Shellharbour
CITY COUNCIL

COMMUNITY FACILITIES NEEDS STUDY

2021-2031

Activate • Connect • Evolve

About the authors

The Institute for Public Policy and Governance (IPPG) is an interdisciplinary research and consulting organisation at the University of Technology Sydney (UTS). We are a leading group of researchers and practitioners in the areas of public administration and policy, research, stakeholder engagement and leadership. We utilise a unique combination of skills and perspectives to offer long term sustainable solutions to governments, organisations, businesses and communities.

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Acknowledgement of Shellharbour City's Traditional Owners

Shellharbour City Council, together with the UTS researchers, acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the Dharawal Nation and recognise their continued connection to the land. We pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging and acknowledge the ongoing contribution they make to the life of this city and region. We extend our recognition to their descendants who continue to live on Country.

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Glossary

ID	Informed Decisions
ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
APR	Albion Park Rail
CSP	Community Strategic Plan
IPPG	Institute for Public Policy and Governance, UTS
IRSED	Index of Relative Socio-Economic Disadvantage
LGA	Local Government Area
LGBTQI	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Intersex
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
NSW	New South Wales
RMS	Roads and Maritime Services
SEIFA	Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas
SEPP	State Environmental Planning Policies
SSI	Settlement Services International
TAFE	Technical and Further Education
UTS	University of Technology Sydney

Executive Summary

Shellharbour City Council (Council) engaged the Institute for Public Policy and Governance (IPPG) at the University of Technology Sydney (UTS) to develop a Community Facilities Needs Study (Study) and a Community Facilities Strategy (Strategy) and related Action Plan to guide Council decision making on community facilities and infrastructure across the Shellharbour Local Government Area (LGA) for 2021-2031. The Community Facilities Strategy and Action Plan will form part of Council's Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework. It will also build on the key priorities set out in the Shellharbour Community Strategic Plan 2018-2028, and support the current Shellharbour vision.

This Study contains the research evidence and analysis that was used to shape the Strategy and Action Plan. The Study includes a review of 54 key Council community facilities, as well as the findings from a desktop policy and research review, including in relation to industry-accepted benchmarks regarding community facilities and infrastructure. The Study also includes the findings from a large community and stakeholder engagement initiative, including a representative telephone survey, online surveys, focus groups and interviews.

Overall, the Study found that Shellharbour City Council is providing its residents with adequate access to community facilities, offering a good variety of facilities across the LGA. However, a synthesis of the different information sources, including usage patterns, condition of the facilities, design features, location compared to population projections, and resident needs and expectations, points to areas for reform and action.

The Study concludes by recommending that Council adopt a set of guiding principles that will help it plan, manage and activate its community facilities into the future, with a focus on:

1. Being responsive to community and place

2. Providing accessible, inclusive and adaptive facilities

3. Nurturing cohesion and creating connections

4. Giving consideration to affordability and equity

5. Continually being informed by the evidence, best practice and community feedback

6. Managing its assets in a sustainable and future orientated way.

Complementing these principles, the Study recommends it shapes its new 10-year Community Facilities Strategy on five key themes and directions. These are detailed in the complementary Shellharbour City Council Community Facility Strategy 2021-31 called **Activate- Connect- Evolve** and Action Plan.

1   Introduction

This section provides the background and context for the development of the new Shellharbour City Council Community Facilities Needs Study, and ten-year Community Facilities Strategy and Action Plan, being prepared with the assistance of the Institute for Public Policy and Governance (IPPG) at the University of Technology Sydney (UTS).

Community facilities are buildings and places available to the public for casual or organised recreational, educational, artistic, social or cultural activities. They are essential in promoting physical activity, wellbeing, sports participation, community interaction and social cohesion, particularly for groups who may not have many opportunities for socialising in their day to day lives, such as those who are retired, unemployed, underserved or caring for someone.

Table 1 contains a description of the types of community facilities that are covered in this Study, together with the number of facilities that Council has requested be considered. Section 2 contains more details on the specific facilities that were reviewed.

The provision of community facilities helps to enable a sense of place, through encouraging social interaction, sense of community, social capital, community engagement, neighbourhood participation, satisfaction, quality of life and the general happiness of residents. In turn, this is associated with increased physical activity and improved mental health.

The **Community Facilities Needs Study** provides an overview of the changing demographic profile of the Shellharbour LGA, maps current community facilities, describes current policy settings and standards, and usage patterns.

> **What are Community Facilities?**
>
> Community facilities provide a key resource for local communities by offering buildings and places for casual or organised recreational, educational, artistic, social or cultural activities.
>
> The term community facilities includes a wide range of spaces such as libraries, neighbourhood centres, and community halls. Although shifting to a more mixed approach to delivery, these facilities have typically been provided and maintained by local councils.

In addition, the Needs Study outlines the feedback gathered through an extensive community and stakeholder engagement process undertaken from December 2020 to March 2021.

The Study was prepared first and used to inform the development of the Strategy and Action Plan.

The **Community Facilities Strategy and related Action Plan** utilises the evidence base in the Needs Study and outlines a set of priorities, strategies and actions to guide how Shellharbour City Council provides, manages, and activates its community facilities over the next 10 years, for the benefit of the Shellharbour community.

It considers existing Council-owned and/or managed community facilities and also provides a framework and rationale for future investments in different types of facilities.

The Community Facilities Strategy and Action Plan will form part of Council's Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework. It will also build on the key priorities set out in the Shellharbour Community Strategic Plan 2018-2028, and support the current Shellharbour vision.

> 'In 2030, Shellharbour is a dynamic city that values and celebrates the unique diversity of our people, places and environment. We are a connected community working together to create a safe, sustainable future that provides opportunities for all to achieve their potential.'

In addition to actively consulting with the community and key stakeholders, the Needs Study, Strategy and Action Plan will be informed by contemporary trends in community facility delivery.

Table 1   Description of community facilities

Facility Type	Description
Hall, Function and Events Space	Facilities that provide spaces for events, functions, meetings and conferences. They can be staffed or unstaffed and are usually available for community hire and use.
	Across the LGA they are the most common type of facility and comprises large and small venues, some with multiple spaces, others being stand-alone or single room facilities.
	Council currently owns 19 community facilities classified as a halls, function and event spaces.
Club House and Amenity Room	Facilities that support local sport, recreation and relaxation activities.
	Most club houses and amenity rooms in the LGA adjoin sports, recreation and open space areas and support associated activities.
	Council currently owns nine community facilities classified as club houses and amenity rooms.
Community and Neighbourhood Centre	Staffed facilities that provide a range of neighbourhood level community services, events and social activities, as well as educational and recreational activities. These are generally targeted to the specific needs of different groups living in the local community.
	These centres mostly comprise a mix of meeting rooms, halls and other activity spaces; shared kitchens; administrative areas; plus access to fenced outdoor areas.
	Council currently owns eight different community and neighbourhood centres, with three additional centres in planning.

Facility Type	Description
Baby Parent and Child Centre	Facilities catering to the health, wellbeing and education of babies, toddlers and preschoolers. Baby Health Centres is where the local health service provider offers advice, baby checks, and health and peer support activities to parents and their babies.

Child care centres provide early childhood education services to children aged from 0 to six years of age.

Council currently owns five facilities classified as baby, parent and child centres. |
| Senior Citizens Centre | A specific type of community centre where seniors can gather to participate in different forms of social, physical, emotional, and educational activities.

They are often used for organised group activities, offering healthy ageing and support programs, and space for providing or coordinating outreach services including home care and respite services.

Council currently owns three facilities classified as senior citizen centres, with one recently re-purposed as a general hall and function centre. |
| Surf Life Saving Club House | Facilities designed to primarily support on the beach water safety services and public amenity blocks for beach goers.

These facilities not only provide storage for essential life saving equipment, and staff and volunteer amenities, but can also offer a range of training, education, recreation opportunities for other members of the community.

Council currently owns two surf life saving houses. |
| Arts and Cultural Centre | Facilities that cater to creative, performing arts and other cultural activities.

These can include art galleries, exhibition spaces for local and visiting artists, artist studios, performance and rehearsal venues etc. They may also include facilities and spaces that support making and creating activities and classes.

Council currently owns two arts and cultural centres. |
| Youth Centre | Facilities that provide spaces for programs and services specifically for young people, usually ranging in age from 12 to 25 years.

Youth centres and youth spaces generally offer safe, informal and supervised activities for young people, often covering creative, recreational, educational and cultural activities, and potentially access to counseling and support services.

Council currently owns one youth centre with an additional youth space available at the Albion Park Community Centre. |

Facility Type	Description
Other Community Facility	Facilities listed under this category are those that fall outside the above categories. They include miscellaneous buildings usually not associated with a dedicated activity. Most are available for hire or community use. Some have heritage listings. Council currently owns five 'other' community facilities.

There are a total of 54 different Council community facilities that are the prime focus of this Needs Study. Their names and locations are listed at **Table 2**.

2   About community facilities

Key points:

- Council currently provides a wide and varied range of community facilities across the LGA, 54 of which are included in this Study.

  These facilities include 19 halls, function and event spaces; 9 club houses and amenity rooms; 8 community and neighbourhood centres; 5 baby, parent and child centres; 3 senior citizens centres; 2 surf life saving clubs; 2 arts and cultural centres; 1 youth centre; and 5 miscellaneous other community facilities, including heritage buildings.

- Shellharbour City Council plays a variety of roles in the development, delivery, maintenance, running and activation of its community facility spaces and programs.

- There is a rich intersection of roles played by Council and other players in the use and operations of community infrastructure. These shared responsibilities underscore the need to consider partnerships and collaborations to improve community facility operations.

Community facilities provide a key resource for local communities by offering buildings and places for casual or organised recreational, educational, artistic, social or cultural activities.

The term community facilities generally include a wide range of built spaces such as libraries, neighbourhood centres, and community halls. Although typically provided and maintained by local councils, recent times have seen a shift towards more mixed approaches to delivering and managing community facilities. Some of these changes were triggered by an increase in privately owned and operated facilities such as shopping centres and pubs and clubs that provide options for community gatherings and events.

Shellharbour City Council currently provides a wide and varied range of community facilities across the LGA. This project aims to consider this network as a whole, with a special emphasis on community and neighbourhood centres, halls, club houses, child and family centres, senior citizens centres, youth centres, surf life saving clubs and arts and cultural centres.

2.1   Shellharbour City Council's community facilities

Council requested that 54 community facilities be considered in this Study. **Table 2** lists the names, locations and types of community facilities that are in scope for this Study. It should be noted, however, that Shellharbour City Council also operates several other community facilities, such as libraries and museums, which were out of scope for this Study. This is because they have been considered in other recent Council review and planning processes such as the *Libraries and Museum Strategy.* Those facilities out of scope include:

- Libraries and museums
- Commercial facilities used by the community
- Emergency services facilities
- Operational facilities (i.e. offices, depots, plant rooms and airport buildings)
- The Shellharbour Theatre
- Shellharbour Civic Centre
- Sports stadiums or sports amenities
- Open space facilities such as parks, sports grounds and picnic areas.

While these will not be considered directly in the research, they will inform the high-level review of the 'facility network', to ensure the Community Facilities Strategy and Action Plan complements existing Council plans and commitments, including:

- Shellharbour Open Space and Recreation Strategy
- Asset Management Plan
- Shellharbour Theatre Feasibility Study
- Illawarra Regional Airport Strategic and Business Plan
- Libraries and Museum Strategy.

Table 2   In-scope Shellharbour City Council facilities by precinct and type

Name	Facility Type
Albion Park	
Pavilions at Albion Park Showground (APS): • Agricultural Pavilion • Arthur McLeay Pavilion • Colin Cook Cattle Pavilion • Lindsay Johnson Pavilion • Poultry Pavilion • Showground Kiosk (South)	Hall, Function and Events Space
Scout Hall (Tongarra Scouts) (APS)	Hall, Function and Events Space
Rural Youth Hall (APS)	Hall, Function and Events Space
HACC Centre (APS)	Hall, Function and Events Space
Centenary Hall (APS)	Hall, Function and Events Space

Name	Facility Type
Baby Health Centre	Baby, Parent and Child Centre
Albion Park Community Centre	Community and Neighbourhood Centre
Girl Guides Hall	Hall, Function and Events Space
Former Tongarra Museum	Hall, Function and Events Space
Terry Reserve Clubroom and Hall (Field 1)	Club House and Amenity Room
Albion Park Rail	
Albion Park Rail Community Centre	Community and Neighbourhood Centre
German Air Rifle Club	Hall, Function and Events Space
SMARTS (Mud Brick) House	Arts and Cultural Centre
Yovelton House	Other Community Facility
Alunga Child Care Centre	Baby, Parent and Child Centre
Koninderie Child Care Centre	Baby, Parent and Child Centre
McDonald Park Pigeon Club	Club House and Amenity Room
Light Rail Museum Society Building	Other Community Facility
Blackbutt	
Wallaroo Childcare Centre	Baby, Parent and Child Centre
Blackbutt Youth Centre	Youth Centre
Croom	
Swansea Farm House (Croom Sports Complex)	Other Community Facility
Caretakers Cottage (Croom Sports Complex)	Other Community Facility
Eagles Function Centre (Croom Sports Complex)	Hall, Function and Events Space
Hockey Club House (Croom Sports Complex)	Club House and Amenity Room
Flinders	
Flinders Child and Family Centre	Baby, Parent and Child Centre
Lake Illawarra	
Howard Fowles Oval Club Room	Club House and Amenity Room
Mount Warrigal	
Joan Pearce Hostel	Senior Citizen Centre
Boonerah Point Scout Hall	Hall, Function and Events Space

Name	Facility Type
Oak Flats	
Former Oak Flats Fire Station	Other Community Facility
Senior Citizens Centre	Senior Citizen Centre
Oak Flats Neighbourhood Centre	Community and Neighbourhood Centre
Deakin Reserve Sailing Club	Club House and Amenity Room
Swimming Centre Club House	Club House and Amenity Room
Geoff Shaw Oval Club Room	Club House and Amenity Room
Keith Bond Oval Club Room	Club House and Amenity Room
Shell Cove	
Shell Cove Community Centre	Community and Neighbourhood Centre
Shellharbour	
Girl Guides Hall (former)	Hall, Function and Events Space
Heritage Council Chambers	Hall, Function and Events Space
Imaginarium	Arts and Cultural Centre
Sea Spray Function Centre	Hall, Function and Events Space
Surf Lifesaving Club House	Surf Lifesaving Club House
Ron Costello Oval Club Room	Club House and Amenity Room
Warilla	
Lowe Park Scout Hall	Hall, Function and Events Space
One-Stop Shop	Community and Neighbourhood Centre
Warilla Senior Citizens Centre (former)*	Senior Citizen Centre
Warilla Community Centre	Community and Neighbourhood Centre
Oakleigh Park Neighbourhood Centre	Community and Neighbourhood Centre
Surf Life Saving Club House	Surf Lifesaving Club House

* *In addition, the Ron Costello Oval East Viewing Stand has recently been added to Council's community facilities portfolio.*

** *Since conducting the research, the Warilla Senior Citizens Centre has changed to operating as a Hall, Function and Event Space.*

Figure 1 is a map showing the location of all the above community facilities.

Figure 1   Map of Shellharbour City Council community facilities by category

Community Facilities by Category

	Category
	Arts & cultural centres
	Baby, parent & child centres
	Club houses & amenity rooms
	Community & Neighbourhood Centres
	Proposed Community Centre
	Proposed Community Facility
	Halls, Function & Event Spaces
	Other community facilities
	Senior Citizen Centres
	Surf Life Saving club house
	Youth centres
	Community Hub
	Libraries & Performance Spaces
	Non-Council Facilities

KEY / DESCRIPTION

KEY	DESCRIPTION
1	Albion Park Girl Guides Hall
2	Albion Park Community Centre
3	Former Tongarra Museum
4	Albion Park Showground - HACC Centre
5	Albion Park Showground - Rural Youth Hall
6	Albion Park Showground - Scout Hall (Tongarra Scouts)
7	Albion Park Showground - Centenary Hall
8	Pavilions at Albion Park Showgrounds
9	Albion Park Baby Health Centre
10	Terry Reserve Clubroom and Hall (Field 1)
11	Croom Sports Complex Centenary Oval - Eagles Function Centre
12	Croom Sports Complex - Hockey Clubhouse
13	Croom Sports Complex - Swansea Farm House
14	Light Rail Museum Society Building
15	Albion Park Rail German Air Rifle Club
16	Croom Sports Complex - Caretakers Cottage
17	McDonald Park Pigeon Club
18	Alunga Child Care Centre Albion Park Rail
19	Konindere Childcare Centre Albion Park Rail
20	Albion Park Rail Community Centre
21	SMARTS (Mud Brick) Studio
22	Yovelton House
23	Keith Bond Oval Club Room
24	Geoff Shaw Oval Club Room
25	Oak Flats Swimming Centre Club House
26	Deakin Reserve Sailing Club
27	Old Oak Flats Fire Station (Former)
28	Oak Flats Senior Citizens Centre
29	Oak Flats Neighbourhood Centre
30	Blackbutt Youth Centre
31	Wallaroo Childcare Centre Blackbutt
32	Boonerah Point Scout Hall
33	Joan Pearce Hostel
34	Howard Fowles Oval Club Room
35	Warilla One Stop Shop
36	Warilla Community Centre
37	Warilla Senior Citizens Centre (Former)*
38	Warilla Surf Life Saving Club House
39	Lowe Park Scout Hall
40	Oakleigh Park Neighbourhood Centre
41	Flinders Child and Family Centre
42	Shell Cove Community Centre
43	Sea Spray Function Centre
44	Shellharbour Surf Clubhouse
45	Shellharbour Girl Guides Hall (Former)
46	Shellharbour Heritage Council Chambers
47	Imaginarium
48	Ron Costello Oval Club Room
49	Albion Park Library
50	Oaks Flat Library
51	Shellharbour Civic Centre
52	Warilla Library
53	Shellharbour Library
54	Harbourside Theatre

Proposed Centres and Facilities

KEY	DESCRIPTION
A	Calderwood Community Centre (Proposed)
B	Shell Cove Community Centre (Proposed)
C	Tullimbar Community Facility (Proposed)

Non-Council Facilities

KEY	DESCRIPTION
D	Sprout Hub (Calderwood)
E	Albion Park Bowling Club
F	Albion Park Village Shopping Centre
G	Stockland Shellharbour
H	Southern Youth and Family Services
I	Warilla Grove
J	Warilla Bowls and Recreation Club
K	The Shellharbour Club
L	Waterfront Town Centre
M	The Tinkerage

CATEGORY

	Arts & cultural centres
	Baby, parent & child centres
	Club houses & amenity rooms
	Community & Neighbourhood Centres
	Proposed Community Centres & Facilities
	Non-Council Facilities
	Halls, Function & Event Spaces
	Other community facilities
	Senior Citizen Centres
	Surf Life Saving club house
	Youth centres
	Community Hub
	Libraries & Performance Spaces

2.2 Council's role in community facility provision

The delivery of a wide and comprehensive network of community and social infrastructure relies on active involvement and collaboration between a range of stakeholders, including Council and other government agencies, private and not-for-profit providers, and the community. Collectively, they provide 'hard' community facilities such as neighbourhood centres, club houses, halls and event spaces, and also 'soft' infrastructure including services, programs and activities that actively support the needs and interests of the community. By working together, the community benefits from access to a wide variety of facilities and services to support their health and wellbeing.

Shellharbour City Council plays a variety of roles in the development, delivery, maintenance, running and activation of its community facility spaces and programs. Its efforts are supported and complemented by a variety of other 'players' including service providers, community groups and not-for-profit organisations, private clubs and other facility hirers, and, of course, by community members who use and enjoy the facilities.

Given the multi-faceted nature of this form of infrastructure, it is useful to frame the discussion as a continuum, recognising the rich intersection of roles played by Council and other players in the use and operations of community infrastructure.

Importantly, these shared responsibilities underscore the need to consider partnerships and collaborations to improve community facility operations. **Table 3** outlines the different roles that Shellharbour City Council and other local players play in the delivery of community facilities and infrastructure.

2.2.1 Council funding of community facilities

Council has identified streams of income for funding the development of community facilities, including development contributions, external grant funding and Council financing.

2.2.1.1 Development contributions

The Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 sets the statutory framework under which Council can obtain contributions from new developments to be put towards funding the cost of additional infrastructure required[1].

Shellharbour City Council's Local Infrastructure Contributions Plan 2019 (9th Review) identifies the infrastructure that Council will levy contributions for development to provide a range of community infrastructure to meet future population needs. This plan provides the rationale, and the monetary contribution rates, for development in different parts of the LGA.

Council may also enter into a planning agreement (commonly known as a Voluntary Planning Agreement) with a developer. This is a voluntary agreement between Council

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[1] Under Section 7.11 (formerly Section 94) of the Act, Council can levy a variety of developments that will, or are likely to, require the provision of or increase the demand for public infrastructure and services. The infrastructure to be funded by developers' contributions will vary depending on where the development is located. Section 7.11 funds can only be used for the specific purpose identified in Council's adopted Contributions Plan.

and a developer to deliver public benefits and provide infrastructure required from their development.

2.2.1.2 External grant funding

A second mechanism Council uses to fund its community facilities is through applying for grant funding made available by State and Commonwealth Governments. These provide opportunities to undertake work outside of typical planned works programs.

Grant funding is generally only available on a competitive basis, is periodic and usually non-recurrent.

2.2.1.3 Council finances

A final funding option is to leverage additional funds by using Council reserves to construct new or upgrade facilities. This requires a strong and stable financial reserve in order to forward plan new facilities. Council finances also fund the operations and maintenance of the facilities.

2.2.2 Council role in overseeing community facilities

Shellharbour City Council, like other local governments across Australia, plays a variety of roles in community facilities, including planning facilities, providing the hard and soft infrastructure to operate facilities, and/or maintaining and managing the asset. Many of these roles are also performed by others as summarised in **Table 3** below.

Historically, local government have been the primary, and sometimes only, provider of community facilities able to be accessed by the public. However, over recent times there has been a shift towards more mixed approaches to delivering and managing facilities. This has included an increase in privately owned and operated community facilities, such as in large retail and shopping centres, or in pubs and clubs that provide options for community gatherings and events. The roles played by these 'other parties' are also described in **Table 3** below.

Table 3   Council and non-Council roles in the community facilities infrastructure

Role	Council	Service Providers	Other Parties
Planning	Coordinates the development of long-term strategies and plans for community facilities, services and events. Roles include decisions on whether the facility should operate as a Council facility or service, or alternatively leased or licensed to an external provider.	Actively participate in the planning for social infrastructure including through advocacy and community consultation processes.	Actively participate in the planning for social infrastructure including through advocacy and community consultation process. In the case of developers, this may include undertaking their own planning and delivery of community facilities.
Providing built or hard infrastructure	Manages a range of 'hard infrastructure', including the 54 community facility buildings in the LGA, which are in the scope of this Need Study *(see* Table 1*)*. Responsible for providing buildings that meet required standards. Coordinates leasing and licensing, regular and casual venue hire of facilities to community groups, service providers and other hirers.	Increasingly some larger service providers, such as major charities, are securing grants or taking out loans to construct or upgrade buildings for use in community service provision. Responsible for providing buildings that meet required standards.	Private owners and/ or private providers like pubs, clubs and shopping centres are increasingly offering community spaces such as events, meeting and function rooms. Responsible for delivering spaces to relevant and required standards.

Role	Council	Service Providers	Other Parties
Providing services or soft infrastructure	Helps 'activate' community facilities. Coordinates and/or delivers some services, programs activities or events in or associated with community facilities. Partners with service providers or other organisations to deliver some programs, activities and events. Coordinates leasing, licensing, regular and casual venue hire of facilities to community groups, service providers and other hirers. Shares and promotes information about community facilities, programs and available activities.	Through leasing or licensing or hire arrangements, delivers services, programs and events at a community facility on an ongoing, regular or ad hoc basis. Delivers wide variety of community services including baby health, aged and child care, community and neighbourhood centre programs, plus clubs and societies).	Provides access to facilities for service delivery, programs and events to take place on a low or no-fee basis. 'Activates' and promotes private spaces for broader community use. Coordinates hiring of the facility.
Maintenance and management	Responsible for maintenance and management of all Council-owned community facilities. In many instances also responsible for cleaning.	Where leased, licensed or hired, responsible for adhering to rules and requirements associated with using a Council facility.	Responsible for maintenance and management of all private facilities consistent with parties' terms and conditions.

2.3   Snapshot of Shellharbour LGA

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

2.3.1   Major infrastructure

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

There are three NSW Intercity trains stops in the LGA – at Albion Park Rail, Oak Flats and Shellharbour Junction – part of the network on the South Coastline, plus a bus network which connects the suburbs within the LGA and also to the neighbouring Wollongong and Kiama LGAs to the north and south.

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

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

2.3.2   Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage

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

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

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

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

Today, 3.8% of the people in the Shellharbour LGA identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, significantly higher than the NSW average of 2.9%. See Section 5 for more detailed demographic information.

2.3.3   Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage

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

- Albion Park Showground including both ovals, for being "unique within Shellharbour and a major event place in the Illawarra"

- Beverley Whitfield Pool, for its "high historic, social and aesthetic significance"

- Blackbutt Reserve, as "the largest natural woodland reserve in the Illawarra, and the last remaining viable remnant of coastal plain forest in the Illawarra region"

- Illawarra Escarpment Landscape Conservation Area, for its values that "encompass scenic, ecological, historic and indigenous cultural, social (including tourist and recreational), visual, and natural history"

- Shellharbour Foreshore Conservation Area, which includes a number of heritage items as well as Little Park, rotunda and trees, the breakwater/boat haven, the Beachside Tourist Caravan Park, Beverley Whitfield Pool, Cowrie Island and its fish processing area. The Conservation Area also includes a shared use path, picnic/barbeque facilities and play equipment.

3   Needs Study methodology

Key points:

- UTS: IPPG used a mixed methods approach to conduct the Needs Study that included desktop review, stakeholder consultation and facility mapping.

- Over 600 participants were involved in the consultation process through interviews, discussion groups, phone surveys, workshops and think tanks.

3.1   Overview

UTS:IPPG adopted a mixed research methodology to inform a robust, evidence-based Community Facilities Needs Study, Strategy and Action Plan.

The research aimed to address five core themes:

| What is the current community facilities context in Shellharbour? | What are the stakeholder aspirations for community facilities, now and into the future? | What opportunities or challenges exist that could enable or constrain future planning? | What innovations, initiatives or partnerships could deliver improvement? | What actions and strategies will allow Council to realise its 10-year plan? |

To address these questions, UTS:IPPG implemented the following research methods:

Stakeholder consultation

Desktop review of key policy and background documents

Review of contemporary trends and best practice models

Mapping

Review of existing supply

Demographic analysis
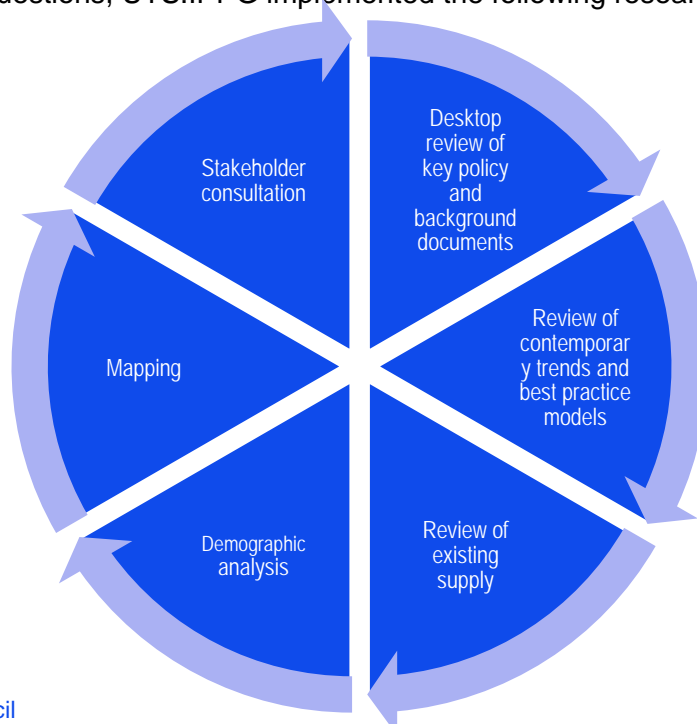
a) A comprehensive **desktop review** of **key policy and background documents**, including relevant Council planning documents, major state and Commonwealth policy settings relevant to community facilities planning and infrastructure

b) A **review** of **contemporary trends** and **best practice** examples of community facility provision from other councils

c) A **review** of the **existing supply** of community facilities in the LGA, in terms of numbers and types of facilities, user groups, condition and utilisation

d) A **demographic analysis** of the LGA, and anticipated population changes over the next decade to understand current and expected demand for community facilities

e) **Mapping** of existing and planned community facilities to understand the geographic spread and concentration of provision

f) A broad suite of **stakeholder engagement** activities, detailed in the following section.

3.2   Consultation and engagement methods

As outlined in **Table 4**, the UTS:IPPG stakeholder consultation process comprised a range of engagement methods to gather residents' and other stakeholders' feedback and ensure the Needs Study, Strategy and Action Plan reflect diverse community attitudes and expectations for community facilities in Shellharbour.

