



COMMUNITY FACILITIES STRATEGY

2021-2031

Activate • Connect • Evolve

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Shellharbour City Council, together with the University of Technology Sydney (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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INTRODUCTION

What is the purpose of the Strategy?

The Shellharbour City Council Community Facilities Strategy 2021-2031: Activate - Connect - Evolve outlines a set of principles, priorities and actions to guide how Shellharbour City Council provides, manages and activates its community facilities over the next ten years, for the benefit of the Shellharbour community.

The Strategy considers existing Council owned and/or managed community facilities and also provides a framework and rationale for future planning and investment in different types of facilities.

The Strategy will form part of Council's Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework and will be systematically delivered based on a staged implementation plan, running from 2021 through to 2031.

In addition to gathering ongoing feedback from the community and other stakeholders, the Strategy's implementation will be informed by changes in the local population and by emerging trends in social infrastructure occurring at the local government level in other parts of Australia and the rest of the world.

What are community facilities?

In this Strategy, **community facilities are buildings and places available to the public for casual or organised recreational, educational, artistic, social or cultural activities.**

They include community and neighbourhood centres; senior citizen centres; youth centres; baby, parent and child centres; halls, functions and events spaces; club houses and amenity rooms; surf life saving club houses; and scout and girl guide halls. A description of each of these is included in Table 1.

Community facilities are imperative in promoting physical activity, wellbeing, sports participation, community interaction and social cohesion, particularly for groups who may not have many opportunities for community interaction in their day-to-day lives, such as those who are retired, unemployed or caring for someone. Community facilities provide for the health, welfare, social and cultural needs of the community and play an essential role in the development of vibrant neighbourhoods, especially for minority groups such as culturally and linguistically diverse people and people with disability.

Table 1 Description of community facilities



Hall, Function and Event 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 Local Government Area (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 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 facilities in planning.



Baby, Parent and Child Centre

Facilities catering to the health, wellbeing and education of babies, toddlers and preschoolers. Baby health centres are 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 and performance and rehearsal venues. They may also include facilities and spaces that support making and creating activities and classes.

Council currently owns two community facilities classified as 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 counselling and support services.

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



Other Community Facility

Facilities listed under this category are those that fall outside the other 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 Strategy. It should be noted that Council also own various other types of facilities that also serve the community. These are not included in this Strategy as they have recently been reviewed by Council or are covered by other plans and strategies of Council.

These include:

- Shellharbour Civic Centre
- The Shellharbour Theatre
- Council's libraries and museum
- Council's sports fields, parks, recreation areas and open spaces
- Other community-type facilities that are not open to the general public including:
 - Operational facilities
 - Emergency services facilities

How was the Strategy developed?

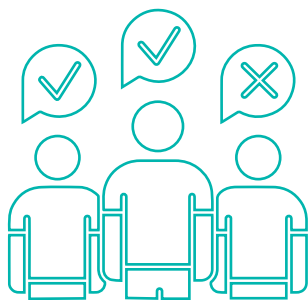
The Institute for Public Policy and Governance (IPPG) at the University of Technology Sydney was commissioned by Shellharbour City Council to commence research on Council's community facilities, to identify the needs and gaps and provide recommendations on how these could best be addressed in a new ten-year Strategy and Action Plan.

The Community Facilities Needs Study provides an overview of the changing demographic profile of the Shellharbour LGA. It also maps current community facilities, policy settings, trends in community facility planning, as well as industry standards and usage patterns.

In addition, the Needs Study outlines the feedback gathered through an extensive community and stakeholder engagement process undertaken from December 2020 to June 2021. This process involved consulting with more than 650 individuals across the LGA, using four main methods, as outlined below:

3

Community
Surveys



Representative sample telephone survey
(451 residents)

Council website Let's Chat community survey
(79 residents)

Council website Let's Chat community facilities hirers
and service provider survey (25 providers)

7

Stakeholder
Workshops



63+ individuals participated in 7 workshops focused
on the Aboriginal community, seniors and people with
disability, young people, local service providers, and
parents and carers

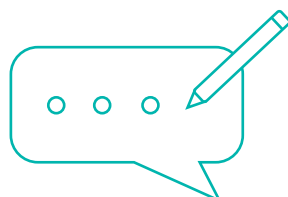
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In-depth
Interviews and
Focus Groups



Series of interviews, focus groups and exchanges with
Council staff, plus consultation with elected officials

