various facilities and spaces available in the LGA. Notably, these include clubs for popular sporting activities such as athletics, cricket, football codes (AFL, rugby league, rugby union, football, Oztag), gymnastics, netball and tennis. In addition to these established sports, the LGA is also home to a wide variety of smaller or special interest sport and recreation clubs including equestrian, air rifle, triathlon, skateboarding, and BMX.

Importantly, while a large portion of these clubs make use of public facilities (particularly those who require large ovals), there are many who make use of private facilities and largely operate outside the scope of council's remit.

Included at Table 31 is a list of sports and recreation facilities in the LGA.

Table 31: Shellharbour LGA facilities

Facility	Location and Precinct	Used for:	# Fields/ Courts	Comments on Use
Albion Oval	Albion Park Rail (P5)	Touch Football	7	Competition (Summer & winter) Competition & Training (Summer)
		Football (Soccer)	1	Competition & Training (Winter) Preseason
		Cricket	2 Synthetic centre wickets	Competition & Training (Summer)
		Skateboarding	1 Skate Park	All year
Albion Park Pavilion	Albion Park (P7)	Gymnastics	NA	All year
Andrew Park	Mount Warrigal (P3)	Netball	Grass surface 3 Hard surface courts 3	No bookings
Barrack Heights Sportsfield	Barrack Heights (P2)	Football	3	Competition & Training (Winter) Preseason Training (Summer)
Ben Fretus Field	Shellharbour (P2)	Rugby League	1 Junior	Competition & Training (Winter) Preseason Training (Summer)

Facility	Location and Precinct	Used for:	# Fields/ Courts	Comments on Use
Croom Radio Control Cars	Croom Regional Sporting Complex (P6)	Radio Control Cars		All year
Cec Glenholmes Oval	Lake Illawarra (P1)	Rugby League	2 Senior 1 Junior	Competition & Training (Winter) Preseason Training (Summer)
Centenary Field	Croom Regional Sporting Complex (P6)	Rugby League	1	Competition & Training (Winter) Preseason Training (Summer)
Centenary Training Fields	Croom Regional Sporting Complex (P6)	Rugby League	3 1 mod field	Competition & Training (Winter) Preseason Training (Summer)
Con O'Keefe	Albion Park (P7)	AFL Cricket	Synthetic centre wicket	Pre-season Training (summer) (past) Competition & Training (Summer)
Croom BMX Track	Croom Regional Sporting Complex (P6)	BMX		All year
Croom Netball Courts	Croom Regional Sporting Complex (P6)	Netball	6 Hard surface courts 6 Grass surface courts	Training (Winter)
Croom Tennis Courts	Croom Regional Sporting Complex (P6)	Tennis	4 Courts	All year
Dawes Park	Barrack Point	Cricket Rugby League	1 Concrete centre wicket 1	Competition & Training (Summer) Pre-Season Training (Summer)
Des King Oval	Albion Park Showground, Albion Park (P7)	Cricket	Synthetic centre wicket	Competition & Training (Summer) Preseason Training (Winter)
		Rugby League		Competition & Training (Winter) Preseason
		Rugby Union		Training (Summer)
		Dog Agility/Training		All year
Albion Park Tennis Courts	Albion Park Showground (P7)	Tennis	3 – Concrete surface	All year
Keith Grey Oval	Albion Park Showground, Albion Park (P7)	Cricket AFL (2019)	Turf centre wicket	Competition & Training (Summer) Preseason Training (Winter)
Di Gorman Oval	Albion Park (P7)	Football (Soccer)	1	
Flinders Reserve	Flinders (P3)	Touch Football	7	Competition (Summer)
		Oztag	7	Competition (Summer)
		Rugby League	3	Competition & Training (Winter) Preseason Training (Summer)
Freeman Park	Mount Warrigal (P1)	Cricket	Concrete centre wicket	
		Football		
Geoff Shaw – (Forms part of Keith Bond)	Oak Flats (P4)	Cricket	Synthetic centre wicket 2 available	Competition & Training (Summer) Preseason Training (Winter)

Facility	Location and Precinct	Used for:	# Fields/ Courts	Comments on Use
		Football		Competition & Training (Winter) Preseason Training (Summer)
Howard Fowles Oval	Lake Illawarra (P1)	Cricket	1 Concrete centre wicket 1 Turf centre wicket	Competition & Training (Summer) Preseason Training (Winter)
Jock Brown Oval	Barrack Heights (P2)	Cricket	1 Synthetic centre wicket	Competition (Summer) Past – Competition
		AFL	1	(Winter) Light quality constrains training of an evening
John O'Dwyer	Croom Regional Sporting Complex (P6)	Athletics		Competition & Training (Summer) Training (Winter)
Keith Bond Oval	Oak Flats (P4)	Football (Soccer)	1	Competition & Training (Winter) Preseason Training (Summer)
Keith Hockey Oval	Shellharbour (P2)	Rugby League	1	Competition & Training (Winter) Preseason Training (Summer)
		Cricket	1 - Synthetic centre wicket	Competition & Training (Summer) Preseason Training (Winter)
King Memorial Oval	Barrack Heights (P2)	Cricket	Synthetic centre wicket	Competition (Summer)
		Dog Agility/ Training		All year
		Rugby League		Training (Winter)
King Mickey Park	Warilla (P1)	Football (Soccer)	1	Competition & Training (Winter) Preseason Training (Summer)
Mary Marley Hockey Centre	Croom Regional Sporting Complex (P6)	Hockey	1 Artificial turf	
McDonald Park	Albion Park Rail (P6)	Outdoor fitness		All year
		Netball	9 turf courts 3 Concrete surface	Training (Winter)
		Tennis	4 Synthetic Grass	All Year
Morley Park	Warilla (P4)	Football (Soccer)	2 Fields 3 Junior	Competition & Training (Winter) Preseason Training (Summer)
		Cricket	2 Synthetic centre wickets	Competition (Summer)
Myimbarr Community Park	Flinders (P3) (Includes 3 separate sports grounds, and 16 separate sportsfields)	Football (2 SG)	3.	Competition & Training (Winter) Preseason Competition (Summer)
		Cricket (2 SG)	2	Training & Competition (Summer)
		AFL (1 SG)	1	Competition & Training (Winter) Preseason Training (Summer)
		Oztag (All)	10	Competition & Training (Summer)

Facility	Location and Precinct	Used for:	# Fields/ Courts	Comments on Use
Oak Flats Tennis Courts	Oak Flats (P4)	Tennis	4 Artificial turf surface	All year
Oakleigh Park	Warilla (P1)	Cricket	1 Turf Centre Wicket	Competition & Training (Summer) Preseason Training (Winter)
		Rugby League	1	Competition & Training (Winter) Preseason Training (Summer)
Panorama Oval	Oak Flats (P4)	Football (Soccer)	2 Senior 3 Junior	Competition & Training (Winter) Preseason Training (Summer)
		Cricket	1 Synthetic centre wicket	Competition & Training (Summer) Preseason Training (Winter)
Pioneer Park	Shellharbour (P2)	Rugby League Cricket Skateboarding	2 Junior 1 Concrete centre wicket 1 Skate park	Training only Competition & Training (Summer)
Ron Costello	Shellharbour (P2)	Rugby League	1	Competition & Training (Winter) Preseason Training (Summer)
Scout Willoughby Oval	Shellharbour (P2)	Cricket	1 Turf centre wicket	Competition & Training (Summer) Preseason Training (Winter)
		Rugby League	2 Junior	Training (Winter)
Shellharbour Skate Park	Shellharbour (P2)			All year
Shellharbour City Stadium	Croom (P6)	Volleyball Wheelchair basketball Netball		Indoor facility
Terry Reserve	Albion Park (P7)	Football (Soccer)	4 Senior 3 Junior	Competition & Training (Winter) Preseason Training (Summer)
		Equestrian	1	All year
Graham Park	Lake Illawarra (P1)	Tennis	2 Concrete surface	All year
The Links Golf Course	Shell Cove (P2)	Golf	18 holes	18 hole course

Information provided by Shellharbour Council Property team on 22 November 2019.

It is worthwhile mentioning that there are some sporting codes that have clubs based in Shellharbour, however do not have any facilities in the LGA (such as baseball). In addition, the Shellharbour community has access to a wide variety of privately run facilities that cater to various sporting and recreational needs, which are often supported through appropriate leasing and licencing arrangements through Council. Such private facilities include (but are not limited to):

- Martial arts
- Dancing
- Fitness and personal training
- Yoga, tai chi and meditation

Furthermore, Shellharbour Council provides a significant network of free and publically available tracks for walking and cycling (including bushwalking tracks). Cycling tracks in the LGA include shared use paths, low traffic volume routes, on-road routes and lanes on high speed routes, including routes such as:

- Around the southern edge of Lake Illawarra, and along the ocean foreshore
- Around the edges of the all eastern suburb boundaries

- Along the Princes Highway
- Connecting all train stations in Shellharbour
- Through Calderwood, Albion Park and Croom Regional Sporting Complex

Additionally, Council encourages local residents to enjoy local open spaces through the provision of space for features such as the community gardens currently open in Shell Cove and Albion Park.

The importance of the ongoing maintenance and updated provision of these spaces was a key point raised during community engagement processes.

Key Findings:

→ Shellharbour is well provisioned in terms of spaces for active recreational and sporting pursuits, including a suite of sportsfields, areas for specialised activities such as BMX tracks, in addition to ample space for local walking and cycling tracks that are free and accessible for the whole community.

→ A number of sporting codes make efficient use of facilities by sharing the space across different training and game times, and across seasons. Such an approach is considered to be an effective approach for catering to ongoing demand for open space facilities into the future.

→ There is an ongoing demand for the provision of quality recreation spaces for the community, including community gardens.

→ The new development in Shell Cove provides a good opportunity to extend the walking and cycling shared path further south past Shellharbour.

→ There is scope to extend the shared walking paths around all of Lake Illawarra to create a Lake Illawarra coastal walk.

6.2 Recreation Participation, Demand and Stakeholder Views

This section analyses existing and future demands for sport and active open space facilities, utilising a review of publicly available data, data provided by Council and findings from engagement.

6.2.1 NSW Sport Participation Trends

Sports Australia collects information on sport and activity participation rates across Australia and within each state and territory. On 31 October 2019, an updated AusPlay report was released, showing participation data collected during 2018/19. For all states and territories, data tables only include the top 15 activities for adults and top 20 for children, meaning that data is not available all activities⁷⁹.

Children are defined as people aged 0-14 years, with adults aged 15 and over. Participation for children is limited to outside of school hours organised physical activity. For adults, data includes overall participation in both organised and non-organised activities.

In summary, the 2019 AusPlay report ⁸⁰ shows that in NSW, the top 10 sports for adults (15+) participated in were:

1. Walking (43%)
2. Fitness/gym (35%)
3. Swimming (17%)
4. Jogging, running and athletics (15%)
5. Cycling (10%)
6. Football (soccer) (7%)

⁷⁹ Sport Australia 2019, *AusPlay survey results July 2018 – June 2019*.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

7. Bushwalking (6%)
8. Yoga (5%)
9. Tennis (5%)
10. Golf (5%)
11. Surfing (3%)
12. Pilates (3%)
13. Netball (2.7%)
14. Basketball (2.6%)
15. Touch football (2.2%)

For children (0-14 years), the top 10 activities were:

1. Swimming (36%)
2. Football (soccer) (21%)
3. Dancing (recreational) (10%)
4. Gymnastics (9%)
5. Netball (7%)
6. Jogging, running and athletics (6%)
7. Tennis (5%)
8. Cricket (5%)
9. Basketball (5%)
10. AFL (4%)

By comparing 2009⁸¹ and 2019 NSW adult participation rates, the data shows that that participation rates have:

- Significantly grown in athletics and swimming, use of gym facilities and yoga
- Stayed relatively stable in cricket (with a small decrease) and football (soccer) (with a small increase)
- Basketball, netball and rugby league have all disappeared from the top 15 adult organised activities.

While no comparison can be made between 2009 and 2019 for children's activities⁸², a comparison with the 2017-18 AusPlay report shows that there has been:

- An increase in swimming, athletics, and slight increase in cricket and basketball participation
- A decrease in tennis, netball and Australian football, dancing and gymnastics participation.

Youth participation in sport and active recreation has recently been encouraged by the NSW Office of Sport with the introduction of *Active Kids vouchers*. The vouchers provide parents and carers of school-enrolled children (aged 4.5 to 18) with two \$100 vouchers per child to use towards sport and recreation costs.

In addition, the NSW Office of Sport indicated that⁸³:

- Football (soccer) has grown in the last 10 years
- AFL and Rugby League participation is growing due to changes to rules and regulations (league tag for example) and growing female participation
- Cricket have made a big push to increase female participation which is starting to see results in the Illawarra, particularly from younger age groups

⁸¹ Australian Sports Commission 2010, *Participation in Exercise, Recreation and Sport Survey (ERASS) Annual Report 2009* – note this survey is no longer available and has been replaced with the AusPlay survey. The ERASS survey also did not include persons aged under 15 years. Due to differences in survey design and results, this comparison is high level and indicative only.

⁸² The ERASS survey did not include children aged under 15 years.

⁸³ Through an interview undertaken as part of this study.

Key Findings:

→ An audit of sports clubs and defined recreational activities reveal that Shellharbour LGA is home to a wide variety of clubs, most of which use local facilities.

→ There are a number of sports clubs which make use of facilities outside the LGA, mostly as a result of competition rotations. Similarly, some 'external' clubs make use of Shellharbour facilities.

Recreational activities are supported by a range of public and private facilities across the LGA

→ State and national participation trends, and feedback from local clubs, suggest more focus on female participation may be required, particularly in sports traditionally played exclusively by boys and men. This may require further provision of female change rooms and amenities.

→ There appears to be a widespread challenge in getting young people to transition from junior to senior sports participation for both male and females.

→ While traditionally older residents have erred to more passive activities and to recreation and leisure in the natural areas, parks and reserves (as opposed to active activities using sporting facilities and venues),

6.3 Shellharbour Active Recreation Trends and Stakeholder Views

This section paints a detailed picture of local participation trends in sport and recreation activities, using a range of data sources including 2018/19 AusPlay survey results, together with phone, community and club surveys undertaken as part of the research for this report. This section provides quantitative data on participation trends, as well as stakeholders' views and perspectives on future priorities provided through the other community engagement method (see Appendix B and C for details).

6.3.1 2018/19 AusPlay Data

In Shellharbour, the 2018/2019 AusPlay data shows that the top 6 activities across all ages and genders⁸⁴ were⁸⁵:

1. Walking (recreational) (36%)
2. Fitness/gym (25%)
3. Jogging, running and athletics (16%)
4. Swimming (15%)
5. Bushwalking (11%)
6. Cycling (11%)

6.3.2 Sports Specific Trends

The following section outlines trends for specific sports and recreation activities. This information includes AusPlay 2019 data, outcomes from the Shellharbour Club Survey (see participation trend tables for select sports at Appendix F, noting that not all clubs responded to the survey so data may not reflect actual participation numbers or trends), as well as findings from the phone and online survey.

6.3.2.1 AFL

Nationally, AFL is amongst the most popular sports (particularly for males), however NSW has one of the lowest rates of participation. Despite this, there is data to show an increasing interest in AFL since 2010, which is reflected in the Shellharbour LGA.

There is also a general trend in NSW towards increased female participation. For example, in 2019 in the local Swans Junior AFL female participants made up approximately one third of all players.

In 2019, there were 281 club members recorded at just two of the three local AFL clubs. This increase since 2010 is mostly driven by junior participation at Shellharbour Swans Junior AFL. Both clubs have grown in

⁸⁴ For those respondents who provided a valid postcode.

⁸⁵ Sport Australia 2019, *AusPlay survey results July 2018 – June 2019*.

membership in the last few years, including junior female participation. Growth is expected in both clubs, including for female participation.

Until 14 years of age, boys and girls play together, although there are also dedicated girl teams. A majority of the growth in recent years is due to growing female participation, similar to other football codes. This is a result of strategic work, but also a growing profile of the AFL competition. Approximately 42% of participants are female.

It is expected that participation from both genders will continue to grow. There are no official targets, but it is an objective to continue to grow year on year.

Using the three responses from the 2019 club survey, there is a reasonable level of satisfaction with the ovals at Myimbarr Community Park. Respondents were less satisfied with Jock Brown Oval, particularly with the type and condition of amenities, maintenance and lighting.

As for most competitive sports, both the phone and website community surveys demonstrated that sports players travel within the Illawarra region for the sport, either for scheduled games outside Shellharbour LGA, or involvement in an external team.

6.3.2.2 Athletics

In NSW, junior participation in athletics sits at around 36,000 people across 185 centres⁸⁶. For adults, athletics also encompasses running, capturing both organised competitive runners as well as recreational runners⁸⁷. In NSW, adult athletic participation was around 15%, with a relatively equal mix of males and females and across ages.

In 2018, between 444 and 526 persons were members of the two athletics clubs that exist in the LGA. Current participation is mostly junior, and is relatively gender-balanced. Growth is anticipated in the next 10 years, mostly driven by junior (both male and female) participation with a small target of 50 senior members in one of the clubs.

A separate interview was undertaken with the Illawarra Athletics association. It was stated that participation was steady, and gender balanced. The senior members are registered former Little Athletics children who train and compete on the same night as children.

6.3.2.3 Baseball

Although there is limited information on baseball participation rates in NSW, the Baseball NSW 2018 annual report indicates that there was a particularly strong resurgence of baseball participation in country NSW areas⁸⁸.

One baseball club operates in the LGA and provided membership details, however they play outside the LGA. Participation has oscillated in the last ten years. While it peaked in 2015-16, overall 2019 participation is the same as 2010 participation. Participation is mainly senior and male, with some growth anticipated in senior male participation over the next 10 years.

6.3.2.4 Basketball (including Wheelchair Basketball)

While not one of the top 15 sports in NSW, there are over 60,000 registered members and 136,000 participants across NSW, supported by a total of 82 associations across the state.

While there is no basketball association in Shellharbour, the Illawarra Wheelchair Basketball team is run out of Shellharbour City Stadium.

No interviews were undertaken with local or district basketball groups, however throughout engagement, frequent comments were made by respondents regarding the lack of basketball facilities in Shellharbour. There was also a number of respondents who indicated that they had to travel outside the LGA to play basketball.

Additionally, comments were received from the Wheelchair Basketball co-ordinator, who specifically raised concerns around the lack of availability and high cost of securing court time, particularly with consideration to the lack of alternative facilities and overall limited availability of accessible and inclusive recreational facilities in Shellharbour.

A notice of motion was submitted to Council in May 2019 in relation to outdoor basketball facilities and increasing demand for outdoor facilities, requesting an officer report to investigate the possibility of providing

⁸⁶ Little Athletics NSW, 2017/18 Annual Report.

⁸⁷ Sport Australia 2019, *Running/Athletics – State of Play Report*.

⁸⁸ Baseball NSW, 2018 Annual Report, available at:

https://www.baseballnsw.com.au/uploads/1/2/1/6/121695030/annual_report_final_v2.pdf

⁸⁹ Notice of Motion submitted by Cr Peter Moran: Outdoor basketball facilities (11211263)

half-court basketball courts be provided within passive open spaces and close to other play places. The notice of motion also called for an investigation into potential costs and criteria for determining suitable locations". Whilst refused, this reflects growing demand for this type of facilities, which was confirmed during the engagement.

6.3.2.5 BMX

As a fast growing sport at the national level, membership numbers grew at a fast pace between 2011 to 2017, when membership numbers were just over 20,000. This number dropped off slightly over 2018, however remains close to 20,000 members⁹⁰.

The club has had fluctuating participation numbers since 2010, experiencing a peak of 257 in 2013, and 228 in 2018. Overall, the club expects to grow by approximately 50 more people over the next 5 years. Participation rates are skewed towards male participation, and this is not expected to change in the coming years.

The Club Survey indicates that there is an overall level of dissatisfaction with available facilities at Croom. In particular, the club was extremely dissatisfied with the type and condition of available facilities, maintenance, fencing, accessibility and car parking. There was also some dissatisfaction with the quality of surfacing and lighting.

Through engaging with the Shellharbour community, it is understood that BMX participation rates in the LGA are low (approximately 4%), with marginally stronger participation rates in Precincts 5-9 (Albion Park Rail, Rural East, Albion Park, Rural West, Calderwood and Rural West). A small number of respondents to the survey indicated that there was a lack of BMX facilities for young children, and no place for motocross riding (which uses motorcycles, so is arguably different to BMX and mountain biking).

Through the survey, most respondents indicated that they preferred to use local parks and facilities.

6.3.2.6 Bushwalking

Participation in bushwalking was one of the top 15 recreation activities in NSW capturing over 6% of the population aged 15+, with an almost equal female/male split. Participation rates peaked between the aged of 25-34, but was also noticeably popular for those aged 55-64⁹¹.

Although there are a variety of walking tracks in Shellharbour that are available for use, compared to other recreational activities, quite a few respondents indicated that they travel between 20 and 120 minutes outside the LGA for bushwalking, likely for variety in route or seeking a different gradient of walk than that available in Shellharbour. Overall, there was an almost equal split in preference for walking in local or more distant parks.

Other information gathered from the community survey suggested that over 40% of Shellharbour residents participate in bushwalking on a monthly basis, with slightly higher rates of participation from those living in Precincts 2 (Shellharbour), 3 (Blackbutt), and 4 (Oak Flats).

A small number of respondents from Precincts 4 (Oak Flats) and 7 (Albion Park) indicated that bushwalking is an activity they would like to do, but cannot due to a range of factors including physical access and available time.

6.3.2.7 Cricket

Over 400,000 people played cricket in NSW in 2017/2018 with strong growth in school programs and girls' cricket. Female participation has grown significantly in the last few years. It is Cricket NSW's ongoing strategy to become the leading sport for women and girls⁹². It is also one of the top 15 sports played in Australia – NSW adult participation sits at around 2.5%. Overall participation rates experience a peak at junior ages (between 9 and 14), and participation to date has been almost exclusively male⁹³.

Despite this, there has also been a significant drop in participation for players aged 15 to 17. Cricket NSW is actively working on attracting more juniors to the sport with a faster and shorter game format on shorter pitches and grounds with smaller boundaries. They are also working on a transition program from junior to senior participation. It is noted that a number of adults prefer to participate in the sport in the form of social cricket, including Last Man Stands, as opposed to club registration, which is likely explained by the shorter time commitment involved with this type of game.

⁹⁰ Baseball NSW, 2018 Annual Report.

⁹¹ Sport Australia 2019, *Bush Walking – State of Play Report*.

⁹² Cricket NSW, *Strategic Plan*

⁹³ Sport Australia 2019, *Cricket – State of Play Report*.

Six clubs operate in Shellharbour, and it is estimated that in 2019, between 250 and 300 players are members of the three clubs (out of 6) that responded to the club survey. In addition, two interviews were undertaken with Greater Illawarra Cricket Zone and Cricket NSW respectively.

While participation rates have been stable for seniors, there has been recent growth in junior participation in the last few years, although one club mentioned that they have had to redirect juniors to other clubs in the past due to a lack of facilities to accommodate growth. Another problem was that team numbers do not always match up and “it would be difficult to explain to a junior cricketer that there are 14 registered players for this 11 player team and rotate them”.

With the format of junior games is evolving, changes to cricket pitches will be required to suit the modified format for younger ages (e.g. smaller grounds and shorter pitches). The transition from junior to senior needs attention as there is a drop around the age of 15 and males tend to start playing social cricket instead of staying in a club with LMS (Last Man Stands) that are shorter games. The associations are trying to address this.

Female participation is also growing, although there is no girls/women competition in Shellharbour yet, although this may happen in the future. At the moment, boys and girls play together. Social women cricket leagues are also run.

With regards to facilities, Cricket NSW works in collaboration with AFL with the view of sharing facilities when and where possible. Synthetic turf is also being adopted on a number of facilities with specific guidelines now available that were prepared in collaboration with AFL. While this can be a response to future increasing participation, the cost may be prohibitive due to the large dimensions of these fields.

Specific concerns about existing facilities raised through the survey were limited, although there was some dissatisfaction over the quality of playing surfaces and the type and condition of ancillary facilities, particularly at Keith Grey, Des King and Albion Oval.

Other concerns included the size of playing field at Des King oval, and lighting, fencing and maintenance at John O’Keefe oval.

6.3.2.8 Cycling

Recreational Cycling

Recreational cycling is a popular national activity, with close to 10% of the NSW population participating in cycling both recreationally and as part of a club or organisation⁹⁴. There were particularly high levels of cycling for males aged between 45 and 54⁹⁵.

There is a comprehensive range of cycling trails and paths in Shellharbour that include shared use paths, low traffic volume bike routes, on-road bicycle paths and high speed road bicycle facilities. Additionally, there are bike lockers located at Albion Park, Oak Flats and Dunmore train stations.

Through resident surveys, it is understood that cycling was a relatively popular activity on a weekly or monthly basis, however approximately half of respondents indicated that they did not participate in cycling. Overall, Precincts 1 (Warilla) and 2 (Shellharbour) had the highest rates of weekly bike riding (approximately 23%) compared to other precincts. There was a small number of respondents from Precincts 3 and 5 who indicated that they would like to participate in bike riding, but are unable to. Notably, one respondent commented on the difficulty of locating bike paths through the Council website.

Similar to walking, respondents also demonstrated that there was a mix of preference for cycling locations, including both local and other parks in Shellharbour and lake or ocean foreshores. There were limited comments on quality or quantity of bicycle facilities, suggesting a general level of satisfaction.

Mountain Biking

Mountain biking rates have experienced a fast growth rate in Australia in recent years, with statistics showing a 60% increase between 2013 and 2018. Membership rates are a little lower than BMX, sitting at around 15,500 in 2018⁹⁶.

In Shellharbour, a private mountain bike operator offers a members-only club offering trails and training. Information gained through the community survey demonstrates that within Shellharbour, approximately 15% participate in mountain bike riding, mostly on a weekly or monthly basis. Participation appears to be strongest in Warilla, Shellharbour, Oak Flats and Albion Park Rail (Precincts 1, 2, 4 and 5).

⁹⁴ Sport Australia 2019, *Cycling – State of Play Report*.

⁹⁵ Sport Australia 2019, ‘Australia top 20 sports and physical activities revealed’, 30 April 2019.

⁹⁶ Mountain Bike Australia, *Annual Report 2019*.

6.3.2.9 Dancing

Across Australia, recreational dancing is a key recreation activity, particularly for girls up to the age of 10, and it remains an activity mostly represented by women across all age groups⁹⁷. Adult participation in dancing across NSW is approximately 1.5%.

Facilities in Shellharbour available for dancing in Shellharbour are mostly privately run, and are located throughout the LGA. There were limited comments through community engagement regarding dancing, although a small number of people indicated that they travelled between 5 and 25 minutes outside the LGA to participate in this activity.

6.3.2.10 Equestrian

Equestrian covers a broad range of equine sports, including driving, dressage, eventing, interschool, show horse, jumping and vaulting. Equestrian NSW membership was stable in 2017/18, with a total of 8,134 individual members and 250 group affiliates. There was a slight (2%) increase in senior membership, and a small (5%) decrease in junior membership⁹⁸.

In Shellharbour, one club provided a response out of the two clubs that operate in the LGA. Overall participation is now relatively equally split between juniors and seniors. Junior participation remains relatively stable while senior participation has varied every year since 2016.

An interview was also undertaken with the Stoney Range Pony Club. The club used to be a larger club of 100 members, however has since considerably decreased in numbers. This may be due to housing development where members used to keep their horses, and an overall loss of agistment areas in the LGA. The loss of members is further compounded as the club does not own any of its own horses. The Pony Club is has been redesigned as a consequence of the new bypass traversing the Croom Regional Sporting Complex.

With regards to facilities, both clubs indicated a general level of satisfaction with the facilities at Terry Reserve, with some indication that amenities, lighting and maintenance could be improved.

Additionally, the Albion Park Showground ring was recently identified as a facility suitable area for harness racing practice for Clydesdale horses.

With regards to the community and phone survey, horse riding was one of the least popular sports or recreation activities that respondents engaged in on a regular basis. In fact, across all precincts, participation rates in horse riding was 6% or less of the precinct population. There was also limited preference for horse riding to be undertaken locally, with most respondents indicating that they are willing to travel for this activity.

6.3.2.11 Golf

Within NSW, golf participation rates sit at approximately 5% of the population, and is heavily represented by males aged 65 and above, and has very low rates of youth participation⁹⁹.

In Shellharbour, there are two golf courses – Calderwood Valley Golf Course, and The Links at Shell Cove. Both clubs are membership based.

There was limited information about golf gathered from the engagement process, except that there were a number of respondents who travelled between 5 to 60 minutes outside the LGA to play golf. This suggests that there may be superior facilities elsewhere, or that golfers travel to different locations for variety and to socialise.

6.3.2.12 Fitness/Gym

Across Australia fitness/gym activities are a key recreation activity for men and women across all age groups¹⁰⁰. In NSW, close to 35% of adults participate in gym or fitness activities, with a noticeable peak between the ages of 18-34.

Facilities in Shellharbour available for fitness in Shellharbour are mostly privately run, and are located throughout the LGA. The exception to this is the free outdoor exercise equipment available at 8 separate Council Reserves across the LGA. There is limited information on the use of this equipment, however response rates through the survey indicated a low level of use

In comparison, it can be assumed that the general preference is for indoor gym/fitness facilities. From survey data, it is understood that at least 25% of residents visit an indoor gym on a weekly basis.

⁹⁷ Sport Australia 2019, *Dancing (Recreational) – State of Play Report*.

⁹⁸ Equestrian NSW, *2017-18 Annual Report*.

⁹⁹ Sport Australia 2019, *Golf – State of Play Report*.

¹⁰⁰ Sport Australia 2019, *Fitness/Gym – State of Play Report*.

There were limited comments through community engagement regarding fitness/gym, although a small number of people indicated that they travelled between 15 and 30 minutes outside the LGA to work out at a gym, or attend fitness classes. Another interesting point to note is that 68% of survey respondents indicated that they travelled by car to indoor recreation facilities (although this may also relate to indoor sports, rather than gyms).

Overall, there was limited information gained through the survey on gym use.

6.3.2.13 Gymnastics

Gymnastics is one of the top 15 sports in Australia for children. Almost a quarter of all participants are represented by girls aged 0-14, while it was also a popular activity for boys under 4. Only a very small number of adults participated in gymnastics¹⁰¹.

In Shellharbour, participation trends mirror national patterns with the majority of members being junior females. There is a total of three gymnastics clubs in the LGA, all operating at capacity.

One of the clubs, Oak Flats Albion Park Gymnastics and Acrobatics completed the club survey. Their response showed that while numbers decreased over the last 10 years, there is a slight growth expected in the next 10.

In the club survey, satisfaction with the Albion Park Showground Pavilion was mixed, with higher levels of dissatisfaction with the size and quality of the facility, and the type and condition of amenities. There was general satisfaction with lighting, maintenance, and car parking. Importantly, the club has recently advocated for land to be allocated in the Albion Park Showground to build a new facility, further demonstrating a demand for upgraded gymnastics facilities.

There is also support from Gymnastics NSW to build a facility of regional significance in Shellharbour, which would provide stronger pathways for gymnasts in the South Coast and likely boost demand in the area.

There was little to no mention of gymnastics in the phone and online survey as a sport that people either travel to, or are unable to participate in.

6.3.2.14 Hockey

Across NSW Hockey annual report provides little information on memberships rates, however did show that throughout the Illawarra region, 385 Active Kids vouchers were used for participation in hockey¹⁰².

The sport has traditionally been played by females more than males. The sport is also a family sport and people continue to play in their 40s, 50s, and over. There is a target to increase under 15s participation in 2020.

6.3.2.15 Netball

Across NSW, netball has over 115,000 members playing netball at all levels of performance, while nationally, 13% of young girls participate in the sport¹⁰³. Netball participation is strongly skewed towards female participation, with peak participation at around 12 – 14 years of age¹⁰⁴.

In 2019 there were 320 members of the Shellharbour netball club, which was the only club out of three that responded to the club survey. In line with national trends, all members are female, and a majority of participation is junior. Some growth is expected in the next 10 years, again driven by junior participation.

Overall, there are approximately 2,500 females playing netball in the Illawarra area on Saturday mornings including 3 clubs from Shellharbour area being Shellharbour Netball Club, Albion Park Netball Club and Southern Suburbs Netball Club). Over 300 of the total numbers plays in one of the three Shellharbour City clubs. While participation rates appeared to decline slightly 4-5 years ago, it has gradually increased since with continued growth is expected to continue particularly through junior participation.

6.3.2.16 Oztag

Oztag is a non-tackling version of rugby league, and runs competition across Australia, with approximately 140,000 players across the country, played in more than 120 locations¹⁰⁵.

One Oztag club operates in Shellharbour LGA. Participation rates for 2018 and 2019 show a strong junior presence, although there are also two senior competitions each year. There was some decrease in

¹⁰¹ Sport Australia 2019, *Gymnastics – State of Play Report*.

¹⁰² Hockey NSW, *Annual Report 2018*.

¹⁰³ Netball NSW, *Annual Report 2018*.

¹⁰⁴ Sport Australia 2019, *Netball – State of Play Report*.

¹⁰⁵ Oztag Australia 2018, *Play Oztag*.

participation rates between 2018 and 2019, with interviews outlining that the decrease in numbers has reduced the number of junior teams by about 5 players.

The club survey indicated that there was a general level of satisfaction with all aspects of the Oztag facilities at Myimbarr Community Park and Flinders fields.

6.3.2.17 Rugby League

Rugby League in NSW had in excess of 100,000 players in 2018, with approximately 60% as part of Country Rugby League (CRL)¹⁰⁶. Participation grew in 2018 for the first time in five years, while state trends across all CRL show a growth in female participation rates.

Rugby League on the South Coast and in Shellharbour is driven by junior participation. While there are around 12 rugby league that exist in the LGA (juniors and seniors), only 6 responded to the club survey. From this survey, it is understood that in 2019, a total of 928 persons were members of these 6 clubs, suggesting that total rugby league participation rates are likely to be close to 2,000. Numbers are driven mostly by junior male participation, with a large proportion of members playing with Shellharbour City and Stingrays.

Currently, the female/male participation ratio is approximately 30% / 70% in both junior and senior groups. Female participation typically starts to become more substantial from approximately 9-10 years of age, but has significantly increased in the last few years. Predictions are that female players will reach approximately 40% of total participation rate in the near future, driven by the 'Ladies League Tag' introduced in 2017. This was replaced in 2019 by a women's tackle competition (Under-14s, 16s and Open-Aged women), which has created a clear pathway for regional players to various levels of representative football including national representation, and will continue to help boost participation rates.

It is not expected that there will be a high growth in male participation because many of the established clubs have an adequate number of teams, however it is likely that senior participation will experience a 2 to 3% growth in the next few years.

Through the club survey, there are a number of key issues that were raised with regards to satisfaction with facilities. In particular, there was a higher level of dissatisfaction with Flinders Reserve, and across most clubs, dissatisfaction with the type and condition of ancillary facilities. Satisfaction with the size and quality of playing surface was variable across clubs.

As for most competitive sports, both the phone and website survey community survey demonstrated that players travel within the Illawarra region for the sport, either for scheduled games outside Shellharbour LGA, or involvement in an external team.

6.3.2.18 Rugby Union

Rugby Union is played across Australia in a range of different competitions and formats, with schools forming an early incubator for participation. Similar to many football codes, growth in female participation has rapidly grown in recent years¹⁰⁷.

Illawarra District Rugby Union is the governing body for rugby union within the Illawarra District, which includes a girl's competition. Junior and female development are two focus areas for Rugby NSW.

