



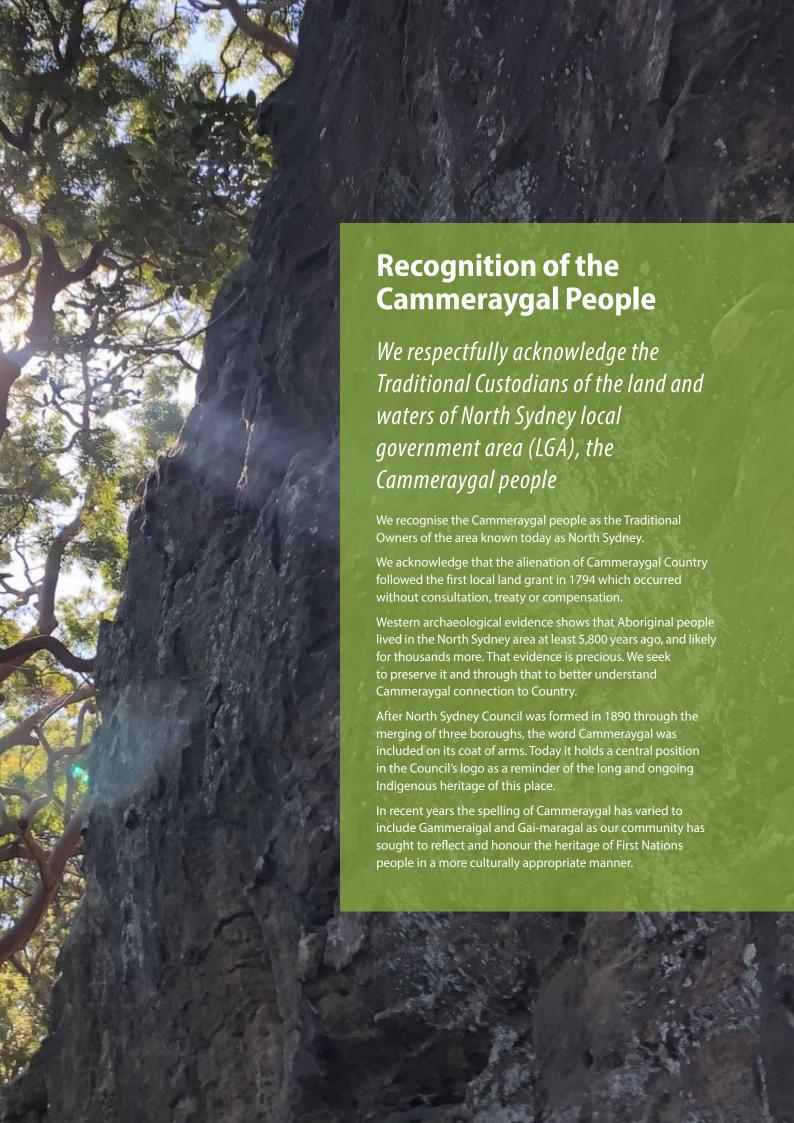
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Contents

Recognition of the Cammeraygal People	4
Mayor's message	5
Introduction	6
Background	7
Community engagement	8
About this Strategy	9
Delivering the outcome	11





Mayor's message

Since 2011, the residential population of the North Sydney local government area (LGA) has grown by 6,600 people, including 2,000 more school-age children and 3,000 seniors. Around 4,000 new dwellings have been constructed to accommodate this growth, with a shift to even higher density living. At the same time, single-person households have increased by almost 2,000 – all housed within a very constrained 10.5km² LGA.

It is anticipated that the residential population of North Sydney will be 79,000 to 80,000 people by 2036, with almost 90% living in medium and high-density dwellings. In addition, employment targets set under the North District Plan anticipate between 76,000 and 81,500 workers by 2036.

We are one of the three most densely populated LGAs in NSW, and that density is growing. The need for public open space and recreation facilities is vital to ensure a liveable, resilient community. Those of us who live in apartments rely on parks and community facilities for rest, recreation, health and wellbeing.

The fact is that our LGA does not have sufficient open space to serve existing residents, students and workers, let alone the projected and increasing population.

This strategy will guide our efforts to address these challenges by maximising existing resources, including re-purposing under-utilised civic spaces and enhancing our parks and facilities. It reflects our collective vision of an active community with space for everyone to exercise, access and enjoy the outdoors.

By prioritising equity, we can ensure that all community members have access to the benefits of open spaces – improving health, fostering social connections, and supporting environmental sustainability.

This strategy is underpinned by extensive, real community engagement, ensuring your voices shape and guide the path forward.

Thank you to everyone who provided feedback in the 'Have your say on North Sydney's next ten years' consultation in mid-2024. This engagement was testament to our strong tradition of public participation and the importance of empowering our community to influence decisions that impact your lives.