Written
Feedback



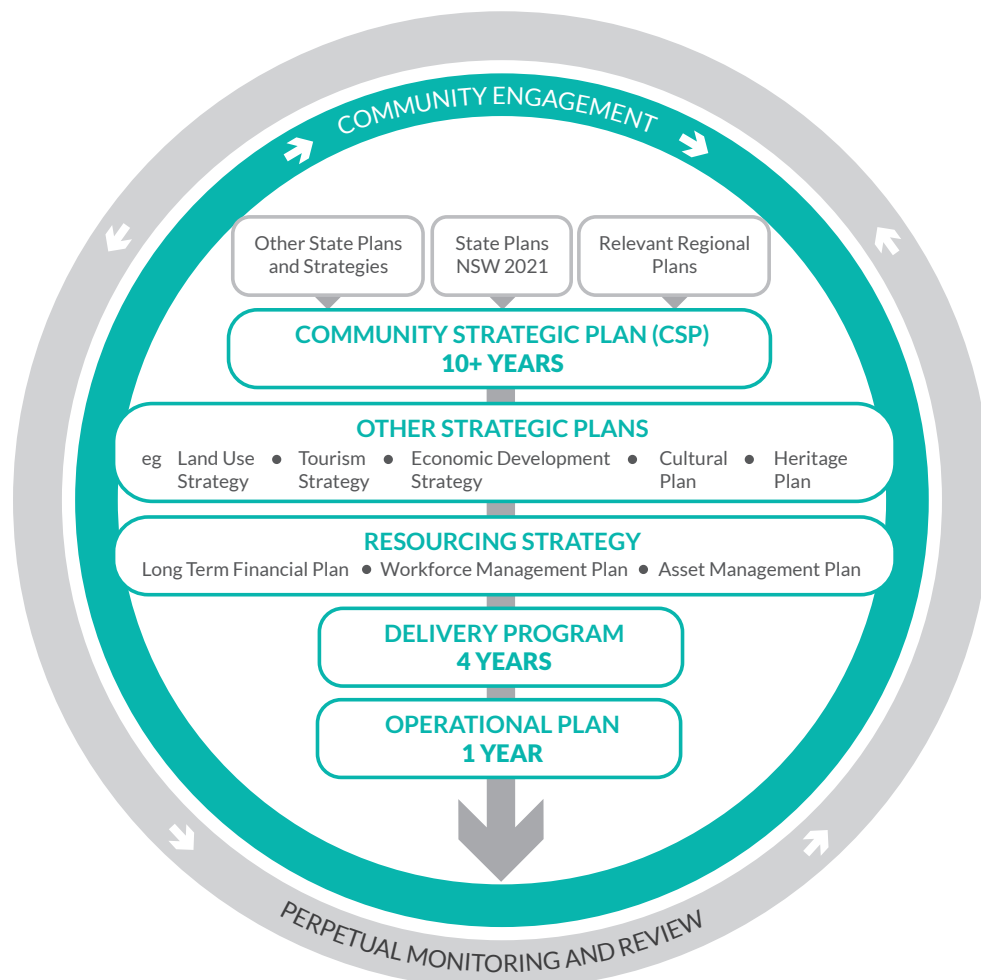
A series of feedback boards were provided at seven
Council community facilities

In addition, UTS received emails and feedback from a
range of stakeholders

How does the Strategy relate to other Council plans?

This **Community Facilities Strategy** was developed within the context of the NSW Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework, expanding upon commitments made in Shellharbour's *Community Strategic Plan 2018-2028* (CSP) and complementing other operational plans as illustrated in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1 The Shellharbour Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework



Shellharbour City Council's CSP shapes the strategy, services, operations, management and renewal of facilities and assets. It also guides decision-making about services, projects and work programs for the local community.

Key Council objectives related to community facility planning, activation and management include creating a city that is:

“ **Vibrant, safe, creative and inclusive;** providing a liveable community that is accessible and inclusive. ”

“ **Active and healthy;** providing access to services and facilities where people can live, learn and play. ”

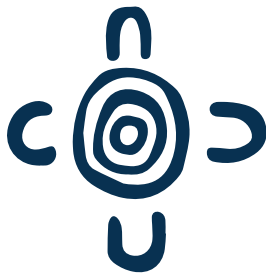
The Needs Study was prepared first and provides the key background to this Strategy.

