



ACTIVE RECREATION STRATEGY

Adopted by Council 24 June 2024

PREPARED BY



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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Lake Macquarie City Council acknowledges the Awabakal People, the traditional custodians of the land over which the Active Recreation Strategy relates.

We remember and respect the Ancestors who cared for and nurtured this Country.

Dhumaan ngayin ngarrakalu kirraanan barayidin.

It is in their footsteps that we travel these lands and waters.

Ngarrakalumba yuludaka bibayilin barayida baaduka.

Lake Macquarie City Council acknowledges the Awabakal people and Elders past, present and future.

Lake Macquarie City Council dhumaan Awabakala ngarrakal yalawaa, yalawan, yalawanan.

Wording by the Aboriginal Reference Group and translated by Miromaa Aboriginal Language and Technology Centre

MAYOR'S MESSAGE

Living in Lake Macquarie, we're blessed to have access to a wide variety of outdoor spaces where we can move our bodies and stay healthy.

Whether it's surfing at our beautiful beaches, walking or cycling along a shared pathway, shooting hoops at a local park or working out on our outdoor fitness equipment, an active lifestyle is a big part of what makes Lake Mac such a wonderful place to call home.

Council plays an important role in supporting our community to enjoy a healthy lifestyle and positive wellbeing by providing valuable infrastructure and supporting programming to encourage greater participation in physical fitness and activity.

Our Active Recreation Strategy provides a framework to guide the provision of infrastructure and programming our community needs to stay fit and healthy.

I'm proud that the strategy is underpinned by principles of diversity and inclusion, and seeks to provide accessible facilities that cater to a wide range users.

We understand that our diverse community has different abilities and preferences when it comes to active recreation. In creating this strategy, we have engaged with a broad cross-section of our community, and heard that people want safe, easily accessible spaces where the whole family can be active together.

Alongside other priority actions, this strategy outlines a 'hub' approach where active recreation infrastructure is co-located, providing opportunities to join in a range of activities in one place. For example, a skate park or climbing wall might be skirted by a walking track and situated within a wider park that also features a playground and hit wall, creating intergenerational active recreation opportunities.

Providing the right infrastructure is important, but we can also help overcome barriers to participation in our community by activating these spaces. This strategy will see us playing a greater role in promoting new and existing programming that Council, community groups and businesses are providing across our facilities.

Lake Macquarie is an active city and our people love to move. I'm confident this strategy will enable more of us to get active more often, and in more ways than ever before.

Cr Kay Fraser

Mayor, Lake Macquarie City Council



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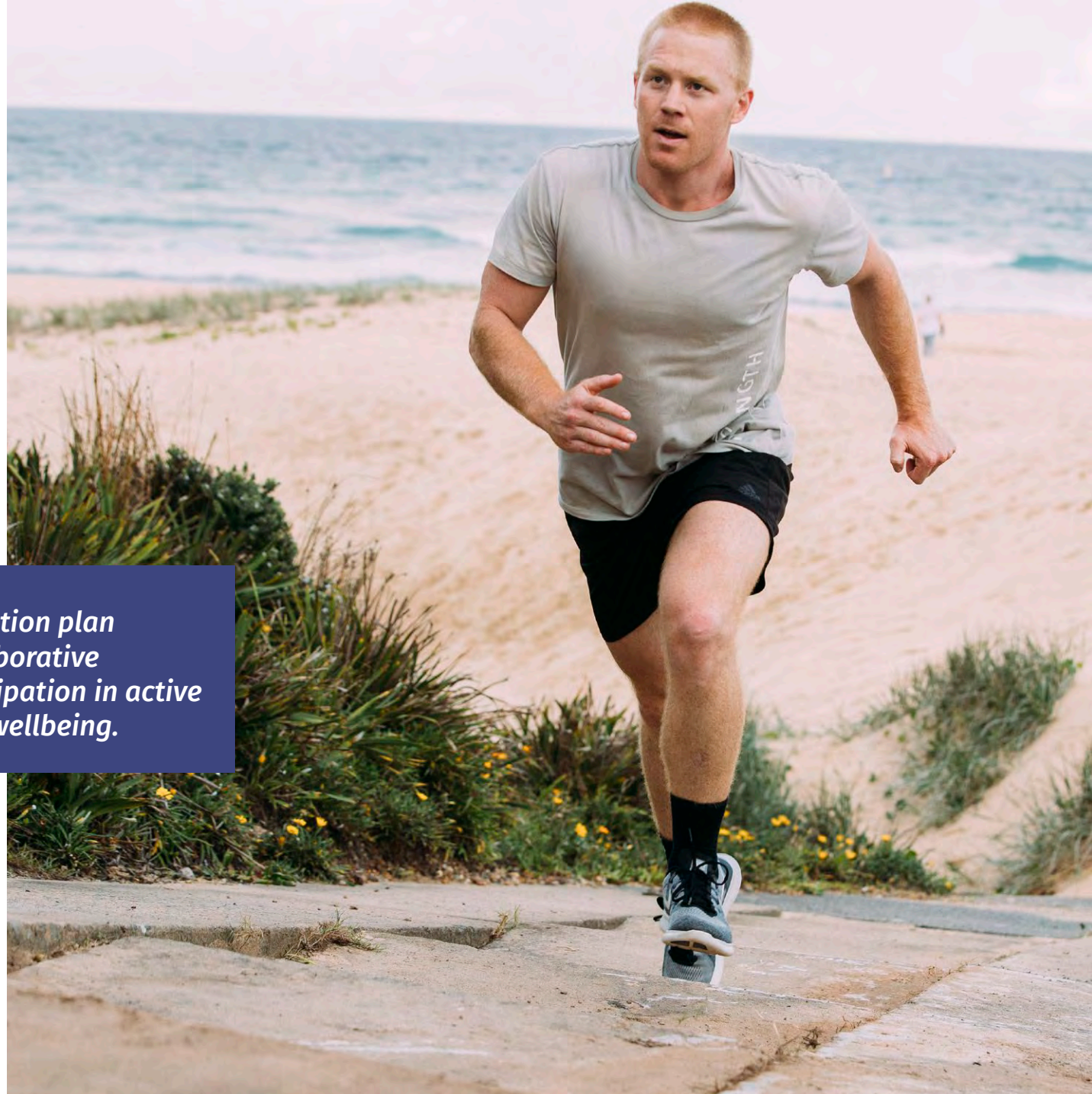
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1. STRATEGY OVERVIEW

1.1. PURPOSE AND AIMS

The purpose of the Lake Macquarie Active Recreation Strategy is to:

Provide a strategic framework and action plan that enables a coordinated and collaborative approach aimed at supporting participation in active recreation for liveability, health and wellbeing.



The **aims** of the Lake Macquarie Active Recreation Strategy are summarised in the figure below:

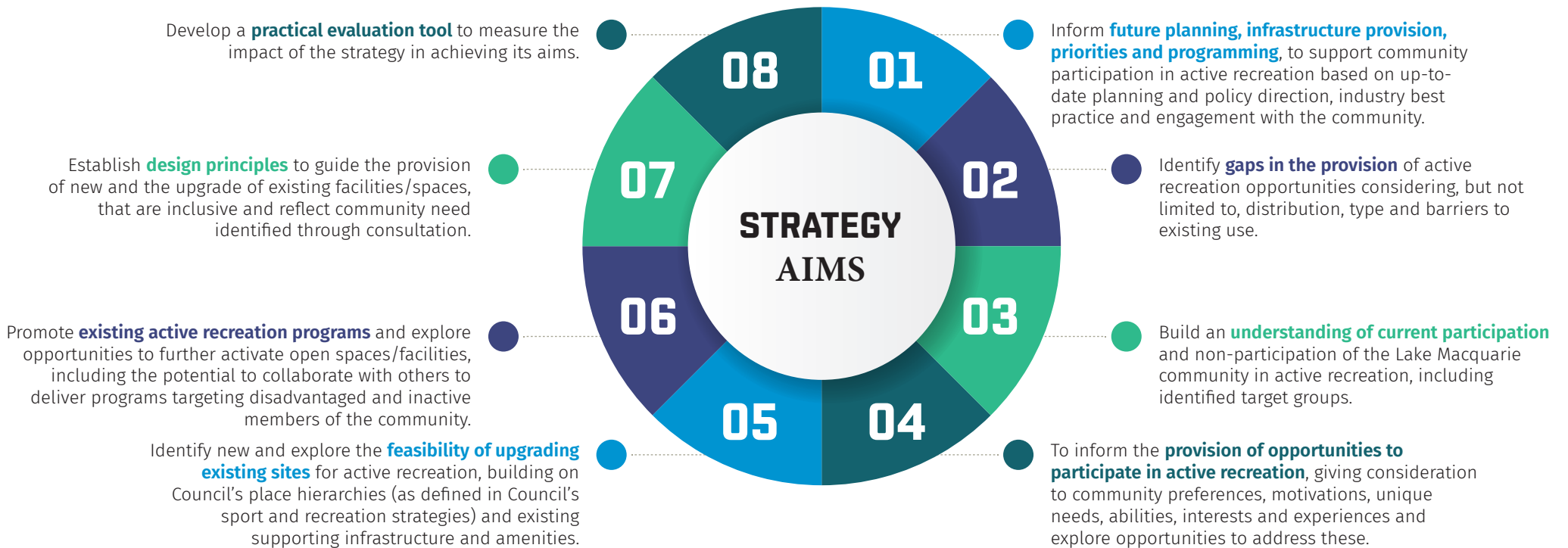


Figure 1: Lake Macquarie Active Recreation Strategy aims

The Active Recreation Strategy is underpinned by a number of supporting documents that provide detailed background context, community and stakeholder engagement, analysis and assessment:



**Background
Research Report**



**Community and Stakeholder
Engagement Report**



**Planning Framework and
Analysis Report**

1.2. WHAT IS ACTIVE RECREATION?

For the purpose of this strategy, active recreation is defined as:

Unstructured physical activity undertaken for health, wellbeing and enjoyment that is self-directed or facilitated by a provider or organisation.

1.3. WHAT DOES THIS STRATEGY COVER?

The Lake Macquarie Active Recreation Strategy focuses on the informal physical recreational activities people undertake in open spaces, including parks, natural areas, sportsgrounds, beaches, swim centres, and civic spaces. Such activities include, but are not limited to, walking, skateboarding, scootering, inline skating, BMX riding, outdoor fitness, informal court-based activities (basketball, hit wall tennis), parkour, tai chi, aqua fit, etc.

1.3.1. WHERE DOES THE ACTIVE RECREATION STRATEGY FIT?

Active recreation is part of a continuum of physical activity from organised sport through to the activities undertaken as part of an active lifestyle such as walking and cycling to work and school. The strategy complements existing and proposed strategies that address this continuum as outlined in Figure 2.



Figure 2: Lake Macquarie City Council recreation strategy suite

Paths, trails and the active transport network play an important role in promoting a healthy and active lifestyle. Walking (recreational) is the most popular activity undertaken in Lake Macquarie¹, and the network of pathways and trails is vital in connecting communities to open spaces.

Council's Walking, Cycling and Better Streets Strategy provides a valuable framework that will help deliver new pedestrian, cycling and road safety improvements across the city for active transport.

The development of a future Tracks and Trail Strategy will guide the provision of tracks and trails for recreational walking and cycling throughout the city.

The Active Recreation Strategy will consider walking and cycling for recreation in our open spaces and aims to complement the actions identified within the Walking, Cycling and Better Streets Strategy.

¹ AusPlay: 'State and territory participation' accessed via clearinghouseforsport.gov.au/research/ausplay/results

1.4. HOW DOES THE ACTIVE RECREATION STRATEGY ALIGN?

The Active Recreation Strategy is informed by the Lake Macquarie Community Strategic Plan and Local Strategic Planning Statement.