Only one rugby union club operates in Shellharbour with one team formed in 2017 and plays on Des King Oval at the Albion Park Showground. The team plays in the third-grade competition with about 25 players.

The club responded to the survey, outlining that while participation has decreased in the last few years, growth is expected over the next ten.

In addition, the Southern Crushers provided participation numbers to Council in August 2019 (20 senior male players, and 7 junior male players), also indicating that their junior team was combined with the Shoalhaven Rugby Club that also only had 7 players.

Through the survey, it is understood that Des King Oval is used for Rugby Union games. While the size of the oval, lighting, fencing, accessibility and parking were all satisfactory, responses followed the general trend of some level of dissatisfaction with playing field quality, type and condition of facilities and maintenance of the oval.

As for most competitive sports, both the phone and website community survey demonstrated that players travel within the Illawarra region for the sport, either for scheduled games outside Shellharbour LGA, or involvement in an external team.

¹⁰⁶ Country Rugby League of NSW, *Annual Report 2018*.

¹⁰⁷ Rugby Australia 2019, 'Rugby Australia announces 2018 results at Annual General Meeting', 8 April 2019.

6.3.2.19 Skateboarding

There is limited information on skateboarding participation in Australia and NSW, due to the casual and informal nature of this activity. Through the community survey, it is understood that less than 10% of residents over the age of 18 skateboard on a weekly basis, noting that the survey did not collect information from anyone under 18.

Most participants were from Warilla and Shellharbour (Precincts 1 and 2), and the majority preferred to skateboard at their local park.

6.3.2.20 Football (Soccer)

Football is Australia's biggest participation sport with more than 1.5 million participants – including 402,000 female participants – at all junior and senior levels. In fact, almost 20% of children in NSW take part in this activity¹⁰⁸. In NSW, adult participation sits at almost 7%, however the sport is skewed towards male participation between the ages of 4 and 18¹⁰⁹.

In 2019, a total of 1,856 persons were members of the 9 (out of 13) clubs that responded to the survey. In line with NSW trends, most of this participation is driven by junior male participation. Respondents estimated their future growth by providing a number reflecting either additional members or total future membership. It is sometimes not clear what the number provided reflects and therefore a total future membership number cannot be identified.

Engagement with clubs in Shellharbour indicated that:

- Membership in those clubs that responded to the survey increased between 2010 and 2019, mostly driven by junior membership
- Membership in these clubs is expected to grow by 56% in the next 10 years with a growth in both junior and senior participation as well as female participation
- Three clubs currently operate with a waiting list.

Some clubs operate on weekends only while others operate every day of the week. Half of clubs run out of season activities, such as trials, training clinics, summer football, with one club not able to run out of season activities due to the current facilities and concerns with seating, sheltering, lighting and drainage.

A separate interview was undertaken with Football South Coast, who also provided the following numbers to Council in August 2019:

As previously found, junior participation represents a majority of overall participation (approximately 75%), mostly from two clubs - Albion Park Junior Soccer Club and Shellharbour Junior Football Club. There is very strong participation from under 6s to under 12s, then a drop when schoolwork loads increase, or young people get jobs. Peaks in participation have been noticed following events such as the Asian or World cups.

In the east, a lot of junior members join Shellharbour Junior Football Club (instead of Warilla and Oak Flats), as reported by the association, even if there might be longer distance to travel.

For adults, approximately 20% of senior participation is female. There has been a big push by the Federation to increase female participation rates (such as development programs) and it is expected that future growth is likely to be predominantly driven by female participation. Adult participants are also playing at older ages, with some participants over 45 years of age.

There remain concerns about ongoing growth and the capacity of available facilities to accommodate this. In particular, responses to the club survey demonstrated that almost all clubs were dissatisfied with lighting and the availability and condition of ancillary facilities. There was also a higher level of overall dissatisfaction with Morley Park and Terry Reserve.

6.3.2.21 Tai Chi

The Australian Academy of Tai Chi and Qigong provides one hour Tai Chi classes at the Albion Park Neighbourhood Community Centre. There are also beginners Tai Chi classes offered by the Illawarra Women's Health Centre in Warilla.

¹⁰⁸ Football Federation Australia 2019, *2018 Annual Review*.

¹⁰⁹ Sport Australia 2019, *Football – State of Play Report*.

In the representative survey, Tai Chi was raised as an activity that a small number of respondents (particularly from Precinct 3) would like to be involved in but cannot for reasons such as cost, lack of facility, and lack of time). This may indicate that there is a need for greater assistance in reaching existing facilities.

6.3.2.22 Tennis

In NSW, adult tennis participation sits at approximately 5%, and has a strong junior presence between the ages of 5 and 15. The sport is also weighted towards male participation¹¹⁰.

One club provided membership data, noting that Graham Park does not have members but is open to anyone.

Membership at the association has remained relatively stable since 2010 and is relatively gender-balanced. Growth is anticipated in the next 10 years, mostly driven by junior participation, both male and female. The proportion of male/female participation has remained relatively stable.

A separate interview was undertaken with the Kiama Shellharbour District Tennis Association. It was indicated that there are six clubs in Shellharbour including Warilla Bowls who are in the process of closing the courts. Overall participation has dropped slightly in the past 5-10 years which reflects the Australian trend. The association is one of the only ones to run Saturday morning competitions.

Increasing participation is challenging in tennis, as a set of skills is required to play. It takes longer to learn. The association tries to send coaches to schools (early years) and follow up with programs. Tennis Australia is trying to push further by offering modified court sizes, rackets etc. The association will aim for a growth of another 400 players.

The sport is relatively gender balanced and age balanced. There is no separation of genders on Saturday morning competitions.

6.3.2.23 Lawn Bowls

The 2017/18 Bowls Australia annual report indicates that bowls has increased in participation rates in recent years, with close to 650,000 players across Australia¹¹¹. The majority of these are social players, however almost a third make up competitive membership numbers.

Shellharbour has three lawn bowls clubs – the Warilla Bowls and Recreation Club, Oak Flats Bowling and Recreation Club and the Albion Park Bowling Club. Members of these clubs play in local club and premier leagues. Information on membership numbers at these clubs was not collected, however most are represented by both junior and senior members at a variety of competition levels.

There were no bowling clubs who participated in the Club Survey, so specific details about membership rates and satisfaction levels are unavailable.

Bowls was mentioned a number of times the community survey as a sport for which residents travel – likely as a result of competition rosters. A small number of participants indicated that they would like to play bowls, but cannot.

6.3.2.24 Martial Arts

Across Australia, martial Arts has a unique pattern of peak participation ages for males and females in organised sport. Participation for males peaks at 9-11 years of age, whereas for females it is 65 and over¹¹² (although this may be explained by the classification of Tai Chi as a martial art).

Facilities in Shellharbour available for Martial Arts are mostly privately run, and include Karate, Taekwondo, Taekidokai, Jiu Jitsu, and mixed martial arts. These facilities are spread throughout the LGA.

6.3.2.25 Touch Football

NRL League Touch is an alternate format of Touch Football, developed by Touch Football Australia (TFA) and the National Rugby League. Touch football is already a relatively gender balanced team sports¹¹³.

One out of two clubs that operate in Shellharbour provided a response to the survey. The club operates with senior participation only. Participation has significantly decreased in the past few years, however some growth is anticipated in the next 10 years.

¹¹⁰ Sport Australia 2019, *Tennis – State of Play Report*.

¹¹¹ Lawn Bowls Australia, *Annual Report 2017-18*.

¹¹² Sport Australia 2019, 'Australia top 20 sports and physical activities revealed', 30 April 2019.

¹¹³ Sport Australia 2019, *Touch Football – State of Play Report*.

In recent years, senior membership has slightly decreased, and junior membership has slightly increased. However, participation has increased, which is due to the growth in school-based programs, with touch football one of the most demanded sport as a secondary school program.

The survey response demonstrated that all elements (playing field size and quality, amenities, maintenance, lighting, fencing, accessibility and car parking) were all considered satisfactory.

Through the phone and online survey, no specific mention of touch football was made.

6.3.2.26 Triathlon

Triathlon Australia has approximately 22,000 members, and 220 affiliated clubs across the country¹¹⁴. Participation in the triathlon club has remained relatively stable since 2016 and is expected to grow.

Engagement with the Triathlon club demonstrated a need for a new club house for storage and indoor training purposes, ideally at the Bass Point Quarry (Shell Cove) where new sporting facilities are being planned. Additionally, a cycling connection into the new venue would be a positive addition.

To facilitate the three sports that triathlon consists of (swimming, cycling and running), the triathlon team uses a range of facilities including Myimbarr Community Park fields, Reddall Reserve, Beverley Whitfield Ocean Pool and Shellharbour Boat harbour. There was an overall level of satisfaction with these facilities, with the exception of car parking at the pool.

There was limited mention of Triathlon competition on the phone and online survey, likely as a result of the small, select size of the triathlon club.

6.3.2.27 Walking/ Running

As per the 2019 AusPlay report¹¹⁵, recreational walking is the most popular activity for people in NSW over the age of 15, with close to 43% participating in walking once a week.

Throughout the engagement process, Shellharbour trends exceeded national walking trends, with almost three quarters (75%) of respondents indicating that they walked or ran at least once per week.

From the community survey, almost 70% of respondents suggested that they walked or ran on a weekly basis, making it the most popular activity in the survey and aligning with the 2018 AusPlay results.

There were some patterns that emerged from the data, demonstrating that there were higher rates of regular participation in walking/ running in Precincts 1, 2, 3 and 4. Respondents also demonstrated that there was a mix of preference for walking/ running locations, including both local and other parks in Shellharbour and lake or ocean foreshores. The majority of respondents indicated that their location of preference for was either local parks or ocean/lake foreshores.

From comments made in the survey, a very limited number of people indicated that they were unable to engage in walking or running activities as a result of age and physical limitations.

6.3.2.28 Yoga/Pilates

Yoga and Pilates are both represented in the top 15 activities that Australians participate in. Across Australia, participation rates for both activities are skewed towards adult females, with participation generally starting around 18 years, and peaking between 35 and 45¹¹⁶.

In Shellharbour, there are a wide range of yoga and Pilates classes offered across the LGA. For example, these include classes at the Albion Park Neighbourhood Community Centre as well as through gym franchises, and private studios. There are also clinical Pilates sessions offered through ancillary health providers.

Throughout engagement, a small number of respondents from Precinct 3 indicated that yoga/Pilates was an activity that they would like to participate in, but cannot due to lack of time, cost, or limited facilities. This may indicate that there is a need for greater assistance in reaching existing yoga facilities.

¹¹⁴ Triathlon Australia, *About Triathlon Australia – History*.

¹¹⁵ Sport Australia 2019, *Walking – State of Play Report*.

¹¹⁶ Sport Australia 2019, *Yoga – State of Play Report*; Sport Australia 2019, *Pilates – State of Play Report*.

6.3.2.29 Volleyball

There is limited information available on volleyball in Shellharbour, although the LGA does fall within the Illawarra Volleyball Association, which runs social and competitive games in Unanderra. Additionally, Shellharbour City Stadium provides a venue for regional volleyball competitions.

Limited comment in the community survey was made on volleyball, with a small number indicating that they travel outside the LGA for this activity.

6.3.2.30 Camping

There is limited information available on the demand for camping in Shellharbour, however noting that there are currently four holidays parks in the LGA, in addition to Shellharbour's attractive setting and close proximity to Sydney (approximately 2 hours by car), it can be assumed that there is a reasonable demand for camping sites in the area. Importantly, the demand is likely driven by tourists and would almost certainly experience seasonal variations.

For the Shellharbour community, some respondents to the phone and online survey indicated that camping is a recreational activity they travel outside the LGA for. It can be assumed that this is for scenic variety and interest in exploring new locations.

Key Findings:

A review of Shellharbour sport and recreation participation, demand and stakeholder views drew forth a number of key points:

- The review of state and national sport and recreational trends, combined with some feedback through engagement with residents from the Shellharbour LGA indicate that sport and recreation activities vary significantly with age and across genders, and to some degree, across precincts.*
- There is an increasing rate of women's participation in sports, particularly across all football codes and cricket. This increase has led to additional pressure on existing facilities, and a perceived lack of appropriate amenities for women.*
- There was a mixed response around the quality of sportsfields and court facilities in the LGA, with most responses from the Clubs survey demonstrating that there may be additional resourcing required to improve maintenance.*
- The ongoing growth in cricket demonstrated that there is potentially a need for a new facility.*
- There was a range of responses from clubs with regards to sharing facilities. While a shared system is possible amongst a variety of sporting codes, such arrangements would require ongoing consultation amongst local and district sporting clubs.*
- Current gymnastics facilities in the LGA are limited, and may be impacting on rates of participation. Shellharbour has previously been identified by Gymnastics NSW as a prime location for a regional facility that can encourage gymnastics participation in the area and improve elite competition pathways.*
- Shellharbour LGA has available facilities for both volleyball and basketball at the Shellharbour City Stadium, however there appears to be a potentially untapped demand for these sports in the LGA.*
- Dissatisfaction with the ability for the number of football (soccer) fields to accommodate current need could suggest a need for a larger or better resourced facility. This could include a synthetic field, which can be located on top of other infrastructure (on roofs or carparks) if space is limited, and could operate as part of a multi-use active open space.*
- There are a number of sports such as Martial Arts that require limited to no input from Council, as they are run through private facilities, and respond to underlying market demand.*

Key Findings (continued)

→ Shellharbour LGA has a long history of embracing sport participation through public events, with a number of key sport and recreational events on offer throughout the year.

→ Many local recreational activities (such as golf, fitness/gym, dancing, yoga/Pilates, tai chi) appear to place limited demands on Council time and resources, as they are primarily run through private facilities, by private operators and operated largely in response to market demand. There is a potential role for Council however in encouraging greater community participation in recreational activities that improve residents' health, wellbeing and connectedness.

→ There are a number of non-organised, free recreational activities such as walking, cycling and skateboarding that rely on safe, connected and good quality paths and other public infrastructure such as benches, public amenities and water fountains. Council has a direct role in planning in this regard as it is the key means to support participation.

→ There is scope to consult with neighbouring councils about the possibility of collaborative provision of regional mountain trail bike facilities.

→ Outdoor exercise equipment is available in the LGA, however there is a limited understanding of their use and enjoyment by residents and visitors.

6.4 Other stakeholder views

6.4.1 General satisfaction with open space

In 2019, Council engaged a research company to conduct a survey to establish satisfaction levels in the Shellharbour community with Council services (community satisfaction survey), identify priority areas and evaluate Council's customer services, organisational skills and communication. The survey was comprehensive: there were responses from 601 residents via phone survey and 246 residents via an online survey. Some of the strongest results related to open space and recreation assets and services. We have set out some key results from the survey that relate to open space and recreation below:

- Top performing services and facilities were beaches, libraries and sporting fields and amenities.
- The community's responses indicated that all services and facilities either improved or maintained their level of performance since 2017.
- Assets that were identified as among the six "strategic advantages" of Shellharbour because they were performing above average and had a strong impact on creating overall satisfaction, included:
 - Sporting fields and amenities; and
 - Parks, reserves and other open spaces (e.g. Blackbutt)
- Assets that were identified as among the nine "differentiators" of Shellharbour included:
 - Community centres and halls
 - Beaches
 - Swimming pools
 - Community events and activities

Unlike other open space and recreation assets, playgrounds and toilet facilities were considered to be key vulnerabilities for Council.

General satisfaction with all recreational assets improved and was generally equal to or better than comparable councils, as set out below. Only playgrounds did not perform well as compared with other councils (see Table 32 below).

Table 32: Satisfaction levels with Shellharbour Council open space and recreation assets between 2017 and 2019 and in comparison with other Councils

Assets	2017	2019	Significant change since 2017	Performance compared to comparable Councils
Beaches	-	4.2	-	-
Sporting fields and amenities	3.7	4.0	↑	↑
Swimming pools	3.5	3.9	↑	↑
Community events and activities	3.6	3.8	↑	↑
Parks, reserves and other open spaces	3.4	3.8	↑	↔
Other public buildings	3.4	3.8	↑	-
Community centres and halls	3.6	3.7	↔	↔
Playgrounds	3.4	3.6	↑	↓

Source: Iris Research, Shellharbour City Council Community Satisfaction Survey 2019 Final Report

Asked some specific questions about playgrounds, community feedback was that the qualities of an ideal playground were:

- Safety
- Cleanliness and good maintenance
- Shade
- Accessibility for all children – age and ability
- Toilets

These findings generally accord with NSW's new playground standard, the Everyone Can Play guideline, set out in Section 2.1.5.

Residents were asked whether Council should reduce the number of small local playgrounds to upgrade larger playgrounds. There was a low level of support for this action with only 24% of those surveyed in support. The main arguments against this action were that playgrounds should be in walking distance from home, larger playgrounds discriminate against families who find it more difficult to travel and that larger playgrounds can become overcrowded.

6.4.2 Youth satisfaction with open space

In June 2018, Council hosted a survey for young people on its *Let's Chat* forum page to inform the development of its draft Youth Plan. The target demographic of the survey was people in the LGA aged 12-24. In the survey a number of questions were asked that were relevant to open space and the ways in which young people in particular use open space.

As there were only six respondents to the survey, the results are not statistically significant but they do provide some useful information about young people's priorities and satisfaction with existing open space. Generally, open space was valued highly by young people. For example, when asked "What are the opportunities available to young people living in the Shellharbour council area today?" people responded in the following ways:

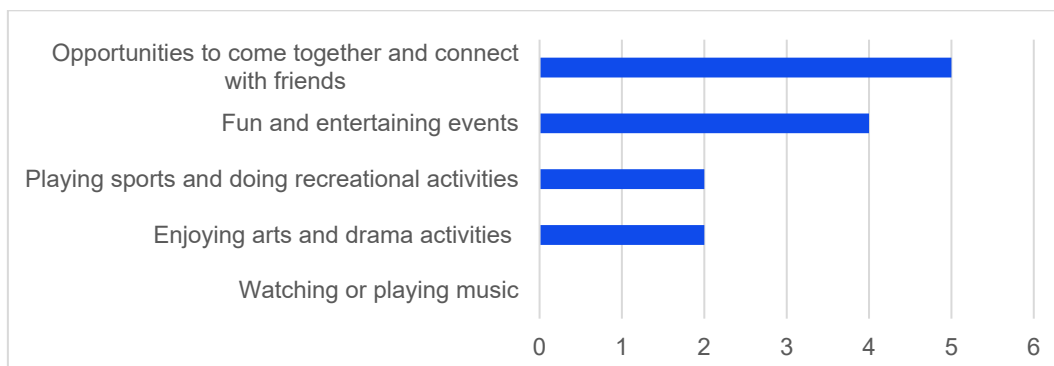
- "Shellharbour LGA has good sporting facilities (sk8parks, team sports fields, indoor stadium etc) Good access to natural open spaces (ocean, parks etc) for those that live near these spaces"
- "The potential of the area for tourism, natural environment, growing area in housing and thereby the areas of construction etc."
- "Service accessibilities, educational pathways."
- "Education, sports".

When asked "What are the biggest challenges faced by young people living in the Shellharbour council area today?" some relevant responses were:

- "Transport, technology, sense of community..."
- "Getting to youth activities on their own when parents work 9 to 5. Not much to do in Albion Park so hanging around the streets is the option."

When asked “What are your top 3 priorities for PLAYING in Shellharbour?” people (relevant) responded in the following ways:

Figure 9: Responses to the question “What are your top 3 priorities for PLAYING in Shellharbour?” (n=5)



Source: Shellharbour City Council Youth Plan survey, June 2018

6.5 Shellharbour Sport and Recreation Events

6.5.1 Shellharbour City Festival of Sport

Held annually, the Festival of Sport is a day annual sporting based event and has been held since 1998. The event includes a charity Walk/Run event through Shell Cove, a Dragon Boat challenge on Lake Illawarra and a variety of mini games for kids at Shellharbour City Stadium.

6.5.2 Surf and Skate

The annual Surf and Skate festival is held across various weekends in December, and includes surfing and skateboarding competitions, skateboard workshops, a music festival and an art instalment. The event is held across key locations in Shellharbour LGA, notably the Skate Park in Pioneer Park (Precinct 2) and at Killalea National Surfing Reserve (Precinct 2)¹¹⁷. The event is funded by NSW government grants, local businesses and other private sponsors.

6.5.3 Dogs in the Park

This event is held at Albion Park Showground and is supported by Shellharbour Council and the NGO ‘Dogs in the Park’. The event offers dog owners a range of events and competitions such as agility demonstrations, dog walking, health checks and microchipping¹¹⁸.

6.5.4 KidsFest

Running since 2008, this annual festival is held in May every year. Originally funded by the federal government between 2008 and 2012, the event is now sponsored mainly by community and business groups, and a variety of government grants¹¹⁹. The event offers a wide array of free events for children and teenagers in Shellharbour, many of which are based around physical activities. For example, the 2019 program offered¹²⁰:

- Guided family bushwalks in Macquarie Pass National Park
- Rock climbing on the Scouts Climbing Wall
- Kite flying
- Circus and park play sessions
- Bowling
- Junior boxing classes

¹¹⁷ Shellharbour City Council, *Surf and Skate Festival*.

¹¹⁸ Crabb, B. 2019, ‘Shellharbour City Dogs in the Park Event taking place on Sunday’, *Illawarra Mercury*, 25 October 2019.

¹¹⁹ KidsFest Shellharbour, *About Us*.

¹²⁰ KidsFest Shellharbour, *2019 Program*.

- Tae Kwan Do lessons
- Wheelchair basketball games

6.5.5 ParkRun

Shellharbour has a ParkRun group, which organises weekly 5km runs (or walks) around a set route each Saturday. The event is open to anyone who would like to participate, and is run by volunteers¹²¹.

Key Findings:

A review of Shellharbour sport and recreation participation, demand and stakeholder views drew forth a number of key points:

→ The review of state and national sport and recreational trends, combined with some feedback through engagement with residents from the Shellharbour LGA indicate that sport and recreation activities vary significantly with age and across genders, and to some degree, across precincts.

→ There is an increasing rate of women's participation in sports, particularly across all football codes and cricket. This increase has led to additional pressure on existing facilities, and a perceived lack of appropriate amenities for women.

→ There was a mixed response around the quality of sportsfields and court facilities in the LGA, with most responses from the Clubs survey demonstrating that there may be additional resourcing required to improve maintenance.

* * * *

¹²¹ Parkrun Shellharbour, *Shellharbour parkrun - Weekly Free 5km Timed Run*.

7 Aquatics

This section focuses on all water-based activities within the LGA, inclusive of swimming, boating, ocean and lake-based activities. It also provides an assessment of Shellharbour's four public pool facilities.

7.1 Shellharbour Aquatic Facilities, Clubs and Organisations

Bordered to the east by coastline, adjacent to a lake on the northern end of the LGA and with a range of pools across the LGA, Shellharbour offers a variety of water-based opportunities for residents and visitors alike.

7.1.1 Existing Aquatic Recreation Spaces and Facilities

7.1.1.1 Beaches and Lake

Shellharbour is located on the coast and shares an eastern border with the Pacific Ocean. As a result, Council maintains six beaches, as detailed below in Table 33. There are also swimming facilities in Lake Illawarra, accessed from Reddall Reserve.

Additionally, the Shellharbour community is in close proximity to a number of other beaches in the southern portion of the LGA (but outside council control including: Bushrangers Bay, Maloney's Bay, the Farm and Mystics).

Table 33: Shellharbour Beaches

Name	Location	Patrol Times	Beach wheelchair?	Other facilities
Blacks Beach (North end of Shellharbour North Beach)	Junction Road, Barrack Point	Summer: 9:00am – 5pm, 7 days Autumn: 9:30am – 5pm, weekends, public holidays and school holidays	No	BBQ; toilets; outdoor exercise equipment
Warilla Central Beach	Osborne Parade, Warilla	Spring: 9:30 – 5pm, 7 days Summer: 9:00am – 5pm, 7 days Autumn: 9:30am – 5pm, 7 days	Yes	Outdoor exercise equipment (nearby Strongs Reserve); outdoor shower; public toilet
Warilla North Beach	Entrance Street Warilla	Summer: 9:00am – 5pm, 7 days Autumn: 9:30am – 5pm, weekends, public holidays and school holidays	No	
Warilla South Beach	Little Lake Crescent, Barrack Point	Summer: 9:00am – 5pm, 7 days Autumn: 9:30am – 5pm, weekends, public holidays and school holidays	No	BBQ; outdoor shower; public toilet at nearby Elliot Park and Barrack Reserve
Shellharbour North Beach	Junction Road, Shellharbour Village	Spring: 9:30am – 5pm, 7 days Summer: 9:30am – 5pm, 7 days Autumn: 9:30am – 5pm, 7 days	Yes	Outdoor shower; public toilet

Name	Location	Patrol Times	Beach wheelchair?	Other facilities
Shellharbour South Beach	John Street Shellharbour	Summer: 9am - 5pm (7 days) Autumn: 9.30am - 5pm (weekends, public holidays & school holidays only)	No	Public toilet; Bullwarroo Rd and Bass Point Road Showers
Reddall Reserve Lake Illawarra	Reddall Parade	Designated swim area	Wheelchair Access	Outdoor exercise equipment; outdoor shower; public toilet

7.1.1.2 Public Pool Facilities

Australian Councils typically provide pool facilities for their local community, and Shellharbour is no exception (see Section 7.2.1.1 for an explanation on the cultural value of pools). There are four Council run pool facilities in the LGA, including one ocean pool, as outlined in Table 34.

Table 34: Shellharbour Public Pools

Name	Location	Precinct	Indoor/Outdoor	Heated?	Facilities
Beverley Whitfield	John Street, Shellharbour	2	Outdoor	No	50yard or 49.7m pool Toddler pool
Warilla	Benaud Crescent, Warilla	1	Outdoor	No	50m pool Toddler pool
Oak Flats	Kingston Street, Oak Flats	4	Outdoor	25m pool only	50m pool 25m pool Toddler Pool
Albion Park	Russell Street, Albion Park	7	Outdoor	No	50m pool Toddler pool Infants pool

7.1.1.3 Private Swimming Facilities:

In terms of swimming facilities, there are a number of private facilities/operators that also exist in the Council area such as private swim schools.

In addition, the Shellharbour Club also has an ongoing development application which includes the development of an indoor aquatic centre (25m indoor heated pool).

It is noted that:

- Wollongong City Council operates a total of nine public pools (5 are fresh water chlorinated and 3 are saltwater pools, with one indoor facility), as well as nine ocean rock pools.
- Kiama City Council operates two freshwater pools (including the indoor Kiama Leisure Centre) and four saltwater rock pools.

7.1.1.4 Boating

Boating activities including rowing, sailing, canoeing/kayaking and motor-based boating is undertaken on Lake Illawarra.

Boat ramps available in Shellharbour LGA include:

- Reddall Reserve,
- Skiway Park, Oak Flats
- Deakin Reserve, Oak Flats
- Windang Boat Ramp
- Bass Point Boat Ramp

- Shellharbour Village Boat Ramp

7.1.1.5 Surfing

There are a number of surf localities in Shellharbour including:

- Warilla Beach
- Shellharbour Beach (North and Black Beaches)
- Mystics – Killalea
- The Farm - Killalea
- Shellharbour South
- Shallows – (Bass Point)
- Barrack Point
- Windang Island
- Redsands (Bass Point)
- Cowries (Boat Ramp Shellharbour)

7.1.2 Existing Aquatic Recreation Clubs and Organisations

There are a number of clubs and organisations within Shellharbour that cater for a diverse range of aquatic activities, including (but not limited to) swimming, sailing, rowing, surfing, surf life saving and dragon boat racing. These clubs operate across a range of locations in the LGA, generally offer both competitive and recreational activities and support a range of ages and abilities. A number of these clubs and organisations hold aquatic events throughout the year, for example: swimming carnivals, competitive surf life-saving events, surfing competitions and ocean swims, among others.

Key Findings:

→ Shellharbour has a variety of aquatic facilities throughout the LGA that cater to wide range of aquatic recreational pursuits including swimming and boating activities.

→ These facilities enable clubs and organisations to exist in the LGA, adding to the vibrancy of aquatics in Shellharbour.

→ Private pools and pools run by other councils also address some of the demand for pool facilities in Shellharbour

7.2 Policy Context, Trends and Benchmarks

7.2.1 Swimming Facilities – Trends in delivery

7.2.1.1 Cultural value of pools

The swimming pool is a uniquely Australian public space and an important piece of infrastructure for communities. They have cultural significance for the broad community as a social place to be, and also for their role in sports and competition.

Ocean pools also play a significant and recognisable role in Australia, and have distinct collective identities compared to other types of aquatic facilities.¹²² A number of these ocean pools were built during the Great Depression and were originally established to provide recreational and competitive swimming opportunities and protection from potential shark attacks.¹²³ They are free to use, open all year round, and require minimal maintenance compared to other types of aquatic facilities. While the last ocean pool was built over 50 years

¹²² McDermott, M.L. 2012, 'Wet, wild and convivial: past, present and future contributions of Australia's ocean pools to surf, beach, pool and body cultures and recreational coasts', PhD Thesis, Edith Cowan University.

¹²³ Wilder, G. 2019, 'Ocean pools are making a comeback – and not just for their seductive beauty', *The Guardian*, 13 April 2019.

ago, towns such as Ballina and Port Macquarie in NSW and other localities interstate are currently investigating the provision of ocean pools.¹²⁴

Since 1894, the Beverley Whitfield ocean pool has been an important visitor attraction for Shellharbour. It is historically and socially significant for generations of swimming club members, school children, residents and visitors including holidaymakers and campers, and has been recognised as cultural heritage items by the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH).¹²⁵ As explained in the OEH statement of significance: "Beverley Whitfield Pool has high historic, social and aesthetic significance, as the only extant example of a 19th century ocean bath in the Shellharbour area, and the only NSW ocean bath named in honour of an Olympic and Commonwealth swimmer, Beverley Whitfield. Whilst the place has been modified and upgraded, it continues to demonstrate these values".¹²⁶

7.2.1.2 Value to the local community and wellbeing

The public swimming pool has long been recognised as an important piece of social infrastructure - not only does it provide an avenue for exercise, it is also a place for leisure and socialisation. Increased physical activity, improved mental health, stress reduction and increase in avenue for social interaction have all been associated with the provision of a swimming pool.¹²⁷

Aquatic health and fitness activities represent an important activity choice for people of all ages, although with an ageing population, there is an increased demand for heated water areas, pools suitable for therapy and programmed older adult exercises.

Nonetheless, it has become apparent in the last few decades that local swimming pools, particularly those dependent on seasonality, can place significant financial pressure on local governments. In part, this is due to fluctuating numbers, ongoing maintenance requirements and ageing facilities. A large number of public pools have closed over the last 30 years, also due to decreasing popularity, changing attitudes in relation to sun exposure, a shift away from club-based competitive swimming and the appearance of larger, multipurpose facilities.^{128, 129}

7.2.1.3 Multipurpose centres

Year-round multipurpose facilities that incorporate other recreation and leisure uses are a different model to that of the seasonal local pool.¹³⁰ Compared to a standalone swimming pool, they combine a range of aquatic and non-aquatic uses, which may include a gym and gym classes, sports facilities such as indoor courts and health services such as physiotherapy or chiropractic services. They may also include other multipurpose spaces for community events, day care facilities and a café.

Research on the provision of multi-purpose aquatic centres demonstrated that this range of services is necessary in order to attract a wide range of users from the community, including those who are interested in leisure and recreation, those who wish to use the centre for competitive training and fitness, and those seeking education and health therapies.¹³¹ These centres should also cater to the needs of children through the provision of shallow water areas, 'fun zones' and interactive equipment (such as inflatables) to enhance their appeal to the broader community.¹³²

Underpinning the development of multipurpose centres is an aim to:

- Overcome seasonality and offer year-round, flexible and multi-generational activities
- Meet a range of accessibility needs, and provide programs and services for users of various abilities, physical conditions and skill levels
- Generate income beyond that of general admission and swimming programs
- Boost the number of reasons to visit, and encourage repeat visits.

Due to the larger scale of operation of a multipurpose centre, their construction and ongoing costs (staffing, maintenance etc.) are significantly higher than that of a single swimming pool facility. However, there is

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ NSW Office of Environment and Heritage, Stage Heritage Inventory, database number 2380126.

¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷ Thomson, H., Kearns, A. & Petticrew, M. 2003, 'Assessing the health impact of local amenities: A qualitative study of contrasting experiences of local swimming pool and leisure provision in two areas of Glasgow', *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health* 57(9) 663–667..

¹²⁸ Lewi, H. 2017, 'A history of the Aussie public pool', *Australian Geographic*, 5 September 2017.

¹²⁹ McShane, I. 2009, 'The past and future of local swimming pools', *Journal of Australian Studies* 33(2) 195-208.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ Shellharbour City Council 2015, *Shellharbour Aquatic Services Review*.

¹³² Ibid.

evidence to suggest that incorporating a wider range of uses facilitates a more profitable outcome for the centre, particularly through health and fitness activities, food and beverage sales and other revenue generating activities such as special events.¹³³

7.2.1.4 Splash pads

Splash areas or 'pads' are versatile play areas that can be incorporated within existing pool facilities, play spaces, or other public spaces such as parks and malls. Importantly, splash pads work best when they are co-located with other facilities so that amenities such as toilets and change rooms can be shared.

The provision of splash pads is to be considered as a complementary experience to swimming pools, in order to provide a comprehensive supply of aquatic experiences to children. Spray play and zero-depth water play areas are recognised as important features for children's play areas in the Government Architect's guidelines.

The benefits of splash pads include:

- They encourage all-inclusive use and interaction between age groups and abilities.
- They offer safe places for water-based play.
- They are versatile and can be designed in a wide range of forms to suit the context in which they exist.

7.2.2 Swimming Pool Benchmarks

The Parks and Leisure Australia Guidelines for Community Infrastructure¹³⁴ set out the following benchmarks for aquatic facility provision:

- A local aquatic facility services between 10,000 and 30,000 people, and will have either a 25m or 50m pool, potentially some ancillary leisure space.
- A district aquatic facility services about 75,000 people and requires a minimum of one 50m pool, and a second pool that is at least 25m.
- A regional aquatic facility services about 150,000 people, with a combination of a 50m and 25m or more pools, with at least one indoor pool that can host regional competitions, and ancillary complementary services and facilities, with a varied range of activities and programs.

All facilities rely heavily on community (e.g. general public) use. District and regional facilities will also rely more heavily on club use.

7.2.3 Shellharbour Aquatic Facilities Review, 2015

In 2015, the Shellharbour Aquatic Facilities Review was prepared by RMP & Associates. The review provided an overview of the use patterns and financial performance of each pool, while also looking more broadly at social and economic trends in aquatic facility provision. Some of the key findings of the report are listed below, and most findings remain relevant.

Key findings:

- That the current pools experience low numbers of visits, and the subsidies provided for visits are a high cost to Council.
- The pool facilities are aged, and there are no indoor heated pools which impacts on swimming programs run by schools.
- A lack of heating in the pools means that they're warmest during summer school holidays when the beaches are available to the community, at no cost.
- There are now a number of privately operated indoor heated swim schools.
- Olympic pools are suitable for lap swimming and competition, but do not effectively service families when there is no leisure equipment, cafes, quality change rooms or enough seating.
- Two of the pools are closed half of the year.

¹³³ Ibid.

¹³⁴ Parks and Leisure Australia (Western Australia) Region, *Guidelines for Community Infrastructure*, August 2012.

- The existing facilities compete with each other, particularly as there is little difference in their offerings and experience.
- There is an oversupply of lane space/lap swimming opportunities.