ABOUT THE SHELLHARBOUR AREA

Population and planning trends

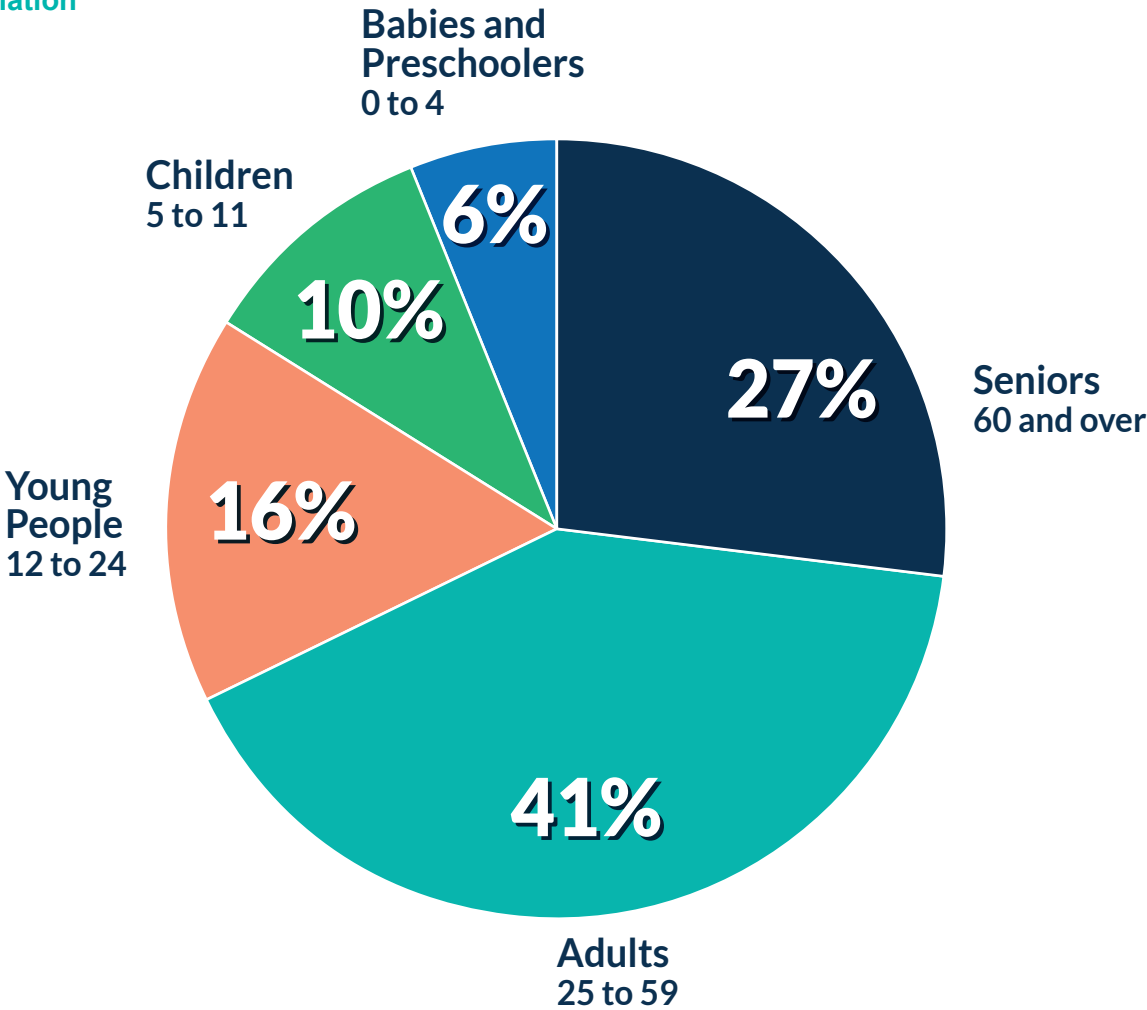
Our community

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.



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%.

Figure 2
Profile of Shellharbour
LGA population
by 2031



There is a wide diversity of ages, household types, incomes and cultural heritages amongst the almost 74,000 people who reside in the Shellharbour LGA.

Compared to similar LGAs, the Shellharbour LGA is home to high numbers of young people and families, with under 25-year-olds representing approximately a third of the population (33%) in 2019, a percentage that is expected to remain similar into 2031 (32%). Many of these young people will live in new release areas of Shell Cove, Flinders, Tullimbar and Calderwood.

In contrast, established suburbs such as Warilla, Mount Warrigal, Barrack Point and Barrack Heights have a higher proportion of older residents. By 2031, over 60-year-olds are expected to rise to close to 30% of the population. Both geography-based age trends are expected to continue across the next 10 years.

It is estimated that by 2031, the population will have increased to 86,245 people, equating to an additional 13,956 people (16% growth) in the LGA. Figure 2 shows this projected population breakdown by age.

ESTIMATED RESIDENT
POPULATION 2021

73,233



ESTIMATED RESIDENT
POPULATION 2031

86,245

This population growth presents some opportunities, as well as challenges, for Shellharbour City Council, particularly around the use and availability of community facilities. This includes how to optimise existing assets in established suburbs, while at the same time, working to meet the needs of new residents moving into expanding housing areas into the future.