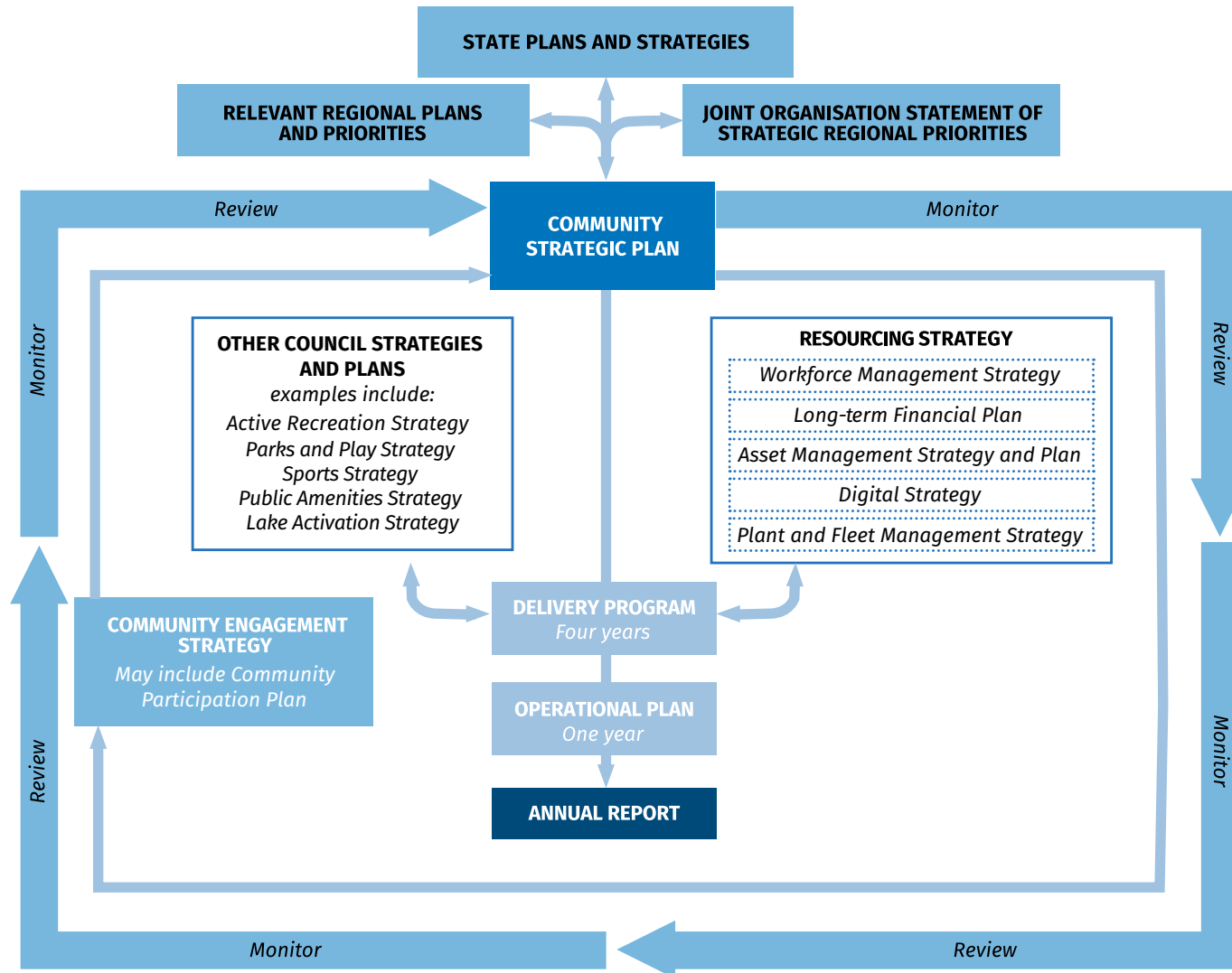


Figure 3: Active Recreation Strategy alignment within the Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework



The Active Recreation Strategy provides a framework to assist delivery of the Lake Mac 2032 Community Strategic Plan 2022-2032, including Council's commitment to its lifestyle and wellbeing value:

A place that encourages safe, active and social opportunities.

Specifically, the strategy will work toward the following objective and action:

- **Objective 2.2** - Our open and shared spaces are inclusive and help us to live a healthy and safer social lifestyle.
- **Action 2.2.3** - Enhance sport, leisure and recreation infrastructure for community use.



United Nations Sustainable Development Goals

Council has made a commitment to supporting the Sustainable Development Goals adopted by the United Nations in 2015.

Consideration has been given to these goals when developing this strategy. The following goals align with this strategy:





Compared to NSW averages, there is:

Higher median age of **42 years** compared to 38 years

Higher proportion of people aged **over 55 years**, notably people aged between 60 and 84 years

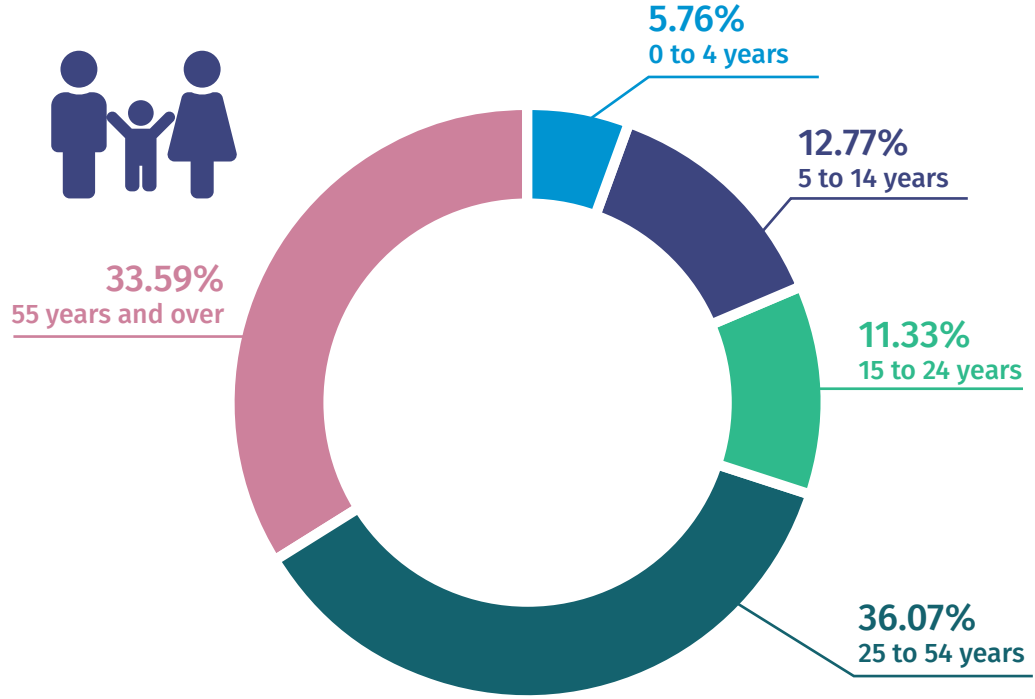
Higher proportion of people aged between **5 and 19 years**

A lower proportion of people aged between **20 and 44 years**

2. WHO IS LAKE MACQUARIE?

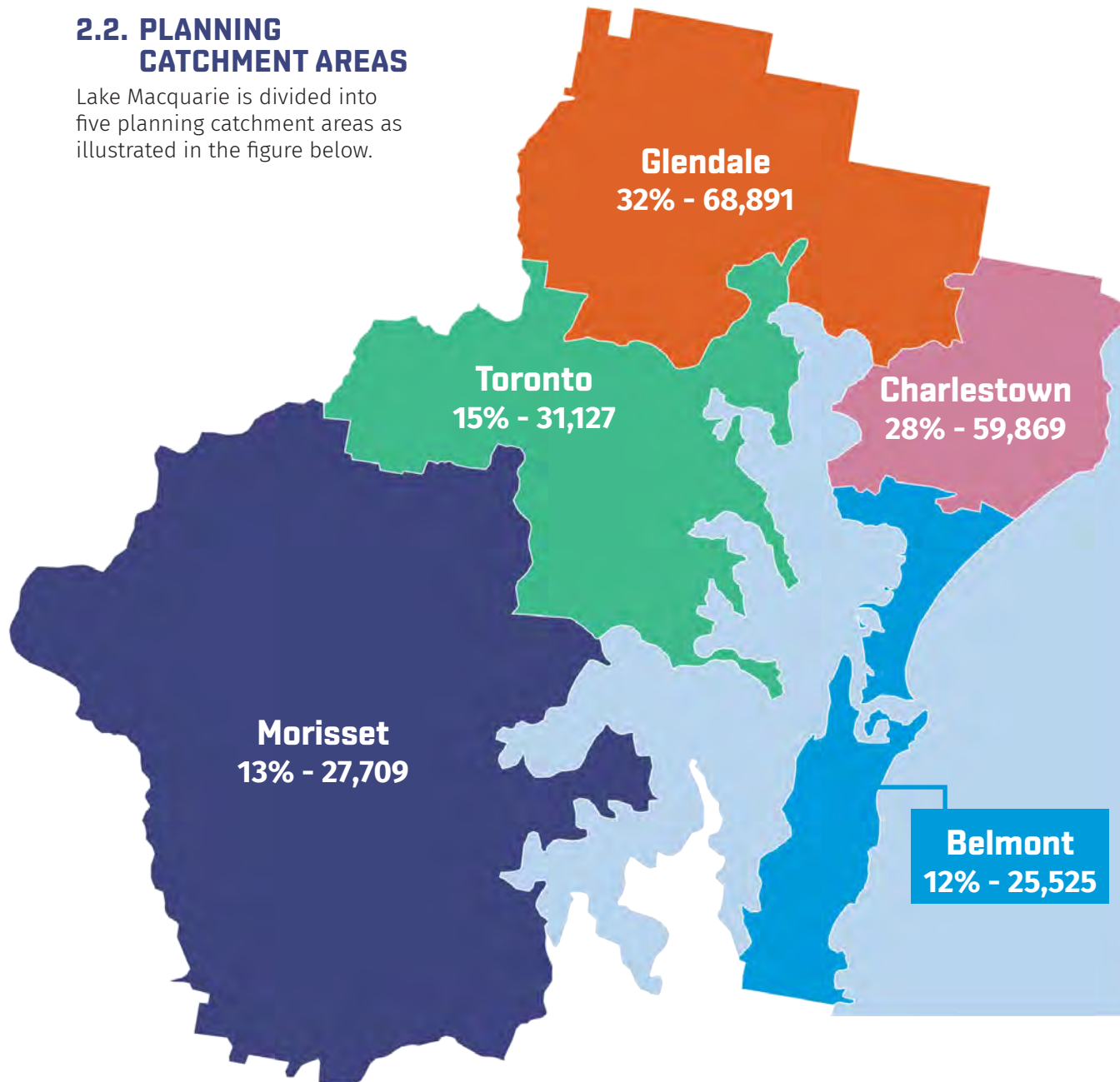
2.1. CURRENT POPULATION

Lake Macquarie is home to 213,845 residents (based on the 2021 Australian Bureau of Statistics (Census data)).



2.2. PLANNING CATCHMENT AREAS

Lake Macquarie is divided into five planning catchment areas as illustrated in the figure below.



2.3. FUTURE POPULATION

The population of Lake Macquarie is expected to increase by 38,824 people to 252,971 by 2041 (based on REMPLAN data).



2021
213,845



2031
236,795



2041
252,971

The majority of the forecast growth between 2021 and 2041 will occur in:

- Morisset and Cooranbong (Morisset Planning Catchment) with 11,704 additional residents
- Edgeworth and Cameron Park (Glendale Planning Catchment) with 8,733 additional residents.

Key expected demographics characteristics include:



An increase in the proportion of people aged between **75 and 94 years**



A reduced proportion of people aged between **0 and 14 years**

A reduced proportion of people aged between **25 and 39 years**

3. EVIDENCE FOR ACTION



Increased participation in non-sport related physical activity

National participation trends identify an increasing shift towards informal, unstructured sporting activities.

While all physical activity is important in building active, healthy and connected communities, active recreation has become increasingly appealing for its flexibility, enabling people to exercise at a time that suits them.



Community need

The population of Lake Macquarie is predicted to grow from 213,845 (2021) to 252,791 by 2041. This population growth will fuel participation demand for additional active recreation facilities and services.

Lake Macquarie is an ageing community, creating a greater demand for accessible, therapy-based and social active recreation participation opportunities.



Evidence-based planning

The unstructured nature of active recreation and the diverse range of settings and locations these activities are undertaken throughout the city significantly limits the ability for local government to easily capture quantitative participation data. Most local research is based on qualitative data, which aims to understand the motivations, preferences and barriers to undertaking desired physical activity.

There is significant national data, obtained over a number of years, which demonstrates the continued move towards more independent, unstructured activities. This research identifies community demand for spaces and facilities that provide a range of options while supporting flexibility around when and how people can participate.

There is increasing universal recognition that active recreation facilities have traditionally been designed to suit male participation (e.g. skate park, BMX tracks). A re-focusing of facility design, spaces and programs that support and encourage participation by girls, young women and older people is needed.

Many active recreation facilities have been provided through developer contributions, based on quantitative provision standards. While these standards provide a useful guide, there is a recognised need to engage with local communities to identify specific needs and include qualitative measures as part of the planning process.



Sustainable asset management

Community needs and expectations for active recreation opportunities are increasing.

Active recreation facilities such as skate parks, multi-courts and hit walls are a significant financial investment. Building on Council's place hierarchies (as defined in Council's sport and recreation strategies) and existing supporting infrastructure and amenities, provides an opportunity to optimise community infrastructure as well as provide for broader community use.

There is a growing focus by local government in the activation of open space including through programming to ensure recreation infrastructure is well used and the outcomes of the facility investment are achieved.

3.1. THE IMPORTANCE OF ACTIVE RECREATION

Active recreation is a valuable part of life in Lake Macquarie and promotes active lifestyles, develops valuable social networks and contributes to liveability.



Health benefits

Improves physical and mental health and reduces the risk of obesity and lifestyle-related illnesses. An active lifestyle contributes to general wellbeing and social capital.



Economic and tourism benefits

Delivers economic benefits through its contribution to tourism, attracting visitors and generating jobs, improved productivity and reducing preventative health costs.