7.2.4 Aquatic Facilities Working Party

The Shellharbour LGA Aquatic Facilities Working Party (AFWP) was set up by Council, and the purpose of the group is to review the current use of swimming pools and investigate the future needs of the community in regard to swimming facilities. The group meets when and as needed, and includes Councillor Representatives, community representatives and Council staff.

The AFWP play a key role in investigating issues, concerns, challenges and barriers to aquatic facilities, and investigating, reviewing and recommending solutions. For example, the Working Group was recently involved in reviewing the results of a free child entry to pools pilot program, as well as participating in relevant workshops and being actively involved in exploring future options for Council owned aquatic facilities. The AFWP also played a key role during the development of the 2015 Shellharbour Aquatic Facilities review.

7.2.4.1 Free Child Entry Pilot Program

A recent Free Pool Entry Pilot program also provided some useful information on pool usage. The program removed fees for Child Passes for two weeks during the 18/19 Christmas New Year's period at Albion Park, Oak Flats and Warilla pools. The results of this pilot program show an increase in children swimming at both Warilla (+1,408) and Albion Park (+920) pools, as compared to same period the year prior. There was a particularly strong spike in child attendance rates at Warilla pools.

There was also a spike in adult swimming rates during this time, a combined result of hotter than average temperatures and more parents bringing their children to swim.

Key Findings:

→ *There is long-standing cultural value placed on the provision of pool facilities in Australia, underscoring the importance of Council's ongoing role in this space.*

→ *Over time, the delivery of these facilities has changed. In particular, there has been a shift towards providing pools alongside other facilities such as gyms to boost participation and engagement through co-location. There is also some evidence to suggest that there is financial benefit in co-locating a range of facilities.*

→ *Providing versatile access to water (such as through 'Splash Pads') is a growing trend, and has been recognised as an important element of play for young children. Such facilities can be provided in existing pool facilities, or in other community areas (such as in-front of libraries or in parks)*

→ *Shellharbour LGA has an existing mechanism (AFWP) for identifying the community's aquatic needs and potential barriers to access and use. It is considered that this group has ongoing benefit to the community, particularly if there is an arising need to review existing facilities, identify upgrades or discuss new facility installation.*

→ *The use of events and other community incentive (such as the Free Child Entry Pilot Program) has had demonstrated success in boosting attendance rates, highlighting the importance of aquatic-based activities and events to enhance the aquatic profile of Shellharbour.*

7.3 Aquatic Sport and Recreation Demand and Stakeholder Views

7.3.1 Swimming

For adults, pool-based swimming is the second most popular type of physical activity in NSW after gym participation, and the most popular for youth¹³⁵. Swimming in NSW is the most popular activity for children aged up to 11, mostly due to learn to swim classes.

While junior participation is relatively gender balanced, there are more adult females than males participating in swimming clubs, which reflects the Australian trend¹³⁶. However overall, swimming participation rates remain high across

Club participation is between 30,000 and 35,000 members, and remains in the top 15 club activities for adults. In the NSW South Eastern district, club membership was at 2,060 in 2018/19, which has remained relatively steady for the past five years¹³⁷.

Table 35: NSW swimming trends

Activity	Overall participation (adults) (000s)		Organised participation (adults) (000s)		Organised participation (children) (000s)	
	000s	Participation rate	000s	Participation rate	000s	Participation rate
Swimming	1,159.2	18.0%	592.0	9.2%	563.5	38.0%

Source: AusPlay survey results January 2018 – December 2018, accessed 27 May 2019

In Shellharbour, swimming trends vary across the LGA, based on community survey results. The surveys suggested that there was a relatively small proportion of respondents who swam daily (7%), with weekly swimming being the most popular response across the LGA at 33%. Less than 15% swam on a monthly or less than monthly basis, while 35% indicated that they did not swim at all.

For those who do swim on a daily, weekly or monthly basis, the majority of people have a preference for swimming in the ocean or in an outdoor swimming pool while the minority of respondents preferred indoor pools

Among the LGA precincts, there are a variety of swimming patterns. For example, daily swimming rates ranged between 0% (Precinct 5, Albion Park Rail) and 11% (Precinct 4, Oak Flats), while weekly swimming rates ranged between 21% (Precinct 4, Oak Flats) and 42% (Precinct 3, Blackbutt). Similarly, monthly swimming rates ranged from 5% (Precinct 5, Albion Park Rail) and 21% (Precinct 3, Blackbutt). Overall, regular involvement in swimming was particularly high in Precincts 2 (Shellharbour), 3 (Blackbutt) and 4 (Oak Flats).

Overall, non-participation in swimming was lowest in Precinct 3 (Blackbutt) (27%) and highest in Precinct 5 (Albion Park Rail) (47%).

In order of preference, the community prefers to swim at Beverley Whitfield ocean pool and Oak Flats, then Albion Park, and finally a small proportion at Warilla. In total, about 33% of the population use Oak Flats Swimming Pool (mostly females), and 17% use Beverley Whitfield (both males and females), while 35% use 'other' facilities such as private pools.

A small number of respondents to both surveys indicated that they travelled outside the LGA to swim, generally for the use of heated pools, or competition commitments.

Throughout the phone and online survey, comments provided by respondents provided a deeper understanding of the drivers behind pool use. These comments were made in response to a range of questions around what activities people travel outside the LGA for, what activities people cannot participate in, and why they prefer particular pools. Responses are thematically summarised in the table below.

¹³⁵ Sport Australia 2019, *AusPlay survey results January 2018 – December 2018*.

¹³⁶ Sport Australia 2019, *AusPlay survey results January 2018 – December 2018*.

¹³⁷ Swimming NSW, *2018-19 Annual Report*.

Table 36: Shellharbour community engagement comments

Pool referring to	Theme of comment
Beverley Whitfield	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Saltwater • Close to home • Near shops and other facilities • Free • Nice location • Clean • More shading and seating needed
Oak Flats	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roof over heated pool should be installed • Prefer this pool because it's heated • Can swim in winter • Has squad training and swimming lessons • Has aqua aerobics • Close to home • Nice layout • Quiet and not too busy
Warilla	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Close to home • Has undercover facilities
Albion Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Close to home • Well maintained • Plenty of space • Good staff • Shaded areas and canteen
General	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crowded and not enough seating • No indoor pool in Shellharbour - have to travel to Kiama • Need an indoor pool • Pools have poor accessibility (no steps) • Need a hydrotherapy pool • Pools don't cater to all groups • Difficulty finding somewhere to swim in winter • Difficulty in supervising children around pools • Age barriers in accessing the pool
Other pool external to Shellharbour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kiama has a heated pool • Wollongong University pool is deeper, heated, and accepts mermaid tails

7.3.2 Other Engagement Feedback

As noted in Appendix B and C (phone and online survey responses), respondents stated that they were more likely to swim on a daily and weekly basis than taking part in organised sport.

- Residents of Shellharbour, Blackbutt and Albion Park Rail (Precincts 1, 3, 5) use the **coastline/foreshore** just or nearly as much as they use their local park for socialising, walking, running. The foreshore/coastline is also popular for dog walking.

- A quarter of residents swim, and a large proportion (35%) of swimmers primarily use a facility that is not one of the four public pools. Around one-third of swimmers (32%) use the Oak Flats pool. The second most used facility is the ocean pool (Beverley Whitfield) (17%), with Albion Park Pool (14%) not far behind. Warilla is hardly used (2%).

7.3.2.1 Canoeing/kayaking

While not a 'top 15' sport as per the 2019 AusPlay data¹³⁸, recreational canoeing/ kayaking is a common activity around water bodies such as lakes and rivers either through use of private equipment, or equipment rental. Within Shellharbour, Lake Illawarra provides an ideal location for paddle craft, as well as other boat-based activities.

Close to Shellharbour is the Illawarra Canoe Club (located in Wollongong) which offers members and the public enjoyment, knowledge and safety of kayaking in the Illawarra, through training, education, recreational paddling, and social events.

One comment was made in the survey results that suggested that kayaking is increasingly difficult due to silt levels in the lake (therefore making it hard to get kayaks in and out).

Canoe launching area within the new Shell Cove Marina is proposed.

7.3.2.2 Rowing

There are approximately 5,000 members of Rowing NSW, with participants generally aged 12 and above. In Shellharbour, participation in rowing has remained relatively stable since 2016 and is expected to grow. The club caters mostly to experienced and masters rowers (27+ years), although are actively seeking to build a junior rowing program.

Through the Shellharbour club survey, the rowing club outlined some areas of concern in Deakin Reserve such as the condition and type of facilities and levels of maintenance. Other considerations such as fencing, accessibility and parking were considered satisfactory.

There was limited mention of rowing on the phone and online survey, likely as a result of the small, select size of the rowing club.

7.3.2.3 Sailing

Sailing Australia is the national body for sailing, and their annual report demonstrates that there is close to 82,300 members nationally, heavily skewed towards male participation in all states. Of this number, NSW makes up 23%¹³⁹.

Shellharbour LGA is home to the Oak Flats Sailing Club, which provides learn to sail classes as well as participating in local and state regattas. Participation has grown since 2013 and is expected to continue growing. There are slightly more seniors than juniors, and there are more males than females involved in the sport, although greater increase in female participation is expected in coming years.

Through their Club Survey response, the sailing club indicated that there was some level of dissatisfaction with the amenities and facilities available at Deakin Reserve, levels of maintenance and quality of surfaces. Most other aspects were considered satisfactory.

There was limited mention of sailing on the phone and online survey, likely as a result of the small, select size of the sailing club.

7.3.2.4 Surfing (Competition)

Surfing Australia oversees surfing activities ranging from high-performance competitions to surf school programs. Included in this are Board rider clubs which are recognised at the core foundation of competitive Australian surfing. In 2018, there were 216 affiliated clubs, with 21,949 members¹⁴⁰.

Shellharbour is home to two board rider clubs. The Southbridge Boardriders has been running since 1979, and participation is mostly junior. DV8 Malibu Riders Shellharbour has been running since 1985.

The club and community surveys revealed indicated that the Southbridge Boardriders were generally satisfied with available facilities and amenities, lighting and car parking around Warilla and other beaches. The level of satisfaction is likely due to the low resource requirements of the sport (e.g. no fields or other specific equipment such as goal posts to maintain, no particular need for seating or spectator amenities).

¹³⁸ Sport Australia 2019, *AusPlay survey results July 2018 – June 2019*.

¹³⁹ Australian Sailing, *Annual Report 2017-18*.

¹⁴⁰ Surfing Australia, *2017-18 Annual Report*.

The phone and online survey revealed little about the competitive surfing community, with only one mention of travel to undertake surfing (noting that many surfers will seek out different beaches according to daily conditions).

7.3.2.5 Surfing (Recreational)

While competition surfing has previously been reported on, it is important to recognise that a large proportion of surfers are non-competitive, with the majority of participants across both genders and all ages brackets participating for fun/enjoyment purposes. NSW participation rates sit at around 2% of the +15yo population, and are heavily skewed towards male participation aged between 25 and 54 (approximately 75% of all participants)¹⁴¹.

Engagement with the Shellharbour community revealed little about the recreational surfing community, with the exception of some respondents indicating that they sometimes travel outside Shellharbour to surf. Despite this, Shellharbour offers a number of prime locations for surfing, including a number of locations in the Killalea Reserve (including The Farm and Mystics), and Warilla and Shellharbour beaches.

There are also a number of Learn to Surf schools in Shellharbour (including Pines Surfing Academy) which offer lessons for those interested in learning to surf or refining their skills. In addition to regular surfing, kite surfing is also a popular activity in Shellharbour, particularly at Warilla North Beach during north-east winds.

7.3.2.6 Surf Life Saving

Across Australia, Surf Lifesaving is one of the largest volunteering movements in the country, running volunteer and competitive sport programs alike. It has over 176,000 volunteer members nationally¹⁴².

There are two Surf Life Saving clubs in Shellharbour LGA – Shellharbour and Warilla-Barrack Point. Shellharbour club is the larger of the two with 730 including nippers members, while Warilla-Barrack point has 450 including nippers. Both have experienced membership growth in recent years, and the proportion of male/female and junior/senior participation has remained stable. However, patrolling numbers are declining.

The responses from the club survey demonstrate a high level of satisfaction from both clubs regarding available facilities, maintenance, car parking, lighting and accessibility.

The phone and online survey had no responses regarding the need to travel to surf lifesaving, or any suggestion that there are community members who would like to participate, but cannot. Given that there are two Surf Life Saving clubs in Shellharbour LGA, and their volunteer-based approach that welcomes a wide range of community members to join, the lack of responses in the community survey is not surprising.

7.3.2.7 Other aquatic activities

In addition to the above, the location and geography of Shellharbour LGA means that residents and visitors alike have the opportunity to participate in a wide variety of aquatic-based activities, other than those listed above. Importantly, this will be non-structured activities in an informal environment, or privately run, and could include such activities as (but not limited to):

- Fishing
- Jet skiing
- Open water swimming
- Stand-up paddle boarding
- Scuba-diving
- Sea-kayaking
- Snorkelling
- Wind-surfing.

¹⁴¹ Sport Australia 2019, *Surfing – State of Play Report*.

¹⁴² Surf Life Saving Australia, *Annual Report 2019*.

Key Findings:

→ There are a wide variety of aquatic sports that the Shellharbour community participates in, including (but not limited to) canoeing/kayaking, swimming, surfing, surf life-saving, sailing and rowing.

→ Swimming remains one of the most popular aquatic sports to participate in, across age and gender brackets

→ As understood through the engagement feedback, there are a number of drivers of pool use including proximity to home, price of entry, cleanliness and presence of staff.

→ Barriers to participating in aquatic activities included a lack of accessible facilities, high cost of participation, distance to home and perceived age limitations.

→ Clean aquatic environments and surrounds was mentioned a number of times through engagement, highlighting the importance of ensuring that these areas are well-maintained to promote ongoing use.

More specific findings are below:

→ Swimming

Swimming remains a highly popular activity across ages and genders in Shellharbour.

Existing pool facilities provide a limited aquatic experience for users, particularly with consideration to the limited range of pool types, lack of heated pools and no indoor facilities. There is strong community interest in additional heated pools, and to some degree, an indoor facility. The Beverley Whitfield ocean pool is highly valued.

The age of the existing facilities also limits user experience, particularly for those with mobility challenges, and interesting experiences for young children.

Existing aquatic facilities are heavily stacked towards the north/ eastern side of the LGA, and reduce equality of access.

Survey respondents placed strong value on having pool facilities close to home

→ Boating:

Shellharbour LGA offers a wide range of boating opportunities across Lake Illawarra.

Of the available boating facilities, limited comments were made by the community. However, there was some indication that upgrades to facilities around Deakin Reserve may be required.

The quality of water in Lake Illawarra was not considered as part of this study, however minor comments were made regarding the level of silt in the lake, which may impede boating activities.

→ Surfing:

Shellharbour LGA offers opportunities for both recreational and competition surfing.

Surfers expressed general satisfaction with available facilities and amenities, likely due to the low resource requirements of the sport.

→ Surf Life Saving:

Shellharbour has two Surf Life Saving clubs, each with growing memberships.

Both clubs expressed high levels of satisfaction with current facilities.

7.4 Shellharbour Pool Facilities Assessment

7.4.1 Beverley Whitfield ocean pool

Beverley Whitfield Pool is the only ocean pool in Shellharbour. It is located at Shellharbour Village and is open all year round, with no specific opening or closing hours. The pool facility includes a shaded children's

area. Maintenance is conducted once a week, and it is patrolled on weekends only during September and October and every day during summer (mid-December to late January), as well as on weekends and public/school until Anzac Day.

Community engagement through the phone and online survey found that for respondents of the phone survey, 17% of those preferred to swim outdoors primarily used Beverley Whitfield Pool on a daily, weekly or monthly basis. This made the pool the third most popular outdoor pool to swim in. Of respondents who preferred outdoor pools, the majority from Precinct 2 (Shellharbour) preferred to swim at Beverley Whitfield (33%), followed by 18% from Precinct 3 (Blackbutt) and 16% from Precinct 5 (Albion Park Rail).

Interestingly, Beverley Whitfield Pool was the most used pool for respondents of the online survey, at 44% of respondents.

The phone survey revealed that men were slightly more likely than women to state that Beverley Whitfield Pool was their primary pool (18% of men compared with 16% of women). Preference for Beverley Whitfield Pool was highest among those aged 60+ (28%) and lowest among those aged 18-39 (7%). A low percentage of people who identified as having a disability used Beverley Whitfield Pool (8%). Similarly, only a small proportion (11%) of people who were part of a sports club used the pool, potentially underscoring the role that free facilities play for people who are unwilling or unable to join a sports team.

The main reasons that respondents cited for using Beverley Whitfield included:

- Saltwater
- Close to home or other community facilities like the Surf Club
- Clean
- Well patrolled
- Free

Table 37: Summary of Beverley Whitfield Ocean Pool

Area	Features
Swimming facilities	50yard Olympic saltwater pool Toddlers pool (shaded)
Ancillary amenities/facilities	Toilets/showers, change rooms
Activities	n/a
Cost to use (as per Council's Delivery Program)	Free
Broader reserve	BBQ, outdoor exercise equipment, picnic table, car parking
Location and key adjacent land uses	Shellharbour Village, retail/food and beverage Passive open space Play space – Little Park
Challenges	Unheated Only lifeguarded in summer
Opportunities	Location, Tourism attraction, Open all year Highest number of visitors Close to Shellharbour Village shops
Ongoing/planned upgrades (as per Council's draft capital works program)	New seating and picnic areas are being installed by Council near the Beverley Whitfield Pool, as well as outdoor exercise equipment within the Shellharbour Reserve Renewal of baby pool in Shellharbour Ocean Pool
Club use	Shellharbour Dolphins Shellharbour Tri Club School use (summer only – weekdays and Saturday mornings)

7.4.2 Oak Flats Swimming Pool

Oak Flats Swimming Pool is open every day, and includes a 50m pool, a 25m heated pool and a toddler's pool. The facility is open during summer (September – April) every day from 6am – 7pm. The 25m pool is open on weekdays and Saturday mornings in winter (April – September) from 6am – 6:30pm. The pool offers aqua aerobics classes, as well as parents and babies water confidence, learn to swim programs and squad training.

The Phone survey found that Oak Flats was a popular outdoor pool for respondents who had a preference for an outdoor pool. Overall, 33% primarily used Oak Flats on a daily, weekly or monthly basis, making it the top response after 'other pools' (inclusive of private facilities). Almost two thirds (66%) of respondents from Precinct 4 (Oak Flats) preferred to swim at Oak Flats, dropping to 54% of residents from Precinct 3 (Blackbutt) and 31% of residents from Precinct 1 (Warilla).

For those who preferred to swim outdoors, Oak Flats was the most popular pool among women (38%), those aged 18-39 (37%), those who had lived in Shellharbour for more than 10 years (35%), and those who were members of a sports club (39%) – the latter likely due to the existence of the Oak Flats swimming Club. Excluding 'Other' pools, Oak Flats also had the highest use by those who identified as having a disability (22%).

Reasons cited by respondents for using Oak Flats included:

- Heated facilities
- Has a variety of pools to choose from
- Offers swimming lessons and other classes like aqua aerobics
- Close to home.

Table 38: Summary of Oak Flats pool

Area	Features
Swimming facilities	50m Olympic pool 25m heated pool Toddlers pool
Ancillary amenities/facilities	Toilets/showers, change rooms
Activities	Aqua aerobics 3 days a week Learn to swim programs all year round Pool parties School carnivals
Cost (as per Council's Delivery Program)	Various fees for general admission, different for cold and heated pools, activities etc., special fares/discounts and passes
Broader reserve	Car parking, grassed areas/shade Incorporates Kingston St Park (passive space) with play space
Location and key adjacent land uses	Adjacent Geoff Shaw and Keith Bond ovals, tennis courts and Oak Flats dog agility park
Challenges	50m and toddler pool unheated Closed for half the year Lacking modern facilities No leisure play areas Too similar to other pools
Opportunities	Create a recreation hub also incorporating adjacent active uses Room for additional development/ upgrades Heated 25m pool
Ongoing/planned upgrades (as per Council's draft capital works program)	Various upgrades including pool blanket, heating, park furniture, plant renewal as a result of recent sports grants.

Club use	Oak Flats Swimming Club School use (summer only)
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7.4.3 Albion Park Swimming Pool

Albion Park Swimming Pool offers an outdoor 50m pool, an infant's pool and a toddler pool. The facility is open every day between 6am and 6pm in summer (late October to late March), but is closed during winter. The pool offers learn to swim programs, and aqua aerobics.

The phone survey found that of swimmers who preferred to swim outdoors, 14% generally swam at Albion Park. The pool also ranked lower down in the community survey, with 24 people indicating that they preferred Albion Park Pool as a public pool facility.

Patronage was heavily skewed towards outdoor swimmers from Precincts 6-9 (Rural East, Albion Park, Rural West, Rural West and Calderwood), with 46% of swimmers from these precincts choosing to swim at Albion Park. Just over a quarter (16%) of outdoor swimmers from Precinct 5 (Albion Park Rail) also swam at Albion Park Pool.

There was a large gender difference among survey respondents, with 22% of males stating they primarily use Albion Park Pool compared with just 7% of females. In terms of age groups, 20% of those aged 60 and over primarily used Albion Park Pool, followed by 18% of 18-39 year olds and 7% of 40-59 year olds.

Of those who preferred outdoor pools, 16% who identified as having a disability swam at Albion Park pool, as did 17% of those who were part of a sports club.

The main reasons that respondents chose to swim at Albion Park included:

- Proximity to home
- Cleanliness
- Well maintained
- Friendly staff

Table 39: Summary of Albion Park Pool

Area	Characteristics
Swimming facilities	50m Olympic pool Toddlers pool Infants pool
Ancillary amenities/facilities	Toilets/showers, change rooms
Activities	Aqua aerobics twice a week Swim school
Cost (as per Council's Delivery Program)	Various fees for general admission, activities etc., special fares/discounts and passes
Broader reserve	Grassed areas/shade
Location and key adjacent land uses	Separate car parking adjacent Adjacent Con O'Keefe Oval, Albion Park Library and large scale retail, skate park
Challenges	Unheated Close for half the year Lacking modern facilities No leisure play areas
Opportunities	Create a recreation hub also incorporating adjacent active uses Located in an attractive setting Close to other community facilities and shops

Area	Characteristics
Ongoing/planned upgrades (as per Council's draft capital works program)	Various upgrades including to hydraulic lift, park furniture, play & fitness area, pool blanket, pool heating and splash pad as a result of recent sports grants.
Club use	Albion Park Swimming Club School use (summer only)

7.4.4 Warilla Swimming Pool

Warilla Pool includes a 50m lap pool, and a toddler pool. The facility also offers aqua aerobic classes, as well as intensive learn to swim programs. The pool is open every day from 6am to 6pm in summer (late October to late March), but is closed in winter.

Through community engagement, the phone survey found that of swimmers who preferred to swim outdoors, only 2% generally swam at Warilla. These respondents were females, aged 18-39, who did not have a disability. The pool also ranked lower down in the community survey, with 12 people indicating that they generally swam at Warilla. It was also the lowest ranked pool of preference in the online survey with 11 responses.

The main reasons that respondents chose to swim at Warilla included:

- Close to home
- Has undercover facilities

Table 40: Summary of Warilla Pool

Area	Characteristics
Swimming facilities	50m Olympic pool Toddlers pool
Ancillary amenities/facilities	Toilets/showers, change rooms
Activities	Aqua aerobics once a week Learn to swim
Cost (as per Council's Delivery Program)	Various fees for general admission, activities etc., special fares/discounts and passes
Broader reserve	Large grassed area, some trees
Location and key adjacent land uses	Adjacent car parking Warilla Neighbourhood Centre, basketball court, large park/Bensons Creek
Challenges	Unheated Closed for half the year Lacking modern facilities No leisure play areas
Opportunities	Create a recreation hub also incorporating adjacent uses Surrounded by open space Good street exposure Has space to host other community events
Ongoing/planned upgrades (as per Council's draft capital works program)	n/a

Key Findings:

- Shellharbour has four pools, all of which provide a 50m Olympic pool, and some provide smaller 25m or toddler pools as well.
- The pools are generally well located within surrounding green spaces, however in some cases are not located close to other facilities such as kiosks or cafes. Beverley Whitfield Pool was highlighted as a pool that has good access to food and other services.
- Only one 25m pool is heated in the LGA, which some of the community find difficult to manage particularly in winter months. Recently, Albion Park Pool and Oak Flats pool were upgraded to include pool blankets to improve temperatures.
- Beverley Whitfield Pool is a much-loved local icon, popular with locals and tourists alike. This aligns with broader trends about the cultural value placed on ocean pools in NSW.
- Warilla Pool sometimes hosts other community events, highlighting that pool facilities can play an expanded role in community events and open space provision.

* * * *

8 Precinct-based OSR Analysis

This section uses the Draft NSW Government Architect Guidelines (see Section 2.5) as the benchmark for a precinct-by-precinct analysis of open space and recreation issues, now and in the next 10 years based on population projections.

As explained in Section 2.5.2.1, this section reviews each precinct's current and future Open Space and Recreation needs based on an eight-point open space design framework (detailed in Attachment 1). The framework consists of eight performance criteria, which are based on and adapted from the draft GANSW Guide. The criteria include:

1. **Quantity**
2. **Access and distribution**
3. **Physical attributes and safety**
4. **Demographic growth and profile**
5. **Quality and sustainability**
6. **Diversity**
7. **Hierarchy, role and integration**
8. **Community and stakeholder use**

While there are eight performance criteria in the open space design framework, the below review of each precinct is structured according to seven sub-sections; with 'physical attributes and safety' and 'quality and sustainability' criteria combined into one sub-section for brevity.

Each section also includes an active space issues and options sub-section, plus a set of key findings.

8.1 Precinct 1 Warilla

8.1.1 Quantity

There is a total of 48 passive and 10 active open space reserves in Warilla.

Table 41: Open Space in Warilla (Precinct 1)

Passive open space		Active open space		Other key open spaces of note	Planned open space
#	Ha	#	Ha		
48	53.5	10	37.6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Environmental reserves along foreshore Lake/ocean foreshore Little Lake Outdoor exercise equipment (Reddall Reserve, Strong Reserve) Warilla swimming pool Sportsfields Tennis, netball and basketball courts 	n/a

8.1.2 Access and distribution

In terms of passive open space, there typically is a park every 400 to 600 metres, with the exception of the southern portion of the precinct. The precinct is also well covered in terms of quantity of open space, although approximately 10% of dwellings are **not** within a 400m walkable catchment of open space. For a map visualisation of these catchment areas, and explanatory notes on the methodology adopted for this analysis, see Attachment 4.

A majority of the areas not within 400m walkable catchment are within Barrack Heights, however a number of active reserves exist in this area. As such, in Barrack Heights:

- The southern and north-western portions of the Jock Brown Oval Reserve contain space that can be used for informal recreation. A playground exists in the north-western portion of the reserve. Some picnic tables already exist in this portion of the reserves but there could be improved features such as seating, water fountains, and footpaths to facilitate access to the play space. The oval is not fenced and is currently available to the community outside of training/games.
- The Barrack Heights sportsfield is also available to the community outside of training/games.
- In addition, a number of ancillary reserves (not included in the GIS analysis) provide walking linkages between dwellings and open space that are actually within a 400m walkable catchment.
- Some dwellings are within 400m of an active open space reserve and 600m of major passive open space (Blackbutt Reserve) which is within guidelines.

Other dwellings in other parts of the precinct that are not within a 400m walkable catchment of open space, are also all within a 400m catchment of active open space, none of which are fenced, and some of which contain areas for informal recreation- namely **Freeman Park, Morley Park, Howard Fowles, and Oakleigh Park**. Each is close to other open space, including the foreshore (within 450-550m generally).

Some are within walking distance of open space that are just under 3,000m², which is acceptable.

It is noted that in general, existing ancillary reserves create good connections between open spaces, or between residential areas in general. They provide a foundation for a connected linear network of open spaces which can be expanded on into the future. There are also opportunities to further link the foreshore to open spaces and residential areas further inland. There may also be an opportunity to improve access and useability of **Bensons Creek** with a walking/cycling track.

8.1.3 Physical attributes, safety and quality

A large number of these reserves, and particularly local parks away from the foreshore, have limited usability, due to their relatively small size (less than 1,000m²), or because they only have one street frontage, sometimes via a cul-de-sac, with ageing and/or limited facilities (sometimes no facilities), are partly used for car parking. The fact that most dwellings are within 400m of parks that are larger than 0.3ha, suggests that there may be some redundancy in the current number of spaces. However, in some areas, and particularly Barrack Heights, these smaller reserves do provide residents with accessible open spaces within 400m.

The provision of these local parks could be considered for rationalisation, particularly in the Mount Warrigal suburb, along the Warilla/Lake Illawarra suburb boundary. It is acknowledged that the urban design that dominates the precincts is a key limitation to rationalising open spaces, whilst preserving a 400m walkability to open spaces. These older areas are therefore relatively inefficient in terms of walking and cycling connectivity.

A number of reserves are adjacent or within short walking distance from schools which is a good characteristic of open space provision that should be retained.

A total of 26 play spaces exist throughout the precinct, mainly within local parks. The quality of these play spaces is generally not adequate, with some of them with no or very limited facility in respect to seating, shading, a bin adjacent to the play space, or adequate track to access the play space.

Based on the analysis in Table 41, there is a current oversupply of playgrounds in this precinct. Given the demographic profile, the number of play spaces could be rationalised to provide higher quality spaces that cater for different age groups. This is partly achieved in the **Reddall Reserve** master plan report, which seeks to include several areas of play of different scales along the foreshore and provide an all-inclusive playground.

Some of the foreshore is currently being embellished (Reddall Reserve for example), with some other areas particularly along the Lake in need of upgrade and basic facilities (such as seating). The master plan identifies a necessary upgrade of existing playgrounds which is consistent with the above observations.

Most of the environmental reserve in Mount Warrigal is not useable, being either densely vegetated and/or steep.

8.1.4 Demographic growth and profile

There was no growth in the Mount Warrigal and Barrack Heights suburbs between 2006 and 2016, and limited growth in Lake Illawarra and Warilla. Only limited growth is expected in the next 10 years.

Over a quarter of the population is aged 60 and over, and 21% is aged 17 or under.

Half of the population consists of single or couple families with no children, and 42% of the population consists of families with children.

8.1.5 Diversity

Given the precinct is bounded by the lake and the ocean, a natural diversity of recreational opportunities exists in the precinct, complemented by a range of reserves further inland. Outdoor exercise equipment is also provided along the foreshore (**Strong** and **Reddall Reserves**).

The precinct provides two off-leash dog areas, one within **Jock Brown Oval Reserve**, and one in Mount Warrigal (though due to the topography, some residents would find it difficult to walk to the Mount Warrigal area).

Half of the eastern precinct's sportsfields are within the Warilla precinct, and provide a good range of sport and active recreation opportunities.

8.1.6 Hierarchy, role and integration

The precinct contains one city-wide park at **Reddall Reserve** (incorporating Pelican View Park). This is adjacent a second city-wide park (Blackbutt Forest Reserve in Precinct 3), located along its southern boundary.

While the entirety of the precinct's foreshore is not council-owned open space, it remains that this foreshore area is an important aspect to preserve in the future, in order to promote public access to and environmental protection of the foreshore. The foreshore plays an important role in the LGA and provides recreational opportunities to the local population as well as to visitors, which should be recognised in the type and level of facilities that are provided along the water.

Council staff have indicated that the Lake foreshore attracts visitors from other parts of the LGA and adjacent LGA, as well as from Greater Sydney, particularly during weekends and holidays. It is necessary to ensure that these areas are maintained to an adequate level. This was recognised in the Master Plan report for **Reddall Reserve**. The Master plan includes an event area which reflects the destination nature of this reserve.

Central to the precinct is the **Shellharbour War Memorial Park** which contains the Warilla pool, a basketball court, and is adjacent the Warilla Neighbourhood Centre and Library. This is a large reserve which may benefit from additional features and facilities and a holistic review of its role (including a review of the Warilla pool which is not in high demand). The park has some issues with vandalism at night, which further underscores the importance of enhancing the area with appropriate e (e.g. lighting) and other methods to discourage anti-social behaviour. The reserve is adjacent Bensons Creek, but a majority of the reserve is within a low flood hazard zone¹⁴³.

8.1.7 Community and stakeholder use

Most respondent residents from this precinct report using their local park, as well as the ocean/coastline or lake/foreshore on a daily or weekly basis and would drive to these areas. Feedback from residents from this precinct indicated that they have the highest rate of cycling to open spaces.

Other respondent feedback from the Warilla Precinct include:

- Only about a quarter of respondents use playgrounds weekly.
- About 60% of residents travel outside Shellharbour for sport.
- Nearly 30% of people who are members of sports club reside in the Warilla precinct.

¹⁴³ Shellharbour City Council 2016, *Elliott Lake – Little Lake Floodplain Risk Management Study*.

- About a third of people who reported having a disability reside in the Warilla precinct.

Most respondents from this precinct indicated they were are satisfied with the current provision of parks, sportsfields and playgrounds. While they indicated they did do not know about the provision of courts, indoor sports facilities and off-leash dog areas, nearly a third reported that they were satisfied with the current provision of indoor sports facilities.

Those who were dissatisfied were mostly dissatisfied for the reasons outlined in Table 42.

Table 42: Community Feedback from Residents of Warilla (Precinct 1)

Parks	Sportsfields	Courts	Playgrounds	Indoor sports	Off-leash areas
Poor maintenance including mowing, lack of bins, needles and glass (safety issue)	Poor condition (surface, seating)	Not enough	Poor condition, old equipment, need more modern equipment	Poor advertising of events	Not enough
Poor condition: Old equipment, run down	Poor maintenance, mowing	Poor condition	Maintenance and safety issues (glass etc.)	Local facility could be a plus	
Shortage of family friendly areas	Vandalism, glass		Shortage/ more facilities could be put around the Lake		

Warilla respondents also commented that:

- Parks in Barrack Heights in general have deteriorated and are unsafe
- The foreshore requires an upgrade, including suggestions for a skate park, a scooter park, additional shade and barbeque facilities
- Council took a good initiative when replacing the unused facility with basketball in Warilla – more similar actions would be appreciated.
- Most of the funding is thought to go to Shellharbour and Shell Cove.

In addition, a petition was put to Council in June 2019 in relation to necessary upgrades at **Doonside Park** and need to make the space more attractive to children. This is consistent with the above analysis that play spaces in the precinct should be reviewed to ensure that quality spaces are provided.

8.1.8 Active Open Space Issues and Options

Active reserves in Warilla have an average size of 3.7ha which is consistent with existing guidelines. There is a theoretical oversupply of sports fields in the precinct, however analysis indicates that:

- At a minimum, upgrades are needed at **Cec Glenholmes Oval** and **King Mickey Park**
- **Jock Brown** - one of the few AFL purpose-build facilities - has outdated facilities, and is not used a lot anymore. Half of the Jock Brown reserve is underutilised. It would need to be embellished to encourage more informal recreational uses or could contribute to the environmental assets of the LGA. In addition, **Jock Brown** and **JN Memorial Park** are both underutilised and very close to each other providing similar level facilities
- **Freeman Park, Andrew Park JN King Memorial Park** not much used for sport, but may play an important role for informal recreation or other uses such as off-leash dog areas.

There is a reported undersupply of tennis, netball, basketball facilities in the precinct, and there should be at least one skate park facility (district level). This is consistent with feedback received during engagement, particularly in relation to tennis and basketball.

