



**Gunnedah**  
Shire Council  
Open New Horizons

# GUNNEDAH SHIRE OPEN SPACE STRATEGY 2022 - 2032

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## Acknowledgements

In presenting this document to the community, Gunnedah Shire Council would like to acknowledge the Gamilaroi Aboriginal Nation as the traditional custodians of the land on which we live and work, and in doing so, Council pays its respect to all Elders past and present as well as to the young Indigenous leaders of tomorrow.

Various individuals and organisations provided valuable information and input during development of the Gunnedah Open Space Strategy. The efforts of those noted below are especially appreciated (please refer to the body of the report to learn of all contributing groups).

### Council

Elected Councillors  
Council staff

### Project team

Ashley Gardner  
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### Schools

Public and private schools in Gunnedah Shire provided an opportunity to talk with students to ensure youth input was captured. Input received from all students was invaluable.

### Residents of Gunnedah Shire

Residents participated enthusiastically in multiple rounds of consultation to develop the Open Space Strategy.

## Document control:

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2	31.03.2021	Draft Strategy	HC	DC	AG
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## executive summary

### Project background

The Open Space Strategy 2022-2032 will provide Gunnedah Shire Council with direction enabling it to strategically plan, design, develop and manage open space over the next decade. Development of the Strategy included a review of the 2010 Open Space Strategy, additional strategic planning documents of Council, relevant legislation and State policy and guidelines. Significant engagement has also been a key to ensuring a set of quality directions with community buy-in.

A comprehensive audit of open space has been undertaken including recreation parks, sport facilities, linear corridors, open space along waterways, natural areas and other open spaces providing a recreation function.

Two reports comprise the Open Space Strategy 2020-2030:

- Gunnedah Shire Open Space Strategy Issues Paper
- Gunnedah Shire Open Space Strategy 2022-2032.



It is acknowledged that Gunnedah Shire Council has achieved significant improvements to its open space network since 2010. This Strategy builds on that success, and aims to identify opportunities to enhance open space further, in alignment with Council's and the community's strategic goals and aspirations for the future.

### Open space vision

The open space vision for the Gunnedah Shire for the next 10 years is:

**Gunnedah Shire's open space network contributes to an enhanced quality of life, through open spaces that are sustainable, accessible and resource-efficient, and that enhance the recreation, environmental, social and health needs of current and future generations.**

The vision underpins Council's commitment to deliver quality open spaces and facilities that positively contribute to the quality of life of residents, workers and visitors to the Gunnedah Shire.

## Focus area objectives

The Open Space Strategy includes objectives and strategic directions for the Shire using eight focus areas as a framework. The focus areas are summarised below.

