



**HORNSBY LEISURE STRATEGIC
PLAN
STAGE 3 REPORT**

**RECOMMENDED
STRATEGIES & ACTION
PLANS**

**Prepared for
Hornsby Shire Council**

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1 PREFACE

The strategies and action plans included in this report provide a 'basis for long-term leisure planning and services and facilities provision for the Hornsby community' – in accordance with Council's objective for the project.

They - the strategies and actions – are the end products of a detailed assessment of situations, problems and issues found to exist with respect to leisure and recreation in the Shire. They entail suggestions of possible ways in which those situations can be addressed and perhaps changed.

They should assist Council in pursuing its various roles of relevance to the provision of leisure services and opportunities within the Shire (including direct delivery of services, assistance to other providers of leisure services, land use planning, environmental management and the facilitation of social, economic and tourism development).

Having said this, it is noted that leisure and recreation services are, in the main, discretionary rather than mandatory policy areas for Council. Guidelines and standards are available in some program areas - but there are no clear mandates for what Council **should** be providing and doing and what the priorities should be.

Within this somewhat uncertain policy context, the outcomes of the current study will assist Council in the process of identifying priorities and determining appropriate courses of action.

With respect to this, however, it is emphasised that the strategies and action programs are based on best practice approaches to leisure services management and **may not, in their totality, be affordable or achievable in the short to medium term.**

Nevertheless the proposed strategies and actions should be seen (at the very least) as long term goals – eventually achievable albeit at the 'visionary' end of the policy development spectrum. The strategies, as well as reflecting best practice approaches to planning, also entail common sense responses to the needs, issues and problems identified in the study.

Essentially, the research undertaken for this study – and documented in detail in the Stage 2 Report – has identified and highlighted relevant issues and, in response, has proposed what **can** be done. It is now up to Council (and the community) to decide in the light of their own beliefs, values and priorities what **should** be done.

Hopefully, this report will provide significant assistance in this process.

2 INTRODUCTION

Council's overall objective for this project is to clarify and develop a 'basis for long-term leisure planning and services and facilities provision for the Hornsby community'. This basis is to be provided by a Leisure Services Plan.

Council requires the Leisure Services Plan to build upon existing policies and programs and to propose strategies 'to best align service and facility provision with the identified leisure needs of Hornsby's present and future populations'.

This report deals with stage 3 of a three-stage study process - the development of a leisure services *strategic framework*. It follows stage 1, which entailed a detailed review of existing policies and strategies, and stage 2, which involved detailed demand and supply assessments and gap analyses for a wide range of leisure facilities and services.

The Stage 1 report documented the key issues to emerge out of the review of existing plans and strategies.

These key issues included the following:

- Council's overall vision and objectives for leisure and recreation require broadening and clarification.
- There are apparent gaps in the provision of different types of open space setting and different types of leisure/community facility.
- There appears, for example, to be an under-supply of facilities for both sport and physical recreation (sports fields, indoor sports courts and swimming pools) and 'unstructured' activities (cycle ways and walking trails, picnic areas, dog off leash areas, skate board facilities etc).
- Previous open space/recreation studies have not been comprehensive in their analysis of both demand and supply issues.
- The type and extent of leisure service gaps therefore requires further investigation.
- There are perceived equity issues surrounding the distribution of leisure facilities (between urban and rural locations), Council's user fee and licensing policies and the targeting of services (with concerns expressed in regard to opportunities for young people, women's sport and the leisure needs of 'healthy' older people).
- The enhancement of existing facilities was often seen as a higher priority than the provision of wholly new facilities.
- Particular issues included the upgrading and improved presentation of parks and open spaces, swimming pools and tourist infrastructure and 'value adding' to many existing services
- The previous studies identified barriers to participation - including poor public transport to recreation and community facilities, inadequate disability access

provisions, lack of information on opportunities, perceived safety issues in public places and insufficient leisure programming.

- The provision of more and/or improved walking and cycling opportunities are perceived as key needs.
- The protection of ecological and outdoor recreation values (that are present in many locations within Council's open space system) was seen as a high priority.
- Opportunities to improve Council's leisure planning and management capability.
- A need to review aspects of Council's S94 planning methodology

The Stage 1 review of previous studies identified a range of perceptions and issues in regard to leisure service gaps. The review also noted that because some of the studies lacked comprehensiveness in their methodologies, their findings needed to be treated with some caution.

The stage 2 study built on the knowledge base provided by these previous studies. Through a comprehensive demand, supply and needs analysis, it investigated and documented the extent of service gaps and other issues across a wide range of leisure facilities and services. In doing so, it identified the issues of most current concern and relevance – and how these reflected or differed from the concerns expressed in the previous studies.

The Stage 2 study identified that, while the Shire has a large number of quality leisure facilities and services, there were still a significant number of service gaps as well as anomalies in the geographic distribution of leisure opportunities.

The key service needs identified in the study included the following:

- Additional sports grounds – particularly for cricket and senior soccer
- Purpose built facilities for equestrian groups
- Various upgrading requirements at many parks and sports grounds
- Improved communication between Council and sports groups and between different sports groups
- Additional passive parks in some areas
- Expansion, improvement or disposal of many low value small parks
- More safe cycling and walking routes
- A greater diversity of play spaces/facilities
- More youth-specific leisure facilities
- More activity options for older adults
- More and/or better distributed leisure information
- More access to/interpretation of natural areas
- New and upgraded indoor sports courts
- Upgraded and modernised aquatic centres
- Additional meeting places in some districts

- Upgrading of some community centres
- Improved promotion and programming of community centres and seniors' centres
- Improved access – to a range of facilities – for aged and disabled people
- Community cultural development initiatives
- Improved spaces for performing and visual arts
- Additional library materials and floor space

Stage 3 of the study – the subject of this report – develops strategic directions and action plans in accordance with the findings of Stages 1 and 2 of the study and the requirements of Council's brief. Specifically, it provides:

- guiding principles – to underpin the development of goals and approaches to planning, providing and managing leisure facilities and services,
- strategies for the upgrading, rationalisation or development of open space, recreation and leisure facilities in *existing* communities,
- benchmarks and service levels for open space, recreation and leisure facilities in *future* communities,
- action plans – indicating priorities, responsibilities and performance targets and measures for these strategies, and
- potential levying and allocation of S94 contributions for leisure facilities - including capital and recurrent funding implications of s94 charges

3 STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

3.1 Guiding Principles

The development of goals for leisure facilities and services and the planning and management of those services should be guided by the following principles:

- The provision of leisure facilities and services should be based on a full assessment of current and future community needs
- The provision of leisure facilities and services should be realistic with regard to the ability of Council and the community to provide, operate and maintain them¹
- Council should give priority to initiatives which help to achieve equity of opportunity for all individuals and groups – regardless of age, ability, gender or economic capacity
- Council should manage facilities according to sound asset management principles – thereby ensuring the provision only of needed facilities and services and at the lowest possible life cycle cost
- Council should involve the community in decisions affecting the planning, provision and management of recreation facilities and services
- Council should manage the recreational use of leisure resources on a sustainable basis
- Council should adopt best practice risk management processes to reduce public risk and safety issues involved with the use of leisure facilities
- Council should encourage and support community and commercial initiatives in the provision and management of leisure facilities and services.

3.2 Vision and Goals

Council's overall mission or intent is 'creating a living environment'. Council has determined to achieve this through:

- “engaging the community in the future of the Shire
- protecting the natural environment
- conserving resources
- facilitating increased social wellbeing
- aligning service provision to meet changing needs
- integrating land use and transport planning

¹ Particularly in regard to S94 projects where a decision by Council to levy projects entails a legal commitment to provide that facility – irrespective of the overall capital and recurrent cost liabilities to Council

- facilitating a diverse local economy
- achieving financial sustainability.”

Within the context of this overall mission, Council's *Management Plan 2001/2 – 2003/4* identifies a range of *desired outcomes* of relevance to the future planning and management of leisure facilities and services - including the following:

- equitable provision of sporting, recreational and cultural facilities
- equitable access for all groups in the community to information, services and facilities
- best value in Council services
- continuing community support for the volunteer program in bushland regeneration
- use of more sustainable modes of transport such as public transport, walking, bicycles

The *Management Plan* identifies a series of *new initiatives* for the achievement of these *desired outcomes* and, as well, provides the broad strategic framework for the development of specific program goals and strategies. These latter are articulated in various program strategic plans² and community land plans of management.

The goals established in these various documents similarly deal with the provision of facilities and services in accordance with principles of equity and good management, demonstrated need and quality criteria.

The strategies developed in this study and detailed below are consistent with the broad goals and objectives articulated in Council's *Management Plan* and various leisure-related program strategies. At the same time, the study recognises the need to regularly revisit goals and strategies - and some of these could be reformulated in the light of the outcomes of this study.

The formulation of new visions and goals is a role for Councilors and Council officers in appropriately structured workshops using the outcomes of this study (including the recommended strategies) and other relevant investigations.

3.3 Strategic Overview

The key finding of the current study is that the resource base for leisure within the Shire is of variable quality and comprehensiveness.

On the one hand, the Shire has a 'generous' supply of high quality bushland and a range of other excellent facilities (including Fagan Park, Hornsby Park, several sportsgrounds and neighbourhood parks, Hornsby and Pennant Hills libraries and some community centres).

² Including the Library & Information Services Strategic Plan 2000-2003, Skateboard Strategy, Youth Services Strategic Plan 2000-2003 and Social Plan 2000-2005

On the other hand, and with respect to the current needs of *existing* populations, there are deficiencies in some types of leisure facility – as detailed in chapters 8-15 of the Stage 2 Report.

There are, for example, *quantitative deficiencies* in soccer and cricket fields, equestrian facilities, indoor sports halls, purpose-built cultural centres, library floor space and materials, youth facilities and, in some areas, local 'walk to' parks and meeting places.

There are also *quality issues* – mainly to do with the usability and accessibility of leisure resources. The key issues include the condition of assets (including sports ground playing surfaces and change facilities, aquatic centres, playgrounds and community centres) and the 'user-friendliness' of facilities (information on leisure opportunities, parking at libraries, shade in parks, safe cycling routes and disability access at all facilities).

Another issue concerns Council's current orientation towards facility provision and management and the potential benefits of adopting higher profile roles in leisure programming and marketing.

Additionally, and this is a central concern of the strategies proposed in this volume, the Shire' population is expected to grow to 163,000 by 2011 – an increase of 12,000 (or 8%) more than the current population. This will generate considerable additional demand for existing (and new) leisure facilities and services³.

Current strategic priorities therefore encompass initiatives in the following areas:

- The provision of *new* facilities and the enhancement of *existing* facilities – to meet the demonstrated needs of both existing *and* future populations, and
- The expansion of leisure programming and marketing roles.

A series of strategies and actions across a range of program areas have been developed to address these strategic priorities. These are detailed in the following two chapters.

³ It would be desirable to forecast leisure facility needs over a twenty-year planning horizon – to 2021. However, detailed population projections – for the Shire and at the planning district level – are not currently available for this period. These forecasts could be done – as a supplementary study – when these population projections become available.

4 RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES

The proposed strategies are organised according to broad *program area* and several *policy outcome areas*.

The program areas are *parks and open space* (sports grounds, local and district parks, bushland and linkages), *community and cultural facilities* (halls, community, youth and seniors' centres, arts facilities and libraries) and *indoor sport and aquatic recreation facilities*.

The policy outcome areas are as follows:

1. Provision of new and/or extended facilities
2. Improvements in the quality and accessibility of existing facilities
3. Partnerships with and assistance to clubs, associations and other agencies involved in the provision/management of leisure facilities
4. Promotion of existing facilities and leisure opportunities
5. Improvements in Council's capacity to manage the planning, development and operation of leisure facilities and services.

For each of these 'policy outcome' areas, a range of strategies have been developed – as detailed in the following sub-sections. Action plans for the implementation of these strategies (with proposed priority ratings, funding sources, performance targets and responsibilities for implementation) are detailed in chapter 5 below.