In terms of active open space, the Government Architect's guidelines suggest that 80% of dwellings should be within 2km of at least two sports spaces of 4ha. The current provision is consistent with these guidelines.

Precinct 1 Warilla – Key Findings

→ There is no need to increase the number of reserves in the Warilla precinct and the current provision will also be adequate for the estimated 2031 population.

→ The coastline/lake foreshore seems to play the role of a 'city-wide park' for residents of Shellharbour. It also plays a broader, regional role as it attracts visitors from the rest of the LGA and beyond. This should be recognised in the level of facilities that are provided in these areas.

→ The evidence suggests that the provision of local parks in Precinct 1 be reviewed to investigate opportunities for rationalisation. This should be done in parallel to a review of the provision of play spaces to also seek to achieve rationalisation in order to create efficient, quality and multipurpose play spaces that also address the needs of older children.

→ Investigate opportunities for the development of a skate park for multi generations.

→ Ensure there are enough facilities for older generations to enjoy open spaces.

→ Ensure there is easy access to facilities including footpaths on streets to access facilities and paths and seating within reserves to address the needs of older generations, people with disability and generally all who may find it difficult to travel by foot, including people travelling with prams.

→ Continue the embellishment of the foreshore and provide adequate levels of facilities that address the needs of residents (multi generations) and visitors, with due consideration given to environmental protection and flood prone zones. Foreshore renewal is identified in the Reddall Reserve Master plan, which is a good outcome.

→ Improve the connections between spaces, leveraging off the existing network of reserves including ancillary reserves.

→ Investigate the role of the War Memorial Park in a holistic manner, including due consideration given to the role of Warilla Pool

→ Investigate the roles of Freeman Park, Andrew Park JN King Memorial Park for active or multipurpose recreation

→ Review the role of Jock Brown reserve and opportunities to better utilise the space, which may involve a more nature-oriented use of the land, also considering the proximity to JN King Memorial Park and efficiencies that can be achieved.

8.2 Precinct 2 Shellharbour

8.2.1 Quantity

There is a total of 42 passive and 5 active open space reserves in the Shellharbour precinct.

Table 43: Open Space in Shellharbour (Precinct 2)

Passive open space		Active open space		Other key open spaces of note	Planned open space
#	Ha	#	Ha		
42	39.7	5	28.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Environmental reserves along coastline and human made wetlands Outdoor exercise equipment (Barrack reserve) Bass Point Reserve Killalea State Park Beverley Whitfield Ocean pool Skate park 	Environmental reserve along coastline Sporting field at Shell Cove Open space around the harbour foreshore and parks in the commercial area at Shell Cove.

8.2.2 Access and distribution

Nearly all dwellings in the Shellharbour Precinct are within 400m of open space (see Attachment 4). Approximately 4% are outside this catchment, which mostly includes dwellings in Shell Cove adjacent the area currently under development, which will include open space. A modified concept plan for the remainder of the Shell Cove development area has been approved and contains 8.5ha of useable open space. This includes linear connections to adjacent urban areas. Based on this concept plan, a majority of the future development area will be within a 400m walkable catchment of open space, with the exception of the south-eastern corner of the area.

The majority of open space in this precinct is contained within two reserves, Bass Point and Killalea State Park, which provide significant passive recreational opportunities.

Smaller parks and additional environmental reserves exist throughout the Precinct. The benefit of these spaces is acknowledged as a key social infrastructure provision as they provide space for a wide range of sporting and recreational opportunities. With ongoing population growth (particularly through development in Shell Cove), the inclusion of various open spaces within the Shell Cove development is considered a positive contribution to the area.

There is a good connectivity of spaces in Shell Cove and along the foreshore, as well as between Myimbarr Community Park with adjacent precincts (such as Blackbutt Forest Reserve). This could be further strengthened to connect open spaces in Shell Cove and Shellharbour suburb. It is recommended that open spaces in the future areas of Shell Cove be connected to link the existing residential areas to the foreshore.

8.2.3 Physical attributes, safety and quality

It is noted that most dwellings are within 400m walking distance of open space larger than 0.3ha. There are 13 play spaces currently in the precinct, which well exceeds the theoretical requirement. However, it was mentioned during the engagement that Little Park was particularly crowded.

There are a number of parks in Shellharbour that are under 0.3ha, and which may be reviewed to identify if redundant in terms of use and management practices. Some contain play spaces which use, or adequacy may also be reviewed.

Some of the play spaces are likely to require upgrade or maintenance particularly those in the Shellharbour suburb. The popularity of Little Park should be further explored to replicate a similar model in one or more alternate locations.

Residents of the precinct often feedback that parks were not well maintained.

8.2.4 Demographic growth and profile

The Shellharbour precinct currently represents 15% of the LGA population, which will increase to 26% by 2031, mostly due to development in Shell Cove. Population change by 2031 is expected to be of about 23%. Another 2,800 residents, approximately, are expected in Shell Cove by 2031.

It is expected that the future population in Shell Cove includes a larger proportion of school aged children, and adults between 35 and 59, compared to the LGA. There will also be a larger proportion of people aged over 60. It will be important to address the needs of all generations.

8.2.5 Diversity

Passive open space and environmental reserves exist along the majority of the coastline. Only two playspaces exist on the foreshore, which may need to be increased given the popularity of these spaces. There is a total of 13 play spaces across the precinct, mostly located in Shellharbour and Shell Cove, with additional play spaces planned in Shell Cove. The approved modified concept plan includes three playspaces, but two actually already exist, and only one new one is proposed.

There is also a community garden in both Shell Cove and Albion Park, however the garden in Shell Cove is on 'borrowed' land and a permanent space for the garden will need to be found in the coming years.

Given the expected popularity of the precinct, there is reason to revamp the central new play space (as shown on the concept plan) to a district level facility, and certainly one that caters for a range of ages. Demand should also be monitored in relation to the potential need for a local play space in the south-eastern portion of the development area. This could be established on the coastline, at the south-eastern edge of the boat harbour precinct.

8.2.6 Hierarchy, role and integration

While there are no reserves categorised "city-wide" in the Shellharbour Precinct, Beverley Whitfield Ocean Pool and adjacent reserve is a major attraction and should be considered a city-wide asset. In addition, it was advised that the Little Park reserve and playground also contributed to the significant attraction of this portion of the foreshore. Council staff indicated that this area of the precinct, which also contains Shellharbour Village, attracts visitors from the rest of the LGA and adjacent LGA, as well as from Greater Sydney, particularly during weekends and holidays. It may be necessary to ensure that these areas are maintained to an adequate level, and also that residents of the precinct have access to other, quieter facilities if required.

While not a Council owned asset, Bass Point reserve also represents a significant open space area for the entire LGA and is therefore represents a high-order area of open space that offers LGA-wide opportunities.

It is noted that some areas of the coastline marked as passive open space only have limited usability and should be protected and possibly re-categorised to environmental space (such as the open space area south of the Beachside Holiday Park).

8.2.7 Community and stakeholder use

Residents from this precinct (as well as residents from precincts 3 and 4) were most likely (compared to other precincts) to use their local park, a sportsfield or the ocean/coastline on a weekly basis.

Other respondent feedback from the Shellharbour Precinct include:

- Approximately a quarter also use their local park on a daily basis.
- Residents are more likely, compared to other precincts, to use a playground, but not on a regular basis (monthly or less).

Most reported they were satisfied with the current provision of parks, sportsfields and playgrounds, and do not know about the provision of courts, indoor sports facilities and off-leash dog areas. However, over a third reported they are satisfied with the current provision of indoor sports facilities and off-leash dog areas.

More off-leash dog areas were requested through the engagement process, with a few respondents mentioning that parts of the coastline could become off-leash dog areas, at least between certain times of the day (early morning/ evening).

Those who were dissatisfied were mostly dissatisfied for the reasons outlined in Table 44.

Table 44: Community Feedback from Shellharbour residents (Precinct 2)

Parks	Sportsfields	Courts	Playgrounds	Indoor sports	Off-leash areas
Maintenance – mowing	Seating is limited	Shortage of tennis courts	Equipment is old	Not enough	Not enough on beach
Old equipment	Maintenance of fields	Shortage of basketball courts	Different ages are not considered.		Not enough in general
Not much space for children – need bigger parks	Cricket nets need upgrading	Existing need upgrading	Vandalism		
Need outdoor exercise equipment			Not enough		

Shellharbour (Precinct 2) respondents also commented that:

- They are likely to use their local park on a daily or weekly basis, as well as the coastline or other natural areas.
- They are likely to use a sportsfield on a weekly basis.
- They are less likely however, to use a playground or an off-leash dog area. Most respondents walk to the open space they use.
- **Little Park** is reported as very crowded
- **Russell East Park** on Eastern Avenue in Shellharbour is outdated and unsafe
- **Myimbarr Community Park sportsground** also need an upgrade, according to residents.

8.2.8 Active open space issues and options

There is a good provision of sportsfields in the Shellharbour precinct, based on current population numbers and also those in 10 years' time.

There is however a shortage of tennis, basketball and netball courts based on guidelines. This was also reflected in some of the engagement, particularly in relation to tennis courts and basketball.

Active reserves in the Shellharbour Precinct have an average size of 5.6ha which is consistent with existing guidelines.

There is a theoretical oversupply of sports fields in the precinct, with fields for sports including (but not limited to) football, rugby league, cricket, and AFL. Additionally, new fields are planned as part of the Shell Cove development.

The precinct also contains new facilities such as the Myimbarr Community Park fields that are considered to be high value facilities. However it was mentioned during engagement that there was potentially room for a third ground to be created, which could be used for football (soccer) and AFL. It was also mentioned that the athletics parks in Myimbarr Community Park needed an upgrade, potentially to a synthetic surface.

Precinct 2 Shellharbour – Key Findings and Options Arising

- Review the overall provision of play spaces as part of a LGA-wide study
- Review the south-eastern portion of the Shell Cove development area and adjacent open space/foreshore to activate this space and ensure good connections to the urban area. In the longer term, this could become part of a walking/cycling track to Bass Point.
- Recommend another local level play space be established in the Shell Cove area
- The popularity of Little Park should be further explored to understand the reasons for such popularity and potential improvements, in order to replicate a similar model in one or more alternate locations.
- There is good walkability in the precinct which is recognised by residents. This should be further strengthened
- Identify opportunities to integrate court facilities in active or passive reserves
- Identify locations for, and support the ongoing provision of a community garden in Shell Cove.

8.3 Precinct 3 Blackbutt

8.3.1 Quantity

There is a total of 36 passive and 1 active open space reserves in the Blackbutt Precinct.

Table 45: Open Space in Blackbutt (Precinct 3)

Passive open space		Active open space		Other key open spaces of note	Planned open space
#	Ha	#	Ha		
36	126.7	1	3.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Off-leash dog area/ dog agility park (Whittaker St) • Half basketball court • Blackbutt Forest • Harrison Park 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth orientated recreation facility at Harrison Park • Sporting fields east of shopping centre (Benson Basin fields)

8.3.2 Access and distribution

Nearly 100% of dwellings in the precinct are within 400m of passive open space (see Attachment 4).

There is a limited provision of good-sized passive open space, however there are a number of environmental reserves which provide some level of passive recreational opportunities. These environmental reserves also form a good linear network in the precinct which also connects to other precincts. This could be reinforced and improved with better cycling and walking paths. This is all the more important as this precinct is an employment hub, and better connections would support sustainable commuting.

Some areas do not have access to a playground within 400m. The provision and quality of play spaces in this precinct would benefit from being further reviewed.

8.3.3 Physical attributes, safety and quality

Blackbutt Forest Reserve represents approximately a quarter of the precinct and is the largest natural bushland reserve in the Illawarra region. It is home to a range of fauna and flora species, and is a significant asset for passive recreation. In addition, a number of mountain biking trails have been informally developed over time in the reserve.

Some precinct parks, including Blackbutt, and some of the play spaces are less accessible because they are in a park that has only one road frontage, or because of topography.

It is therefore all the more important to provide a new space which is topographically accessible to all, and contains a good quality play space that caters for all generations.

While there are some reserves of relatively small size (e.g. below 3,000m²), a majority of reserves are located adjacent other ones, thereby creating a physical network in the precinct, also linking to open spaces in adjacent areas.

There are however opportunities to better connect open spaces in the precinct. While existing passive and environmental reserves create natural linear networks, these need to be better connected. For example, the Flinders Environmental Reserves could connect Flinders to the Myimbarr Community Park fields and ultimately to the coastline. However, the existing pedestrian and cycling infrastructure does not currently enable these connections (limited availability of footpaths and adequate and safe crossings). This is the case for a number of existing spaces which could be better connected to create networks across the LGA. In order to maximize the useability of these networks, easier walkability and cyclability paths across roads could be investigated.

8.3.4 Demographic growth and profile

The precinct contains the Shellharbour City Centre and the largest centre zone in the LGA, which includes the Stockland shopping centre. The precinct is a shopping destination as well as an employment hub and contains a number of community facilities including the new civic centre.

As previously noted, nearly 3,000 additional residents are expected in this precinct by 2031. Growth in this precinct will also be driving growth in the east of the LGA. New residential development is expected in the precinct, mostly in the form of apartments south and east of the centre (1, 2 and 3 bedrooms). Seniors housing is also expected with about 430 new seniors' dwellings by 2028, including a village green.

It is therefore expected that new dwelling forms will have smaller amounts of private open space and residents will need access to public open space of quality, to be easily accessible for all generations. Workers and visitors of the precinct would also benefit from a space that provides informal recreational opportunities that are easily accessible and safe.

The Blackbutt Precinct is relatively younger than others in the LGA, in particular the Flinders suburb which has a larger proportion of children, and generally less persons under 50 years of age compared to the rest of the LGA.

8.3.5 Diversity

It is noted that a youth orientated recreational facility is currently being investigated for Harrison Park. This seems a worthwhile option, noting the presence of the youth community centre, however there is also value in giving consideration to establishing a large multi-generational facility in lieu of a single skate park albeit potentially reducing useability for younger age cohorts.

There is also potential value in outdoor exercise equipment being installed adjacent this large play space, which could also cater for workers of the precinct.

In saying this, there seems to be an oversupply of play spaces in the precinct, with 13 playgrounds provided in an area of three kilometres by one kilometre. As mentioned above, the provision of play spaces should be reviewed.

8.3.6 Hierarchy, role and integration

Blackbutt Reserve plays a significant role in providing passive recreation in the whole LGA. Its role is recognised at a city-wide level. Another facility, at least of district level, should be established to provide a space of significant size to the existing workforce and visitors of the centre, and ongoing and future residential development adjacent the centre.

While Harrison Park is categorised as a city-wide park, existing facilities currently do not suffice to fulfill this role. Its useable size (half of the reserve is taken up by wetlands) is just about adequate. Its location near

an employment, retail and institutional hub is an asset. As previously advised, it is recommended that the role of Harrison Park be strengthened, and that the diversity of uses be improved including by providing a multi-generational play space. This park could also be a central location for community events such as outdoor movies.

8.3.7 Community and stakeholder use

Residents from this Precinct 3 (as well as residents from precincts 3 and 4) were most likely compared to other precincts to use their local park, a sportsfield or the ocean/coastline on a weekly basis. They are also more likely compared to all other precincts to use another park than their local park, and visit the Lake foreshore on a weekly basis. A quarter also use their local park on a daily basis. Most people never use an off-leash dog area.

Most people in this precinct are satisfied with the current provision of parks, sportsfields, playgrounds and indoor sports facilities. Like most other precinct feedback, they do not know about the provision of courts and off-leash dog areas. However, over a third are satisfied with the current provision of indoor sports facilities and courts.

Those who are dissatisfied are mostly dissatisfied for the reasons outlined in Table 46.

Table 46: Community Feedback from Blackbutt residents (Precinct 3)

Parks	Sportsfields	Courts	Playgrounds	Indoor sports	Off-leash areas
Maintenance including weeding	Maintenance / seating areas	Not enough tennis/basketball	Poor maintenance	Not enough, only one	Not enough
Limited facilities	Mowing, fencing	Maintenance including surfacing	Old equipment		Dogs entering water at south beach
	No equal distribution of codes in the area		Not targeted to all ages		
			Soft-fall issues		

Blackbutt respondents also commented that:

- The city centre required a “big park” with the land next to the Stockland shopping centre possibly earmarked for a new city park instead of a retirement home.
- More family activities, including a skate park, were requested.
- A few of the local playgrounds needed an upgrade.

8.3.8 Active open space issues and options

There is only one active reserve in the precinct (Flinders Field) containing three fields (rugby league, touch, oztag). This is one more field than should theoretically be provided. With the provision of the Benson Fields, the provision of active open space will remain adequate in the precinct. The precinct is also directly adjacent the Myimbarr Community Park Fields (hosting football (soccer), AFL, oztag, cricket, and athletics).

It was mentioned during the engagement that the Flinders facility was not adequate for the Stingrays in terms of numbers of players, quality of surfaces, facilities, and access to female facilities.

The Benson Fields could be considered for a new facility, or another facility outside the precinct such as Shell Cove. Feedback included reallocating Flinders Field for rectangular sports and/or tennis courts.

There is a reported shortfall of court facilities, including tennis, netball and basketball in the Blackbutt precinct. While netball courts were not identified during the engagement as being in particular need in the precinct (most residents did not know), publicly available tennis and basketball courts were identified as being generally not well supplied across the LGA.

These could be provided as part of the Benson Fields development, also in the form of multipurpose courts for public use. A full or half basketball court could also be incorporated here or alternatively at Harrison Park.

In addition, it was reported that two facilities are required for clubs. One facility could be provided in this precinct.

Precinct 3 Blackbutt – Key Findings

→ Enhance the role of **Harrison Park** as a city-wide park, which provides mixed recreation opportunities, more facilities to support community gatherings, and a public basketball facility (one full or half size court). A master plan for Harrison Park should be developed.

→ Investigate the popularity of the Flinders off-leash dog area, and consider relocating

→ Master plan the development of the **Benson Fields**, and consider incorporating tennis and/or basketball or multipurpose courts

→ Reallocate the **Flinders Reserve** to another code – and relocate the Stingrays to another facility (Benson Basin fields or outside the precinct)

→ Encourage the development of tennis and basketball facilities, including close to the centre zone, and within the master planned Harrison Park.

8.4 Precinct 4 Oak Flats

8.4.1 Quantity

There is a total of 16 passive and 4 active open space reserves in the Oak Flats Precinct.

Table 47: Open Space in Oak Flats (Precinct 4)

Passive open space		Active open space		Other key open spaces of note	Planned open space
#	Ha	#	Ha		
<u>Oak Flats- Precinct 4</u>					
16	18.8	4	15.9	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Oak Flats swimming pool• Tennis Courts	Ski Way Park and Central Park play spaces being redeveloped

8.4.2 Access and distribution

Based on the walkable catchment analysis (see Attachment 4), approximately 12% of dwellings are currently not within 400m of open space. This is the highest rate of dwellings not within the catchment in Shellharbour East.

The two areas that are not within 400m are:

- A residential area between the Oak Flats High School, Shellharbour College, Shellharbour Hospital and Lake Entrance Road. At most, some of these dwellings are within 850 metres of Harrison Park or the foreshore which is acceptable. These are also within 400m of smaller local open space with play spaces (with limited useability, visibility and accessibility)

- Dwellings in the central portion of the precinct, around the Oak Flats Public School, noting that some of these are within 400m of the Oak Flats Swimming Pool park reserve (Kingston St Park). Most of these are within 800m at most of Kingston St Park or the foreshore, which is considered acceptable.

There would be value in identifying a new local open space opportunity within the Oak Flats centre zone.

8.4.3 Physical attributes, safety and quality

Notwithstanding the above, it is also noted that a number of dwellings which are within 400m of open space are not within range of useable open space. For example, the environmental reserve along New Lake Entrance Road acts as a buffer between the road and dwellings. Some dwellings are therefore about 1 kilometre from useable open space.

Some of the existing spaces in the precinct only have limited useability, with some parks under 2,000m², limited road frontage, and old facilities.

It is also noted that some of the thoroughfares that would naturally lend themselves to connecting some of the open spaces and key land uses (including schools and the Oak Flats Swimming Pool, such as the local centre zone, Central Avenue, Moore Street, Fisher Street), do not offer footpaths/shared ways and walking/cycling opportunities. This significantly reduces walkability/cyclability in the precinct.

While the Oak Flats swimming pool reserve is well connected to other areas, including the foreshore, more opportunities could be created for both the Oak Flats Precinct and other adjacent precincts.

8.4.4 Demographic growth and profile

The Oak Flats precinct will see some demographic growth in the next 10 years and is predicted to remain the same proportion of the LGA. In 2016, Oak Flats Precinct had a higher proportion of people aged over 50 than the LGA, and a smaller proportion of primary and secondary schoolers (with a similar proportion of babies and pre-schoolers).

There is also a higher proportion of separate houses in Oak Flats than in the LGA (and smaller proportion of medium and high densities).

Based on the above, it is essential to ensure that there is open space easily accessible by all generations, including parents with prams and older residents.

8.4.5 Diversity

With the foreshore, Balarang Reserve, and Oak Flats swimming pool reserve, offer good recreation opportunities in the precinct.

Notwithstanding, there may be a shortage of useable open space, including play spaces, for some of those residents who live further inland.

8.4.6 Hierarchy, role and integration

A passive reserve of significant size (approximately 11.5 hectares) exists on the eastern edge of the precinct and is adjacent the Oak Flats Skiway Park which includes a play space, boat ramp, picnic shelters etc. The Skiway Park play space is currently being upgraded by Council. The Central Park play space is also currently being upgraded.

As stated on the Council website, and reinforced during engagement, the Ski Way Park is very popular amongst visitors and residents alike.

The Oak Flats swimming pool reserve provides a range of recreational opportunities. It is also the most popular swimming pool in the LGA and there may be opportunities to further strengthen the facility's role, including by investigating opportunities to improve adjacent reserves.

8.4.7 Community and stakeholder use

Based on respondent feedback, residents from this precinct are more likely to use the lake foreshore on a daily basis than another frequency. This is the only precinct with most residents reporting they were most likely to use a space on a daily basis. This highlights the importance of the foreshore for local residents across the Oak Flats Precinct.

Most respondents from this precinct reported they are satisfied with the current provision of parks, sportsfields, playgrounds, however they did not report knowing about the provision of courts, indoor sports facilities and off-leash dog areas. Nonetheless, over a third are satisfied with the current provision of indoor sports facilities and courts.

Those who are dissatisfied are mostly dissatisfied for the reasons outlined in Table 48.

Table 48: Community feedback from Oak Flats residents (Precinct 4)

Parks	Sportsfields	Courts	Playgrounds	Indoor sports	Off-leash areas
Old equipment	Fields can't get used when it rains	Not enough	Maintenance, vandalism		Not enough
Maintenance, mowing, glass, safety issues	Maintenance of football (soccer) grounds including fencing, surface	Need resurfacing	Don't target all ages		
Lack of facilities, seating, bins, water fountains, tables	Lack of amenities/toilets		Need upgrading, old equipment		

As noted above, the Oak Flats swimming pool is one of the swimming facilities most used in the LGA.

Precinct 4 respondents also commented on:

- The need for more play equipment in Oak Flats (such as swings), as well as public basketball areas.
- The shortage and poor condition of play equipment, as reflected in the analysis above.

8.4.8 Active open space issues and options

There are three active reserves in the LGA, one of which contains the Oak Flats swimming pool and adjacent reserve.

Active reserves in this precinct have an average size of 5.2ha which is consistent with existing guidelines.

Given the small population of this precinct, there is a quantitative oversupply of sporting fields, however these are also used by other precincts, and in particular adjoining precincts that have fewer active recreation facilities.

There is a quantitative undersupply of basketball courts which was also identified during the engagement.

Precinct 4 Oak Flats – Key Findings

→ Review the role of **Oak Flats Swimming Pool** and investigate opportunities to strengthen its role as one of the preferred aquatic facilities in the LGA, as part of a broader recreation precinct that incorporates passive and active recreational opportunities.

→ Identify a new local open space opportunity within the Oak Flats centre zone.

→ Investigate the opportunity for public basketball courts to be established in the precinct, perhaps in Ski Way Park/Balarang Reserve or the Oak Flats swimming pool reserve.

Precinct 4 Oak Flats – Key Findings (continued)

- Review the supply of play equipment and play spaces to identify opportunities to rationalise the location of play space and address a potential shortage in this precinct
- Identify opportunities for new walkable/cycleable connections between open space, the Oak Flats swimming pool reserve, the local centre and the foreshore, and schools
- Identify opportunities to increase the useability of the public reserve located along New Lake Entrance Road which is accessible at the intersection of Devonshire Crescent and Lake Entrance Road

8.5 Precinct 5 Albion Park Rail

8.5.1 Quantity

There is a total of 32 passive and 2 active open space reserves in the Albion Park Rail Precinct. Another active reserve exists, as categorised by Council, which includes the German Air Rifle Club (outside scope of this study) and has been excluded from the table below.

Table 49: Open space in Albion Park Rail (Precinct 5)

Passive open space		Active open space		Other key open spaces of note	Planned open space
#	Ha	#	Ha		
32	22.4	2	13.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Skate Park (Albion Oval) Outdoor exercise equipment (McDonald Park) Netball and tennis courts Multi-purpose field 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> McDonald Park master plan to be implemented, including a playspace, learn to ride and outdoor exercise equipment

8.5.2 Access and distribution

Residential uses in the precinct are typically contained within a narrow strip located between the Lake and Princes Highway. Most dwellings are therefore within less than 300m of the Lake foreshore.

Approximately 19% of dwellings are outside of a 400m walk from informal open space (see Attachment 4). These are mostly located west of Princes Highway. However, these are also mostly within 400-600m of active open space including McDonald Park and Albion Oval, which are available to the public outside training/game hours. Some of these are also within 400m walking distance of the Croom Reserve (bushland) and the Albion Park Cemetery Reserve play space.

Considering the type of residential dwellings in the precinct, which are mostly detached dwellings with relatively large amounts of private open space, and the limited future growth, the existing provision is considered reasonable.

Some of these dwellings are also located within short distance of the Croom Regional Sporting Complex, located directly adjacent the precinct, which provides significant recreation opportunities, including wooded bushland.

8.5.3 Physical attributes, safety and quality

The precinct is well connected along the foreshore, with nearly all of the foreshore linked. However, there could be better connections between the foreshore and the rest of the precinct.

The majority of reserves in the precinct are in the form of linear reserves along the foreshore or the Macquarie Rivulet with only a few small passive reserves and environmental reserves further inland. Some of these reserves are of relatively small size compared to the Government Architect's guidelines, including some reserves under 1,000m², of which the use and/or management could be reviewed.

There may be an opportunity for an additional play space to be developed within Albion Oval, which could replace or supplement the existing play spaces at Albion Park Cemetery and Corkwood Place if of sufficient size and quality.

8.5.4 Demographic growth and profile

The Albion Park Rail precinct represents about 10% of the LGA population. This proportion will decrease by 2% by 2031 and population growth will be the slowest across all precincts.

The precinct has a larger proportion of people aged 55 and over compared to the LGA, and a smaller proportion of school aged children.

8.5.5 Diversity

A majority of open space in the Albion Park Rail precinct consists of environmental reserves along Lake Illawarra which is considered acceptable given the location of the precinct and the fact that most residents are within close proximity of the Lake foreshore. It should be noted that a number of residential streets do not have footpaths, thereby potentially limiting accessibility for at least some members of the community.

8.5.6 Hierarchy, role and integration

Given the nature of Precinct 5, substantially taken up by the airport and industrial land, the current provision of environmental reserves in the precinct is adequate.

This precinct also acts as one of the major entrances into the LGA and it is important that it is well connected, also in terms of walkable and cycleable networks. Investigation into completing a cycling loop around the Lake could be given serious consideration.

8.5.7 Community and stakeholder use

Respondents from the Albion Park Rail Precinct indicated they were least likely, compared to other precincts, to use their local park on a daily or weekly basis, which is consistent with the above analysis and perhaps with the identified limited diversity. They also reported they are more likely to use the ocean coastline, than their local park, on a daily and weekly basis. Half of residents prefer to travel to the foreshore for social gatherings, instead of their local park.

Because most dwellings are close to a sportsfield, organised and social sport mostly takes place in what residents would refer to as their local park. This is recognised in the Master plan report for McDonald Park

Reflective of the above comments, precinct 5 respondents are also more likely to drive to open spaces that they use. Further, residents are less likely to use a park to socialise, walk, run ride their bike, than in other precincts.

A majority of resident respondents indicated they were satisfied with the current provision of parks, sportsfields, though do not know about the provision of courts, indoor sports facilities and off-leash areas. However, over a third reported they were satisfied with the current provision of indoor sports facilities. A similar proportion of residents were satisfied and dissatisfied with playgrounds.

Those who are dissatisfied are mostly dissatisfied for the reasons outlined in Table 50.

Table 50: Community feedback from residents of Albion Park Rail (Precinct 5)

Parks	Sportsfields	Courts	Playgrounds	Indoor sports	Off-leash areas
Maintenance, mowing	Maintenance, including of toilets (+upgrading)	Seating (netball courts)	Maintenance / vandalism		
Old equipment	Seating/amenities are average	Expensive	Old/need upgrading		
Lack of facilities, shading, seating, fencing,			Not enough equipment		

8.5.8 Active open space issues and options

The Albion Park Rail Precinct is well supplied with sporting fields and will remain well supplied in the next 10 years given the small population number. Active reserves in this precinct have an average size of 6.5ha which exceeds existing guidelines.

Central to the precinct is Albion Oval which was described as having good playing surfaces, but the ancillary facilities and maintenance are in need of improvement. The space is also well used by football (soccer) clubs and is reported to be at capacity in winter.

Tennis courts have recently been upgraded in McDonald Park, where netball courts also exist. There is a good proportion of tennis and netball courts, which would also be used by other precincts given the shortage of such facilities in other parts of the LGA. However, club users of the netball courts have reported dissatisfaction with the current surfaces (grass), and that senior players may not train unless the surface was sealed. It was reported that lighting is also required at the McDonald Park courts.

Precinct 5 Albion Park Rail- Key Findings

- Review the use and preferred management of small reserves under 3,000m²
- Consider rationalising the number of playgrounds with the aim of increasing quality
- Recognize the role of the foreshore for local residents and continue embellishments to the foreshore and ensure walkability and cycleability of this area
- Ensure the connection to Wollongong via cycling and walking paths is adequate and investigate opportunities to create a continuous track (as part of a continuous loop around the Lake), in collaboration with Wollongong Council
- The role of active reserves in providing passive/informal recreational opportunities should be recognised. Identify opportunities to provide more and better facilities in the two active reserves (McDonald Park and Albion Oval).
- Implement the **McDonald Park** master plan.
- Review necessary upgrades in **Albion Oval**.

8.6 Precincts 6-9 (Albion Park, Rural East, Rural West, Calderwood)

While it is acknowledged that there are characteristic differences across the western suburbs of Shellharbour (namely Precincts 6-9), they have been analysed together for the following reasons:

- Demographic forecasts are only available for a “Rural Balance” area comprising Precincts 7-9. Additionally, there are currently very low population numbers in Precincts 7, 8 and 9 (Rural East and West, and Calderwood)
- The Tullimbar growth area is within Albion Park, contained in the middle of Precincts 7-9. While Tullimbar suburb is split between Precincts 7 and 8, the growth area is within Albion Park (Precinct 7).

8.6.1 Quantity

There is a total of 36 passive and 8 active open space reserves in Precincts 6-9, including Croom Regional Sporting Complex which provides a significant amount of active space to the LGA. While not included in the calculations, the precinct abuts Macquarie Pass National Park which offers the community easy access to a sizeable area of open, environmental space for recreational and leisure pursuits.

Table 51: Open Space in Western Suburbs (Precincts 6-9)

Passive open space		Active open space		Key open spaces of note	Planned open space
#	Ha	#	Ha		
36	26.6	8	98.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Croom Regional Sporting Complex (including Equestrian Centre, BMX track and radio controlled car track) • Macquarie Pass National Park and State Conservation Area • Some existing environmental reserves in Calderwood • Albion Park Swimming Pool • Auskick centre at Calderwood • Tennis and netball courts • Sporting fields • Indoor Stadium 	<p>Calderwood:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 11 local parks • 4 district parks (one 3.2ha district park already open) • Total open space of 47.4ha (incl. active and environmental), including dog park <p>Tullimbar:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New District Park

8.6.2 Access and distribution

As a standalone precinct, approximately 14% of **Albion Park** dwellings are currently **not** within 400m of passive/environmental open space (see Attachment 4). However, most of these dwellings are within 400m of active open space including:

- **Con O'Keefe Park**, where the Albion Park swimming pool is located with informal open space
- **Keith Barnes Oval**, which is not used for formal sport and can therefore be used for informal recreation 24/7, noting that there is a lack of facilities and portion of the reserve is currently fenced off,
- A large reserve in Liam Close, Albion Park is currently unutilised. It is recommended that this reserve provide a range of informal recreation opportunities.

Some dwellings located north of Tongarra Road, remain outside a walkable catchment from any form of open space. While these include larger properties on the edges of the urban area, a local park could be provided in this area. It is noted that three small reserves under 1,000m² exist slightly further to the west. This could be considered for rationalisation. While Hegarty Park is of good quality and has been upgraded, one of the other two could potentially be relocated further to the east where there is a gap.

In relation to the growth areas, future open space has been included in the analysis, as per the existing Calderwood Concept Approval and Tullimbar master plan, and noting that these areas are indicative only and to be informed by this assessment.

Based on an analysis of Calderwood from data available in June 2019, the majority of dwellings are currently outside a 400m catchment of open space. As the area is still developing, this will likely change and it is important to note that if open space be provided in the form indicated in the current master plan, most residents will be within a 400m walkable catchment of passive/environmental open space.

In Tullimbar, a portion of the development area would remain outside a 400m walking distance from passive open space however, would be within 400m of an oval which will be transferred to Council ownership upon completion. This will help ensure that all residents will be within 400m of accessible and publically available open space. The oval will also play a key role in providing space for various sporting and recreational use, particularly if access is made available outside training/game hours. As the area will be central to the Tullimbar development area, it is suggested that the oval can play an important local or district role, particularly noting that currently, there is no large park in the western portion of the urban area of Albion Park.

8.6.3 Physical attributes, safety and quality

In Albion Park, and as per other precincts, some play spaces have low useability, with only limited road frontages, facilities in need of an upgrade.

North of Tongarra Road, six play spaces exist within a linear distance of less than two kilometres, some with limited useability or facilities in need of an upgrade. It is recommended that the redevelopment of some of these spaces into a more efficient space be investigated which would incorporate some space for passive recreation/kick about space. It may also be possible to create similar efficiencies with play spaces in the south-western portion of the precinct.

It is suggested that the existing reserve in Liam Close be developed in a way that provides Albion Park residents with informal recreational opportunities. More consultation could be undertaken with the residents in relation to this particular space to ensure a co-design process.

Considering the form of urban design and the relative inefficient walkable network, the current provision of play spaces in other areas is not significantly excessive but could be reviewed to allow some efficiencies, also as it is expected that the proportion of children in this area will decrease in the future.

Play spaces will be provided in the two growth areas as development proceeds and additional demand is generated.

In Calderwood, as per the master plan, a total 47.4 hectares of useable open space are expected which represents approximately 3.8 hectare per 1,000 residents. This is a good provision of open space, even if this includes environmental space and active recreation which, based on engagement, is highly sought after by existing sports clubs in the LGA. The location of the schools should also be within 400m of open space.