Table 4   Overview of stakeholder consultation and engagement methods

Method	Target groups	Participant numbers and other details
Representative sample phone survey*	General community	**451 respondents** • A representative sample of the Shellharbour LGA population using quotas for age, gender and postcode • Conducted by social and market research company McNair yellowSquares for UTS:IPPG
Online survey for community members*	General community	**79 respondents** • *Let's Chat* Council website online survey ran 1 December 2020 - 27 February 2021 • Available to all community members
Online survey for service providers & hirers*	Service providers and hirers	**25 respondents** • *Let's Chat* Council website online survey ran 1 December 2020 - 27 February 2021 • Available to all service providers and hirers of community facilities

Method	Target groups	Participant numbers and other details
Stakeholder workshops	Aboriginal community Seniors People with disability Youth Service providers + hirers Children and families General community	**7 workshops involving 63+ participants:** • 15 participants (approx.) at a workshop with Illawarra Aboriginal Community Based Working Group (7/4/21) • 5 participants at a workshop for seniors and people with disability (30/3/21) • 9 participants at a workshop with Youth Council (24/3/21) • 3 participants at a workshop with service providers and hirers (24/3/21) • 7 participants at a workshop with Warilla Baptist Care Playgroup (18/3/21) • 20 participants at a workshop with parents at Park and Play (29/3/21) • 4 participants at a workshop with Warilla Baptist Care Playgroup (24/3/21)
In-depth stakeholder interviews	Key Council staff Key service providers + hirers Interagency groups NGOs Peak bodies and community groups Aboriginal communities State agencies	**12 participants across 8 interviews** • 1 interview with Council's Access and Participation Officer (7/4/21) • 1 interview with Council's Construction and Maintenance Manager and Parks and Gardens Manager / Centenary Hall Caretaker (7/4/21) • 1 interview with Council's Children and Families Officer and Team Leader Children and Youth (19/4/21) • 3 interviews with Council staff who manage bookings for community and neighbourhood centres (5/5/21) • 1 interview with Council's Community Partnerships Officer (5/5/21) • 1 interview with Council's Aboriginal Community Liaison Officer (9/7/21)

Method	Target groups	Participant numbers and other details
Council Think Tank workshops	Key Council staff	**3 Council staff workshops** • 12 participants at a workshop on 30/11/20 • 6 participants at a workshop on 2/06/21 • 7 participants at a workshop on 27/07/21
Councillor workshop	Elected representatives	**5 Councillors to date** • 5 participants at a workshop on 9/3/21
Feedback boards	General community	**1 Board received** • Posted at 7 Council Community Facilities with opportunity for open feedback • One board received from Albion Park Community Centre

* Note: Raw Let's Chat and phone survey data referred to throughout this report have been provided to Shellharbour City Council

4 Community facilities within a strategic and policy context

Key points:

- Shellharbour City Council's objective in delivering its Community Facilities Strategy and Action Plan is to provide direction in the planning, provision, activation and management of its community facilities from 2021 to 2031

- The Needs Study, Strategy and Action Plan sit within a broader policy and strategic context set by federal, state, regional and local planning guidelines

- This chapter details some of the key policy documents and planning instruments that relate to community facilities planning and infrastructure.

4.1 Federal Government social infrastructure and community facilities planning

The Federal Government of Australia has developed, or been party to, several recent policy and planning processes that should be considered in future community facility planning at the local level. These include, though are not limited to:

- **Infrastructure Audit 2019**:

  Chapter 6: Social infrastructure explores the role of green spaces, waterways and community facilities in providing social, economic and environmental benefits to communities. In regional areas, sporting and community facilities often play a central role in social cohesion and community facilities provide accessible public spaces for residents to interact and participate in a range of activities that help to increase community wellbeing, develop social capital, and encourage civic engagement.

- **Smart Cities Plan**:

  Sets out the Federal Government's vision for cities, and the plan for maximising their potential. It includes three pillars: *Smart Investment*, *Smart Policy* and *Smart Technology*. This includes investment in infrastructure and the Government will prioritise projects that meet broader economic and city objectives such as accessibility, jobs, affordable housing and healthy environments.

- **Disability Discrimination Act 1992**:

  Prohibits discrimination against people with disabilities in employment, education, publicly available premises, provision of goods and services, accommodation, clubs and associations, and other contexts. The Act makes it against the law to discriminate against a person because of their disability either by refusing to provide them with goods or services or make facilities available, or because of the terms or conditions on which, or how, the goods, services or facilities are provided.

- **National Construction Code 2019**:

This Code defines a uniform set of technical provisions for the design, construction and performance of buildings in Australia. The Code sets the minimum requirements concerning structure, accessibility, health and amenity and sustainability.

4.2 NSW Government social infrastructure planning and policy

The NSW Government has also developed, or been party to, other policy and planning processes that impact future community facility planning. Most importantly, these include, though are not limited to, relevant State Environmental Planning Policies (SEPP) under *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* including:

- **SEPP (Infrastructure) 2007**:

This SEPP assists the State Government, private infrastructure providers, local councils and local communities by simplifying the process for providing infrastructure like hospitals, roads, railways, emergency services, water supply and electricity delivery. The Infrastructure SEPP plays a key role in helping to deliver the NSW Government's infrastructure works (NSW Department of Planning, Nov 2020).

- **SEPP (Education Establishments and Child Care Facilities) 2017:**

This SEPP contains provisions that are intended to make it easier for childcare providers, schools, TAFEs and universities to build new facilities and improve existing ones by streamlining approval processes to save time and money and deliver greater consistency across NSW. The SEPP balances the need to deliver additional educational infrastructure with a focus on good design (NSW Department of Planning, Nov 2020).

- **Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979**:

Section 4.15 sets out matters for consideration in determining a development application. For example, the likely impacts of the development, including environmental impacts on both the natural and built environments, and social and economic impacts in the locality, and the suitability of the site for the development.

Other relevant NSW Government legislation and policy documents include:

- **NSW Local Government Act 1993 and Local Government (General) Regulation 2005**:

Under this regulation, councils are required to plan and deliver services per the outlined framework. Here councils can provide goods, services and facilities, facilitate effective participation of local communities and carry out activities to meet the current and future needs of the local community.

- **Future Transport 2056: Regional NSW Services and Infrastructure Plan:**

This policy sets a 40-year vision for transport in regional NSW to support liveable communities and productive economies. The aspiration for regional NSW is to maximise its potential, recognising the diversity between regions in their natural assets, individual communities, local skills and globally competitive industries.

- **People Places: A guide for public library buildings in NSW**:

Under this guide, public libraries are defined as one of the most used educational, cultural and social facilities within the community. The guidelines assist local authorities to plan and build new or enhanced public library buildings.

- **Cultural Infrastructure Plan 2025**:

This plan defined several strategic priorities including cultural infrastructure that supports strong communities and economies in NSW; access to space for community participation in culture is important; cultural infrastructure for a collaborative and thriving cultural sector should be provided, and creating impact through partnerships and capacity building is a valuable way forward.

- **NSW State Infrastructure Plan (2018–2038)**:

This strategy sets out the NSW Government's infrastructure priorities for the next 20 years. It, combined with the **Future Transport Strategy 2056**, the **Greater Sydney Region Plan,** and the Regional **Development Framework,** provides a high-level framework for infrastructure investment and land-use planning for NSW cities and regions.

- **NSW 2021:**

This ten-year State Government plan focused on rebuilding the economy, providing quality services, renovating infrastructure, restoring government accountability and strengthening local government and communities. It is anticipated that the Government will release a new state plan sometime in 2021 or 2022.

In addition, the **NSW Premier's Priorities** includes a key policy priority for well-connected communities with quality local environments.

- **Better Placed – Government Architect NSW**:

The document includes an objective to ensure cities and towns deliver cost-effective services, including access to public health services.

- **Local Schools, Local Decisions**:

This NSW Department of Education policy outlines several directions for NSW public schools, including objectives to foster innovation and identify significant opportunities for co-use. Local community stakeholder engagement is in its early stages of planning with expectations that proposals will be generated leading to greater co-use of government facilities.

4.3   Regional planning instruments

Regional planning instruments also potentially play an important role in shaping Shellharbour's vision. Regional plans set the framework, vision and direction for strategic planning and land use, planning for future needs for housing, jobs, infrastructure, a healthy environment and connected communities (NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment 2020).

- **The Illawarra Shoalhaven Regional Plan 2041**:

  The plan represents a strategic vision and direction for how to plan for the region's future housing, jobs, infrastructure, and a healthy environment, with a strong focus on sustainability and resilience. It is premised on a place where people have easy access to green spaces and live in connected communities – and a region that values its people and places.

- **Illawarra Shoalhaven Regional Transport Plan**:

  A multimodal and integrated vision for how transport planning will proactively support how land is used in the region.

- **A Regional Approach to Sustainability in the Illawarra Shoalhaven 2020**:

  Developed as part of the recent review of the Illawarra Shoalhaven Regional Plan, it embeds sustainability into the plan and identifies regional collaborative opportunities.

- **Public Spaces in the Illawarra Shoalhaven Region 2020:**

  Investigates and analyses access to public spaces in the region and identifies opportunities to improve access. This plan is part of the recent review of the Illawarra Shoalhaven Regional Plan.

- **360 Illawarra - Shoalhaven Economic Outlook**:

  Provides a snapshot of developments and economic opportunities in surrounding regions. Highlights opportunities that can enhance the economic growth of the Illawarra Shoalhaven due to their alignment with the region's existing skills base, economic assets and industry capabilities.

- **Illawarra Shoalhaven Smart Region Strategy**:

  Its vision is to be a collaborative, innovative region that leverages digital and emerging technologies to both preserve its unique landscape and heritage, and unlock opportunities to create a thriving, sustainable and inclusive place, now and for the future.

- **Healthy Cities Illawarra Strategy and Business Plan 2020-2024**:

  Planned action includes continuing to develop, plan, implement and evaluate community-based programs and events which encourage and support increased physical activity across all ages and demographics.

Although not within the boundary, the Greater Sydney Commission, **Greater Sydney Regional Plan – A Metropolis of Three Cities**, is the NSW Government's 40-year vision for Greater Sydney. It is relevant because the document highlights the importance of social infrastructure, which includes community facilities. Notably, several strategies in the plan identify social infrastructure as essential to creating liveable cities and neighbourhoods.

4.4　　Key local planning policies and instruments

The **Shellharbour Community Strategic Plan 2018-2028** (CSP) highlights the community's vision and objectives for the future. The CSP plays an important role in addressing the economic, environmental and social needs of the Shellharbour community and is the highest-level planning document in Council's suite of plans. The plan is currently under review.

The CSP shapes the delivery of strategy, services, operations, facilities and the management and renewal of assets to the Community, Councillors, Customers and Council. It also guides decision-making about services, projects and work programs for the local community.

Objectives related to community facility planning and delivery include creating a city that is:

- Vibrant, safe, creative and inclusive: provide a liveable community that is accessible and inclusive.

- Active and healthy: provide access to services and facilities where people can live, learn and play.

Other critical Council planning documents and policies are:

- **Shellharbour City Local Strategic Planning Statement 2020**

  This sets out a vision for Shellharbour City and provides local planning priorities and actions for the next 20 years.

- **Shellharbour Local Environment Plan 2013**

  This plan is a statutory document that regulates land use and standards. It serves to make local environmental planning provisions for land in Shellharbour under the relevant standard environmental planning instrument.

- **Shellharbour Development Control Plan**

  This plan sets out provisions for specific uses of land and provisions applying to types of uses.

These documents form part of the **Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework** and establish Shellharbour's vision and priorities for the future. The documents enable Council to make planning decisions based on defined economic, environmental and social priorities as well as prescribe strategic actions required to achieve them.

Figure 2   The Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework
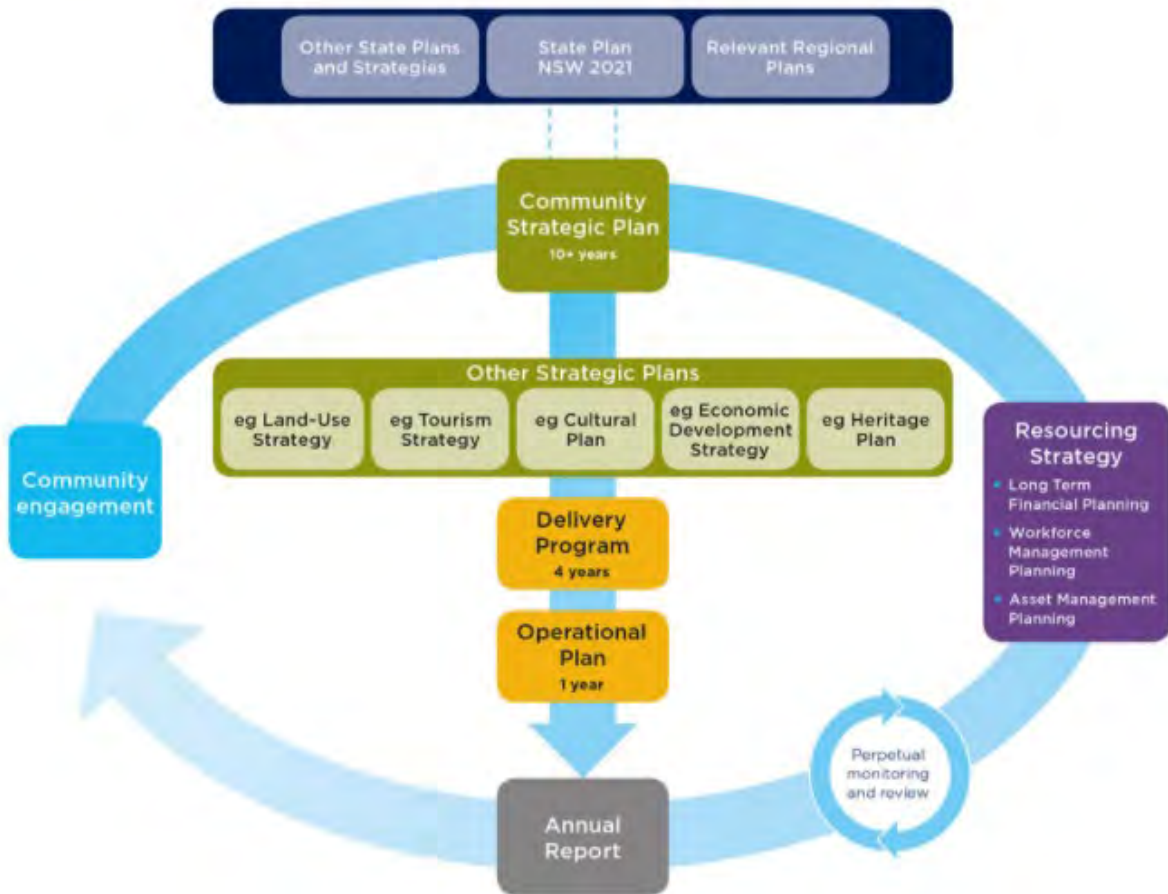
Several other Council strategies and plans also reference community facilities and will inform in the development of the Community Facilities Needs Study, Strategy and Action Plan. These include:

- **Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2017-2021**:

  This plan focuses on how Shellharbour City can be a more inclusive and accessible city and sets the direction on how this can be achieved. The plan is intended to cover all aspects of Council services.

- **Library and Museums Strategy 2024**:

  This document outlines the opportunities available to public libraries in the digital age. It has been shaped by an extensive community consultation process.

- **Shellharbour Events Strategy 2018-2021**:

  This provides a guiding framework for developing and attracting new events, as well as facilitating the growth of existing events.

- **Shellharbour Open Space & Recreation Strategy 2020**:

  This ten-year strategy will guide the long-term planning, delivery and management of open space and recreation areas, including parks, reserves, aquatics and associated

infrastructure such as sporting grounds and courts, amenities facilities and walking tracks.

- **Shellharbour Youth Plan 2018-2021:**

Informed by policy, best practice local support services and community consultations, this document lays out young people's vision for Shellharbour. The plan is targeted at young people aged 12-24 across all sections of society, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, multicultural groups, people with disability and LGBTQI people.

- **Illawarra Regional Airport Strategic and Business Plan**:

A key outcome of this plan is to develop the airport precinct into a vibrant business hub that positively contributes to regional economic development, tourism and employment.

- **Bass Point Interpretative Centre Feasibility Report (now changed to Aboriginal Interpretive Centre):**

This report provides a plan for establishing an Aboriginal Interpretive Centre to host Aboriginal artefacts and promote Aboriginal heritage.

- **Council's Asset Management Plans 2020-2030**:

This document provides a list of Council assets. The plan analyses the current state of Council's assets and recommends resource allocations for the next 10 years.

- **Property Strategy October 2020-2025**:

This strategy establishes a consistent approach and guiding principles for the management of property assets to assist with the realisation of Council's service delivery objectives identified in the Community Strategic Plan 2018-2028.

- **Local Infrastructure Contributions Plan 2019 (9th Review)**:

This plan outlines the type, location and level of contributions made by developers of certain developments for the provision of a wide range of community infrastructure. This plan ensures that infrastructure is delivered to meet the needs of the community now and in the future.

- **Public Art Strategy 2020-2025**:

This strategy provides a bold vision for the future of Shellharbour's public art program. The need to develop this strategy was identified as a key action within the arts and cultural development strategy Make, Play Grow: a strategy for a more creative Shellharbour. Community engagement findings said, "Public art is best suited to Parks and Open Spaces, Town and City Centres, Community and Civic facilities."

4.5 Available standards and benchmarks

4.5.1 Standards

Currently, there are no prescribed national or state standards for Councils that regulate the provision of community facilities (except state government guidelines for libraries - see *People Places: A guide for public library buildings in NSW* 2012).

In general, the common approach is to consider how the area's demographic trends will shape infrastructure needs and the standards for the provision of community facilities that need to be locally relevant. This involves:

a) A review of the demographic make-up of the community and identifying any specific facility, service and program needs based on population size and demographics.

b) An assessment of how the local community will grow and change in the future and what that will mean in terms of needs and levels of demand for community facilities and services.

4.5.2 Benchmarks

Similarly to standards, the desktop review did not identify any single or consolidated set of benchmarks against which councils could plan their community services infrastructure. That said, several councils in Australia and New Zealand have defined their benchmarks over recent years that could be used as a point of reference for other councils. These are summarised in **Table 5**.

Table 5   Sample of community facility benchmarks used by other Australian and New Zealand councils

Source	Type of facility	Benchmark standard (per population)
Infrastructure development guidelines: City of Greater Geelong (2010)	Community Meeting Room/ Multi-Purpose Hall	1: 6,000 – 10,000
	Neighbourhood Centre	1: 3,500 – 15,000
	Child Care Centre (long day care)	1: 4,000 – 8,000 population or 1: 5-7 children aged 0-4
	Occasional Care	1:12,000 – 15,000
	Multi-Purpose Community Centre	1: 20,000 – 30,000
	Youth Facility/ Service	1: 20,000
	Art Gallery	1: 20,000 - 30,000
	Civic Centre	1: 30,000 – 120,000
	Performing Arts/ Exhibition/ Convention Centre	1: 50,000 – 200,000

Source	Type of facility	Benchmark standard (per population)
Community Facility Network Plan, Auckland Council (2015)	Level 1 Community Centres/ Early Years Facility/ Neighbourhood Houses	1: up to 10,000
	Level 2 Community Centres/ Early Years Facility/ Neighbourhood Houses	1: 10,000 – 30,000
	Low Order Youth Facility	1: 10,000 – 30,000
	Multi-Purpose Community Facility	1: 30,000 – 60,000
	Arts Centre	1: 30,000 – 60,000
	High-Order Dedicated Youth Facility	1: 30,000 – 60,000
	Performing Arts Facility	1: 30,000 – 60,000
Bankstown Area Plans (2015)	Youth Facility	1: 20,000
	Community Centre (local)	1: 6,000
	Community Centre (district)	1: 20,000
Economic Development Queensland (2015)	Major Community Centre/ Hub/ Civic Centre (Council)	1: 30,000 – 120,000
	Sporting Facility	1: 30,000
	Major Community Centre/ Hub/ (Council) Multi-Purpose Community Centre/ Neighbourhood Centre	1: 20,000 – 50,000
	District Sporting Facility	1: 20,000
	Local Community Centre/ Hub Multi-Purpose Hall	1: 6,000 – 10,000
	Exhibition/ Convention Centre	1: 50,000 – 200,000
	Performing Arts Spaces	1: 30,000 – 50,000
	Sporting Facilities	1: up to 30,000
	Youth Centres/ Services (local)	1: 10,000 – 20,000
	Youth Centres/ Services (districts)	1: 20,000 – 50,000
	Neighbourhood House/ Community Meeting Room	1: 2,000 – 3,000

Source	Type of facility	Benchmark standard (per population)
Community and Social Infrastructure Assessment Teleopea Master Plan (2017)	Local Multi-Purpose Community Centre/ Neighbourhood Centre	1: 6,000
	District Multi-Purpose Community Centre	1: 20,000
	Child Care Facility (0-4 years)	1: 5 children
	After School Care (5-9 years)	1: 25 children
Open Space and Community Facilities Assessment: Kellyville Station Precinct (2015)	Local Community Centre/ Neighbourhood Centre	1: 5,000 – 15,000
	District Level Facilities	1: 15,000 – 150,000
	Regional Level Facilities (e.g. Major Cultural Centres/ Civic Centres)	1: 50,000 – 100,000+

As an alternative to the list above, several councils, including Cumberland City Council, have adopted 'a no one-size-fits-all approach', recommending that community facilities be assessed on a case-by-case basis (Cumberland Community Facilities Strategy, page 45).

Wollongong City Council, in its audit of community facilities, states that in most NSW local government areas, frequently adopted a figure of between 60m² and 100m² for council provided multi-purpose community facility space per 1,000 people. This figure is referenced for use in its Development Contribution Plans (Wollongong Social Infrastructure Planning Framework 2018-2028, page 31).

As previously noted, libraries have population benchmarks to calculate the floor space required for service areas. Because space for reading, sitting and study can align with the spaces provided in multi-purpose facilities, these benchmarks may be used as a reference point. It is assumed that there would be similar provisions for various types of cultural spaces as there is for library space. However, for cultural facilities, benchmarking is typically based on the availability of different types of special-purpose venues, rather than floor space.

Another model that is becoming increasingly popular around Australia and internationally is the **'20-minute neighbourhood'**[2] where, through sustainable urban planning, people are within a 20-minute catchment from facilities and spaces that meet their daily needs. The model builds a strong case to ensure that a full range of community facilities can be easily accessed by walking or public transport in no more than 20 minutes.

While the above measures are useful points of reference, Council should aim to provide suitable community facilities that are in line with established planning regimes, as well as addressing the needs of the current and future local community.

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[2] The '20-minute neighbourhood' is a key planning principle of the Plan Melbourne 2017-2050 strategy

5 Trends in community facility provision

Key points:

- Successful community facilities should be: flexible, accessible, adaptable, coordinated, sustainable, have a sense of place and be equitable.

- The major trends in community facility planning include:

    o Multi-purpose community spaces that cater for the needs of different user groups

    o Creative use of outdoor space to better link buildings and support a wider range of activities

    o Repurposing heritage buildings to maximise the use of existing infrastructure and protect local history

    o Building partnerships and collaborations between local groups as well as between Council and other governments

    o Consolidating or relocating facilities to better link facilities to other existing services.

5.1 Important principles in community facilities design and provision

This section examines current trends and directions in community facility design and planning. Examples of best practice frequently use the same design principles. As every local area is unique, principles rather than strict design specifications inform the best approach to take. It is suggested that if these principles are adhered to, it will guide successful community facility planning, design and provision.

Recurring principles are community facilities that are: flexible, accessible, adaptable, coordinated, sustainable, able to create a sense of place, and equitable. Key principles can apply in different contexts, such as sustainability in both an environmental and financial sense. These principles should be used as a guide to the planning and assessment of community facilities. They are informed by contemporary trends in community facility provision and reflect key characteristics of innovative community facilities.

Table 6 summarises 14 broad principles identified through the desktop review. These will be analysed in conjunction with the consultation findings when shaping the Community Facilities Strategy and Action Plan.

Table 6   **Principles related to successful community facilities identified through desktop review**

Area	Principle	Feature
Planning	Serves the needs and preferences of the local community	• Aligned with current and future population needs
	Accessible	• Near public transport, centrally located, near public space • Access to outdoor areas
	Coordinated and integrated	• Integrated with other services, facilities and programs • Part of a coordinated network of facilities • Functions as part of a network • Connected and integrated • Establishes social infrastructure within community hubs
	Sustainable	• Actively managed and monitored • Sustainable funding, management and maintenance arrangements
	Partnerships	• Engages in partnerships • Encourages shared use of social infrastructure • Centred around public and private partnerships
	Multi-purpose and adaptable	• Maximises existing facilities • Adaptable over time • Providing a range of community services, activities and programs
	Appropriate	• Plans for the future (longevity) • Smart, sustainable and measured • Innovative and future-proofed
	Affordable and accountable	• Financially sustainable • Cost-effective • Economically responsible • Attainable • Uses existing infrastructure • Best use of existing facilities

Area	Principle	Feature
Design	Best practice	• High-quality design • Green (environmentally sustainable/friendly) • Access to outdoor space • Visually prominent • Safe and secure • Friendly and accessible • Vibrant, inclusive, appropriate and functional • Welcoming and inviting
	Flexible	• Adaptable and multi-purpose spaces • Compatible with local area
Community	Community involvement	• Promotes access and inclusion • An involved and resilient community • Involves and engages the community in the planning process • Consulting with the local community • Working collaboratively
	Inclusive	• Serves cultural and social needs • Supports local community and facilitates community cohesion • Addressing local community needs and promoting social outcomes
	Equity and fairness	• Supports disadvantaged communities and/or areas with declining or small populations • Fairly distributed
	Sense of place	• Meet local community needs and reflect local identity • Contributing to the public domain and sense of place • Developing a strong local community profile

5.2 Current trends in and directions in community facilities

Community facilities, like most things, adapt to trends and new ways of doing things. This section sets out wider trends and best practice models of community facilities, and visualisations of new community facilities options being implemented in other councils in NSW. In recent years, several other councils have been looking at different ways to plan or manage their building and spaces and the examples highlight trends pursued in community facilities planning and provision. Some examples of best practice are sources from Landcom's Community Centre guidelines, which were developed in consultation with Sydney councils and social planners.

Five examples of major trends in community facility planning are set out below and include:

- **Community 'hubs', multi-purpose model**: to better cater for different community needs.

- Creative use of **outdoor space**: better linking buildings to support a wider range of activities.

- Adaptive use of existing infrastructure (**repurpose heritage buildings**): to maximise their use at the same time as protecting local history.

- **Building partnerships and collaborations**: Between local groups and between councils and other government and business providers to expand the options available.

- **Consolidate or re-locate facilities**: To better link facilities to other services including local libraries, shops, sports and recreation activities.

Each of these trends will be considered against the local community feedback documented in **Figure 3**.

Figure 3   Five trends in community facilities provision

Trend # 1	Multi-Purpose Space Facilities
Description	A multi-purpose space is where community facilities are integrated into one location or building. Co-locating various facilities and services in a single place is a key trend in community facility planning. It enables visitors to access a range of services in one location and encourages coordination and referrals between services. It is also efficient for councils because resources can be concentrated on one site.[3]
Community benefits	Multi-purpose facilities cater to a wide range of users and can adapt to changing community needs. In a multi-purpose community space model, facilities can be clustered along with the co-location of services. This is meant to enhance coordination between services and increase convenience for the local community. This model provides better access to a wider range of services. It is a more efficient use of resources. Community buildings can also be clustered in places that are easy to access by public transport and are centrally located, near to shopping centres and schools.
Example of a multi-purpose community space	**Shellharbour City Council** Shellharbour Civic Centre, Shellharbour City Centre, NSW

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[3] Cumberland City Council, Community Facilities Strategy 2019-2029 (page 41) <https://www.cumberland.nsw.gov.au/community-facilities-strategy>

Current usages	Shellharbour Civic Centre is a five-star Green Star multipurpose building that can host a wide range of events, including conferences and meetings, concerts, celebrations and more. Since opening in January 2018, the Civic Centre has received numerous awards for its sustainable and versatile design. The Centre is home for the: • Shellharbour City Museum, which hosts regular exhibitions to showcase past and present stories of the local areas, its people and the events that make Shellharbour what it is today. • Shellharbour City Council, with over 200 Council staff working in the building. • City Library offers a collection of 40,000 items, free Wi-Fi, computers, scanning and printing facilities, as well as an outdoor resort-style balcony. The library also has the benefit of quiet spaces, free community meeting rooms (one of which doubles as a maker space) and a soundproof room. • The Civic Square Café Additionally, the Civic Centre offers a variety of venues for hire through an online booking system.
Further information	Shellharbour Civic Centre Opened in 2018

Trend #2	Creative use of outdoor space – the Friendship Garden at Auburn Centre for Community
Description	A second trend is having well-integrated and thought-out outdoor spaces.

The Friendship Garden at the Auburn Centre for Community first started as a community engagement initiative owned and run by Settlement Services International (SSI). It is now a community-run project.

SSI worked with Cumberland City Council to support the expansion of the existing Friendship Garden. It is now a productive and inclusive community garden project.[4]

The Council encourages community groups to express interest in hiring a plot in the garden and run new programs in the garden. |
| Community benefits | A diverse range of activities can be conducted outside and enhances the flexibility of the space. It is a bright and welcoming environment. People who were involved in SSI programs and members of the public could come together to socialise and learn new skills during regular gardening mornings and workshops (SSI 2015).

The creative use of outdoor space better links buildings to support a wider range of activities. |
| Example of outdoor space | **Cumberland City Council**
Auburn Centre for Community

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[4] Settlement Services International, 'Refugees and asylum seekers dig deep for Auburn Community Friendship Garden' (October 2015).