Social benefits

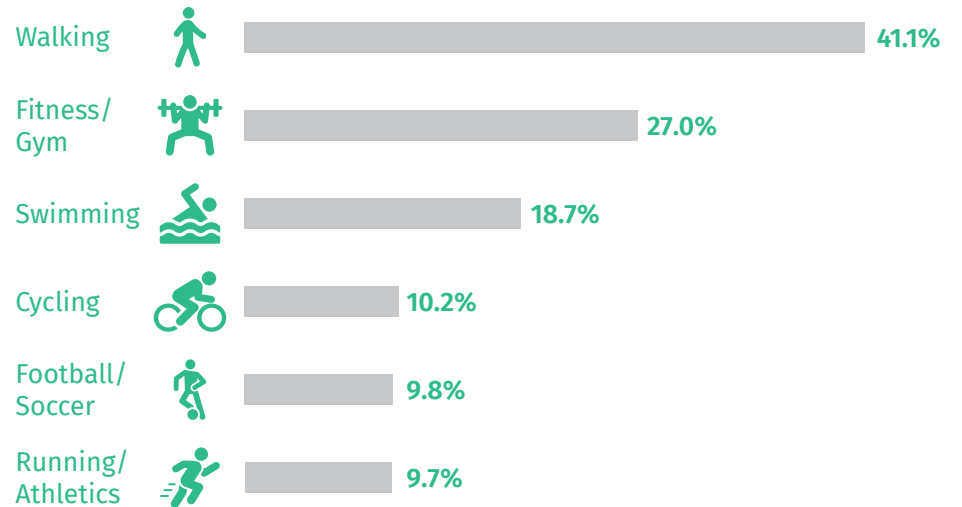
Bringing people and communities together, contributing to a stronger, more inclusive society. Participant diversity makes active recreation an ideal forum to reach people from every age group, cultural background, demographic and socio-economic group.

² AusPlay Results accessed via www.clearinghouseforsport.gov.au/research/ausplay/results

3.2. THE PARTICIPATION LANDSCAPE

National recreation participation data compiled by the Australian Sports Commission through the AusPlay survey² shows that over the last two decades participation in sport and physical activity has increased by more than 20 per cent, particularly in non-sport-related physical activities.

AusPlay data indicated local participation data for the Hunter region and Lake Macquarie local government area is relatively consistent with state and national participation trends. The top activities in 2021-2022 were:



Physical health and fitness (83 per cent) remain the primary motivator for people aged over 15 years and for all abilities.

A greater percentage of people aged 15-19 years recorded **health and fitness as their motivation**, the most significant increase (14 per cent) of all age/ability groups from 62-84 per cent between 2016-2017 and 2021-2022.

Nearly double the percentage of the population was **motivated by mental health benefits** over the same period, increasing by 15 per cent from 16 per cent to 31 per cent. This trend occurred equally across all age/ability groups apart from people aged over 54 years, for whom the increase was 11 per cent.

Poor health/injury followed by a lack of time continue to be the primary barriers to participation for the general population (27 per cent and 24 per cent) and particularly for the over 55 age group at 43 per cent and 24 per cent respectively.



4. ACTIVE RECREATION IN LAKE MACQUARIE

4.1. ACTIVE RECREATION SETTINGS

Active recreation can take place in range of Council settings as summarised in the table below.

Table 1: Active Recreation settings

SETTING	DESCRIPTION
Major destination parks	Large, high-quality parks that offer a large variety of activity options, where you might spend a day-long visit, and that attract visitors to Lake Macquarie. Major destination parks provide a range of active recreation opportunities in conjunction with broader recreation facilities such as playgrounds.
District parks	A larger park that is 2-5km from your home that you might walk, ride or drive to, and provides several facilities for play, recreation and socialising.
Local parks	A small park within walking distance from home and designed to provide for local outdoor recreation play, socialising and connectivity.
Sports facilities	Sportsgrounds, developed primarily for organised sporting competition, provide a range of opportunities and facilities for active recreation including playing fields, netball and basketball courts and tennis hit walls. Walking and cycling circuits often around the perimeter sportsground.
Swim centres	Swim centres provide a range of active recreation participation opportunities including casual swimming, aquatic programs and school holiday programs.
Foreshores and linear public open space	<p>Foreshores are areas of land situated along the shoreline of a body of water, such as Lake Macquarie. Such spaces are appealing for active recreation due to their connection to natural places. This is highly valued by community.</p> <p>Linear open space areas, including land along to waterways, creeks and storm-water channels and disused transport corridors (such as old rail lines), can provide for popular active recreation activities such as walking, running and cycling.</p> <p>District and regional foreshores support higher levels of activation including organised exercise like Parkrun and fitness groups.</p>
Beaches	Provide a range of active recreation opportunities including water-based activities (swimming, surfing, snorkelling and kayaking) and sand-based (walking, running, beach games and ball activities).
Urban and civic spaces	Includes formal spaces in urban settings such as town squares, plazas and streetscapes. These spaces are often close to community, cultural or commercial centres and often include table tennis and pop-up activations featuring temporary infrastructure and programming.

4.2. ACTIVE RECREATION FACILITIES

Active recreation can be undertaken in a range of local settings without the need for specialised infrastructure (e.g. kicking a ball, yoga, walking or running in a park or sportsground).

Council also provides specific active recreation infrastructure within these spaces to support and encourage healthy lifestyles to cater to the diverse interests and abilities of the community.



4.3. ACTIVATION

While the role of local government in respect to active recreation is typically centred on providing open spaces and infrastructure, the promotion of active recreation and programming opportunities is an area that an increasing number of councils throughout the country are resourcing. Successful activation enhances community participation in active, healthy lifestyles and optimises the use of recreation facilities.

There is a diversity of programs and events that facilitate active recreation throughout the city. Council's role in facilitating active recreation opportunities is limited to:

Direct provider

The delivery of aquatic programs at its swim centres throughout the city.

Facilitator

Engaging third-party organisations to provide annual active recreation programs targeting seniors, young people and children and families in line with grant funding opportunities.

Enabler

Booking and licencing the use of Council's open spaces to third-party organisations to provide active recreation programs and events.

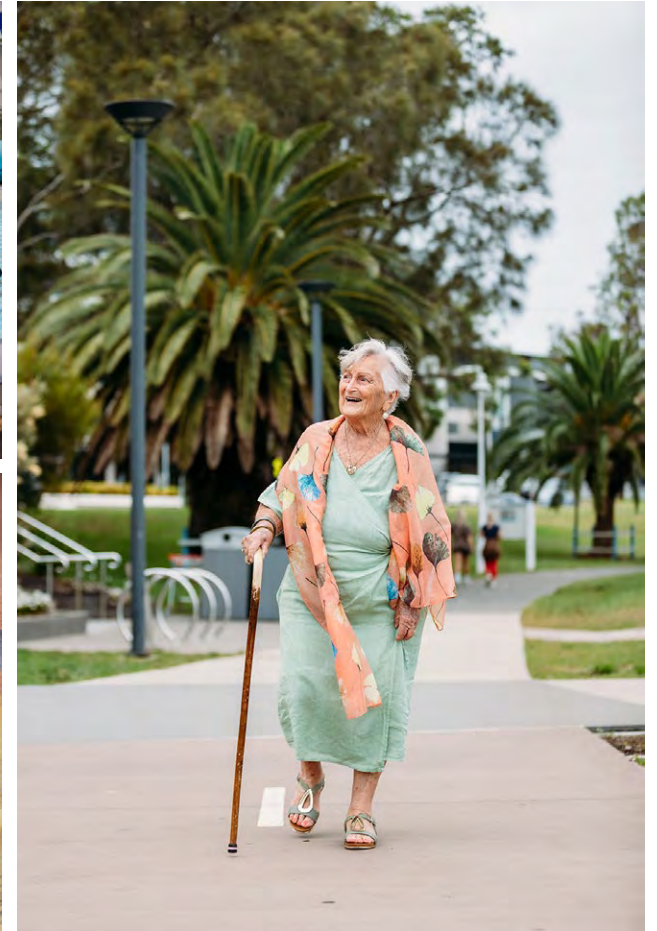


Figure 4: Lake Macquarie Parkrun Event
(Source: Lake Macquarie Parkrun)

5. ENGAGEMENT FINDINGS - WHAT HAVE WE HEARD?

5.1. HOW WE ENGAGED



Awareness raising through:

- Shape Lake Mac project page
- Social media campaign
- Signage across key sites with QR codes
- Creation of a promotional video
- Direct email to stakeholders
- Over 55s, Shape Lake Mac and Your City e-newsletters



Online community survey



Interactive online map



Attendance at community events



Target group workshops



Attendance at Youth Week events



Interviews with state government agencies and surrounding councils



Pop-up events such as Active Inclusion Sports Day, 80s Skaties and Mother's Day Fondalicious 80s-style aerobics





Current participation

- 65.7 per cent of survey respondents visit an open space or swim centre for active recreation either daily or two to three times a week.
- Walking, cycling, swimming, running and mountain biking are the most popular active recreation activities.
- Pathways, nature-based trails, beaches, the lake and swim centres are the spaces most used for active recreation.
- Connection to nature, feeling safe, being within walking distance from home and supporting infrastructure such as toilets and car parking are the most important aspects of the open spaces for active recreation.
- Main barriers to participation are a lack of time, lack of facilities and lack of supporting infrastructure.
- Key motivators for participation are fitness and socialising.

Community interest in programs, including swim centre programs, for different ages and abilities, demonstrations of outdoor fitness equipment, yoga in the park and 'come and try sessions'.



We would like...

- Enhancement and expansion of walking/cycling tracks.
- More programs including 'come and try' sessions.
- Connection with nature including lake-side shared pathways and bushland trails.
- Improved access to facilities including through lighting and extending operational periods of Council-operated swim centres.
- A diversity of facilities across the city, catering to people of all ages, abilities and backgrounds.
- Supporting infrastructure including accessible toilet facilities and accessible parking.
- Consideration of conflict between shared users (cyclists and walkers).

Opportunities for those with sensory needs is important including sensory-friendly activities and spaces.

Aqua fit programs provided through Council's 55s program is highly valued for their social and health benefits.



Activation of spaces through...

- Enhanced awareness of existing active recreation opportunities.
- Development of new programs and services that facilitate active recreation.
- Consideration of emerging active recreation trends and spaces that are multi-use and adaptable.
- Continued collaboration across various government agencies and third parties to deliver programs.
- A focus on identified groups where participation rates are low.

Cost is often a key factor for many participants in seeking to continue with mainstream programs.

Free grant funded program 'taster' sessions are successful; however, majority of programs do not continue due to lack of ongoing funding.

6. OUR VISION AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

6.1. VISION

The vision for the Lake Macquarie Active Recreation Strategy has been developed based on the outcomes of an extensive consultation and engagement process.

Lake Macquarie's diverse active recreation opportunities support our community to be active, healthy and connected.

6.2. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The following guiding principles have been developed to inform the future planning, design, activation and management of the active recreation network.



Access and inclusion
Active recreation opportunities are designed to be inclusive and welcoming fostering participation by all members of the community across all life stages, genders and abilities.



Connected
Active recreation facilitates opportunities for social interaction and connection including with our unique environment.

Diverse
A diverse mix of active recreation opportunities are provided, reflecting the diversity of our community and places across the city.



Sustainable management
The use of our existing open space is optimised for active recreation through programming and events and facility upgrades and adaption.



Intergenerational and multi-use
Active recreation and other compatible uses are colocated to foster intergenerational use and provide a variety of recreation offerings in the one location.



7. PLANNING FRAMEWORKS FOR ACTIVE RECREATION

7.1. ACTIVE RECREATION HIERARCHY






An Active Recreation Hierarchy has been developed to guide the delivery of a network of active recreation hubs that are accessible to all people across Lake Macquarie. The hierarchy has considered the Parks and Play Strategy, Lake Activation Strategy and Sports Strategy hierarchies to ensure open space sites are not overembellished and existing supporting amenities can be leveraged.

Local active recreation sites

The hierarchy prioritises the planning, investment and development of district and neighbourhood active recreation hubs. In some instances where there are gaps and an inability to provide an active recreation hub, a local active recreation site will be provided.

A local active recreation site will consist of one active recreation element and be co-located within a sportsground/park/ foreshore reserve, urban space or along a shared pathway. Typical elements that would be considered as a local active recreation site include outdoor fitness stations, table tennis table, half-court or hit wall.

Table 2: Active Recreation Hierarchy – District and neighbourhood hubs

	DISTRICT HUB	NEIGHBOURHOOD HUB
 CATCHMENT/ ACCESSIBILITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 15-minute travel time - About 5-7km from most residents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 10-minute travel time - About 3-5km from most residents
 FACILITY COMPONENTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Four to five active recreation facilities including a key attractor e.g skate park, pump track 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Two to three active recreation facilities or one key attractor.
 LOCATION AND SETTINGS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Major destination parks - District parks - Sportsgrounds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Major destination parks - District parks - Local parks (where space permits) - Sportsgrounds - Beaches and beach-side reserves
 PROVISION CONSIDERATIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Attracts residents from across the entire planning catchment - Type and location of existing active recreation infrastructure in proximity to site - Demographic profile of community - Capacity of site to accommodate new infrastructure - Existing or ability to connect to public and active transport network 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Attract residents from multiple suburbs within the planning catchment - Type and location of existing active recreation infrastructure in proximity to site - Demographic profile of community - Capacity of site to accommodate new infrastructure - Existing or ability to connect to public and active transport network
 SUPPORTING INFRASTRUCTURE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Shade and seating - Off-street parking - Drinking station - Access to toilets - Bike racks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Shade and seating - On-street parking - Drinking station - Access to toilets - Bike racks

What is an Active Recreation Hub?

The proposed strategic approach is based upon co-locating active recreation facilities. The number of facilities will differ according to the area the hub is seeking to service. A district hub will comprise four to five facilities while a neighbourhood hub will comprise of two to three.