4.1 Provision of New/Extended Leisure Facilities

Strategy	Rationale
Parks and Open Space	
<p>Provide new soccer, cricket and netball facilities according to demonstrated needs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low provision of grounds/courts according to planning benchmarks and regional comparisons • Full or over utilisation of many existing grounds • Conflicts between user groups (eg Waitara Oval – dispute between R League & Union and Cricket) • Strong expression of need from relevant stakeholder groups • Above average proportion in Homsby of 'high sports participation' age groups
<p>Review the following options for new soccer, cricket and netball facilities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use and/or development of public land (ex pony club site on Schofield Parade, Old Man's Valley, Pacific Highway, Berowra; Warrigal Road, Westleigh; Dartford Road Thornleigh) • Joint ventures with schools with adequate land for sports field development and/or upgrading (eg Loreto College) • Reconfiguring of existing sports space (eg conversion of mini soccer fields to senior fields as child population falls in future years) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Major needs are within the southern, developed areas of the Shire • Joint ventures with schools provides mutual benefits to schools and community and entails efficient use of limited resources • Opportunities for reconfiguring space will emerge with future demographic change and sports participation trends
<p>Support the Northern District Hockey Association's proposal to build a synthetic field at Pennant Hills Park</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low provision of grounds according to planning benchmarks and regional comparisons • Strong expression of need from relevant stakeholder groups
<p>Provide equestrian facilities – according to demonstrated needs - in conjunction with multi-use show ground facilities at Fagan Park</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low provision of facilities on a regional comparative basis • Strong expression of need from relevant stakeholder groups
<p>Progressively develop new local and district parks in new development areas where suitable undeveloped land is available</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some areas in the Shire (particularly in PD's 2, 5 and 8) are not well provided with quality local parks • All children should have reasonable access to play facilities (ie maximum 300-500 metre safe walking distance from homes) • Older people should also have walking distance access to quality open space

Strategy	Rationale
<p>Progressively build upon the existing network of local and regional walking and cycling trails and paths</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many parks and open spaces are dispersed and fragmented – thereby reducing opportunities for trails and linkages • Parks will be better used where linked to each other and to residential areas by safe walking and cycling facilities • The desire for safe cycling facilities was articulated in all the consultations undertaken for this study • Insufficient provision of safe routes for young people on bikes, scooters, skates and skateboards • Cycling is an increasingly popular recreation activity for families and older people • Walking (for fitness and pleasure) is an increasingly popular activity – and remains popular with older age groups
<p>Indoor sport & aquatic recreation facilities</p>	
<p>Commission a detailed feasibility study of options for the enhancement of Council's aquatic facilities (with options to include extension of existing facilities – with indoor leisure pools and/or larger gyms - and provision of a modern regional scale 'wet-dry' facility)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The last strategic review of aquatic centres was undertaken nearly ten years ago • The Shire has only one indoor pool (at Galston) and this is perceived to be 'congested' for part of the year • The collective use of the pools is (comparatively) low – in winter in particular – suggesting that the facilities/ programs are not fully appropriate to people's needs • The consultations identified a strong demand in the community for modern indoor aquatic and leisure centre facilities • Modern leisure centres attract 2-3 times more users than outdoor 'wet' only facilities – reflecting their relevance to a greater range of people
<p>Construct the proposed indoor four-court sports hall at Thornleigh (Dartford Rd) at the earliest possible date</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is no multi-court indoor public sports facilities in the Shire (making it very difficult for most indoor sports to conduct district scale competitions and impossible to run regional level events) • General public excess to existing facilities (ie those provided by schools, YMCA and PCYC) is poor • Unmet needs for indoor court space articulated strongly in the community consultations

Strategy	Rationale
<p>Closely monitor the use of the new sports hall (when it opens in 2003) and existing indoor sport facilities and, depending on need, commence feasibility work for the development of new indoor facilities between 2005-2010</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The current shortfall is a minimum of four courts – so the proposed facility will barely provide for backlog needs and will not have the capacity to cater to any significant growth in relevant sports • The growth in the population and the increasing popularity of indoor sports is likely to increase demand in future years
<p>Community centres & cultural facilities</p>	
<p>Investigate opportunities for increasing public meeting/activity space in the Hornsby CBD, Cherrybrook and Pennant Hills</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall, Council has one centre/5,600 people – which is adequate according to commonly accepted standards • The provision levels are significantly lower in Cherrybrook, Pennant Hills and the Hornsby CBD • The consultations identified a need for additional meeting space in the Hornsby CBD. • Use of community halls and meeting places is quite high – but there is under use of Council's community centres (except for those in the 'under-provided' areas
<p>Investigate the feasibility of developing a regional-scale youth entertainment and drop-in facility within the Hornsby CBD</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing youth centre is small – with limited potential for medium & large scale entertainment events • No suitable venues for band nights, u 18's dance parties and other youth entertainment events
<p>Investigate the feasibility of providing a multi-purpose cultural facility within the Shire</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most recent feasibility completed in 1988 (14 years ago) • Consultations (<i>community and organisations' surveys</i>) identified a significant demand for visual and performing arts facilities • High use of (often unsuitable) halls and other community centres by cultural groups
<p>Increase library floor space and library stock to levels more consistent with prescribed standards</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low provision of floor space and library materials compared to relevant standards and state average provisions

4.2 Improvements - Quality/Accessibility of Existing Facilities

Strategy	Rationale
All program areas	
<p>Undertake a comprehensive disability access audit of major parks, open space and other leisure facilities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The community consultations highlighted the need to improve the accessibility of parks - including accessible parking and toilets, shade, lighting and seating • The increasing proportions of middle aged and older persons in the Shire require improved access to and within open space and leisure facilities • Maximising aged and disabled peoples' access to mainstream leisure opportunities is consistent with access and equity principles
<p>Identify strategies for upgrading and expanding both public and community transport services throughout the Shire to improve access to leisure facilities for those with limited mobility – youth, unemployed, aged, disabled</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The community consultations highlighted the transport access difficulties of young people and those without private transport – particularly in more remote areas • Minimising transport barriers - for young people and other transport disadvantaged people - is consistent with access and equity principles
Parks and open space	
<p>Develop walking trail and cycle way strategies</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultations identified high demand for further linkages and safe walking and cycling routes
<p>Review community land plans of management in the light of the outcomes of this study (and the proposed access audit and walking/cycle way strategies). Amend where necessary</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amendments required to reflect current community views as identified in the study consultations (re sports facility upgrading, more linkages, more/improved park visitor facilities such as seating, signs, shade and access)
<p>Subsequent to completion of the plans of management review and the disability access audit, develop a program of works to provide/improve seating, shade, signs, play facilities and access in major parks and other facilities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As above
<p>Continue to upgrade sportsgrounds – with floodlighting, improved playing surfaces, amenities, drainage, irrigation, car parks</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is more cost effective to facilitate optimal use of existing facilities than to build new ones

Strategy	Rationale
Upgrade the 'family friendliness' of sportsgrounds by providing adjacent picnic, rest and play facilities for the enjoyment of non playing siblings and other family members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The provision of playgrounds and/or picnic facilities adjacent to sports facilities will increase their appeal for family use • Around 40% of Council's sportsgrounds are not currently associated with playgrounds • The consultations identified a strong demand for a greater diversity of opportunities in parks
Develop guidelines for the design and development of children's playgrounds and/or seek professional design advice before developing playgrounds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a limited range of playground 'types' in Homsby – with most catering to the 2-8 years age group • An adequate diversity of opportunity requires a hierarchy of local to district scale play facilities
Develop at least one high quality play area in a local or district park in each district – with (for example) playground, junior bike circuit, seating and shelters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As above
Provide a range of youth-oriented play facilities (including skate facilities, basketball rings & play facilities for youth at key accessible sites within the Shire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low current provision of youth oriented play facilities - skateboard parks, playgrounds for older children/youth, basketball rings – in the Shire's parks • Apart from the skate park facilities at Cherrybrook and Brooklyn, there are no play facilities suitable for adolescents
Develop a 'companion animals' policy – including the further identification and promotion of both on and off-leash areas in accessible locations across the Shire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The community consultations highlighted the need to improve the range of recreation facilities and opportunities in parks – including more dog 'off leash' areas • The need will become more urgent as the population ages and more people leave the work force
Indoor sport & aquatic recreation facilities	
Upgrade and extend Council's three aquatic centres in accordance with prescribed standards and expressed needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only one of Council's three centres has an indoor pool. One has no gym and the other two have only very small gyms and 'dry area' programs • The <i>community survey</i> identified relatively high levels of dissatisfaction with existing pools • In the <i>organisations' survey</i> many user groups rated Council's aquatic centres as 'poor' or 'average'. Desired improvements included general refurbishment, upgraded toilets, better starting blocks, replacement of tiles, upgraded filtration and more shade/spectator cover

Strategy	Rationale
Community & cultural facilities	
<p>Develop and implement an Asset Improvement Program for Council's community centres, seniors' centres halls and libraries</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the <i>organisations' survey</i>, 63% of respondents rated halls and community centres as 'good' or 'very good' but still requested a wide range of improvements – heating, ventilation, larger and/or more rooms • In the <i>community survey</i>, 13% of respondents expressed dissatisfaction with the quality of community centres
<p>Continue to implement existing strategies for improving the relevance, appeal, accessibility and use of seniors' centres</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High levels of unutilised capacity at most centres (despite the high use and limited capacity at many other types of community centre/hall) • Use of the centres by only a very small proportion of older people within the Shire
<p>Address/review library configurations and operations in accordance with operational requirements and the expressed needs of users</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultations identified some level of dissatisfaction with library services – including staffing, layouts, use of technology, disability access, parking, quantity of non-English materials and opening hours

4.3 Partnerships and Assistance

Strategy	Rationale
All program areas	
Continue to promote 'community partnering' through the provision of financial assistance grants and other initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council can leverage its own limited resources through co-operating with and/or supporting the facility management and activity programming initiatives of other organisations (including schools, sports clubs and associations and other community groups)
Establish co-operative mechanisms with schools (including possible assistance with insurance, facility development and/or maintenance) to further the community use of schools outside school hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As above
Work with the Department of Sport and Recreation and other agencies to promote volunteer involvement programs, leadership programs and other initiatives of value to community based organisations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many groups are too small and without the knowledge to run their own training and development programs
In allocating grants and other support, give priority to proposals which promote multi-purpose use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multi purpose facilities cater to a wider diversity of needs and are more cost effective (more needs met per \$ allocated) • Promotes potential synergies between activities
Join the Active Australia Local Government Network (AALGN)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The AALGN is a national network of councils committed to improving the quality of the sporting opportunities in their communities (via partnerships with local sport and recreation organisations) • By joining the network, councils are able to share common experiences, programs and activities as well as benefit from the many ways in which they will be able to access Active Australia opportunities.
Parks and Open Space	
Strengthen communication between Council and sport/recreation groups through the conduct of summer and winter season forums (including joint summer-winter user forums) – to present the direction and priorities being pursued by Council and provide an opportunity for groups to discuss issues of common concern	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need for improved communication expressed in community consultations • Improved coordination would facilitate discussion and understandings on issues of common concern to sports groups (including user fees, length of tenancies, facility maintenance, facility upgrade priorities and development approval processes) • Improved coordination would also facilitate the flow of information on Council's sports planning intentions to sports groups and facilitate joint approaches (grant applications, facility development programs) between different groups

Strategy	Rationale
In conjunction with these forums review the merits of forming a community based sports council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A formal ongoing mechanism for community-Council co-operation on strategic sports development and use matters and/or the maintenance and management of facilities
Expand support to Hornsby Bushcare - as a principal means of increasing the area of degraded bushland being restored	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community consultations identified concerns with quality of bushland in some areas
Prepare education and guidance materials for 'neighbours' of Council owned natural areas – indicating how they can assist with land management issues (fire control, weed control, domestic pets, passive surveillance of vandalism etc)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complements other strategies – including bushcare, weedbusters week, guides walks – in raising awareness of environmental issues and leveraging Council's limited resources
Investigate the merits of forming a peak body for the cooperative management of environmental open space in the Shire – to include relevant government agencies (Council, NPWS, fire and water authorities) and other interested groups (bushcare groups, 'friends' groups)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Variety of mutual benefits - information and ideas sharing, joint projects and policy development
Indoor sports/aquatic/recreation facilities	
Investigate options for partnering/assisting community providers of indoor sports facilities (PCYC, YMCA and/or schools) in the upgrading of existing facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The proposed Thornleigh facility will not be able to meet all indoor sport needs

4.4 Promotion of existing facilities & recreation opportunities

Strategy	Rationale
All program areas	
<p>Assist leisure organisations in the promotion of activities – such as in assisting with 'try or learn' programs and/or providing annual awards to groups that are particularly successful in promoting access to their activities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic, social and health benefits of increased use of facilities and participation in leisure activities
Parks and Open Space	
<p>Develop a marketing and promotion strategy for Council's parks and open space – including facility directories and brochures (with maps and information on places of interest)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic, social and health benefits of increased use of facilities and participation in leisure activities • The focus groups identified 'lack of information' about opportunities as a major constraint to participation
<p>Develop a signs strategy for parks and recreation facilities and park furniture colour schemes – ensuring a consistency of quality across Council's open space and recreation assets</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotion of positive 'corporate' image and awareness • Key component of optimising the appeal and attractiveness of Council's park and open space system
<p>Enhance public awareness and appreciation of environmentally significant areas of open space through the further development of interpretation programs (including brochures, signs and/or self guided walks)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhanced visitor enjoyment of high value natural areas • Enhanced appreciation of environmental and heritage issues (with long term benefits in reduced management problems)
Indoor sports & aquatic recreation facilities	
<p>Review and build upon the existing marketing and promotion strategy for Council's aquatic centres - with a particular focus on winter season use and promotion to the youth population</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low use of Council's pools on a regional comparative basis (mainly due to low winter season use) • Economic, social and health benefits of increased use of facilities and participation in leisure activities • The focus groups identified 'lack of information' about opportunities as a major constraint to participation

Strategy	Rationale
Community Cultural Centres	
<p>Further develop the marketing and promotion strategy for Council's halls and community centres</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic, social and health benefits of increased use of facilities and participation in leisure activities • Underuse of many of Council's community centres • Need to build on existing brochures with other modes of promotion (possibly including Council's web site, directories and events/activities calendars)
<p>Market and promote Council's library services – in accordance with Key Goal 5 in the Library and Information Services Strategic Plan 2000-2003</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic, social and health benefits of increased use of facilities and participation in leisure activities