As we embark on this ten-year journey, I urge you to continue to actively participate in our community. Together we can create accessible and vibrant open spaces that enhance the quality of life for all residents of North Sydney.

Toe Baller

Introduction

North Sydney features a network of well-maintained parks and recreational facilities that serve as vital community hubs, many of which are situated in picturesque harbourside locations. These spaces offer residents opportunities for leisure, structured sports, informal exercise and social interaction, significantly enhancing the community's overall wellbeing. However, the local government area (LGA) faces a considerable open space deficit, estimated at around 45 hectares*, which is expected to increase as the population grows. With 89% of residents living in high and medium-density housing, ensuring an adequate supply of accessible public open spaces is essential.

Limited land availability and high land prices severely restrict the ability to acquire new open space. Therefore, it is crucial to explore innovative strategies to maximise the use of existing resources. This includes design modifications and the potential repurposing of civic and 'grey' spaces, such as roads and car parks, for recreational use.

To address this open space deficit and deliver the desired outcome of being **an active community with space for everyone to exercise and enjoy the outdoors**, this Open Space and Recreation Strategy focuses on four strategic directions:



^{*}North Sydney Open Space and Recreation Needs Study, 2024

Background

This strategy is part of a suite of informing strategies (see Figure 1) that articulate North Sydney's needs and priorities over the next ten years. These strategies will form the basis for Council's new Community Strategic Plan (CSP) 2025-2035, Delivery Programs and Operational Plans.



Figure 1: Suite of Informing Strategies

The role of Council

North Sydney Council plays an important role in shaping strategic directions that align with community aspirations and prioritising funding accordingly, however collaboration will be essential to driving meaningful outcomes.

Council's ten-year strategies must be viewed within the broader framework of local government's role in relation to State and Federal policies and jurisdictions.

While Council has significant responsibilities, its powers can be limited in certain areas. In these situations, advocacy and partnerships with other organisations may be necessary to influence specific actions in place of more direct initiatives.

Community engagement

In 2024, Council launched its most extensive consultation to date: the 'Have your say on North Sydney's next ten years' campaign. This initiative was designed to gather broad and meaningful input from the community to shape the suite of informing strategies.

The six-week consultation focused on five key Discussion Papers* that addressed critical areas of community interest, helping us understand evolving needs, aspirations and priorities.

We received over 1,000 responses to our online surveys, and over 600 individuals attended our community forums. Additionally, thousands more were engaged through both in-person and online events.

To ensure we heard from unique and diverse voices, Council also held dedicated workshops for specific groups including a demographically selected group of 60+ residents, a First Nations workshop in partnership with Indigenous consultancy Murawin, a Voice of Youth workshop with over 50 primary and secondary students, and sessions with relevant key stakeholders.





The valuable insights gathered through community engagement, along with extensive research, have shaped five comprehensive studies that outline the vision and priorities for our community. These studies are the foundation for bold, forward-looking strategies that will guide our next ten years.

For details on the research and engagement supporting this strategy, please refer to the North Sydney Open Space and Recreation Needs Study.

Specific discussion papers and research studies were not prepared for Environment, Housing and Governance* as part of this campaign, for the reasons outlined below.

Environment: Significant research had already been undertaken to develop the North Sydney Environmental Sustainability Strategy 2030.

Housing: The existing North Sydney Local Housing Strategy is a legislated strategy under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979. It will be reviewed and updated in 2025/26.

Governance: The Governance strategy focuses primarily on internal governance structures and processes, which are guided by established regulations and best practices.

North Sydney Council

About this strategy

The Open Space and Recreation Strategy details how Council, the community, businesses and other stakeholders will work together over the next ten years to deliver the desired outcome of being:

An active community with space for everyone to exercise and enjoy the outdoors

This strategy takes precedence over existing Council strategies and plans, except where required by legislation. Relevant information captured in superseded documents will be considered through service unit planning and, if necessary, adopted as supporting plans.

Principles

The strategy is guided by four key principles:



FAIRNESS

Sharing our open spaces and recreational facilities so they can be enjoyed by everyone.



INCLUSION

Fostering an inclusive environment that caters to various interests and abilities.



INNOVATION

Embracing creative solutions to increase open space availability and use.



WELLBEING

Promoting physical and mental health through active lifestyles and social interaction.



Structure

The strategy includes four strategic directions with clear measurable objectives, that outline how we will strive towards the outcome of an active community with space for everyone to exercise and enjoy the outdoors.

Under each direction are specific projects and initiatives that will help us achieve the objectives. There is also a list of Council's existing services that support each strategic direction.

Figure 2 illustrates the structure of the informing strategy.