A “key attractor” is a significant active recreation facility that people will travel to use (i.e. a skate park or pump track). A district hub would incorporate at least one key attractor as part of the suite of facilities while a neighbourhood hub could provide 2-3 facilities or simply one key attractor.

Thomas H Halton Park at Croudace Bay is an example of a district hub. It includes a skate park (key attractor), outdoor fitness equipment, half court, hit wall, circuit walk and is also complemented by the broader foreshore park and play space.

Bernie Goodwin Memorial Park, Morisset, is an example of a neighbourhood hub. It includes a skate park (key attractor), outdoor fitness equipment and is also complemented by the broader park, play space and sportsground.



Figure 5: Redhead Pump Track

Redhead Pump Track is an example of a neighbourhood hub, consisting of one key attractor.

The hierarchy framework does not prescribe the specific active recreation elements for inclusion in the hubs, and instead provides the flexibility to identify these in consultation with the community. Typical facilities of a hub include multi-courts, hit walls, outdoor fitness stations, parkour, climbing/ bouldering walls, table tennis tables, disc golf, shared pathways.

Active recreation hubs will predominantly be located in major destination parks, district parks and sportsgrounds. These settings will generally provide the spatial capacity to accommodate an active recreation hub as well as delivering efficiencies in supporting infrastructure such as parking and amenities. Hubs can be delivered in one location or alternatively as a precinct across a number of adjoining land parcels (e.g. proposed Charlestown District Hub will incorporate Charlestown Skate Park, Charlestown Lions Park (hit wall, multi-courts) and sportsground (circuit walk)).

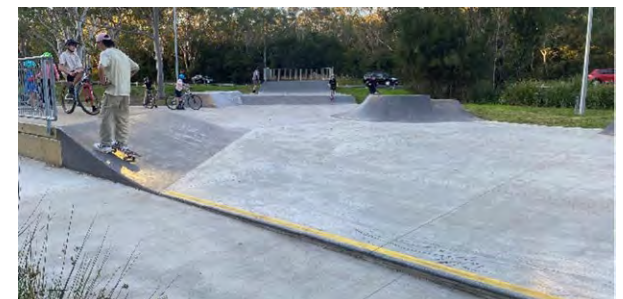


Figure 6: Thomas H Halton Park, District Hub

7.2. ACTIVATION

Council will continue to support the activation of open spaces and facilities via the following methods:



Improved coordination, ongoing monitoring and evaluation of existing active recreation programs and events across Council will provide greater efficiencies and direct future priorities including targeting groups where participation rates are low.

In the medium term, there is the potential to investigate capacity within existing resources for Council to improve community awareness of active recreation opportunities in Lake Macquarie. This includes the identification of potential pathways between Council's annual grant funded programs including 'come and try' sessions towards opportunities for ongoing participation.

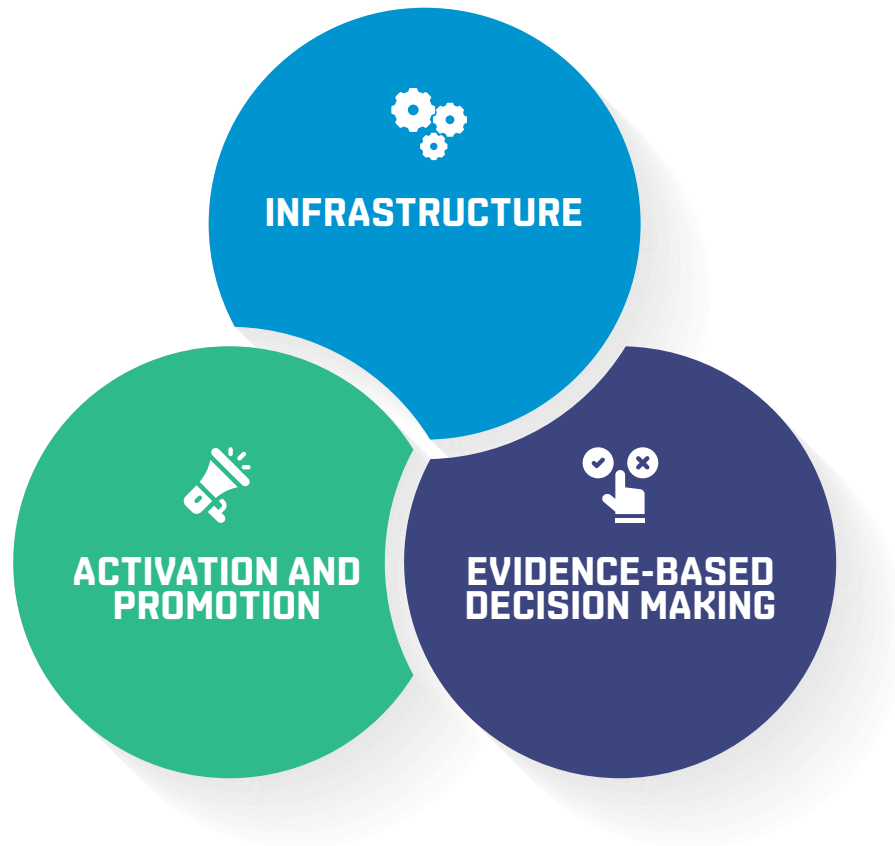
There is an opportunity for Council to be more actively involved in the activation of open spaces and facilities for active recreation, however, this will require additional resources.

Council is committed to investigating how it can contribute most effectively to this space, using an evidenced-based approach that builds upon and adds value to existing opportunities in the community.

8. OUR PLAN - FOCUS AREAS AND OBJECTIVES

8.1. FOCUS AREAS

Background research and analysis has identified three key focus areas for the strategy to achieve the vision.



8.2. OBJECTIVES

Seven objectives describe specific outcomes that the Active Recreation Strategy aims to achieve. Council will monitor a series of measures to track progress towards these objectives.

FOCUS AREA	OBJECTIVES
Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Create a network of multi-use active recreation hubs- Support walking and cycling for recreation- Enhance the use of existing infrastructure and spaces for active recreation- Active recreation facilities, spaces and programs are accessible for everyone
Activation and promotion	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Support physical activity through active recreation programs and events- Promote the opportunities and benefits of active recreation
Evidence-based decision making	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Provide evidenced-based programs and infrastructure investment

9. ACTION PLAN

This action plan sets out what Council proposes to do to facilitate diverse active recreation opportunities that support our community to be active, healthy and connected.

The following tables outline future actions that are assigned a priority rating. Actions can be progressed simultaneously across the active recreation network, subject to resourcing, and are not interdependent in their delivery.

The detailed implementation of the strategy will require additional work to address specific issues, including more detailed planning, engagement and assessment at the local level to determine the best response to identified issues. In some cases, actions will be dependent on collaboration and partnerships with others, access to external funding or resolution of local planning issues.

The implementation of this strategy will be considered within the context of Council's overall priorities and the competing demands of other areas and strategies within Council.



Lead Council department and partners

The recommendations outlined will be lead by LMCC with a 'lead' department identified. A number of actions will require the involvement of multiple departments in their implementation.



Priority rating

The following priority rating has been developed to assist with the implementation of actions. It is noted that the ability to implement actions is subject to funding and resource allocation.

- **High:** Critical to strategy implementation. Should be commenced within the first three years.
- **Medium:** Important in responding to a future need. Requires pre-requisite work to be undertaken. Should be commenced within three to eight years.
- **Low:** An identified future need that will improve active recreation provision. Should be commenced within eight to 12 years.
- **Ongoing:** Recurring actions that support implementation and continue throughout the life of the strategy.



Rationale

- Background research
- Participation data and trends
- Community and stakeholder engagement
- Leveraging existing Council master plans
- Reducing ongoing asset management resourcing
- Current and future population analysis
- Supply and distribution analysis

Infrastructure Action Plan

ACTION	DETAIL	PRIORITY	LEAD COUNCIL DEPARTMENT AND PARTNERS	
1. Create a network of multi-use active recreation hubs				
1.1	Plan for new district and neighbourhood active recreation hubs where there are identified provision gaps	Review gaps in active recreation hubs in each catchment and identify opportunities to address these. This could include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - development of new active recreation hubs - embellishment of existing sites to a hub. Review the functionality of existing active recreation sites. Where relevant, consider opportunities for relocation of hubs in order to meet community needs.	High	Recreation and Land Planning City Design
1.2	Plan for new local active recreation sites where a hub is not feasible	Review gaps in active recreation hubs in each catchment and identify opportunities to address these.	Medium	Recreation and Land Planning
1.3	Sustainably plan for the existing local active recreation sites	Review the provision of existing local active recreation sites with consideration to key planning considerations including surrounding supply, site suitability and asset condition to determine if sites should be: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - retained and activated - expanded to develop an identified gap in active recreation hub provision - relocated to adjoining active recreation hub - removed. 	Ongoing	Recreation and Land Planning
2. Support walking and cycling for recreation				
2.1	Plan for recreation walking and cycling opportunities across the city	Review the existing network of recreation pathways in parks and sportsgrounds. Prioritise identified opportunities. Include identified opportunities within future master plans and upgrades to open space network where appropriate.	Medium	Recreation and Land Planning Infrastructure Asset Strategy
2.2	Ensure pathways provide quality experiences and encourage activity by all	Plan and design pathways in accordance with the design principles to encourage walking, running and cycling for recreation. Address the potential conflict of use on shared pathways with consideration to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the compatibility of recreation and active transport outcomes on certain routes - future carrying capacity to provide for multiple uses in high use areas - education and signage. 	Ongoing	Recreation and Land Planning Infrastructure Asset Strategy
2.3	Encourage active transport connections to active recreation hubs and sites	In reviewing priorities under the Walking, Cycling and Better Streets Strategy, ensure suitable consideration is given to active recreation outcomes.	Ongoing	Recreation and Land Planning Infrastructure Asset Strategy
2.4	Develop a Tracks and Trail Strategy to improve recreation opportunities in natural areas	Improve opportunities to connect to parks through tracks in adjacent natural areas as an alternative to footpaths or driving and provide an additional activation.	High	Recreation and Land Planning Natural Assets

ACTION	DETAIL	PRIORITY	LEAD COUNCIL DEPARTMENT AND PARTNERS
3. Enhance the use of existing infrastructure and spaces for active recreation			
3.1	Maximise the use of existing sport and recreation infrastructure	Explore opportunities for greater public access to existing facilities for active recreation when not in use by organised sporting clubs (e.g. floodlighting on sportsgrounds, multi-courts, hit walls at tennis facilities).	Medium Recreation and Land Planning Community Partnerships
3.2	Extend times during which active recreation can be undertaken	Investigate the lighting of active recreation facilities at hubs and high use pathways to increase opportunities for physical activity.	Medium Recreation and Land Planning Infrastructure Asset Strategy
3.3	Diversify the use of existing hard courts	Plan and prioritise a program to adapt half of the existing netball training facilities in Lake Macquarie to accommodate netball/basketball. Plan for future netball training facilities to provide dual-use opportunities.	Medium Recreation and Land Planning Community Partnerships
3.4	Plan for new fitness stations to complement popular walking pathways	Investigate opportunities to include fitness equipment along existing or new high use shared paths. Evaluate to understand existing users and the demonstrated benefits of existing facilities to guide future provision.	Low Recreation and Land Planning
3.5	Encourage further activation of our beaches	Investigate opportunities to provide active recreation infrastructure at beaches to facilitate physical activity and diversity of use (e.g. beach volleyball/soccer nets).	Low Recreation and Land Planning Leisure Services
4. Active recreation facilities, spaces and programs are accessible for everyone			
4.1	Provide inclusive and accessible active recreation facilities, spaces and programs	Apply Universal Design Principles in the design of active recreation facilities. Investigate opportunities to support affordable active recreation programs through the fees and charges.	Ongoing Recreation and Land Planning Community Partnerships City Design
4.2	Improve access to beaches	Investigate opportunities to improve access onto the sand and to the water for people with mobility difficulties at our beaches.	Medium Recreation and Land Planning Leisure Services
4.3	Diversify community representation in the planning and design of active recreation hubs	Actively target under-represented groups including teenage girls and young women, over 55s and people with disability in the planning and design of active recreation facilities to ensure they meet the diverse needs of the community.	Ongoing Recreation and Land Planning Communications

Activation and Promotion Action Plan

ACTION	DETAIL	PRIORITY	LEAD COUNCIL DEPARTMENT AND PARTNERS
5. Support physical activity through active recreation programs and events			
5.1	Provide programs targeting specific population groups	High	Community Partnerships Arts, Culture and Tourism Communications
	Continue to partner with third-party providers to deliver active recreation programs and activities targeting specific population groups within current grant funding allocations. Implement a coordinated approach to the planning, promotion, evaluation and prioritisation of active recreation programs and events. Develop a program evaluation tool to evaluate success of programs and events and provide for continual improvement and prioritisation.		
5.2	Promote active recreation opportunities	Medium	Community Partnerships Recreation and Land Planning Communications
	Investigate, within existing resources, the opportunity to improve access to information and awareness of active recreation opportunities in Lake Macquarie including: - an annual calendar of active recreation programs and events in partnership with community groups, private providers and local clubs - linking Council's grant funded programs including 'come and try' sessions to opportunities for ongoing programs/participation - supporting volunteer organisations delivering active recreation activities through funding, promotion and facilitating access to spaces.		
5.3	Review resource allocations to deliver broad active recreation programs	Low	Community Partnerships Recreation and Land Planning Communications
	Develop a business case to investigate a specific resource to further opportunities to support active recreation programs including: - proactively seeking third parties to run active recreation programs for the broader community including identified groups where participation rates are low (i.e. EOI under a licence agreement, seed funding) - partner with active recreation stakeholders to promote and support ongoing participation through their programs - consider allocation of budget to fund activation programs and events.		
5.4	Develop a fees and charges schedule to promote active recreation programs	Medium	Community Partnerships Recreation and Land Planning Communications
	Investigate a fees and charges and licencing strategy to facilitate the delivery of active recreation programs including the provision of active recreation on Council-owned or managed community land.		
6. Promote the opportunities and benefits of active recreation			
6.1	Develop a series of resources to encourage the community to be physically active	Low	Recreation and Land Planning Community Partnerships Communications Arts, Culture and Tourism
	Investigate the use of technology to encourage physical activity through raised awareness and heightened user experience such as: - fitness and exercise apps that engage users in fitness challenges or other activities - online video demonstrations/programs associated with fitness equipment - interactive guided tours.		