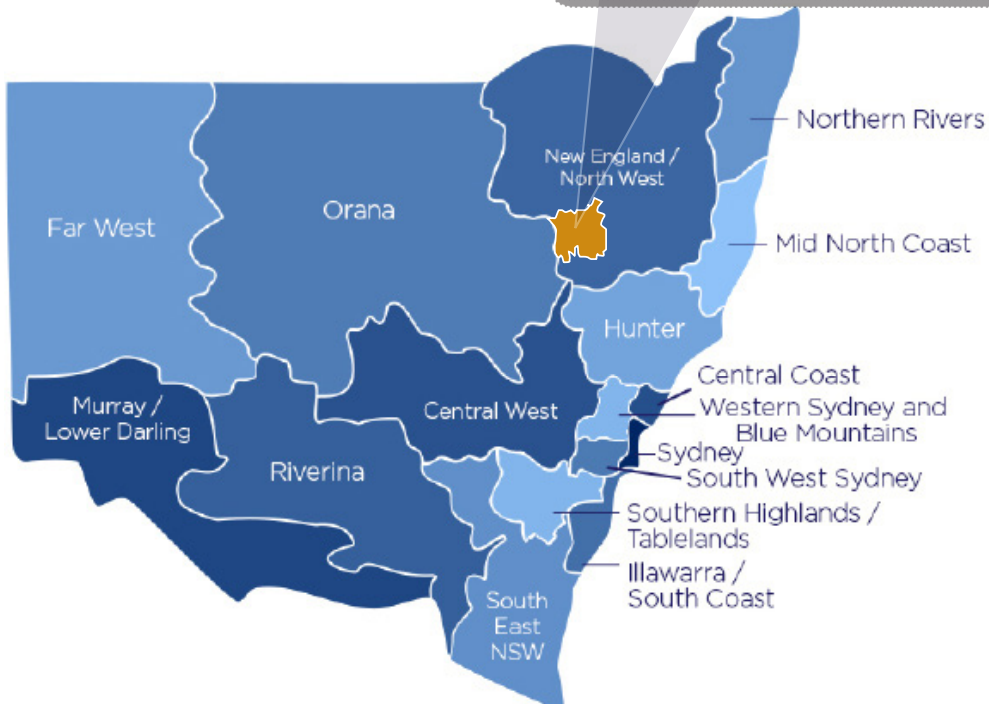
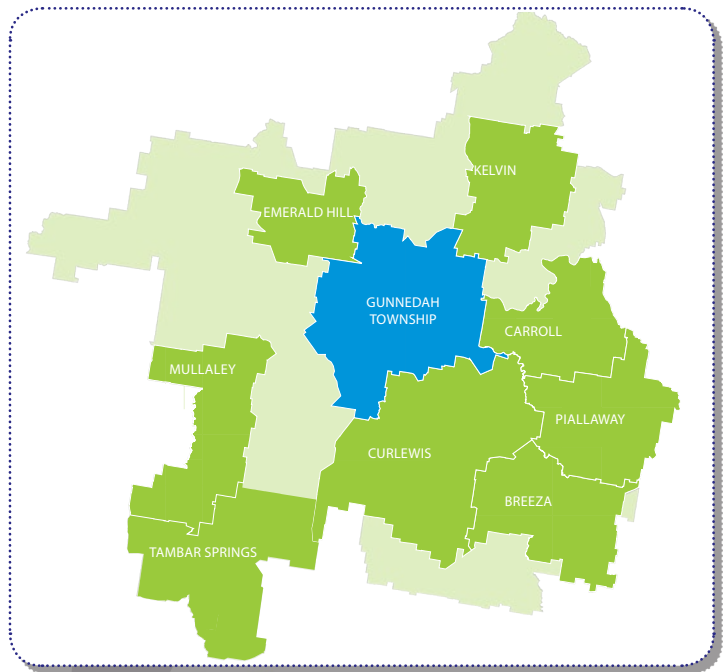
Table 01: Focus areas and objectives for Gunnedah Shire

Focus Area	Objectives
Focus area 1: Open space provision	Ensure equitable provision of suitably developed parks and reserves in accordance with agreed Desired Standards of Service (DSS), particularly in new residential areas
Focus area 2: Recreation destinations	Create recreation destination parks in the Shire that provide a diverse range of high quality recreation opportunities and experiences
Focus area 3: Sport and aquatic facilities	Continue to provide and improve sport and aquatic facilities to support participation in organised competition and events
Focus area 4: Open space connections	Enhance the walkability of towns and outlying communities through functional, safe and attractive open space connections, including developing and maintaining paths, trails, recreation nodes, landscapes and streetscapes
Focus area 5: Biodiversity and nature	Coordinate and plan the approach to protecting, managing and enhancing natural areas to strengthen the biodiversity and natural settings along linear corridors, biodiversity corridors and nature reserves
Focus area 6: Public realm	Enhance the quality and diversity of open space through innovative landscape design including a strategic approach to landscape architecture principles and design trends
Focus area 7: Placemaking and activation	Create and promote unique and vibrant places and activities, and empower the community to activate public places, thereby achieving place making
Focus area 8: Open space management	Provide well managed and maintained open spaces through a coordinated and planned approach that reflects park classifications and hierarchy and whole-of-life asset management

## Planning areas

Planning areas have been identified across the Shire to allow strategic analysis and direction for open spaces and specific parks and reserves. The planning areas are:

- Breeza
- Carroll
- Curlewis
- Emerald Hill
- Gunnedah township
- Kelvin
- Mullaley
- Piallaway
- Tambar Springs.