OUTCOME

An active community with space for everyone to exercise and enjoy the outdoors

Where we want to be in ten years



STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

How we work together to achieve the outcome and

OBJECTIVES

Measurable goals for each strategic direction



PROJECTS & INITIATIVES

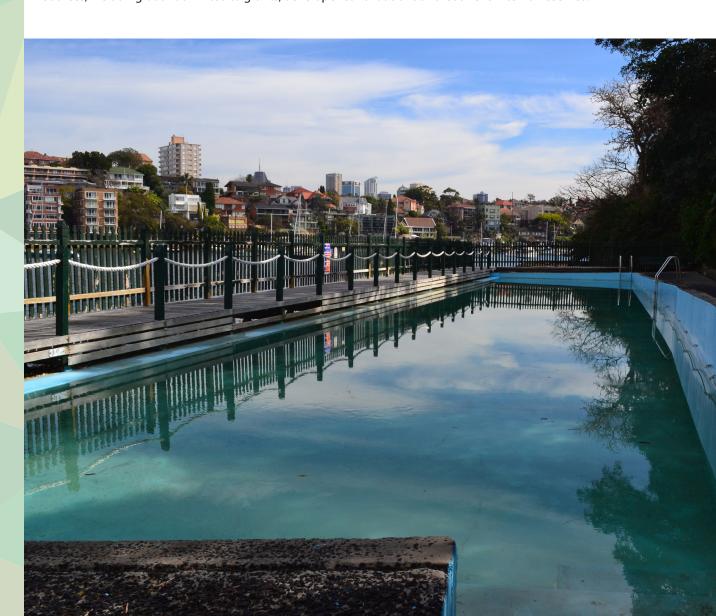
Specific projects and initiatives that Council will undertake

and SERVICES

Existing Council services that support the strategic direction

Figure 2: Structure of the Open Space and Recreation Strategy

Timing and delivery of new projects and initiatives will be dependent on availability of funding from a variety of sources, including but not limited to grants, developer contributions and Council's internal reserves.



DELIVERING THE OUTCOME



OBJECTIVE

• Identify and/or develop five new spaces by 2035 that may be used by the community to meet identified sport and/or recreational needs

STRATEGIC DIRECTION 1: **Deliver additional space for sports** and recreation

1.1 Develop a masterplan and feasibility study for consolidating a new community centre, underground car parking and a significant new area of open space for Crows Nest on the site which currently accommodates the Holtermann Street car park, Crows Nest Community Centre and Ernest Place.



- 1.2 Progress the design and delivery of the Hume Street Park expansion project that includes removal of the childcare centre, closure of part of Hume Street, and improvements to the quality of open space in Hume Street Park.
- Prepare a public domain and placemaking strategy for Crows 1.3 Nest and St Leonards that determines appropriate design and function of public space to support the growing population. The strategy will consider the pedestrianisation of Willoughby Road and incorporate the Holtermann Street car park precinct and Hume Street Park expansion projects.

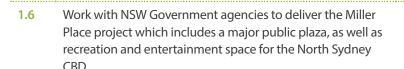


Work with the NSW Government to convert the under-1.4 utilised deck of the tramway viaduct near North Sydney Train Station into a 4,650m² active recreation space.



1.5 Develop a masterplan for the civic precinct in North Sydney (bounded by Ridge, Miller, Church and McLaren Streets) that investigates and incorporates a range of new community space, open space and active recreation spaces.









Shared projects, initiatives and services

Some projects, initiatives and services contribute to the delivery of outcomes from multiple Informing Strategies. These are indicated using symbols (see below) representing the other strategies that include the same activity.



Culture and Creativity







Economic Development



Open Space and Recreation



OBJECTIVES

- Deliver more than 20,000 sportsfield booking hours per year by 2035
- Reduce the number of sportsfield closure hours due to wet weather by 10% by 2035 from a 2025 baseline

STRATEGIC DIRECTION 2: Maximise the capacity of our existing open spaces and recreational facilities

- 2.1 In consultation with the community, develop a masterplan for Cammeray Park that increases opportunities for multi-use and addresses community demand for active and passive recreation.
- 2.2 Review the management model at North Sydney Oval to determine whether the oval complex could accommodate additional community participation and use without significantly compromising its role as a venue for the playing and watching elite sport.
- 2.3 Renew and upgrade the North Sydney Indoor Sports Centre to increase capacity and useability, including exploring opportunities with Northern Suburbs Basketball Association for equitable multi-use.
- 2.4 Formalise a Council policy of retaining control of sportsfields and courts and associated infrastructure to ensure flexibility and accessibility of use.
- 2.5 Upgrade the tennis courts and associated amenities in Green Park to create a multi-use facility.
- 2.6 Explore opportunities for multi-purpose sports sites to accommodate hockey and/or netball matches and training, and/or emerging sports including pickleball and climbing.
- **2.7** Explore opportunities to accommodate AFL, with a focus on junior AFL and women's AFL, in the North Sydney area.
- 2.8 Develop and implement a program for increasing the capacity and utilisation of sportsfields and courts through infrastructure improvements.
- 2.9 In consultation with the community and key stakeholders, identify sportsfield(s) that would be suitable for alternative playing surfaces such as hybrid and synthetic turf, to increase capacity.