Current usages	The Friendship Garden encourages people to grow and share local food, make new friends, share skills all whilst improving community health and wellbeing. (Cumberland City Council 2020). The garden forms part of The Auburn Centre for the Community, which is an award-winning multi-purpose centre. Auburn Centre for Community offers a range of facilities available for hire including the main hall, multi-purpose room, computer/training room, lounge area, youth space, outdoor BBQ and picnic area, children's play area and commercial kitchen.
Further information	Friendship Garden at Auburn Centre for Community Auburn Centre for Community
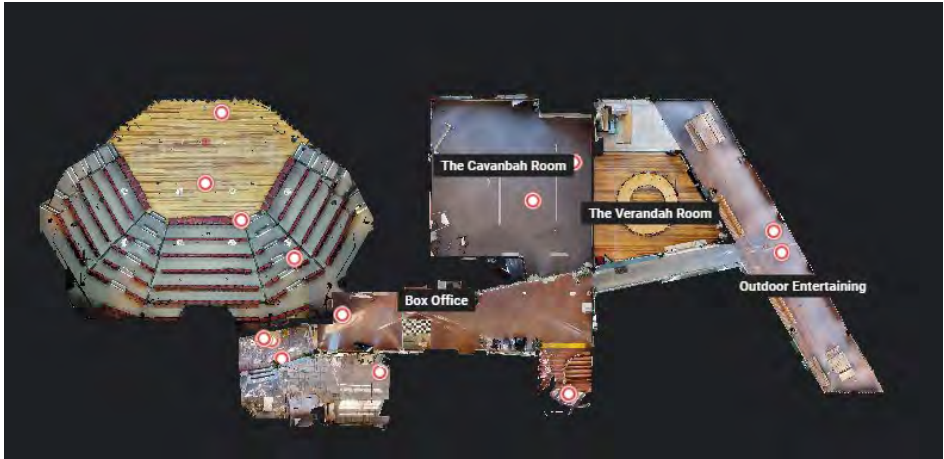
Trend # 3	Adaptive use of existing infrastructure / Repurpose heritage building
Description	There is a trend towards adaptive re-use of heritage buildings. Councils are re-purposing heritage buildings for new purposes such as community art spaces.
Community benefits	• Benefits of reusing existing infrastructure. • Is a cost-effective resource. • Ensures that facilities are maintained and renewed in ways that meet local community needs. • Creates active creative places in new spaces • Protects local history
Example of adaptive use of existing infrastructure	**Hornsby Shire Council** Wallarobba Arts and Cultural Centre
Current usages	The Wallarobba Homestead was built in 1903 and is Hornsby Council area's premier art and cultural centre. In 2012 it was awarded the Local Government and Shire's Association 'Places for Arts and Culture: Improved Cultural Facility Award'. Features of the centre include a community art studio, a purpose-built printmaking room, art classes, an artists' lounge and a gallery space. The Hornsby Art Society also has an office in the centre.
Further information	Wallarobba Arts and Cultural Centre

Trend # 4	**Building partnerships and collaborations (with local community groups and associations)**
Description	Local partnerships are one way to create strong social ties and relationships within a community. Some community facilities are dependent on the development of partnerships between local and state governments to make them feasible. The Byron Community Centre is owned and operated by a not-for-profit community association that provides a wide range of services to the community from the centre. The Byron Theatre and Community Centre was recently refurbished and was funded by grants received from the NSW Government Public Reserves Management Fund and Byron Shire Council for specific heritage projects.
Community benefits	Community facilities play an important role in shaping social inclusion for the community. It aims to deliver a range of community projects and activities that are needed by the community. The centre provides a valuable social and recreational service to residents at no cost to Council. Building partnerships and collaborations between local groups, and between councils and other government and business providers expand the options available.
Example	**Byron Shire Council** Byron Community and Cultural Centre Byron Bay

Current usages	The Association has set up several programs and the Byron Community Centre houses a range of important community projects and services. • Byron Community Pantry • Liberation Larder • Homeless Breakfast • Free Telephone Counselling • General Counselling • Tax Help
Further information	Byron Community Centre

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Trend # 5	Consolidate and co-located community facilities
Description	A trend toward larger and better facilities – fewer facilities but better designed. This better links facilities to other services including local libraries, shops, sports and recreation activities. The objective is to provide higher quality and a wider range of spaces, services and activities.
Community benefits	The mix of services and opportunities available including training, leisure and child care attracts a wider range of local users. To make the best use of resources, community facilities need to provide for multiple uses and serve a range of population groups. It is necessary that the building can adapt as the community changes and needs develop over time.
Example	**Canada Bay Council** The Connection
Current usages	Is situated in the centre of Rhodes and offers a variety of community spaces for hire, as well as a learning space, outdoor amphitheatre and café.
Further Information	https://www.canadabay.nsw.gov.au/theconnection

6   Shellharbour population trends

Key points:

- Shellharbour's population is expected to grow over the next decade, however, the rate is likely to be lower than initially predicted (due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic)

- The fastest-growing age groups will be elderly (85 and over) – predicted growth of 63.9%, and seniors (70 to 84) – predicted growth of 37%

- Existing and future residential development will continue to shape and transform the LGA. The number of residents in Calderwood and Tullimbar is predicted to increase by over 5,000 over the next decade

- The new areas of Shell Cove, Flinders, Tullimbar and Calderwood are home to a high and growing number of young people and families, which is likely to create further demand for child, youth and family friendly facilities.

6.1   Population and planning impacts

Community facilities planning is strongly influenced by population trends. As the population of Shellharbour grows, the demand for community facilities is likely to rise. People may seek to use community facilities in different ways and for different purposes as the demographic characteristics of the local population shift over time.

This section provides an overview of the existing and likely future population characteristics of Shellharbour LGA residents based on demographic analysis. This provides an important evidence base to build an understanding of current and expected future demand for community facilities in the area.

Wherever possible, this analysis draws upon population forecast data from .id (Informed Decisions), which enables analysis of likely future changes in total population, age groups and household types. All forecast analysis focuses on the period 2021 to 2031 to align with the 10-year Strategy and Action Plan that will be informed by this Study.

For demographic variables unavailable in forecast data (e.g. cultural diversity, socio-economic disadvantage and travel behaviours), previous Census data from 2011-2016 is used to explore historical trends.

6.2   Shellharbour LGA population

The Estimated Resident Population of Shellharbour in 2020[5] was 74,622, having grown at an average annual rate of 1.4% over the previous five years. A similar pace of growth is likely to be sustained over the next decade, with forecasts from .id (Informed Decisions) suggesting the population will grow from 75,953 in 2021 to 86,824 in 2031, at an average annual growth rate of 1.3%. This growth rate will be slightly faster than that of NSW[6] as a whole over the same period (0.9% per year).

These population trends are illustrated in **Figure 4.**

Figure 4   Shellharbour LGA historical and forecast population growth, 2015-2031

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Regional Population Growth, Australia (3218.0); Population and household forecasts, 2016 to 2041, prepared by .id (informed decisions), May 2019.

Included at **Figure 5** is projected population growth by 2031 mapped onto the Shellharbour LGA.

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[5] As at 30 June. The Estimated Resident Population is considered the official Australian Bureau of Statistics population figure for all Local Government Areas.

[6] Comparisons of Shellharbour and NSW forecast data must be interpreted with caution, as .id (Informed Decisions) published the Shellharbour LGA forecast data in 2019, prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. The NSW forecast data was published in 2021, so may be based on different assumptions accounting for the demographic impacts of the pandemic. For this reason, comparisons with NSW are used sparingly throughout the analysis.

Figure 5   Shellharbour City Council community facilities and forecast population by 2031
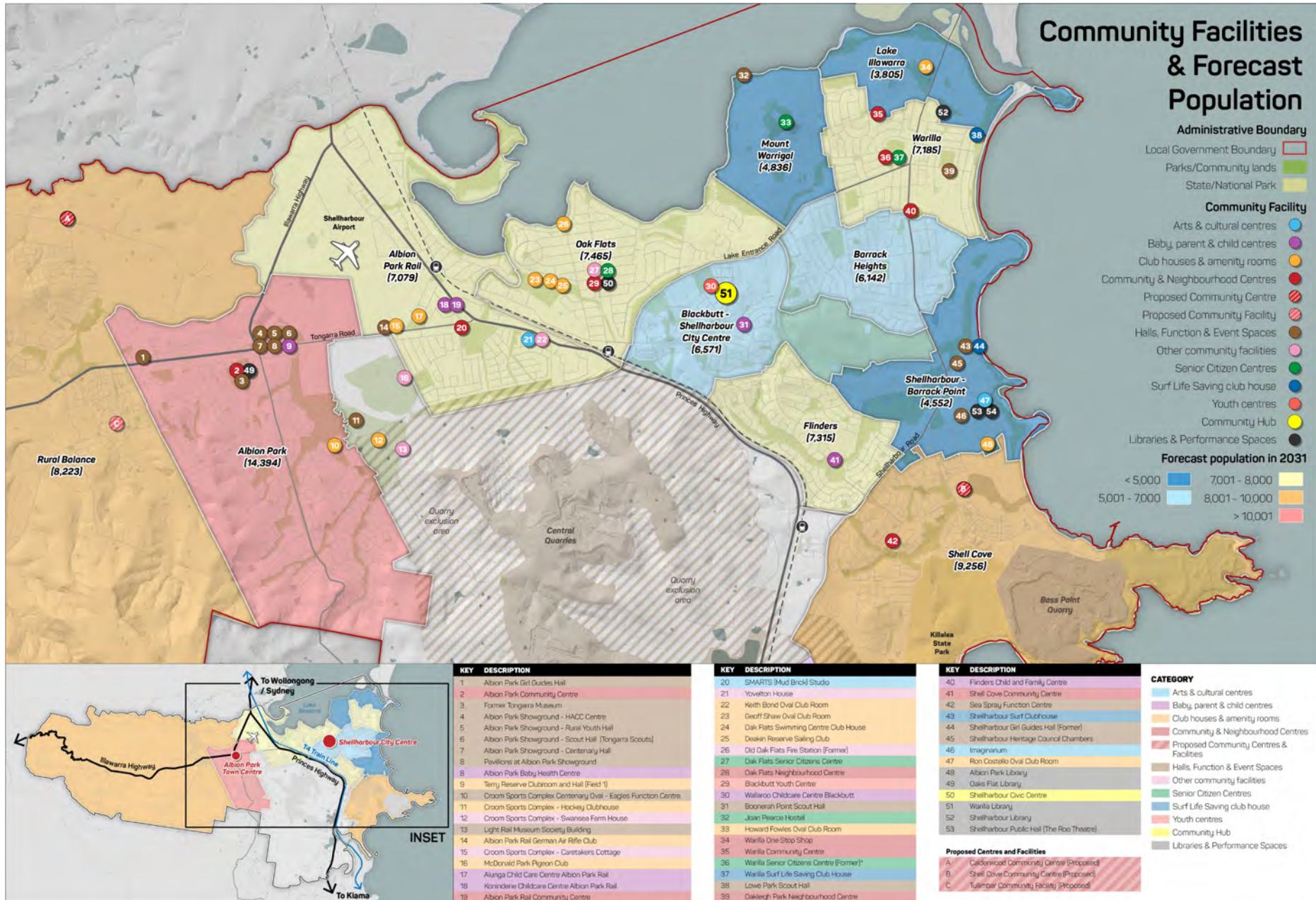
6.3   Age profile

The largest service age group in Shellharbour in 2021 is parents and homebuilders (aged 35 to 49), who account for 18.8% of all residents **(Figure 6)**. By 2031, parents and homebuilders will remain the largest service age group, with a slightly increased share of the total population (19.0%). The second-largest age group in 2021 is older workers and pre-retirees (50 to 59) at 12.2% of the population, yet by 2031 they will be overtaken by seniors (70 to 84).

Figure 6   Forecast age profile by service age group, Shellharbour LGA, 2021-2031
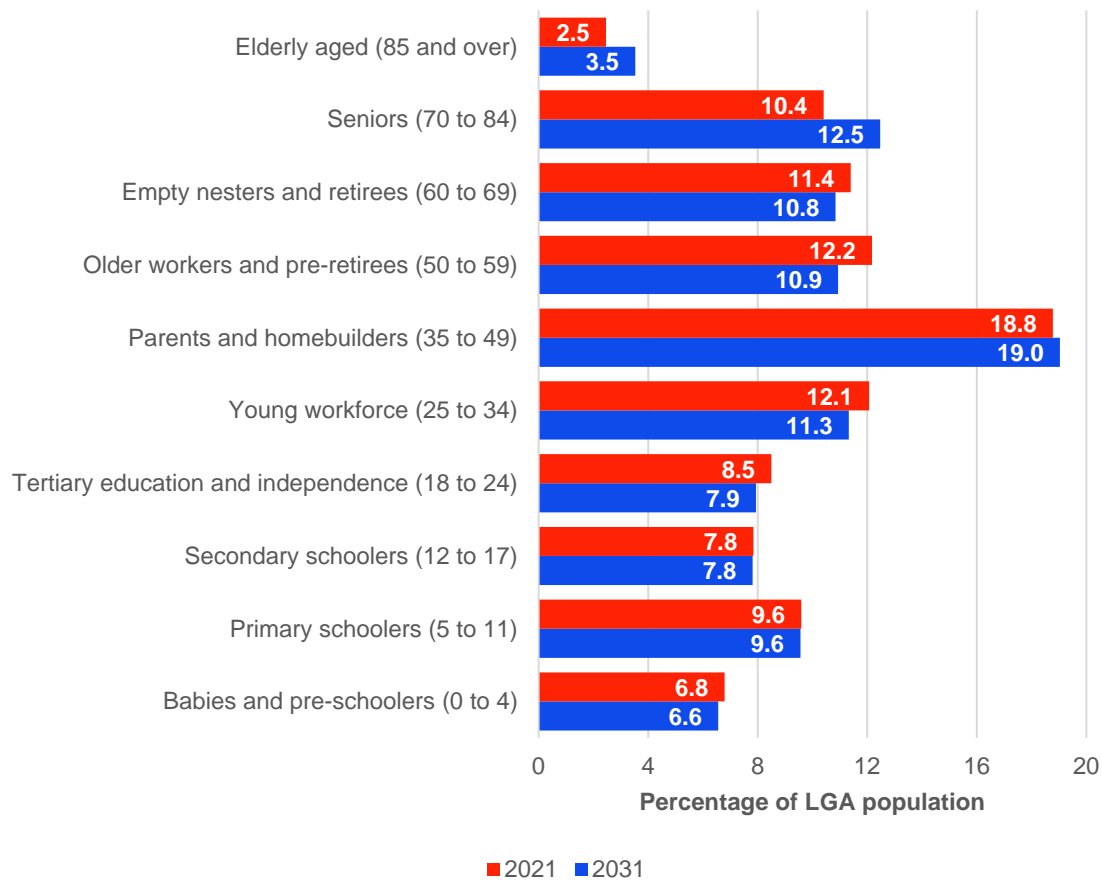
Source: Population and household forecasts, 2016 to 2041, prepared by .id (informed decisions), May 2019.

As illustrated in **Figure 7**, between 2021 and 2031, the fastest-growing age groups will be the elderly aged (85 and over) and seniors (70 to 84), who will increase in number by 63.9% and 37.0% respectively. By contrast, the total Shellharbour population will increase by just 14.3% over that time. This growth in older age groups will reflect both the ageing of existing residents over the decade along with Shellharbour's ongoing attraction as a residential destination for retirees.

Parents and homebuilders (35 to 49) will also increase faster than the LGA average, yet to a more modest degree at 15.9%. Older workers and pre-retirees (50 to 59) will have the slowest growth at only 2.7% across the decade.

Figure 7   Forecast growth in service age groups, 2021-2031, Shellharbour LGA
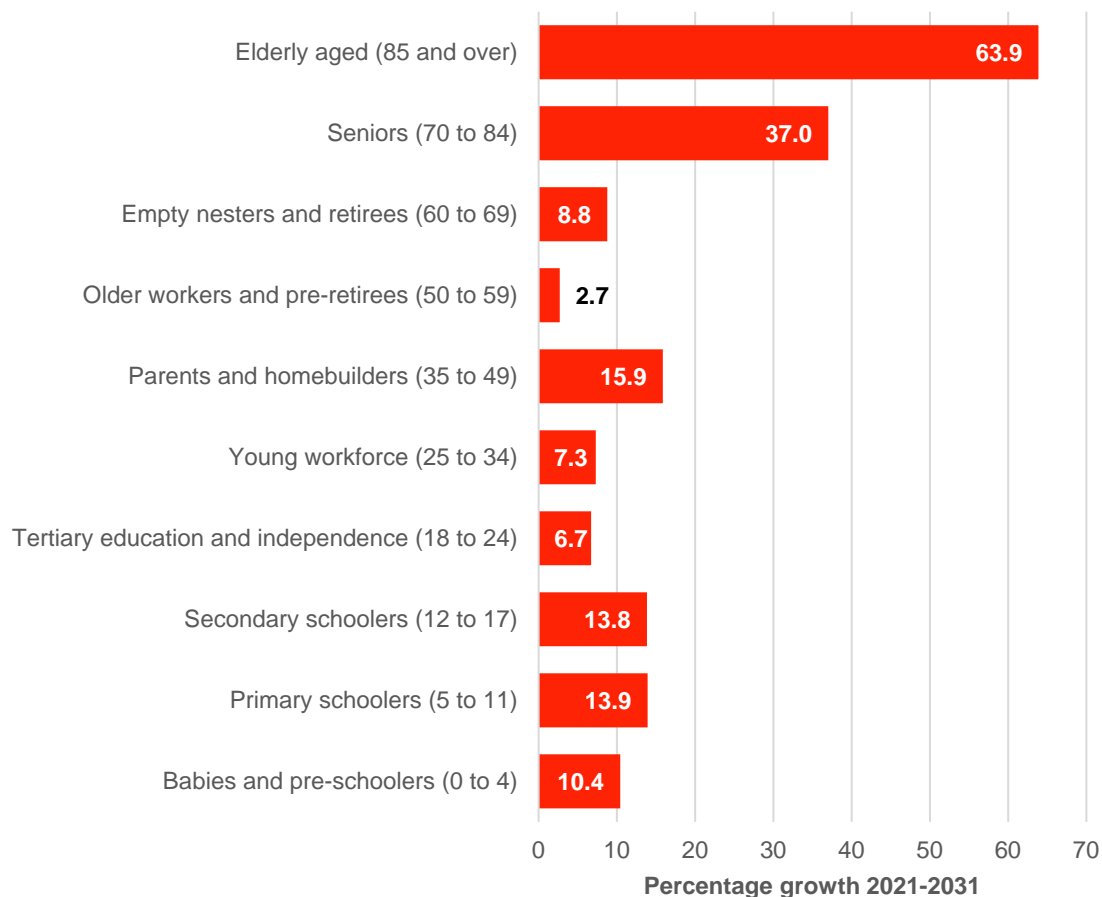
Source: Population and household forecasts, 2016 to 2041, prepared by .id (informed decisions), May 2019.

6.4   Households and dwellings

Couple families with dependents are the most common household type in Shellharbour LGA in 2021, accounting for 33.5% of all households (**Figure 8**). They will remain the most common household type in 2031, however, their share of all households will reduce slightly, due to considerable growth (+26.6%) in the number of couple families *without* dependents (see **Figure 8** and **Figure 9**).

Figure 8   Forecast household types, 2021-2031, Shellharbour LGA
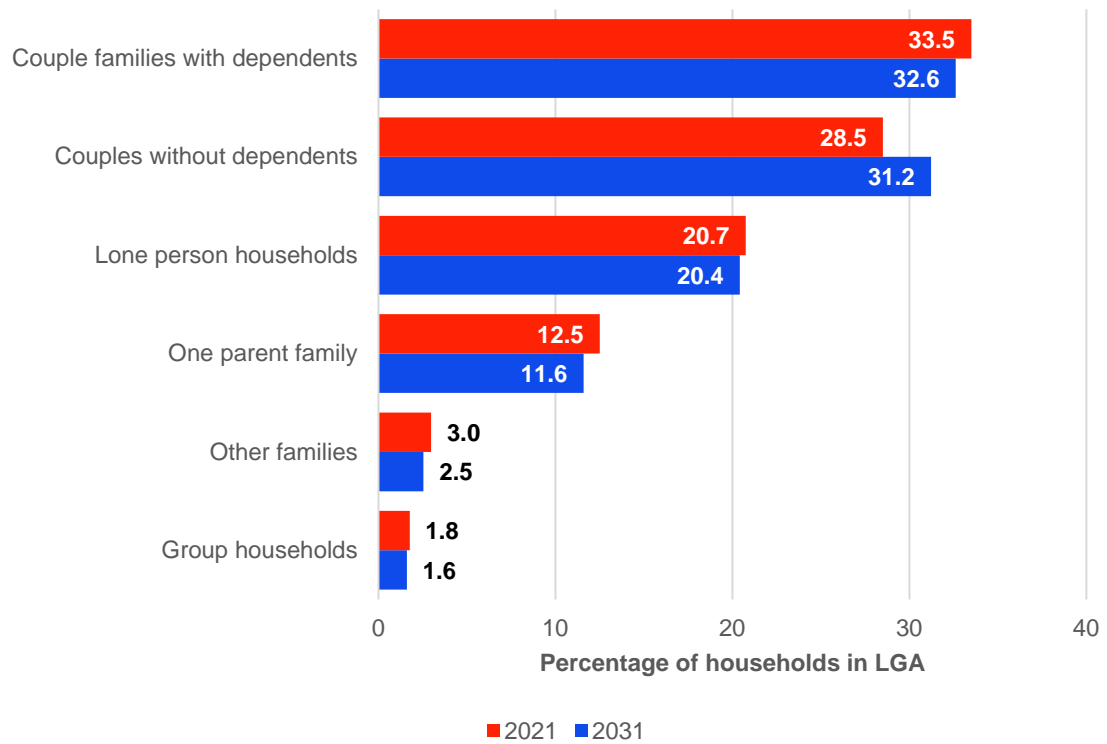
Source: Population and household forecasts, 2016 to 2041, prepared by .id (informed decisions), May 2019.

Figure 9   Forecast growth in household types, 2021-2031, Shellharbour LGA
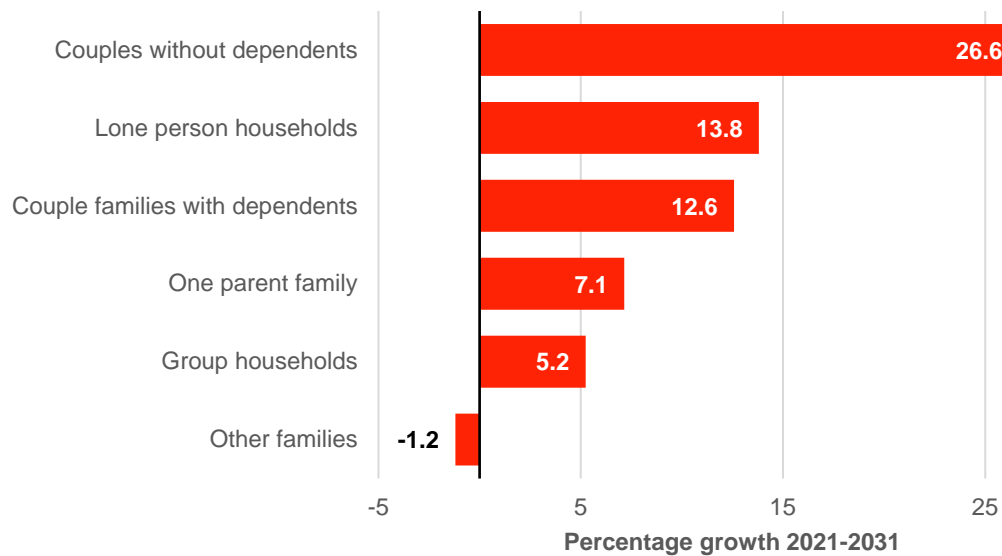
Source: Population and household forecasts, 2016 to 2041, prepared by .id (informed decisions), May 2019.

6.5　Shellharbour geography

Existing and future residential development will continue to shape and transform the geographic distribution of population across Shellharbour LGA over the next decade. The largest growth will be seen in the area termed 'Rural Balance', which includes the high-growth suburbs of Calderwood and Tullimbar in the west. The number of residents in those areas will increase by over 5,000 by 2031. The next largest increases of just under 2,000 will be seen in Blackbutt – Shellharbour City Centre and Shell Cove.

By contrast, the more established suburbs of Mount Warrigal, Albion Park Rail, Barrack Heights and Flinders will have very modest rates of growth – or even slight declines in population – over the decade. These projections are summarised in **Table 7**.

Table 7　Forecast population change by suburb, 2021-2031, Shellharbour LGA

Area	2021 Population (Number)	2031 Population (Number)	Absolute change from 2021-31	Percentage change from 2021-31
Albion Park	13,856	14,394	+538	+3.9
Albion Park Rail	7,102	7,079	-22	-0.3
Barrack Heights	6,117	6,142	+26	+0.4
Blackbutt - Shellharbour City Centre	4,626	6,571	+1,946	+42.1
Flinders	7,206	7,315	+109	+1.5
Lake Illawarra	3,480	3,805	+325	+9.3
Mount Warrigal	4,924	4,836	-88	-1.8
Oak Flats	6,905	7,465	+560	+8.1
Rural Balance	3,198	8,223	+5,024	+157.1
Shell Cove	7,369	9,256	+1,886	+25.6
Shellharbour - Barrack Point	4,365	4,552	+187	+4.3
Warilla	6,805	7,185	+380	+5.6
Shellharbour City (total)	**75,953**	**86,824**	**+10,871**	**+14.3**

Source: Population and household forecasts, 2016 to 2041, prepared by .id (informed decisions), May 2019.

6.6   Socio-economic disadvantage and vulnerability

The socio-economic circumstances of a local community can also significantly impact the demand for community facilities and the services they host.

The ABS produce an index called the SEIFA Index of Relative Socio-Economic Disadvantage (IRSED), which measures the relative level of socio-economic disadvantage of a geographic area based on a range of Census data on the local population (e.g. unemployment, low-income levels, and low education levels).

Table 8 lists the suburbs of Shellharbour LGA in descending order according to their score on the index – the higher the score, the less disadvantaged the area, relative to other geographic areas in Australia. The percentile is also provided, which can be interpreted as 'the approximate position of this small area in a ranked list of Australia's suburbs and localities.' For example, a percentile of 75 indicates that the area has a higher index score than 75% of all Australia's suburbs.

Table 8 depicts IRSD scores for SA1s, which are very small geographic areas for which SEIFA data is released. **Table 8** and **Figure 10** indicate that levels of socio-economic disadvantage vary widely across the LGA. The highest levels of socio-economic disadvantage are clustered in the northeastern suburbs – Warilla, Lake Illawarra, Barrack Heights and Mount Warrigal. These suburbs also tend to have lower levels of projected population growth. Lower levels of disadvantage are found in the southeast of the LGA, with Shell Cove – Dunmore by far the least disadvantaged suburb.

Table 8   SEIFA Index of Relative Socio-Economic Disadvantage (IRSED) by suburb

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

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

Figure 10   Index of Relative Socio-Economic Disadvantage by SA1, Shellharbour LGA, 2016
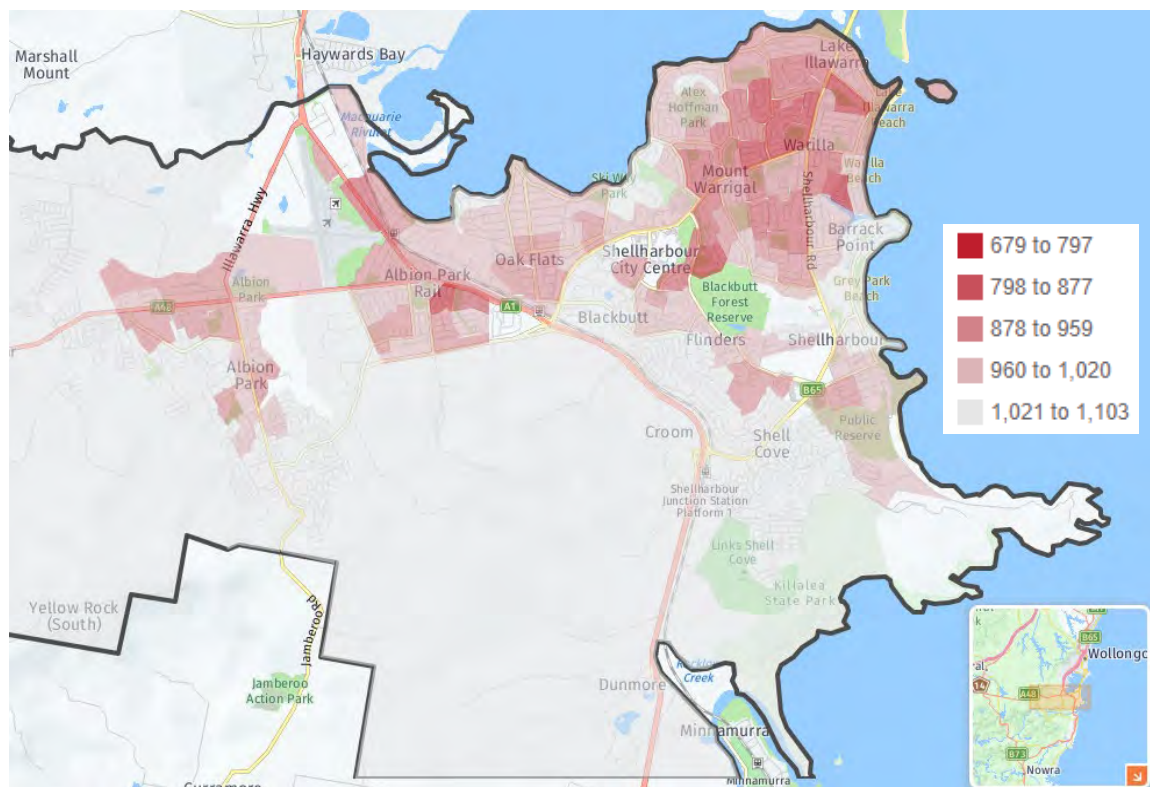
Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing, 2016 (Usual residence data). Compiled and presented in atlas.id by .id, the population experts.