Map source: [www.sport.nsw.gov.au/how-to-find-whats-on-](http://www.sport.nsw.gov.au/how-to-find-whats-on-)

## Implementation

This Strategy provides strategic direction as well as specific projects that require implementation over the next decade to achieve Council's vision for open space. Actions identified in the implementation section have been drawn primarily from the focus areas and planning areas sections of this Strategy.

Implementation of the Strategy will require a commitment of funding and resources, as well as the formation of partnerships and external grant funding. To implement the Strategy, the following key actions will be required:

- inclusion of identified projects in Council's Long Term Financial Plan
- allocation of additional capital funding to support identified capital improvements
- review of funding mechanisms within Council including development contributions
- proactively prepare for opportunities to secure additional external funding
- identify partnerships for management of open spaces.



Image source: <https://zestevents.com.au/water-tower-mural-on-australian-silo-art->



# 01\_ introduction

## 1.1 Purpose

The Gunnedah Shire Open Space Strategy 2022-2032 will provide strategic direction to Council ensuring the provision of open space is developed to an appropriate standard and to meet the recreation needs of current and future residents.

## 1.2 Scope

For the purpose of the Gunnedah Open Space Strategy, open space includes recreation parks, sport facilities, linear corridors, reserves, town and village entrances, and the public realm including the Gunnedah main street.

## 1.3 Strategic objectives

The broad objectives of this Strategy include enhancing:



Safety, health promotion, comfort and compatibility of uses and users



Social interaction and inclusion of diverse groups and uses



Accessibility, movement and legibility



Location and connectivity



Ease of maintenance



Physical comfort and shelter



Building design and landscaping



## 1.4 Methodology

The planning process involved several steps, detailed in Figure 01.

An Issues Paper was delivered after completion of Stage 3 to identify key issues for further investigation and analysis.

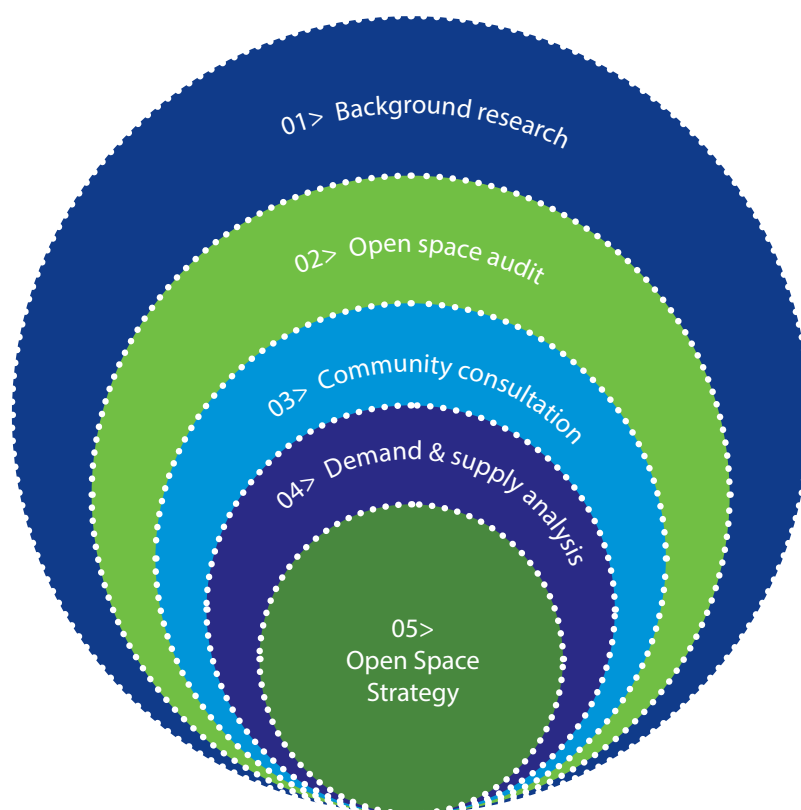


Fig. 01: Open Space Strategy methodology

## 1.5 Outputs

Two key outputs resulted from the Strategy. These outputs are:

- Issues Paper
- Open Space Strategy 2022-2032.

Related outputs that are critical for implementation of the Strategy, include:

- proposed 10-year capital works schedule
- operational and maintenance budget estimates.