It was particularly identified that future residents will likely include a larger proportion of babies and pre-schoolers, and primary schoolers, and a larger proportion of younger households and families between 25 and 49 compared to the rest of the LGA. Given the expected total population in this area, at least one district play space would be expected, catering for multiple ages, within a larger park that would contain other

recreational facilities, including outdoor exercise equipment. It is noted that a district reserve was opened in 2019 near the entrance to the development (3.2 hectares), which includes picnic and BBQ facilities, a climbing frame for children, a half basketball court and a bowl swing. Another 4 or 5 good quality inclusive play spaces would be expected in various locations, catering for different age groups. This is consistent with engagement findings with the current Calderwood population, which identified that the top 4 reasons residents go to parks are: to get outside and relax, take kids to the park, have a BBQ or picnic, take pets to the park.

It is noted that the housing mix will include retirement living units and aged care homes. Particular attention to walkability around these dwellings, to/from key uses including open space will need to be given.

In Tullimbar, approximately 5,000 new residents are expected. As previously mentioned, an oval has been provided for a use that is still undetermined. It is recommended that this space be established into a central community park, which could include local level facilities including a play space, outdoor exercise equipment, courts, as well as a multipurpose sport field that is large enough to accommodate a variety of sport codes.

This space should be connected to other open spaces planned in the Tullimbar development area, and ensure walkability and cyclability. Additionally, the expected population growth theoretically warrants the establishment of two local play spaces. It is suggested that a higher-order facility be provided centrally within Tullimbar, and a local level play space be provided in the south-western portion of the precinct as population grows.

8.6.4 Demographic growth and profile

In total, this area currently represents 21% of the LGA population. This proportion will increase to 26% by 2031. The population is going to increase by a substantial 48%, largely driven by development in the growth areas of Calderwood and Tullimbar. There is only limited growth expected in the suburb of Albion Park.

By 2031, there will be a larger proportion of babies and pre-schoolers, and primary schoolers, and a larger proportion of younger households and families between 25 and 49. There will be a smaller proportion of older people aged over 50.

It is therefore important to consider the needs of these future younger communities.

8.6.5 Diversity

Across these precincts the majority of open space is active, with a total of 99.5ha of active open space across all four, although almost half of this space is made up by Croom Regional Sporting Complex in Precinct 6. There is also 77.4ha of environmental open space, particularly in Precinct 7. There is a comparatively low amount of passive open space (22.4ha) which is reasonable in light of current residential patterns. Planned open space provision as a result of urban development in Calderwood and Tullimbar will ensure that there is adequate passive open space into the future.

8.6.6 Hierarchy, role and integration

The area is home to a number of higher order open spaces including city-wide parks including Albion Park Showgrounds and Terry Reserve (active open spaces), as well as district facilities such as Croom Regional Sporting Complex (active). These parks support both the local neighbourhood and Shellharbour LGA more broadly. Additionally, a new district park has recently been opened in Calderwood to support

There are 30 local parks (all located in Albion Park) that support the residential population of Albion Park.

8.6.7 Community and stakeholder use

Resident respondents from Precincts 6-9 indicated they are more likely to use the ocean/coastline or lake/foreshore than any other type of open space on a daily or weekly basis.

Residents from these precincts also had one of the highest levels of satisfaction with sportsfields and indoor sports facilities across the LGA, and the highest level of dissatisfaction with parks.

Satisfaction with indoor sports is logical given the one indoor facility in the LGA is located in this area. It was mentioned by some residents that the area did not get as much attention or budget as other more socio-economically advantaged areas.

Those who are dissatisfied are mostly dissatisfied for the reasons outlined in Table 52.

Table 52: Community feedback from Western suburbs residents (Precincts 6-9)

Parks	Sportsfields	Courts	Playgrounds	Indoor sports	Off-leash areas
Maintenance including mowing, rubbish, footpaths – issue with vandalism	Lack of amenities, including toilets and parking	Not enough and not free	Old/run down – maintenance / vandalism		Not enough
Lack of facilities, including shading, shelter, café, BBQ	Upgrade to seating	All very busy	No variety of equipment - Don't target all ages and special needs		
Don't get as many facilities and money as "richer suburbs"	Maintenance, weeds, glass	More outdoor	Not enough.		
		Maintenance/old equipment	Include shelters, family friendly amenities, BBQ		
			Too small		

Precinct 6-9 respondents also commented on:

- The new facilities in Calderwood were generally good and well maintained, though other open space and facilities in the broader area should also be looked after
- More netball courts were required
- The stadium does not offer enough activities.

8.6.8 Active open space issues and options

There is a significant theoretical oversupply of sportsfields in this area, which is mostly reflecting the presence of the Croom Regional Sporting Complex.

Active reserves across the precincts have an average size of 6.9ha (excluding the Croom Regional Sporting Complex) which well exceeds existing guidelines.

However, and despite the oversupply, there is a theoretical shortage of AFL and football (soccer) facilities, as well as tennis and basketball courts.

This is consistent with engagement findings as providing facilities for football (soccer) and AFL was also identified by stakeholders. It is noted that cricket was also mentioned for growing areas, with at least two pitches in Calderwood and Tullimbar as part of larger facilities.

Precinct 6-9– Key Findings

- Precinct 7 and 9 are a growth areas within the LGA. It is important to continue to engage with the community as future residents move in the area to understand their needs and expectations.
- Review the current use of **Keith Barnes Oval** and consider master planning this reserve.
- In Albion Park, the existing reserve in Liam Close should be developed in a way that provides Albion Park residents with informal recreational opportunities. More consultation could be undertaken with the residents in relation to this particular space.
- Review the gap area north of Tongarra Road and identify opportunities for rationalisation of existing spaces to address the needs of this gap area.
- Review the offering of the Indoor Stadium. Continue to offer multipurpose areas but expand the range of offered sports.
- The new Calderwood area should provide multipurpose fields for AFL, cricket and football (soccer).
- In Tullimbar, an oval has been provided for a use still undetermined. It is recommended that this space be established into a central community park, which could include local level facilities including a play space, outdoor exercise equipment, courts, as well as a multipurpose sport field, large enough to accommodate any code and including a cricket pitch.
- A cricket pitch should also be established in Tullimbar.
- Consider upgrading the hierarchy of Croom Regional Sporting Complex from district to city-wide.

* * * *

9 Summary and Conclusions

The provision of public open space and recreational facilities is an essential component of a healthy population, strong community life and a resilient environment. Public open space supports a broad spectrum of activities and interactions between people and nature, while ensuring critical environmental functions for the health of communities. The success of open space and recreational facility provision is strongly influenced by a sound understanding of the community context, good strategic planning processes, and an in-depth knowledge of existing and forecast participation trends.

This Needs Study has provided a comprehensive analysis of Shellharbour City Council's current open spaces, sport and recreation facilities, including aquatics. It has analysed the current provision of open spaces and facilities through various lenses (including population, housing, and community needs), while considering the impact of population growth on open space and facility demand into the future.

The Study has been prepared from, and informed by, a variety of information sources and methodologies, including: a comprehensive review of relevant federal, state and local policies and strategies; open space benchmarks and best practice guides; Shellharbour community engagement findings, including a representative telephone survey, an online survey, a workshop, and a sports club survey; other stakeholder engagement measures including interviews and Council staff workshops; as well as mapping and Geographic Information System (GIS) analysis, demographic analysis and population modelling up to 2031 using established projections.

Through UTS' analysis and synthesis of this data, the Study produced various key findings on the demands, requirements and expectations for open spaces and recreational facilities, for 2020 and also over the medium and long term. These findings are the basis of the seven directions and recommended actions that are outlined in Shellharbour OSR Strategy 2020-2030, which will guide decision-making over the next decade.

The following provides an overview of the research findings detailed throughout this report.

Policy Settings and Context

Open space planning and management and recreational facility provision are long-standing and important roles for local government, however they are guided by a number of federal and state policies, directions and strategies. These include the Commonwealth Smart Cities Plan; NSW Government Department of Planning, Industry and Environment frameworks, various NSW Premier's Priorities, plus the Government Architect of NSW guidelines related to open space and green infrastructure, as well as other documents relating to topics such as inclusive play and strategic sport priorities.

Collectively, these documents lay a foundation of underlying principles that shape an understanding of the inherent value of open spaces and recreation facilities. In particular, they provide a validation and justification for ongoing provision of such assets by recognising that the provision of quality open space and recreation facilities:

- Provides access to green spaces, which has a positive impact on mental and physical wellbeing
- Enables and promotes engagement in sport and other physical activities, which reduces the prevalence of lifestyle diseases and contributes to good quality of life
- Improves social connections, develops stronger social networks and increases community cohesion.

In addition, there are a number of available standards and benchmarks that seek to quantify the provision of open space and/or recreation facilities through the use of population ratios or spatial measurements. For example, these include the *Guidelines for Community Infrastructure* developed by Parks and Leisure Australia (PLA) and the Government Architect of NSW's draft *Open Space for Recreation Guide*. Importantly, contemporary research suggests that while a standardised benchmarking approach can be useful, such guides should be applied in conjunction with careful consideration to the local context and a commitment to quality over quantity.

At a local level, there are a suite of documents that also play a critical role in supporting the implementation and delivery of open spaces and recreation facilities. Collectively, these plans guide a long-term strategic local approach to providing open space and recreation (including upgrades and new works), identify funding sources, and enable public participation.

At the highest level, this includes Council's Community Strategic Plan, from which flow a range of subsequent plans, policies and strategies to guide the portfolio of work that Council is involved in. Other strategies and plans that impact on open space and recreation include asset management plans, environmental management plans, planning policies and local infrastructure contribution plans (amongst many others).

About the Shellharbour community

The Shellharbour LGA is located approximately 100 kilometres south of the Sydney CBD within the Illawarra region of NSW. The LGA spans 147 square kilometres and in 2019 was home to approximately 72,290 people. By mid-2031, the Shellharbour population is expected to rise to 86,823.

The LGA is surrounded by significant natural features such as the Pacific Ocean to the east, Lake Illawarra to the north and Macquarie Pass National Park to the west. These features, amongst many others, make Shellharbour a popular "lifestyle" location in which to reside, while also being appealing to tourists and visitors.

In addition to a beautiful natural environment, Shellharbour is also home to the Wodi Wodi people and important Aboriginal heritage sites, including shell middens and stone artefacts, with Bass Point Reserve being an area of particular significance. Other sites of historical significance also exist across the LGA.

The Shellharbour community is comprised of a diverse range of demographic profiles, however there are a number of age brackets and family compositions that are more heavily represented in the community, compared to similar LGAs. In the 2016 Census results, those aged between 35 and 49 represented the largest proportion of the Shellharbour population (19%), with the most common household type in Shellharbour being couples with children (34% of all households).

Importantly, future population forecasts to 2031 suggest that while there will be a growth in all age groups, the fastest growing population in Shellharbour will be retirees, seniors and the elderly (aged 60 or over), with their population proportion expected to increase from 22% in 2016 to 27% in 2031. It can be expected that over the next decade, such changes in the age profile of Shellharbour will be accompanied by changes in household structures.

The projected changes in Shellharbour's population have been an underlying foundation to this Study because the way a community profile shifts and changes has clear implications for the type of open space and recreation that is required by the community. Furthermore, changes in population numbers also have flow-on effects on the amount of open space that should be provided under best practice guidelines and accepted benchmark standards as documented in the Attachments.

Open spaces and recreational facilities

Provision and demand

The Shellharbour community has access to a wide variety of open spaces (both active and passive), as well as sport and recreation facilities including sports fields, courts, stadiums, playgrounds, and walking and cycling tracks. Importantly, these facilities fall within a hierarchy (based on their size and function), which impacts on the number of people that use the area, the range of activities that are undertaken in the space, and the distance that community members are willing to travel to access the space. This hierarchy is three-tiered, and includes local, district and city-wide park facilities, plus so called icon parks which have a special purpose or place in the community.

Within Shellharbour, the following is currently available to residents and visitors alike:

- 114 local parks
- 75 district parks
- 6 city wide parks
- 96 play spaces
- 29 active reserves, including 57 sports fields
- 29 netball courts

- 22 tennis courts
- 21 cricket ovals
- 19 full football (soccer) fields, plus 6 junior pitches and 3 mini fields
- 5 AFL ovals
- 4 basketball courts
- 3 skate parks
- 2 athletics fields
- one BMX facility, equestrian facility, and radio controlled electric car facility respectively.

The Study also lists many other sports facilities not summarised above.

Additionally, there are a number of environmental reserves and state and national parks located in and around the Shellharbour LGA that are open for use by the community. These include Blackbutt Reserve, Bass Point Reserve, Killalea State Park and Macquarie Pass National Park.

Taken together, Shellharbour's open spaces and recreational facilities are well used by the many sport clubs and associations that exist in Shellharbour and which cater to a wide variety of interests including all football codes, athletics, gymnastics, tennis, netball, Oztag, hockey, wheelchair basketball, walking, cycling (including BMX), triathlon, volleyball, and equestrian. Additionally, these spaces also cater to those who wish to engage in passive recreation or unstructured exercise, including bushwalking and bird watching.

Other kinds of sports and recreation activities (such as dancing or martial arts) are generally privately run, in many instances supported by leasing and licencing agreements through Council.

Furthermore, these spaces facilitate the implementation of a calendar of events in the LGA, all of which play a significant role in encouraging the use and enjoyment of open spaces, recreation facilities and the natural environment.

The Study found that virtually all sports clubs and associations across the Shellharbour area were anticipating increases in participation rates between 2020 and 2030, with female participation being the most prominent trend.

Community feedback

Engaging with the community throughout the course of this research provided a deeper understanding of the civic value of open space and recreation facilities; the variety of reasons for which people use these spaces, and how they feel about them; where upgrades or new facilities are thought to be needed; as well as highlighting the importance of catering to a wide cross section of the community.

These insights were reached through collection of information from the community via a statistically representative phone survey, an online survey that all community members were invited to complete, a questionnaire sent to all sports clubs, and an open invitation to attend a community workshop.

Considering the engagement results as a whole, the key messages and themes that emerged from the engagement included:

- The need for ongoing, well-resourced maintenance of open space and recreational facilities to maintain or even upgrade quality to encourage community participation
- The importance of upgrading or adapting facilities to ensure that they are accessible and inclusive to all members of the community, and respond to changing levels of demand
- The value in open spaces and facilities that feel safe, are well maintained and have adequate amenities such as shading, seating and drinking fountains.
- The need to balance the provision of good quality local facilities in close proximity to residential areas, with large multi-use facilities that can support a variety of passive and active activities.

Other points of relevance include the fact that participation trends in sport and recreation vary across variables including age, gender and postcode. As such, the Study notes the importance of understanding both the drivers and barriers to participation as this can help inform an approach to open space and recreation planning that addresses potential inequalities.

Aquatic

Provision and demand

As an LGA that borders the eastern Australian coastline and the southern edge of Lake Illawarra, there is a strong emphasis on, and enjoyment of, aquatic activities in the Shellharbour LGA. At present, Shellharbour provides four public swimming pools (including one ocean pool), as well as a range of clubs and associations that enable participation in a range of active and passive aquatic activities, including swimming, rowing, sailing, surf lifesaving, surfing and aqua-aerobics. Most of these activities take place along the Shellharbour and Lake Illawarra foreshores.

Given the importance of aquatic facilities and recreational opportunities in the area, aquatics formed a stand-alone chapter in the Needs Study, which includes key findings specific to water-based activities.

Additionally, Shellharbour boasts five beaches (Blacks Beach, Warilla Central, Warilla North, Warilla South, Shellharbour North and Shellharbour South), and a designated swimming area in Lake Illawarra (access from Reddall Reserve).

Collectively, these spaces and facilities enable a range of events and competitions to take place throughout the year, including ocean swimming competitions, surf lifesaving carnivals, regattas and competitive swimming meets.

Demand for ongoing access to aquatic facilities is expected to grow steadily up to 2030, with an identified need for access to a heated indoor pool to facilitate year-round water-based activities, including swimming lessons and aqua-aerobics.

Community Feedback

Throughout the engagement (particularly in the phone and online survey), specific questions were asked of the community in relation to their use of pools and the ocean. In particular, the survey sought to understand swimming pool preferences (i.e. indoor, outdoor or ocean), and which pool respondents used most.

Overall, the themes and messages that were expressed by the community on aquatics included:

- The value in having pool facilities that are close to home, offer value for money or are free, are accessible to all, and are clean and well supervised
- A community preference for access to a heated indoor pool (within or without a broader leisure centre) that can deliver a range of water-based activities all year round
- The importance of having a variety of pool facilities available, including a range of sizes, locations and water temperatures, and affordable swimming lessons (or other class options)
- The need for upgraded facilities, including more shaded or undercover areas, be co-located with other services such as cafés, and have well maintained and safe amenities.

Key Findings

A range of key findings relating to current and future open space and facility provision in Shellharbour LGA emerged from the research and analysis contained in the Needs Study. These are highlighted in the boxes throughout the document, and relate to topics including: the policy context of open space and recreation provision; issues arising from changing demographics and population forecasts in the Shellharbour LGA; options for existing open space provision; sport and recreation participation and demand; aquatics; and precinct-based considerations.

To add depth to the Study, a precinct-based analysis was also undertaken to provide an additional layer of analysis (see Section 8). The open space and recreation areas of each precinct were reviewed in terms of their existing open space provision quantity and quality, distribution and accessibility, diversity of spaces and areas, patronage and community feedback.

Taken together, the key findings in the study have been used to shape the principles, directions and actions contained in the Shellharbour OSR Strategy 2020-2030 (see separate document). Importantly, the findings were synthesised and analysed collectively to inform the OSR Strategy and were not merely transcribed from one document to the other. As such, the Study's findings should be considered holistically.

In saying this, however, it is worth underscoring that the depth of detail available in this report provides Shellharbour Council with a strong foundation of knowledge and evidence on which to support future decisions made about the provision of open space and recreation facilities. It is expected that the findings and evidence available will greatly inform actions taken to implement the OSR Strategy over the coming decade.

Conclusion

The completion of this Shellharbour OSR Need Study has been a culmination of a significant amount of research and investigation into existing open space guidelines and benchmarks, existing provision, future council plans and priorities, population forecasts, and community considerations and expectations.

With this breadth and depth of information, the Study provides a detailed picture of both what currently exists, and what should be provided for the community in the future. In doing so, the Study is foundational to the Shellharbour OSR Strategy, which provides Council with a set of principles and actions spanning across the next decade to 2030.

Overall, the Study found that as Shellharbour is very well provisioned in terms of the availability of open space and recreational facilities, it is in a good position to further improve the quality and quantity of community participation up to 2030. Key considerations over these 10 years will be:

- Providing sufficient resources to maintain quality standards
- Improving links between existing open space assets, facilities, and users
- Adopting an inclusive approach to all OSR planning and design
- Pursuing more shared-use and multi-use options
- Investigating options for a local indoor pool combined with/ without a leisure centre
- Use of best practice OSR planning, including in all growth areas.

It is anticipated that the findings of this Study will provide a substantial amount of information and evidence for Council that can be used beyond the OSR Strategy, and can be applied to support plans, strategies and decisions across a range of Council departments that will address the above considerations.

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Attachment 1. Shellharbour Parks and Recreational Space Guidelines, 2019

This attachment provides planning guidance for the design of open spaces, parks and recreational spaces within the Shellharbour City Council LGA. The guidelines are designed to be used when creating new open spaces or in the redevelopment of existing spaces, to ensure a consistent and transparent approach of open space provision, planning, design and management.

The guidelines are divided into eight parts:

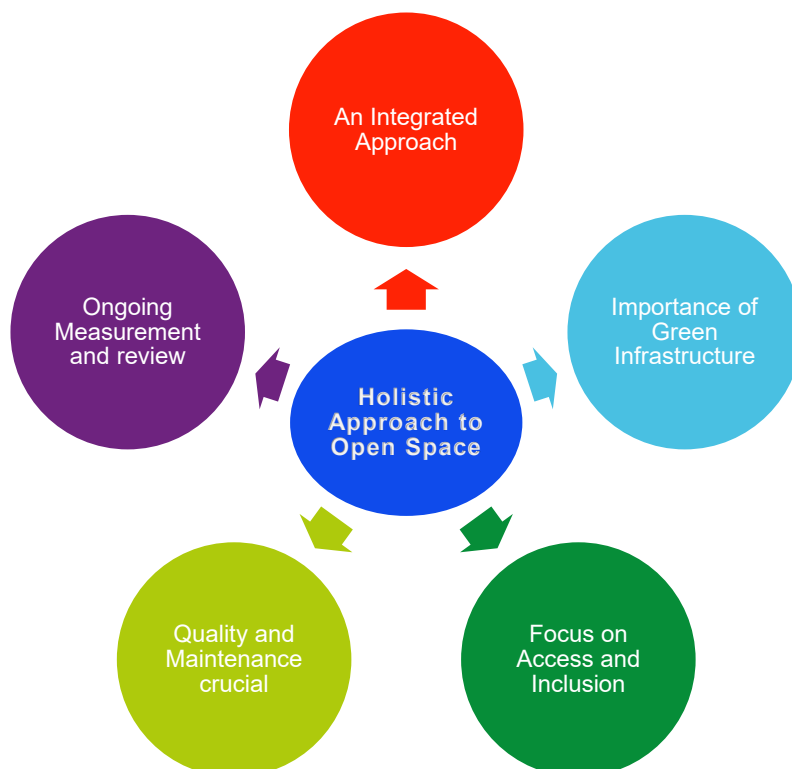
- 1.1 **Key themes and trends in open space planning** including major policy drivers, broad recreation and local open space trends
- 1.2 **Open space design framework** outlining an eight-point review system and including broad design considerations
- 1.3 **Park hierarchies** for use across the Shellharbour LGA
- 1.4 **Park performance criteria and design principles**
- 1.5 **Aquatic facilities performance criteria and design principles**
- 1.6 **Active open space performance criteria and design principles**
- 1.7 **Passive open space performance criteria and design principles**
- 1.8 **Performance measures for different open space usages**

Attachment 1.1 Key themes and trends in open space planning

UTS has identified a number of important trends related to open space planning, as well as in recreation and leisure, that sit alongside the eight-point open space design framework outlined in Attachment 1.2 above. We recommend these also be considered in future open space decision making between 2020-2030

A) Open Space Policy Drivers

21st century approaches to open space require a holist approach, based on five key drivers as summarised in the diagram below:



I. An Integrated Approach

Whereas once open space planning was conducted as a discreet and contained activity of individual planning authorities, by 2019 it is better understood as requiring an integrated and linked-up approach, not just across the one authority, but also with other stakeholders that also have influence on decision-making or their implementation. As outlined in GANSW Guidelines the uses and benefits of open spaces are wide and many, contributing directly to:

- a. Environmental outcomes, including to biodiversity; protection of habitat; cooler urban microclimates; improved air quality; improved visual landscapes and amenity; plus, cultural heritage and character (*also see II below*)

- b. Social outcomes including improved physical health and mental wellbeing; reduction in lifestyle conditions (such as obesity and Type II diabetes); increased community cohesion and sense of belonging; participation and sense of community pride
- c. Economic outcomes including to population growth, business opportunities, land values and tourism¹⁴⁴

This spread of benefits highlights the need for open space planning, design, management and maintenance needs to be considered concurrently with other Council deliberations, and vice versa.

¹⁴⁴ Government Architect of NSW, *Open Space for Recreation Guide*, Draft for discussion, Issue No. 01 – 2018 (since withdrawn) (GANSW Guide), page 23.

II. Importance of Green infrastructure

Linked to an integrated approach, is the world-wide trend focusing on green infrastructure. In NSW, this term was promoted in a 2019 government policy framework designed to increase networks of open spaces, natural systems and semi-natural systems that are planned, designed and managed to support good quality of life in an urban environment. These commitments called for a focus on a) providing green, open space infrastructure that supports recreational activities; b) bushlands and waterways that protect habitat and provide ecological health; and c) urban tree canopies that provide shade and assist in climate adaptation and resilience. To deliver these, the framework called on authorities to consider four interrelated concepts:

- How to **integrate**
- How to **connect and link-up**
- How to support **multi-functional uses**
- How to encourage **participation**¹⁴⁵.

III. Focus on Access and Inclusion

Public open spaces need to be planned, designed, managed and maintained from an inclusion perspective with due consideration given to how the entire population – noting differences in age, interests, needs and abilities – can access and enjoy local parks, services and recreational facilities.

Access also raises equity considerations as open space needs to evolve to meet changing population trends at the same time as providing good geographic coverage across the LGA.

IV. Quality and Maintenance are Crucial

Whereas once open space planning was primarily focus on design and management considerations, today it is crucially about **maintenance** and ensuring adequate resourcing is available not only to maintain high quality over time, but also to address any remedial action to mitigate the impacts of flooding or other natural disasters, extreme weather events or anti-social behaviour and vandalism.

V. Ongoing Measurement and Review

As emphasised in the GANSW Guidelines, it is essential for all planning authorities to firstly establish and regularly review their open space performance against some clear and public performance measures. UTS have adapted the GANSW measures and provided an eight-point open space design framework for Council as documented in Attachment 1.2 below. We have also recommended a number of regular open space monitoring and reporting

systems as documented in the accompanying OSR Strategy document.

B) Broad recreation trends

In addition to the above open space policy drivers, UTS has identified a number of broad trends in recreation literature that are applicable to Shellharbour, and should be considered as part of any specific decision making. These include:

- Increased female participation in formal recreational activities (sports), particularly in AFL, rugby and cricket
- Growth of participation in football (soccer), athletics and swimming in NSW
- Increased demand for informal recreation and less organised sport, particularly walking, cycling, yoga, gym and outdoor running, with a greater emphasis on holistic and healthy lifestyles and mental health
- Changes in housing types, with larger houses on smaller lots, or more houses on fewer lots, resulting in a general reduction in “backyard” space and recreational opportunities
- Growing emphasis on “inclusive” planning – planning that is heavily influenced by universal design thinking and considers the different ways in which people of different ages and abilities might use a space, particularly in the context of an ageing population
- Emphasis from government on access to green and open space and amenity as providing health and wellbeing benefits and enabling general heat reduction in the context of climate change
- Emphasis from government on multi-use, flexible open space to accommodate shifts in popularity of certain sports and encourage use and integration with other infrastructure
- Emphasis on sustainability in open space assets, particularly in providing spaces that are safe from extreme events and incorporate sustainable principles like waster sensitive design, LED lighting and particular kinds of sustainable materials
- Increasing expectations of local government to provide high quality open spaces, including features and facilities and maintenance
- Increased pressure on Councils to provide after-hours use of open spaces, particularly for sporting grounds and schools, and including car parking and lighting
- Increasing expectation for the provision of facilities that are well organised, comfortable, safe, high quality, and well provided for in terms of support/ancillary facilities (such as toilets, car parking and lighting).

¹⁴⁵ Government Architect of NSW, *Greener Places: an urban green infrastructure policy for NSW*, Draft for Discussion, 2018.

C) Local trends in open space planning

Within the Shellharbour LGA the above trends can be further focused as follows:

- Defined areas of high growth with new open spaces being required which primarily target families with children;
- Existing established areas with limited growth opportunities, aging resident population and decreasing average household population, where open space areas may need to be reorientated to service an older population; and
- An increasing demand for improved features and facilities, particularly among sporting groups, including requirements for fencing, shade, toilets, canteens and other features and facilities.

* * * *

Attachment 1.2 Open Space Design Framework

UTS recommends the use of the following eight-point open space design framework to assess the quality of open spaces across the Shellharbour LGA.

The eight performance criteria have been adapted from the Government Architect of NSW's draft 'Open Space for Recreation Guide' (GANSW Guide, 2018)¹⁴⁶ which has since been withdrawn by the NSW Government. They also use design considerations and principles drawn from the 2010 Shellharbour Parks and Recreational Space Guidelines that have served the LGA well over the last 10 years.

These same criteria were used to assess the quality of open space in each precinct, as documented in Section 8 of the Needs Study.

UTS encourages Council to monitor any updates on the status of the GANSW Guide on the NSW Government Department of Planning website. Naturally, any updates to, or replacement of the criteria and the associated design principles, will affect the review system developed.

The eight performance criteria are:

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1. Quantity | 5. Quality and sustainability |
| 2. Access and distribution | 6. Diversity |
| 3. Physical attributes and safety | 7. Hierarchy, role and integration |
| 4. Demographic growth and profile | 8. Community and stakeholder use |

Performance criteria	Definition	Broad design considerations
Quantity	<p>The amount of open space that is currently provided is an important consideration. For example, there are minimum areas needed for different sporting outcomes.</p> <p>Quantity is also about capacity, and community's expectations that public open space is sufficiently large enough for everyone and that overcrowding and overuse will not diminish the quality of the experience and the condition of the space.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provision benchmark per 1,000 people: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local parks: 0.2ha per 1,000 District parks: 1ha per person City-wide parks: 1ha per 1,000 Active open space: 1.2ha per 1,000 General open space: 4.4ha per 1,000 Quantity should be considered in the number of opportunities available. Larger public open space areas mean more opportunities can be provided in one location. Quantity of land available, along with size and shape, are critical in adequately meeting sporting needs. There are minimum areas needed for different sporting outcomes. See design guidelines for active open space (Attachment 1.6 below) Investing in increasing capacity can be just as effective as investing in new land and is an alternative response that increases the quantity of opportunity.

¹⁴⁶ GANSW Guide.

Performance criteria	Definition	Broad design considerations
Access and distribution	The ability of residents to gain access to public open space within an easy walk from home, workplace, and schools is an important factor for quality of life and enjoyment. Therefore, the geographic distribution of open space throughout the LGA is a key access and equity issue for the community. This also relates to the hierarchy as described below.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide for safe and convenient access to open spaces within and between communities, and where possible co-locate open spaces with shops, schools and other community facilities to reduce parking requirements and minimise walking distances. • Provide equitable access to parks and open spaces to ensure that the type, location and quality of the infrastructure are appropriately distributed. • Recommended access distances to open space from dwellings by park hierarchy should be applied (see design principles for local, district and city-wide parks at Attachment 1.4 below) • Distance of general open space from workplaces and schools (at 400m) should also be applied. • In addition, access pathways should follow natural desire lines and provide passive surveillance of active park areas
Physical attributes and safety	<p>Physical attributes, most importantly the size and shape and surface of open space has a direct bearing on the capacity of that open space to meet and accommodate specific passive and active recreation activities.</p> <p>Spaces must be large enough to accommodate the expected types of activities depending on where the space sits in the open space hierarchy. While sizes may fluctuate, some spaces might be too small to continue to be maintained as public open space in their current configuration.</p> <p>Further, safety issues also stem from a park's size and shape (as well as from its uses and community use discussed below).</p>	<p>Size/ shape considerations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommended sizes of open space by park hierarchy should be applied (see design principles for local, district and city-wide parks at Attachment 1.4 below) • Road frontage and visibility are key considerations (see Safety Considerations below). • Sporting facilities often require specific size and shape requirements that need to be met to provide functional space for their use. • In general parks should be regular in shape with a minimum width of 40 metres • Grassed open activity areas with a slope less than 1V:20H and greater than 1V:150H • Maintained parkland with gradients no steeper than 1V:4H if grassed and 1V:3H where planted with vegetation (1V:6H preferred) <p>Safety Considerations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure a minimum of 50% of the frontage is orientated to a public street • Buildings and structures to be orientated for passive surveillance of active park areas • Avoid rear fences backing onto parks. Where avoidance is not possible, open form fencing is preferred. • Ensure all park areas can be readily viewed from public streets and from surrounding active building frontages • Fencing should only be introduced where necessary to protect the safety of children's play areas. In most instances such fencing should be see-through style fencing of no more than 1.2m in height • Landscaping should be provided for weather protection and scenic amenity. Species selection and maintenance should ensure clear vision through landscaping between 0.6m and 1.8m in height above ground level

Performance criteria	Definition	Broad design considerations
Demographic growth and profile	The socio-demographic evolution of an area, nature and type of residents (both historical and projected) is important to guide the provision of open space.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planning for future recreation needs assesses the demand arising from urban growth and develops the range of strategies required to meet demand. Plan for the likely maximum demand as it is usually very difficult to add more open space once land has been allocated. This is because while demand may shift with differing demographics, most communities will move through similar cycles with demand peaking with high youth numbers. Also see the Trend information listed at Attachment 1.1 above.
Quality and sustainability	<p>The quality of open space features and facilities (natural and built) and ongoing maintenance and management is critical to attracting use and activation of the open space network.</p> <p>Sustainability in respect to potential for flooding, natural and extreme weather events and climate change need to also part of the quality review.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open space improvements should be considered, especially in areas with changing demographics, increasing density or urban renewal zones where increases in capacity are possible. Key design considerations that can influence quality include: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Visual and physical access 2. Landscape setting 3. Conditions of facilities and equipment 4. Maintenance 5. Number of activations within the space 6. Adjacent land uses 7. Amount of vegetation 8. Biodiversity outcomes 9. Sustainability Features and facilities also contribute to open space quality and should form part of the design concept, with special consideration given to options for multi-functional or shared usage covering a spectrum of user groups. Depending on the hierarchy or intended uses, might include consideration of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Walk / cycle pathways o Landscape improvements and shade structures o Play and exercise opportunities for different users and ages o Signage o Seating, tables and bins o Water fountains o Amenities etc In addition, design, development and management of open space should respond to environmental values and conditions, community aspirations and economic considerations and must remain viable in the long term. In the context of flood-prone parts of an LGA, this means planning open space to accommodate the possibility of flooding, sea-level rise and long term erosion. In certain locations and as part of an integrated design, open space areas should provide for and assist in the detaining and cleansing of stormwater.

Performance criteria	Definition	Broad design considerations												
Diversity	The range of open space setting types within a given area will determine the diversity of recreation opportunity for a community. Diversity is important not just in the range of activities but in the settings that create the spaces and places for these activities. Diversity of public open space is an important part of creating a sense of place within urban environments and for defining local character	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide a variety of open spaces to serve a range of different active and passive recreational roles to meet the diversity of community needs.• Open space presents multiple different outdoor recreation opportunities (eg: local play for the very young, youth space / teenage activity areas / fitness and exercise opportunities for individuals – see guidelines at Attachment 1.8 for each individual use)												
Hierarchy, role and integration	Parks may be classified as local, district or LGA-wide. Each category in the hierarchy plays a different role and serves different needs. Consideration also needs to be given to how specific parks form part of a linear open space system or recreation corridor where possible with linked cycle and pedestrian paths.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cluster/group sports fields and facilities in order to maximise flexibility of use and to minimise disruption to residential areas (noise, light spill and parking/ traffic issues and impacts).• Locate parklands where possible adjacent to town centres, schools and community areas to encourage greater access and shared use of parking.• Where possible, connections should be made between open space areas by the use of consistent vegetation, linked walkways or cycle routes within the local area.• These areas should also be linked into the regional open space system where such opportunities exist.												
Community and stakeholder use	<p>Open space is used differently by different user groups, and it is important to understand which spaces are used by which groups, when, how, how often, and if needs are being met. While effective use of existing parks and other open space areas is encouraged, all parks have a capacity.</p> <p>New demand for open space from increased density or new housing development can impact existing functioning parks.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Planning should account for the capacity of an existing asset and set limits on its ability to accommodate new demand. Additionally, the attributes of and functions of an open space should be highlighted to provide character, attract and expand usage and contribute to place making.• The draft GANSW guidelines provide additional design considerations in relation to eleven different uses of open space, that should also be considered (see Attachment 1.8 below for details):<table><tr><td>1) Local play for the very young (LPY)</td><td>7) Large community outdoor recreation area (LCOR)</td></tr><tr><td>2) Local children’s play (LPC)</td><td>8) Fitness and exercise space (FES)</td></tr><tr><td>3) Older children’s activity space (OCA)</td><td>9) Trail and path-based recreation (TPR)</td></tr><tr><td>4) Youth recreation space (YRS)</td><td>10) Organised sport and recreation (OSR)</td></tr><tr><td>5) Local recreation space (LRS)</td><td>11) Off-leash dog exercise area (DEA).</td></tr><tr><td>6) Active recreation space (ARS)</td><td></td></tr></table>	1) Local play for the very young (LPY)	7) Large community outdoor recreation area (LCOR)	2) Local children’s play (LPC)	8) Fitness and exercise space (FES)	3) Older children’s activity space (OCA)	9) Trail and path-based recreation (TPR)	4) Youth recreation space (YRS)	10) Organised sport and recreation (OSR)	5) Local recreation space (LRS)	11) Off-leash dog exercise area (DEA).	6) Active recreation space (ARS)	
1) Local play for the very young (LPY)	7) Large community outdoor recreation area (LCOR)													
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3) Older children’s activity space (OCA)	9) Trail and path-based recreation (TPR)													
4) Youth recreation space (YRS)	10) Organised sport and recreation (OSR)													
5) Local recreation space (LRS)	11) Off-leash dog exercise area (DEA).													
6) Active recreation space (ARS)														

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Attachment 1.3 Park hierarchies

A park hierarchy refers to a tiered classification of open spaces based on the types of use each attract, and their function in the broader supply of open space. The three tiers used in the UTS OSR Needs Study are:

- **Local:** refers to open space areas that serve a neighbourhood, and are located close to or within residential areas for informal and play activities with basic facilities.
- **District:** refers to open space areas that serve multiple neighbourhoods including larger areas that include both passive and active recreation opportunities and may contain sports fields or courts.
- **City wide:** refers to open space areas that serve an entire LGA, or multiple LGAs. Importantly, these areas are not always larger than other parks, but instead offer a wider range of uses, have higher visitation rates and attract a wider range of users.¹⁴⁷

In addition, UTS notes that Shellharbour has adopted a fourth type of park:

- **Icon park:** refers to parks that have a special purpose or place within the community. As there no established benchmarks that relate to this type of park, they are not documented in the table below.