While SEIFA indicates an area's relative level of socio-economic disadvantage overall, it is also important to understand which specific elements of disadvantage or vulnerability are prevalent in each community.

Informed Decisions (.id) identifies a range of characteristics of potentially vulnerable people that can be measured using Census data. The prevalence of these characteristics among suburb populations is listed in **Table 9**, which highlights several suburbs with multiple areas of vulnerability. According to these measures, the most vulnerable communities in Shellharbour are Warilla, Lake Illawarra, Mount Warrigal and Barrack Heights, which mirrors results from the analysis of SEIFA data.

Table 9   Percentage of population meeting vulnerability criteria, Shellharbour suburbs, 2016

Area	People 65+	Lone person household	Disability	Poor English proficiency	No motor vehicle	No internet connection	Disengaged youth
Albion Park – Rural West	12.2%	13.7%	6.2%	0.5%	2.8%	16.1%	9.9%
Albion Park Rail - Croom	18.0%	21.1%	8.4%	0.7%	4.7%	23.8%	14.2%
Barrack Heights	19.0%	22.6%	7.2%	2.7%	6.3%	26.8%	15.4%
Blackbutt – Shellharbour City Centre	17.7%	20.6%	9.2%	3.5%	6.8%	22.3%	5.6%
Flinders	10.0%	14.3%	3.9%	2.1%	2.5%	16.2%	9.7%
Lake Illawarra	20.9%	35.1%	8.7%	1.7%	12.3%	36.8%	15.0%
Mount Warrigal	20.8%	17.0%	8.4%	1.9%	5.2%	21.8%	17.8%
Oak Flats	19.4%	21.5%	6.7%	1.2%	4.5%	23.2%	11.6%
Shell Cove - Dunmore	10.8%	8.0%	3.2%	1.2%	0.1%	8.1%	6.3%
Shellharbour – Barrack Point	19.4%	21.1%	4.9%	1.4%	4.0%	25.2%	6.7%
Warilla	22.6%	29.1%	9.9%	2.2%	11.7%	36.1%	17.7%
Shellharbour LGA	**16.6%**	**19.6%**	**6.8%**	**1.6%**	**5.2%**	**22.5%**	**11.5%**
NSW	**16.2%**	**22.4%**	**5.4%**	**4.5%**	**8.8%**	**21.8%**	**9.0%**

Note: Shaded cells indicate the most vulnerable suburbs for each criterion. Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics Census of Population and Housing, 2016.

6.7 Implications for community facilities

The Shellharbour LGA population trends raise several important issues in terms of community facility planning for the next ten years and beyond. Many trends are worth highlighting, including:

- Ongoing growth in the proportion of people over the age of 70. Ageing is forecast across all suburbs, however by 2031, Albion Park Rail, Oak Flats and Warilla will have distinctly older age profiles (albeit that infill development tends to attract younger households). A growing population of older people will likely result in evolution in housing typologies, with more retirement villages and independent living units that may provide access to common areas and shared community facilities.

- The new-release areas of Shell Cove, Flinders, Tullimbar and Calderwood are home to a high and growing number of young people and families. There will be growing demand for child, youth and family-friendly facilities, indicating that consideration will need to be given to how to best cater for different cohorts within the 0-24-year bracket, including in terms of their access to social and recreation opportunities that cater for younger age groups.

- It is expected that there will be a shift from low density to more medium density housing, with implications concerning expectations and needs for community facilities.

- Suburbs in the northeast around Warilla tend to have some of the highest levels of disadvantage not only in the LGA, but in all of Australia. They also have lower levels of car ownership, highlighting the importance of ensuring most residents have access to quality accessible community facilities.

7 Current supply and usage of community facilities

Key findings:

- Club houses and amenity rooms are the most widely used type of facility among phone survey respondents.

- 50% of Council owned community facilities were built since the 1990s, while the other 50% were built in the 1970s – 1980s.

- 61% of community facilities are in excellent condition.

- Most facilities are within a 200m catchment from a bus stop, however, buses are often infrequent and route planning can be challenging.

- The least widely used facilities are those targeted at specific demographic groups – senior citizens centres, youth centres, and child and family centres.

- Most people who use community facilities tend to do so a few times a year or less.

- Just over one quarter (27%) of respondents said they never use any type of community facility.

7.1 Number, type and location of facilities

As listed in **Table 2**, Shellharbour City Council owns a total of **54 community facilities** included within the scope of this Needs Study, with an additional three **community facilities** planned to be built by 2022/2023, including Calderwood Community Centre, Tullimbar Community Facility and Shell Cove Community Centre.

Community facilities were categorised into nine types based on their primary function (see **Figure 11**):

- The largest provision of community facility types is among those that cater for a broader range of uses. Halls, function and event spaces are the most common type of facility, ahead of club houses and amenity rooms and community and neighbourhood centres.

- There are fewer numbers of facilities with more specific uses or user groups, such as youth centres, surf life saving clubs and arts and cultural centres.

Figure 11 Number of Council-owned community facilities in Shellharbour, by type

Facility type	Count
Halls, function and event spaces	17
Club houses and amenity rooms	10
Community and neighbourhood centres*	7
Baby, parent and child centres	5
Senior citizen centres	4
Youth centres	2
Surf lifesaving club houses	2
Arts and cultural centres	2
Other community facilities	4
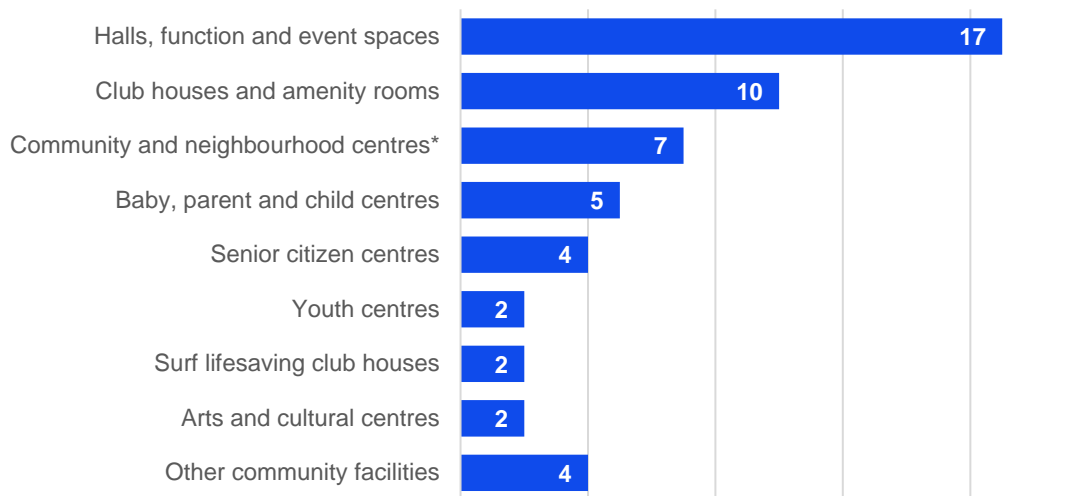
** Does not include the three **new community centres/facilities** planned to be built in Calderwood, Tullimbar and Shell Cove. Source: Shellharbour City Council Assets Data, UTS:IPPG analysis.*

7.2   Age and condition of facilities

Most community facilities owned by Shellharbour City Council were built in the 1980s, whilst the second most popular decade was 1990 when 29% of the facilities were built. The rate has decreased significantly since the beginning of the century, with only just above 20% of the facilities dating from 2000 onwards.

Figure 12 Age of Council-owned community facilities in Shellharbour

Decade	Percentage
2010s	4%
2000s	17%
1990s	29%
1980s	40%
Pre-1980	10%

Source: Shellharbour City Council Assets Data, UTS:IPPG analysis.

Figure 13 Shellharbour LGA community facilities by conditions

Community Facilities by Condition

Administrative Boundary
- Local Government Boundary
- Suburb Boundary
- Parks/Community lands
- State/National Park

Community Facility Condition
- As New / Excellent
- Good / Satisfactory
- Fair / Tolerable
- Poor / Intolerable
- Proposed (not yet built)

KEY	DESCRIPTION
1	Albion Park Girl Guides Hall
2	Albion Park Community Centre
3	Former Tongarra Museum
4	Albion Park Showground - HACC Centre
5	Albion Park Showground - Rural Youth Hall
6	Albion Park Showground - Scout Hall (Tongarra Scouts)
7	Albion Park Showground - Centenary Hall
8	Pavillions at Albion Park Showgrounds
9	Albion Park Baby Health Centre
10	Terry Reserve Clubroom and Hall (Field 1)
11	Croom Sports Complex Centenary Oval - Eagles Function Centre
12	Croom Sports Complex - Hockey Clubhouse
13	Croom Sports Complex - Swansea Farm House
14	Light Rail Museum Society Building
15	Albion Park Rail German Air Rifle Club
16	Croom Sports Complex - Caretakers Cottage
17	McDonald Park Pigeon Club
18	Alunga Child Care Centre Albion Park Rail

KEY	DESCRIPTION
19	Koninderie Childcare Centre Albion Park Rail
20	Albion Park Rail Community Centre
21	SMARTS (Mud Brick) Studio
22	Yovelton House
23	Keith Bond Oval Club Room
24	Geoff Shaw Oval Club Room
25	Oak Flats Swimming Centre Club House
26	Deakin Reserve Sailing Club
27	Old Oak Flats Fire Station (Former)
28	Oak Flats Senior Citizens Centre
29	Oak Flats Neighbourhood Centre
30	Blackbutt Youth Centre
31	Wallaroo Childcare Centre Blackbutt
32	Boonerah Point Scout Hall
33	Joan Pearce Hostel
34	Howard Fowles Oval Club Room
35	Warilla One Stop Shop
36	Warilla Community Centre

KEY	DESCRIPTION
37	Warilla Senior Citizens Centre (Former)*
38	Warilla Surf Life Saving Club House
39	Lowe Park Scout Hall
40	Oakleigh Park Neighbourhood Centre
41	Flinders Child and Family Centre
42	Shell Cove Community Centre
43	Sea Spray Function Centre
44	Shellharbour Surf Clubhouse
45	Shellharbour Girl Guides Hall (Former)
46	Shellharbour Heritage Council Chambers
47	Imaginarium
48	Ron Costello Oval Club Room

Proposed Centres and Facilities

A	Calderwood Community Centre (Proposed)
B	Shell Cove Community Centre (Proposed)
C	Tullimbar Community Facility (Proposed)

CONDITION
- As New / Excellent
- Good / Satisfactory
- Fair / Tolerable
- Poor / Intolerable
- Proposed

The majority of Council-owned community facilities are in excellent or good condition (61%), while 31% are in fair condition and a further 8% (3 facilities) in a poor state. 11 out of the 54 facilities in scope for this Study are in excellent condition. It has to be noted that these 'as new' community facilities were built between 1984 – 2019.

Figure 14 Condition of Council-owned community facilities in Shellharbour
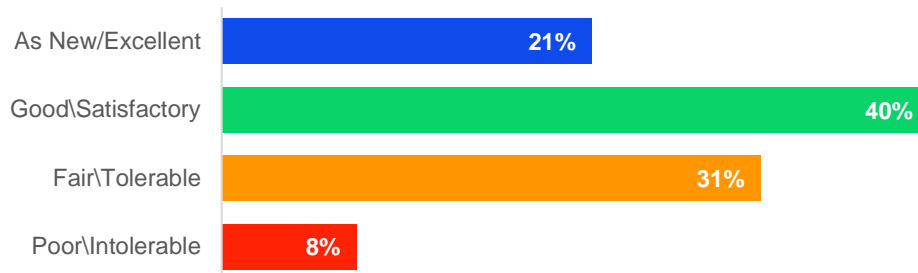
Source: Shellharbour City Council Assets Data, UTS:IPPG analysis.

Figure 13 plots the location of these facilities across the LGA. As may be expected, the majority of facilities that are rated poor/ intolerable or fair/ tolerable are located in the older, northern sections of the LGA, particularly in Albion Park Showground (APS), Albion Park Rail and Oak Flats.

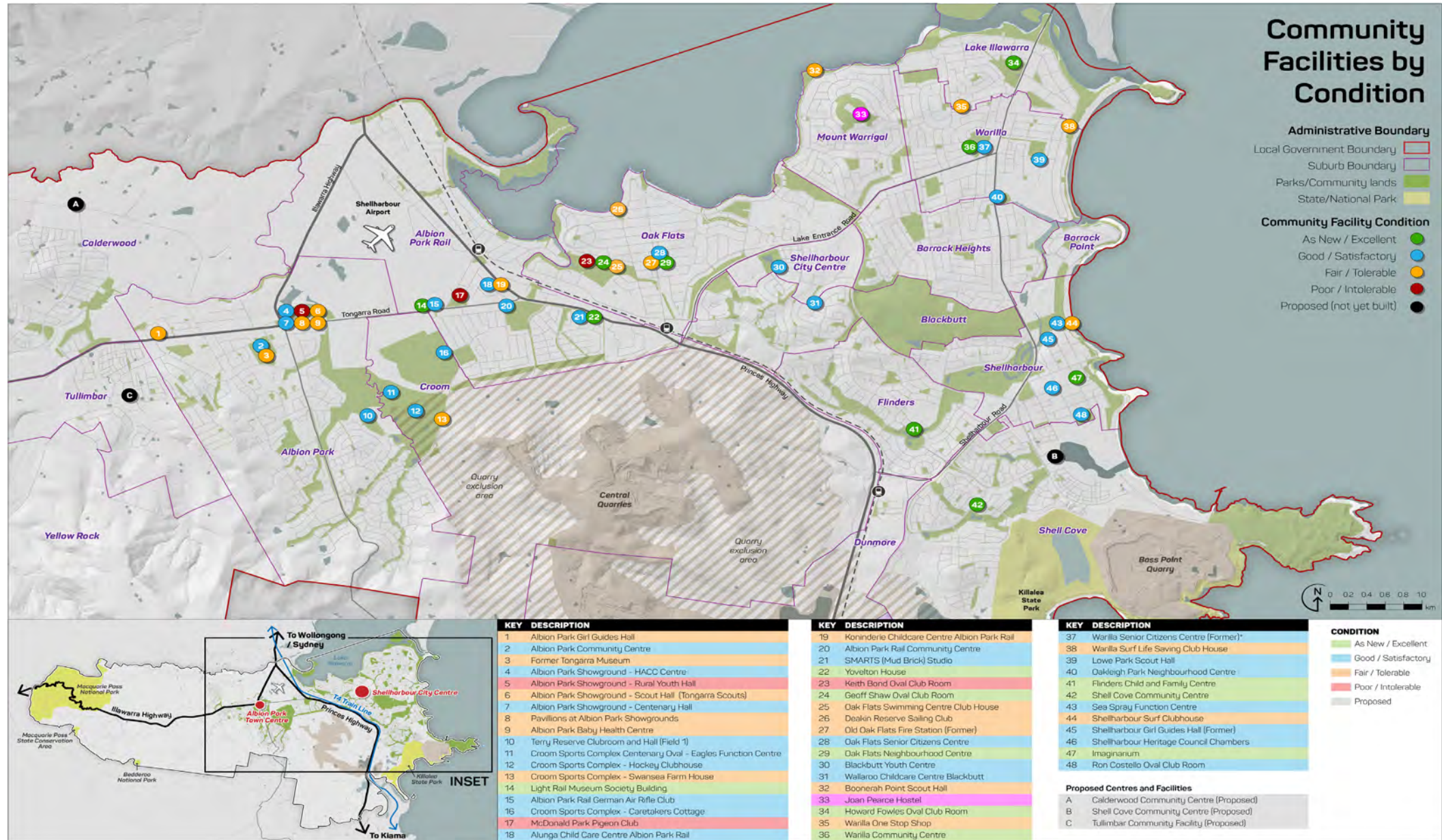**Table 10** below lists those facilities that are currently rated poor/ intolerable and fair/ tolerable suggesting the need for Council consideration and action.

Table 10   Shellharbour community facilities rates less than good/ satisfactory by Council staff

Facilities rated poor/ intolerable condition	Sports/ Recreation related facilities rated fair/ tolerable condition	Other facilities rated fair/ tolerable condition
• Keith Bond Oval Club Room • McDonald Park Pigeon Club • Rural Youth Hall	• Albion Park Girl Guides Hall • APS Scout Hall • Boonerah Point Scout Hall • Deakin Reserve Sailing Club • Shellharbour Surf Life Saving Club • Oak Flats Swimming Centre Club House • Warilla Surf Life Saving Club	• Albion Park Baby Health Centre • Former Tongarra Museum • Koninderie Child Care Centre • Swansea Farm House • Old Oak Flats Fire Station • Warilla One Stop Shop

`*Source: Shellharbour City Council Assets Data, UTS:IPPG analysis.*

It should be noted that two-thirds of the facilities rated poor/ intolerable and over half of the facilities rated fair/ tolerable are associated with sport and recreation. This requires consideration within the context of Council's 10-year Open Space and Recreation Strategy.

7.3   Community and public transport

Socio-economic circumstances are linked to travel behaviour, which is another important driver of demand for, and most importantly access to community facilities. Facilities that are not well served by public transport restrict or limit access to residents without cars.

Figure 15 shows the location of all Council-owned community facilities in relation to public transport. Although most facilities are within 100 – 200 metres walking distance from a bus stop, it should be noted that stakeholders commented that:

- Shellharbour's public transport timetable is relatively infrequent, meaning that if a resident missed a service, they may need to wait a further 45 - 60 minutes.
- After-hours services are challenging only operating until 8:30 pm, with weekend and public holiday services at a considerably reduced frequency.
- Difficulties associated with prams, walkers and other walking aids when boarding and exiting public transport.

A number of examples help illustrate potential access barriers for those lacking access to private cars:

a)   A weekday bus service from Warilla to Shellharbour City Centre runs one per hour and takes approximately 30 minutes to travel a distance that would normally be done in under 10 minutes whilst driving.

b)   Travelling by public transport during weekends is additionally challenging, with services from northern suburbs such as Warilla and Lake Illawarra to Shellharbour City Centre scheduled 2 hours apart, and concluding at 9 pm.

c)   If residents would wish to travel from Warilla and Lake Illawarra to Albion Park via public transport it would take them over 1 hour and at least 2 bus changes. This is a distance that can be done in just over 10 minutes by car.

Given that Warilla residents have high levels of disadvantage based on socio-economic data, and also have the lowest levels of car ownership in the Shellharbour LGA, these transport barriers pose genuine challenges.

Furthermore, the proposed Calderwood Community Centre is outside of the current bus catchment areas, making car ownership crucial for community members living beyond walking distance if they wish to use the facility.

Taken together, current public transport services pose genuine challenges to low-income community members who do not own a car, and for many others who may live in households with a car, though who do not have access to it, due to age or other competing demands. As expanded upon in Section 10, these access barriers are particularly problematic for many local young people, seniors, Aboriginal people, parents using strollers, and people with disability living in different parts of the LGA.

Figure 15   Shellharbour City Council community facilities proximity to public transport, by bus stops
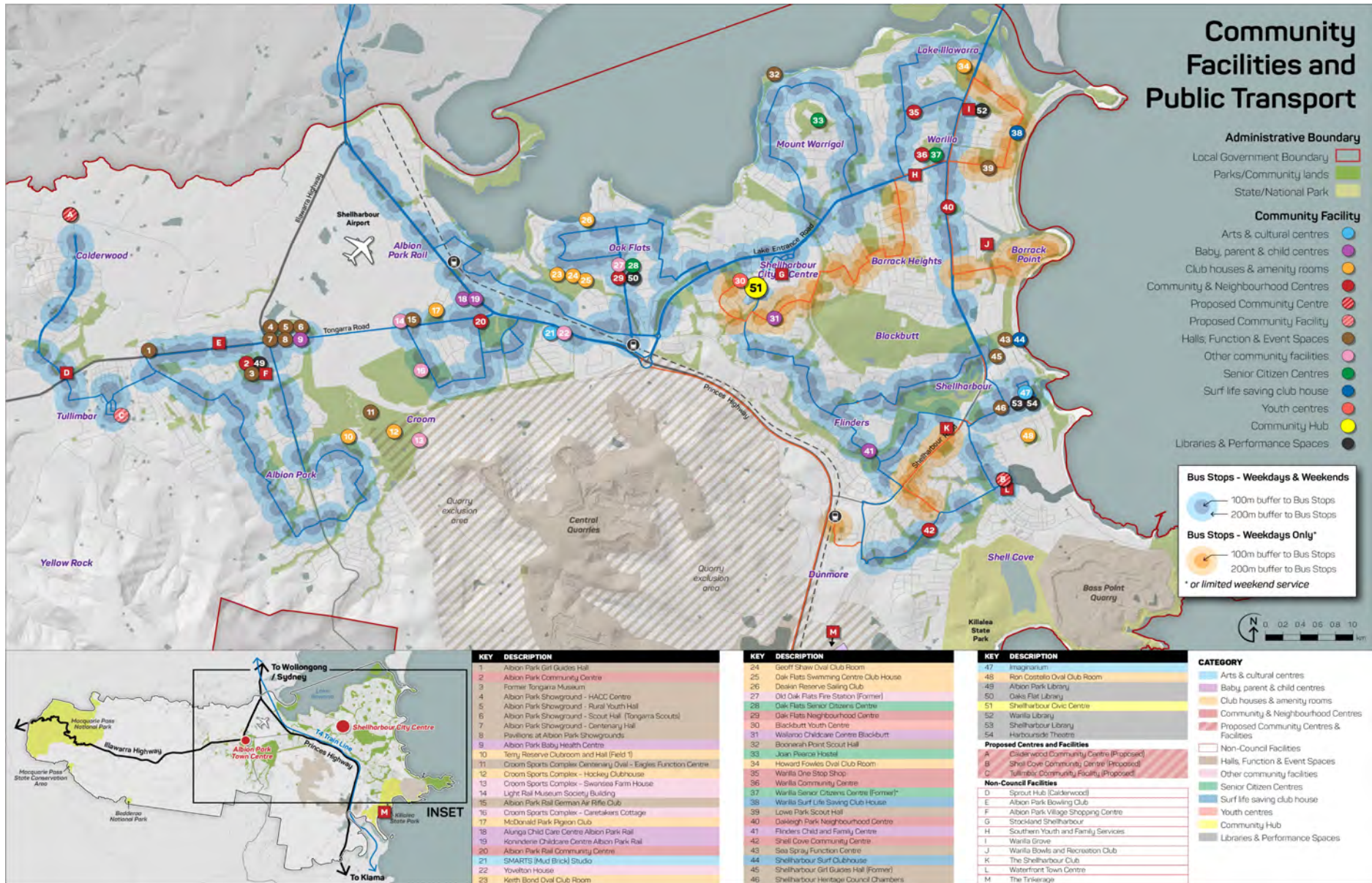
7.4   Current usage patterns

7.4.1   Findings from bookings data

The data below provides a summary of the community centre and hall bookings (either tentative or confirmed) over 6 months (1 Jan 2021 to 1 July 2021). This time period was chosen as it was considered as more representative of usage patterns than annual data covering 2020 given the impacts of COVID-19.

7.4.2   Number of hours booked by venue

Figure 16 shows the number of hours booked by venue. The total number of hours booked during the 6 months was 6,787 hours.

Flinders Child Family Centre had the highest number of hours booked at 1,420 hours (20.9% of the total hours), with the Former Tongarra Museum Building recording the lowest at 126 hours (1.8% of total hours).

Figure 16 Number of hours booked by venue
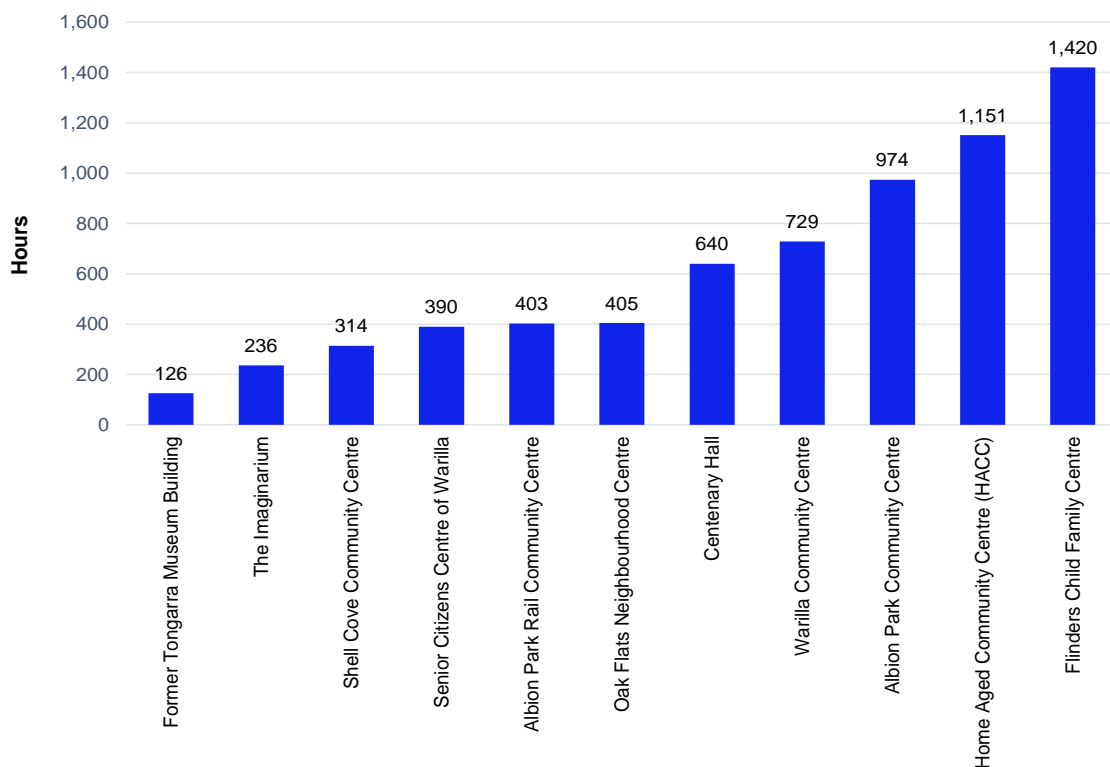
Source data: Shellharbour City Council Booking Information Jan – June 2021: IPPG analysis

The number of venue items (or facilities) in each venue contributes to the higher number of hours. For example, Flinders Child Family Centre (Table 10) have five items available for hire compared to the Former Tongarra Museum with only one (**Table 11**).

Figure 17 provides a percentage breakdown by venue based on the number of hours booked. Of the total number of hours booked over the 6 months, Flinders Child Family Centre booked 20.9%, Home Aged Community Centre booked 17.0% and Albion Park Community Centre booked 14.3%.

Figure 17   Booking hours by venue percentage split (%)
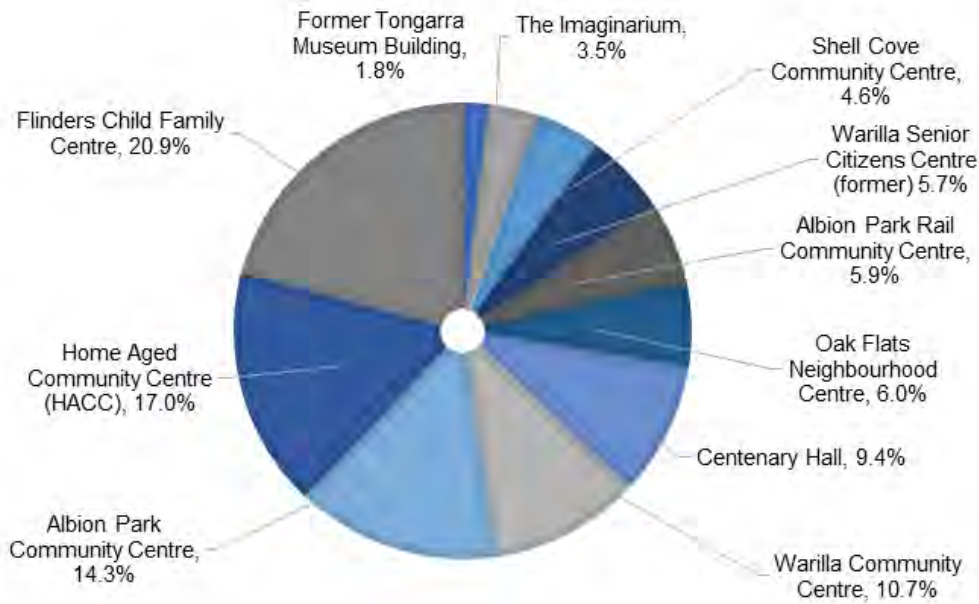
Source data: Shellharbour City Council Booking Information Jan – June 2021: IPPG analysis

Table 11 provides a summary of community utilisation by venue. The Albion Park Community Centre along with the Flinders Child Family Centre and Home Aged Community Centre (HACC) have the highest number of bookings, at 303, 267 and 198 bookings, respectively. The three venues also have the highest number of attendees.