4.5 Improvements in Council's capacity to plan, develop & operate recreation facilities.

Strategy	Rationale
All program areas	
<p>Provide staff and resources to undertake initiatives in <i>leisure programming</i> (including liaison with and assistance to community groups, grant and other submission writing and promotion/marketing)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A diversity of leisure, recreation, sport and cultural programs are required – both to meet needs and to ensure high levels and effective use of open space and other leisure facilities • Council can provide leisure programs directly – and it can also leverage the large array of skills and enthusiasms in the community to generate more leisure activity than it can through direct programming. • Effective leveraging requires Council support in the form of small 'seeding' or operational grants and/or assistance with information and promotion activities, management, volunteer/leadership training and transport • Council needs specialist leisure program staff to assist with the leisure programming initiatives of community organisations (and the Active Australia Network) & to provide relevant programs directly (in, for example, underused community centres)
<p>Provide staff and resources to undertake initiatives in <i>recreation planning and visitor monitoring</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is inadequate information on the use of local and district parks, aquatic centres and other leisure facilities – and the satisfaction levels of users • Visitor information is critical to understanding whether or not facilities and programs are meeting people's needs – and an important determinant of upgrading priorities
<p>Enhance <i>leisure management information systems</i> (including leisure facility use/visitor monitoring and demographic change analysis) for the ongoing assessment of community leisure needs and the capacity of facilities to meet these needs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As above
<p>Maximise funds for leisure facilities and services – through the full exploitation of both traditional and innovative sources of funding</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effectively addressing service gaps requires the optimal use of all available funds – grants, user fees, sponsorships, donations, S94 levies, joint ventures and general revenue
<p>Continue the process of incorporating asset management, risk management and 'best value' principles into the management and maintenance of Council's leisure facilities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council can add significant value to its portfolio of open space and leisure facilities through the further implementation of its Asset Management Program

Strategy	Rationale
Parks and Open Space	
<p>Continue to identify park and open space sites which should be considered for disposal or alternative uses and develop guidelines for reinvesting the funds released in other local and district scale recreation opportunities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disposal of 'low value' open space is consistent with sound asset management principles • It is cost-ineffective to incur substantial maintenance costs for spaces that are little used or appreciated by their local communities. • The disposal of such sites has the potential to raise funds for the (more cost-effective) enhancement of higher value open space and/or recreation facilities
<p>Review park and open space maintenance regimes in accordance with asset management principles</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council's budget for open space maintenance is low (on a benchmarked basis) and this is an impediment to the cost-effective provision of open space and recreation facilities. • Consequences include declining levels of service (such as grass cutting reduction from 22 to 16 cuts per annum) • In this context, it is essential to address and modify any factors that inhibit the achievement of optimal maintenance efficiencies
Community & cultural facilities	
<p>Provide staff and resources to undertake initiatives in <i>community cultural development</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrated community benefits from the adoption of community cultural development approaches in physical and social planning • Consultations identified strong community demand for more cultural and entertainment events and activities – and for more information on cultural matters
<p>Provide staff and resources to support the implementation of the Library Services Strategic Plan 2000-2003 – consistent with Key Goal 8 of the Plan</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Essential for the efficient and effective management of the Library Service – and to meet the expectations of users as identified in user consultations
<p>Encourage and assist community organisations to prepare management plans for the facilities that they manage (on behalf of Council)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More effective and more accountable management of Council resources

5 ACTION PLANS

The Action Plans address the most significant gaps and needs in accordance with the proposed strategies detailed in chapter 3.

Actions have been documented according to each 'policy outcome' area (as specified in chapter 3) and include:

- the strategy or action;
- the priority of the action;
- who should take responsibility for seeing that it is implemented;
- possible sources of funding; and
- performance indicators

These include actions from previous studies which remain relevant but have not yet been implemented.

Actions have been given a high, medium, low or ongoing priority rating, which has been broadly attributed according to the following criteria:

HIGH PRIORITY ACTIONS ARE:

- urgent;
- mandatory/statutory requirement;
- outstanding actions from studies and plans; and/or
- suggested to occur within a 1-2 year time horizon

MEDIUM PRIORITY ACTIONS ARE:

- important but not urgent
- reliant on other high priority actions being undertaken;
- subject to other agency programming; and/or
- suggested to occur within a 2-3 year time horizon

LOW PRIORITY ACTIONS ARE:

- reliant on high and medium priority actions being undertaken;
- timing subject to other agency programming; and/or
- suggested to occur within a 3+ year time horizon;

ONGOING PRIORITY ACTIONS ARE:

- actions of high to low importance which require ongoing rather than 'time limited' management attention;

The target group for most proposed actions is the whole community or large proportions of the community. The actions have been grouped in the table below by 'policy outcome' area. Where particular target groups or geographical areas are relevant, this is indicated.

Policy Outcome 1: Provision of New Open Space and Leisure Facilities

REF	ACTION/STRATEGY	PRIORITY	RESPONSIBILITY	POTENTIAL FUNDING	PERFORMANCE INDICATOR
Sports Facilities					
1.1	<p>Provide new soccer, cricket and netball facilities according to demonstrated needs⁴ and in accordance with the development guidelines provided at Section 2.2 of Attachment A.</p> <p>With respect to this, review the following options for new soccer and cricket facilities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use and/or development of public land (ex pony club site on Schofield Parade, Old Man's Valley, Pacific Highway, Berowra); Warrigal Road, Westleigh; Dartford Road Thornleigh • Joint ventures with schools with adequate land for sports field development and/or upgrading (eg Loreto College) • Reconfiguring of existing sports space (eg conversion of mini soccer fields to senior fields as child population falls in future) • Proposed showground site within Fagan Park 	High	HSC	HSC S94 Grants Joint venture	Facilities provided in accordance with need and development guidelines
1.2	Support the Northern District Hockey Association's proposal to build a synthetic field at Pennant Hills Park	High	HSC	Joint venture	Synthetic field provided in accordance with need

⁴ Needs assessments are, in part, based on the provision – by the relevant associations - of numbers of registered players resident in the Shire. These figures should be 'independently' validated prior to any commitment to the provision of new facilities.

REF	ACTION/STRATEGY	PRIORITY	RESPONSIBILITY	POTENTIAL FUNDING	PERFORMANCE INDICATOR
1.3	Provide equestrian facilities – according to demonstrated needs - in conjunction with multi-use show ground facilities at Fagan Park	High	HSC	HSC S94 Grants Contributions	Equestrian and showground facilities provided in accordance with need
Local and District Parks					
1.4	Develop walking trail and cycle way strategies - in recognition of the high demand for further linkages and safe walking and cycling routes	Medium	HSC RTA	HSC Grants	Strategies completed and adopted
1.5	Progressively build upon the existing walking and cycling trails and paths – in accordance with priorities established in the walking trail and cycle way strategies	Medium	HSC	HSC S94	Development of paths in accordance with strategies
1.6	Progressively develop new local and district parks in new development areas (and other currently under-provided areas) where suitable undeveloped land is available and in accordance with the performance guidelines provided at section 2.1 of Attachment A.	High/Low	HSC	HSC S94	Facilities provided in accordance with need and development guidelines
Aquatic Recreation & Indoor Sport Facilities					
1.7	Construct the proposed indoor four-court sports hall at Dartford Rd Thornleigh at the earliest possible date – in recognition of the urgent need for indoor sports courts	High	HSC	HSC S94 Grants	Indoor sports hall provided on time and in accordance with need
1.8	Closely monitor the use of the new sports hall (when it opens in 2003) and existing indoor sport facilities and, depending on need, commence feasibility work for the development of new indoor facilities between 2005-2010	Low	HSC	HSC S94	Monitoring and feasibility work undertaken and completed

REF	ACTION/STRATEGY	PRIORITY	RESPONSIBILITY	POTENTIAL FUNDING	PERFORMANCE INDICATOR
1.9	Commission a detailed feasibility study of options for the enhancement of Council's aquatic facilities (with options to include extension of existing facilities – with indoor leisure pools and/or larger gyms - and provision of a modern regional scale 'wet-dry' facility)	High	HSC	HSC	Feasibility study undertaken and completed and clear guidance on future development options provided
Community Centres & Cultural Facilities					
1.11	Investigate opportunities for increasing public meeting/activity space in the Hornsby CBD, Cherrybrook and Pennant Hills	Medium	HSC	HSC	Opportunities identified and course of action adopted
1.12	Investigate the feasibility of developing a regional-scale youth entertainment and drop-in facility within the Hornsby CBD	Medium	HSC	HSC	Feasibility study completed and course of action adopted
1.13	Investigate the feasibility of providing a multi-purpose cultural facility within the Shire	Medium	HSC	HSC	Feasibility study completed and course of action adopted
1.14	Increase library floor space and library stock to levels more consistent with prescribed standards	Medium	HSC	HSC S94 Grants	Library floor space and stock in line with prescribed standards

Policy Outcome 2: Improvements in the Quality and Accessibility of Existing Facilities

REF	ACTION/STRATEGY	PRIORITY	RESPONSIBILITY	FUNDING	PERFORMANCE INDICATOR
All Program Areas					
2.1	Undertake a comprehensive disability access audit of major parks, open space and leisure facilities – in accordance with the disability access guidelines at Attachment B	High	HSC	HSC	Comprehensive access audit completed
2.2	Pursue options (including liaison with relevant agencies and assistance to community groups) for the upgrading and expansion of both public and community transport services throughout the Shire - to improve access to leisure facilities for those with limited mobility (youth, unemployed, aged, disabled)	High	HSC Commercial and community bus services	HSC Grants Sponsorship	Demonstrated improvements in public/community transport services
Parks & Open Space					
2.3	Review community land plans of management in the light of the outcomes of this study (and the proposed access audit and walking/cycle way strategies). Amend where necessary	Medium	HSC	HSC	Plans of management reviewed and, where necessary, amended
2.4	Subsequent to completion of the plans of management review and the disability access audit, develop a program of works to provide/improve seating, shade, signs, play facilities and access in major parks and other facilities	Medium	HSC	HSC	Upgrading works implemented and well received by park and recreation facility users
2.5	Develop guidelines for the design and development of children's playgrounds and/or seek professional design advice before developing playgrounds	Medium	HSC	HSC	Guidelines developed and used
2.6	Develop at least one high quality play area in a local or district park in each district – with (for example) playground, junior bike circuit, seating and shelters	Medium	HSC	HSC Grants S94	High quality playgrounds provided in each district

REF	ACTION/STRATEGY	PRIORITY	RESPONSIBILITY	FUNDING	PERFORMANCE INDICATOR
2.7	Provide a range of youth-oriented play facilities (including skate facilities, basketball rings & play facilities for youth at key accessible sites within the Shire)	Medium	HSC	HSC Grants S94	Facilities provided and used by young people
2.8	Develop a 'companion animals' policy – including the further identification and promotion of both on and off leash areas in accessible locations across the Shire	Medium	HSC	HSC	Policy adopted and facilities provided that meet the needs of dog owners
2.9	Continue to upgrade sportsgrounds – with floodlighting, improved playing surfaces, amenities, drainage, irrigation, car parks - to a level where their capacity is optimised (consistent with physical and social impact constraints)	High	HSC	HSC Grants S94	Sportsgrounds upgraded in accordance with current capital works programs and the findings of this study
2.10	Upgrade the 'family friendliness' of sportsgrounds by providing adjacent picnic, rest and play facilities for the enjoyment of non-playing siblings and other family members	Medium	HSC	HSC Grants S94	Complementary recreation facilities provided at a range of sportsgrounds
Indoor Sport & Aquatic Recreation Facilities					
2.11	Upgrade Council's three aquatic centres in accordance with prescribed standards and expressed needs	High	HSC	HSC Grants	Facilities upgraded in accordance with relevant standards and users' expectations
Community Centres & Cultural facilities					
2.12	Develop and implement an Asset Improvement Program for Council community centres, seniors' centres halls & libraries	Medium	HSC	HSC	Asset Improvement Programs developed, adopted and implemented
2.13	Continue to implement existing strategies for improving the relevance, appeal, accessibility and use of seniors' centres	Medium	HSC Seniors' clubs	HSC Grants	Demonstrable improvements in the diversity and quantity of use
2.14	Review and address library configurations and operations in accordance with operational requirements and the expressed needs of users	Medium	HSC	HSC Grants	Improved layouts and higher levels of visitor satisfaction

Policy Outcome 3: Partnerships & Assistance

REF	ACTION/STRATEGY	PRIORITY	RESPONSIBILITY	FUNDING	PERFORMANCE INDICATOR
All Program Areas					
3.1	Promote 'community partnering' through the continued provision of financial assistance (annual donations program), assistance with the procurement of government grants, joint provision/operation of facilities and other relevant initiatives	Ongoing	HSC	HSC	Number and amount of grants provided Number of joint initiatives undertaken
3.2	Establish co-operative mechanisms with schools (including possible assistance with insurance, facility development and/or maintenance) to further the community use of schools outside school hours	Medium	HSC Education Dept Schools	HSC Educ'n Dept Schools	Demonstrable increase in the community use of schools
3.3	Work with the Department of Sport and Recreation and other agencies to promote volunteer involvement programs, leadership programs and other initiatives of value to community based organisations	Ongoing	HSC Dept Sport & Rec'n Clubs and organisations	HSC	Number of 'community development' initiatives undertaken Number of people involved in the initiatives
3.4	In allocating grants and other support, give priority to proposals which promote multi purpose use – thereby catering to a wider diversity of needs	Ongoing	HSC	HSC	Demonstrable increase in the multi use of facilities
3.5	Join the Active Australia Local Government Network (AALGN)	Ongoing	HSC Dept Sport & Rec'n	HSC	Number of joint program and promotional initiatives undertaken
Parks & Open Space					
3.6	Subject to the provision of adequate staff resources (as per Action 5.1), strengthen communication between Council and sport/ recreation groups through the conduct of summer and winter season forums (including forums <i>between</i> summer & winter user groups) – to present the direction and priorities being pursued by Council and provide an opportunity for groups to discuss issues of common concern	Ongoing	HSC Clubs and organisations	HSC	Conduct of forums Level of participation at forums