The information below has been adapted from the draft GANSW Guide. The draft Guide prescribes a population ratio benchmark for each category of park (hectares per 1,000 people); a desirable minimum size; an access requirement that relates to the ability for people to easily reach the park on foot or by car or public transport, plus some additional planning considerations which often include the way the open space is used; the age of the user; whether the activity is passive or active (known as "open space uses")

Park category	Description	Provision benchmark: per person	Desirable minimum size	Access benchmark	Possible open space uses ¹⁴⁸
Local parks	Open space areas that serve a neighbourhood, and are located close to or within residential areas for informal and play activities with basic facilities	0.2ha per 1,000	0.3ha ¹⁴⁹	80% of residents have access to a local park within 400m or a 5-minute safe walking distance, 100% of residents have access within 500m ¹⁵⁰	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local play for the very young • Local children's play • Older children's activity space • Youth recreation space • Local recreation space • Dog exercise area
District parks	Open space areas that serve multiple neighbourhoods including larger areas that include both passive and active recreation opportunities and may contain sports fields or courts	1ha per 1,000	2ha	80% of residents have access within 800m safe walking distance, 100% of residents have access within 1500m ¹⁵¹	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active recreation space • Large community outdoor area • Fitness and exercise space • Organised sport and recreation • Dog exercise area

¹⁴⁷ GANSW Guide. We note that this draft has been removed from the website of the Government Architect so its current status as providing a benchmark is unclear. These indicative open space benchmarks are generally in relation to planning for greenfield development.

¹⁴⁸ See Attachment 1.8 for design principles for these specific types of open space uses.

¹⁴⁹ GANSW Guide, page 10.

¹⁵⁰ GANSW Guide, page 52.

¹⁵¹ GANSW Guide, page 52.

Park category	Description	Provision benchmark: per person	Desirable minimum size	Access benchmark	Possible open space uses ¹⁴⁸
City-wide parks	Open space areas that serve an entire LGA, or multiple LGAs. Importantly, these areas are not always larger than other parks, but instead offer a wider range of uses, have higher visitation rates and attract a wider range of users	1ha per 1,000	20ha but depends on design	100% of residents can access. Should be accessible by public transport ¹⁵²	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active recreation space • Large community outdoor area • Fitness and exercise space • Trail and path based recreation

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¹⁵² GANSW Guide, page 52.

Attachment 1.4 Park performance criteria and design principles

The following park design principles (based on the eight-point performance criteria described at Attachment 1.2) are drawn from the GANSW draft 'Open Space for Recreation Guide'¹⁵³ plus the design concepts contained in the 2010 Shellharbour Parks and Recreational Space Guidelines that have served the LGA well over the last 10 years.

Performance criteria	Local parks	District parks	City-wide parks
Quantity	0.2ha per 1,000 people	1ha per 1,000 people	1ha per 1,000 people ¹⁵⁴
Access and distribution	Within 5 mins safe walking access; within 400m of 80% of houses and within 500m of 100% of houses	Within 15–20 mins safe walking distance or 10 mins cycling. Generally, should be accessible within 1500m	Within 30 mins travel time on public transport or by vehicle; within 5-10km from most houses
	Pram friendly	Should be within 500m walk of public transport	Citywide or destination parks generally require detailed planning and travel-time measures are less relevant. However, generally, parking should be provided and the park should connect to active transport network and meet access standards. ¹⁵⁵
	Connected to active transport network and meets access standards	Connected to active transport network and meets access standards	
Physical attributes and safety	Shape requirements are flexible but in general parks should be regular in shape in order to be useable.	Shapes may vary to take advantage of local landscape features	Shapes may vary to take advantage of local landscape features
	Desirable minimum size: 3000m ²	Desirable minimum size: 2ha	Desirable minimum size: 20ha but depends on design
	General residential, renewal and redeveloping areas minimum area 2500m ²	500m ² of developed picnic area plus space for community gathering	Citywide parks or icon parks are provided more opportunistically around significant landscape features or specific built environments. They may include highly structured parklands with large built facilities and adjacent commercial zones or large destination parklands such as a botanic gardens.
	Greenfield sites provision of a local park of 5,000m ² or greater is recommended however local considerations may alter the recommended size	For greenfield development, district park of 2ha or more is recommended	
	Quiet open space location with high visibility and passive surveillance	Linear parks such as foreshore reserves may be elongated subject to the minimum size indicated above	
	No boundary less than 15m	No boundary to be less than 30m	
	Ensure a minimum of 50% of the frontage is orientated to a public street	Ensure a minimum of 50% of the frontage is orientated to a public street	

¹⁵³ GANSW Guide.

¹⁵⁴ UTS notes that there is no requirement that there be more provision of city-wide parks than of district parks – the same population ratio amount is required for both district and city-wide parks

¹⁵⁵ GANSW Guide, page 52.

Performance criteria	Local parks	District parks	City-wide parks
Physical attributes and safety (Continued)	Not adjacent to highways or main roads	Ensure that at least two of the park boundaries have public street frontages or back onto other public open space	Ensure high level of visibility with frontages and access from main roads and located in locations where high visibility is maintained
	Must be adequately buffered from adjacent uses	Buildings with active frontages to be orientated for passive surveillance of active park areas	Buildings with active frontages to be orientated for passive surveillance of active park areas
	Grassed open activity areas with a slope less than 1V:20H and greater than 1V:150H	Ensure all park areas can be readily viewed from public streets and active building frontages	Avoid rear fences backing onto parks or provide for a consistent fencing type that is appropriate for the location and environmental conditions
	Maintained parkland with gradients no steeper than 1V:4H if grassed and 1V:3H where planted with vegetation (1V:6H preferred)	Avoid rear fences backing onto parks. Where avoidance is not possible, open form fencing is preferred.	Internal fencing should only be introduced where necessary to protect the safety of children's play areas.
		Fencing should only be introduced where necessary to protect the safety of children's play areas. In all instances such fencing should be see-through style fencing of no more than 1.2m in height	In all instances such fencing should be see-through style fencing of 1m in height
		Lighting of essential public circulation paths that are designed to be used at night.	Lighting of key public walkway areas (where designed to be used at night)
		Sporting facilities have specific size and shape requirements that need to be met to provide functional space for their use (see active open space design principles in Attachment 1.6).	As per district parks

Performance criteria	Local parks	District parks	City-wide parks
	<p>Other design, facilities and features considerations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local park with seats, tables, water, and shade and other activations Recreation nodes provided as part of riparian open space corridor Landscaped gardens and public space areas provided as part of larger public precinct or sporting parks Recreation node developed on land surrounding public infrastructure (e.g. reservoir or public building) Conversion of cul-de-sac or disused road corridor to public parkland space Viewpoints and lookouts 	<p>Other design, facilities and features considerations (in addition to local parks -see left):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A large district park of more than 3ha with a mix of active and passive activities and a common or plaza suited to community gatherings Foreshore parkland with play and picnic facilities with multi-user pathway and links along the corridor to a number of activity points Viewpoint destinations which may be smaller but provide open vistas and have developed facilities for groups Bushland reserves with basic facilities and activations such as trails and lookouts and a larger developed picnic and play area Combined parkland and public plaza space with adjacent café / commercial recreation opportunities 	As per district parks
Demographic growth and profile	Review local population profiles and trends, together with access and target group information.	Review district population profiles and trends, together with access and target group information	Review LGA-wide population profiles and trends, together with access and target group information
Quality and sustainability	Predominantly parkland, kick about space, natural, or garden style landscape, with environmental attributes such as drainage lines or significant trees integrated into the park design.	Environmental attributes, such as drainage lines, stands of significant vegetation, foreshore dunes and the like should be integrated into the park design	As per district parks
	Seats and at least one other feature such as viewsapes, play facilities or shelters	Picnic areas of different sizes with shelters and tables, water and barbecues provided	
	At least 50% natural shade	50% natural shade	
	Embellishments should also include consideration of sub-groups who are also likely to use the park – for example seating and shade for elderly people in conjunction with younger children's play areas	Site should include at least 5 different activations and public toilets	
		Larger gathering area for community groups	

Performance criteria	Local parks	District parks	City-wide parks
Diversity	Diversity of settings (i.e. host open space areas) is desired across neighbourhoods including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> viewpoints bushland waterfronts public gardens local parks 	Diversity is required both within the site and between separate sites to create a broader range of opportunities across the urban area and to aid in defining local character and identity	As per district parks
	Local parks should be designed to target the predicted demographic users for the area	A range of infrastructure should be included in district parks to cater for a variety of use and recreational activities for individuals and small and large groups	
Hierarchy, role and integration	Serves a neighbourhood. Located close to or within residential areas.	Serves multiple communities.	Serves a local government area.
	Cluster local parks with other open space linkages or localised community facilities where possible	Integration with other district or higher level facilities should be incorporated where possible, for example community centres, district retail shops or sports grounds	As per district parks
	Local parks should form part of a linear park system or recreation corridor where possible with linked cycle and pedestrian paths	District parks should form part of a linear series of parks or recreation corridor, enabling a start/end point for walking and cycling pathways	As per district parks
Community and stakeholder use	Possible community uses (see Attachment 1.8 for design principles for each of these): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local play for the very young Local children's play Older children's activity space Youth recreation space Local recreation space. Dog exercise area 	Possible community uses (see Attachment 1.8 for design principles for each of these): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Active recreation space Large community outdoor area Fitness and exercise space Organised sport and recreation Dog exercise area 	Possible community uses (see Attachment 1.8 for design principles for each of these): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Active recreation space Large community outdoor area Fitness and exercise space Trail and path based recreation
	Attributes of the site should be highlighted to provide character and place making for the park	A district park should be located where possible in a physically prominent space or local landmark area in order to capitalise on special site attributes to maximise recreation opportunities and environmental values.	As per district parks

Performance criteria	Local parks	District parks	City-wide parks
		District park sites should be physically well defined to develop special character and sense of place for the space	As per district parks

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Attachment 1.5 Aquatics facilities performance criteria and design principles

UTS recommends use of the following performance criteria and design principles when assessing the quality of Shellharbour's aquatic facilities. These have been adapted from three sources:

- the draft GANSW Guide¹⁵⁶
- the Parks and Leisure Australia Guidelines for Community Infrastructure¹⁵⁷
- Planning for Community Infrastructure in Growth Areas guidelines developed by Australian Social and Recreation Research Pty Ltd.¹⁵⁸

Performance criteria	Design principles
Access radius	Access within 20 mins safe walking or 15 minutes safe cycling or public transport:
Connectivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Within 500m of a public transport stop • Connected to active transport networks • Facilities must meet access standards
Location	Protection from traffic and other noise sources and adequate buffering to adjacent residential uses so that user noise and lighting does not cause unreasonable impacts
Diversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council facilities are multifunctional facilities and may comprise a number of water spaces, weights training areas, health and fitness spaces, sports medicine facilities, meeting areas, child minding and/or café areas. One facility across the municipality may be developed to a higher level. This facility may be supported by less complex facilities at the sub-municipal level. • Facilities need to be planned across urban areas. Alternative strategies for built facilities such as pools and indoor centres can include use of floor area in multi-level development and construction of synthetic fields and outdoor courts on roofs and car parks.
Shade	Good solar access, but with a preferred 40% shade cover for perimeter areas

¹⁵⁶ GANSW Guide, page 49.

¹⁵⁷ Parks and Leisure Australia (Western Australian region), *Guidelines for Community Infrastructure*, working document, August 2012, page 13.

¹⁵⁸ Australian Social and Recreation Research Pty Ltd, *Planning for Community Infrastructure in Growth Areas*, 2008, page 35.

Performance criteria	Design principles
Features / facilities	<p>Elements could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 50m program pool with movable boom and/or 25m program pool • Free form leisure pool, warm water pool, toddlers pool • Waterslides, water features, splash park etc • Spa, sauna and steam room, • Fully equipped gymnasium, cardio theatre • Flexible group activity rooms • Large car park • Consulting suites for complementary health and well-being providers (e.g. masseurs) • Function/training rooms • Child minding space (licensed for occasional care) • Café, social areas including members' room • Change rooms, foyer/administration areas
Minimum area for activation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 25m leisure pool – local / neighbourhood • 25m or 50 pool for recreational, club, water polo, diving and competitive swimming – district • 50m pool – FINA competition standard – LGA wide/regional
Minimum area of host space	2-3 ha
Shape and boundaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular shape (square or rectangular) to allow flexibility for active recreation and sport. No boundary to be less than 150m • Minimum of 50% road frontage

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Attachment 1.6 Active open space performance criteria and design principles

UTS recommends use of the following performance criteria and design principles when assessing active open space, specifically in respect to district level access to sporting and organised recreation activities. These have been adapted from draft GANSW Guide¹⁵⁹.

Performance criteria	Design principles
Access radius	<p>Access to at least two of the following within 20 minutes safe walking or 15 minutes safe cycling or public transport:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ field sports ○ outdoor court sports ○ indoor sports ○ aquatic sports ○ access to all of the above within 30 minutes travel by public transport or car
Connectivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Within 500m of a public transport stop • Connected to active transport networks • Facilities must meet access standards
Location	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protection from dominant winds where possible (particularly for outdoor courts) • Sporting fields must be level and generally have slopes no greater than 1:100 for active use areas • Protection from traffic and other noise sources and adequate buffering to adjacent residential uses so that user noise and lighting does not cause unreasonable impacts
Diversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilities need to be planned across urban areas. Alternative strategies for built facilities such as pools and indoor centres can include use of floor area in multi-level development and construction of synthetic fields and outdoor courts on roofs and car parks • Diversity can be ensured by securing well located highly functional and adaptable space that can be reconfigured as participation demands change over time
Shade	Good solar access, but with a preferred 40% shade cover for “off-field” perimeter areas where possible/practical
Features / facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public toilets and change facilities are essential, with due consideration to male/ female usage and accessibility • Range of sporting facilities provided

¹⁵⁹ GANSW Guide, page 49.

Performance criteria	Design principles
Minimum area for activation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minimum recommended format for any field sport site is 4ha which allows for a multi-field unit (2 x rectangular fields with an oval overlaid) or fields and outdoor courts plus ancillary space For synthetic sports fields, individual fields may be located on hard spaces e.g. rooftops. Minimum space to accommodate indoor sports courts or other built facilities is 3000m²
Minimum area of host space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For medium-density and redeveloping areas a minimum site area of 8–10ha is preferred In high-density where a minimum area of 8 ha cannot be achieved, a combination of co-located solutions such as a 4ha sports field complemented with indoor court facilities and synthetic fields on rooftops could be considered All spaces to consider space for ancillary uses, parking and informal recreation use Greenfield and regional towns minimum area is 10 ha for district sport precincts and 20ha for regional precincts
Shape and boundaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular shape (square or rectangular) to allow flexibility for active recreation and sport. No boundary to be less than 150m Allow for north–south field and court orientation Minimum of 50% road frontage

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Attachment 1.7 Passive open space performance criteria and design principles

UTS recommends use of the following design principles when assessing passive open space, specifically in respect to locally accessible walk-to outdoor recreation facilities providing for passive enjoyment of outdoors and nature.

These principles were drawn from the draft GANSW Guide.¹⁶⁰

Performance criteria	Design principles
Access radius	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Within 5 minutes safe walking access; within 400m of 80% of houses and within 500m of 100% • For high-density areas access should be within 300m for 80% of houses and within 500m for 100%
Connectivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pram friendly • Connected to active transport network and meets access standards
Location	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quiet open space location with high visibility and passive surveillance • Not adjacent to highways or main roads • Must be adequately buffered from adjacent uses
Diversity	<p>Diversity of settings (i.e. host open space areas) is desired across neighbourhoods including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ viewpoints ○ bushland ○ waterfronts ○ public gardens ○ local parks
Shade	At least 50% natural shade where possible/practical
Features / facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must have a predominantly parkland, natural, or garden style landscape • Seats and at least one other feature such as viewsapes, play facilities or shelters
Minimum area for activation	Minimum area recommended by GANSW for the recreation space (the developed facilities) is 500m ² ¹⁶¹
Minimum area of host space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Renewal and redeveloping areas minimum area 2500m² • High-density minimum size 1500m² • Greenfield sites provision of a local park of 5,000 m² or greater is recommended however local considerations may reduce this recommended size

¹⁶⁰ GANSW Guide, page 41.

¹⁶¹ GANSW Guide, page 44.

Performance criteria	Design principles
Shape and boundaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Shape flexible• No boundary less than 15m• Open space area to have minimum 50% road frontage

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Attachment 1.8 Performance measures for different open space usages

The draft GANSW Guidelines included a suite of additional performance measures and design principles covering 11 different recreational uses of public open space.

UTS believes each of provide practical options for Council to consider when planning new open spaces or upgraded existing facilities with specific user groups in mind. For this reason, they have been reproduced here in full.

Note: As the draft Guidelines have since been withdrawn by the NSW Government, with no plans for replacement, UTS encourages Council to monitor updates via the NSW Government Department of Planning website. Naturally, any updates to, or replacement of the performance criteria will affect the approach adopted.

1

Local play for very young (LPY) Locally accessible walk-to space for parents and very young children (up to 5 y.o.) to play outdoors

SUITABLE AREAS

Any park area

Foreshores

Linear open space or waterway corridors (with above bank areas wider than 20m) from the built environment

EXAMPLES OF POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

One high-quality playspace within local parkland

Play events provided in small spaces that are part of sports parks or multi-user public open space areas

Small play area provided as children's garden or similar

Outdoor sculpture play and local recreation node in a linear open space corridor (e.g. waterway), with design to limit risks associated with location

PERFORMANCE CRITERIA

Access radius	Within 5 minutes safe walking
	For medium- and low-density areas, within 400 m for 80% of houses and within 500 m for 100% of houses
	For high-density areas, within 200 m for 80% of houses and within 300 m for 100% of houses
Connectivity	Connected to active transport network and meets access standards
Location	Quiet pram-friendly location, not adjacent to highways or main roads
	High degree of visibility and passive surveillance
Diversity	Play areas should have different settings or themes from those immediately adjacent such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — nature-based — structured — landscape play sculpture
Shade	Natural or built shade to 50% of open space area Playspace to be predominantly shaded
Features / facilities	Inclusive play space
	Seats
	Water
	Fenced if area adjacent to busy road
Min. area for activation	The play feature should be greater than 50 m ²
Min. area of host space	General residential minimum 2500 m ²
	High density minimum 1500 m ²
	Greenfield minimum 5000 m ²
Shape and boundaries	Shape flexible
	No boundary to be less than 20 m
	Minimum 50% road frontage

2

Local children's play (LPC)

Locally accessible walk-to, ride-to play opportunities for children of primary school age (5–12 y.o.)

SUITABLE AREAS

Any park area

Foreshores

Sport parks

Large linear open space corridors with at least 20 m from top of bank

EXAMPLES OF POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

One large multi-featured play area per neighbourhood in a highly accessible central location catering to a range of ages

Nature play area provided in bushland park or as part of a waterway corridor or linear open space

Splash play and zero-depth water play

Guaranteed community access to school or other public grounds with play facilities

PERFORMANCE CRITERIA

Access radius	<p>Within 5 minutes safe walking</p> <p>For medium-and low-density areas, within 400 m of 80% of houses and within 500 m for 100%</p> <p>For high-density areas, within 300 m of 80% of houses and within 400 m for 100%</p>
Connectivity	Connected to active transport network and meets access standards
Location	<p>Quiet pram-friendly location, not adjacent to highways or main roads</p> <p>High degree of visibility and passive surveillance</p>
Diversity	<p>Children's play spaces should be of diverse types or styles from those immediately adjacent. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — natural bush play — adventure play — structured play — water play
Shade	<p>Natural or built shade to 50% of the host space</p> <p>Play facilities or spaces to be minimum 80% shaded</p>
Features / facilities	<p>Inclusive play space</p> <p>Seats</p> <p>Water</p> <p>Fenced or landscape barriers if near roads or hazards</p>
Min. area for activation	The play feature should be greater than 100m ²
Min. area of host space	<p>General residential minimum 2500 m²</p> <p>High density minimum of 1500 m² fenced</p> <p>Greenfield minimum 5000 m²</p>
Shape and boundaries	<p>Shape flexible – no boundary to be less than 20 m</p> <p>Host site to have minimum 50% road frontage</p>

3

Older children's activity space (OCA)
Locally accessible ride-to or walk-to play and active recreation space for older children (10–15 y.o.)**SUITABLE AREAS**

Any park area

Foreshores

Sport parks

Bushland reserves and natural areas

Large linear open space corridors with at least 20 m from top of bank

Multiple-use areas such as detention basins

EXAMPLES OF POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

Large multi-age play space provided in large park

Natural bush exploration and activity space

Adventure play equipment and structured play equipment

Water-play and creek-play areas

Bike tracks, small pump tracks, skate plazas and outdoor courts

Active play trail with features along a linear system such as a creek or bushland trail

Kickabout space of 40 m x 60 m

PERFORMANCE CRITERIA

Access radius	Within 10 minutes safe walking and cycling Access to at least 1 active play area within 800 m for 80% of houses and within 1500 m for 100%
Connectivity	Connected to active transport network and meets access standards
Location	Highly accessible central location High degree of visibility and passive surveillance Adequately buffered from other user groups
Diversity	Should be of diverse types or styles from those immediately adjacent including: — adventure play — creek-based nature play — active play trail along a linear system; kickabout space of 40 m x 60 m
Shade	At least 50% built or natural shade over activity space
Features / facilities	Development to include shelters, tables, water, and access to toilets Must include active recreation elements
Min. area for activation	The play feature should be greater than 1000 m ²
Min. area of host space	5000 m ² or greater
Shape and boundaries	Shape is flexible – no boundary less than 40 m Open space area to have minimum 50% road frontage

4

Youth recreation space (YRS)

Neighbourhood-level, larger, youth-focused area suitable for youth (13–20 years) and providing both active recreation and space to gather and interact

SUITABLE AREAS

- Any park area larger than 1 ha
- Larger foreshore areas
- Sport parks
- Large linear open space corridors with greater than 20 m from top of bank
- Multiple-use areas such as detention basins (if providing informal sport field)
- Should be visible and preferably located near shop

EXAMPLES OF POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

- Designed for longer stays so should have access to public toilets
- Activation options include:
 - a small jump park or BMX track
 - parkour elements, exercise and fitness equipment
 - sports courts, half courts, exercise area provided as part of a district park
 - youth friendly space with 60 m x 40 m informal field
 - youth “plaza” with wifi and versatile group spaces

PERFORMANCE CRITERIA

Access radius	<p>Generally 800 m safe walking or cycling for 80% of houses and 1500 m for 100% of houses</p> <p>High-density neighbourhoods access should be within 600–800 m</p> <p>In regional towns access within 1000 m may be acceptable</p>
Connectivity	<p>Connected to active transport network and meets access standards</p> <p>Should be within 500 m of public transport stop</p>
Location	<p>Not suitable adjacent to play areas for younger children</p> <p>Should be visible (high passive surveillance) and preferably located near shops</p>
Diversity	<p>Youth recreation spaces should aim for diversity across districts including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — parkour, skate or BMX tracks — mountain-biking trails and trail head shelter facilities — sports court / half court — exercise area — cricket nets — fishing platform and shelter
Shade	<p>Host site should have 50% natural or built shade</p>
Features / facilities	<p>Active recreation and “social” space with seats, shelters, water and access to public toilets</p> <p>Should provide for larger and small groups</p> <p>Provides dedicated youth area which legitimises their presence in public space</p>
Min. area for activation	<p>Must be at least 2000 m² of developed activity area</p>
Min. area of host space	<p>Greater than 1 ha</p> <p>In high-density areas host site may be 5000 m² or larger if co-located with other public space such as plazas and concourses</p>
Shape and boundaries	<p>Shape is flexible</p> <p>At least 50% road frontage</p>

5

Local recreation space (LRS) Locally accessible walk-to outdoor recreation facilities providing for passive enjoyment of outdoors and nature

SUITABLE AREAS

Any park area

Foreshores

Sport parks

Bushland reserves and natural areas

Large linear open space corridors with at least 20 m from top of bank

Multiple-use areas such as detention basins

EXAMPLES OF POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

Local park with seats, tables, water, and shade and other activations

Recreation nodes provided as part of riparian open space corridor

Landscaped gardens and public space areas provided as part of larger public precinct or sporting parks

Recreation node developed on land surrounding public infrastructure (e.g. reservoir or public building)

Conversion of cul-de-sac or disused road corridor to public parkland space

Viewpoints and lookouts

PERFORMANCE CRITERIA

Access radius	Within 5 minutes safe walking access; within 400 m of 80% of houses and within 500 m of 100% For high-density areas access should be within 300 m for 80% of houses and within 500 m for 100%
Connectivity	Pram friendly Connected to active transport network and meets access standards
Location	Quiet open space location with high visibility and passive surveillance Not adjacent to highways or main roads Must be adequately buffered from adjacent uses
Diversity	Diversity of settings (i.e. host open space areas) is desired across neighbourhoods including: — view points — bushland — waterfronts — public gardens — local parks
Shade	At least 50% natural shade
Features / facilities	Must have a predominantly parkland, natural, or garden style landscape Seats and at least one other feature such as views, play facilities or shelters
Min. area for activation	Minimum area for the recreation space (the developed facilities) is 500 m ²
Min. area of host space	Renewal and redeveloping areas minimum area 2500 m ² High-density minimum size 1500 m ² Greenfield sites provision of a local park of 5000 m ² or greater is recommended
Shape and boundaries	Shape flexible No boundary less than 15 m Open space area to have minimum 50% road frontage

6

Active recreation space (ARS)

Neighbourhood-level accessible open space area with elements or facilities to encourage individual and group-based active recreation such as a social sporting activity

SUITABLE AREAS

Larger park areas exceeding 1 ha

Sport parks

Multiple-use spaces such as detention basins designed for recreation use

Riverside and foreshore open space areas wider than 40 m

Large district parklands

Community access to outdoor courts or fields provided at other public facilities

EXAMPLES OF POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

District parklands with community tennis courts, bocce courts or outdoor sport courts

Park with informal field a minimum 60 m x 40 m

Wide linear open space (such as along a waterway) with beach volleyball courts or multi-courts

Exercise site and stations along an open space corridor

Synthetic playing field or court on top of built structures supported by adjacent open space

PERFORMANCE CRITERIA

Access radius	Within 15 minutes safe walking or 10 minutes cycling distance – or less than 1500 m walking distance For high-density areas access within 1000 m is preferred
Connectivity	Bikeway/pathway access essential
Location	Central area preferred as part of activation features of large park Generally flat with main use area at no greater than 1:100 slope
Diversity	Should provide diversity across neighbourhoods. For example: — informal field minimum 60 m x 40 m — beach volleyball courts — bocce courts — community tennis courts or outdoor sport courts
Shade	At least 50% shade for perimeter of active space Host site should have 50% shade overall
Features / facilities	Must be co-located with water, seats, and shade, and toilets in adjacent parkland Should be well-buffered from adjacent residential areas to limit noise impact
Min. area for activation	Should be a minimum of 2500 m ²
Min. area of host space	Must be a minimum of 1ha and preferably greater In greenfield areas provision of a district park of 2ha or more is recommended
Shape and boundaries	A regular-shaped area with no boundaries less than 60 m is preferred

7

Large community outdoor recreation area (LCOR)

District-level open space area that provides a range of activities for individuals, and small and large groups

Should support community gatherings and extended stays for picnic, play, and other activities

SUITABLE AREAS

Large district parklands and park areas exceeding 2 ha

Mixed-use recreation and sport parks

Extended riverside and foreshore open space areas wider than 40 m

Bushland and heritage parks with developed visitor facilities

EXAMPLES OF POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

A large district park of more than 3 ha with a mix of active and passive activities and a common or plaza suited to community gatherings

Foreshore parkland with play and picnic facilities with multi-user pathway and links along the corridor to a number of activity points

Viewpoint destinations which may be smaller but provide open vistas and have developed facilities for groups

Bushland reserves with basic facilities and activations such as trails and lookouts and a larger developed picnic and play area

Combined parkland and public plaza space with adjacent café / commercial recreation opportunities

PERFORMANCE CRITERIA

Access radius	Provided within 15–20 minutes safe walking distance or 10 minutes cycling. Generally should be accessible within 1500 m
Connectivity	Connected to active transport network and meets access standards Should be within 500 m walk of public transport
Location	Large highly accessible public open space Preferred as green and predominantly natural public space for picnicking, relaxation, nature enjoyment and socialising
Diversity	Should provide a range of activities for individuals, small and large groups Diversity is required both within the site and between separate sites to create a broader range of opportunities across the urban area and to aid in defining local character and identity
Shade	50% natural shade
Features / facilities	Picnic areas of different sizes with shelters and tables, water and barbecues provided Site should include at least 5 different activations and public toilets Recommended activations include LPY, OCA, ARS, FES Larger gathering area for community groups
Min. area for activation	500 m ² of developed picnic area Plus space for community gathering
Min. area of host space	In high-density, redeveloping and renewal areas minimum size of 1.5 ha For greenfield development, district park of 2 ha or more is recommended
Shape and boundaries	50% of host open space must have road frontage Shapes may vary to take advantage of local landscape features No boundary to be less than 30 m

8

Fitness and exercise space (FES)

Local exercise and fitness opportunities for individuals that are no cost and located in public open space

SUITABLE AREAS

All open space areas including multi-user path networks

EXAMPLES OF POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

Access to a car-free running loop of more than 2 km

Linear multi-use open space corridor (e.g. supporting stormwater) with a pathway and exercise stations

Exercise sites/ stations in a local or district park

Exercise equipment in sports parks

Public access to fields and internal path or road systems for running and walking

Perimeter walking and running paths around public facilities

PERFORMANCE CRITERIA

Access radius	Access to at least one opportunity within 5 minutes walking (400 m) For high-density areas, proximity should be 300 m
Connectivity	Connected to active transport network and meets access standards Should be within 500m of public transport stop
Location	Most open space areas including linear systems Must be visible location and safe for evening use
Diversity	Access to at least one of the following: — cycle and running return circuit of minimum of 2.5 km — exercise stations in public open space — bushwalking trails of longer than 1 km — large open space suitable for exercise or group fitness — other similar exercise opportunity
Shade	50% natural or built shade
Features / facilities	Seats, water, exercise equipment or running loops, etc., and any wayfinding or exercise guide signs provided Space should be buffered from other users
Min. area for activation	Area of activation may vary depending on the activity (e.g. fitness stations vs running loop)
Min. area of host space	Host space to be a minimum of 0.5 ha
Shape and boundaries	Shape variable Minimum 50% road frontage, or if linear system 30% road frontage, with no road boundaries to be less than 40 m

9

Trail and path-based recreation (TPR)

Local access to car-free walking, cycling and running trails allowing for extended activity times linking to longer networks in public open space, natural areas and community destinations

SUITABLE AREAS

Potential locations, include but are not limited to:

- waterfronts, waterways, and drainage corridors
- wetlands
- bushland reserves and natural areas
- foreshores and beaches
- significant landscape features
- historic and heritage sites
- linear open space and multiple-use open space

EXAMPLES OF POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

Recreation trails and paths provided as part of planned development and opportunistically where bushland and other non-developed areas allow

District and larger parklands with trail and path networks

Local bikeway, shared pathways, footpaths

Perimeter path networks on golf courses, through cemeteries, public institutions, and alongside transport corridors

Promenade-style paths around water bodies or along waterfronts

PERFORMANCE CRITERIA

Access radius	Within 10 minutes safe walking or within 800 m of 100% of houses In high-density areas, multi-user path networks with linking access to extended trail or path opportunities should be provided within 400 m
Connectivity	Must be connected to active transport network and have safe visible trail heads or access points
Location	A range of opportunities will contribute to this outcome including shared user pathways and local bush tracks Most open space areas especially linear systems
Diversity	Diversity should focus on both setting (e.g. urban, waterside, and bushland trails) and diversity of activity (e.g. cycling, running, bushwalking)
Shade	Shade should be available adjacent to trails or covering paths at least 50% of the distance
Features / facilities	Seats and wayfinding signage Trail heads and major access points should include water and shade Opportunities for general enjoyment and reconnection with nature In high-density areas, multi-use paths should be a minimum 5 m wide
Min. area for activation	Minimum of 50 minutes walking on a return loop
Min. area of host space	Host space / linear open space must be a minimum of 20 m wide and have 30% road frontage with no road boundaries less than 40 m
Shape and boundaries	Path corridors must be 10 m wide clear space or greater, particularly in high-use areas such as alongside Sydney Harbour / Parramatta River, lakes, rivers, beaches and other similar path settings

10

Organised sport and recreation (OSR) District-level access to sporting and organised recreation activities

SUITABLE AREAS

District-level sporting and organised recreation activities generally require large flat areas of public open space which is relatively flood-free, with at least 20% of the land flood-free or able to be made so without significant cost. Siting of the flood free area should consider that it will be required for built facilities and amenities.

The accepted flood immunity for sporting fields varies greatly across Councils in NSW, with some LGAs having far more opportunity to use flood-free land for sporting facilities than others.

Sports fields should have a minimum Average Exceedance Probability (AEP) of 0.095 which is similar to the former Average Recurrence Interval (ARI) of 1:10 years. An AEP of 0.095 means there is a 10% chance of flooding in any given year.

Buildings associated with district-level sporting and organised recreation activities, particularly amenities buildings and clubhouses, should be flood-free and situated above AEP 0.01 or 1:100 ARI (or the relevant flood immunity for public buildings within the local government planning scheme).