Evidence-based Decision Making Action Plan

ACTION	DETAIL	PRIORITY	LEAD COUNCIL DEPARTMENT AND PARTNERS
7. Evidence-based programs and infrastructure investment			
7.1	Provide for evidenced-based decision making for infrastructure investment	Low	Recreation and Land Planning Communications
7.2	Improve understanding of participation in Council-facilitated active recreation programs	Low	Recreation and Land Planning Community Partnerships Communications


10. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Progress towards the objectives of the Active Recreation Strategy will be monitored and reported to the community, alongside reporting on the delivery of Council's other key environmental, social and economic strategies.

The main techniques to monitor progress delivered by the Active Recreation Strategy include:


- questions in regular community surveys, covering preferred active recreation activities and community satisfaction with the facilities and services provided (generally online but may be supplemented with face-to-face intercept surveys)
- targeted monitoring technology such as cameras, automatic counting devices and QR codes that can monitor the number of people using facilities (e.g. outdoor fitness equipment)
- evaluation tool to assess the effectiveness of Council-facilitated active recreation programs in meeting the strategy objectives.

How we will track progress



Create a network of multi-use active recreation hubs

Monitoring will be linked to the delivery of capital works to progressively establish active recreation hubs, which will be implemented under Action 1.1 of this strategy.



Support walking and cycling for recreation

Monitoring will be linked to the delivery of capital works to progressively deliver enhanced opportunities for walking and cycling for recreation, which will be implemented under Action 2.1 of this strategy.

Monitoring of impacts of Action 2.1 and Action 2.2 towards achieving objectives will be implemented under Action 7.1 of this strategy.



Enhance the use of existing infrastructure and spaces for active recreation

Monitoring of impacts of works to progressively enhance the use of existing infrastructure and spaces to broaden its use including trial low-cost interventions.

Measures include an increased use of existing facilities and spaces and diversity of active recreation offerings.

How we will track progress



Active recreation facilities, spaces and programs are accessible for everyone

Measures include increased use of facilities and spaces for active recreation. Indicators will include:

- attendance of active recreation programs including number of participants, demographic information and satisfaction levels
- use of active recreation facilities
- comparison of data collection actions within this strategy over time to identify trends in participation levels
- monitoring of impacts of programs towards achieving objectives will be implemented under Action 7.2 of this strategy.



Support physical activity through active recreation programs and events

Monitoring will be linked to the Ageing Population Strategy, Child and Family Strategy, Culturally Diverse Lake Mac Plan, Disability Inclusion Action Plan and Youth Strategy.

Monitoring of impacts of programs towards achieving objectives will be implemented under Action 7.2 of this strategy.



Promote the opportunities and benefits of active recreation

Monitoring of effectiveness and reach of marketing and promotion initiatives will be implemented under Action 7.1 and 7.2 of this strategy.

Monitoring of the uptake of technological interventions in encouraging physical activity including ongoing retention.



Evidence-based programs and infrastructure investment

Monitoring of impacts of programs towards achieving objectives will be implemented under Action 7.2 of this strategy.

11. OUR CATCHMENT PLANS



ACTIVE RECREATION IN BELMONT

POPULATION

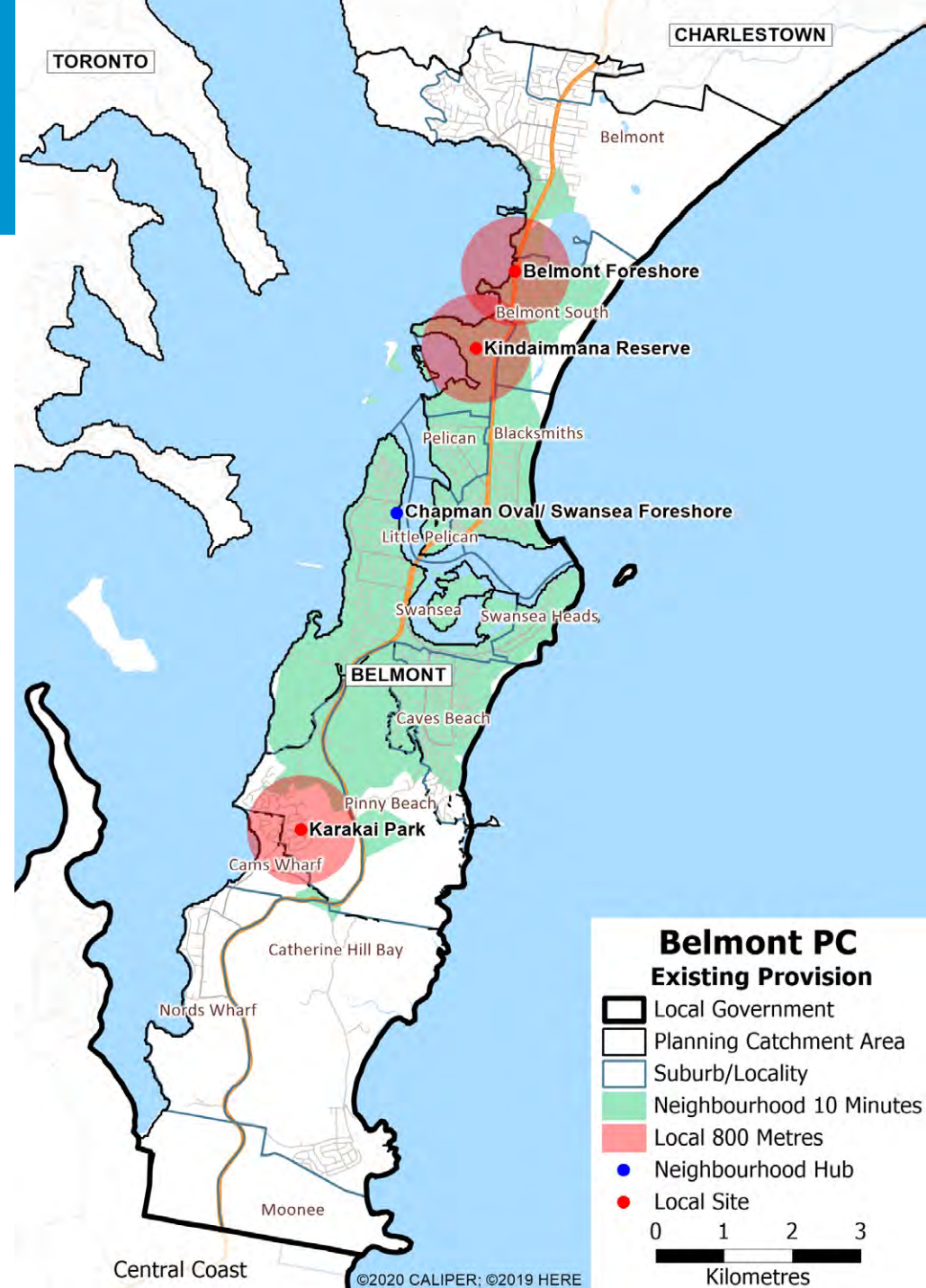


EXISTING ACTIVE RECREATION PROVISION



SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

- A gap is identified in the southern area of the planning area. The northern area of the catchment falls within the provision area of the district hub at Thomas H Halton Park, Croudace Bay.
- The neighbourhood hub at Chapman Oval, Swansea, comprises of a key attractor plus associated walking track and fitness equipment along the foreshore.
- There is one key attractor (skate park). While centrally located at Swansea, it is the only key attractor in the planning area.
- Popular areas for walking, jogging and cycling include Swansea Foreshore, Caves Beach Foreshore, Fernleigh Track, Green Point and the foreshore and Kindaimanna Reserve at Marks Point.
- Catherine Hill Bay Beach and Caves Beach provide popular locations for walking, running and water-based active recreation activities.



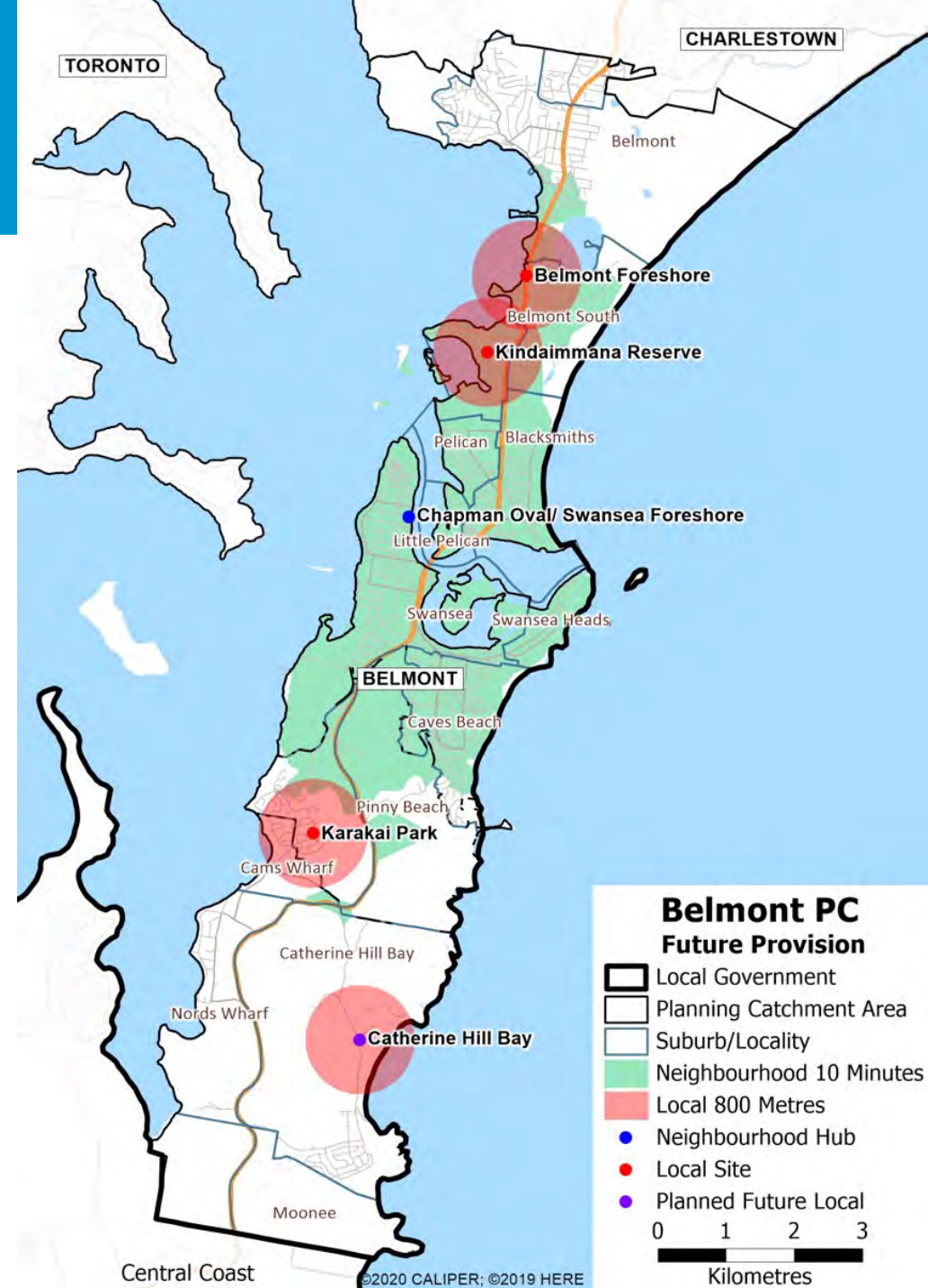
OUR PLAN FOR BELMONT

PLANNED ACTIVE RECREATION HUB

New local site at Roy MacDougall Park, Catherine Hill Bay.

OPPORTUNITIES TO ENHANCE PROVISION, CAPACITY AND ACCESS

- Upgrade the existing neighbourhood hub at Chapman Oval and Swansea Foreshore to a district hub.
- Investigate development of neighbourhood hub at Caves Beach or Blacksmiths Beach.
- Investigate development of a neighbourhood hub in the northern section of the catchment.
- Investigate development of formal pathways in beach reserves including the Caves Beach precinct.
- Extend existing pathways, including western Swansea Foreshore, and investigate pathway opportunities at Swansea Heads.