REF	ACTION/STRATEGY	PRIORITY	RESPONSIBILITY	FUNDING	PERFORMANCE INDICATOR
3.7	In conjunction with these forums review the merits of forming a community based sports council – according to the principles and guidelines outlined at Attachment C	Medium	HSC Clubs and organisations	HSC	Review undertaken and recommendations presented to Council
3.8	Expand support to Hornsby Bushcare - as a principal means of increasing the area of degraded bushland being restored	Medium	HSC Residents	HSC Grants	Increased area of bushland being regenerated
3.9	Prepare education and guidance materials for 'neighbours' of Council owned natural areas – indicating how they can assist with land management issues (fire control, weed control, domestic pets, passive surveillance of vandalism etc)	High	HSC Residents	HSC	Materials developed and distributed to relevant parties
3.10	Investigate the merits of forming a peak body for the cooperative management of environmental open space in the Shire – to include relevant government agencies (Council, NPWS, fire and water authorities) and other interested groups (bushcare groups, 'friends' groups)	Medium	HSC	HSC	Investigations undertaken
3.11	Seek conservation agreements with owners of privately held and significant parcels of bushland resource	Ongoing	HSC Bushland owners	N/A	Increase in amount of privately held bushland subject to conservation agreements
Indoor Sport & Aquatic Recreation Facilities					
3.12	Investigate options for partnering/assisting community providers of indoor sports facilities (PCYC, YMCA and/or schools) in the upgrading of existing indoor sport facilities	Low	HSC Relevant community organisations	HSC Grants Contributions	Options investigated and a course of action adopted

Policy Outcome 4: Promotion of existing facilities and recreation opportunities

REF	ACTION/STRATEGY	PRIORITY	RESPONSIBILITY	FUNDING	PERFORMANCE INDICATOR
All Program Areas					
4.1	Assist leisure organisations in the promotion of activities – such as in assisting with 'try or learn' programs and/or providing annual awards to groups that are particularly successful in promoting access to their activities	Ongoing	HSC Clubs and organisations	HSC Clubs and organisations	Number of support initiatives undertaken Response by groups to the support provided
Parks & Open Space					
4.2	Develop a marketing and promotion strategy for Council's parks and open space – including facility directories and brochures (with maps and information on places of interest)	Medium	HSC	HSC Sponsorship	Strategy formulated Promotional materials distributed and used Increase in the use of 'promoted' facilities
4.3	Develop a signs strategy for parks and recreation facilities and park furniture colour schemes – ensuring a consistency of quality across Council's recreation assets .	Medium	HSC	HSC Sponsorship	Signs strategy formulated and implemented Positive visitor/user response to signage improvements
4.4	Enhance public awareness and appreciation of environmentally significant areas of open space through the further development of interpretation programs (including brochures, signs and/or self guided walks)	Medium	HSC	HSC Sponsorship	Development of interpretive materials Level of visits to environmentally significant areas
Indoor Sport & Aquatic Recreation Facilities					
4.5	Further develop the marketing and promotion strategy for Council's aquatic centres – focusing on increasing low levels of winter season use	Medium	HSC	HSC	Strategy formulated Promotional materials distributed and used Increase in the use of aquatic centres

REF	ACTION/STRATEGY	PRIORITY	RESPONSIBILITY	FUNDING	PERFORMANCE INDICATOR
Community Centres & Cultural facilities					
4.6	Further develop the marketing and promotion strategy for Council's halls and community centres	Medium	HSC	HSC	Strategy formulated Promotional materials distributed and used Increase in the use of halls and community centres
4.7	Market and promote Council's library services – in accordance with Key Goal 5 in the Library and Information Services Strategic Plan 2000-2003	Medium	HSC	HSC	Strategy formulated Promotional materials distributed and used Increase in the use of libraries

Policy Outcome 5: Improvements in Council's capacity to plan, develop and operate leisure facilities

REF	ACTION/STRATEGY	PRIORITY	RESPONSIBILITY	FUNDING	PERFORMANCE INDICATOR
All Program Areas					
5.1	Provide staff and resources to undertake initiatives in <i>leisure programming</i> (including liaison with and assistance to community groups, grant and other submission writing and promotion/marketing)	High	HSC	HSC	Measurable increase in leisure programs and activities
5.2	Provide staff and resources to undertake initiatives in <i>recreation planning and visitor monitoring</i>	High	HSC	HSC	Measurable increase in leisure planning activities Effective and comprehensive leisure management information system (MIS)
5.3	Enhance <i>leisure management information systems</i> (including leisure facility use/visitor monitoring and demographic change analysis) for the ongoing assessment of community leisure needs and the capacity of facilities to meet these needs	Ongoing	HSC	HSC	Appropriate monitoring and information systems established and implemented
5.4	Maximise funds for leisure facilities and services – through the full exploitation of both traditional and innovative sources of funding (as identified at Attachment D)	Ongoing	HSC	N/A	Increase in quantity and types of funds generated for leisure facilities and services
5.5	Continue the process of incorporating asset management principles into the management and maintenance of Council's leisure facilities – in accordance with the imperatives and rationales detailed at Attachment E	Ongoing	HSC	N/A	Principles adopted and integrated into management systems
Parks & Open Space					
5.6	Continue to identify park and open space sites which should be considered for disposal or alternative uses (as per the guidelines provided at Attachment F) and develop guidelines for reinvesting the funds released in other local and district scale recreation opportunities	Medium	HSC	HSC	Disposal of 'low value' sites in accordance with asset management principles Measurable increase in recreation opportunity via use of proceeds from disposal of 'low value' sites

REF	ACTION/STRATEGY	PRIORITY	RESPONSIBILITY	FUNDING	PERFORMANCE INDICATOR
5.7	Review park and open space maintenance regimes in accordance with asset management principles (as detailed at Attachment G)	Medium	HSC	HSC	Maintenance regimes reviewed and modified where appropriate
Community Centres & Cultural facilities					
5.8	Provide staff and resources to undertake initiatives in <i>community cultural development</i>	High	HSC	HSC Grants	Measurable increase in cultural programs and activities within the Shire
5.9	Provide staff and resources to support the implementation of the Library Services Strategic Plan 2000-2003 – consistent with Key Goal 8 of the Plan	High	HSC	HSC Grants	Measurable progress in implementation of the Library Services Strategic Plan
5.10	Encourage and assist clubs and associations to prepare management plans for the facilities that they manage (on behalf of Council)	Ongoing	HSC Clubs and organisations	HSC	Number of management plans developed and endorsed Comprehensiveness/quality of management plans

6 POSSIBLE S94 STRATEGIES

6.1 Introduction

A key component of this study has been the identification of shortfalls and gaps in leisure facility infrastructure – both currently and in anticipation of population growth to 2011. The key gaps were identified and discussed in the Stage 2 Report and have formed the basis for the strategic response and framework developed in chapters 2-4 of this Stage 3 Report.

The strategic framework includes, amongst other things, proposals for new facilities *and* for the upgrading, modification and/or expansion of existing facilities – to serve the needs of the existing and/or future populations.

This chapter addresses opportunities for the levying and allocation of Section 94 contributions for these infrastructure requirements and, accordingly, its focus is on the leisure needs of the forecast future population (anticipated to increase from an estimated resident population of 151,500 in 2001 to 163,800 in 2011).

This population growth will normally necessitate the provision of additional leisure facilities to ensure that existing levels of amenity - enjoyed by the current populations - are not eroded.

The chapter firstly establishes the relationship (nexus) between the expected development in the area (and associated population growth) and the demand for leisure facilities generated by that development. It then identifies capital projects in the Action Plan (chapter 4 of this Report) that – based on the nexus - have the potential to be levied for S94 contributions. The process for determining the potential (capital and recurrent) costs to Council of levying – and thereby committing to these projects – is also identified.

Finally, the chapter reviews the relevant components of Council's draft S94 Plan (February 2002 and currently on exhibition) and identifies options for updating the Plan based on the findings of the current study.

[The nexus arguments developed below are based on preliminary population forecasts that need to be validated, at a later date, by a more rigorous projection methodology. They are therefore initial observations that provide Council with a number of 'potential opportunities' for levying S94 contributions. Aspects of *physical* and *temporal* nexus will need to be developed following the completion, by Council, of age-related population projections for each of Council's planning districts].

6.2 Nexus

The current study has updated Council's knowledge of leisure facility use and needs and, on the basis of the findings, has identified works that could be included in a revised *S94 Contributions Plan*.

The study, in effect, updates the relationship (nexus) between new development and the demand for additional open space and leisure facilities generated by the new population.

The anticipated increase in resident population will place greater demands on existing facilities and services and require the provision of new or improved facilities that are currently not available or are available but with insufficient capacity to meet the demands of future populations.

The link or nexus between anticipated development in the Shire and the proposed facilities has been established through the detailed assessment of needs undertaken in this study and documented in the Stage 2 Report. Key elements of this assessment included:

- the availability and capacity of existing facilities and services in the area,
- the characteristics of the population and the requirements for new, additional or improved facilities, and
- the extent to which the proposed facilities and services will meet the needs of the new population.

6.3 Tentative Schedule of Works

The Action Plan includes proposals both for new facilities and for the upgrading, modification or expansion of existing facilities. Those proposals required to meet the needs of both the existing *and* future Shire populations are summarised in Table 6.1 below.

All of these projects can *potentially* be subject to S94 because the forecast future populations will generate (at least) a proportion of the demand for them.

[Note: In the case of district scale facilities (such as sports fields, swimming pools and equestrian facilities), the proportion of funding that can be potentially raised from S94 is quite small – less than 10% of project costs - in accordance with the proportion of total demand generated by new development]

Table 6.1: Preliminary Schedule of Proposed Facilities/Upgrading

FACILITY	NATURE OF WORKS PROPOSED	COST ESTIMATE
SPORTS GROUNDS		
District scale soccer & cricket facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New soccer and cricket facilities at sites to be determined. (Quantity subject to independent verification of number of registered players residing in the Shire) 	\$XX,000
Equestrian facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Incorporated within show ground facilities at Fagan Park – scale and configuration to be determined in master planning study or equivalent 	\$XX,000
Upgrading program – sports grounds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing program of upgrading of existing sports grounds – floodlighting, improved playing surfaces, amenities, drainage, irrigation, car parks etc 	\$XX,000
PARKS		
Local and district parks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provision of additional park space (via acquisition of new sites and/or embellishment of undeveloped sites) to satisfy the 'reasonable' open space requirements of the new population Where possible, this should be at least equivalent to the existing Shire wide provision of parkland (ie 1.24 ha/1000) and according to the development guidelines at Attachment A 	\$XX,000
Upgrading program - Local & district parks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing program of embellishment of existing parks and reserves – landscaping, furniture, play equipment (for a range of age groups), pathways, walking/cycle trails, disability access, picnic areas, dog off leash areas, signage etc 	\$XX,000
BUSHLAND		
Regeneration program – bushland and other natural areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing program of bushland protection regeneration and interpretation 	\$XX,000
INDOOR SPORTS FACILITIES & AQUATIC CENTRES		
Dartford Rd Sports Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of new 4-court sports hall 	\$XX,000
Aquatic facilities enhancement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feasibility/concept study of aquatic centre redevelopment opportunities and enhancement of facilities in accordance with the study outcomes 	\$XX,000
YOUTH FACILITIES		
Youth centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feasibility/concept study for the development of a CBD based youth centre (including youth entertainment capacity) 	\$XX,000
COMMUNITY CENTRES/HALLS		
Meeting space in Cherrybrook, Pennant Hills and Hornsby CBD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review options and develop additional meeting space in these 3 districts 	\$XX,000
Upgrading program - community centres & halls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing program of capital upgrading for existing community centres and public halls 	\$XX,000
CULTURAL FACILITIES		

FACILITY	NATURE OF WORKS PROPOSED	COST ESTIMATE
Multi purpose arts centre – Hornsby CBD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate the feasibility of providing a multi-purpose cultural facility within the Shire 	\$XX,000
LIBRARIES		
Library floor space and materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase library floor space and library stock to levels more consistent with prescribed standards Complete Stage 2 of the Pennant Hills library expansion 	\$XX,000

Identification of specific works and their costing will need to be carried out by Council officers based on previous experience in providing Council facilities and services, and where necessary, reference to standard building costs for public buildings from Rawlinson's Handbook for the Construction Industry.

Council will then need to be asked to select which of the above items they wish to commence levying for. The commencement of levying ties Council into a commitment to build a facility, unless the Contributions Plan is altered by means of a further full review and statutory exhibition process. Only very minor flexibility can be incorporated into the Plan.

Council officers will then need to determine priorities and time frames for projects and opportunities for borrowing between various segments of the Plan - to enable higher priority facilities to proceed at earlier dates. This would also help to ensure that the first collected funds are the first spent - and that this occurs within reasonable time in keeping with 'temporal nexus' requirements.

Council could decide to borrow to provide facilities and recoup costs - where it is important that facilities be provided at an earlier date. In this case, the cost of borrowing funds (interest) can be added to the contributions' plan.