Table 11   Venue utilisation summary data

Venue	Number of bookings	Booking hours	Number of Attendees
Albion Park Community Centre	303	974	5,470
Albion Park Rail Community Centre	169	403	2,472
Centenary Hall	161	640	4,105
Flinders Child Family Centre	267	1,420	5,733
Former Tongarra Museum Building	49	126	937
Home Aged Community Centre (HACC)	198	1,151	4,834
Oak Flats Neighbourhood Centre	98	405	2,612
Warilla Senior Citizens Centre	68	390	1,852
Shell Cove Community Centre	124	314	1,726
The Imaginarium	37	236	309
Warilla Community Centre	204	729	3,002
Grand Total	**1,678**	**6,787**	**33,052**

Source data: Shellharbour City Council Booking Information Jan – June 2021: IPPG analysis

Key utilisation metrics are provided in **Table 12**.

Interestingly, the Warilla Senior Citizens Centre (27.2) and the Oak Flats Neighbourhood Centre (26.7) have the highest number of attendees per booking. This may be due to these venues being larger and therefore having a higher capacity of attendees.

Although the Imaginarium has the lowest number of attendees per booking, it also has the highest average hours per booking.

Table 12   Venue utilisation summary metric

Venue	The average number of attendees per booking	Average hours per booking
Albion Park Community Centre	18.1	3.2
Albion Park Rail Community Centre	14.6	2.4
Centenary Hall	25.5	4.0
Flinders Child Family Centre	21.5	5.3
Former Tongarra Museum Building	19.1	2.6
Home Aged Community Centre (HACC)	24.4	5.8
Oak Flats Neighbourhood Centre	26.7	4.1
Warilla Senior Citizens Centre	27.2	5.7
Shell Cove Community Centre	13.9	2.5
The Imaginarium	8.4	6.4
Warilla Community Centre	14.7	3.6
Grand Total	**19.7**	**4.0**

Source data: Shellharbour City Council Booking Information Jan – June 2021: IPPG analysis

As illustrated in **Figure 18** below, youth, faith, and children and family organisations/groups were the most frequent users with 5,660, 5,629 and 4,330 attendees over the 6 months, respectively.

Figure 18 Number of attendees by user type
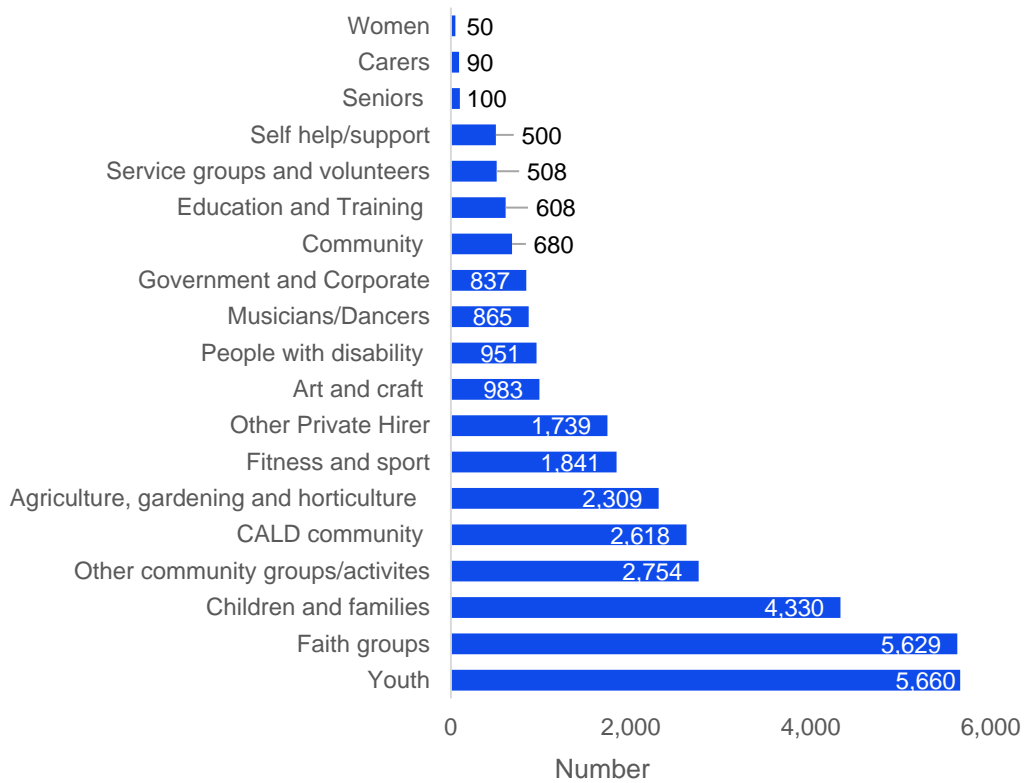
User type	Number
Women	50
Carers	90
Seniors	100
Self help/support	500
Service groups and volunteers	508
Education and Training	608
Community	680
Government and Corporate	837
Musicians/Dancers	865
People with disability	951
Art and craft	983
Other Private Hirer	1,739
Fitness and sport	1,841
Agriculture, gardening and horticulture	2,309
CALD community	2,618
Other community groups/activites	2,754
Children and families	4,330
Faith groups	5,629
Youth	5,660

Source data: Shellharbour City Council Utilisation Information Jan – June 2021: IPPG analysis

* 'Other' private hirers included those not related to government or corporate, such as birthday or engagement parties.

** 'Other' community groups/activities included those not related to a specific demographic.

As shown in **Figure 19**, the user type that had booked the most hours over the 6 months were people with disability, with 1,574 hours.

Figure 19 Booking hours by user type

User type	Hours
Seniors	15
Women	16
Carers	18
Service groups and volunteers	35
Self help/support	63
Community	121
Musicians/Dancers	136
Fitness and sport	153
Art and craft	189
Education and Training	262
Other Private Hirer	291
Government and Corporate	361
Faith groups	398
Other community groups/activites	478
CALD community	603
Children and families	674
Youth	684
Agriculture, gardening and horticulture	719
People with disability	1,574

Source data: Shellharbour City Council Utilisation Information Jan – June 2021: IPPG analysis
* 'Other' private hirers included those not related to government or corporate, such as birthday or engagement parties.
** 'Other' community groups/activities included those not related to a specific demographic.

Figure 20 below shows the proportion of booking hours by user type. Of all the hours booked, 23% were attributed to organisations for people with disability, 11% for agriculture, gardening and horticulture organisations, and 10% for youth organisations.

Figure 20 Proportion of booking hours by user type

Source data: Shellharbour City Council Utilisation Information Jan – June 2021: IPPG analysis
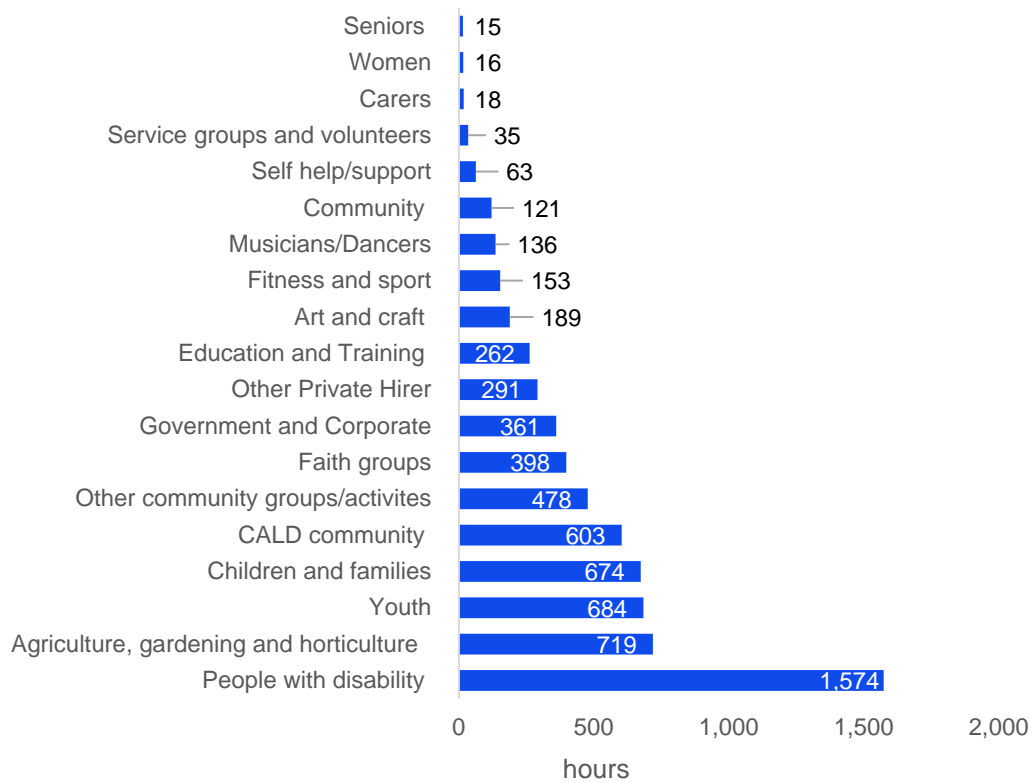* 'Other' private hirers included those not related to government or corporate, such as birthday or engagement parties.
** 'Other' community groups/activities included those not related to a specific demographic.

Figure 21 shows the average booking hours per attendee by user type were 1.65 hours for organisations for people with disability, 0.43 hours for education and training organisations, and 0.43 hours for government and corporate organisations.

Figure 21 Average booking hours per attendee by user type

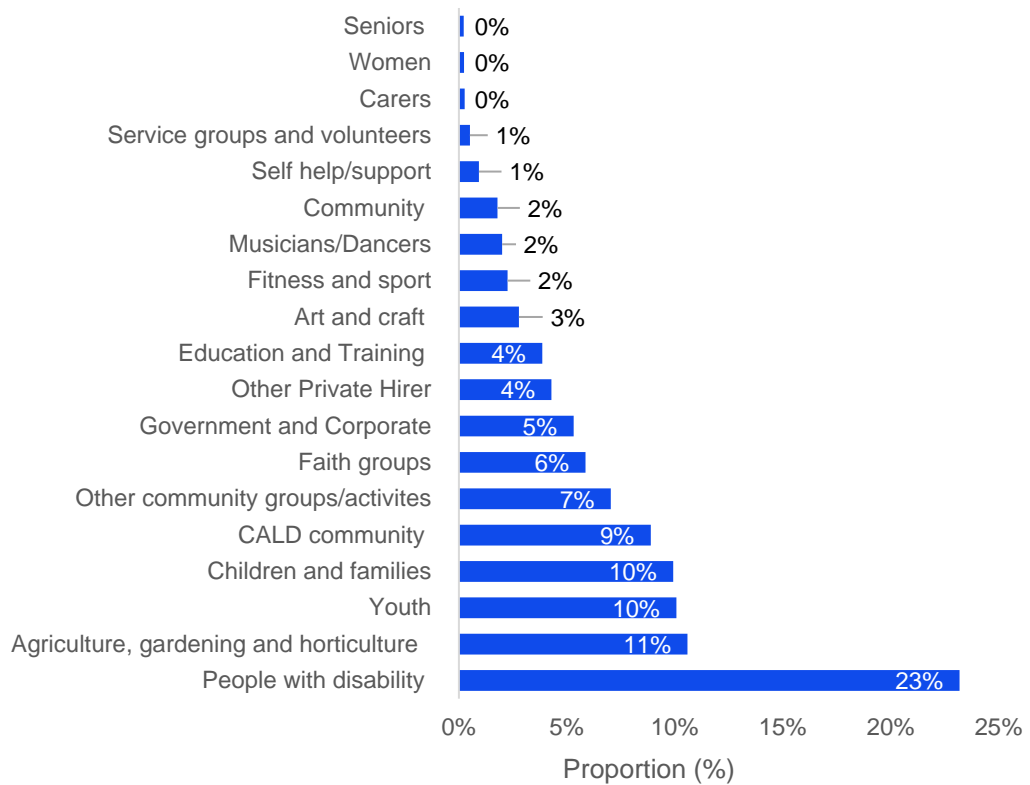Source data: Shellharbour City Council Utilisation Information Jan – June 2021: IPPG analysis
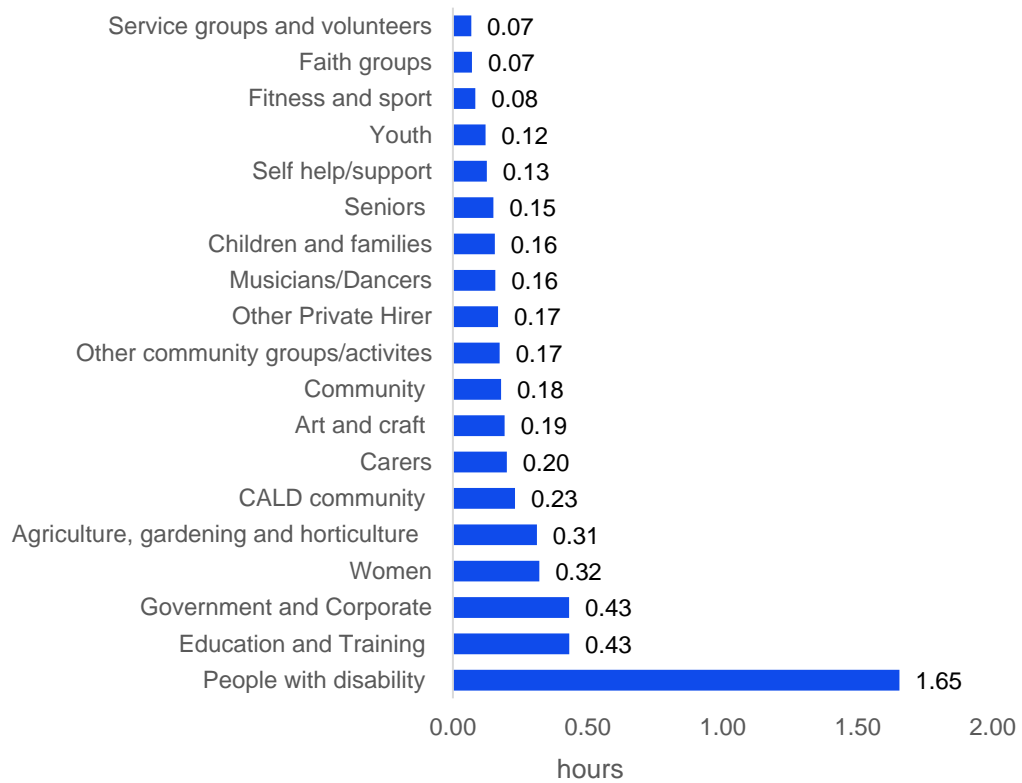
* 'Other' private hirers included those not related to government or corporate, such as birthday or engagement parties.

** 'Other' community groups/activities included those not related to a specific demographic.

Figure 22 shows the number of attendees by their purpose for booking. Most attendees booked for health and wellbeing related activities (11,824) including exercise and sport, drug and alcohol support, and community care; religious gatherings (4,934); meetings (4,307), including garden club meetings and meetings for Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) people; and education programs, including parenting groups and community college.

Figure 22 Number of attendees by booking purpose
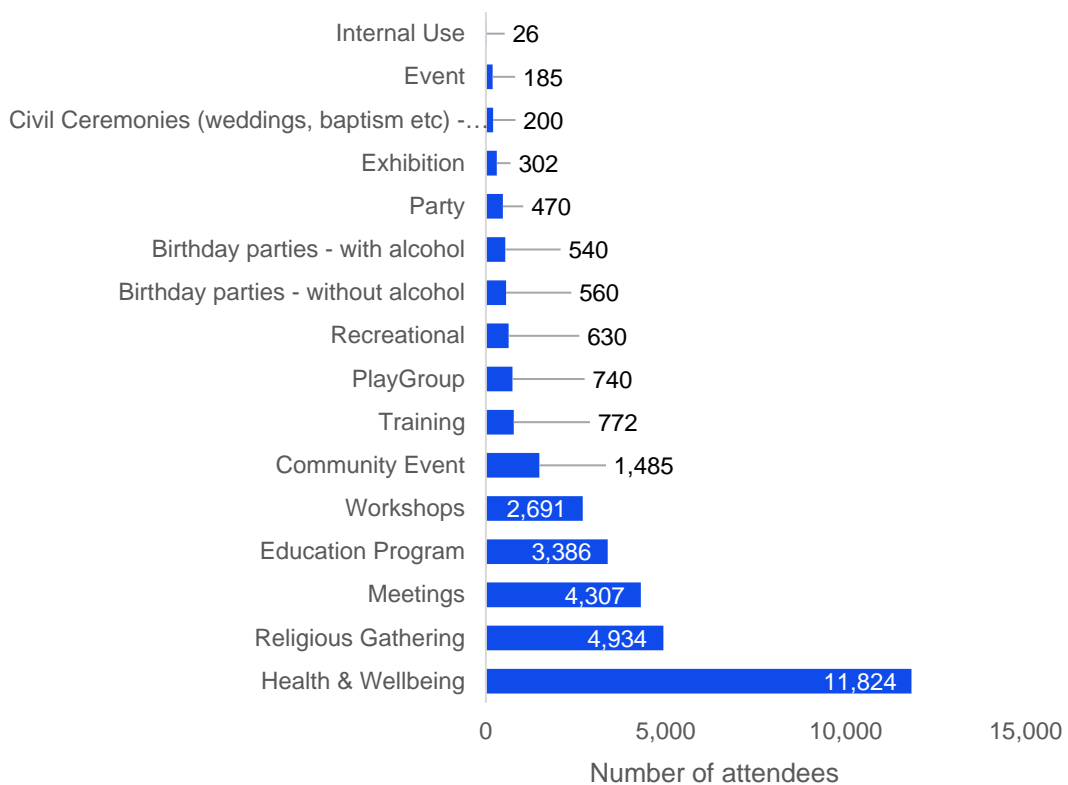
Source data: Shellharbour City Council Utilisation Information Jan – June 2021: IPPG analysis

Figure 23 Proportion of the number of attendees by booking purpose (%)
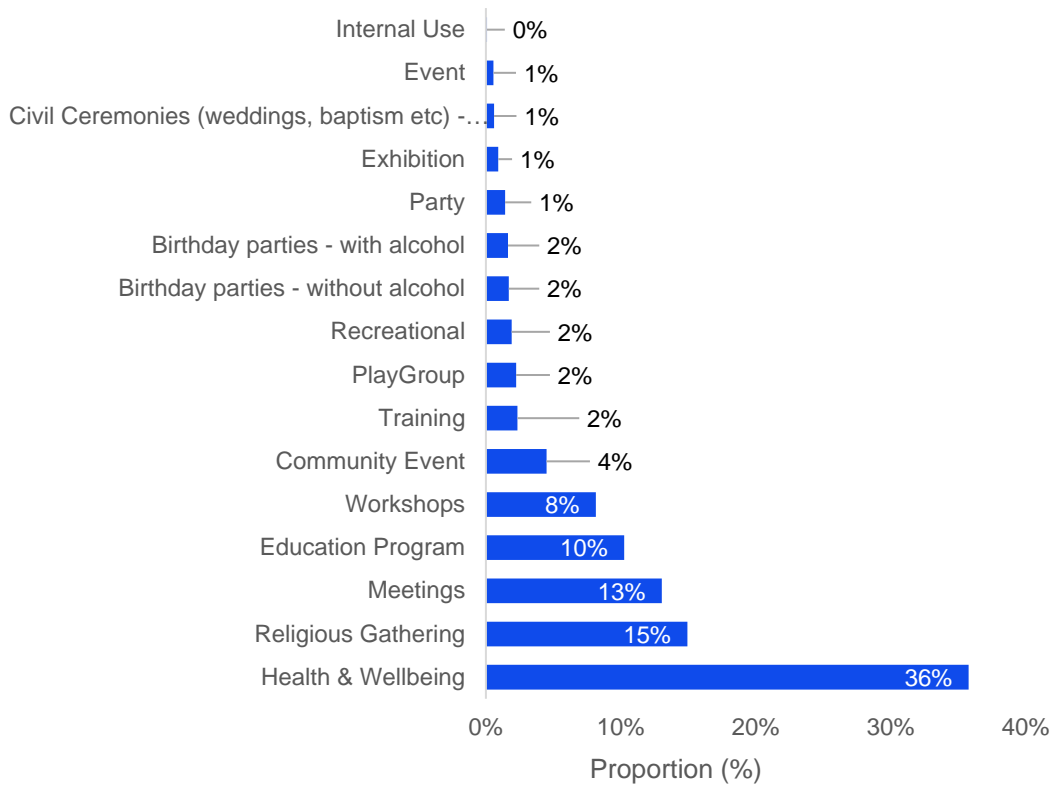
Source data: Shellharbour City Council Utilisation Information Jan – June 2021: IPPG analysis

Figure 23 shows the proportion of the number of attendees by booking purpose. Of all the attendees over the 6 months, 36% booked for health and wellbeing reasons, 15% for religious gatherings and 13% for meetings. Given the results provided in **Figure 22** and **Figure 23**, it is clear that overwhelmingly, most people are attending for health and wellbeing purposes. This category is diverse and consists of craft groups, multicultural/language groups, sport and exercise groups, games afternoons, counselling and self-help services, speech pathology and community care.

7.5 Phone survey usage feedback

The representative phone survey (n=451) asked respondents:

> *"In a typical 12-month period (not affected by COVID-19 restrictions), how frequently do you or a member of your household use the following types of community facilities in the Shellharbour Council area?"*

As documented in **Figure 24**, key findings are as follows:

- Each type of facility is only used by a minority of respondents. The proportion stating they 'never' use each facility type ranged from 53% for club houses and amenity rooms to 90% for senior citizens centres.

- Club houses and amenity rooms are the most widely used facility, with 47% of respondents using them at some stage in a typical year.

- Halls, function and event spaces are also quite widely used – by 39% of respondents – however, most use these facilities only a few times a year or once a year.

- The least widely used facilities were those targeted at specific demographic groups – senior citizens centres (10% of respondents), youth centres (14%) and child and family centres (18%).

- Among those who do use each type of facility, most visit those facilities a few times a year or less.

- 27% of respondents stated they never use any of the listed types of community facilities.

Figure 24 Frequency of community facilities use by facility type

Facility type	Weekly or more	Fortnightly or Monthly	A few times a year	Once a year or less	Never
Club houses and amenity rooms	13%	10%	17%	7%	53%
Halls, function and event spaces	7%	5%	12%	15%	61%
Arts and cultural centres	2%	5%	16%	11%	66%
Surf life saving clubs	5%	6%	12%	8%	70%
Community or neighbourhood centres	4%	4%	13%	8%	71%
Baby, parent and child centres	7%	3%	5%	4%	82%
Youth centres	3%	2%	5%	4%	86%
Senior citizens centres	2%	2%	4%	2%	90%

Source: Shellharbour Community Facilities Phone Survey. Survey question: In a typical 12-month period (not affected by COVID-19 restrictions), how frequently do you or a member of your household use the following types of community facilities in the Shellharbour Council area? Sample: n=451.

7.6   Online survey usage feedback

The *Let's Chat* online survey (n=79) for community members asked respondents:

In the last 2-3 years, have you or anyone in your household visited any of the following types of community facilities in the Shellharbour City Council area?

Findings were similar to those from the phone survey (see **Figure 24**).

- Club houses and amenity rooms and halls, function and event spaces were the most widely used types of community facilities.

- Facilities targeted at specific demographic groups – senior citizens centres, youth centres and baby, parent and child centres had the lowest rates of use among the survey sample.

- The question also allowed respondents to nominate other types of community facilities they have used in the past 2-3 years. Although 29% of respondents nominated an 'other' facility type, these mainly included facilities outside the scope of this study, such as libraries, sports fields, skate parks and swimming pools.

Figure 25 Use of community facilities in the past 2-3 years
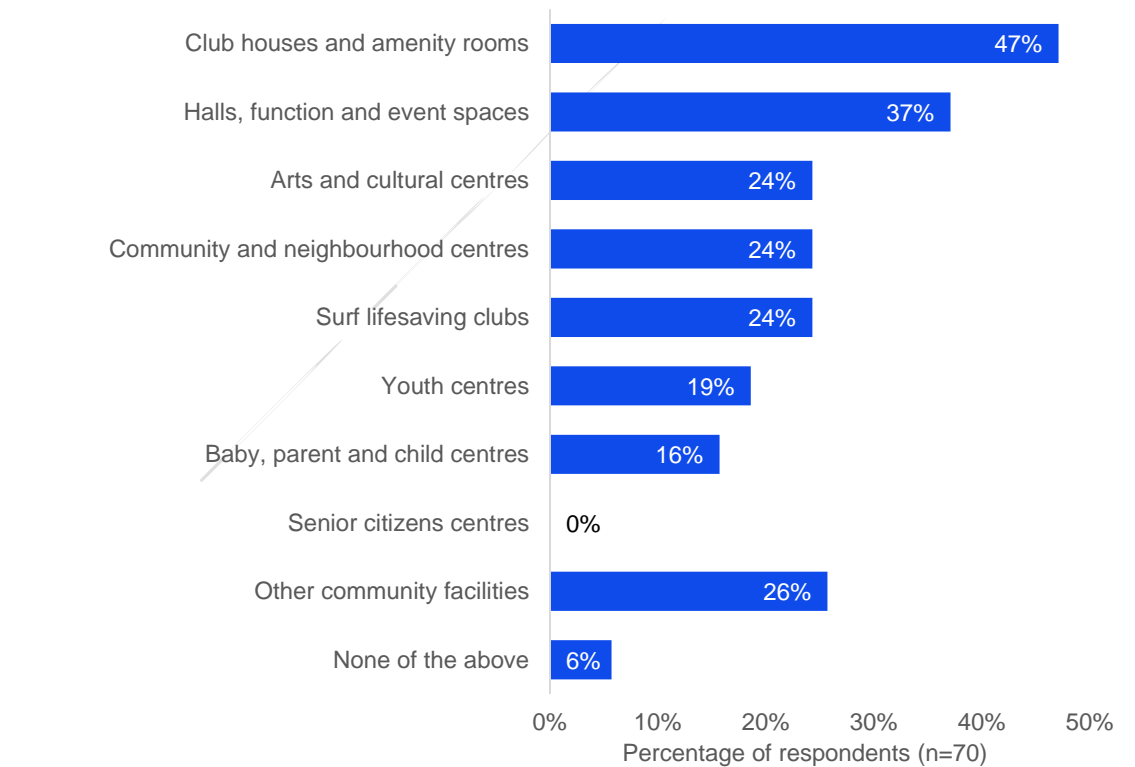
Source: Shellharbour Community Facilities Online (Let's Chat) Community Members Survey. Survey question: In the last 2-3 years, have you or anyone in your household visited any of the following types of community facilities in the Shellharbour City Council area? Sample: n=70.

8 Community experiences and perceptions on community facilities

Key findings:

This section summarises what the Shellharbour community had to say about their experiences and perceptions of Council's community facilities when asked in the phone survey and via Council's *Let's Chat* online survey:

- The most common aspect phone survey respondents like about their most familiar community facility is that it is easy to get to.

- Other aspects respondents frequently mentioned they like include the quality or condition of the facility and the activities they do there.

- The most common reason given for not attending any community facilities was that respondents did not need to use them.

- Almost two-thirds of phone survey respondents were either satisfied or very satisfied overall with the community facilities provided by Council.

- Most *Let's Chat* survey respondents expressed positive views of their most familiar community facility in terms of design, features, condition and affordability. However, access to the right kind of technology is seen as a key area for improvement.

This section summarises what the Shellharbour community had to say about their experiences and perceptions of Council's community facilities when asked in the phone survey and via Council's *Let's Chat* online survey *(see Section 3 for details)*.

8.1 Phone survey perception of facilities

The phone survey (n=451) asked those who use at least one type of community facility to name one specific facility that they, or a member of their household, are most familiar with and then to explain what they like about that facility. **Figure 26** shows the themes that emerged from responses, with the following key findings:

- The most common aspect respondents liked about their most familiar facility was that it is easy to get to, which was mentioned by around one in four respondents.

- Around one in five respondents stated that they liked the quality or condition of the facility.

- The next most common factors respondents mentioned were focused on what happens inside the facilities rather than the physical buildings themselves. These

include the organised activities they do at the facility; and the quality of services offered there.

A large proportion of respondents (29%) mentioned 'other' factors beyond the nine themes listed in **Figure 26**. These consisted of a diverse range of responses including:

- Sense of community around the facility (e.g. "Gets people together to support each other"; "It gets people meeting up and learning")

- Opening hours and availability

- Family-friendly atmosphere

- Size of the space available

- The *type* of services offered to the broader community (e.g. community health services at community centres; promotion of water safety at surf life saving clubs)

Figure 26 What respondents like about their most familiar facility

Source: Shellharbour Community Facilities Phone Survey. Survey question: What is it that you like about [your most familiar community facility]? Note: Sum of percentages exceeds 100% as some responses included multiple themes. Sample: n=185 (respondents who use at least one facility type and who were familiar with at least one facility).

Survey respondents who indicated they 'never' attend any community facilities (n=122) were asked to explain why. **Figure 27** indicates:

- By far the most common reason, given by one-third of respondents, was simply that they did not need to use them.

- The next most common reasons were that the facilities do not offer services or programs respondents are interested in and that they are too busy to use them.

- Reasons relating to the location, design and features of the physical community facility buildings themselves were much less frequently mentioned as reasons for not using these facilities.