Other possible spaces include:

- mixed-use areas with open space and built areas that can support built sport and recreation facilities
- some linear open space wider than 40 metres from the top of the bank able to support outdoor courts
- linear open space wider than 100 metres running generally north-south to ensure suitable field orientation
- mixed multiple-use areas with land suitable for built elements (such as an amenities block) and large detention areas able to accommodate sports fields or courts – provided there is no rapid inundation and the average AEP is .095 [JM1] [JM2] or 1:10 ARI.

EXAMPLES OF POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

Dedicated sporting parks and precincts such as a regional sports precinct of 20 ha +

Mix of sporting park and built sports facilities (such as indoor centres)

Combination of public sports parks and community access to school fields and facilities for community sport (or dual provision projects)

Combination of “green” sporting parks and adjacent synthetic fields or courts provided as dual use on other infrastructure (e.g. car park roof) in high-density areas

A number of smaller sporting spaces and facilities located within a mixed-use precinct

Multi-court indoor sport and aquatic facility

PERFORMANCE CRITERIA

Access radius	Access to at least two of the following within 20 minutes safe walking or 15 minutes safe cycling or public transport: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — field sports — outdoor court sports — indoor sports — aquatic sports — access to all of the above within 30 minutes travel by public transport or car
Connectivity	Within 500 m of a public transport stop Connected to active transport networks Facilities must meet access standards
Location	Protection from dominant winds where possible (particularly for outdoor courts) Sporting fields must be level and generally have slopes no greater than 1:100 for active use areas Protection from traffic and other noise sources and adequate buffering to adjacent residential uses so that user noise and lighting does not cause unreasonable impacts
Diversity	Facilities need to be planned across urban areas. Alternative strategies for built facilities such as pools and indoor centres can include use of floor area in multi-level development and construction of synthetic fields and outdoor courts on roofs and car parks Diversity can be ensured by securing well-located highly functional and adaptable space that can be reconfigured as participation demands change over time
Shade	Good solar access, but with a preferred 40% shade cover for “off-field” perimeter areas
Features / facilities	Public toilets and change facilities are essential Range of sporting facilities provided
Min. area for activation	Minimum recommended format for any field sport site is 4 ha which allows for a multi-field unit (2 x rectangular fields with an oval overlaid) or fields and outdoor courts plus ancillary space For synthetic sportsfields, individual fields may be located on hard spaces e.g. rooftops Minimum space to accommodate indoor sports courts or other built facilities is 3000m ²
Min. area of host space	For medium-density and redeveloping areas a minimum site area of 8–10 ha is preferred In high-density where a minimum area of 8 ha cannot be achieved, a combination of co-located solutions such as a 4-ha sports field complemented with indoor court facilities and synthetic fields on rooftops could be considered All spaces to consider space for ancillary uses, parking and informal recreation use Greenfield and regional towns minimum area is 10 ha for district sport precincts and 20 ha for regional precincts
Shape and boundaries	Regular shape (square or rectangular) to allow flexibility for active recreation and sport. No boundary to be less than 150 m Allow for north–south field and court orientation Minimum of 50% road frontage

11

Dog exercise area (DEA) Neighbourhood-level access to an off-leash exercise opportunity for dogs

SUITABLE AREAS

All open-space areas provided fencing or other natural barriers are in place to limit the dogs ability to run off and to minimise disturbance of adjacent park users and users enjoying other activities.

EXAMPLES OF POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

Fenced-off leash area in a large local park or district park

Multiple-use space such as a detention basin or overland flow path

Section of linear open space or waterfront designated as off-leash

Agility park provided in large open space area

Fenced area in buffer space between residential and bushland or transport corridors

PERFORMANCE CRITERIA

Access radius	Access to an off-leash opportunity within 10 minutes (800 m) walking distance from all houses
Connectivity	Connected to active transport network and meets access standards
Location	Most public open space areas excluding conservation areas
Diversity	Diversity in provision of off-leash dog exercise areas can be achieved by combining linear walking trail opportunities with local fenced areas Not all off-leash areas need to be fenced Across a larger urban area provision should aim for local opportunities and larger destination dog-walking locations For higher density areas where space is limited, separate areas for small dogs vs large dogs should be considered
Shade	Should have perimeter shade to 50% of boundary
Features / facilities	Areas should provide water and shaded seating areas Fenced areas need high visibility
Min. area for activation	Minimum area required for a fenced off-leash area is 400 m ²
Min. area of host space	Host space for off-leash opportunities must be a minimum 5000 m ² , or if a linear open space corridor, a minimum of 1 km long
Shape and boundaries	Shape and boundaries flexible

* * * *

Attachment 2. Shellharbour benchmark assessments

In this attachment, UTS has assessed current open space and recreational facilities provision across the Shellharbour LGA in respect of:

- a) provision of general open space
- b) provision of active open space or sportsgrounds
- c) provision of local, district and city-wide parks as defined under the hierarchy set out at Attachment 1.3 above
- d) provision of certain types of sportsfields – e.g. AFL ovals, tennis courts, cricket pitches, etc.

The assessment is divided into two parts:

2.1 Open space provision benchmark assessments- Shellharbour

General and park hierarchy open space benchmarks are calculated using the population ratio which prescribes a certain number of hectares per 1,000 residents. The population ratio assessment applies to a) to c) above

2.2 Active open space and sport facilities benchmark assessments – Shellharbour

The provision of specific sportsfields- namely d] above- is assessed using specific numbers of the type of sportsfield per number of residents, which vary according to the source of the measure.

Note: The source of all benchmarks used is articulated in the preamble before each table or in the footnotes.

Attachment 2.1 Open space provision benchmark assessments- Shellharbour

In the table below UTS has assessed current open space provision in Shellharbour according to the population ratio benchmark at two intervals: 2019 and 2031. The 2018 Shellharbour population is calculated at 72,240¹⁶² and the projected 2031 population at 86,823.¹⁶³

According to the analysis below, in 2019 approximately 89% of dwellings across the Shellharbour LGA are within 400m walking distance of at least one passive or environmental open space 0.3ha or larger. This exceeds the access benchmark. By 2031, based on current information and levels of access to open space, Shellharbour should exceed the benchmark across all three park categories.

Type of open space	2019 Facilities	Provision benchmark per person	Access benchmark	Min. size benchmark	2019 provision assessment	Assessment against provisional benchmarks	
						2019 provision assessment ¹⁶⁴	Projected 2031 provision assessment ¹⁶⁵
General open space	926ha	2.83ha per 1,000 (2010 guidelines ¹⁶⁶)	N/A	N/A	204.4ha	Exceeds provision benchmark	Exceeds provision benchmark
		4.4ha per 1,000 (GANSW ¹⁶⁷)	N/A	N/A	317.9ha	Exceeds provision benchmark	Exceeds provision benchmark
Active open space / sportsgrounds	197.5ha	1.2ha per 1,000	80% of residents have access to at least two formal sport spaces within 2km. Should be accessible by public transport.	10ha	86.7ha	Exceeds provision benchmark	Exceeds provision benchmark

¹⁶² Estimated Resident Population (ERP) 2018, Australian Bureau of Statistics, presented in profile.id by .id, the population experts. The 2018 figure is used in calculating the ratios for the 2019 provision assessment because this is the most recently available ERP for the LGA.

¹⁶³ Population and household forecasts, 2016 to 2031, prepared by .id, the population experts, May 2019.

¹⁶⁴ Where fields are used for more than one sport (e.g. cricket and AFL), they have been counted twice to reflect the amount of space available to that sport.

¹⁶⁵ Assuming the number of sportsfields of that type does not change between 2019 and 2031.

¹⁶⁶ 2010 Shellharbour Parks and Recreational Space Guidelines.

¹⁶⁷ GANSW Guide.

Park category	2019 Facilities	Provision benchmark: per person	Access benchmark	Min. size benchmark	2019 provision requirement	2019 provision assessment	2031 provision assessment ¹⁶⁸
Local parks	39 ha 114 parks	0.2ha per 1,000	80% of residents have access to a local park within 400m safe walking distance, and 100% within 500m	0.3ha	14.4ha	Exceeds provision benchmark	Exceeds provision benchmark
District parks	125.8ha 75 parks	1ha per 1,000	80% of residents have access within 800m safe walking distance, and 100% within 1500m	2ha	72.2ha	Exceeds provision benchmark	Exceeds provision benchmark
City-wide parks	110.6ha 6 parks	1ha per 1,000	100% of residents can access. Should be accessible by public transport where possible.	20ha but depends on design	72.2ha	Exceeds provision benchmark	Exceeds provision benchmark

* * * *

¹⁶⁸ Assuming the number of parks and amount of park hectares is not reduced between 2019 and 2031.

Attachment 2.2 Active open space and sport facilities provisional benchmarks and assessments – Shellharbour

The table below assesses the 2019 Shellharbour active space against provision benchmarks. These been adapted from the Parks and Leisure Australia Guidelines for Community Infrastructure.¹⁶⁹

The data for the 2019 provision requirements has been drawn from asset data provided by Shellharbour City Council (as at November 2019).

The table includes an assessment of active open space provision in Shellharbour according to the population ratio benchmark at two intervals: 2019 and 2031. The 2018 Shellharbour population is calculated at 72,240¹⁷⁰ and the projected 2031 population at 86,823.¹⁷¹

Note: 1) These measures do not take into account changes in local demand that may see one sports code rise in popularity, and others fall due to factors including quality of sport code administration, promotions and sports code investment, plus local or international sporting success.

2) Aquatic facilities are separately listed at the end of the table.

3) Sports which lacked reliable, public domain benchmarks (for example, Rugby Union and Rugby League) have not been included in the analysis below.

Type of Active Space	2019 sports fields / playing surfaces	Provision benchmark: per person	2019 provision requirement	Assessment against provisional benchmarks	
				2019 provision assessment ¹⁷²	Projected 2031 provision assessment ¹⁷³
AFL ovals	5	3 per 15,000	14	Under provision benchmark	Under provision benchmark
Athletics fields	2	1 per 250,000 plus (regional) Overmark existing public open space (district)	0 ¹⁷⁴	Exceeds provision benchmark	Exceeds provision benchmark
Basketball courts	4 full courts	1 per 3,000-4,000 (outdoor) 4 plus indoor courts (regional / subregional)	21	Under provision benchmark	Under provision benchmark

¹⁶⁹ Parks and Leisure Australia (Western Australian region), *Guidelines for Community Infrastructure*, working document, August 2012

¹⁷⁰ Estimated Resident Population (ERP) 2018, Australian Bureau of Statistics, presented in profile.id by .id, the population experts. The 2018 figure is used in calculating the ratios for the 2019 provision assessment because this is the most recently available ERP for the LGA.

¹⁷¹ Population and household forecasts, 2016 to 2031, prepared by .id, the population experts, May 2019.

¹⁷² Where fields are used for more than one sport (e.g. cricket and AFL), they have been counted twice to reflect the amount of space available to that sport.

¹⁷³ Assuming the number of sportsfields of that type does not change between 2019 and 2031.

¹⁷⁴ Population figure is less than benchmark

Type of Active Space	2019 sports fields / playing surfaces	Provision benchmark: per person	2019 provision requirement	Assessment against provisional benchmarks	
				2019 provision assessment ¹⁷²	Projected 2031 provision assessment ¹⁷³
BMX dirt track facilities	1	1 per 10,000 – 30,000 (district) 1 per 50,000 (regional)	4 district 1 regional	Under provision benchmark ¹⁷⁵	Under provision benchmark
Cricket ovals	21	1 per 8,000-10,000	8	Exceeds provision benchmark	Exceeds provision benchmark
Football (soccer) fields	Full Field 19 Junior 6 Mini 3	1 per 3,000-4,000	21	Exceeds provision benchmark	At provision benchmark
Hockey fields	2	1 per 75,000 for synthetic surfaces	1	Exceeds provision benchmark	Exceeds provision benchmark
Indoor sport and recreation centres	1	1 per 50,000 – 100,000 (generic – multi-functional, sport, recreation and meeting place 3 court facility) 1 per 250,000 (regional – 6/7 courts plus gym, aerobics, community meeting rooms)	1 generic	At provision benchmark	At provision benchmark
Netball courts	29	1 per 3,000-4,000	21	Exceeds provision benchmark	Exceeds provision benchmark
Play spaces	96	1 per 50,000 (regional) 1 per 8,000 – 10,000 (district) 1 per 2,000 (local/neighbourhood)	36 local and/or 8 district and/or 1 regional	Exceeds provision benchmark	Exceeds provision benchmark

¹⁷⁵ Where the current provision sits in relation to the benchmark depends on whether the BMX facility is a smaller, district track – not designed for racing (district), or a larger dedicated track with a stone sub-base, maybe incorporating dirt jumps and ramps (regional).

Type of Active Space	2019 sports fields / playing surfaces	Provision benchmark: per person	2019 provision requirement	Assessment against provisional benchmarks	
				2019 provision assessment ¹⁷²	Projected 2031 provision assessment ¹⁷³
Rugby union / league fields	20 in total Full 13 Junior 4 Modified 3	Area / location specific. To be determined by local circumstances and demographic mix	N/A	N/A	N/A
Skate parks	3	1 per 25,000-50,000 – Regional facility 1 per 10,000 – 25,000 – District facility 1 per 5,000-10,000 – Neighbourhood facility	2 regional 4 district 10 neighbourhood	At about provision benchmark	Slightly below provision benchmark
Tennis courts	22 ¹⁷⁶	8 courts per 15,000 (may be multiple courts in one club)	39 ¹⁷⁷	Under provision benchmark	Under provision benchmark

¹⁷⁶ Council notes that two/three courts are in poor condition as at December 2019.

¹⁷⁷ Tennis court ratios may not reflect changes in demand that has occurred over recent decades.

Aquatic Facilities

Type of Active Space	2019 facilities	Provision benchmark: per person	2019 provision requirement	Assessment against provisional benchmarks	
				2019 provision assessment ¹⁷⁸	Projected 2031 provision assessment ¹⁷⁹
Aquatic facilities	4	1 per 30,000 (neighbourhood – 25m and leisure pool) 1 per 75,000 (district – 25m or 50m pool for recreational, club, comp)	2 neighbourhood – 25m 1 district	Exceeds provision benchmark	Exceeds provision benchmark
Indoor aquatic facilities	0	1 per 150,000 (50m FINA competition standard - regional) 1 per 75,000 (district – 25m or 50m) 1 per 30,000 (leisure – 25m)	2 25m leisure or 1 50m district	Under provision benchmark	Under provision benchmark

* * * *

¹⁷⁸ Where fields are used for more than one sport (e.g. cricket and AFL), they have been counted twice to reflect the amount of space available to that sport.

¹⁷⁹ Assuming the number of sportsfields of that type does not change between 2019 and 2031.

Attachment 3. Maps of open space and recreation facilities across Shellharbour LGA

This attachment contains a series of maps which visualise the spatial distribution of existing open space and recreation facilities and assets across Shellharbour LGA. The maps were produced using Council open spaces asset data.

There are 10 maps in total:

- 3.1 LGA-wide map
with larger-scale (more detailed) maps of each of the Local Infrastructure Contributions precincts following:
- 3.2 Precinct 1 – Warilla
- 3.3 Precinct 2 – Shellharbour
- 3.4 Precinct 3 – Blackbutt
- 3.5 Precinct 4 – Oak Flats
- 3.6 Precinct 5 – Albion Park Rail
- 3.7 Precinct 6 – Rural East
- 3.8 Precinct 7 – Albion Park
- 3.9 Precinct 8 – Rural West
- 3.10 Precinct 9 – Calderwood.

All maps visualise the distribution of parks across the LGA, distinguishing between different park categories:

- local
- district
- citywide.

Note: These categories are based on Council's current parks hierarchy, drawn based on the Parks and Recreational Space Guidelines outlined in the 2010 Shellharbour Open Space, Recreation and Community Facilities Needs Study.

The LGA-wide map focuses solely on the distribution of parks according to the park hierarchy.

The precinct maps (3.2-10) however enable greater detail to be shown, so these maps additionally distinguish between park types:

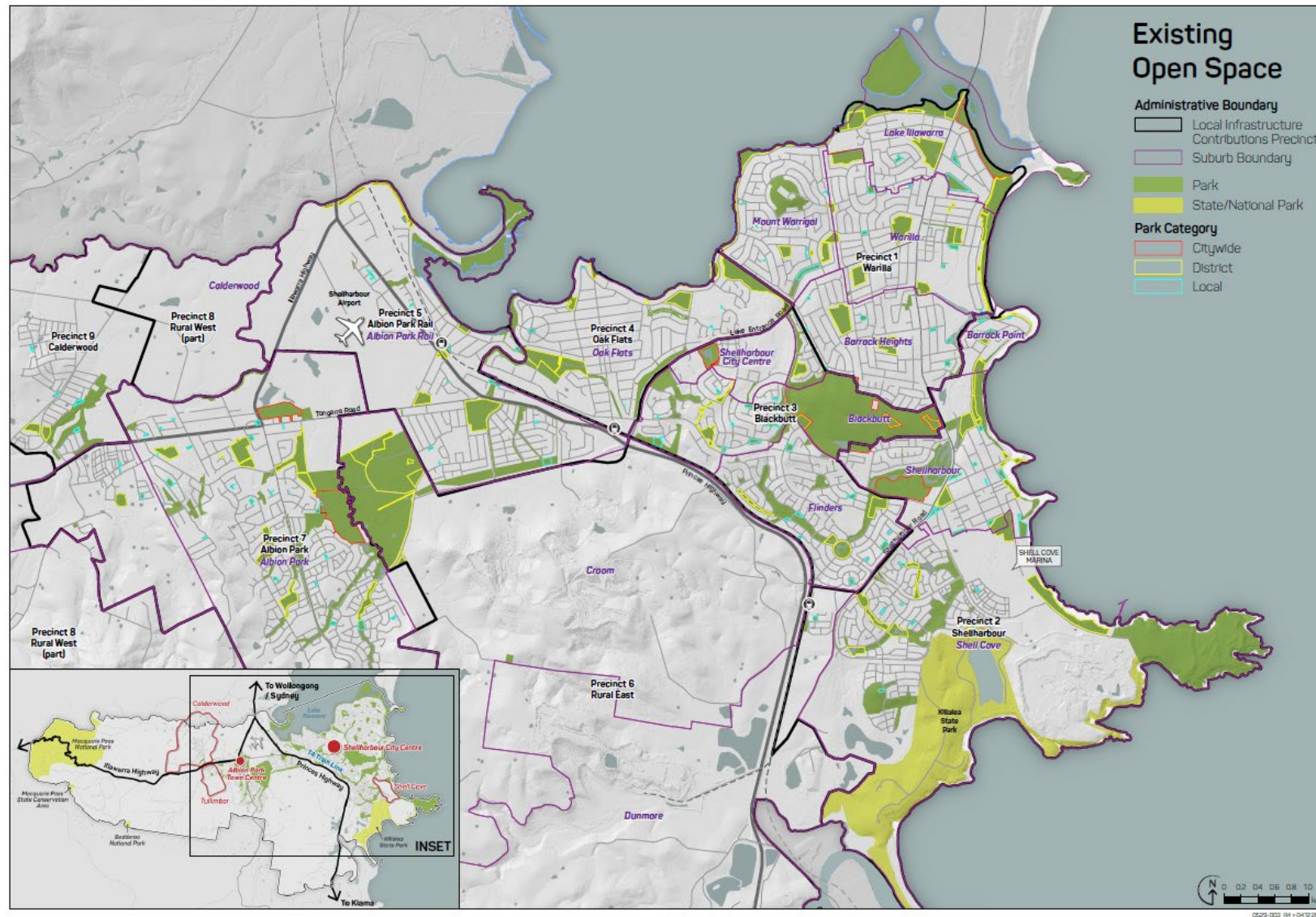
- active
- passive
- ancillary
- environmental.

The precinct maps also visualise future parks (as defined in Council's GIS assets data) as well as a range of other open space and recreation facilities and assets.

Note: The LGA-wide map does not show the entirety of the LGA, but rather zooms in on the area where primary open space activity occurs within the LGA. This maximises the legibility of the map while without losing any information on parks, as all existing parks are contained within the extent of the map (with the exception of National Parks and Conservation Areas located in the far west of the LGA). However, an inset map is provided which displays the entirety of the LGA and indicates the extent covered by the main map.

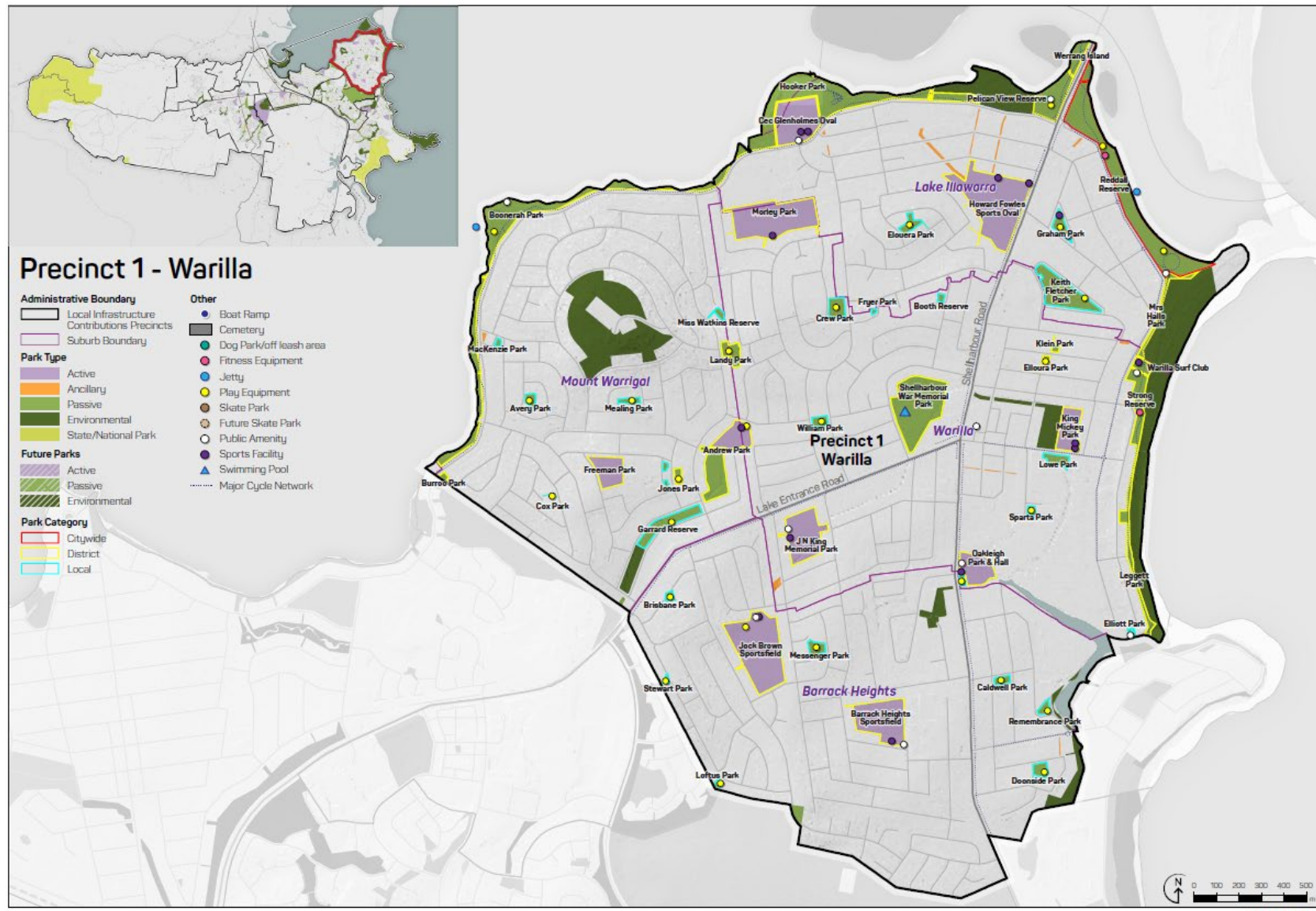
All maps are available in high-resolution PDF format from Shellharbour Council.