The diversity of age and interests across the LGA requires careful consideration to ensure all residents can access appropriate community facilities.

Council's role in community facilities

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

While this Strategy is focused on the built facilities, rather than on the community services, programs, and activities that take place in these facilities, it is important to note that there are a wide variety of other 'players' who complement, support and activate Council's facilities, including incumbent service providers, community groups and not-for-profit organisations; private clubs and other facility hirers; plus individual community members and families who access, use and enjoy the facilities.

Council plays many specific roles regarding community facilities, including:

- facility planning and management
- facility construction, provision, upgrading and maintenance
- facility activation through:
 - managing facility hiring
 - managing leases and licenses coordinating, delivering or partnering in special activities and events involving community facilities
 - in a few cases, staffing, service delivery and direct operations

Table 2 summarises Council's roles, together with the different and complementary roles, which other parties play in local community facilities. These shared responsibilities underscore the need to consider partnerships and collaborations aimed at enhancing Council's roles in community facilities.

Council funds community facilities through:

- Development Contributions
 - External Grant Funding
 - Council Finances

Table 2 Council and non-Council roles in the community facilities infrastructure

Role	Council	Service Providers	Other Parties
Planning	<p>Coordinates the development of long-term strategies and plans for community facilities, services and events.</p> <p>Roles include decisions on whether the facility should operate as a Council facility or service, or alternatively leased or licensed to an external provider.</p>	<p>Actively participate in the planning for social infrastructure including through advocacy and community consultation processes.</p>	<p>Actively participate in the planning for social infrastructure, including through advocacy and community consultation process.</p> <p>In the case of developers, this may include undertaking their own planning and delivery of community facilities.</p>
Providing built or hard infrastructure	<p>Manages a range of 'hard infrastructure', including the 54 community facility buildings in the LGA, which are in the scope of this Strategy.</p> <p>Responsible for providing buildings that meet required standards.</p> <p>Coordinates leasing and licensing, regular and casual venue hire of facilities to community groups, service providers and other hirers.</p>	<p>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.</p> <p>Responsible for providing buildings that meet required standards.</p>	<p>Private owners and/ or private providers like pubs, clubs and shopping centres are increasingly offering community spaces such as events, meeting and function rooms.</p> <p>Responsible for delivering spaces to relevant and required standards.</p>
Providing services or soft infrastructure	<p>Helps 'activate' community facilities.</p> <p>Coordinates and/or delivers some services, programs activities or events in or associated with community facilities.</p> <p>Partners with service providers or other organisations to deliver some programs, activities and events.</p> <p>Coordinates leasing, licensing, regular and casual venue hire of facilities to community groups, service providers and other hirers.</p> <p>Shares and promotes information about community facilities, programs and available activities.</p>	<p>Through leasing or licensing or hire arrangements, delivers services, programs and events at a community facility on an ongoing, regular or ad hoc basis.</p> <p>Delivers a wide variety of community services including baby health, aged and child care, community and neighbourhood centre programs, plus clubs and societies.</p>	<p>Provides access to facilities for service delivery, programs and events to take place on a low or no-fee basis.</p> <p>'Activates' and promotes private spaces for broader community use.</p> <p>Coordinates hiring of the facility.</p>
Maintenance and management	<p>Responsible for maintenance and management of all Council-owned community facilities.</p> <p>In many instances, also responsible for cleaning.</p>	<p>Where leased, licensed or hired, responsible for adhering to rules and requirements associated with using a Council facility.</p>	<p>Responsible for maintenance and management of all private facilities consistent with parties' terms and conditions.</p>

Source: UTS-IPPG Shellharbour City Council Community Facilities Need Study, July 2021

Current profile of community facilities

Shellharbour City Council currently owns a significant number of community facilities, 54 of which are the focus of this Strategy, with an additional three community facilities planned to be built by 2022/2023. These are Calderwood Community Centre, Tullimbar Community Facility and Shell Cove Community Centre.