ACTIVE RECREATION IN CHARLESTOWN

POPULATION

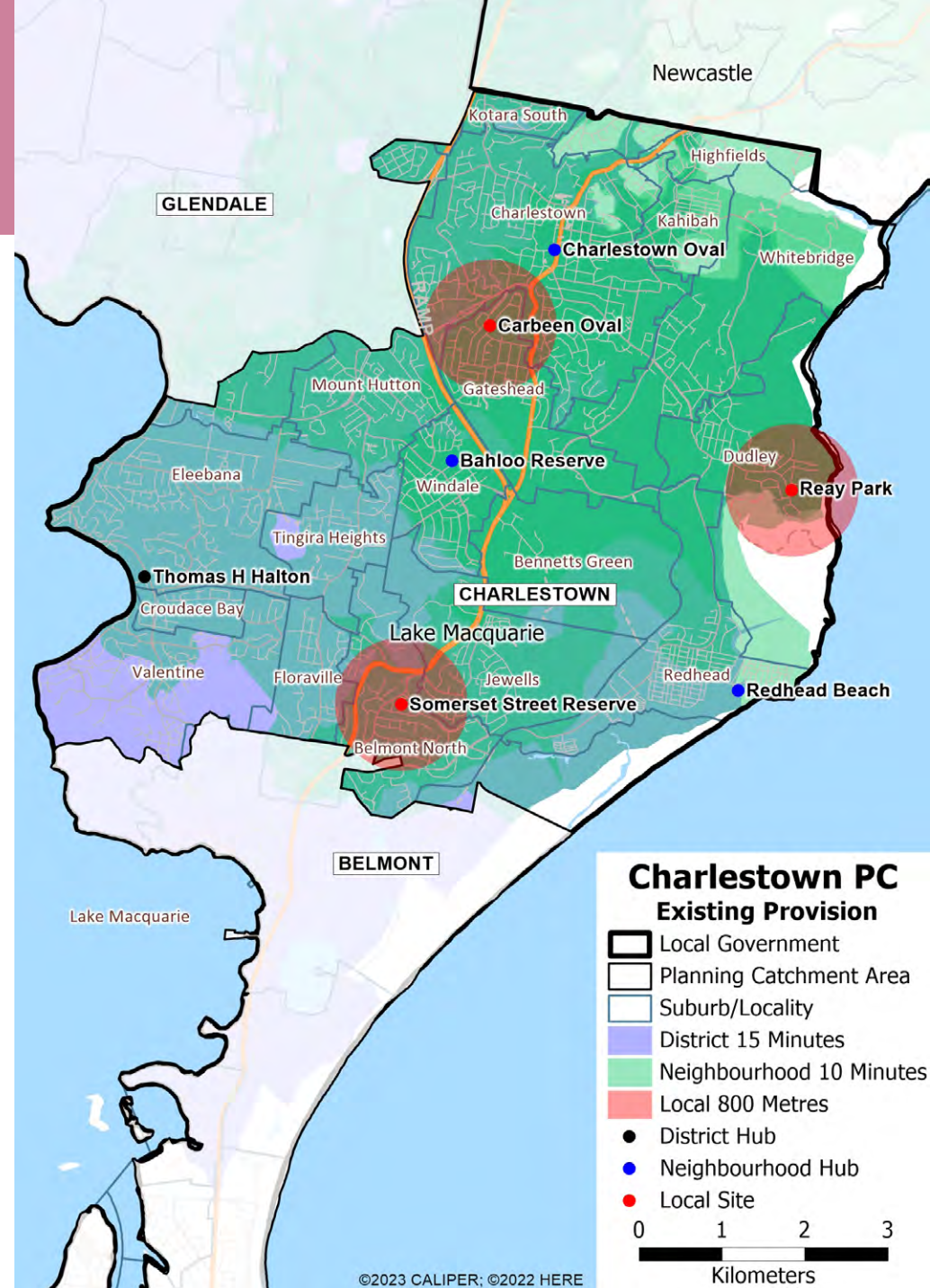


EXISTING ACTIVE RECREATION PROVISION



SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

- Second largest population area with about double the number of residents compared to Belmont, Toronto and Morisset.
- There are no significant gaps in provision identified.
- Four key attractors (skate parks/pump track) dispersed across the catchment.
- Two neighbourhood hubs (Charlestown Skate Park and Redhead Pump Track) comprise single key attractors.
- Popular areas for walking/cycling include the Fernleigh Track, Green Point Reserve, Croudace Bay, Redhead Beach including Ken and Audrey Boardwalk and circuit walks around sporting ovals, notably Raey Park, Charlestown Oval and Liles Oval at Redhead.



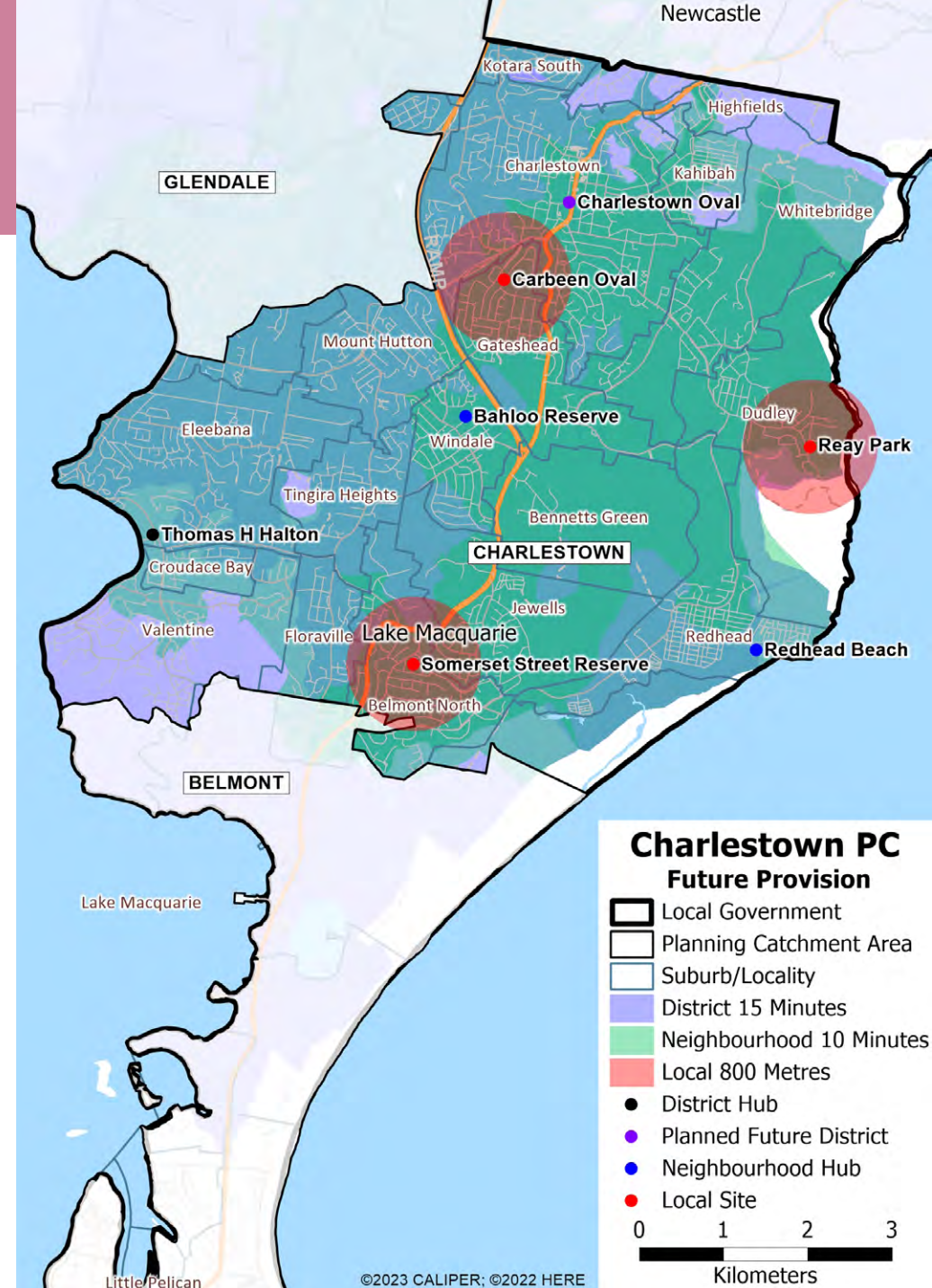
OUR PLAN FOR CHARLESTOWN

PLANNED ACTIVE RECREATION HUB

New district hub at the redeveloped Charlestown Lions Park in conjunction with the existing Charlestown Skate Park and Charlestown Oval.

OPPORTUNITIES TO ENHANCE PROVISION, CAPACITY AND ACCESS

- Investigate development of circuit pathway at Tulootaba Reserve, Gateshead, including connections with Harold Knight, Fred Wright and Mick Middleton Ovals.
- Consider fitness stations to complement popular walking routes.



ACTIVE RECREATION IN GLENDALE

POPULATION



EXISTING ACTIVE RECREATION PROVISION



1
district hub



2
neighbourhood hubs

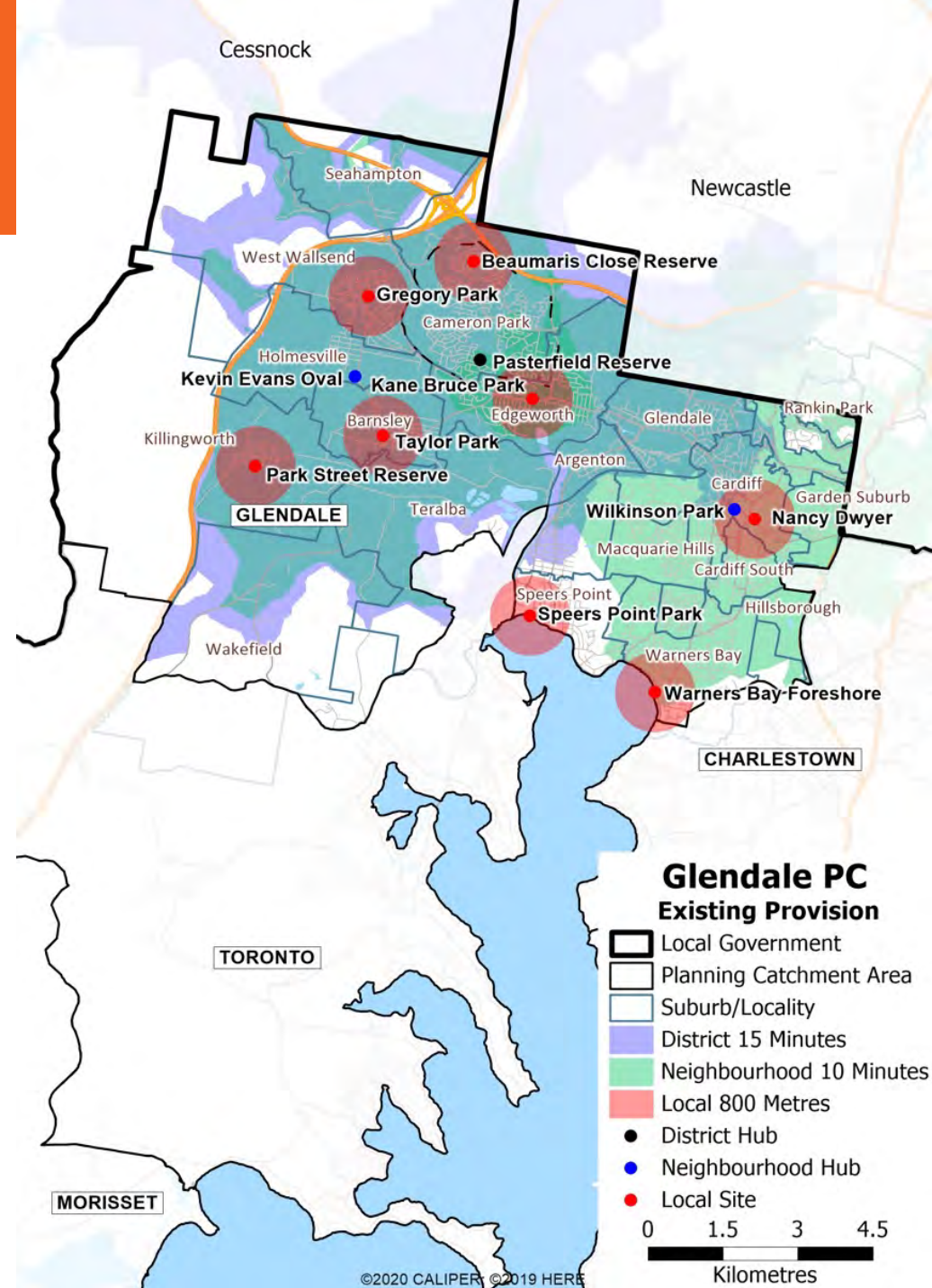


8
local sites

3 skate parks	2 hit walls	1 pump track
1 outdoor table tennis facility	4 half/mini courts	
3 full size multi-use courts	3 fitness equipment sites	

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

- Largest population area with about double the number of residents compared to Belmont, Toronto and Morisset.
- There is a diversity of facility types including four key attractors (skate park/pump track) dispersed across the catchment.
- There are gaps in the functionality and quality of neighbourhood hubs.
- Popular areas for walking/cycling include Speers Point to Warners Bay, Glendale to Wallsend Cycleway and the circuit around Pasterfield Sports Complex.