Figure 27 Reasons for not using any Council community facilities
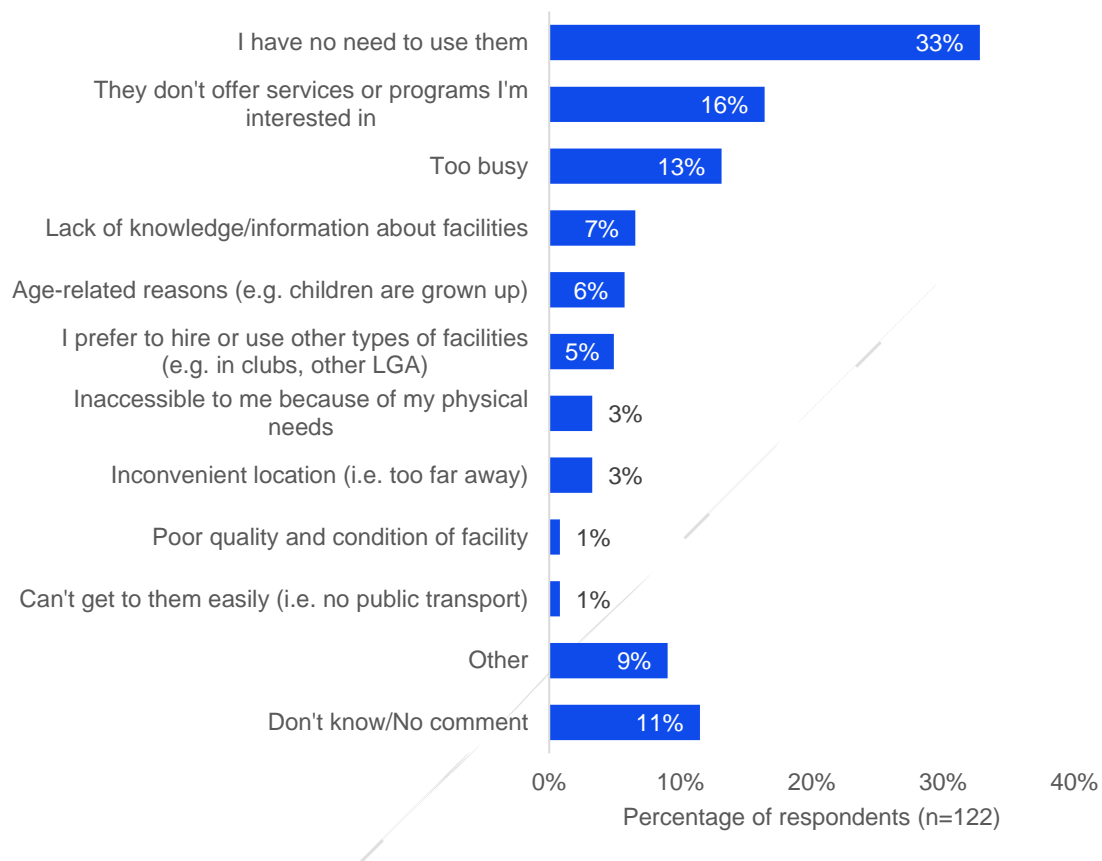
Source: Shellharbour Community Facilities Phone Survey. Survey question: Is there a reason why you or other household members don't use any of these community facilities? Note: Sum of percentages exceeds 100% as some responses included multiple themes. Sample: n=122 (respondents who stated they never use any community facilities).

The phone survey also asked respondents how satisfied they were overall with community facilities provided by Council. This was asked of the entire sample, regardless of whether they used community facilities or not. As shown in **Figure 28**, levels of satisfaction among respondents were quite high overall:

- Almost two-thirds (66%) of respondents were satisfied or very satisfied.

- Only 16% of respondents were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied, with the remaining 18% stating they had no opinion or would rather not say.

There were some variations in levels of satisfaction across different age groups (see **Figure 29**).

General satisfaction (satisfied or very satisfied) with community facilities was above 50% for all age groups.

- Younger people (aged 18-34) were most likely to express some degree of satisfaction (75%).

- Middle-aged people (aged 35-59) were most likely to express some degree of dissatisfaction with community facilities, although this was still a minority of that age group overall (22%).

Figure 28 Level of satisfaction with community facilities provided by Council
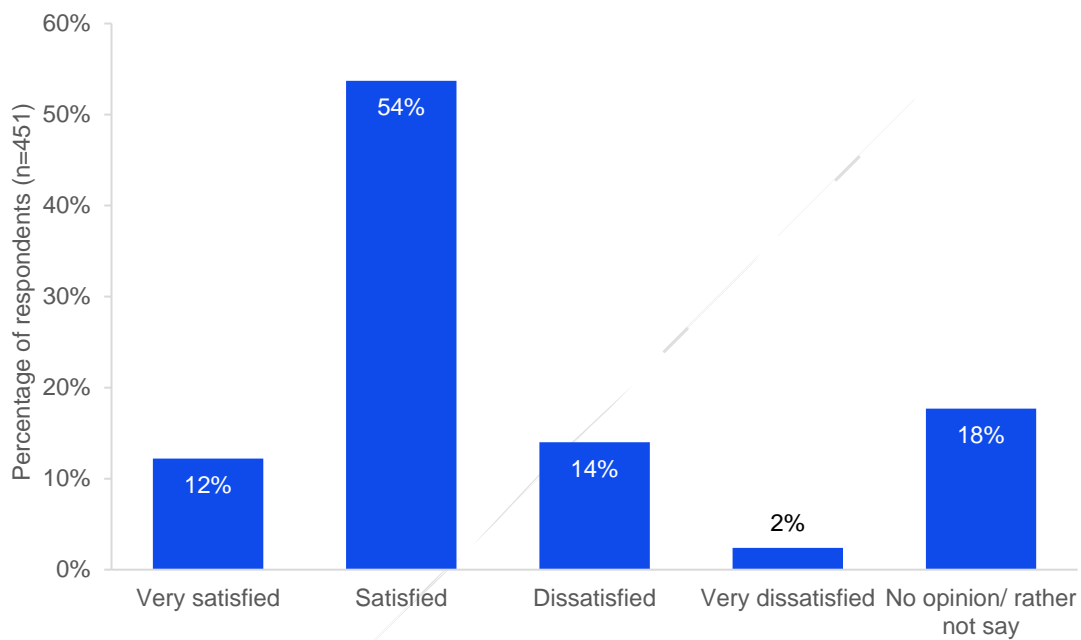
Source: Shellharbour Community Facilities Phone Survey. Survey question: Thinking generally about the community facilities provided by Shellharbour City Council, how satisfied are you overall? Sample: n=451.

Figure 29 Level of satisfaction with community facilities provided by Council, variations by age
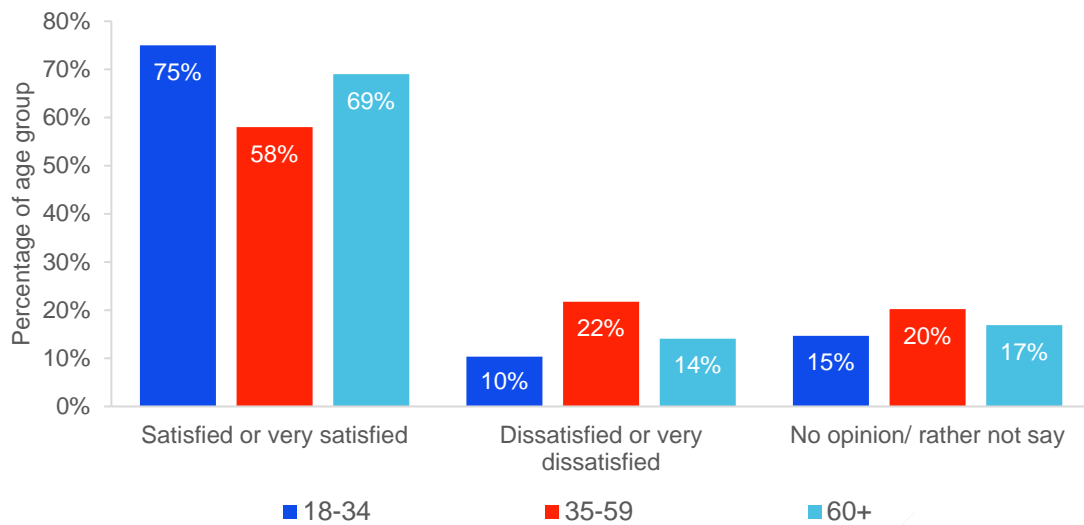
Source: Shellharbour Community Facilities Phone Survey. Survey question: Thinking generally about the community facilities provided by Shellharbour City Council, how satisfied are you overall? Sample: n=451.

Although the majority of respondents in each of Shellharbour's three postcodes said they were satisfied or very satisfied with community facilities provided by Council, there was a small minority (less than 20%) across all three postcodes stating they were more likely to say they were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied, although those responses still represented a small minority (20%) from that postcode.

- Respondents from postcode 2529 (i.e. Oak Flats, Blackbutt, Flinders, Shellharbour, Shell Cove) were more likely to say they were satisfied or very satisfied.

- Respondents from postcode 2527 (i.e. Albion Park) were more likely to say they were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied, although those responses still represented a small minority (20%) from that postcode.

Figure 30 Level of satisfaction with community facilities provided by Council, variations by postcode
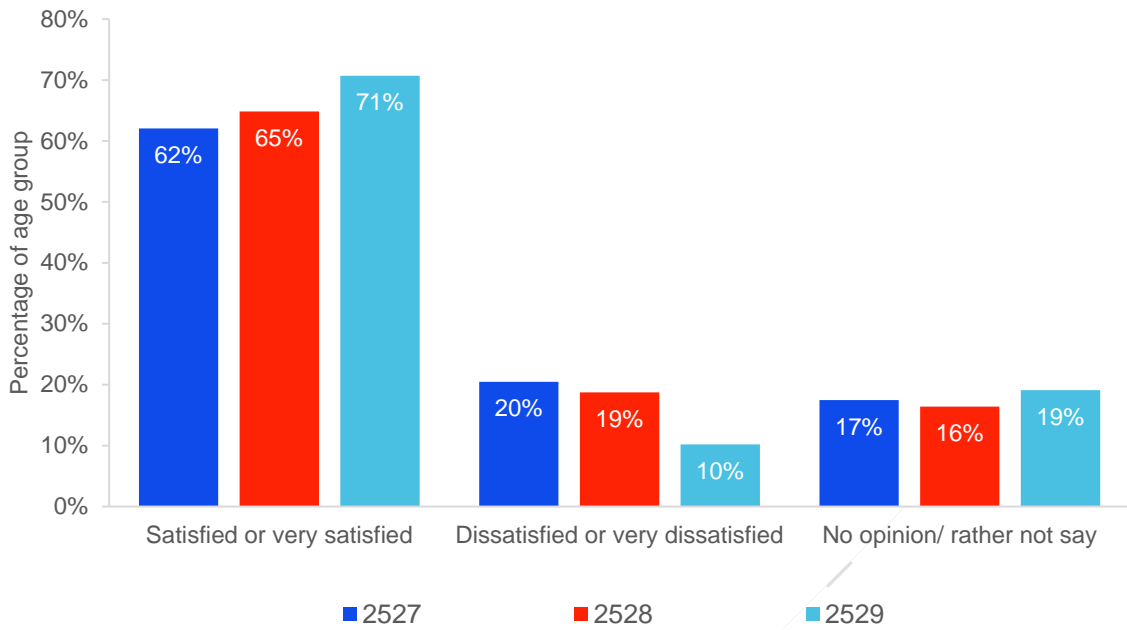

Source: Shellharbour Community Facilities Phone Survey. Survey question: Thinking generally about the community facilities provided by Shellharbour City Council, how satisfied are you overall? Sample: n=451.

8.2　Online survey perception of facilities

The *Let's Chat* online survey for community members (n= 79) asked respondents to name one community facility in the Shellharbour City Council area that they use most often or are most familiar with, and then provide feedback on their perceptions of that specific facility.

Despite the significant response rate (n=79), only 22 named a community facility within the scope of this Study and provided feedback on that facility. The results shown in **Figure 30** should be interpreted with this low sample size in mind.

Figure 31 reveals that respondents hold quite positive views of their chosen community facility in terms of various quality indicators:

- The strongest sentiments among respondents were about the safety and outdoor features of their chosen facility. Over 90% agreed that their facility feels safe and secure and has all the outdoor features they need.

- The overwhelming majority agreed with almost all other positive statements about their facility.

- A minority (41%) of respondents agreed that their facility has good environmentally-friendly features, however, this may reflect a lack of knowledge on this topic, given another 41% said it was hard to say or they were unsure.

- Only 36% of respondents agreed that their facility had the right kind of technology available, indicating this may be a key area for improvement.

Figure 31 Online community members survey respondents' perceptions of their most used or most familiar community facility

Statement	Agree	Disagree	Hard to say / unsure
It feels safe and secure	95%		
It has all the outdoor features I need	91%		
It is accessible and appropriate for my needs	86%	9%	
It is clean and tidy when I access it	82%	9%	9%
It is flexible enough for my purposes	82%		14%
It is the right size for my purposes	77%	18%	
It is affordable and is good value for money	73%		23%
It is well maintained and in good condition	73%	18%	9%
It has all the indoor features I need	73%	14%	14%
The opening hours suit me	68%		32%
It is clear who to contact if I have a query	68%	14%	18%
It has tables and chairs that are easy to move	68%	14%	18%
It has good environmentally-friendly features	41%	18%	41%
It has the right kind of technology available	36%	36%	27%

Percentage of respondents (n=22)

■ Agree   ■ Disagree   ■ Hard to say / unsure

Source: Shellharbour Community Facilities Online (Let's Chat) Community Members Survey. Survey question: Thinking of [your most used or most familiar community facility] please indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements. Sample: n=22 (respondents whose nominated facility is within the scope of the study).

8.3 Use of community facilities not provided by Shellharbour City Council

The *Let's Chat* online survey for community members asked respondents whether they or anyone in their household use community facilities provided by someone other than Shellharbour City Council for example by a club, a private provider or by another Council.

From a low total sample size (n=45):

- 38% of respondents (17/45) indicated that they or someone from their household use community facilities provided by someone other than Shellharbour City Council.

- Around half (51%) did not use any such facilities, and a further 11% were unsure.

- Among those who used facilities not provided by Shellharbour City Council, the most common types of facilities were club houses and amenity rooms (7 respondents) and halls, function and event spaces (4 respondents).

- The most common reasons given for using community facilities provided by someone other than Shellharbour City Council included:

  o The facility provides a service or activity that is unavailable through Shellharbour City Council (8 respondents); and

  o The facility provides a better quality service/activity than those available through Shellharbour City Council (6 respondents).

8.4 Online service providers and hirers survey perception of facilities

The *Let's Chat* online survey for service providers and hirers (n=25) asked respondents to name the main facility in the Shellharbour City Council area that they or their organisation use or hire. Respondents were then asked to provide feedback on their experience of this facility in terms of its usability and overall condition (see **Figure 32**) and booking and management.

Although a total sample size of n=25 respondents completed or partially completed the survey, only nine named a community facility within the scope of this study. The results below should be interpreted with this small sample size in mind.

Figure 32 shows that service providers and hirers generally expressed positive views of the facility they use across various indicators of usability and the overall condition of the facility. Similar to the *Let's Chat* survey for community members, the only area with a notable divergence in views was concerning whether the respondents' facility had the right kind of technology available.

Figure 32 Service providers' and hirers' perceptions of the usability and overall condition of the main community facility they use/hire
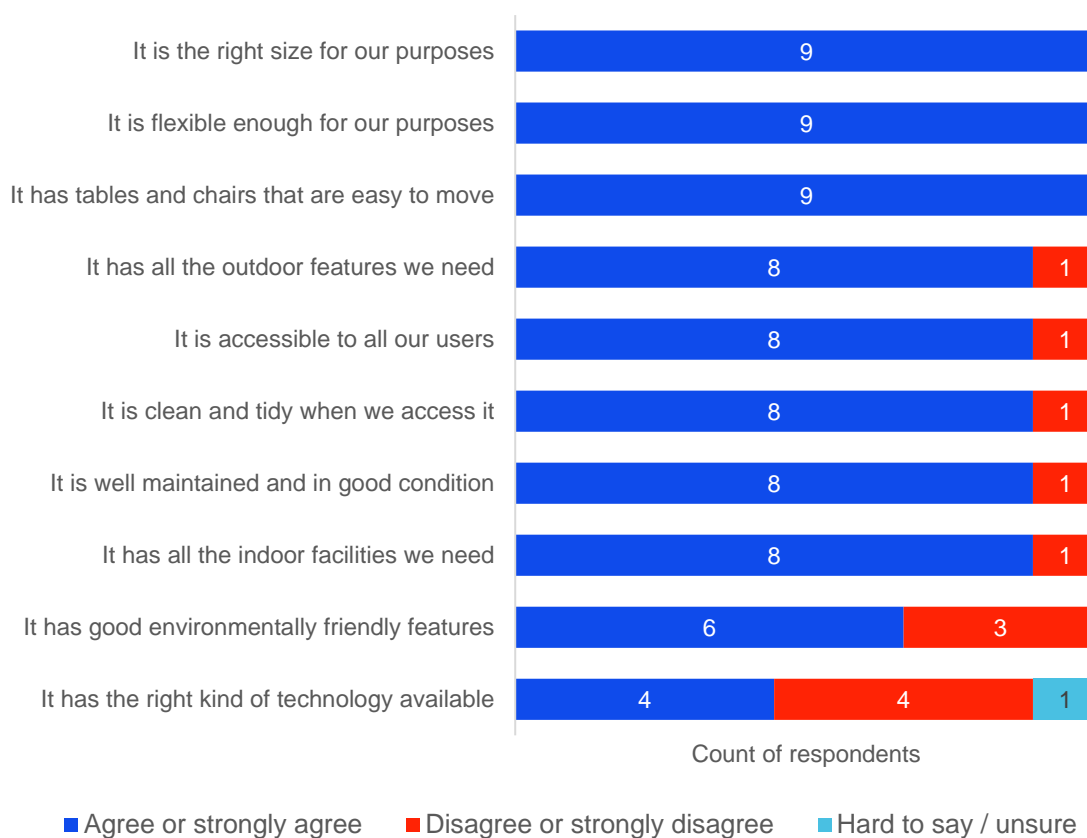
Source: Shellharbour Community Facilities Online (Let's Chat) Service Providers and Hirers Survey. Survey question: Thinking of [your most used or most familiar community facility] please indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements. Sample: n=9 (excludes respondents who answered in relation to a facility, not within the scope of the study).

In relation to the booking and management of these facilities, almost all respondents agreed with the following statements:

- It is affordable and good value for money.

- It is easy to hire the facility or renew our agreement

- It is clear who to contact if we have a query

- The conditions and rules of use are clear and available

- The opening hours suit our organisation

- It feels secure and safe.

9 Future use of and aspirations for community facilities

Key findings:

This section summarises what the Shellharbour community had to say about their aspirations and proposed future use of Council's community facilities when asked in the phone survey and via Council's *Let's Chat* online survey:

- Club houses and amenity rooms and arts and cultural centres are most likely to be used by phone survey respondents in the next five years.

- The majority of respondents do not expect to use a senior citizens centre, baby, parent and child centre or youth centre in the next five years.

- Phone survey respondents expressed a preference for community facilities that are shared by multiple users, staffed, and host organised activities. They also prefer funding to be allocated to upgrading existing facilities rather than building new ones.

- Phone survey respondents were evenly split on the issue of whether community facilities should be large, multi-purpose and fewer in number or small, specific use and larger in number.

- Kitchen facilities and bathrooms/toilets are the most common features phone survey respondents are looking for in a community facility.

- The features phone survey respondents most frequently described as 'must haves' include cleanliness, car parking spaces, moveable tables and chairs, air conditioning/heating, natural light and kitchen facilities.

- Among respondents to the *Let's Chat* survey for community members, there was strong demand for new multi-purpose facilities with flexible spaces.

This section summarises what the Shellharbour community had to say about their aspirations and proposed future use of Council's community facilities when asked in the phone survey and via Council's *Let's Chat* online survey *(see Section 3 for details)*.

9.1 Future use feedback

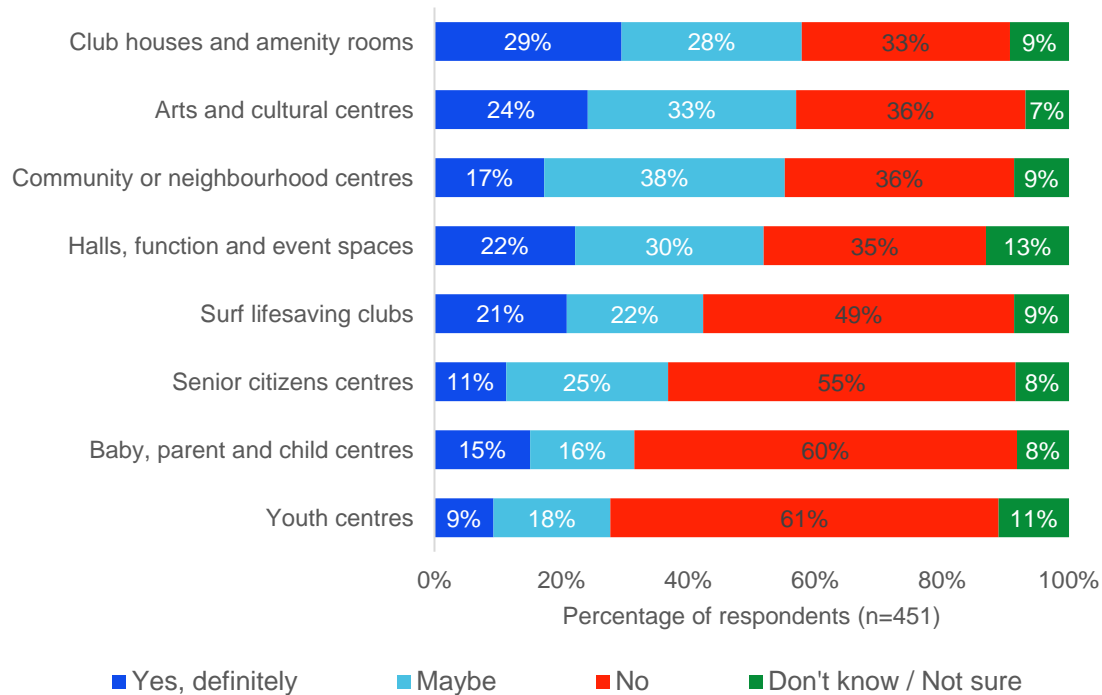The phone survey (n=451) included a question on respondents' expected use of community facilities over the next five years. As shown in **Figure 33**:

- Over half of all respondents stated they would 'definitely' or 'maybe' use club houses and amenity rooms, arts and cultural centres, community or neighbourhood centres and halls, function and event spaces.

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- Echoing findings from the earlier question on the current use of facilities, respondents indicated they would be least likely to use youth centres, baby, parent and child centres and senior citizens centres – the facility types with specific target demographics.

Figure 33 Expected use of community facilities in the next five years

	Yes, definitely	Maybe	No	Don't know / Not sure
Club houses and amenity rooms	29%	28%	33%	9%
Arts and cultural centres	24%	33%	36%	7%
Community or neighbourhood centres	17%	38%	36%	9%
Halls, function and event spaces	22%	30%	35%	13%
Surf lifesaving clubs	21%	22%	49%	9%
Senior citizens centres	11%	25%	55%	8%
Baby, parent and child centres	15%	16%	60%	8%
Youth centres	9%	18%	61%	11%

Percentage of respondents (n=451)

■ Yes, definitely　■ Maybe　■ No　■ Don't know / Not sure

Source: Shellharbour Community Facilities Phone Survey. Survey question: Thinking about the next five years, do you think you or members of your household might use any of the following community facilities? Sample: n=451.

9.2   Future aspirations for community facilities feedback

9.2.1   Community facilities planning preferences

To better understand people's aspirations around the future of community facilities in Shellharbour, the phone survey presented respondents (n=451) with pairs of statements presenting different options for planning future facilities.

As shown in **Figure 34**, key findings from this question include:

- In most cases, respondents expressed a clear preference for one statement over the other, however, they were evenly split on whether there should be a smaller number of large, multi-purpose facilities or a larger number of small, specific-use facilities.

- Respondents were overwhelmingly in favour of facilities that are:

  o Shared by multiple users, with some sharing of facilities such as kitchens, bathrooms and outdoor areas

  o Staffed with organised activities; and

o Upgraded or modernised rather than newly constructed.

Figure 34 Preference for alternative statements about planning for future community facilities

Statement A	Result	Statement B
A smaller number of large, multi-purpose community facilities	51% 49%	A larger number of small, specific-use facilities
Facilities that are shared by several user groups	76% 24%	Facilities used by a single user group or service provider
Facilities that have staff and have organised activities and programs	67% 33%	Facilities that are mainly unoccupied with adaptable space for hire
Providing funding to modernise or upgrade existing community facilities	63% 37%	Providing funding to construct new modern facilities
Facilities where you or your group have exclusive use of the facilities you hire	35% 65%	**Facilities where there can be some sharing of facilities such as kitchens, bathrooms and outdoor areas**

Source: Shellharbour Community Facilities Phone Survey. Survey question: Thinking about community facilities in the Shellharbour Council area, would you prefer [Statement A or Statement B]? Sample: n=451.

There were some notable variations in preferences according to age group. For example, compared to their alternatives:

- "A smaller number of large, multi-purpose facilities" had particularly high preference among those aged 18-34 (58%) and those living in postcode 2529 (56%)

- "Facilities that are shared by several user groups" had particularly high preference among those aged 35-59 (81%) and males (81%)

- "Facilities that have staff and have organised activities and programs" had particularly high preference among those aged 35-59 (72%), females (74%) and those from postcode 2527 (72%)

- "Providing funding to modernise or upgrade existing community facilities" had a particularly high preference among those aged 60+ (71%)

- "Facilities where there can be some sharing of facilities such as kitchens, bathrooms and outdoor areas" had particularly high preference among those aged 60+ (75%).

9.2.2   Importance of community facility features

The phone survey also asked a series of questions about what features of facilities are important to respondents when thinking about using them in the future.

First, they were asked an open-response question, which was aimed at understanding which features are front-of-mind for respondents. **Figure 35** shows the most common themes that emerged, with kitchens and bathrooms/toilets by far the most frequently mentioned features.

Figure 35 Features respondents would be looking for if using a community facility in the future
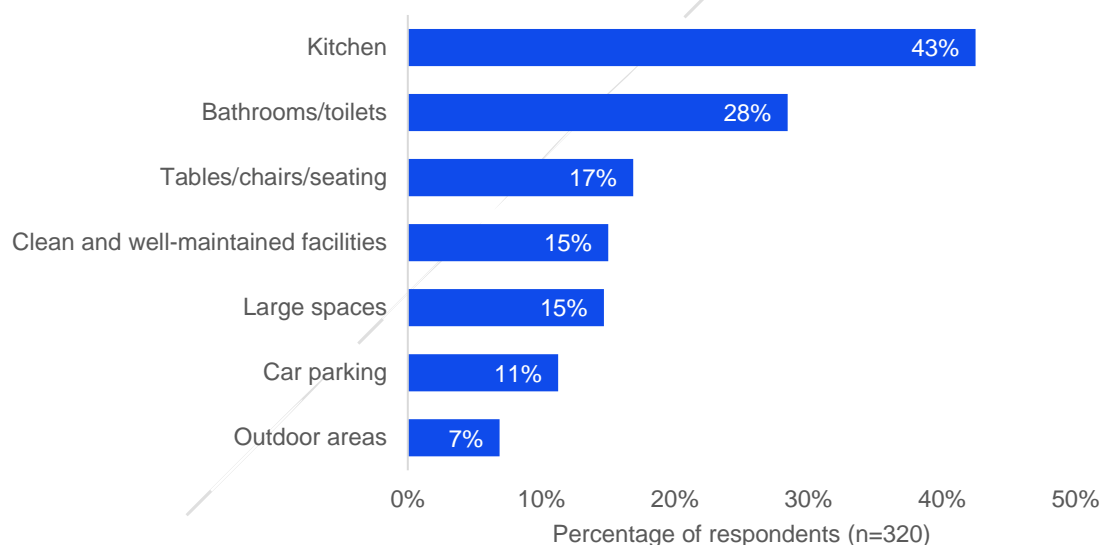
Source: Shellharbour Community Facilities Phone Survey. Survey question: Thinking about possibly using or hiring a community facility in the future, what sorts of features might you or members of your household be looking for? Sample: n=451. Note: Percentage calculations based on n=320 respondents, excluding 'Don't know/No comment' (n=131). The Sum of percentages exceeds 100% as some responses included multiple themes.

The survey then presented respondents with a series of features relating to the design/layout, equipment and ambience of community facilities and asked them to rate the importance of each (in terms of how 'essential' they are). The results are shown in **Figure 36, Figure 37 and Figure 38.**

The features most frequently rated 'must have' include:

- Clean and well-maintained facilities

- Car parking spaces

- Moveable chairs and tables

- Access to air conditioning/heating

- Lots of natural light and windows; and

- Kitchen facilities.