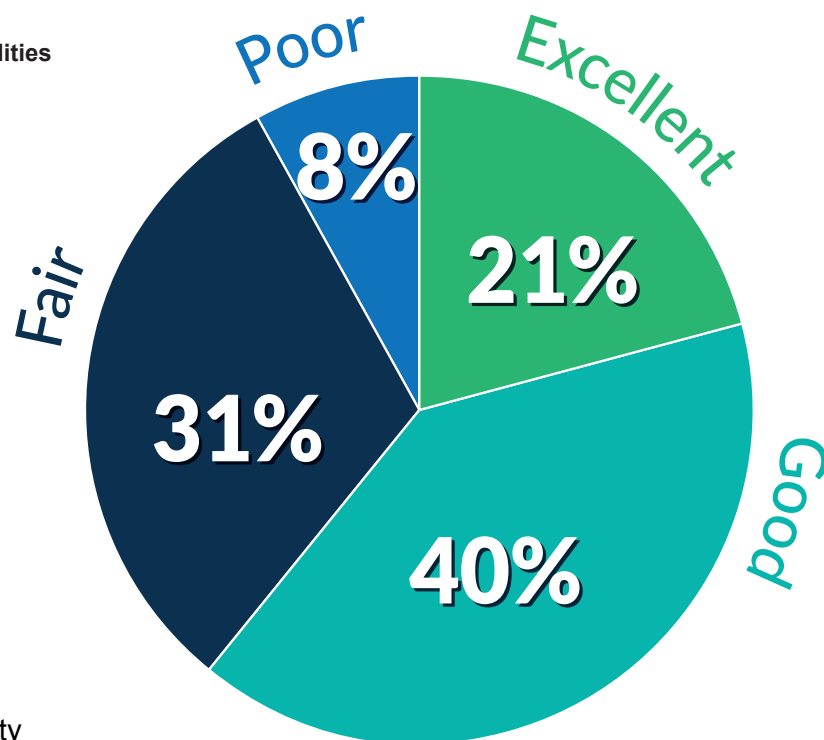
Community facilities provide a key resource for local communities by offering buildings and places for casual or organised recreational, educational, artistic, social or cultural activities.

Whilst a few Council community facilities pre-date 1980 (10%), the majority were built in the 1980s (40%), or 1990s (29%). Just over 20% of the facilities date from the year 2000 with only 4% built over the last 10 years.

Most of Council's 54 community facilities are within a 200m catchment from a bus stop, however, buses are often infrequent and route planning can be challenging.

Figure 3 highlights the condition of Council-owned facilities.