Attachment 3.1 Shellharbour City LGA



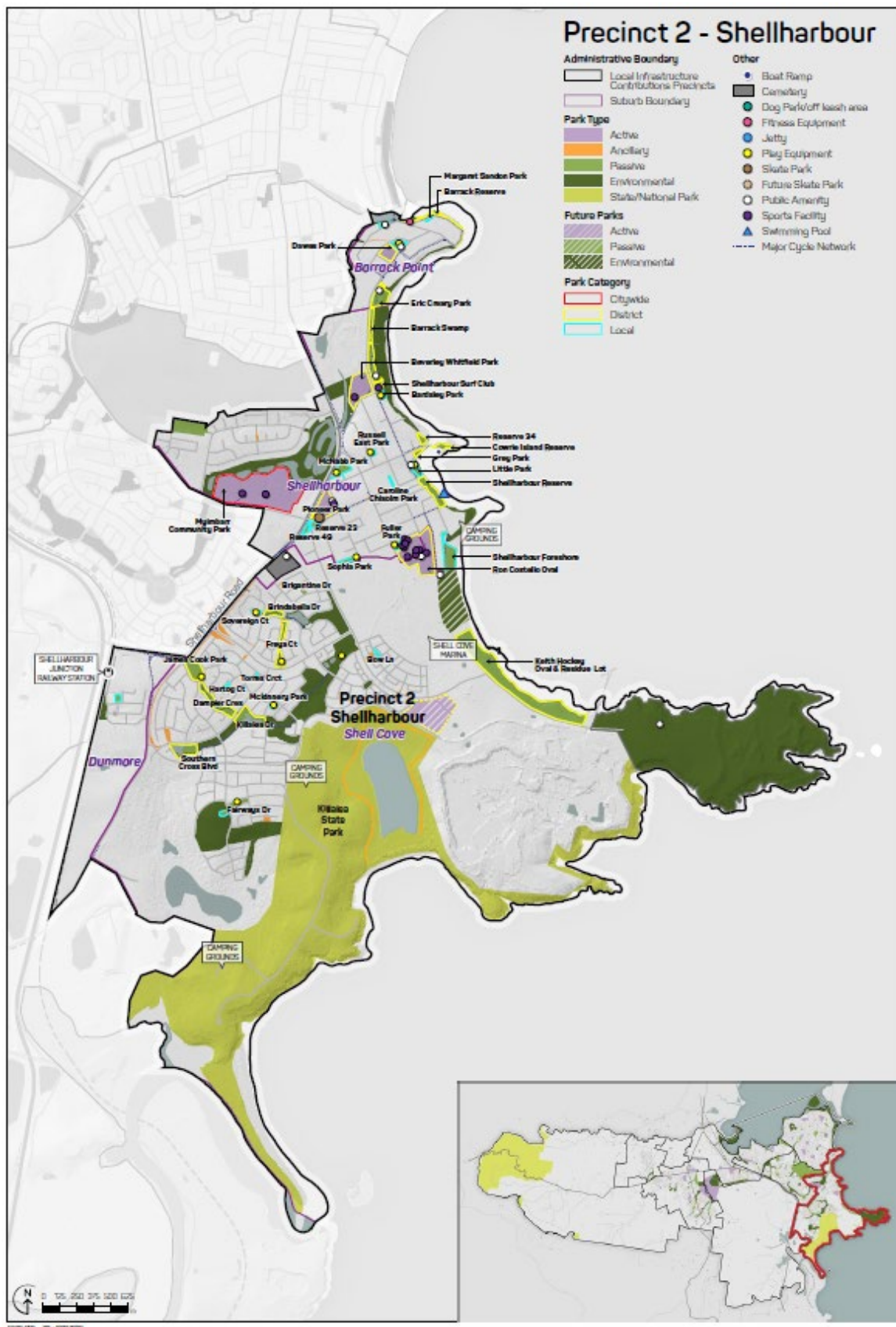
Attachment 3.2

Precinct 1 – Warilla

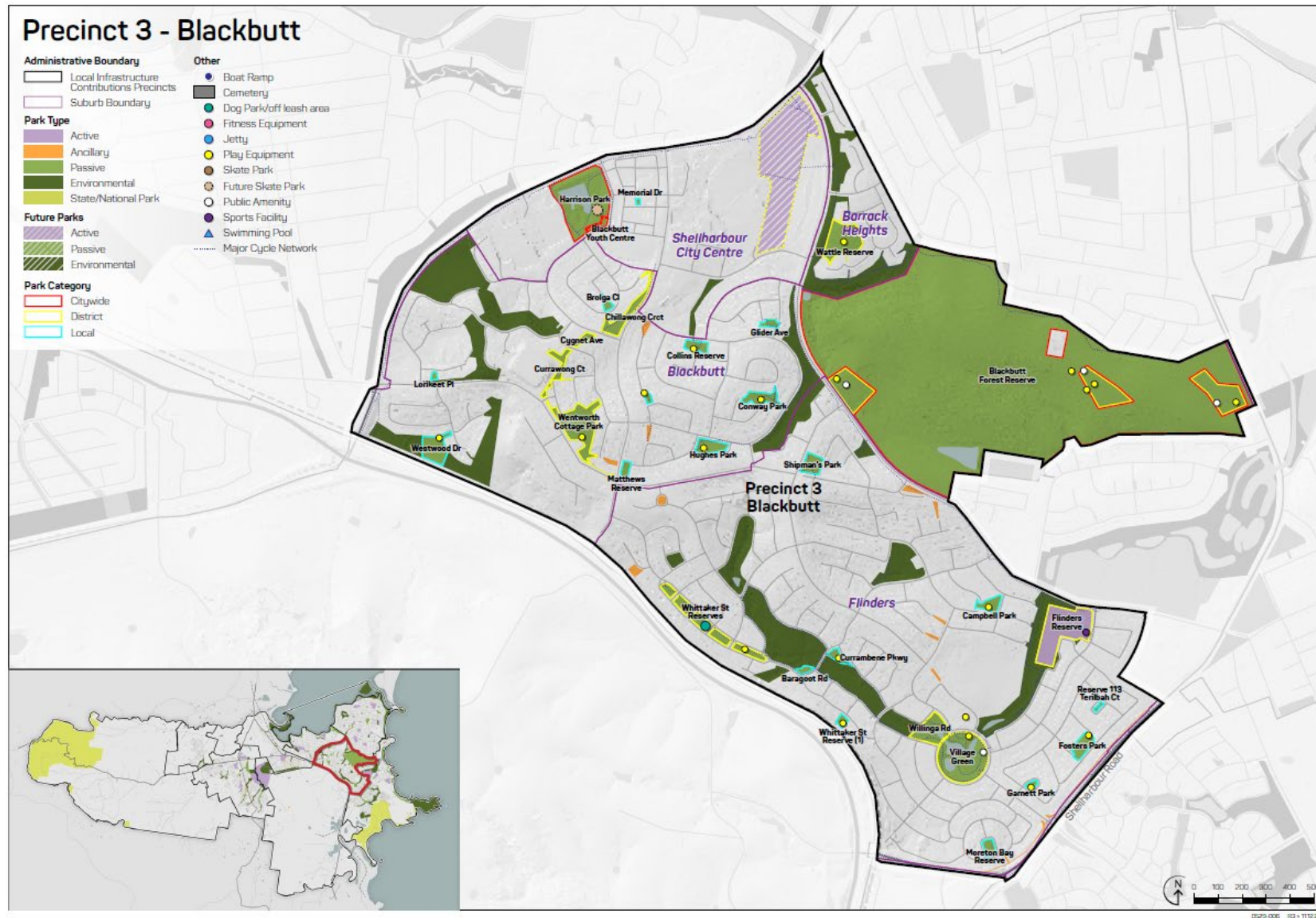


Attachment 3.3

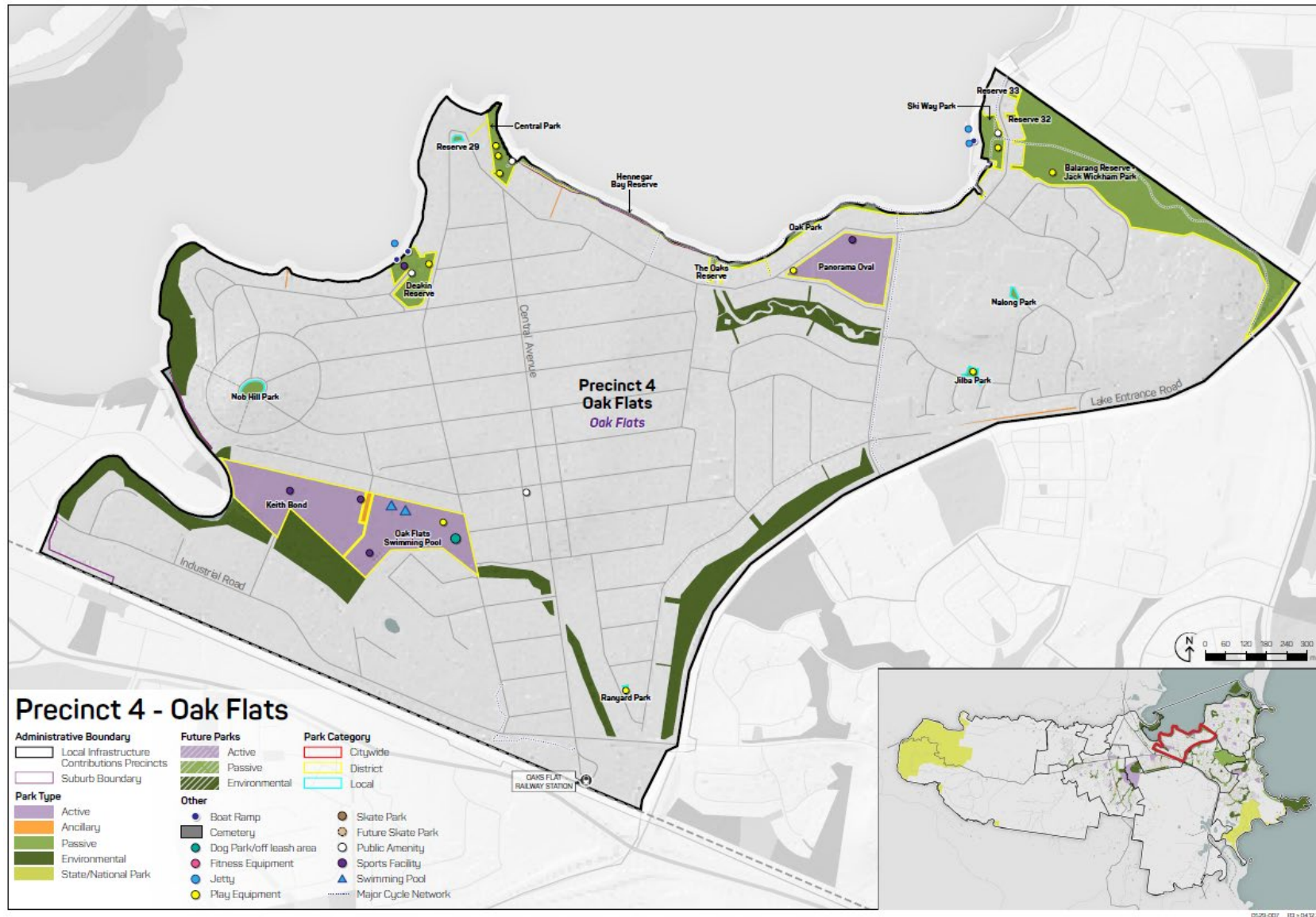
Precinct 2 – Shellharbour



Attachment 3.4 Precinct 3 – Blackbutt

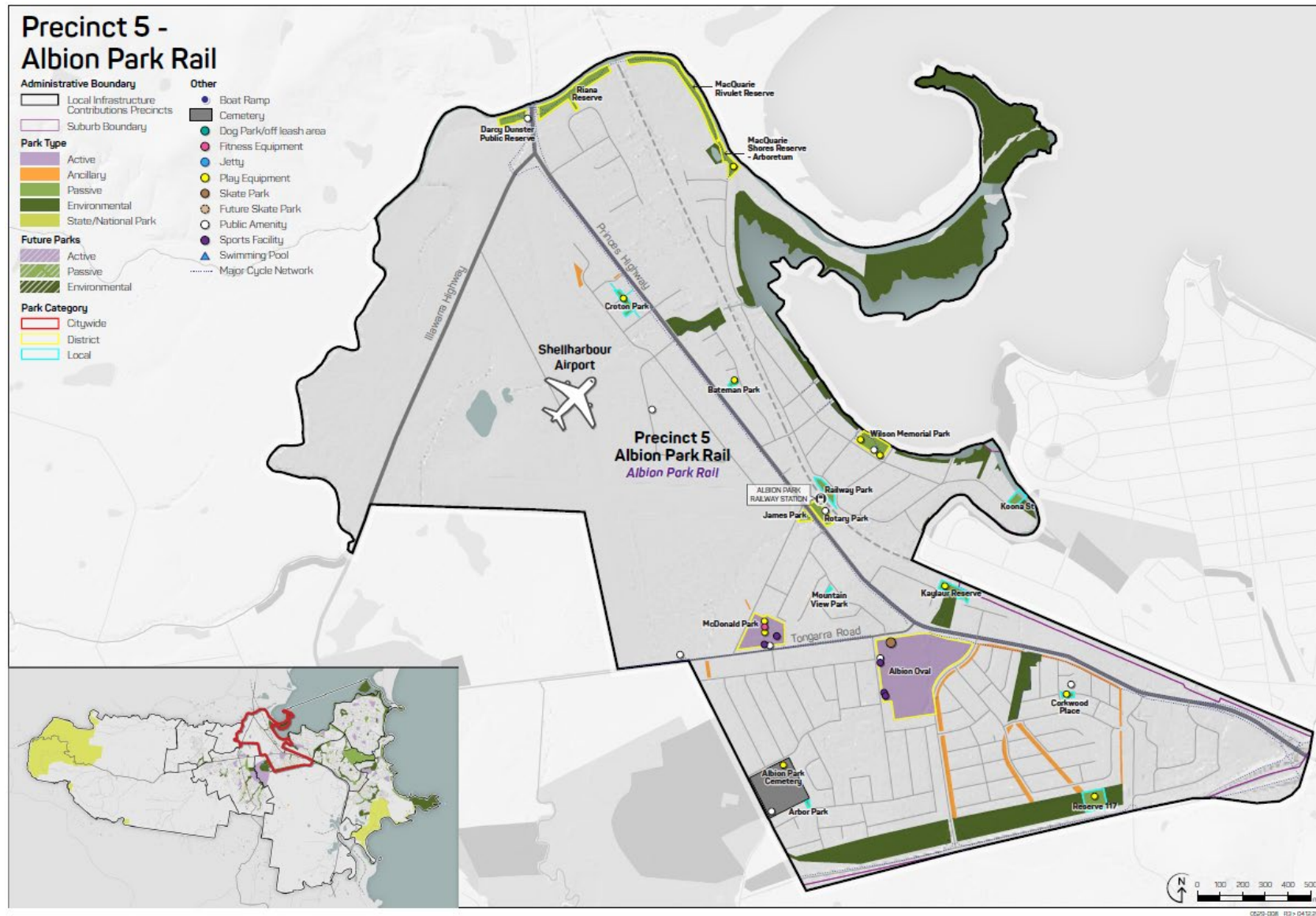


Attachment 3.5 Precinct 4 – Oak Flats



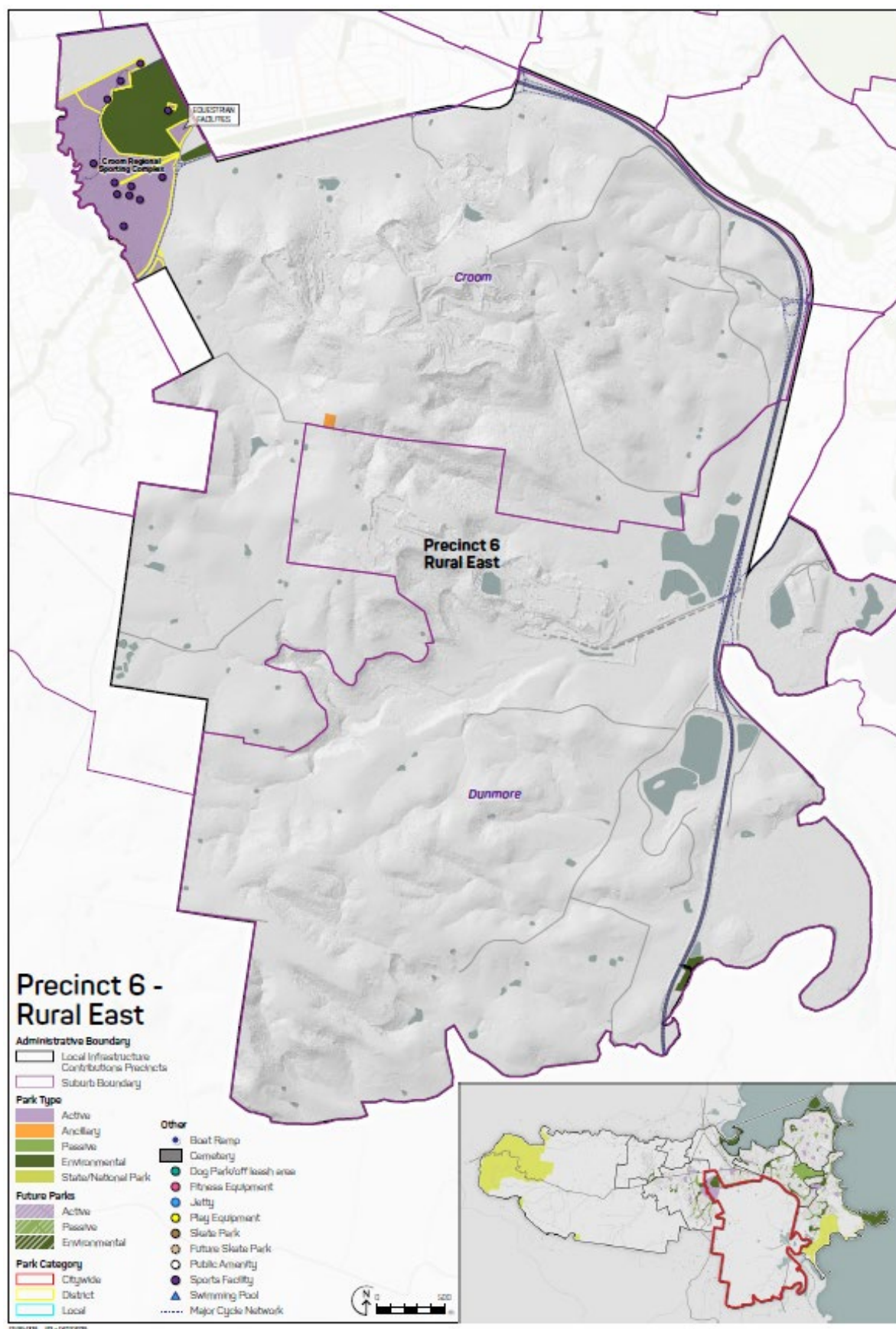
Attachment 3.6

Precinct 5 – Albion Park Rail



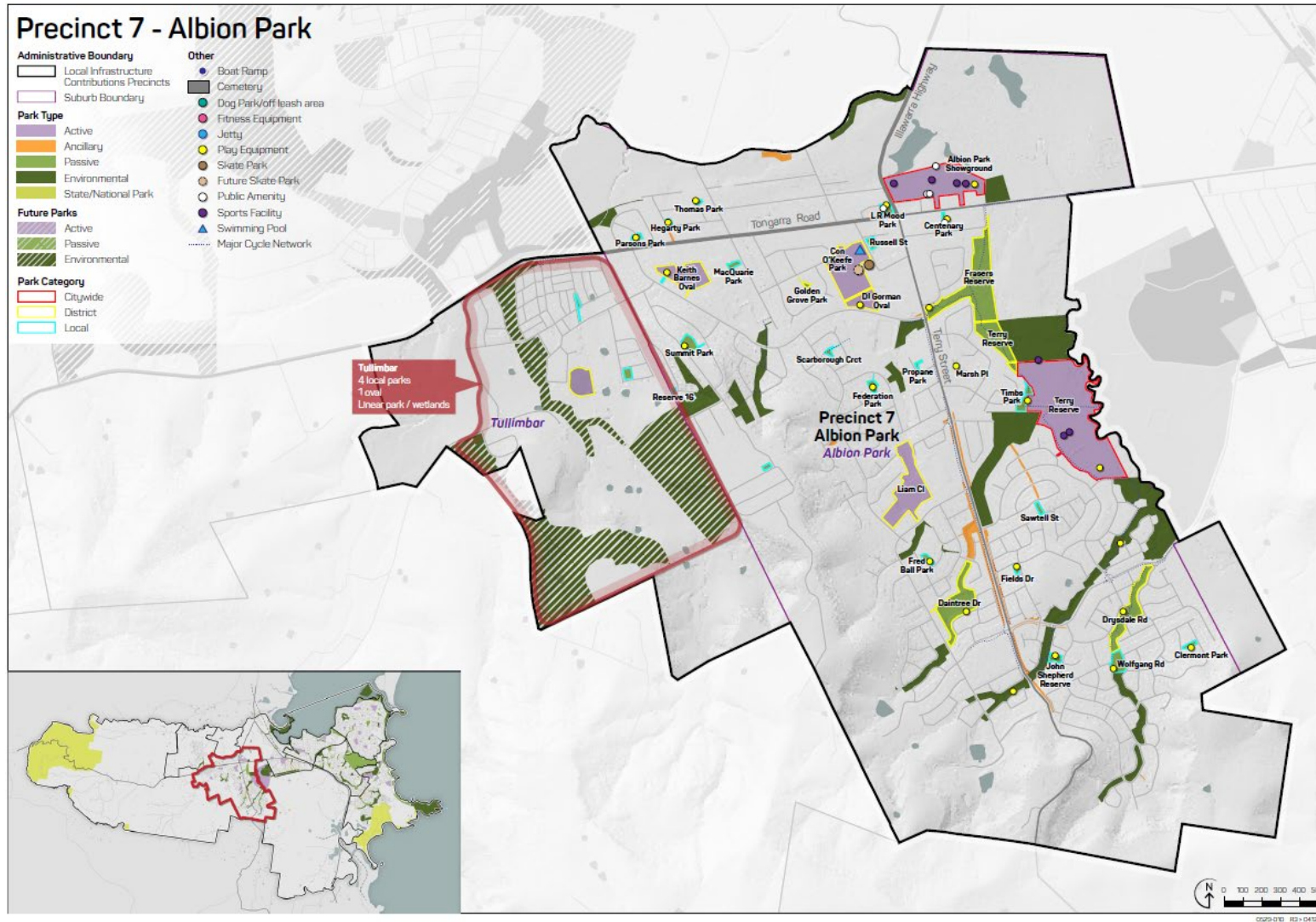
Attachment 3.7

Precinct 6 – Rural East

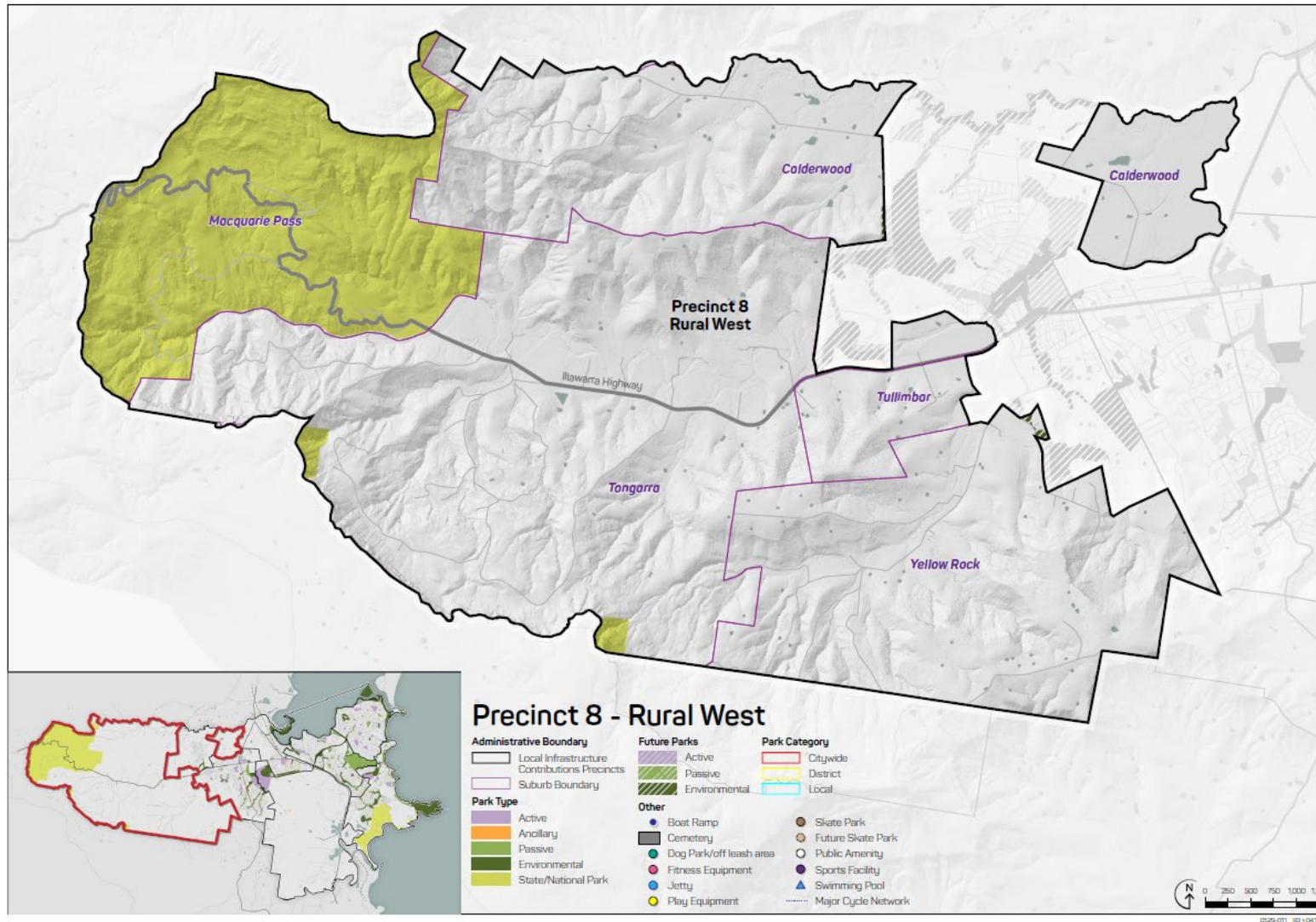


Attachment 3.8

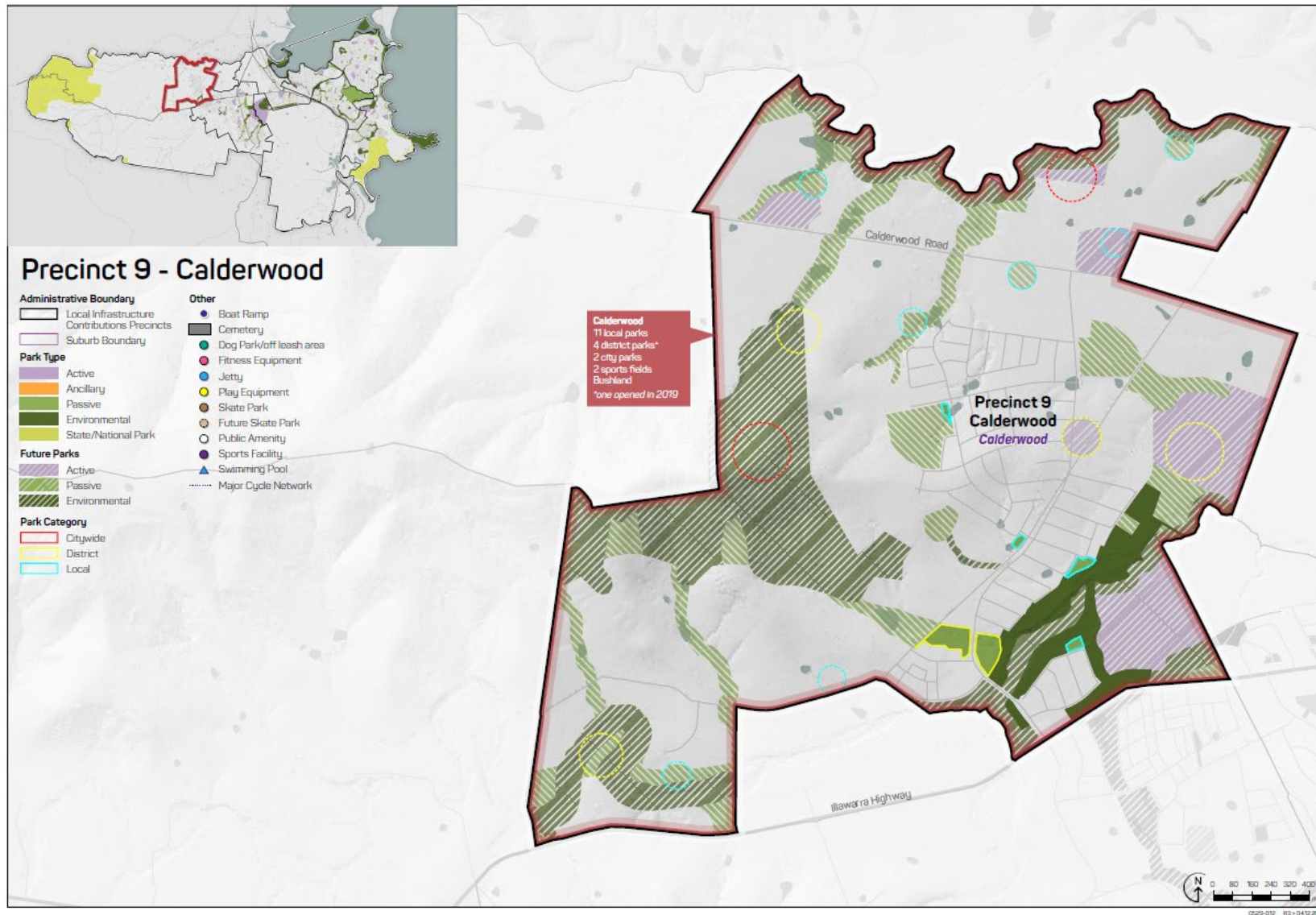
Precinct 7 – Albion Park



Attachment 3.9 Precinct 8 – Rural West



Attachment 3.10 Precinct 9 – Calderwood



Attachment 4. Shellharbour walkable catchments

Background

This attachment contains the results of a spatial analysis that identified 'walkable catchments' around passive and environmental open spaces across the Shellharbour LGA (see Glossary).

The ability of residents to gain access to public open space within an easy walk from homes, workplaces, and schools is an important factor for quality of life. The geographic distribution of open space is also an access and equity issue for the community.

Methodology

Definitions

For the purpose of this analysis, 'walkable catchments' are defined as residential areas within a safe 400m walking distance from a passive or environmental open space 0.3ha (3,000m²) or larger in size, based on asset data provided by Council, as of May 2019.

This definition is based on performance criteria outlined in the draft Open Space for Recreation Guide produced by the Government Architect of NSW (GANSW):

- **Accessibility and connectivity:** In medium-to-low density neighbourhoods, houses should be located within five minutes or 400m safe walking distance from a local, district or regional ('citywide' as referred to in this Study) park.
- **Size and shape:** In medium-to-low density neighbourhoods, the desirable minimum size of a local park is 3,000m² (0.3ha).

The map on the final page therefore only considers walkable catchments around open spaces classified as passive or environmental. Active reserves have been excluded as many have accessibility restrictions (such as having fenced off areas), as reported during the engagement with a number of sports stakeholders (see qualifications in explanatory notes below).

Spatial analysis

GIS (Geographic Information System) software was used to conduct the analysis, drawing upon spatial data provided by Council. Spatial data included open spaces, residential properties, roads and footpaths. The approach consisted of a network analysis, which measured 400m distances along the road and footpath network to identify the walkable catchment areas. This analysis also included use of public footpaths that went between dwellings or other features, not just those running parallel to the road network.

Results

The results of this analysis are presented in two forms:

- Table 53, which shows the percentage of dwellings located inside and outside walkable catchments, categorised by precinct; and
- A map on the final page, which visualises the geographic distribution of walkable catchments across the LGA.

Table 53: Percentage of dwellings inside and outside walkable catchments, by precinct (based on GANSW guidelines of 400m walkable distance from a passive and environmental open space ≥0.3ha)

Precinct	Outside catchments	Inside catchments
Albion Park	14.0%	86.0%
Albion Park Rail	19.2%	80.8%
Blackbutt	0.1%	99.9%
Calderwood*	62.9%	37.1%
Oak Flats	12.1%	87.9%
Rural East	0.0%	100.0%
Rural West	n/a	n/a
Shellharbour*	4.3%	95.7%
Warilla	10.3%	89.7%
LGA Total	11.0%	89.0%

* As noted in the map (see asterisk symbols) these precincts have recently developed or rezoned areas with future passive and environmental open space (see explanatory note below).

Source: Spatial analysis conducted by UTS using Council data on open spaces, residential properties, roads and footpaths.

Important explanatory notes

The results presented here should be interpreted with caution, keeping in mind that the analysis provides an approximation of walkable access to open spaces according to specific distance, park size and park classification criteria, described above. In particular, the following should be noted:

- **Open spaces <0.3ha**

There are a number of passive and environmental open spaces slightly smaller than 0.3ha, which in practice may provide open space of sufficient quality to satisfy the access needs of residents. When interpreting the results of this analysis, it may be useful to understand how the 400m walking catchment coverage changes when these parks, which are *approximately* 0.3ha in size, are included.

To explore this, a separate analysis was conducted which included parks that were within 10% of the 0.3ha minimum size (i.e. any park 0.27ha or larger). Overall, the inclusion of these slightly smaller parks made only a minor difference overall. For example, there was a total of 179 additional dwellings within catchment areas that nominally fell within walkable distances, resulting in a percentage increase from 89.0% of all dwellings to 89.6% of all dwellings across the LGA. These increases are all within the Warilla (+129) and Albion Park (+50) precincts.

- **Recently developed areas and planned open spaces**

There are some parts of the Calderwood and Shellharbour precincts (see asterisks on the map on the final page) that are recorded as currently falling outside the 400m walkable catchments. These areas are presently under development and include planned future passive open space to cater for residents' needs. It is anticipated that over the ten year life of the Strategy, these areas will also meet walkable catchment measures.

- **Safe walking routes**

Finally, the GANSW Guide explains that dwellings should be within 400m *safe* walking distance of a park. While it was not possible to audit every section of the road and footpath network to determine where barriers to safe access may impact walkability, the analysis did consider how walkability may be restricted along the major road corridor of the Princes Highway.

Two clusters of dwellings in Albion Park Rail were identified as having barriers to safe walking routes albeit nominally within the 400m catchment due to limited crossings of the highway to access the listed parks. For a safe walking route to the parks, those residents would need to walk much further to the nearest pedestrian crossing. Based on these considerations, around 100 Albion Park Rail dwellings located close to the Princes Highway were redefined as being outside the walkable catchment areas.

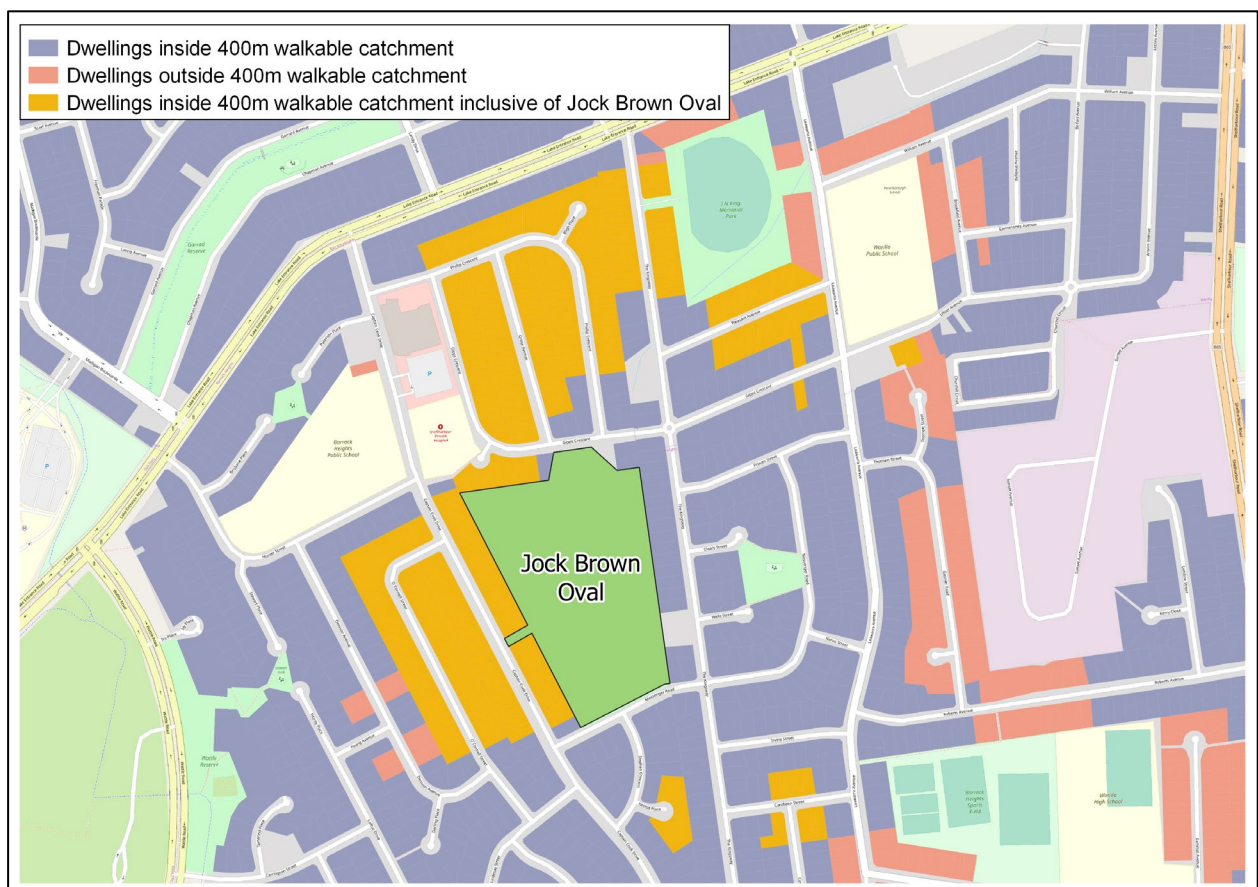
Naturally, should additional crossings be added to the Highway, this impediment would be resolved.

- **Passive versus active open spaces**

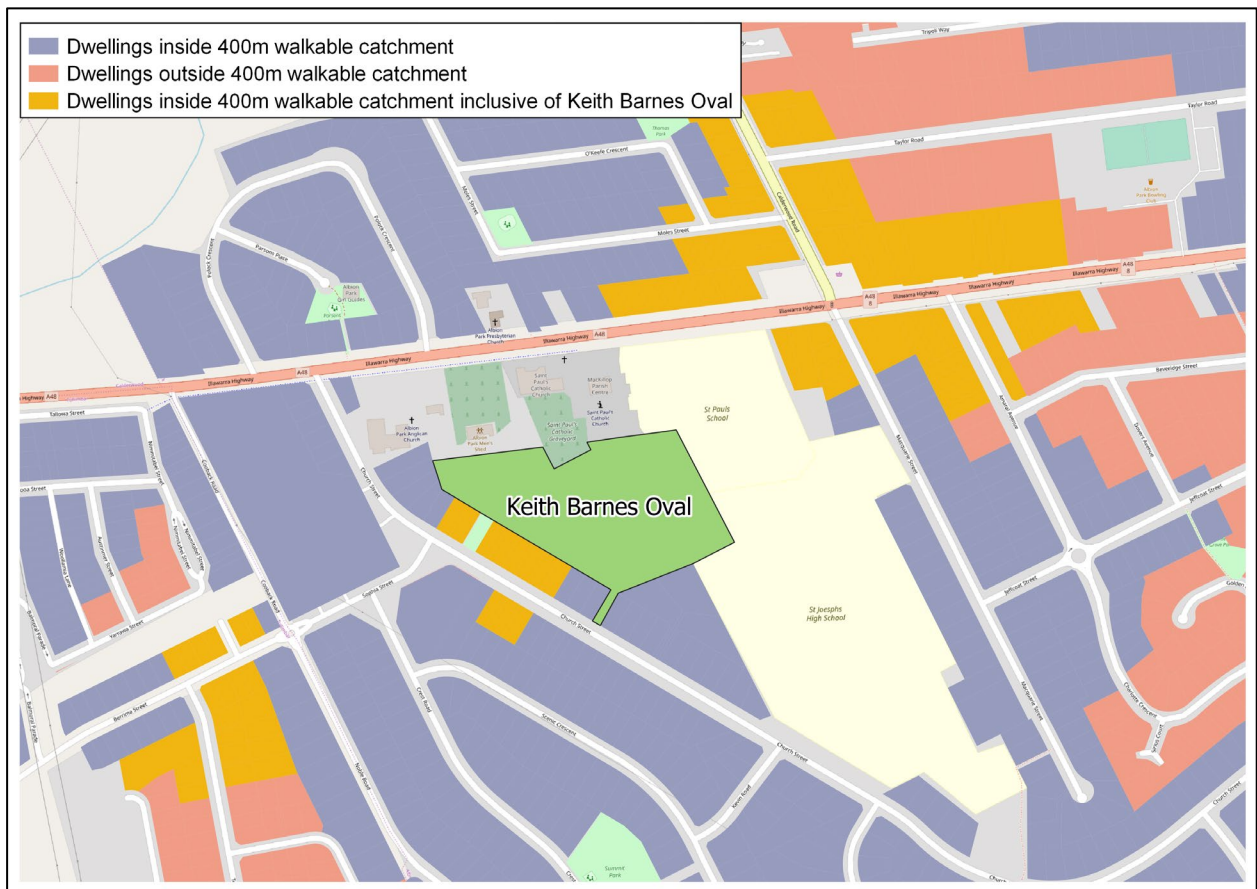
Although the walkable analysis included in this report is limited to passive and environmental open spaces, in practice, some active open spaces within the LGA are also used for passive purposes. For example, Jock Brown Oval, in the Warilla precinct, incorporates regular passive usage through the playground and a dog off-leash area, as does Keith Barnes Oval in the Albion Park precinct. However, the inclusion of these types of open spaces in the walkable analysis would have only a marginal impact on the LGA as a whole. For example, if Jock Brown Oval and Keith Barnes Oval were included, an additional 372 dwellings would fall within the catchment area, resulting in a percentage increase from 89.0% to 90.3% across the LGA.

Figures 10 and 11 below visualise the additional areas that would fall within walkable catchments if these two active open spaces were included.

Figure 10 Walkable catchments adjusted for inclusion of Jock Brown Oval as a passive/environmental open space $\geq 0.3\text{ha}$

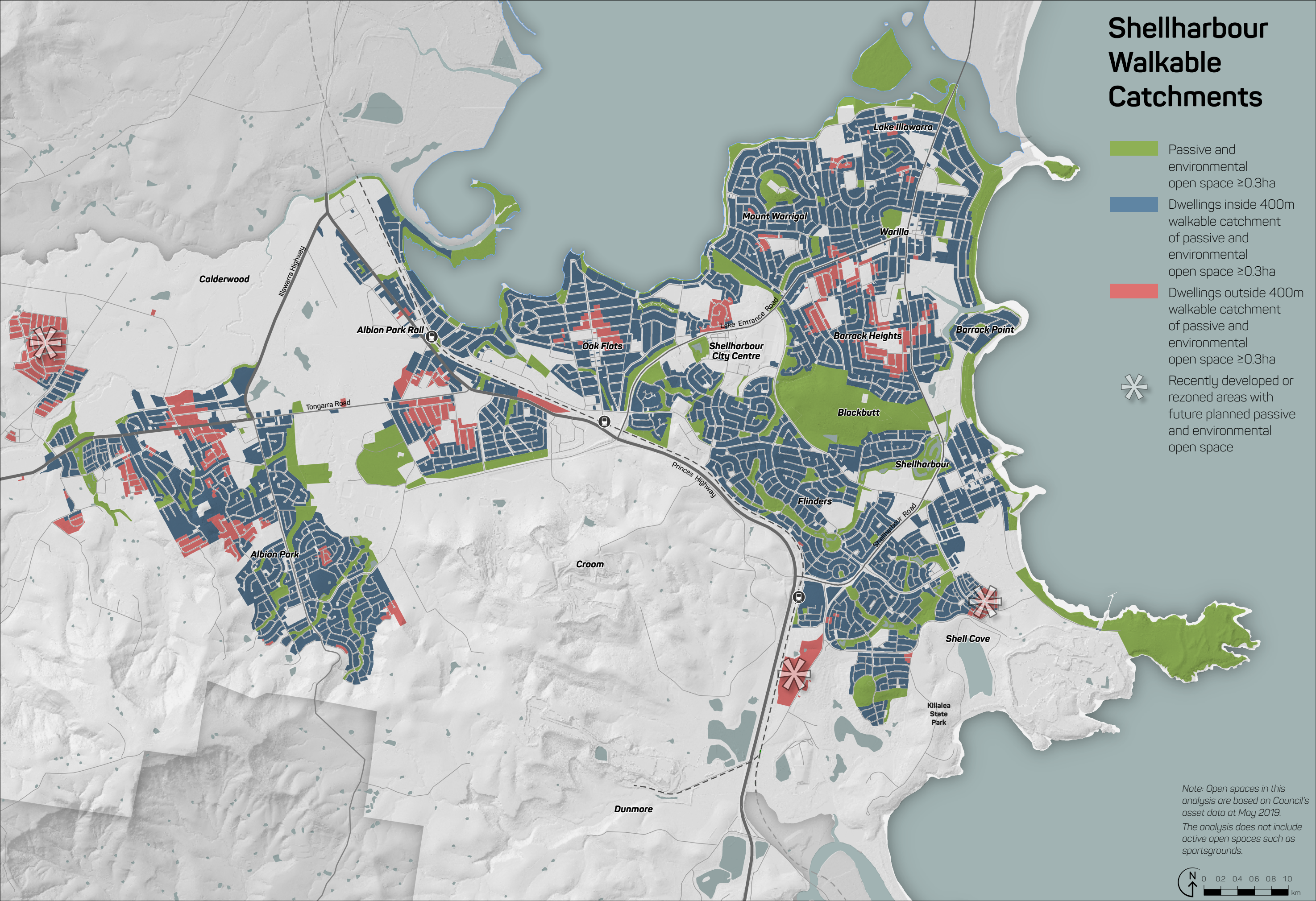


Source: Spatial analysis conducted by UTS using Council data; base map © OpenStreetMap contributors.

Figure 11 Walkable catchments adjusted for inclusion of Keith Barnes Oval as a passive/environmental open space $\geq 0.3\text{ha}$ 

Source: Spatial analysis conducted by UTS using Council data; base map © OpenStreetMap contributors.

Shellharbour Walkable Catchments





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