## 02\_ planning context

### 2.1 Gunnedah Shire character

The Gunnedah Shire landscape is defined by natural and geographic features including the Namoi and Mooki Rivers, expansive agriculturally rich plains and Nandewar mountain ranges. The district is recognised as home to the largest koala colony in inland New South Wales. The land was originally inhabited by Aboriginal People, the Kamilaroi (Gamilaroi/Gamilaraay), and a relatively high proportion of the Shire's population is Aboriginal.

Gunnedah township was settled by Europeans in 1833/34 and is located in the North West Slopes region of New South Wales and covers an area of 4,994 square kilometres. Neighbouring LGAs include Narrabri, Liverpool Plains, Warrumbungle Shire and Tamworth Regional Councils.

The Council directly manages 83.68 hectares of core open space consisting of parks and reserves, as well as additional non-core open space land and streetscapes that contribute to the amenity of Gunnedah township and villages scattered across the local government area (LGA). The Namoi and Mooki Rivers, and Lake Keepit, provide access to water-based recreation activities. Conservation areas, nature reserves and travelling stock routes provide additional areas for outdoor recreation.

Over the past decade, Council has focussed on enhancing open spaces and streetscapes through upgrading facilities and planting additional street trees. Increasing the network of walking and cycling paths has also been a priority.

### 2.2 Planning areas

The Shire includes Gunnedah, the main town, and eight villages and outlying communities. For the purpose of this Strategy, the town of Gunnedah and the Shire have been divided into planning areas. The planning area boundaries are determined by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) for data collection purposes. In effect, the entire population of Gunnedah Shire has been considered for this Strategy. These planning areas are detailed in the table below.

Table 02: Gunnedah Shire planning areas.

Town	Localities	
Gunnedah township	Breeza	Kelvin
	Carroll	Mullaley
	Curlewis	Piallaway
	Emerald Hill	Tambar Springs

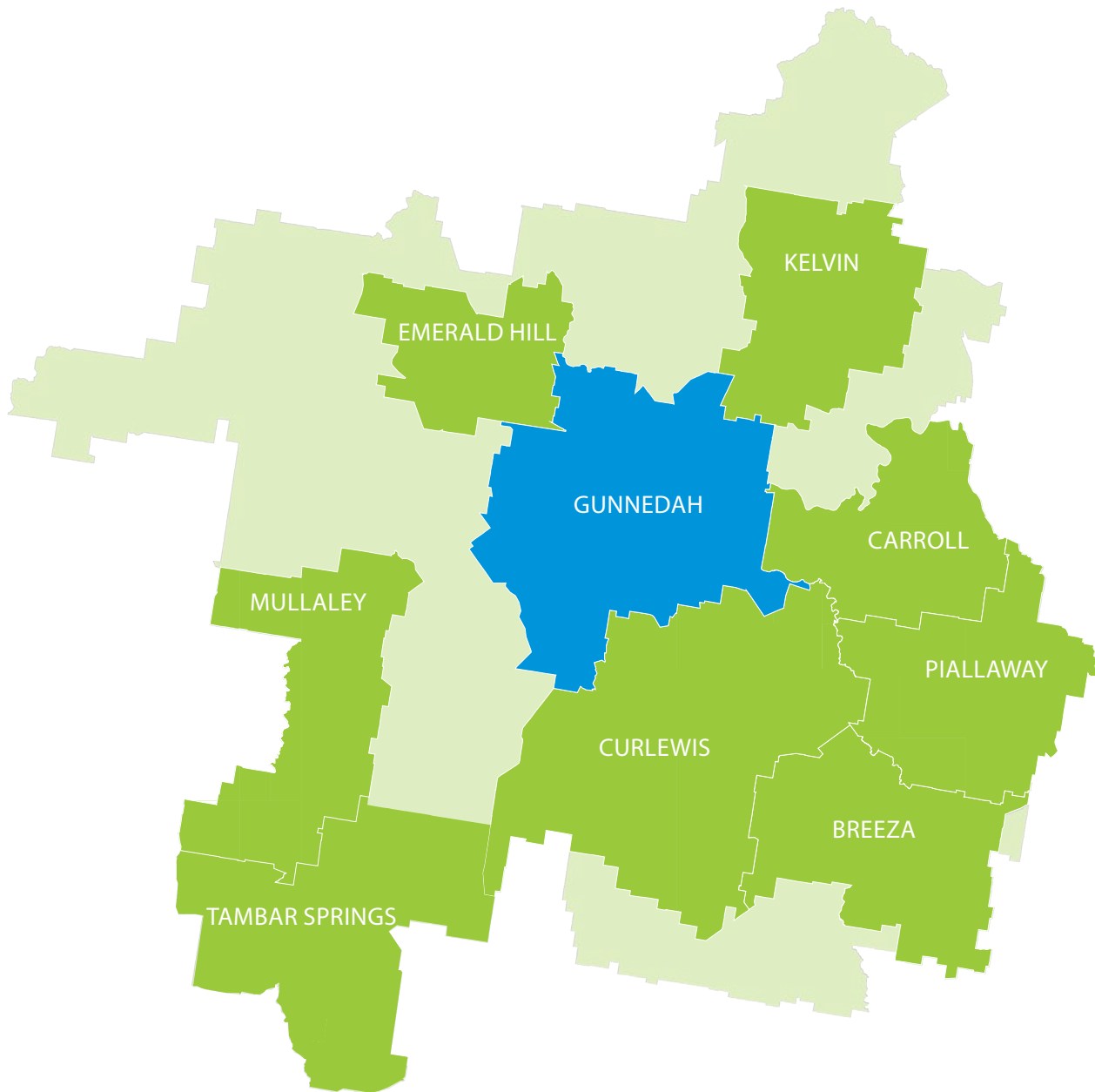
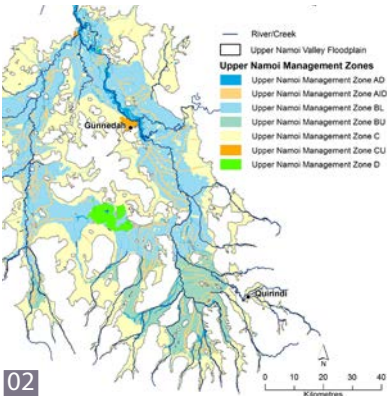