6.4 Liabilities to Council

6.4.1 Capital Funding

An important principle of S94 is that the cost of proposed facilities to be levied under S94 must be apportioned between the existing population and the future population in relation to the proportional share of demand for these facilities by the respective populations⁵. This reflects the underlying test for nexus between the levy to be charged and the demand for additional public facilities created by new development.

Apportionment is required to ensure that the contributing population only pays for its share of the total demand.

⁵ The apportionment factor, it is noted, will be 0% for the existing population if there is no existing shortfall in supply

The process required to identify Council's capital funding liability - the proportion of costs that would have to be found by Council from other sources, should it decide to proceed with levying for the above projects - is as follows:

1. Estimate the capital costs for the projects
2. Identify catchment areas for each facility – Shire-wide or local (ie planning district)
3. Enumerate the populations of catchment areas – existing, new and total
4. Determine apportionment factors (% costed to new development – ie S94 levy)
5. Identify other sources of funding (grants, club/association contributions etc)
6. Calculate shortfalls to be provided by Council (ie total cost – (S94 contribution + other funding) = Council's liability)

This process has not been followed through at this stage due to the requirement for a range of preliminary assessments – including the following:

- More accurate population forecasts - on a Shire-wide and planning district basis - to facilitate apportionment
- A range of additional feasibility and planning studies – including the review of suitable sites for additional sports fields, master planning of Fagan Park, feasibility studies (youth centre and cultural centres), and
- Project capital costs estimates

6.4.2 Recurrent Funding

The proposed additional facilities also have substantial recurrent funding implications – including the following:

- the maintenance of new local and district parks and new outdoor sports complexes
- the maintenance of enlarged/expanded/upgraded parks and sports facilities
- the staffing (or leasing) and management of the new indoor sports/recreation centre at Dartford Road
- more intensive management (including regeneration and interpretation) of key bushland areas

It may be possible to absorb some costs within existing allocations and/or to offset higher costs with productivity gains (flowing, for example, from Council's recent asset management improvements and any future workplace reform initiatives).

Notwithstanding the possibility of productivity gains, there will be substantial additional costs and Council will need to consider the implications of these prior to deciding to levy for S94 projects.

6.5 Current S94 Contributions Plan

Council's current draft *S94 Contributions Plan 1998-2003* (February 2002 Amendment) establishes the nexus between the population growth to 2005 (estimated at 155,383) and the demand for public amenities and services- including library resources, multipurpose community facilities and open space (and related facilities).

With respect to open space, the findings of the 1997 *Open Space Plan* and the 1993 *Recreation Needs Study* provided the 'principal guidelines for the apportionment of S94 contributions'. For multipurpose community facilities, the nexus is established by Council's *Social Plan*. For libraries, the nexus is based on the assumption that new populations will have the same needs as existing populations and will therefore use library facilities at about the same rate as existing populations.

Leisure related projects being levied under the Plan include the following:

Parks and Sports Grounds

- Embellishment of 11 local reserves (8 of which are in planning districts 2 and 3- near the areas of expected major residential development)
- Embellishment and augmentation of 5 regional (Shire wide) parks
- Embellishment of 1.87 district reserves (Old Mans Valley x 1; Dartford Road Park x 0.87)
- Construction of the 4-court indoor sports stadium at Dartford Road Park
- Embellishment/upgrading of sports grounds (\$850,000 over 5 years)

Bushland

- Regeneration of 12 creek line/catchment areas (comprising 84 hectares) affected by urban development
- Augmentation and embellishment of 7 walking trails

Multi purpose Community Facilities

- 0.3164m² of generic floor space per person – for multi purpose community centres 'incorporating such facilities as child care, neighbourhood centres, youth centres, senior citizen's facilities, cultural centres and the like'

Libraries

- Augmentation and development of the central library
- Construction of the pennant Hills Library (Stage 1)
- Library book stock and other materials
- Computer facilities

None of these projects are inconsistent with the findings of the current study. In fact, they are all strongly supported by the study outcomes. The main issue concerns the scope of the projects included in the draft S94 Plan – what the Plan leaves out – and some aspects of its methodology.

This study has identified facilities for which a nexus exists between new development and a need for the facilities *but which are not included in the draft S94 Plan*. The key items include the following:

- Additional sports fields (particularly for soccer and cricket)
- Upgraded aquatic facilities
- Equestrian facilities
- District scale multi purpose cultural centre

As well, some components of the methodology used for the identification of needs are not supported by the findings of the current study.

There are two important instances of this. One is the argument that the need for the proposed indoor sports centre is greater than the need for outdoor sports fields (pages 28-29 of the February 2002 Amendment) – with the identified need for sports fields being ‘converted’ into indoor sports courts.

But the clear findings of this study are that there is an equally urgent need for both types of facility and that such a ‘conversion’ appears inappropriate. This study, in fact, identified the need for a larger number of new sports fields than did the S94 Plan methodology.

The other issue concerns the strategy for local open space - and the emphasis on the embellishment of existing reserves rather than the acquisition of additional open space. While the difficulties of acquiring additional open space – in terms of availability and cost - are acknowledged, this study has found that the Shire has a comparatively low provision of developed parkland and that a large number of residents are outside the normal “service” areas of parks.

While embellishment is also supported, the strategies recommended in this study include strong support for the acquisition of additional space for local parks – particularly in under-provided areas – if suitable and affordable opportunities emerge.

6.6 Conclusions on S94 Issues

This study has provided recommendations on the provision, expansion and/or enhancement of various types of leisure facility.

In this chapter, the potential for the levying of S94 development contributions for these facilities has been reviewed - as well as the process for identifying Council’s (capital and recurrent cost) liabilities should it proceed to levying for the facilities. The chapter has also addressed certain inconsistencies between the findings of this

study and the scope and methodologies of the February 2002 draft S94 Contribution's Plan.

It is concluded that there is considerable potential to levy for a large number of capital projects included in this study's recommended strategies (including all those detailed in Table 5.1, above). However, accurate population projections need to be prepared (to 2011) - and details need to be clarified on the scale, location and costs of many of the projects - before levels of contribution and Council's liabilities can be reasonably quantified.

These matters are beyond and additional to the scope of the current study. When these matters are clarified, however, the relevant sections of the *S94 Contributions Plan* can be reviewed in the light of the findings of this study and the comments made in regard to parts of its methodology (in section 5.5, above).

Guidelines – Open Space & Recreation Facility Planning

ATTACHMENT A: OPEN SPACE/RECREATION FACILITY PLANNING GUIDELINES

[Note: The guidelines provided here are based on best practice approaches and may not be achievable in particular local situations (if, for example, there is insufficient suitable and/or affordable land for particular open space purposes)]

1. GENERAL PRINCIPLES

1.1 The Need for Guidelines

The subdivision land dedication process has often placed little or no onus on developers to assess the suitability of land proposed for dedication.

As a consequence, land dedicated to councils in new release subdivisions is often space 'left over' after infrastructure and houses have been built. It may be small, steep, subject to easements and drainage uses and poorly designed. The result may be an open space resource difficult to maintain and of limited recreation value.

This is often a consequence of poor planning - a failure to provide developers with clear guidelines and a failure to involve parks and gardens staff - those with the immediate knowledge of desirable park attributes and those tasked with the later maintenance of the space - in the decision making process.

Councils can regain control of the process by providing clear guidelines and controls on what type of land is considered acceptable for open space before the rezoning/subdivision application is submitted. With respect to this, relevant generic guidelines are provided in this Attachment - in section 2 below.

Council may consider referencing or including the guidelines in relevant existing or future Development Control Plans.

The guidelines could be complemented and reinforced by the provision to developers of a simple checklist for submission with subdivision applications. The checklist would entail yes/no answers on a range of site attributes including size, linkage potential, gradient, natural features, easements, orientation of development to site, visual qualities).

These processes will ensure that a council has control over the quality of any land dedicated at the earliest stages of subdivision planning.

When such a process is accompanied by a system requiring a 'registered auditor' (a Council approved landscape architect or recreation planner) to guide and monitor a development from application to completion (as currently applies in Wyong Shire), the gains, in the form of higher quality open space, can be substantial.

1.2 Flexibility

Flexibility is more important than adherence to rigid standards. Above all, the assessment of future open space suitability should not be driven just by traditional numerical standards. Rather, it should entail a detailed assessment of a *range* of relevant demand and supply factors (including economic, social, demographic and land opportunity considerations).

As an example, the dedication of a significant area of environmentally sensitive open space along a creek line may, in some circumstances, be viewed as more important – or at least as important – as a more *traditional* local or neighbourhood park.

In the above circumstance, it may be necessary to provide more open space than the amount prescribed by traditional standards – so that both the ‘environmental space’ and the ‘local park’ can be acquired.

1.3 Multiple use

Wherever possible drainage land should be incorporated into the open space system – to reduce the non-residential land take of new developments and land purchase costs.

Sportsgrounds (with associated retention basins) and linear parks, in particular, can be incorporated in multi-use drainage open space – and should so where demonstrated to be cost-effective in terms of engineering and management constraints and opportunities.

The major constraints are the impact of flooding and drainage on the potential useability of proposed facilities and the impact on maintenance and risk management costs of location within flood prone land.

2. PROPOSED GUIDELINES

Chapter 8 of the Stage 2 Report identified and discussed the critical quality and suitability attributes of open space - including the size and shape of parks and reserves, linkage potential, their terrain, location, relationship to surrounding land uses and the presence/absence of attractive natural features and/or design details.

That analysis forms the basis of the quality/suitability guidelines developed here. The proposed guidelines are summarised in Table A2 (on page 42) and detailed in the following sections.

2.1 Local and District Parks

Functions/Objectives

Local parks include the small local reserves that provide for people within immediately adjacent areas - probably within 300 metres walking distance – and the

larger neighbourhood parks that may attract users from surrounding suburbs/areas (but still usually within walking or cycling distance).

The small reserves provide short-term play and rest opportunities and landscape features, primarily for local residents. The larger parks may comprise more comprehensive play equipment, more significant landscape features (views, significant vegetation etc) and linkages with other open space.

District parks comprise larger reserves which may include picnic/socialising facilities, toilets, walking opportunities, public art and sophisticated play equipment (larger playgrounds, skateboard facilities, basketball rings etc). They provide for groups of suburbs and perhaps whole towns. Access for most users is by car or public transport.

Quantity

A focus on the quantity of local and district parks (in terms of numbers of parks or so many hectares/1000 people) will not ensure that parks and other open space areas are appropriately sized, located and embellished.

Quantity is therefore less important than the size, physical attributes and location of individual sites in planning viable and effective park systems.

Quantity should therefore be seen as a product of size and locational criteria rather than as a performance benchmark in its own right. (For example, the provision of 0.5-hectare local parks within 300 metres of all households in a typical (ie 33 persons/hectare) subdivision will take 2.7% of the subdivision area and will provide 0.8 hectares/1000 people).

Table A2: Open Space Planning Guidelines

Space Type	Quantity	Location/distribution	Size	Other Attributes
1. Local and Neighbourhood Parks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sufficient to meet location and size criteria 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Within 500 m of all residents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Min size of 0.4 Hectares (preferably > 0.5 ha) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • access via more than one street • Integrate with local shopping/ community facilities • link with wildlife corridors and fauna/flora protection areas to provide a transition between natural and residential development • At least 2,000m2 of level to gently sloping land
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Within 300 metres of all residents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Min size of 0.2 Hectares (preferably > 0.3 ha) 	
2. District Parks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sufficient to meet location and size criteria 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More a product of available suitable sites – but preferably within 2 kms of all residents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large enough to accommodate a large range of informal opportunities (while possibly protecting and enhancing significant natural features, visual qualities, heritage items) • Should be large enough to support large numbers of people in social groups • Min size of 1.0 Ha (with 3+ Ha preferred) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrate, where possible with other community foci - shops, community centres, outdoor sports facilities • Located such that traffic causes minimal disruption to residential areas • May be highly modified/developed or incorporate significant natural features
3. Sports Fields	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Around 1.5 ha per 1,000 people • For number of specific sports facilities, see Table A3 (page 48) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not necessarily within walking distance of users • Locate in close proximity to schools • Where appropriate, utilise flood prone land, retention basins and former waste disposal sites 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimum of 4 hectares to allow grouping of sports fields – to maximise land efficiency and reduce embellishment costs through economies of scale (shared use of amenities, car parks, spectator facilities etc) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrate with neighbourhood or district parks where possible – to enhance appeal and diversity of opportunity
4. Linkages/amenity space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sufficient to provide safe access to local scale facilities within neighbourhoods 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Larger linear parks – according to opportunity (eg creek valleys, pipe tracks, foreshores and former utility easements) • Local links according to local area access requirements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Size is dependent upon opportunity. Length is more important than width (but must be wide enough for pathway and landscaping and/or natural vegetation) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Should be designed to facilitate pedestrian access – and where appropriate, cycling and horse riding • Seating should be provided at appropriate intervals • At least some linear parks should provide for disabled access • Maximise retention of natural features
Total (1-4, above)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2.5-3.0 Ha/1000 people* 			

* Variable – depending on opportunity and housing densities – but likely to be minimum of 2.5-3.0 hectares/1,000 people (excluding regional open space)

Size

Park size has been found (in many park visitor studies⁶) to be a major determinant of park use. Thus open space areas of less than 0.5 hectares generally have very low visitation levels – mainly because they are too small to accommodate a range of activities.