OBJECTIVES

of residents who are at least somewhat satisfied with recreation facilities and amenities to at least 85% by 2029 from a 2023 baseline of 84%*

STRATEGIC DIRECTION 3:

Provide new and upgraded facilities within existing public spaces to increase amenity, accessibility and diversity

- 3.1 Identify opportunities and implement projects to improve accessibility of parks and playgrounds across the LGA.
- 2004
- 3.2 Deliver gender-neutral player facilities at the following key sports sites to encourage and cater for the growth in female participation:
 - North Sydney Oval
 - · Primrose Park
 - · Tunks Park
- 3.3 Renew the following playgrounds in accordance with the Neighbourhood Parks Plan of Management 2022 and the Playgrounds Plan of Management 2022:
 - Green Park Senior Playground*
 - · Phillips Street Playground
 - · Euroka Street Playground
 - · Victoria Street Playground
 - Mary French Reserve Playground
 - W H Brothers Memorial Reserve Playground
 - Cremorne Reserve Playground
 - · Milson Park Playground
 - Bradfield Park Playground*
 - · Cahill Playground
 - Blues Point Reserve Playground
 - · Tunks Park Playground
 - · Berry Island Playground
 - · Ilbery Playground
 - · Hodgsons Lookout Playground
 - Brightmore Reserve Playground*
 - · Grasmere Reserve Playground
 - *Potential inclusion of adventure and challenge equipment for older children
- 3.4 Upgrade Cammeray Skate Park.
- 3.5 Deliver a park enhancement program for provision of infrastructure to improve the amenity of parks such as shelter, shade, water fountains and seating.
- 3.6 Deliver additional active recreation facilities such as basketball half courts, outdoor table tennis tables and multiuse games areas in selected larger parks, including:
 - · Forsyth Park
 - Waverton Park
 - · Bradfield Park
 - Brightmore Reserve
- 3.7 Design and construct new public amenities in St Leonards Park.

^{*} Source: Customer Satisfaction Survey (Micromex Research)



OBJECTIVE

Maintain the percentage of residents who are at least somewhat satisfied with the maintenance of parks, playgrounds, bushland areas and recreation areas at or above 90%*

* Source: Customer Satisfaction Survey (Micromex Research)

STRATEGIC DIRECTION 4: Manage our open space and recreational

facilities to ensure that they are well maintained and shared

- 4.1 Develop and implement a program for reviewing Council's plans of management and develop a prioritised list of projects for implementation.
 4.2 Prepare a policy to ensure that events and large gatherings in public open space, particularly in prime harbour
- 4.2 Prepare a policy to ensure that events and large gatherings in public open space, particularly in prime harbour foreshore parks, do not undermine the condition of our parks or inhibit general recreational use by the community. The policy shall also include consideration of fees and charges.
- 4.3 Prepare a policy for use of public open space in North Sydney by personal trainers.
- 4.4 Consider developing an appropriate model for use and individual user agreements with schools who use North Sydney's parks for general recreation and informal sports and games.
- 4.5 Implement initiatives to increase community awareness of available sport and recreation spaces and facilities.
- 4.6 Deliver a simplified system for sport facility bookings, so groups can book and use these spaces easily.
- **4.7** Deliver improved drainage in St Leonards Park to increase the resilience of this highly used park.
- 4.8 Replace the synthetic turf at Cammeray Park.
- 4.9 Reconstruct the Tunks Park turf cricket wicket table.
- 4.10 Renew and upgrade the North Sydney Oval complex to comply with current standards for the benefit of all users (clubs and the community). This includes removing the asset maintenance backlog as well as providing improved seating, corporate facilities and public toilets.
- 4.11 Deliver the following park/reserve upgrades in accordance with the Foreshore Parks & Reserves Plan of Management 2023:
 - Blues Point Reserve landscape and lighting upgrade
 - Walker Street Steps renewal (linking Lavender Street with Quibaree Reserve)
 - · Watt Park footpath and associated lighting upgrade
 - · Waverton Oval perimeter path project
 - Dowling Street Reserve upgrade
 - · Lady Gowie Lookout restoration works
- 4.12 Prepare a masterplan for Blues Point Reserve and Henry Lawson Reserve.
- **4.13** Complete the Cremorne Reserve pathway improvements project.
- **4.14** Review and progressively implement the masterplan for Tunks Park.