Fig. 02: Map of planning areas within Gunnedah Shire.



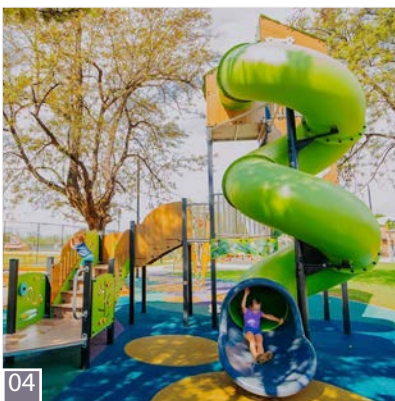
01



02



03



04

- 01\_ Gunnedah has a steady koala population
- 02\_ Upper Namoi River Management Zones
- 03\_ Carvings by the Kamilaroi People
- 04\_ Livvi's Place Inclusive Playground

### 2.3 Legislation and planning context

The provision and development of public open space is guided by several State Government strategies, policies and legislation. The Gunnedah Local Environmental Plan also guides and supports appropriate development. A summary of key legislation, strategies and policies used to prepare this Strategy, are listed below.

#### NSW Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979

Land use in NSW is regulated by the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 (The Act) allows plans to be made to guide the process of development and to regulate competing land uses. These are known as environmental planning instruments (EPIs) and there are two types:

- Local Environmental Plan (LEPs)
- State Environmental Planning Policies (SEPPs).

EPIs specify what type of development is allowed in an area. LEPs deal with the local government areas and SEPPs deal with specific locations, types of places or the whole of NSW.

The Gunnedah Local Environmental Plan (LEP) 2012 is the principal land use planning instrument applying to land in the Gunnedah local government area.