To accommodate both quiet, contemplative activities as well as children's play (including 'kick-about' opportunities), a local or neighbourhood park will generally need to be a minimum of 0.4 hectares.

[It may, in some circumstances, be possible to provide small parks in areas as small as 0.2 hectares – albeit with a more limited range of potential uses. Nevertheless, 0.4 hectares should still be regarded as a minimum requirement in most situations].

District parks, due to their broader functions (perhaps comprising areas of scenic, heritage and/or environmental significance, picnic facilities, regional playgrounds, bike circuits etc) will normally be at least 3 hectares⁷.

Other Physical Attributes

Important physical attribute criteria include shape, terrain, general amenity and the presence/absence of easements and drainage infrastructure.

The *shape* of reserves is an important determinant of use. Linear reserves facilitate walking and cycling activities – particularly where they are long and/or safely connect to other open space areas, schools, shops and other facilities. Such reserves also have the advantage of maximising the number of residences within a 500 metre walking distance.

Linear reserves, however, may be too narrow for either quiet socialising or active play. Desirably, therefore, there needs to be a combination of linear, connective spaces and a series of wider, more regularly shaped parks about one kilometre apart and connected to local residences by safe pathway systems.

Terrain and *natural amenity* are also important determinants of use. Slope, aspect and the presence/absence of vistas will all impact the type and levels of use. Parks need to have large areas that are relatively flat but they also need to be visually interesting. Changes in level, vegetation (including mature shade trees), the preservation of vistas and other landscape features will assist in this.

⁶ Commonwealth Bureau Of Roads 1975, *Small Open Spaces in Urban Areas*; MMBW 1983, *Melbourne Parks, A Survey of the Use of Selected Sites*; Just D in Australian Parks and Recreation Winter 1989, *Appropriate Amounts and Design of Open Space*.

⁷ It is emphasised, however, that district parks are defined more by their 'functions' and 'service catchment areas' than they are by their 'size'. A park as small as one hectare – with unique or special attractions and an accessible location - *could* potentially serve a district wide population. Having said this, a district park will normally need to be three or more hectares to accommodate a 'district scale' range of attributes (especially where sports facilities are involved)

Areas with severe gradients and/or which are impeded by easements should not be accepted as suitable for dedication as public open space.

Distribution and Location

Visitor studies have shown that users of local parks will normally travel a maximum of 5 minutes or 500 metres walking distance to a park and that most, in fact, will travel less than this.

This was confirmed in one study of over 1,000 small local parks in Sydney and Melbourne⁸. The study found that park users who had travelled up to 100 metres to use the parks were more numerous than those who had travelled between 100-500 metres – even though the catchment population of the 100-500 metre zone was 25 times larger than that in the 0-100 metre zone.

The results of this and other studies suggest that, at a minimum, all residences (within urban areas⁹) should be at least within 500 metres of appropriately sized and developed local parks.

In determining these 500 metre travel zones, impediments to travel such as creeks, busy roads and railway lines need to be taken into consideration.

Travel distance is not so critical for *district level* parklands as these facilities are mainly accessed by motor vehicle (although pedestrian/bicycle access is still important for local residents). It is more important that these facilities be centrally located (according to opportunity and site suitability) with good traffic access and adequate parking.

Surrounding land uses are also a critical factor in the suitability of parks. Busy roads, for example can be a hazard for children chasing balls and for children who have to cross them to gain access to the park. Parks completely surrounded by private residences are 'invisible' except to those who back on to them. Parks adjacent to industrial areas or railway lines may be perceived as unattractive, unless adequately screened.

⁸ Commonwealth Bureau Of Roads 1975, *Small Open Spaces in Urban Areas*

⁹ These levels of service are not achievable – and not appropriate – for rural areas and perhaps also the Shire's river settlements and northern linear-shaped urban areas. Due to demand 'thresholds' and the small, dispersed nature of rural and remote populations, residents of these areas, of necessity, have to travel further for most recreation opportunities.

2.2 Outdoor Sports Facilities

Functions/Objectives

Outdoor sports facilities include sports fields and courts and associated amenities. They may range from district to regional (or higher) significance and usually provide space and facilities for both structured competitive sporting activities and for more informal activities.

The larger facilities cater to the needs of high level sports organisations and may comprise clubhouses and substantial spectator facilities.

Quantity

As a general rule of thumb, developing communities will normally require about 1.5 hectares per thousand people for outdoor sports facilities. The amount is however best determined locally according to local needs and available alternatives (such as indoor sports and/or fields in schools and neighbouring municipalities).

With respect to this, the research undertaken for this study (and documented in the Stage 2 Report) found that the forecast 2011 population will require the sports facilities detailed in Table A3. For most sports, the existing facilities can absorb the expected population growth. This is not however true for cricket and senior soccer. Both of these sports are experiencing existing shortfalls currently - and these shortfalls are likely to increase in future years in the absence of further facility provisions.

Table A3: Sports Facility Development Guidelines

Facility Type	Number of Facilities	Area (ha)	Population Served (1000s)	Existing Facilities	Forecast Shortfall (2011)
Soccer fields (senior)	42	3,881	30	9	3
Soccer fields (mini/mod)	19	8,579	24	0	0
Rugby League	7	23,286	8	0	0
Rugby Union	5	32,600	6	0	0
Australian Football	3	54,333	3	0	0
Hockey	4	40,750	2	2	0
Baseball diamonds	5	32,600	6	0	0
Softball diamonds	6	27,167	6	0	0
Cricket fields	49	3,327	43	3	3
Athletics	3	54,333	3	0	0
Netball courts	24	6,792	32	0	0

¹⁰ Based on the needs research documented in sections 8.9.2 and 16.3 of the Stage 2 Report

¹¹ Forecast shortfalls by 2011 in the absence of further facility provisions

Size

Wherever possible, sportsgrounds should be provided in complexes of multiple fields due to economies of scale benefits (from the wider sharing of support infrastructure – access roads, car parks, water, amenities, buffer zones – and various maintenance efficiencies) and the opportunity afforded to sports organisations to conduct major events.

The optimal size for a large multi purpose complex (capable of accommodating regional or higher level competitions and tournaments – and with sufficient buffer zones and adequate flexibility to respond to changing recreation patterns) is up to 15 hectares in size.

Distribution and access

Due to the 'home and away' nature of most sports, sports facilities cater to a very wide catchment of users. Most of these users will therefore access facilities via car, bicycle or public transport.

Because of these relatively broad catchments and specialist activities, the distribution and location of sports complexes is more a product of site related factors (ie suitable and/or affordable sites) rather than immediate proximity to users.

Sports complexes require large tracts of relatively flat land and should, preferably be close to schools to facilitate joint use.

They should also, where possible, be linked with neighbourhood or district parks to enhance their appeal and 'family friendliness' (ie by providing attractive spaces for the families of competitors to relax and children to play).

2.3 Linear Parks and Linkages

Functions/Objectives

Linear parks provide linkages and access routes and may also have a conservation role and/or provide opportunities for informal recreation. They may be of local or district (or even regional significance).

Larger *linear parks* (sometimes called 'greenways') provide opportunities for informal trail recreation (walking, cycling and horse riding) and may link residential areas with points and places of interest (such as parks, schools, community facilities and shops). Depending on their location and attributes, they may also provide wildlife corridors, protect waterways and flood plains and/or contribute to the protection of areas of conservation significance.

Local links in residential areas complement pedestrian roadside pathways to ensure safe and easy access to local parks, schools, community centres and shops.

Size

There is no ideal size for a linear reserve, but length is more important than width. But width must be sufficient to allow for the construction of walking and/or cycle paths and tree planting/landscaping.

To accommodate a two-metre pathway and vegetation, local links should be a minimum width of five metres.

Distribution and access

Location and distribution of major linear parks and 'greenways' is a function of available opportunity – in the form of river/creek valleys, foreshores, pipe tracks, former road and rail reservations, electricity transmission corridors etc.

Access from adjacent residential areas should be maximised via the provision of defined access points and continuity over major road crossings and other barriers.

Local links should be designed into and established within new subdivisions.

ATTACHMENT B

Disability Access Guidelines

ATTACHMENT B: DISABILITY ACCESS GUIDELINES

The consultations undertaken for this study, identified a strong demand for those services that improve the accessibility and utility of sport, recreation and cultural facilities – particularly floodlighting, better amenities, public toilets, street lighting, signage, shade, footpaths and cycle ways and disability access.

This attachment provides guidelines for improving disability access provisions in parks and open space areas

Urban parks provide a variety of settings – including sports fields, play areas, walking tracks, vantage points and places for quiet contemplation. These settings, collectively, are attractive to a wide range of people, including people with disabilities.

But for people with disabilities (and the very young and old or people from different cultural backgrounds), participation opportunities are restricted because of barriers to participation and/or the lack of functional supports.

There are three types of *participation barrier* – physical access barriers, lack of specific facilities and perceptions of safety.

'Physical access' barriers include:

- restricted or minimal access to a facility
- limited parking for people with a disability or parking in inappropriate places in relation to a facility's entrance
- limited access to public transport for people who are less mobile
- limited room to move within a facility
- unsafe floor or ground surfaces for wheel chairs or walking frames
- poor signage
- obstructions on pathways and flights of stairs

'Lack of specific facilities' barriers include absence of designated and specifically designed facilities (such as change rooms and picnic facilities) for disabled people and their families or carers.

'Safety perception' barriers include poor exterior lighting, inappropriate locations and any other factors that contribute to a sense of being unsafe and/or unwelcome.

People with disabilities may need a range of *functional supports* – particular types of signage, additional lighting, extra wide paths, tactile cues on pathways (for changes of level etc), non-slip surfaces, audio loops, colour contrasting, handrails and special seating.

Such supports are of considerable assistance to people with one or more of the following disabling conditions:

- difficulty interpreting information
- severe or complete loss of sight
- severe loss of hearing
- inco-ordination
- prevalence of poor balance
- limitations of stamina
- difficulty moving head
- difficulty reaching with arms
- difficulty in handling/fingering
- loss of upper extremity skills
- difficulty bending/kneeling
- reliance on walking aids
- inability to use lower extremities
- extreme of size and weight

A range of disability access guidelines recognise that the presence of access barriers and/or the absence of functional supports will often make the difference between participating or not.

Barriers, therefore, must be eliminated (or at least minimised) while effective and practical functional supports must be provided where possible.

The following approaches are required:

- comprehensive feasibility studies for new facilities which incorporate widespread consultation with all potential users
- provision of barrier free access and functional supports at the design stage (to avoid expensive retro-adjustments)
- provision of appropriate and relevant information which is clear and concise and which uses multiple forms (signs, symbols, brochures, tactile maps, tape guides as appropriate)
- 'access aware' management that promotes 'inclusion policies', access audits, staff awareness and information development
- modification of existing facilities according to priorities determined by access audit outcomes, relative need (a measure of actual and potential facility use and other issues) and affordability.
- sufficient maintenance to ensure that facilities remain barrier free over time

Given the findings of the consultations and Council's obligations under the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA), the conduct of a detailed and specific 'access for all' audit of parks and open space areas would appear to be a high action priority.

The audit (when undertaken) should utilise 'best practice' guidelines and be informed by the requirements of the DDA – and it should address the following park items or elements:

- public transport availability and access
- parking
- signage
- circulation (including pathways, kerb ramps and steps)
- park furniture (benches, drinking fountains)
- picnic facilities (shelters, tables, barbecues)
- toilets
- sports spectator facilities (seats, gates, grandstands)
- playgrounds
- nature/interpretive trails
- foreshore access (if relevant)

The audit should facilitate the measurement of access barriers *and* the presence/absence of functional supports and levels of compliance with 'best practice' guidelines.

ATTACHMENT C

Sports Councils

ATTACHMENT C: SPORTS COUNCILS

This study has identified significant service gaps with respect to communication and coordination in sports management issues - both between Council and sports groups and between different groups.

In particular, the *organisations' survey* and the *sports stakeholder meeting* - both undertaken as part of this study - identified the need for improved communications.

Initial discussions on the need for and potential role of *sports councils* were held at the *sports stakeholder meeting*.

The guidelines in this attachment build on these initial discussions - providing additional guidance on the options available to Council.

The following paragraphs discuss the role and functions of sports councils, the different types and benefits of sports councils and the need for sports councils. Non-sports council alternative options are also discussed.

What do sports councils do?

Sports councils have existed in many council areas for many years. They may have different names - sports association, sporting union, sports liaison committee or sports forum - but they all involve a formal partnership between Council and sporting groups for the better management of sports facilities and services.

Sports councils vary in their roles and structures but can generally be classified as principally either 'consultative' or 'strategic'.

Consultative Model

The 'consultative' model is typical of councils which have a relatively long history of sports association involvement. They developed in recognition of the need for improved participation by sporting groups in the management of facilities. They were seen as a means for councils to be more responsive to day to day sports management issues.

The sports groups - through the sports council- play an important role in keeping local councils in touch with issues. They may also contribute to the development of infrastructure - through the funding of small improvements (such as the construction or upgrading of amenity buildings and clubrooms). Some play significant roles in seasonal ground allocations.

'Consultative' sports councils may contribute - in a passive way - to the planning and development of new facilities by 'flagging' issues to local councils. But they do not normally have a formal role in the strategic planning of sports facilities.

The sports councils at Blacktown and Warringah are examples of the consultative model.