Figure 3 Condition of Council-owned community facilities

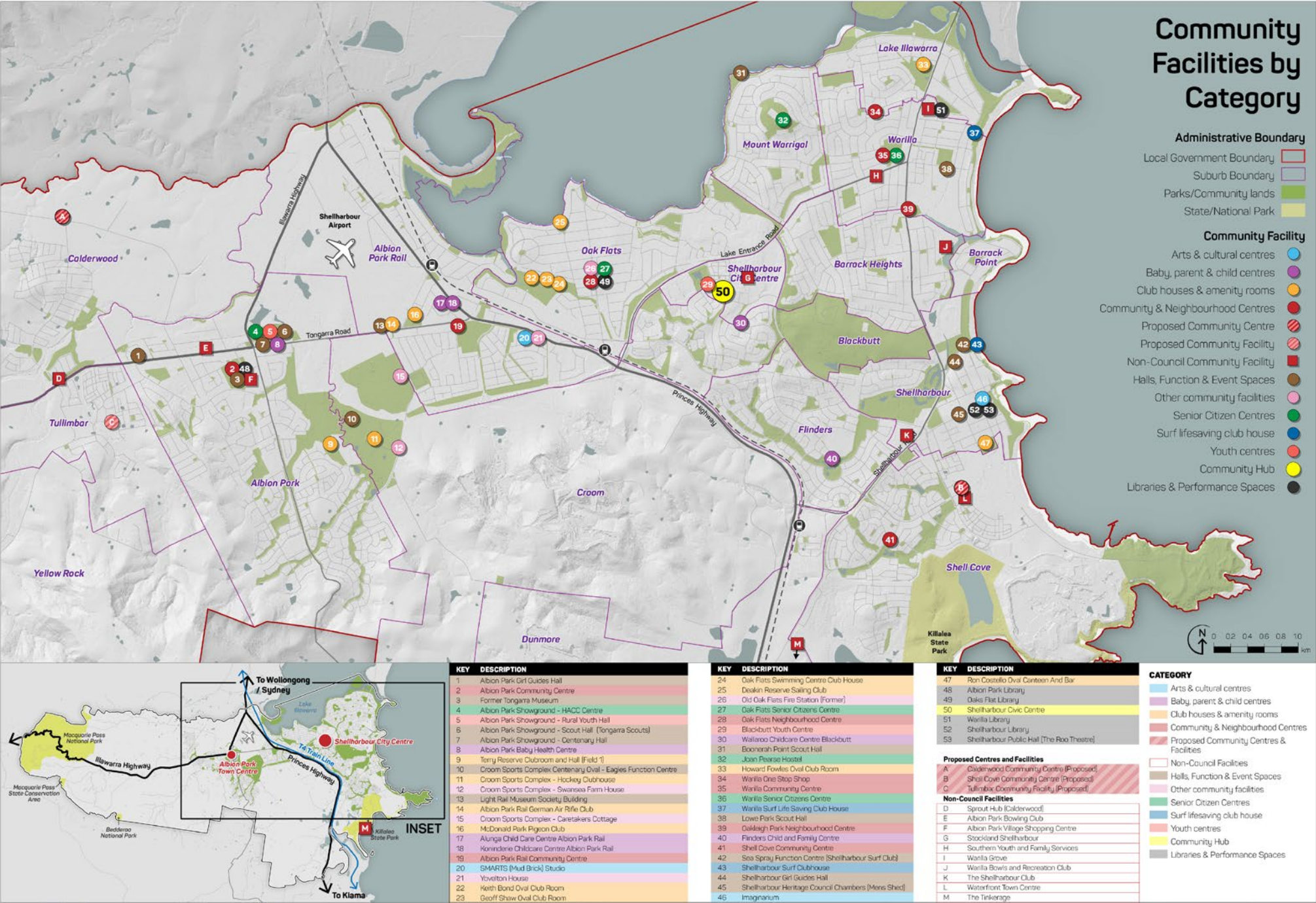


According to Council's facility hiring data over the last six months:

- the most popular booked facilities were the Flinders Child Family Centre, Albion Park Showground Home Aged Community Centre and the Albion Park Community Centre
- the highest number of attendees per booking occurred at the Warilla Senior Citizens Centre and the Oak Flats Neighbourhood Centre
- youth, faith, and children and family organisations/groups were the most frequent users of hired facilities
- women, carers, seniors and self-help/ support groups were the least frequent users of hired facilities.

Figure 4 is a map showing the location and category of facility for the 54 Council community facilities that are the focus of this Strategy.

Figure 4 Map of Shellharbour City Council community facilities by category




What the community told us


Through extensive community and stakeholder engagement, individuals identified what they see as important for our current and future community facilities. The key themes include:

 **Accessible and welcoming**

 **Clean and well-maintained**


 **Financially and environmentally sustainable**

 **Vibrant, contemporary and aesthetically pleasing**

 **Multi-purpose, flexible and centrally located**

 **Modern technology**

 **Connected indoor and outdoor spaces**

 **Programmed and staffed**

 **Building partnerships and collaborations**

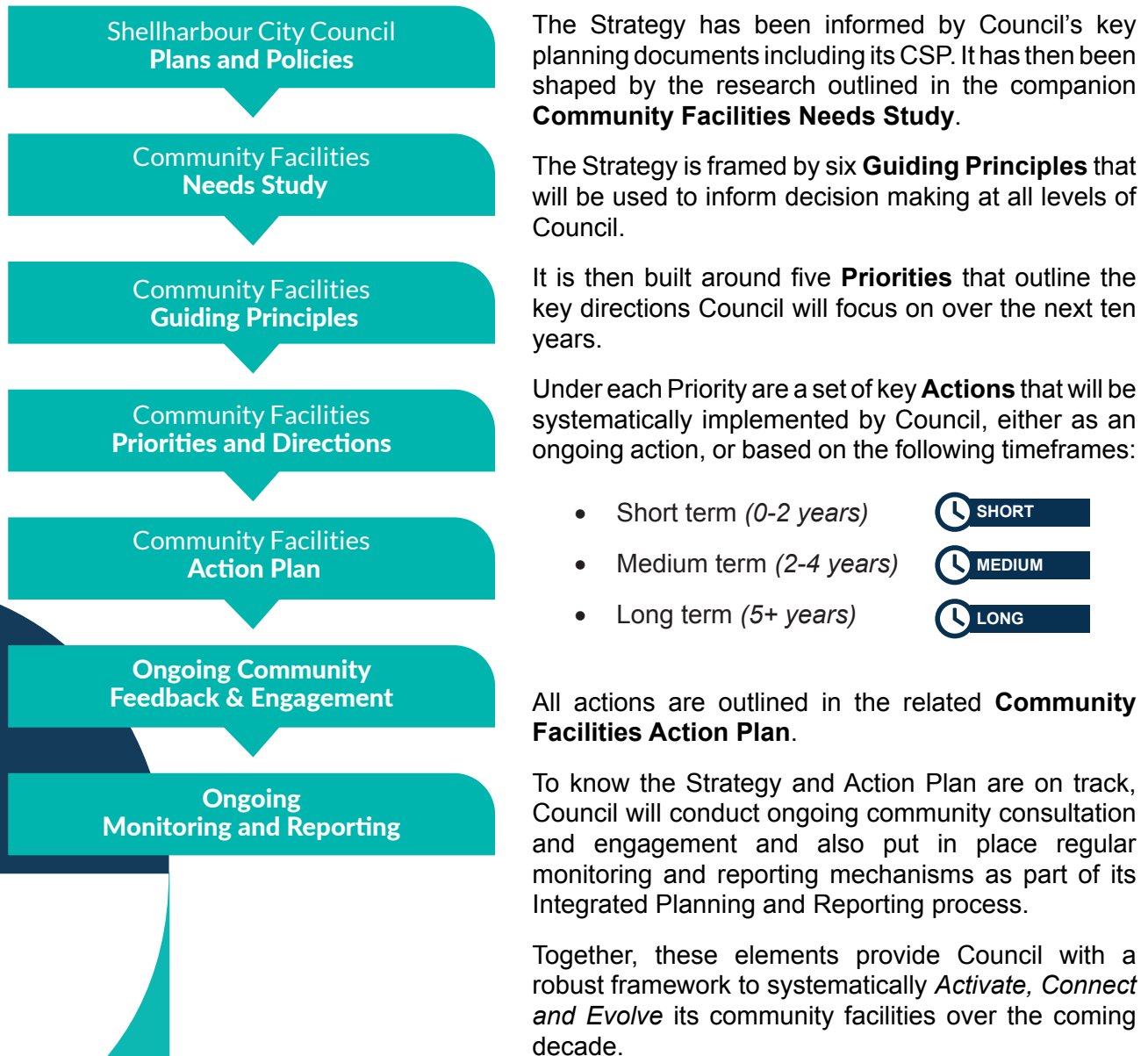


ABOUT THE STRATEGY

How the Strategy works

The Community Facilities Strategy involves several elements that will guide how Council effectively plans, activates and manages its facilities for the 2021-2031 period. These are summarised in Figure 5.

Figure 5 Community Facilities Strategy planning steps



Principles underpinning the Strategy

In response to what our community told us, our demographic analysis and research into best practice in community facilities, six strategic principles have emerged. Council has adopted these **Guiding Principles** to frame how Council plans, manages and activates its community facilities over the next 10 years.

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 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.



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 and equitable access, consistent with Council's commitments to inclusion and social justice principles.



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.

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.



PRIORITIES AND ACTIONS

Drawing on the evidence outlined in the Needs Study, Shellharbour City Council will focus its efforts on the following five priorities. Some key directions for each priority are outlined below.

For the full list of key directions Council will be undertaking, please see the **Community Facilities Action Plan**.



PRIORITY

1










- **Maximise community access to community facilities and grow participation**

Community facilities should be central and accessible to the communities they are intending to serve. It is Council's role to facilitate access to our facilities to ensure our facilities best meet the interests and needs of the Shellharbour community. Having access to community facilities brings several benefits, including:

- Improved health and wellbeing
- Increased participation
- Improved social cohesion

Council will **maximise community access** to its community facilities and expand activation strategies to grow participation by implementing the following actions:



ACTIONS	KEY PRINCIPLES	TIMEFRAME
Enhance how Council advertises, promotes and communicates about its community facilities and programs.	 	 SHORT
Review Council's facility hiring, pricing and usage policies and procedures.	 	 MEDIUM
Monitor and review a rolling asset review and renewal program to identify cost-effective options.	 	 ONGOING



Responsive



Accessible



Cohesive



Affordable



Informed



Sustainable

PRIORITY






2

- **Cater for diverse and emerging community needs** in how community facilities are designed and managed

In order to improve participation, provision of community facilities should meet the needs of the current and future residents, in line with forecasted population changes. This will contribute to a sense of place and belonging and strengthen the local communities. This is particularly important in new development areas and locations with limited access to existing facilities and services.

Council will **cater for diverse and emerging community needs** in how its community facilities are designed and managed by implementing the following actions:



ACTIONS	KEY PRINCIPLES	TIMEFRAME
Improve accessibility to and within our facilities to facilitate access for all.	 	 MEDIUM
Incorporate elements that reflect the local community, culture and heritage, and are designed with community involvement, in existing and new facilities.	 	 ONGOING
Promote Aboriginal history and contemporary cultures through facility provision.	 	 ONGOING



Responsive



Accessible



Cohesive



Affordable



Informed



Sustainable

PRIORITY










3

● Systematically enhance the features and facilities available within and adjoining community facilities

Aesthetic enhancements, as well as improvements to the amenities, offerings, safety features, accessibility and availability, will increase the quality of facilities across the network and the benefits they provide. Upgrading existing facilities can act as a catalyst to revitalise the local community, as well as contributing to local community cohesion, and connectedness between different groups and individuals.