Figure 36 Importance of design and layout aspects of community facilities
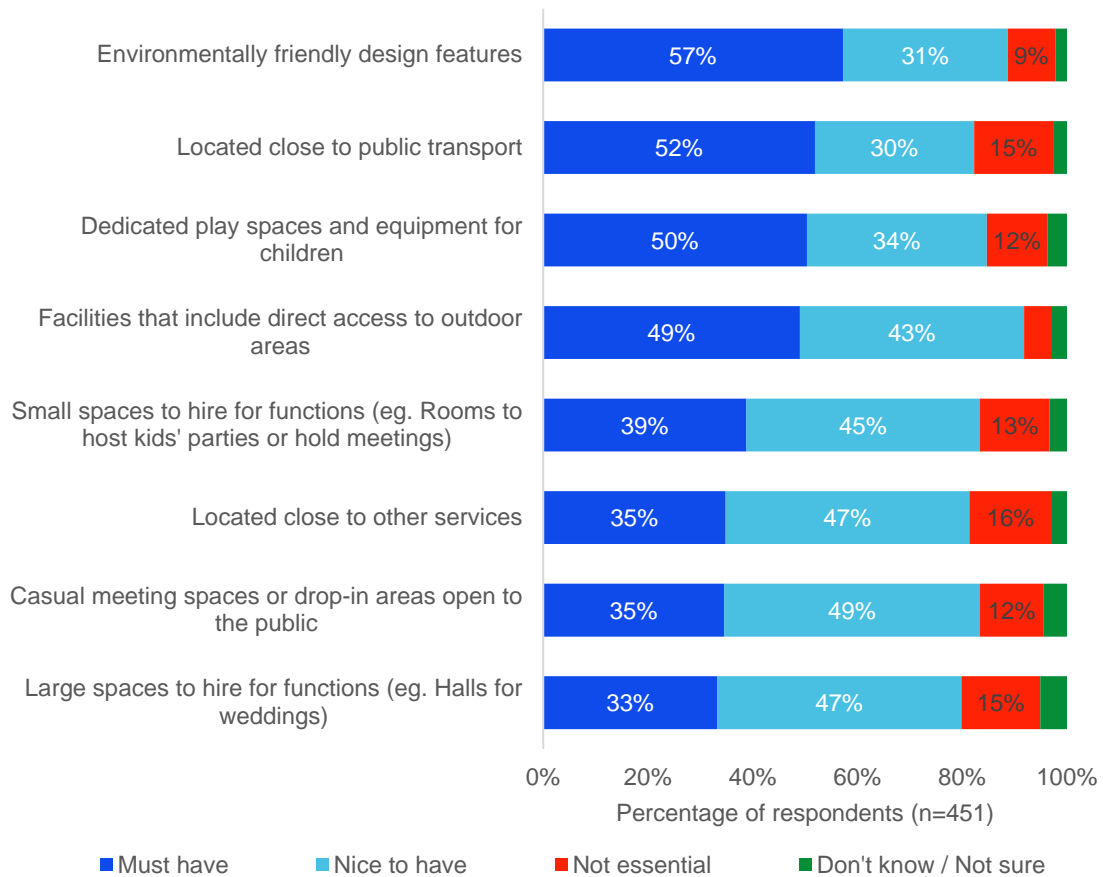
Source: Shellharbour Community Facilities Phone Survey. Survey question: Thinking specifically about the overall design or layout of a community facility, how essential are the following features to you or members of your household? Sample: n=451.
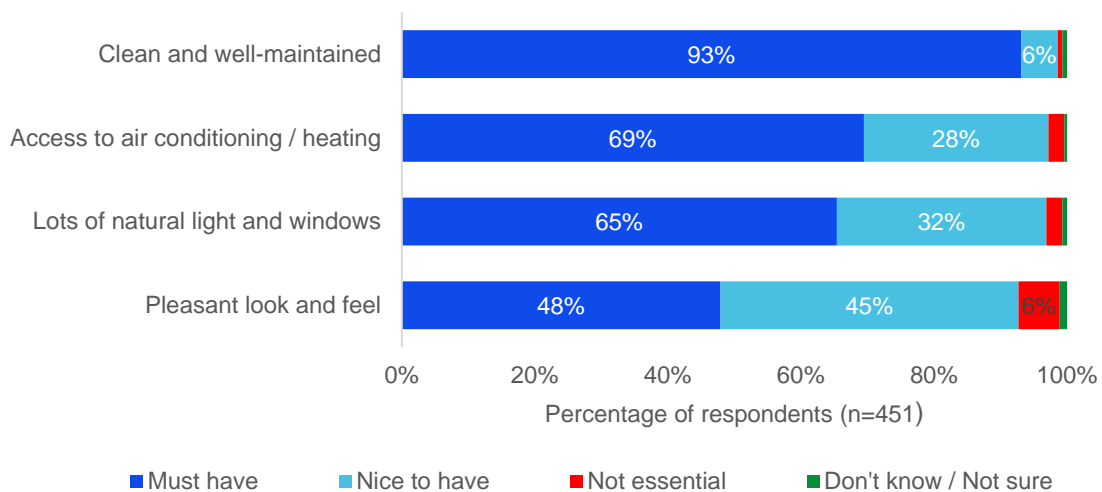
Figure 37 Importance of features and equipment at community facilities
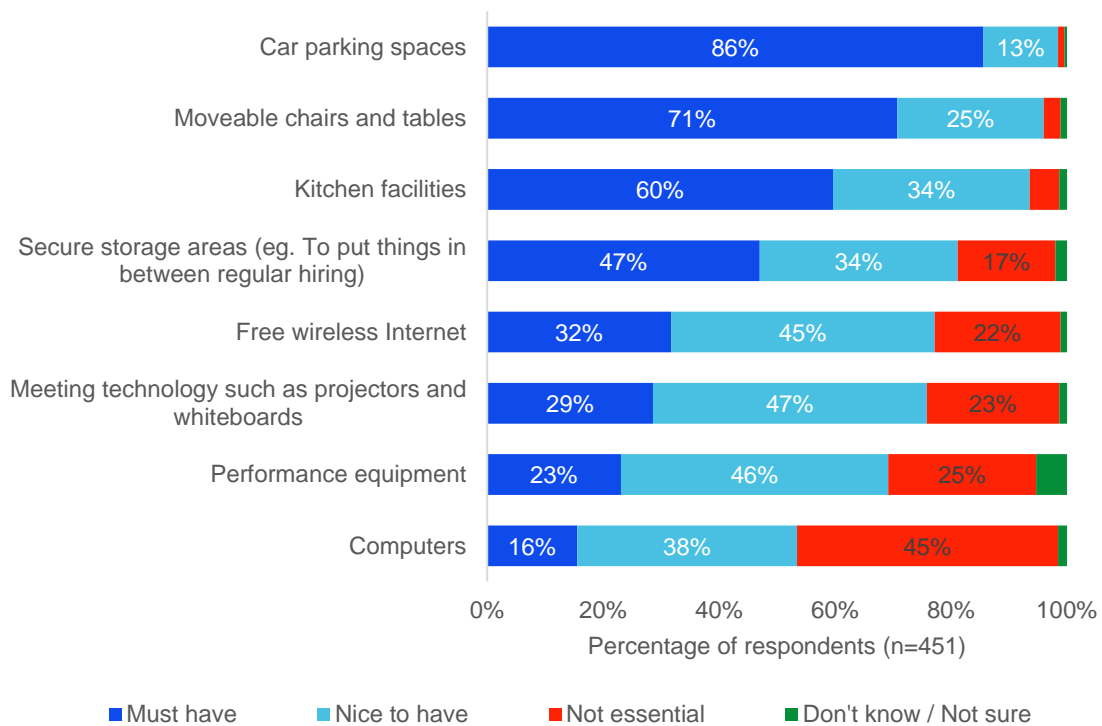
Source: Shellharbour Community Facilities Phone Survey. Survey question: Thinking specifically about the features and equipment available at a community facility, how essential are the following features to you or members of your household? Sample: n=451.

Figure 38 Importance of ambience and feel at community facilities

Source: Shellharbour Community Facilities Phone Survey. Survey question: Thinking specifically about the ambience or feel of a community facility, how essential are the following features to you or members of your household? Sample: n=451.

9.3 Additional facilities and features feedback

9.3.1 Online survey of community members

The *Let's Chat* online survey for community members (n=79) asked respondents whether they thought there should be any more community facilities provided in the Shellharbour City Council area over the next five years. As shown in **Figure 39**.

- By far the most popular choice (**52%** of respondents) was for more **multi-purpose facilities with flexible spaces**.

- Although a distant second, **27%** of respondents thought there should be more arts and cultural facilities.

- Very few respondents thought there should be more surf life saving clubs **(4%)** or senior citizens centres **(6%)**.

Figure 39 Demand for additional community facilities in Shellharbour
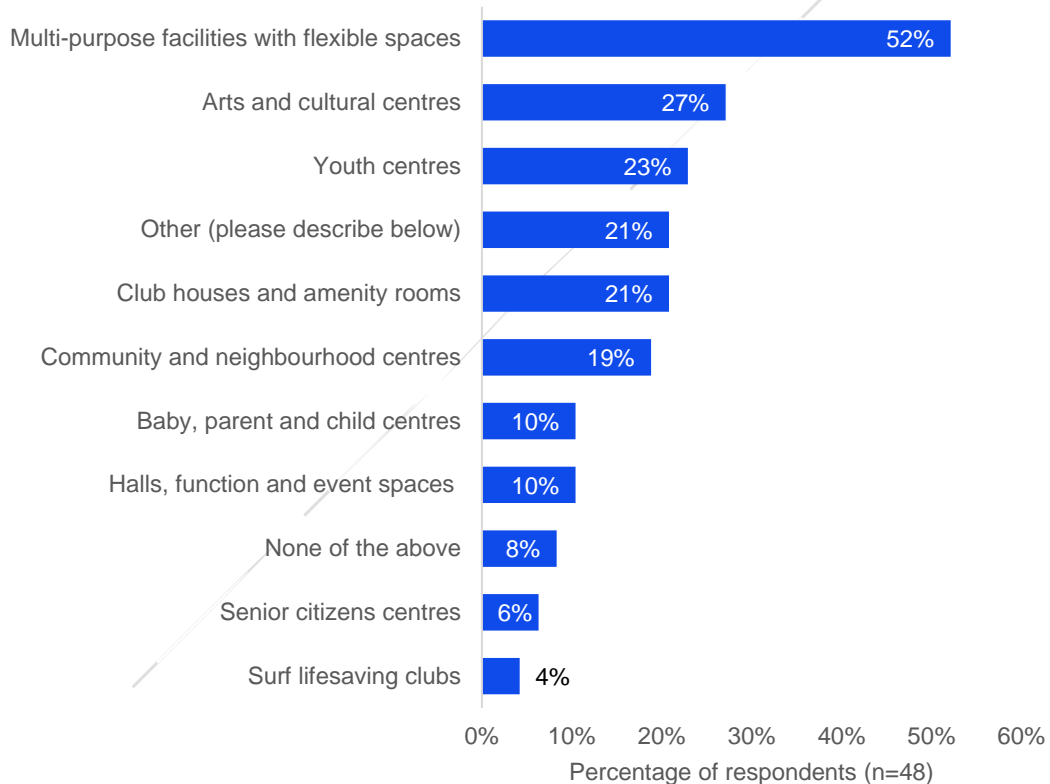
Source: Shellharbour Community Facilities Online (Let's Chat) Community Members Survey, N=70. Survey question: Over the next 5 years, do you think there should be more of any of the following types of facilities provided in the Shellharbour City Council area?

When asked where these new facilities should be located, a range of suburbs were nominated for each type of facility. **Figure 40** lists all suburbs that were mentioned multiple times for each type of facility. The most common responses indicated preferences for:

- New multi-purpose facilities at Albion Park and Warilla; and

- A new club house/amenity room at Warilla.

Figure 40 Suburbs where new community facilities should be located

Facility type	Suburbs (number of responses)
Multi-purpose facilities with flexible spaces	• Albion Park (5) • Warilla (5) • Flinders (3) • Shellharbour (3)
Arts and cultural centres	• Albion Park (3) • Oak Flats (2) • Shellharbour (2) • Shellharbour City Centre (2) • Warilla (2)
Youth centres	• Calderwood (3) • Albion Park (2) • Oak Flats (2) • Shell Cove (2) • Warilla (2)
Club houses and amenity rooms	• Warilla (4)
Community and neighbourhood centres	• Warilla (3)
Baby, parent and child centres	*No suburbs with multiple mentions.*
Halls, function and event spaces	*No suburbs with multiple mentions.*
Senior citizens centres	*No suburbs with multiple mentions.*
Surf life saving clubs	*No suburbs with multiple mentions.*

Source: Shellharbour Community Facilities Online (Let's Chat) Community Members Survey. Question: Over the next 5 years, do you think there should be more of any of the following types of facilities provided in the Shellharbour City Council area? Sample size: n=33 (excludes non-responses).

9.3.2 Online service providers and hirers survey feedback

The *Let's Chat* online survey for service providers and hirers (n=25) presented respondents with a list of 17 features of community facilities and asked them to rank the top six that they or their organisation would like to have access to in the future. From a small sample size of respondents (n=8), the most frequently selected were:

- More environmentally friendly features (6 selections)

- Improved Wi-Fi and technology (5 selections)

- Modern kitchen facilities (4 selections)

- Newer bathrooms/change rooms (3 selections)

- Larger storage space (3 selections)

- Better accessibility features such as ramps/handrails (3 selections)

- Increased cleaning and maintenance (3 selections).

10   Population group issues

Key findings:

- Whilst specific population groups raised issues that were specific to their cohort, there were various shared concerns on the future of community facilities related to:

    a) Inclusive open designs and features

    b) Physical accessibility, in terms of public transport and vehicle parking (including scooter parking)

    c) Lack of awareness of what is available

    d) Hiring access and affordability for some cohorts including self-help groups.

- The phone survey data is a rich source of information highlighting the uses and perspectives of different cohorts living in the Shellharbour community. The material included in this section is a portion of the findings. Further analysis is being used to inform the 10-year Community Facilities Strategy and Action Plan

Section 8 and Section 9 of this Study contain the combined views of the Shellharbour community, primarily gathered through the survey instruments. This section, on the other hand, summarises the key issues and preferences of specific population groups within the community, based on disaggregated phone survey data, combined with feedback gathered from targeted focus groups and interviews as outlined in Section 3.2.

The analysis focuses on five groups who provided distinct perspectives on Council's community facilities, and as such, addressing their needs will be important to consider in shaping Council's 10-year Community Facilities Strategy and Action Plan. The focus groups comprise:

- Young people

- Seniors

- Families with children

- Aboriginal people

- People with disability.

Note: Feedback related to people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds is incorporated in the feedback below, and also covered in Sections 8 and 9.

10.1 Young people and community facilities

10.1.1 Facilities for young people

Included in **Figure 41** is a map that plots the forecasted population density of young people by 2031 mapped against current Shellharbour City Council community facilities catering for this group.

As the map highlights, Shellharbour currently operates:

- One youth-specific facility – the Blackbutt Youth Centre in Shellharbour.

- Four current, and one former Scout and Girl Guide Halls, that may be accessed by some young people, located in Albion Park, Mount Warrigal, Shellharbour and Warilla

- Plus over 30 other general community and neighbourhood centres that run programs that may attract young people as documented in **Figure 41**.

However, when these facilities are compared to projected young people population figures for 2031, it is evident that some areas with projected high concentrations (>16% of the population) may require either a) additional youth-specific facilities or b) other community facilities that directly cater for, and are appealing to, young people. These areas of concentration include:

- Shell Cove

- Flinders

- Albion Park.

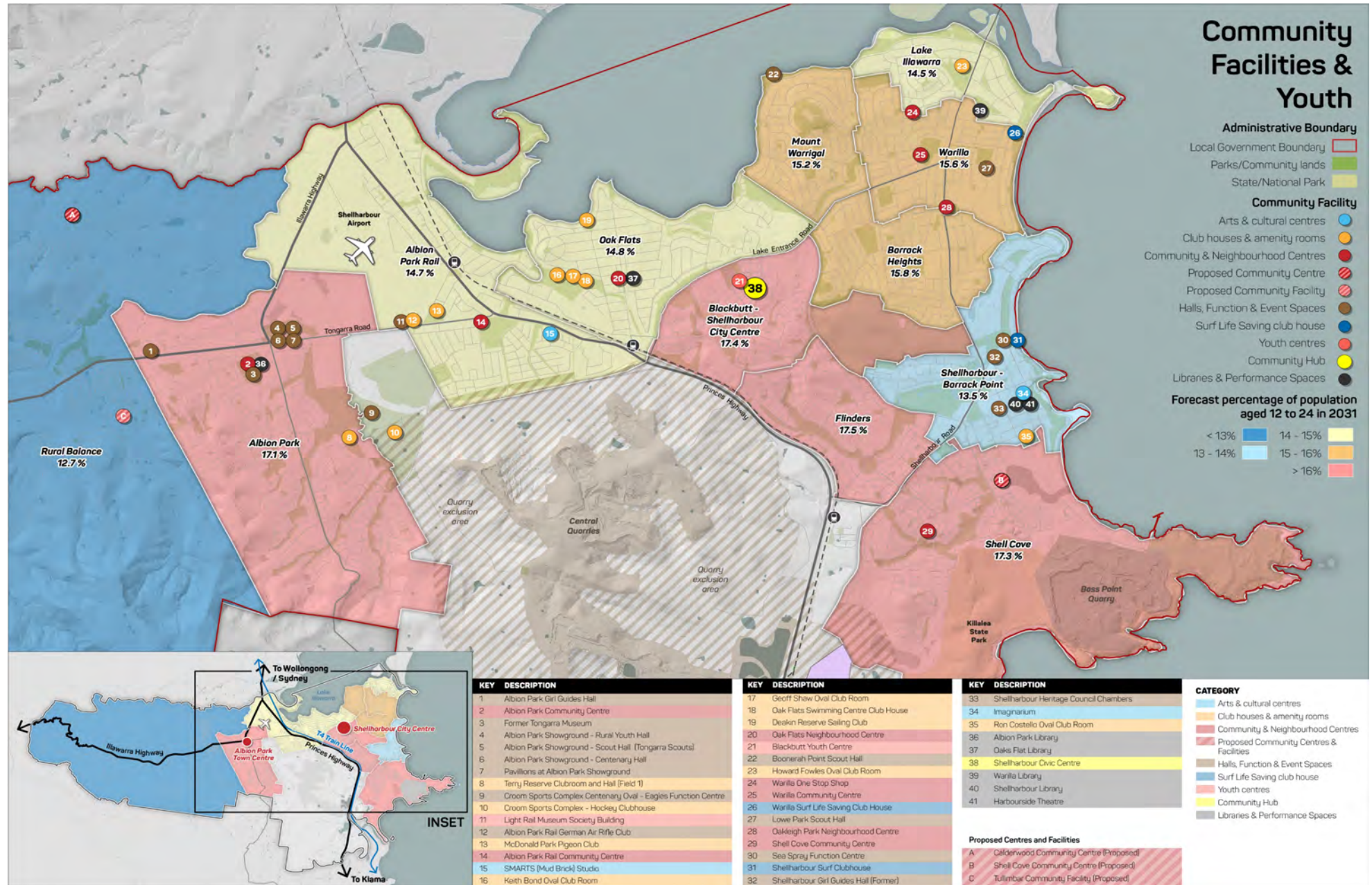### 10.1.2 Phone survey feedback

The representative phone survey (n=451) included feedback from 51 young people aged between 18 and 26 years.

Analysis of feedback by young people compared to the rest of the population shows:

- Young people expressed a stronger preference than the general population for:

  o A "smaller number of large, multi-purpose community facilities" (60%) compared to a "larger number of small, specific-use facilities" (40%)

  o "Facilities used by a single user group or service provider" (73%), compared to "facilities that are shared by several user groups" (27%)

- Young people were more evenly divided between facilities where they or their groups have exclusive use of the facilities they hire (52%), compared to facilities where there can be some crossover with other user groups and sharing of space such as kitchens, bathrooms and outdoor areas (48%).

Figure 41 Population density of young people by 2031 within the Shellharbour LGA mapped against relevant community facilities

Community Facilities & Youth

Administrative Boundary
- Local Government Boundary
- Parks/Community lands
- State/National Park

Community Facility
- Arts & cultural centres
- Club houses & amenity rooms
- Community & Neighbourhood Centres
- Proposed Community Centre
- Proposed Community Facility
- Halls, Function & Event Spaces
- Surf Life Saving club house
- Youth centres
- Community Hub
- Libraries & Performance Spaces

Forecast percentage of population aged 12 to 24 in 2031
- < 13%
- 13 - 14%
- 14 - 15%
- 15 - 16%
- > 16%

KEY	DESCRIPTION
1	Albion Park Girl Guides Hall
2	Albion Park Community Centre
3	Former Tongarra Museum
4	Albion Park Showground - Rural Youth Hall
5	Albion Park Showground - Scout Hall (Tongarra Scouts)
6	Albion Park Showground - Centenary Hall
7	Pavilions at Albion Park Showground
8	Terry Reserve Clubroom and Hall (Field 1)
9	Croom Sports Complex Centenary Oval - Eagles Function Centre
10	Croom Sports Complex - Hockey Clubhouse
11	Light Rail Museum Society Building
12	Albion Park Rail German Air Rifle Club
13	McDonald Park Pigeon Club
14	Albion Park Rail Community Centre
15	SMARTS (Mud Brick) Studio
16	Keith Bond Oval Club Room

KEY	DESCRIPTION
17	Geoff Shaw Oval Club Room
18	Oak Flats Swimming Centre Club House
19	Deakin Reserve Sailing Club
20	Oak Flats Neighbourhood Centre
21	Blackbutt Youth Centre
22	Boonerah Point Scout Hall
23	Howard Fowles Oval Club Room
24	Warilla One Stop Shop
25	Warilla Community Centre
26	Warilla Surf Life Saving Club House
27	Lowe Park Scout Hall
28	Oakleigh Park Neighbourhood Centre
29	Shell Cove Community Centre
30	Sea Spray Function Centre
31	Shellharbour Surf Clubhouse
32	Shellharbour Girl Guides Hall (Former)

KEY	DESCRIPTION
33	Shellharbour Heritage Council Chambers
34	Imaginarium
35	Ron Costello Oval Club Room
36	Albion Park Library
37	Oaks Flat Library
38	Shellharbour Civic Centre
39	Warilla Library
40	Shellharbour Library
41	Harbourside Theatre

Proposed Centres and Facilities

A	Calderwood Community Centre (Proposed)
B	Shell Cove Community Centre (Proposed)
C	Tullimbar Community Facility (Proposed)

CATEGORY
- Arts & cultural centres
- Club houses & amenity rooms
- Community & Neighbourhood Centres
- Proposed Community Centres & Facilities
- Halls, Function & Event Spaces
- Surf Life Saving club house
- Youth centres
- Community Hub
- Libraries & Performance Spaces

- Two thirds of young people (67%) reported they have never used a youth centre over a typical 12-month period, while:
  - 14% have used it at least monthly, fortnightly or weekly, including one respondent who used it multiple times per week
  - 12% have used it once a year or less
  - 8% have used it a few times a year.

- In respect to surf life savings clubs, 45% reported they have never used a surf life saving club over a typical 12-month period, while:
  - 24% used them either a few times per year
  - 20% once a year or less
  - 12% used them monthly or more often.

- 43% reported they have never used a Council hall, function or event space (including Scout and Girl Guide Halls), over a typical 12-month period, while:
  - 24% used them either a few times per year
  - 21% once a year or less
  - 12% used them monthly or more often, including one respondent who used them multiple times per week.

When young people were asked to think about the ambience or feel of a community facility, the majority reported the following as "must have":

- Clean and well-maintained (90%)

- Lots of natural light and windows (65%)

- Access to air conditioning/ heating (63%)

- Pleasant look and feel (47%).

When asked if they had any other comments about the future of community facilities in the Shellharbour area, the following in scope comments included:

- "To keep venues updated with modern technology"

- "I hope for more word-of-mouth discussion about facilities in Shellharbour, since there has not been much conversation about them in recent years"

- "Is important that after they are built [they] are well maintained"

- "Ramps for older people, more disabled parking. More public toilets including in parks"

- "Previously I have attended a lot of functions at Dapto Hall, so I can only put it to the price, functionally and availability"

- "I think the community area and population are only getting bigger. It's really important that growth and continual changes are implemented"

- "Overall, I feel there should be more facilities here, that are more modern and with the purpose to bring some enjoyment. There isn't many spaces here which would make people want to use them when compared to other places"

- "More areas for people with disabilities. Try to be inclusive. If it's more than two levels, have a lift, have a hoist. For people who are blind they can feel the dots"

- "An accessible kitchen and toilets; chairs and tables for wheel chairs to sit under; make sure the outside area is big enough for people with wheel chairs to get passed".

10.1.3 Current strengths, challenges and gaps in provision for young people

During focus groups and interviews, young people were asked to identify what they felt was working well, and what they considered to be the strength of Council's community facilities provision for young people. Positive feedback mainly focused on the Blackbutt Youth Centre and its staff, with many comments related to the enjoyable programs that used to run there.

When young people were asked to identify what they felt was not working well in terms of Council's community facilities provision for young people, the general feedback was there weren't enough youth-specific centres.

Other challenges or shortcomings commented on include:

- Lack of awareness of available facilities for young people suggesting the need for improving council's promotion, including through schools and social media

- Various limitations at the Blackbutt Youth Centre, including:

  - The location of the Centre making it difficult to access after-hours

  - The Centre is "quite hidden so people don't know it exists"

  - The layout of the interior space, limiting the number of concurrent activities that can be held at the same time, especially if performances are underway

  - The limited size of the stage and need to use outdoor areas for backstage preparations.

Some young people also commented on non-youth specific facilities, with comments including:

- "A lot of places look empty"

- "I think some places need repurposing so they get used more".

While seemingly young people consulted were aware that they could use all Council community facilities, overall they indicated that most "did not seem appropriate" for young people. Further, some reported that many Council facilities appeared "uninviting", "empty" or "even dull" from their perspectives.

Unlike some other groups, in the focus group with young people there was a clear preference for dedicated youth facilities rather than shared spaces with other age groups, as the group felt that shared use facilities "don't work as we're always told we have to be quiet, like in the library".

Respondents were enthusiastic about Council establishing additional youth-specific facilities in a range of areas, "rather than at one central location" to provide better access to young people especially those living in or near Calderwood, Albion Park, Warilla, and Shell Cove.

They also commented that providing more youth facilities would help "improve access for those who do not drive", and also solve challenges currently experienced in using public transport, particularly after hours, as noted in Section 7.3.

Other identified gaps in community facilities provision and suggestions for improvement included:

- Ensuring future youth centres or youth spaces are staffed and preferably open during the evenings, especially on school nights

- Better promoting that youth centres were staffed, and a safe place for "young people to just go to", "to feel safe", "to hang out", "to have a break from home", and be "somewhere our parents will know we are okay and that we won't get into any trouble"

- Building creative spaces for young artists and musicians, including places for rehearsals and "somewhere we can safely leave our artwork and art supplies as there is nowhere at home or at school to do this"

- Establishing dedicated study spaces for students that included whiteboards, sound-proof walls, and access to kitchen facilities, moveable tables and chairs, plus lockers for storage.

- Preferred design features included "lots of light" and "brightness"

One respondent also commented on the importance of providing young people with access to mental health support at youth facilities, as young people "are more likely to get the help they need there than trying to go to a hospital or something".

10.2   Seniors and community facilities

10.2.1   Facilities for seniors

Included in **Figure 42** is a map that plots the projected population density of seniors by 2031, mapped against current Shellharbour City Council community facilities catering for seniors (persons aged 60 years and above).

As the map highlights, Shellharbour currently operates:

- Two current senior citizen centres, namely Joan Pearce Hostel at Mount Warrigal and the Oak Flats Senior Citizen Centre, with the former Warilla Senior Citizen Centre recently being used as a general hall, function and event space, that still included some senior activities as does the HACC Centre at Albion Park

- Seven general community and neighbourhood centres, the Civic Centre and the Shellharbour Theatre that run programs that may attract older residents as documented in **Figure 42**.

However, when these facilities are compared to forecasted seniors' population figures for 2031, it is evident that some areas with projected high concentrations (>30% of the population) may require either a) senior-specific facilities, or b) other facilities that directly cater for, and are appealing to, seniors. These areas include:

- Shellharbour- Barrack Point

- Albion Park Rail

- Mount Warrigal

- Lake Illawarra.

Further, as graphically illustrated, the following areas forecasted to have more than one in five residents aged 60 years and over by 2031, will have no local access to a senior-specific facility:

- Albion Park (26+% seniors by 2031)

- Blackbutt -Shellharbour Civic Centre and Barrack Heights (27+%)

- Shell Cove (24+%).

- Further, and as previously noted, there are also issues around the condition, appeal and inflexibility of the existing senior citizens centre at Oak Flats, and former Centre at Warilla.

Overall, given the LGA-wide ageing population trends, it will be important to ensure all Council facilities better cater for older residents over the next 10 years and beyond.