Consultative/Strategic Model

These sports councils are more focussed on longer term strategic planning and normally have less to do with day to day management. Typical issues of concern include the following:

- Inter-sport and inter-district equity (in terms of facility provision and maintenance)
- The role of sport in community development
- Response to changing trends in sport
- Balancing the requirements of sports groups with wider community needs
- How promote development of their sports
- How clubs/associations can support the identification and development of talent
- The role of sport in reducing juvenile crime
- User fees and leasing issues

The sports councils at Wollongong, Campbelltown and Kur-ring-gai are examples of the strategic/consultative model.

Need for Sports Councils

Whether or not a sports council is needed depends upon local circumstances. The key questions are, firstly, whether or not there is a need for improved liaison, cooperation and coordination and, secondly, whether a sports council is the best way to meet these needs.

In regard to the first question, it is a firm finding of this study that based on the expressed views of many community sports (and other leisure) organisations, there is a need for improved communication.

The second question is more appropriately a matter for Council to determine. Guidance is, however, provided below in regard to relevant considerations - including the various potential benefits of sports councils and possible alternatives to sports councils.

Benefits of Sports Councils

Sports councils provide a forum at which issues of common concern can be tabled and discussed. They are a potentially important mechanism for building trust and support between individual clubs and associations and between sports groups and (local government) councils.

Sports councils can also provide an effective conduit of important information to councils - and to sports groups - and can assist in making full and effective use of sporting facilities and other resources. Specific benefits may include the following:

- Improvements in ground utilisation
- More equitable ground allocations and user fees
- Community 'ownership' of sports improvement programs
- Improved planning and coordinated use of resources
- Improved harmony between sports clubs and associations

Sports councils also provide a valuable vehicle for volunteerism in the community

Alternative Options

Notwithstanding the above-mentioned potential benefits of sports councils, there are other (less formal) options for improving communications within the sporting community.

One option would be to expand the role of the two annual ground allocation forums—to include a wider agenda and discussion of relevant sports issues. The forums could be held over a full or half-day and involve guest speakers and special interest workshops. They could also involve a ceremonial element - with the Mayor presenting awards and other forms of recognition to volunteers for outstanding contributions to sports administration within the Shire.

Another option is the establishment of a network of sporting organisations – to facilitate collective and mutual approaches to common issues and problems (including funding, communications with Council, programming and promotions, volunteer training and facility development).

Such a network has been established successfully in Salisbury in South Australia (the *Salisbury Active Community Network*)¹². Clubs and associations formally join the network and pay a modest membership fee. Benefits include information sharing and communication (via newsletters, bulletins and a web site), discounted *Active Australia* training packages, cooperative promotion and membership recruitment programs and joint funding proposals.

This networking has been highly successful with declining memberships being reversed in several cases and many joint funding opportunities secured.

¹² Documented in *Parks and Leisure*, Volume 4 No.2 (June 2001), pp 7-9

Potential Sources of Funds for Leisure Facilities & Services

ATTACHMENT D: POTENTIAL SOURCES OF FUNDS

Section 17.2 of the Stage 2 report identified various sources of funding for leisure facilities and services and Council's current approaches and recent experience in regard to raising revenue from grants and user fees.

Council's *Management Plan (2001/2 to 2003/4)* acknowledges the strategic importance of pursuing all available sources of revenue. A key element of Council's strategic intent is *achieving financial sustainability* and new initiatives, under this element, include the following:

- Investigate new sources of income for Council, especially in relation to the funding of recreation and cultural activities within the Shire
- Maximise grant opportunities as a source of funding for programs
- Examine opportunities for increased income derived from fees and charges with equitable impact

This attachment provides information on a range of traditional and more recent sources of income for leisure programs – including general revenue, proceeds from the sale of surplus lands, user fees, S94 contributions, grants, sponsorships, joint ventures and rate levies - some of which may be new to Council. It also provides up to date information on all relevant grant programs.

The sale of surplus open space is highly contentious and is discussed in detail in section 4.6, below. Opportunities provided by the other options are discussed in the following sub-sections.

Council Funds

Council revenue funds will normally be the major component of funding for operational expenditures and capital works in existing areas.

For capital works, Council funds are critical for several reasons - to get projects 'off the ground', to give credibility to development initiatives, to provide a basis for state and commonwealth support and in ensuring the security of (any) community fundraising efforts.

Section 94 Contributions

Section 94 contributions will normally be the major component of funding of capital works in new development areas.

Section 94 of the *NSW Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* enables local councils and other consent authorities to levy contributions for public amenities and services required as a consequence of development.

The power to levy a contribution relies on their being a clear link (or nexus) between the development being levied and the need for the public amenity or service for which the levy is required. And councils may only seek contributions where there is a valid S94 Plan in place.

Council has a duly adopted S94 *Contribution Plan* in place - as discussed in section 2.3 above. The nexus between new development and the need for open space and recreation facilities was established by the 1993 Recreation Needs Study and the 1997 Open Space Plan. This nexus is to be replaced by the outcomes of the current study.

Grants

Several government agencies and private trusts provide grant assistance programs for leisure purposes.

The key funding programs for open space capital works projects are those provided by the NSW Department of Sport and Recreation. The Department has two programs - the Capital Assistance Program and the Regional Sports Facility Program.

The Capital Assistance Program's purpose is to assist Local Government Authorities and 'not for profit' organisations to develop community oriented local sporting and recreation facilities. Annual funds of around \$4 million are distributed on a State electorate basis. Grants are small, averaging only \$6,000 - \$8,000 per project in recent years.

The Regional Sports Facility Program's purpose is to develop and enhance a network of regional sporting facilities throughout NSW that meet the needs of talented and elite athletes and the general community. The maximum grant is \$300,000.

Other relevant programs include the Natural Heritage Trust, Active Australia and various Australia Council programs (at the commonwealth level) and the Metropolitan Greenspace Program, Waterways Infrastructure Program, Cultural Grants Program and Heritage Assistance program (at the State level).

Details on these and other funding programs are provided at Table D.1.

There are currently insufficient staff resources to fully exploit the full range of opportunities under these programs - in particular, via the production of quality submissions. However, the additional staff resources proposed in the strategy section of this report (section 3.6 above) has the potential to substantially rectify this situation.

User Fees

It is widely accepted – and this is reflected in Council's *Pricing Policy* - that the use of many leisure facilities and services (such as sports grounds and libraries) should be substantially subsidised - due to the significant public benefits entailed in their use.

With respect to outdoor sport, for example, the whole community benefits from the provision and use of sports grounds (via higher property values, education of young people and reduced health costs) and should therefore contribute a significant proportion of the costs of providing them. Notwithstanding this, it is also accepted that individual sports people should pay some fees for ground use – because they are the principal beneficiaries of such use.

Council's current user fees policy was discussed in section 17.2 of the Stage 2 Report. It was noted that fees for the use of Council's park and open space resources are 'fair and reasonable' on a comparative benchmarked basis. It appears, therefore, that there is little potential, in the short term at least, to generate substantial additional funds from user fees.

Due to concerns expressed about the level of fees – in the current study and in previous consultations - any future imposition or substantial increase of fees must be handled strategically and with sensitivity. Critical elements of any implementation process include the following:

- Establish a nexus between proposed fees and consequential improvements in maintenance and/or service levels
- Demonstrate that proposed fees are consistent with fees charged elsewhere
- Demonstrate that, compared to other locally available leisure facilities or activities, the quantum of fees is reasonable
- Introduce fees incrementally
- Provide plenty of notice – so that clubs and organisations can adjust their forward budgets

Meeting the above implementation criteria requires considerable preparation (including research of actual and desirable service levels and the application of fees in surrounding and similar local government areas) and a consultative period to explain and gain support for the fees.

Sensitive community consultations will be crucial to the successful application of new fees and should occur at the draft policy stage – before any decision is taken. The consultations should entail written advice and information/discussion meetings. The aim is to gain support (or at least acceptance) for the fees through explaining the *reasons* for introducing them and the *advantages* following from this.

Sponsorships

Sponsorships are a relatively minor but still useful source of funds for events and facilities. Specific leisure facilities and/or events could be sponsored by interested organisations that would contribute support in cash or 'in kind' to event organisation or facility maintenance and/or development.

Analogous to this is the potential for groups or organisations to 'adopt a park' and be responsible for its maintenance. This has been particularly successful with respect to bushland regeneration programs

Tax Deductible Donations

Allied to sponsorships is the *Australian Sports Foundation Community Benefits Grant Program* – which provides a vehicle for community and commercial groups to contribute to projects on a tax-deductible basis.

The Australian Sports Foundation (ASF) was established by the Federal Government in 1986 to assist Australian sport and to generate funds for sport from the corporate/ community sectors.

The ASF assists non-profit sporting and community organisations, schools and councils to raise money for sport related projects – such as building new club rooms, upgrading oval lighting, buying sporting equipment, funding team travel to national championships or hosting major events.

The ASF is a non-profit public company limited by guarantee and it can receive tax deductible donations. Eligible organisations with projects registered with the Foundation can thereby seek tax deductible donations from the community.

The ASF is unique in that donors are able to nominate a preferred beneficiary for their gifts. Numerous state and national sporting groups, local clubs, schools and councils have successfully raised funds for sport with ASF approved projects.

ASF guidelines currently allow funds to be raised under six categories:

- facility development, construction or refurbishment;
- facility feasibility studies;
- equipment purchase/hire;
- travel to national and international competition;
- hosting major events; and
- sports development (including scholarship programs)

The incentive of tax deductibility can provide potential donors with a powerful additional incentive to support a range of relevant projects.

Community Fundraising

Major fundraising events and the use of fundraising professionals can be very effective for specific development projects. The City of Ararat (Victoria), for example, raised over \$300,000 in six months for a heated pool using a professional fundraising team for a fee of \$20,000.

The pledge system is a productive and successful form of community fundraising and is appropriate for community facilities (such as swimming pools and leisure centres) that can be shown to serve large proportions of the community.

The pledge system involves a 'pyramid' process where, depending on their resources, members of the community are asked to pledge from as little as \$2 to as much as \$20 a week over a two or three year period.

Other fundraising methods used for community facilities have included:

- Building/renovating and selling a home
- Raffleing an historic car through a small number of highly priced tickets
- Auctioning donated items from famous people
- Running debutante balls and cabarets
- Auctioning land donated (or provided at cost) by a developer or Council

If and when Council commits in principle to proceed with the development of a major facility – such as an indoor leisure centre or performing arts centre - it should either establish or support the establishment of a community fundraising program.

Joint Ventures

Joint ventures - between Council and either clubs/associations, schools, commercial interests, other government agencies or adjacent councils – are of particular benefit for expensive regional scale facilities and where there are joint beneficiaries (eg school students and residents).

Many councils have had experience with such ventures – typically with either the Department of School Education (for the development of multi purpose indoor centres or sports fields within school properties) or with sports associations for the development of elite level sports facilities on council land.

TABLE D.1 - POTENTIAL SOURCES OF GOVERNMENT GRANTS

Agency	Government Level	Grant Program	Grant Purpose	Grant Details
Sport, Parks & Recreation				
Department of Sport & Recreation	NSW	Capital Assistance Program	Construction and improvement of public sport and recreation facilities	Up to 50% of capital cost, \$ for \$, small grants only (\$5 –20,000)
	NSW	Regional Sports Facility Program	Construction and improvement of regional scale facilities – catering to elite and/or general community targets	\$ for \$, grants range from \$40 – 300,000
	NSW	Active Kids Communities Grants Program	To improve the overall health and fitness levels of children and youth by increasing their opportunities for participating in physical activity	Projects must be partnership between an Active Australia Network local council and at least one other organisation - an Active Australia Network school and/or community organisation (which must be an Active Australia Provider)
Department of Local Government	NSW	Companion Animals Fund – Community Education Grants Program	Production of community education resource materials re obligations and rights under the Companion Animals Act 1998 (and that can be used by all NSW Councils)	Annual grants for discrete, time limited projects. Funding of up to \$200,000 in the 2001-2002 year – with individual grants up to \$10,000
Roads and Traffic Authority	NSW	Bikeways Enhancement Program	Bike Plans and bicycle facilities (for local government) and Bike week assistance (for community organisations)	\$ for \$ (for Bike Plans and local road facilities); 100% funding for state roads/State Bicycle Network
Department of Employment, Education & Training	Australian	Work for the Dole	Work skills for unemployed – projects include site restoration, bush regeneration, walking trail upgrades and construction of basic sports facilities (eg basketball half courts)	\$ for \$
Natural Areas & Recreation				
Department Land & Water Conservation	NSW	NSW Waterways Infrastructure Development Program	Improve recreational amenity/access of waterways – subsidies for boat launching facilities, public wharves, foreshore access and amenities	\$ for \$ with no set limits