OUR PLAN FOR GLENDALE

PLANNED ACTIVE RECREATION HUB

There are no planned additional active recreation hubs for the Glendale planning catchment.

OPPORTUNITIES TO ENHANCE PROVISION, CAPACITY AND ACCESS

- Improve the neighbourhood hub to service Barnsley, Holmesville and West Wallsend. This could include a relocated hub to Taylor Park, Barnsley, or the provision of additional infrastructure at Kevin Evans Oval at Holmesville.
- Improve the neighbourhood hub at Wilkinson Park, Cardiff. This could include a relocated hub or the provision of additional infrastructure on site.
- Change surface type of BMX facility at Cameron Park to increase capacity and diversity of use.
- Investigate the installation of pathway lighting from Speers Point to Warners Bay.
- Enhance pathway circuit options around Pasterfield Sports Complex, Cameron Park.



ACTIVE RECREATION IN TORONTO

POPULATION

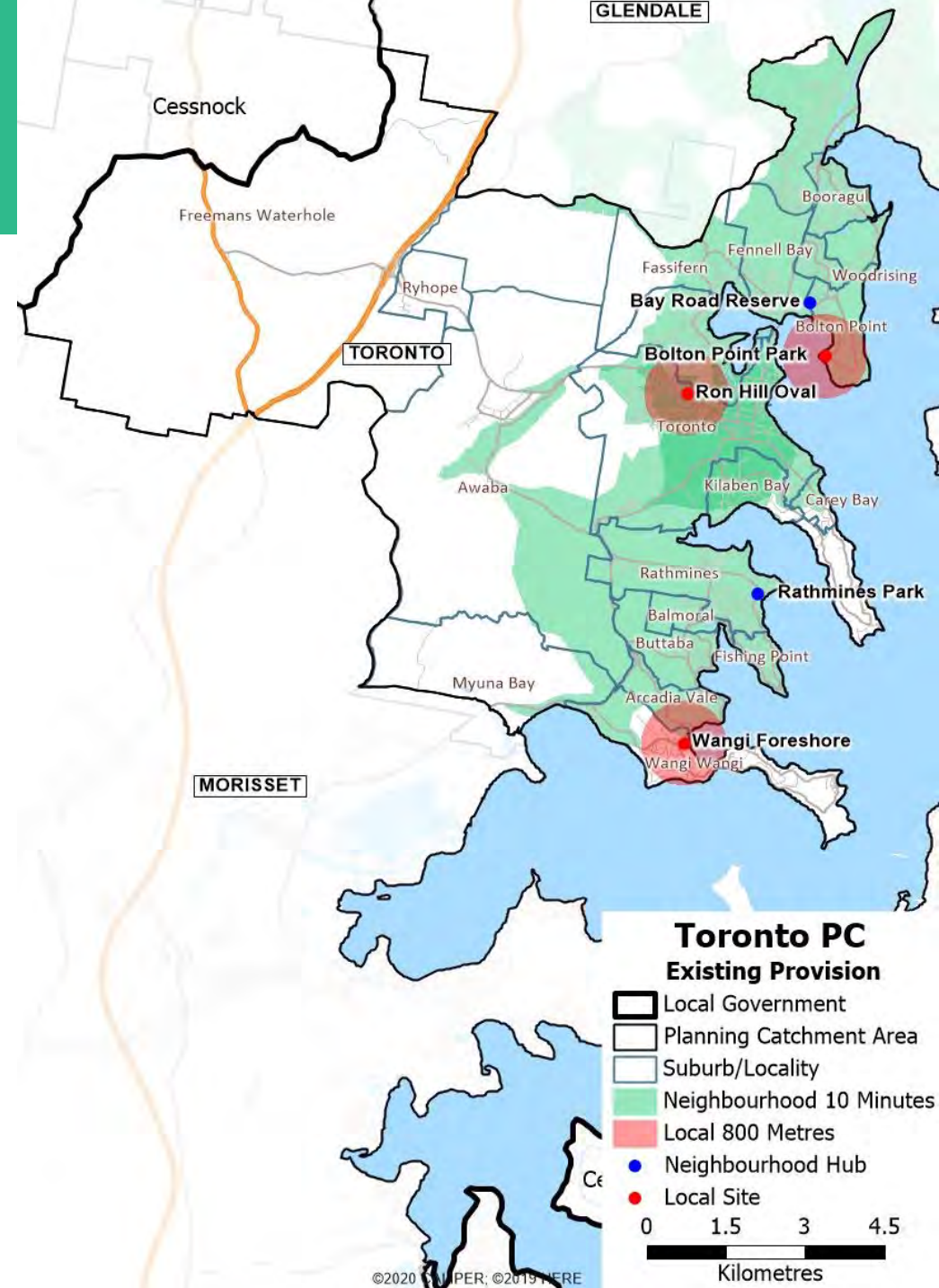


EXISTING ACTIVE RECREATION PROVISION



SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

- Minor gaps in neighbourhood hub provision around Awaba, Wangi Wangi and Coal Point.
- There are two key attractors (skate parks) located to the north and south of the catchment.
- One of the neighbourhood hubs comprises a single key attractor (Bolton Point Skate Park at Bay Road Reserve). This is an older facility and poorly located within the reserve.
- Popular walking/cycling areas include along the foreshore, notably Five Island Road to Edwards Park, Rathmines Park, Wangi Foreshore and the Greenway Fassifern Station to Toronto Foreshore.



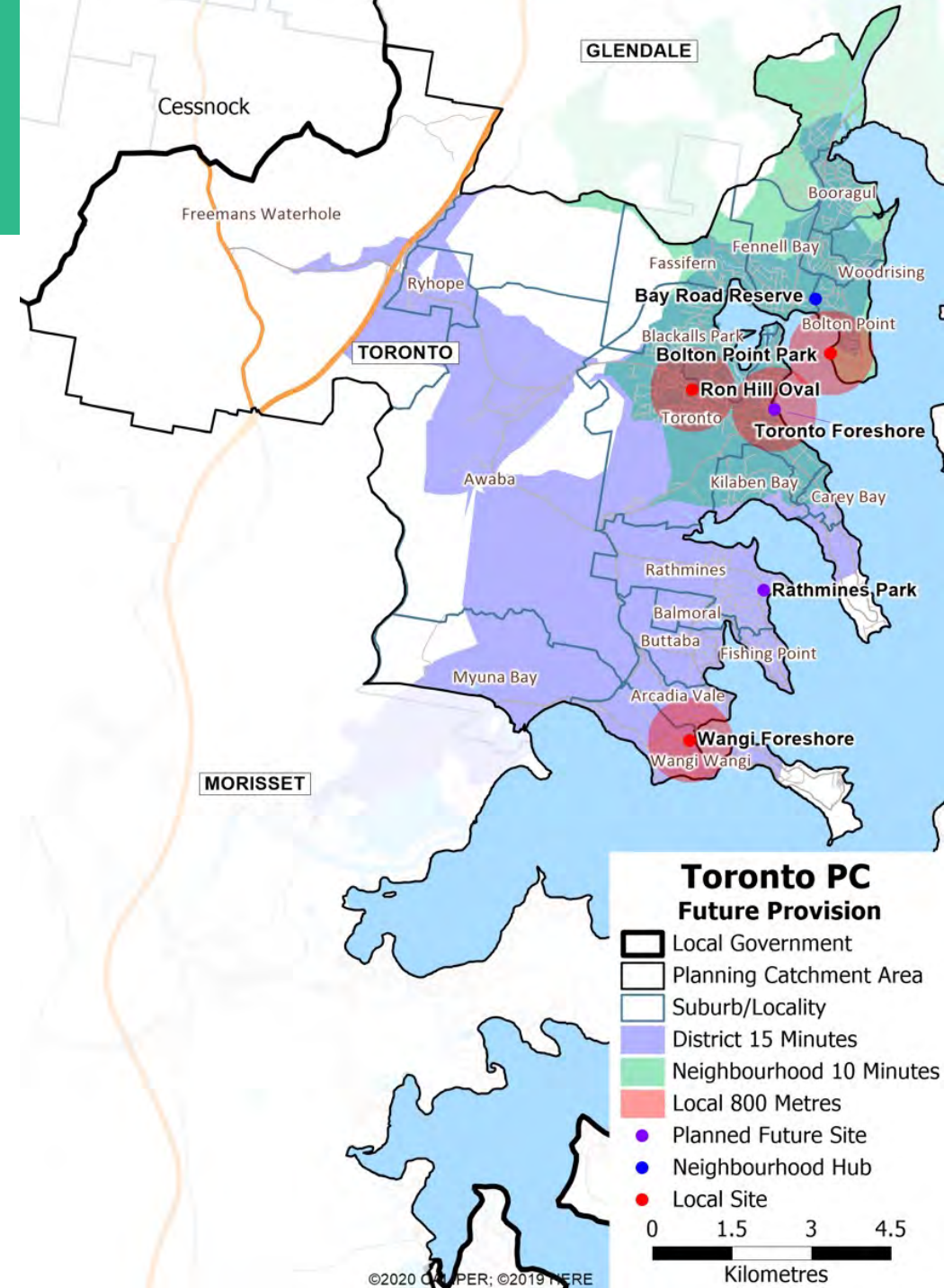
OUR PLAN FOR TORONTO

PLANNED ACTIVE RECREATION HUB

New District Site at Rathmines Park with the delivery of planned youth hub including Skate Park, Pump Track and half court.

OPPORTUNITIES TO ENHANCE PROVISION, CAPACITY AND ACCESS

- Provide a new neighbourhood hub in the Toronto area. Locations for investigation include Ron Hill Oval and Hampton Street Reserve, Carey Bay.
- Improve the neighbourhood hub to service the Bolton Point, Fassifern and Fennel Bay area. This could include a relocated hub or the provision of additional infrastructure at existing site.
- Extend existing foreshore pathways including the formalisation of pathways between Edwards Park, Booragul, and Marmong Point, Bolton Point to Fennell Bay and along Wangi Foreshore.

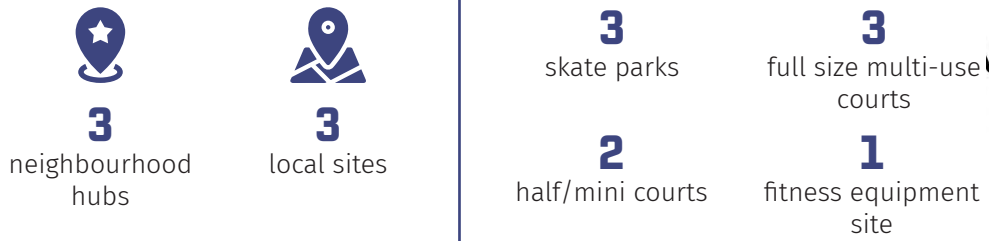


ACTIVE RECREATION IN MORISSET

POPULATION



EXISTING ACTIVE RECREATION PROVISION

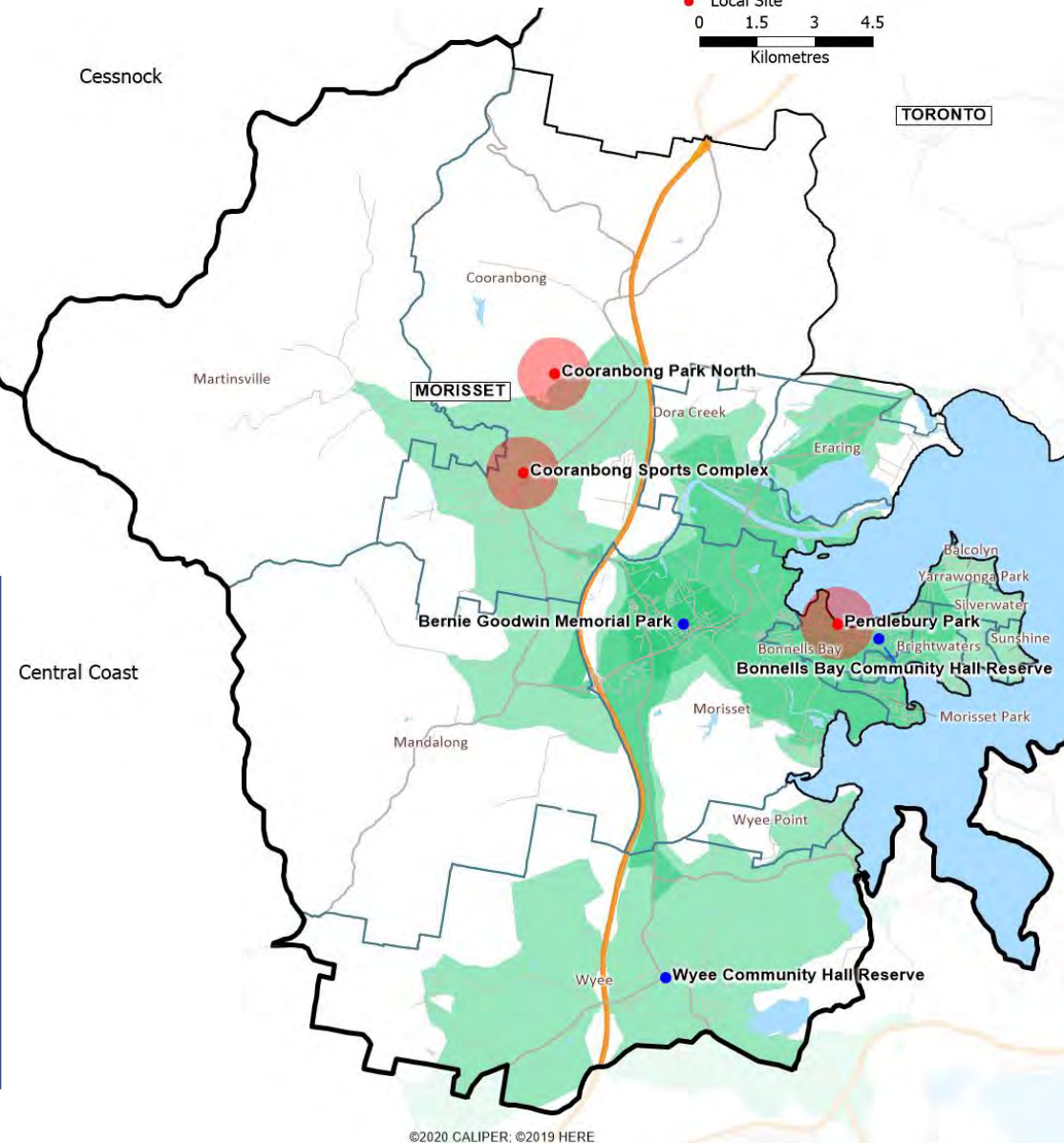
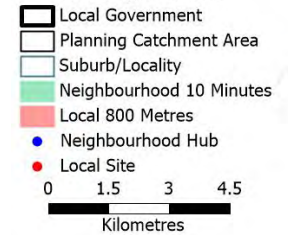


SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

- Significant population growth is forecast.
- There are gaps in the provision of neighbourhood hubs in Cooranbong area.
- Three key attractors (skate parks) located in the catchment. The skate parks at Wyee and Bonnells Bay are older facilities.
- Bonnells Bay Reserve has poor passive surveillance but has the capacity for further development to expand into the future if required.
- Popular walking/cycling areas include foreshore areas between Balcolyn and Sunshine, shared pathway linking Cooranbong to Morisset and perimeter-based activities around Morisset Showground, Gibson Field and Auston Oval.

Morisset PC

Existing Provision



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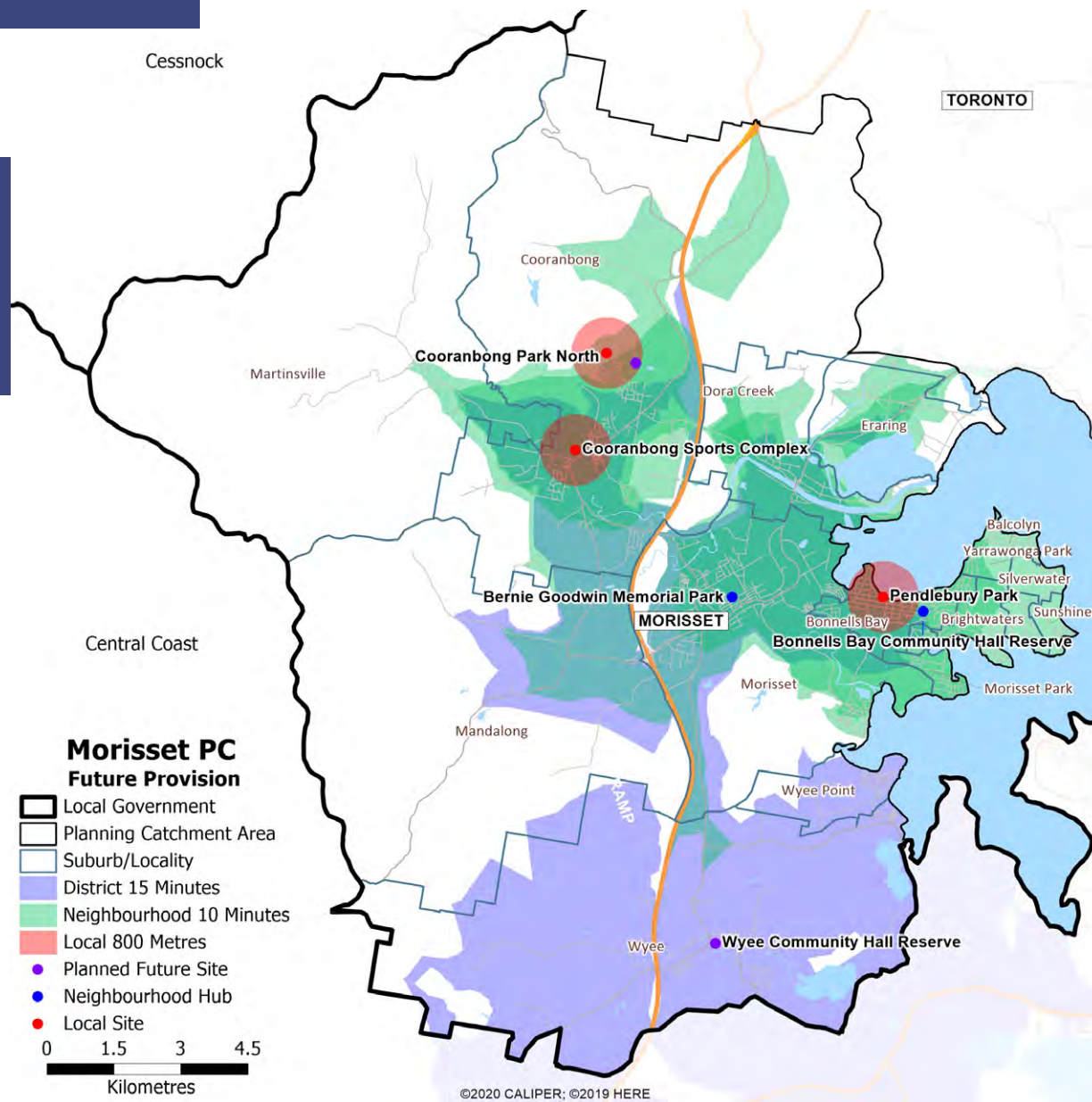
OUR PLAN FOR MORISSET

PLANNED ACTIVE RECREATION HUB

New district hub at Wye Community Hall Reserve with provision of upgraded skate park and other active recreation elements.
 New neighbourhood hub at Cooranbong, with provision of a skate park.

OPPORTUNITIES TO ENHANCE PROVISION, CAPACITY AND ACCESS

- Work with Office of Sport to integrate active recreation offerings/ elements within new Morisset sports facility.
- Investigate opportunities to improve functionality at Bonnells Bay Park neighbourhood hub to support broader community use.
- Develop a walking circuit at Morisset Showground and links to surrounding open space network including Auston Oval, Morisset Swim Centre, Bernie Goodwin Oval and Gibson Oval.



12. IMPLEMENTATION AND EVALUATION

Implementation of the Lake Macquarie Active Recreation Strategy will be undertaken on a priority basis over a 15-year timeframe within available resource allocations.

The progress of strategy implementation should be reviewed annually and reported through Council's performance reporting as part of the Integrated Planning And Reporting Framework. The annual review is to capture:



The percentage of actions commenced and completed.



What actions have been delivered and identify the strategic link to the Council plan and relevant Council's key performance indicator.



What the impact of the action was on the community, summarising key findings from evaluation frameworks.

In implementing the Lake Macquarie Active Recreation Strategy, financial resourcing will be a critical factor. This includes but is not limited to, general revenue, developer contributions and grants.

This strategy recognises the opportunity for divestment and rationalisation of active recreation infrastructure as a plausible avenue for cost saving and revenue generation to support the implementation of this strategy. This process requires careful consideration of range of factors, in particular the equitable access to public open space.

Ongoing partnerships and collaboration with a range of internal and external stakeholders will be essential to ensuring implementation of the strategy.





13. WARRANTIES AND DISCLAIMERS

The information contained in this report is provided in good faith. While Otium Planning Group has applied their experience to the task, they have relied upon information supplied to them by other persons and organisations.

We have not conducted an audit of the information provided by others but have accepted it in good faith. Some of the information may have been provided 'commercial in confidence', and these venues or sources of information are not specifically identified. Readers should be aware that the preparation of this report may have necessitated projections of the future that are inherently uncertain and that our opinion is based on the underlying representations, assumptions and projections detailed in this report.

Otium's advice does not extend to, or imply professional expertise in the disciplines of economics, quantity surveying, engineering or architecture. External advice in one or more of these disciplines may have been sought, where necessary to address the requirements of the project objectives. There will be differences between projected and actual results because events and circumstances frequently do not occur as expected, and those differences may be material. We do not express an opinion as to whether actual results will approximate projected results, nor can we confirm, underwrite, or guarantee the projections' achievability as it is impossible to substantiate assumptions based on future events.

This report does not constitute advice, investment advice, or opinion and must not be relied on for funding or investment decisions. Independent advice should be obtained in relation to investment decisions.

Accordingly, neither Otium Planning Group, nor any member or employee of Otium Planning Group, undertakes responsibility arising in any way whatsoever to any persons other than the client in respect of this report, for any errors or omissions herein, arising through negligence or otherwise however caused.

APPENDIX 1: ACTIVE RECREATION FACILITY TYPES - WHAT ARE THE DIFFERENT TYPES OF FACILITIES AND WHO DO THEY MOST TARGET?

There are a range of facilities that can provide for different active recreation activities including:


- **Ball activities** – Hit wall, half court, multi-use courts, table tennis
- **Wheeled activities** – Skate, scooter, BMX, cycling, learn to ride parks and trails
- **Strength and challenge** – Fitness stations, climbing/bouldering and obstacle/parkour
- **Free form** – Pathways, beaches and open spaces that cater for activities such as walking, jogging and swimming.

The table below provides a summary of key active recreation facilities, the life stage/age they most cater for, the hierarchy catchment area it typically services as well as the suitable settings. Target ages have been developed based on the following to align with AusPlay participation data:



- | | |
|------------------|-------------|
| - Young children | 5-11 years |
| - Tweens | 12-14 years |
| - Youth | 15-17 years |
| - Young adults | 18-34 years |
| - Adults | 35-54 years |
| - Older adults | 55+ years |

The catchment for a specific facility is different to that of a hub. In this respect, a neighbourhood hub could comprise one district level facility (e.g. skate park) or multiple neighbourhood and local level facilities.

BALL ACTIVITIES





Full sized courts including multi-use courts

-  **Target ages**
 - Young children
 - Tweens
 - Youth
 - Young adults
-  **Facility type hierarchy**
 - Neighbourhood
-  **Most suitable settings**
 - Major destination parks
 - District parks
 - Sportsgrounds



Half/mini courts

-  **Target ages**
 - Young children
 - Tweens
 - Youth
 - Young adults
-  **Facility type hierarchy**
 - Neighbourhood
-  **Most suitable settings**
 - Major destination parks
 - District parks
 - Local parks
 - Sportsgrounds

BALL/DISC ACTIVITIES



Hit walls



Target ages

- Youth
- Young adults
- Adults



Facility type hierarchy

- Neighbourhood



Most suitable settings

- Major destination parks
- District parks
- Sportsgrounds



Disc golf



Target ages

- Youth
- Young adults
- Adults



Facility type hierarchy

- District



Most suitable settings

- Major destination parks
- District parks



Outdoor table tennis



Target ages

- Tweens
- Youth
- Young adults
- Adults
- Older adults



Facility type tierarchy

- Local



Most Suitable Settings

- Major destination parks
- District parks
- Local parks
- Foreshores
- Urban and civic spaces

STRENGTH AND CHALLENGE



Bouldering/climbing wall



Target ages

- Youth
- Young adults



Facility type hierarchy

- Neighbourhood



Most suitable settings

- Major destination parks
- District parks
- Sportsgrounds
- Urban and civic spaces



Obstacle courses and parkour



Target ages

- Youth
- Young adults



Facility type hierarchy

- Neighbourhood



Most suitable settings

- Major destination parks
- District parks
- Sportsgrounds



Outdoor Fitness Stations



Target ages

- Young adults
- Adults
- Older adults



Facility type hierarchy

- Neighbourhood



Most suitable settings

- Major destination parks
- District parks
- Sportsgrounds
- Foreshores and linear public open space
- Urban and civic spaces

WHEELED ACTIVITIES



Skate park



Target ages

- Young children
- Tweens
- Youth
- Young adults



Facility type hierarchy

- District



Most suitable settings

- Major destination parks
- District parks
- Sportsgrounds
- Urban and civic spaces



BMX/Pump track



Target ages

- Young children
- Tweens
- Youth
- Young adults



Facility type hierarchy

- District



Most suitable settings

- Major destination parks
- District parks
- Sportsgrounds

SHARED PATHWAYS AND CYCLE TRACKS FOR WALKING, RUNNING AND RIDING



Shared pathways and cycling tracks



Target ages

- Young children
- Tweens
- Youth
- Young adults
- Adults
- Older adults



Facility type hierarchy

- Local
- Neighbourhood
- District



Most suitable settings

- Major destination parks
- District parks
- Sportsgrounds
- Foreshores and linear public open space