Figure 42 Population density of seniors by 2031 within the Shellharbour LGA mapped against relevant community facilities

Community Facilities & Seniors

Administrative Boundary
- Local Government Boundary
- Parks/Community lands
- State/National Park

Community Facility
- Community & Neighbourhood Centres
- Proposed Community Centre
- Proposed Community Facility
- Senior Citizens Centre
- Community Hub
- Libraries & Performance Spaces

Forecast percentage of population over 60 in 2031
- < 15%
- 16 - 20%
- 21 - 29%
- 30 - 35%
- > 35%

Lake Illawarra 31.4 %
Mount Warrigal 33.1 %
Warilla 31.4 %
Oak Flats 30.8 %
Barrack Heights 27.2 %
Albion Park Rail 32.2 %
Blackbutt - Shellharbour City Centre 27.2 %
Shellharbour - Barrack Point 38.5 %
Flinders 18.9 %
Albion Park 26.1 %
Rural Balance 13 %
Shell Cove 24.3 %
Bass Point Quarry
Killalea State Park
Central Quarries
Quarry exclusion area

INSET
To Wollongong / Sydney
Shellharbour City Centre
Albion Park Town Centre
T4 Train Line
Illawarra Highway
Princes Highway
To Kiama

KEY	DESCRIPTION
1	Albion Park Community Centre
2	Albion Park Rail Community Centre
3	Oak Flats Senior Citizens Centre
4	Oak Flats Neighbourhood Centre
5	Joan Pearce Hostel
6	Warilla One Stop Shop
7	Warilla Community Centre

KEY	DESCRIPTION
8	Warilla Senior Citizens Centre (Former)*
9	Oakleigh Park Neighbourhood Centre
10	Shell Cove Community Centre
11	Albion Park Library
12	Oaks Flat Library
13	Shellharbour Civic Centre
14	Warilla Library

KEY	DESCRIPTION
15	Shellharbour Library
16	Harbourside Theatre

Proposed Centres and Facilities

A	Calderwood Community Centre (Proposed)
B	Shell Cove Community Centre (Proposed)
C	Tullimbar Community Facility (Proposed)

CATEGORY
- Community & Neighbourhood Centres
- Proposed Community Centres & Facilities
- Senior Citizen Centres
- Community Hub
- Libraries & Performance Spaces

10.2.2   Phone survey feedback

The representative phone survey (n=451) included feedback from 142 seniors aged 60 years or above.

Analysis of feedback by seniors compared to the rest of the population shows:

- Seniors were roughly evenly spread between their preference for:
  - "Smaller number of large, multi-purpose community facilities" (49%) compared to "a larger number of small, specific-use facilities" (51%).
- Seniors showed a clear preference for:
  - "Facilities that are shared by a number of user groups" (76%) compared to "facilities used by a single user group or service provider" (24%)
  - "Facilities where you or your group have exclusive use of the facilities you hire" (76%) compared to "facilities where there can be some sharing of facilities such as kitchens, bathrooms and outdoor areas" (24%).
- 83% of seniors reported they have never used a senior citizens centre over a typical 12-month period, while
  - 8% have used it at least monthly, fortnightly or weekly, including two respondents who used them multiple times per week
  - 6% used it a few times a year
  - 3% used it once a year or less.
- In respect to community and neighbourhood centres, 74% reported they have never used a centre over a typical 12-month period, while
  - 17% used it at least monthly, fortnightly or weekly, including two who used them multiple times per week
  - 9% used it a few times a year
  - 8% used it once a year or less.
- In respect to arts and cultural centres, 70% reported they have never used a centre over a typical 12-month period, while:
  - 14% used them a few times a year
  - 8% used them once per year or less
  - 8% used them at least monthly, fortnightly or weekly, including one respondent who used them multiple times per week.
- 65% reported they have never used a Council hall, function or event space, over a typical 12-month period, while:
  - 13% used them monthly or more often, including four respondents who used them multiple times per week

- o 12% used them a few times per year

- o 10% once a year or less.

Table 13 contains all the in-scope responses seniors provided when asked if they had any other comments about the future of community facilities in the Shellharbour area:

Table 13   Phone survey in-scope responses by seniors about the future of community facilities

• Would like a mechanical means to move chairs around places in rooms for older people. I think the council does a jolly good job	• They should build more multi-purpose places like the new library--very impressed by it
• There should be more subsidised or free transport to and from facilities because there are people trapped at home	• I think they better utilise the buildings they have. They shouldn't empty meetings rooms or empty buildings. They should use them
• We need more community facilities in the local area instead of Wollongong. Also, more community facilities suitable for people with disability needs to be built in the area instead of Wollongong	• I don't see any evidence that the communities are being upgraded or improved. It would be nice to have an entertainment centre - local band performances
• The population in the area is growing and will continue to grow so the facilities that are being built need to take into account the needs for the next 10-20 years	• More upgraded toilets attached to community facilities and in parks
• Yes, just keep going the way we are going, the way Council is going	• I think they should start a community centre for Aboriginals
• I'm looking forward to the provision of facilities that meet my requirements. Surf Life Saving Clubs are not a community facility. They get a free run and get pretty well looked after to the detriment of other facilities	• The council should upgrade the facilities and make it more suitable for senior citizens and people with disability
• Facilities should have toilets for people with disabilities	• I think I am satisfied with everything that is going on in Shellharbour.
• They should have more funding	• Should be more parking for people with a disability
• Need a few more facilities. Though think Shellharbour Council is doing pretty well.	• I believe they do a good job now; our area is well catered for
• That some facilities are quite run-down especially the scout halls. Maybe they should be incorporated into the Council facilities	• I would like to see more disabled access to community facilities
• I do support the youth centre and surf life saving club, to keep the kids off the street	• Large hall facility for local dance studio no longer available. I have to go to Wollongong

• It would be good to have the kind of facilities I mentioned--places that you can drop in, that are clean and look nice and are air-conditioned	• Make sure everyone is aware of the facilities available. I use the Wollongong arts centre as I didn't know that there is one here!
• We need more facilities for Aboriginal people to meet together. Because we do everything voluntarily, we don't have money to pay rent. It's getting too expensive in Shellharbour. • We'd also like better access to buses	• I think that it's extremely important to have low-cost/free facilities for children. We should have more sporting equipment + facilities for all kinds of sports
• Community facilities are very important and current facilities need to be improved without adding to what is already existing	• Need to plan ahead because it is a rapidly growing community
• More facilities are needed primarily in the growing area, in the West	• I'm impressed with the council's approach to its community involvement
• I am happy with all their upgrading recently	• I do believe we lack facilities for the Arts, whether it be the performing arts and visual arts

- I am sore about continually increasing the rates and using it to build themselves new offices and a pay rise. They need to use the money for things that a lot of people use in the community, not like the two new libraries that cost millions

- I think we need more cultural spaces. There's been an obsession with sport for too long. For example, Shellharbour has a festival of sport, where other councils have cultural events. You should not be neglecting cultural activities, although they have improved a bit in the last five years. Your research is also on the right track. I'd like to see Shellharbour have a big cultural festival. They could have a music festival, literary festival, a multicultural festival, folk festival

- They should encourage more things like the Shellharbour Theatre and the word needs to be got out they've got a new 300 plus seat auditorium at the council chambers and to encourage events as well. There was a heritage plan. Shellharbour should have been a heritage hub, like Port Kembla

- Facilities and programs where young people especially teenagers can go--we have a changing environment--and I see too many young people sitting at home or roaming the streets. They don't seem to be interested in the community centres. The one in Albion Centre when it first opened had group meetings, and mums clubs, and after school cooking clubs, but now nothing is happening there, even before COVID. Lots of things used to happen to keep people there, but nothing is happening now. The grounds look horrible and there are no flowers or anything. It is like nobody cares about it anymore and doesn't look like a happy place that's for sure. Environmental issues and planting trees are very important - keep the area cool and not let it get too hot

- The weighting towards facilities is more toward the Shellharbour side than the Albion Park side, we're being left behind. I'd like more emphasis being put on the Albion Park side as well. We've got a lot of young families but also an ageing population and they need more consideration as far as facilities are concerned and access to these facilities

- I'd like to see a good mix of privately-owned facilities and council-owned facilities

10.2.3 Current strengths, challenges and gaps in provision for seniors

Overall there was mixed feedback from seniors on the idea of shared-use facilities:

- Some seniors enjoy "the sense of community" in sharing facilities with younger age groups and families

- Others reported a potential "lack of safety" at community facilities if they are not specifically devoted to seniors

- It was noted by one respondent that there may be unintended consequences in shared spaces for older people and others "with vulnerabilities".

Other identified gaps in provision or suggestions for improvement included:

- Limited storage space, and parking spaces particularly for mobility scooters and walkers

- Hiring fees are prohibitive for groups with low or zero income, some of whom instead use non-Council facilities (such as clubs) with more affordable or free hiring options

- Challenges associated with how Council notifies or promotes offerings, particularly at community and neighbourhood centres. For example, it was noted:

  o Groups are not permitted to use wall space or noticeboards at community facilities to promote programs

  o The end of free local newspapers, previously a key avenue for promotion to seniors, had created a gap in information flow

  o Social media promotions often failed to reach seniors effectively.

- Various accessibility issues, including:

  o Although all Council community facilities meet Disability Access to Premises Standards, some still do not cater for those with very high needs. For example, some doors are too heavy (and also too narrow), and there is a lack of recharge points for mobility scooters

  o Albion Park Rail Community Centre has a ramp for disability access, however "the gate in front of that entrance is never open". The Centre also has only one disability parking space

  o Public transport access to some community facilities is challenging especially when a) the resident has to use more than one mode of transport. E.g. change from train to bus, or bus to another bus, and timetables are not aligned and/or b) service frequency is low (for example after hours and on weekends- (see discussion at Section 7.3).

In terms of the future aspirations of seniors, and people with disability, the following feedback was provided:

- Preference for local facilities that are easily accessible. Seniors may be less willing to travel across the other side of the LGA

- Community noticeboards to promote programs and activities happening at community facilities

- Community facilities that provide opportunities for social interaction and a sense of community, especially for older people living alone

- Desirable features of community facilities include:

  o Automatic doors

  o Provisions for guide dogs (access to water and grass)

  o Recharge points for mobility scooters

  o Storage capacity for mobility scooters and walkers

  o Simple, plain English signage

  o Sensory or quiet rooms for people with disabilities

  o Separate accessible toilets and baby change facilities (rather than combined)

  o Accessible adult change facilities.

Finally, participants in the seniors' focus group commented on the desire to see seniors "more included" and treated as "part of the broader community" and not to be "separated out". As one respondent stated:

- "Even though I'm well and truly 'a senior', I'm way too young at heart to ever go to a senior's centre …I don't just want to be around old people."

10.3   Families with children and community facilities

10.3.1   Facilities for families with children

Included at **Figure 43** is a map that plots the forecasted population density of families (namely households with one or more children in residence) by 2031, mapped against current Shellharbour City Council community facilities catering for families.

As the map highlights, Shellharbour currently operates:

- Five facilities specifically catering to families with babies and children:

    o   Albion Park Baby Health Centre

    o   Alunga Child Care Centre at Albion Park Rail

    o   Koninderie Child Care Centre at Albion Park Rail

    o   Wallaroo Childcare Centre at Blackbutt

    o   Flinders Child and Family Centre in Flinders.

- Four current, and one former Scout and Girl Guide Halls, that may be accessed by some young people, located in Albion Park, Mount Warrigal, Shellharbour and Warilla, plus

- Approximately 35 other community facilities that run programs that may attract families and children as documented in **Figure 43**.

However, when these facilities are compared to projected population figures for 2031, it is evident that some areas with projected high concentrations of couples with children (>31% of the population) may require either a) additional baby, child and family facilities or b) other community facilities that directly cater for, and are appealing to, families with babies and children. These areas of concentration include, in descending order:

- Rural Balance (noting only some sections will experience population growth)

- Shell Cove

- Flinders

- Albion Park

- Blackbutt-Shellharbour City Centre.

Figure 43 Population density of families by 2031 within the Shellharbour LGA mapped against relevant community facilities
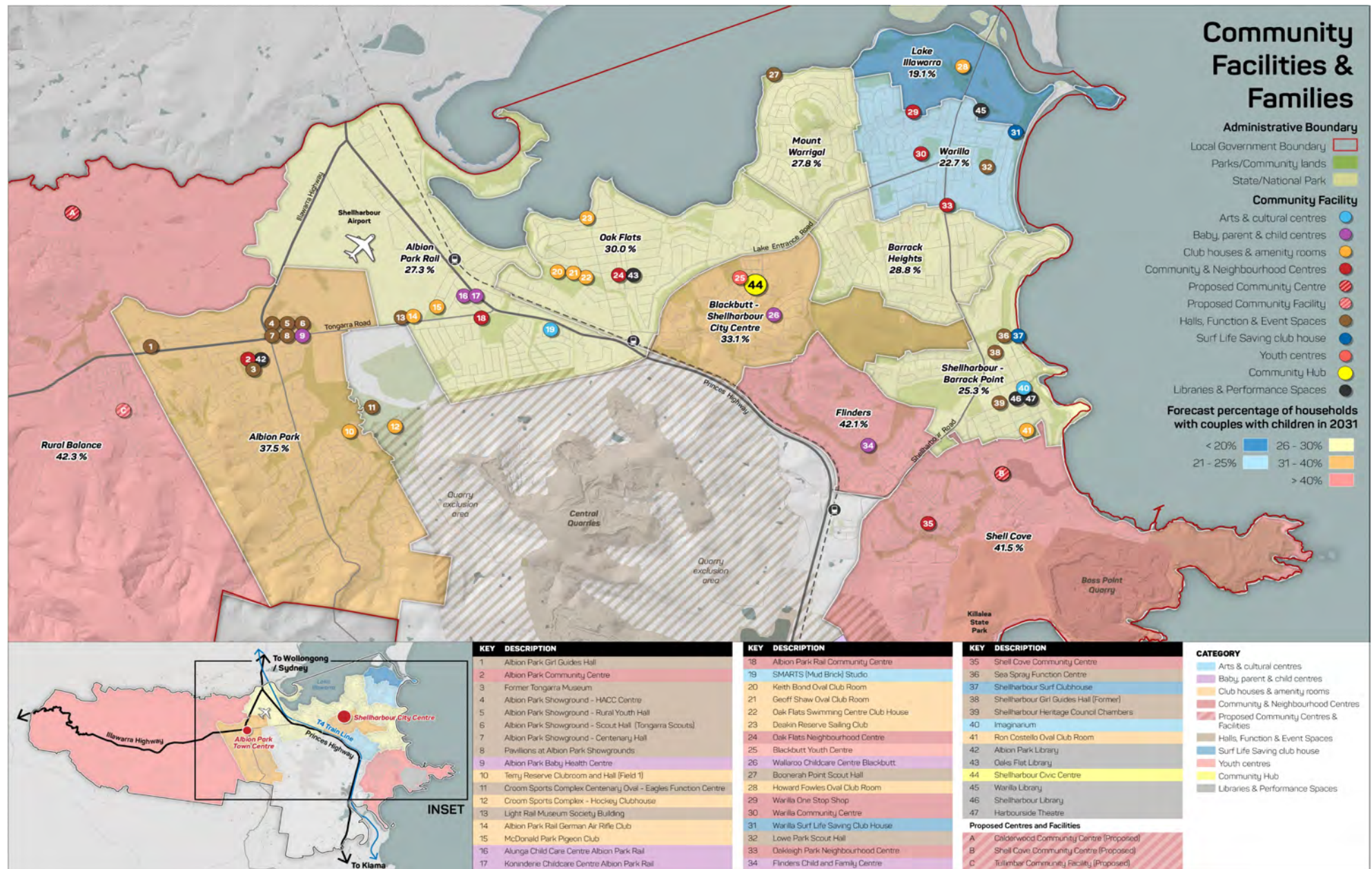
10.3.2 Phone survey feedback

The representative phone survey (n=451) included feedback from 220 respondents who indicated they lived in a household comprising a couple with children (182) or single parent/carer and children (38).

Analysis of feedback by respondents from family households compared to the general population shows 100% preference for "facilities used by a single user group or service provider compared to "facilities that are shared by a number of user groups".

Other preferences for this cohort included:

- "A larger number of small, specific-use facilities" (56%) compared to a "smaller number of large, multi-purpose community facilities" (44%).

- "Facilities where you or your group have exclusive use of the facilities you hire (62%) compared to "facilities where there can be some sharing of facilities such as kitchens, bathrooms and outdoor areas" (38%).

- 73% of respondents from family households reported they have never used a baby, parent or child centre over a typical 12-month period, while:

  o 15% have used it at least monthly, fortnightly or weekly, including 11 respondents who used them multiple times per week.

  o 9% used it a few times a year

  o 3% used it once a year or less.

- In respect to community and neighbourhood centres, 70% reported their household had never used a centre over a typical 12-month period, while:

  o 15% used it a few times a year

  o 10% used it once a year or less

  o 5% used them at least monthly, fortnightly or weekly, including one respondent who used them multiple times per week.

- In respect to arts and cultural centres, 61% reported their household had never used art and cultural centres over a typical 12-month period, while:

  o 19% used them a few times a year

  o 11% used them once per year or less

  o 9% used them at least monthly, fortnightly or weekly, including one respondent who used them multiple times per week.

- 57% reported their household had never used a Council hall, function or event space (including Scout and Girl Guide) over a typical 12-month period, while:

  o 12% used them monthly or more often, including five respondents who used them multiple times per week

  o 12% used them a few times per year

o   19% used them once a year or less.

Table 14 contains all the in-scope responses family household respondents provided when asked if they had any other comments about the future of community facilities in the Shellharbour area:

Table 14   Phone survey in-scope responses by respondents from family households about the future of community facilities

• If they improve the current facilities, they should have a perfect idea of how to do it. I like to see more community programs towards socialising the people with disability	• Overall, I feel there should be more facilities here, that are more modern and with the purpose to bring some enjoyment. There aren't many spaces here which would make people want to use them when compared to other places
• Mental health facilities and/or youth mental health facilities. I'd like Shellharbour City Council to have more of these facilities	• They need to lift their game. They need to make Shellharbour more attractive
• Due to the strong growth in the area facilities need upgrading and expanding including the building of new modern facilities	• I hope that Shellharbour City Council maintain a similar or better standard of facilities, which are quite good, in the future
• They are on the track at the moment, the new library is pretty good and the new council chamber	• We need a nice big council art gallery with shows every month, like Wollongong's one
• It would be nice if the community facilities were modernised and cleaned up	• Lots of beach but no facilities on or near beach e.g.: restaurants, gyms
• An emphasis on more facilities needs to be made priorities to cope with demand	• Would rather spend money hiring an exclusive outdoor area at a park than a community hall or neighbourhood centre
• Be mindful of the money that they invest	• More publicity is needed
• It would be lovely to have more places and programs to take the kids on a rainy day	• Is important that after they are built are well maintained
• New Council building with the library has lovely landscaping, and library layout and lighting is fantastic and also great views to outdoor (when inside feels like being outside)	• Should cater more to the current needs of the teenage generation as the facilities for that group have been well-received and more should be added
• There's got to be some level of security - CCTV pointing in different directions with lighting	• They need to make known their facilities --I just don't know what is out there
• Good access for everyone including disabled users	• More staff at Albion Park, not Shellharbour, everything seems to be over there
• To hire community facilities is expensive and should be cheap	• More for people with a disability
• I hope for more word of mouth discussion about facilities in Shellharbour since there has not been much conversation about them in recent years	• When talking about community facilities the council needs to also consider sporting fields

• I am happy with all their upgrading recently	• I think the Council is doing a good job concerning asking the residents' inputs regarding the facilities
• Please create more entertainment areas for the kids and more shopping/stores	• No just that I hope this survey leads to something happening
• They need to up-grade all the outdoor areas including Blackbutt forests and Myimbarr facilities	• That they do more surveys and find out what people want before they put things up
• No just keep them going and make them welcoming for people	• I want a clubhouse for Shellharbour Tri Club
• I wouldn't be happy with a new facility at the farm. It would affect traffic management	• They are getting better and they seem to be putting more money back into the community
• If they're looking for details think about what scenarios they can afford and put that to the community	• I feel like the halls we have are under used. I don't think people are having weddings in halls
• They're very important but not well utilised by the community--still this fall into the category of the things that the community needs even if they don't know at present that they need it	• Would like a Child Care Centre that caters for multi-cultural families - as religious, halal food and cultural beliefs aren't necessarily understood in other childcare facilities
• I feel they need to ask more questions about what people are needing and wanting	• There should be more community facilities in the Shellharbour City Council Area

- Just we didn't talk about the air cadet's facilities, Australian Airforce cadet's facility and it is situated at the Albion Park facility, at the Albion Park Airport, Albion Park Rail, airport, and it's really important for the youth of this area. I just think Council support should be given to extensions for that facility in the future, it has a very significant role in a number of my children's lives

- I think the council needs to offer community spaces for free to the community and not ask for free but maybe a bond that is refundable pending no damages. This is because we pay for community spaces via our rates. For example, at the moment where I live, no one is utilising community spaces because it is too expensive to hire

- They need to look at the big picture, what looks good on paper isn't always the best. They need to factor in the age of the community. For example, car parking needs to be taken in mind. Know your community

- It's the long-term thing that is part of community building without them we get beholden to commercial interests. It's good to know that they will exist for me to use in 5-10 years
- Just because you mentioned disability, obviously disability access

- You need more for youth in Barrack Heights. I have lived there for 20 years and screamed for many to have things for our kids to do. Even suggested the use of an empty council block with minimal cost. Falls on deaf ears. I actually cannot tell you what they have done for the suburb since I have been there

- I hope they don't abolish or remove them all together. Community centres or community places are still required and whether or not they are useful. If this survey is to determine whether or not they are useful I hope they keep them

- There should be more community facilities in my local area instead of Wollongong. Also more community facilities suitable for people with disability needs to be built in the area instead of Wollongong

- I believe the Council needs to seriously look into ensuring the security of children and young teenagers. The older areas are being neglected where newer States are getting modern parks and facilities

10.3.3   Other strengths, challenges and gaps in provision for families

A further method used to gather feedback from parents and carers of children was via a series of poster boards and play group discussions facilitated by Council staff.

Included in **Table 15** is a summary of the feedback collected through these channels. The key findings being:

- There is limited access to community facilities for families who do not drive, as they often face difficulties in negotiating children and stroller's access on to buses, along with the limited timetables of bus services.

- Albion Park Community Centre looks unwelcoming from the outside.

Table 15   Feedback from local LGA playgroups

What do you like?	What could be improved?	What would you like to see?
Warilla Baptist Preschool at Warilla Community Centre		
• Friendly and welcoming environment that provides a good setting for children to play and interact with others • The staff are very helpful and committed to supporting both parents and children. During COVID they organised online playgroups and a Facebook discussion page where parents could connect • The space is used in flexible and creative ways that help children engage in activities • Great range of toys and equipment. This is particularly valued by families from a lower socio-economic background • Safe facilities with outdoor space for children to play • Accessible for some	• Parents and baby changing facilities • More outdoor seating areas • Better access for those who don't drive • Better public transport to the centre	• Café or lounge where parents can socialise while their kids play • More outdoor play areas and equipment (e.g. splash pad, water play, a wider range of movable play equipment etc.) • Better tailored facilities to accommodate multi-age playgroups (e.g. after school activities, arts and crafts etc.) • Better fit-outs and features (e.g. storage and seating areas) • Notice boards to improve communication and keep parents updated about activities and events throughout the LGA • Options for hiring rooms to host events (e.g. birthday parties) • Bike tracks • Free Wi-Fi

Playgroup NSW at Albion Park Community Centre		
• Good facility for younger children • Close to the Baby Health Clinic • The facility is kept clean and tidy	• The facility requires to be refurbished and upgraded • Better public transport to the centre • Better footpath around the area • Baby changing rooms • Better seating areas • The overall safety of the facility	• Better tailored facilities to accommodate multi-age playgroups • A hub that integrates multiple facilities and offers better amenities • An easy to use booking system for parties and events • More comfortable seating spaces for breastfeeding and socialising

10.4   Aboriginal people and community facilities

Currently, Shellharbour City Council does not operate any Aboriginal-specific community services facility, though all its facilities and services are considered inclusive of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people.

Whilst neither the phone survey nor the *Let's Chat* online survey asked participants to identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, there were two comments provided that related to this group including:

- "We need more facilities for Aboriginal people to meet together. Because we do everything voluntarily, we don't have money to pay rent. It's getting too expensive in Shellharbour. We'd also like better access to buses"

- "I think they should start a community centre for Aboriginal people".

Local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who participated in the focus groups and interviews were asked to identify what they felt was working well or was a strength of Council's community facilities provided for them and their community. Feedback mainly focused on the good staff that existing in some services, and a generally inclusive Council services sector.

When Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people were asked to identify what they felt was not working well in terms of Council's community facilities provision, the dominant message was the absence of a dedicated multi-purpose Aboriginal facility that could function as:

- "Not just as a cultural centre, but also somewhere we could hold meetings, maybe get services, gather for a yarn, and generally be together as a community".

Various stakeholders commented that the proposed Aboriginal Interpretive Centre at Bass Point would be an ideal location for such a facility, especially given its "proximity to middens" and "offering good connection to Country".

Other features that Aboriginal stakeholders wanted to see more of in the design of community facilities included:

- Wide and open entrance ways, that meant you see into the building before entry
- Design that links interior spaces to outdoors, providing a direct connection to country
- Open spaces for casual meetings, discussions and yarning
- Lots of natural light
- Good accessibility features, including parking for elders in motorised scooters.

10.5   People with disability and community facilities

Currently, Shellharbour City Council does not operate any disability-specific community services facility, though all its facilities and services are considered inclusive of people with disability.

13% of the phone survey respondents (60) identified as a person with disability, with most of their feedback aligned to other community feedback covered in Sections 8 and 9. In terms of specific issues raised related to disability, the dominant message was improved **accessibility**, covering:

- Wider entrance ways to community facilities to accommodate wheelchairs
- Proximate car parking and smooth access routes into facilities
- Areas to leave mobility scooters
- Access to modern disabled toilets in all facilities.

In addition, the issue of public facilities that could allow people to wash while out was also raised as a challenge for some.

Table 16 contains all the in-scope responses related to people with disability regarding the future of community facilities in the Shellharbour area.

Table 16   Phone survey in-scope responses by respondents with disability regarding the future of community facilities

• Facilities should have toilets for people with disabilities	• Good access for everyone including disabled users
• Ramps for older people, more disabled parking. More public toilets including in parks	• I would like to see more disabled access to community facilities
• Should be more parking for disabled people	• More for people with a disability
• They need to be more family orientated and look after people with a disability.	• Yes just because you mentioned disability, obviously disability access.

• The council should upgrade the facilities and make it more suitable for senior citizens and people with disability	• Better catering for disability services in Albion Park

- If they improve the current facilities, they should have a perfect idea of how to do it. I like to see more community programs towards socialising the people with disability

- We need more drug and alcohol support services, domestic violence programs, more outreach services, more services for persons with disability, senior citizens and disability pensioners. More counselling services for all the above. I would like to see someone in the council recording and publishing the outcomes of the community services that exist. There isn't much data about the services currently

- I don't think we have enough community centres or areas around the area, and their accessibility to others - the costs are fairly high. Look more at safety features - trip hazards - and accessibility for older people with disability

- She needs another big shopping centre in the area. She needs more community facilities in her local area instead of Wollongong. Also, more community facilities suitable for people with disability needs to be built in the area instead of Wollongong. NDIS in the local area is also not helpful

- As long as the facilities have got a bathroom that's suitable for disabled people, and no stairs, or a ramp, or a lift

11 Future directions and conclusions

A synthesis of the information contained in this Needs Study suggests the need for Shellharbour City Council to adopt firstly a set of guiding principles, and a finite set of priority areas to frame its future planning in respect to community facilities. These are each outlined below.

11.1 Guiding principles

To frame how Council plans, manages and activates its community facilities over the next 10 years, Council has adopted the following guiding principles.

When planning, allocating resources or assessing its community facilities, decision-makers will evaluate how the option delivers on the following:

	1) Responsive to Community and Place	Community facilities will be planned, managed and activated to meet the needs of people across the LGA, and also be responsive to place. They will be planned in an integrated way, delivering a coordinated network of good quality facilities and activities.
	2) Accessible Inclusive and Adaptive	Community facilities will be designed and managed to be accessible to all members of the Shellharbour community, mindful of public transport and after-hours access. They will be operated and managed fairly and equitably, taking all possible steps to be inclusive of all user groups and individuals living in the Shellharbour community.
	3) Nurturing Cohesion and Creating Connections	Community facilities, and the activities they support, will enhance the vibrancy, harmony and liveability of the LGA, nurturing cohesion, providing meaningful opportunities for individuals and groups to connect. As much as possible, they will also support a diversity of uses and be open to shared use in terms of types of users, activities and different times of operation.
	4) Affordable and Equitable	Community facilities, and the activities they support, will provide affordable access, consistent with Council's commitments to inclusion and social justice principles. Further, Council's policies and practices will support equitable access to facilities and support measures to ensure disadvantaged and vulnerable members of the community can access, use and enjoy Council's assets.

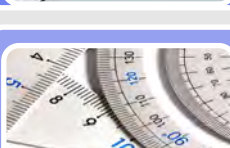|		
	5) Informed by evidence and best practice	Community facilities, and the activities they support, will be responsive to community. Council will regularly seek their input on how facilities should be activated and managed, and also work to build social capital and community participation. In addition, Council will be informed by the latest community facilities research and trends and use these to ensure its approaches remain contemporary and fit-for-purpose.
	6) Sustainable and Future Orientated	Community facilities will be managed, upgraded and maintained sustainably, giving due consideration to both environmental impacts and value for money. Further, Council will ensure its planning considers changes in population profiles and demographic needs.

11.2   Priority areas of focus

In addition to the guiding principles, and based on the evidence outlined in this Needs Study, UTS recommends Shellharbour City Council shape its new 10-year Community Facilities Strategy and Action Plan on the following five themes and directions:

1) Maximise community access to community facilities and grow participation

2) Cater for diverse and emerging community needs in how community facilities are designed and managed

3) Systematically enhance the features and facilities available within and adjoining community facilities

4) Expand how Council collaborates and engages in joint ventures to extend access to facilities

5) Continuously improve how Council plans, manages and activates its community facilities

It is proposed that these five priority areas form the basis of the Strategy and complementary Action Plan, with specific actions and options to deliver on these outcomes listed under each.

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