Agency	Government Level	Grant Program	Grant Purpose	Scope/Basis
	NSW	State Rivercare Program	To rehabilitate riverine corridors and raise awareness of stream management issues – via river management plans, stream bank fencing, vegetation management and restorative works, erosion control works, nutrient control works etc	\$1.5 million to community groups in 1999/00 - for projects which demonstrate and facilitate better land and water management practices along our rivers & streams
	NSW	State Coastcare Program	A cooperative approach on integrated coastal zone management between all levels of government, industry and the community. Projects include protection and rehabilitation of dunes, estuaries, wetlands, coastal headlands and cultural sites; construction of paths, boardwalks and interpretive trails and community involvements in developing local regional coastal management plan	\$970,000 in 1999/00 to 88 community projects
	NSW	Public Reserves Management Fund	Development and maintenance of crown reserves - including 'local parks & reserves', 'showgrounds', 'consultancy program' & 'reserves of high visitation'	Limited loan and grant assistance - \$1.2 million in 1999/00
Planning NSW (formerly DUAP)	NSW	Urban Improvement Program	To revitalise key urban places around transport hubs – create village like atmosphere	\$6 million total over 4 years
	NSW	Metropolitan Green space Program	Regional open space improvement in metropolitan Sydney – cycle paths, tree planting, regeneration, parking, interpretation	\$ for \$ with average grant \$40,000
NSW Heritage Office	NSW	NSW Heritage Incentives Program	Supports the community's identification, assessment, management and interpretation of NSW heritage. Support is available for projects involving physical conservation works and the interpretation and presentation of individual heritage items	Applications called every 2 years Funding available only for items listed on local environmental plans, regional environmental plans and the State Heritage Register.
NSW Environmental Restoration and Rehabilitation Trust	NSW	Environmental Restoration and Rehabilitation Program	Restoration of degraded environments, protection of important ecosystems/habitats	Grants between \$5-100,000

Agency	Government Level	Grant Program	Grant Purpose	Grants
	NSW	Environmental Education	Programs to widening community knowledge, skills and commitment to environment protection	Grants between \$5-25,000
Environment Australia	Australian	Natural Heritage Trust	To help to restore and conserve Australia's environment and natural resources. Set up in 1997, the program encompasses national bushcare, landcare, rivercare and coastcare	Additional \$1 billion allocated in 2001 Budget - for environmental activities at community, regional & National/State levels
	Australian	Green Corps	To give young Australians the chance to show their commitment to the environment and at the same time get high-quality, accredited on-the-job training	Each project - 10 young people for 26 weeks - projects may include bush regeneration, habitat protection & restoration, controlling land or water degradation, cultural heritage protection and environmental and cultural heritage community education
Australian Heritage Commission	Australian	National Estate Grants Program	Projects which identify, document, conserve or promote nationally places of natural and cultural significance	\$ for \$
NSW Ministry for the Arts	NSW	Cultural Grants Program	To support arts organisations - via assistance with specific projects (performance seasons, workshops, residencies, masterclasses, tours, strategic projects) & annual operations generally (annual programs and core activities; salaries for arts officer positions)	In general, grants are given to subsidise the salaries/fees of professional arts workers -not solely for the administrative costs of organisations or the purchase of equipment
Department of Communications, Information Technology & The Arts	Australian	Festivals Australia	Provision of assistance to regional and community Australian festivals for the presentation of quality cultural activities	Available to festival organising body (local government, cultural organisation or regional arts council) - to assist with the presentation of specific cultural projects Two funding rounds a year which are advertised nationally, with closing dates of 15 February and 15 July

Agency	Govt Level	Grant Program	Grant Description	Scope/Basis
Australia Council – Community Cultural Development Board	Australian	Community cultural development (Key Organisations) Annual and triennial programs	Assistance to a limited number of organisations to facilitate and maximise opportunities for artists and communities to participate in and experience a diverse range of community cultural development practices.	Up to 60% of total project costs for annual programs; \$ for \$ for triennial programs
	Australian	Community cultural development (New Work)	Support for one-off projects which create new artistic work through community-based arts and cultural activity.	\$ for \$ Projects may be initiated by communities or by individual artists and artists working with communities Projects are expected to have a public outcome.
	Australian	Community cultural development (Presentation & Promotion))	Support for projects that promote the value of community cultural development practice, or which create opportunities for community cultural development practitioners to explore new ways of presenting the outcomes of existing best-practice models to new audiences	Open to individuals and organisations Projects should demonstrate a capacity to contribute to the understanding and progression of community cultural development among new audiences or sectors new to the practice
Library Council of NSW	NSW	Library Development Grants	To encourage the development of high quality public library services - via innovative projects, improved access, assistance to local authorities, encouragement of strategic partnerships.	Grants up to \$150,000 available to local councils Possible projects include construction, extension, refurbishment, or fit-out of buildings to improve access to collections or services; the improvement of access for groups of users; the establishment of a new service; market research; the purchase or upgrade of communication equipment to facilitate access to electronic networks; computer equipment; the purchase of books & electronic resources
National Library of Australia	Australian	Community Heritage Grants	To assist libraries and museums – to preserve collections of documentary heritage	Small annual grants

Agency	Government Level	Grant Program	Grant Purpose	Special Notes
Department of Community Services	NSW	Community Services Grants Program	To support children, young people, individuals and families; build strong communities and social capital; build and sustain the capacity of the community services sector at a state or regional level to deliver responsive services	Eligible projects include enhancement of neighbourhood, community and youth centres; youth worker subsidies
Department of Aging, Disability & Home Care	NSW	Seniors' Week Grants	To fund innovative projects - held during Seniors' Week - that promote a positive understanding of ageing and encourage an active and healthy lifestyle.	Seeding grants only - not intended to fund a total program. Available to non-profit, volunteer organisations, local government and community groups
NSW Department for Women	NSW	Women's Grants Program	(in part) to improve the health and wellbeing of women	For not for profit organisations (but local government could auspice non incorporated bodies). Three categories of grant - \$5,000 - \$100,000
Department of Education & Training	NSW	Youth Week Grants	To coordinate Youth Week activities	\$ for \$ - for Council run activities or applications on behalf of community organisations
NSW Attorney General's Department	NSW	Safer Communities Development Fund	Beat Graffiti Grants	Available irregularly
Community Relations Commission for a Multicultural NSW	NSW	Community Development Grants Program	Promoting interaction between ethnic groups and the community at large; promotion of community harmony; new networks and structures	For non-profit community organisations

Asset Management Program

ATTACHMENT E: ASSET MANAGEMENT

It is a key recommendation of this study that Council can add significant value to its portfolio of open space and recreation resources through the further implementation of its Asset Management Program.

The overall purpose of strategic asset management is to provide needed assets at the lowest possible life cycle cost *consistent with* required levels of service and control of exposure to risk and loss. This overall aim is sometimes lost in the complexity of complying with AAS27 and other legislative, accounting and reporting requirements.

The critical points of strategic asset management are *linkage* of asset management to corporate and service strategy planning and an asset *life cycle* orientation. The major strands are:

- Identification of the need for and **acquisition** of assets
- **Maintenance and operation** of assets
- **Renewal and adaptation** of assets
- **Disposal** of assets

These asset management strategic options are, desirably, integrated with *non-asset options* (human resource, financial and information technology strategies) in the formulation of service delivery strategies.

The IMEA's National Asset Management Manual distinguishes between *basic* asset management and *advanced* asset management. Basic asset management is 'at a level which addresses immediate issues such as legislative accounting requirements (AAS27) and supports some limited technical needs'. Advanced asset management seeks 'to make use of all relevant asset data to optimise activities and programs directly affecting infrastructure assets'.

The 'basic' level typically includes the development of an asset register (comprising location, age, condition, replacement cost and accumulated depreciation) and an asset replacement schedule. The 'advanced' level is akin to total asset management and entails asset planning, asset creation, asset accounting and economics, asset operations, asset maintenance, asset performance monitoring, asset rehabilitation and renewal, asset replacement and asset disposal/ rationalisation.

As indicated in section 17.4 of the Stage 2 Report, Council's Parks and Landscape Branch has implemented an asset management strategy and has made substantial progress at the 'basic' and early 'advanced' stages of asset management implementation. Initiatives have included preparation of a park assets inventory, condition assessments, identification of essential backlog works and financial planning for further asset refurbishment.

As also indicated in section 17.4, a comprehensive move to the 'advanced' level of asset management has the potential to further increase Council's capacity to address current service gaps.

Possible future directions and priorities in asset management in parks and open space would focus on asset planning and acquisition, maintenance and operations and disposal – as per the following types of questions:

- What services do we want to supply and what assets do we need to supply them?
- What assets do we have already and are they sufficient to supply these services? If not, why not? If so, could we do better (supply more services or the same services more efficiently)?
- What is the condition of our assets?
- What is the level of maintenance (Are we overdoing it? Not doing enough – and what are the consequences in service supply terms?)
- What is the utilisation of our assets? (Could we get more use out of them? If they are under-utilised, why?)
- If we decide we need more assets, which ones will best suit our needs and how shall we acquire them? What is the appropriate timing?
- Which assets should we dispose of and when and how? Are there alternative uses for the assets?

The Parks and Landscape Branch does not currently have the staff resources to implement 'advanced' asset management fully. However, the 'leisure planning' position identified in section 17.3 of the Stage 2 Report would assist the process considerably – particularly in regard to asset planning and acquisition and use monitoring.

To optimise the efficiency and effectiveness of facilities and services – to ensure that facilities are both relevant to current and emerging needs *and* provided at the lowest possible life cycle cost – asset management processes will become increasingly necessary.

Rationalisation/Disposal of Open Space

ATTACHMENT F: RATIONALISATION AND/OR DISPOSAL OF OPEN SPACE

Section 17.4 of the Stage 2 report identified the sale of small open space parcels – with no significant open space functions – as a potential strategy in the improvement of open space maintenance efficiencies.

Disposal of 'low value' open space is consistent with sound asset management principles. It is cost-ineffective to incur substantial maintenance costs for spaces that are little used or appreciated by their local communities. Additionally, the disposal of such sites has the potential to raise funds for the acquisition and/or enhancement of higher value open space elsewhere.

There is typically, however, substantial community opposition to any proposal to dispose of open space. Residents, for example, may have the view that open space is 'inalienable' or that the attractions of an area are integrally linked to maximising the amount of available open space.

Additionally, the rationalisation process is constrained by the reclassification requirements of the Local Government Act 1993.¹³

Due to these difficulties, rationalisations and disposals should only be pursued where there are clear benefits (and few apparent costs) in doing so. The disposal option, where deemed to be appropriate, must also be accompanied by a community education process (advising affected residents of the reasons for the disposal, how realised funds will be spent and consequences of non-disposal).

The proposal is most likely to be acceptable where realised funds are reallocated to (more worthwhile) projects in immediate neighbourhoods and where the consequences of non-disposal (in terms of 'lost' opportunities) are clearly understood by potential opponents.

Appropriate options for realised funds would include:

- repayment of loans (if any) on the purchase/improvement of the disposed land,
- acquisition of alternative open space in the immediate neighbourhood (with the potential to better meet the needs of people in that neighbourhood), and/or
- the embellishment or maintenance of existing open space in the locality.

¹³ The Act requires councils to classify public land ('operational' or 'community') to distinguish between land required for the business purposes of councils (operational land) and that needed for public purposes such as parks and open space (community land). Community land cannot be sold without being reclassified (requiring a lengthy process including preparation of an LEP).

The Act allows reclassification of land dedicated under S94 – where a council is satisfied that the land is unsuitable by reason of size, shape, topography, location and difficulty in providing public access. The net proceeds of any subsequent sale of the land must be dealt with under the provisions of the S94 Contributions Plan as if those proceeds were a monetary contribution instead of dedication.

The proceeds should *not* be channelled to consolidated revenues. They should be used for one of the above purposes or (in the case of S94 dedications) be redirected to the source of the original funding.

Given the complexities and potential difficulties inherent in the implementation of a rationalisation process, a sensible approach would be to conduct a pilot program in one district or part of a district. Depending on the results and outcomes of the pilot, a longer-term rationalisation strategy could be developed for the whole Shire.

Open Space Maintenance Practices

ATTACHMENT G: OPEN SPACE MAINTENANCE PRACTICES

A report to Council in July 2001 argued that Council's budget for open space maintenance was low – according to a range of benchmarks - and that this was an increasingly major impediment to the cost-effective provision of open space and recreation facilities.¹⁴

Consequences included declining levels of service (such as grass cutting reduction from 22 to 16 cuts per annum), irrigation and drainage systems not being installed at all sports ground facilities and infrastructure and equipment not being replaced or refurbished.

In this context, it is essential to address and modify any factors that inhibit the achievement of optimal maintenance efficiencies. These factors include some park layouts (with overly large grassed areas and/or poorly located signs/furniture), the large number of small pocket parks/ancillary spaces (which are inefficient and relatively expensive to maintain) and may include insufficient review of land dedicated as open space in subdivisions.

The achievement of further maintenance efficiencies will 'release' funds for the design and development of parks and open space across the Council area – making such space more effective in meeting people's needs.

Possible strategies for further improving maintenance efficiencies include the following:

- Minimising the amount of lawn areas and obstructions to maintenance vehicles.
- Minimising the dedication of very small parks (unless they are important for environmental or other reasons or form an extension to existing open space).
- Maintaining open space according to cycles at lower levels of maintenance than presently provided or desired by residents.
- Investigating open space modification (to remove excessive lawn areas and possibly replace with native vegetation).
- The sale, where appropriate, of small, surplus parcels of land where they have no significant open space function.
- The acceptances of subdivision open space dedications only where the sites have been adequately rehabilitated.
- the aggregation of sportsgrounds into complexes of fields – where possible - to reduce the number and size of support facilities (access, car parks, amenities, storage) to be maintained and maintenance staff travel time/hectare maintained
- the utilisation of treated effluent (where available) for sportsground irrigation

¹⁴ The Parks and Landscape Team had an operational budget that, as a proportion of asset values, was low on a benchmarked basis - around 5% of the total value of park assets compared, for example, with 8% at the NPWS - Executive Manager's Report No. EN30/01 (11th Jul 2001)