Council will **systematically enhance what features and facilities** are available within and adjoining Council's community facilities by implementing the following actions:



ACTIONS	KEY PRINCIPLES	TIMEFRAME
Upgrade and design-in environmentally sustainable options.	 	 ONGOING
Create more appealing and inviting facilities through external and internal upgrades.	 	 ONGOING
Improve the functionality and flexibility of facilities and spaces to broaden and increase use.	 	 MEDIUM



Responsive



Accessible



Cohesive



Affordable



Informed



Sustainable

PRIORITY










4

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

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, as well as the community. By working together, the community benefits from access to a wide variety of facilities and services to support their health and wellbeing and a more connected community.

Council will **expand how it collaborates** and engages in joint ventures to further community access to community facilities across the LGA by implementing the following actions:



ACTIONS	KEY PRINCIPLES	TIMEFRAME
Facilitate a regular Shellharbour LGA Community Facilities Coordination Group involving local shopping centres, clubs, schools, faith groups, and service providers.	 	 ONGOING
Regularly audit underutilised and poor-quality facilities and develop cost effective and sustainable options.	 	 ONGOING
Introduce a standardised process for tracking and monitoring facility use.	 	 SHORT



Responsive



Accessible



Cohesive



Affordable



Informed



Sustainable

PRIORITY










5

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

Community facilities contribute to the health and wellbeing of individuals and communities, strengthening positive environmental, social and economic outcomes for future generations. To sustain this, Council needs to consider innovative and sustainable ways of planning, operating and financing community facilities in both the short and longer term.

Council will **continuously improve the sustainability and management of Council's community facilities** by implementing the following actions:



ACTIONS	KEY PRINCIPLES	TIMEFRAME
Develop a community facility hierarchy, which will provide appropriate guidance on facility development/upgrades.	 	 SHORT
Explore opportunities for income generating activities.	 	 MEDIUM
Evolve Council's internal systems and processes towards an integrated Social Infrastructure Planning model.	 	 LONG



Responsive



Accessible



Cohesive



Affordable



Informed



Sustainable

PUTTING THE STRATEGY INTO ACTION

Strategy Implementation Plan

To implement the Strategy and Action Plan, Council will convene a high-level **Community Facilities Activation Internal Working Group**, responsible for monitoring the Strategy and updating a **Community Facilities Implementation Plan**, documenting the status of each action and noting those for action in subsequent years.

The Implementation Plan will list the lead unit and other stakeholders, as well as specific milestones. The Plan will also document any emerging issues or new developments that need to be managed against the specific action.

The Plan will be provided to Council's senior management and elected officials for noting and consideration. This will provide accountability and transparency regarding the Strategy's progress.

Measures and monitoring

To measure the success of this Strategy and the Action Plan overall, Council will develop a suite of outcome measures to assess how the priorities and actions are progressing.

The measures will be reviewed at least once per annum over the ten-year life of the Strategy and will assess quantitative and qualitative changes in:

- 1) Community access to community facilities and participation levels
- 2) Breadth, type and number of facility users, including those captured in Council's facility booking system
- 3) Facilities asset and usage reports measured over time, covering:
 - facility usage data
 - asset condition
 - recent and scheduled community facility constructions and upgrades
- 4) Number, type, location and outcomes of Council's collaboration and joint ventures related to community facilities
- 5) Community facility management data measured over time including:
 - consolidated expenditure
 - contracting and staffing data
 - systems and management upgrades
 - community consultation and engagement activities.

These measures and monitoring mechanisms will be included in Council's Integrated Planning and Reporting framework.

Ongoing community involvement and feedback

In addition to established consultative mechanisms, Council will regularly gather community feedback on its community facilities via its regular Community Satisfaction Survey.

Council will also closely review any feedback received on its facilities via its 'Let's Chat' feedback channel.

Further, Council will continue to utilise its community advisory groups and members of other committees to continuously test approaches and gather feedback on specific plans developed under the Strategy.

All feedback from the community and other stakeholders will be systematically collected and communicated to specific Council teams and staff responsible for managing the implementation of the relevant action.



Follow us
on socials



Activate • Connect • Evolve

Enquiries and feedback should be made to:
The Chief Executive Officer
Shellharbour City Council
Locked Bag 155
Shellharbour City Centre NSW 2529

Telephone: (02) 4221 6111
Facsimile: (02) 4221 6016
E-mail: council@shellharbour.nsw.gov.au

www.shellharbour.nsw.gov.au