#### State Environmental Planning Policies

The SEPP (Koala Habitat Protection) 2020 is of particular significance to Gunnedah, due to the koala population in the Shire. The SEPP:

- provides a framework for councils to prepare a strategic koala plan of management that would apply to the whole or part of a local government area
- applies to development applications on land over one hectare in a relevant LGAs
- requires development applications to be consistent with a council strategic koala plan of management that applies to the land, or, if there is no strategic plan, sets out a two-step process to determine if the land is core koala habitat and, if it is, produce an Individual Koala Plan of Management before council can grant consent to a development application
- exempts clearing of vegetation from the application of the SEPP if the purpose of the clearing is to maintain an Asset Protection Zone as part of rebuilding a dwelling destroyed or damaged by bushfire and allows the dwelling to be sited anywhere on the lot
- saves all Koala Plans of Management approved under SEPP 44 and 2019 Koala SEPP.

Research commissioned by North West Local Land Services and undertaken by an independent ecologist in 2015, resulted in the Gunnedah Koala Strategy 2015. Recommendations have been used to develop the Gunnedah Koala Conservation Landscape Plan 2016. Mapping of significant Koala corridors for preservation and revegetation have contributed to development of an overarching Green Corridors map for the Gunnedah Shire, and this can be found further in this Strategy.

## Local Strategic Planning Statement (LSPS)

In 2018, amendments to the EP&A Acts resulted in all councils preparing and adopting a LSPS. Gunnedah Shire Council's LSPS: Future 2040, was adopted in August 2020 and aims to:

- strengthen Gunnedah Shire's productivity and competitiveness
- nurture quality lifestyles and sustain population growth
- value, protect and diversify Gunnedah Shire's primary production land and natural resources
- promote regional connections to ensure a diverse industry base with a skilled and stable workforce
- build effective responses to climate change and natural hazards
- preserve the environment and protect the heritage, history and character of Gunnedah Shire.

Four overarching themes form the basis of the local planning priorities and actions. The four themes are:

- boundless opportunity
- places for people
- connected and accessible
- sustainable and resilient.

In addition to the numerous and diverse priorities and actions in the LSPS, four local planning priorities are highlighted that have the potential to transform Gunnedah Shire. They are:

1. Develop transport and freight opportunities
2. Grow business, services and the digital economy through education, employment, training and innovation
3. Enhance Gunnedah Shire's liveability
4. Preserving biodiversity and preparing for climate change.

The Open Space Strategy aligns with, and provides additional direction, regarding the themes, priorities and actions identified in the LSPS. In particular, the Strategy aims to support achievement of local planning priority 10:

Support accessible, high quality, local open spaces

## Gunnedah Development Control Plan 2012 (DCP)

The Gunnedah DCP provides specific and comprehensive guidance for certain types of development, or area specific requirements for localities. The DCP provides a flexible means of identifying additional development controls and standards for addressing development issues as a local level, including direction regarding the preferred location and design of future open space and parks.

The DCP is due for review and integration of recommendations from the Open Space Strategy will assist to ensure Council achieves its strategic direction.

## Development contributions

Contributions Plans and Servicing Plans are used to share the cost of providing essential economic and social infrastructure to meet the community's needs. The Plans ensure that existing ratepayers are not required to meet the cost of providing for new community infrastructure arising from additional populations occupying new residential developments.

## Voluntary planning agreements (VPAs)

VPAs are voluntary agreements or other arrangements between developers and planning authorities, under which developers are required to make monetary contributions, dedicate land free of cost, or provide any other material public benefits, or any combination, towards public purposes.

## NSW Local Government Act 1993

The Local Government Act 1993 provides the legal framework for the system of local government in NSW and set outs the responsibilities and powers of councils, Councillors and other relevant legal entities. There are several sections of the legislation that are applicable to open space planning, design, management and use. In particular, the Local Government Act requires council to classify public land intended for community purposes and develop plans to guide the use and management of the land. The process for assessment of certain activities that could occur on open space land, such as primitive camping, is also included in the Act.

## NSW Crown Land Management Act 2016

The Crown Land Management Act (CLMA) introduced significant changes to the management of Crown Land by councils, as it effectively resulted in councils managing dedicated or reserved land as if it is public land under the NSW Local Government Act 1993, where the land is classified as community land. Under the Local Government Act, a Plan of Management must be adopted by Council for all community land.



Image: Livvi's Place Inclusive Playground (source: [www.grillex.com.au/livvis-place-gunnedah-nsw](http://www.grillex.com.au/livvis-place-gunnedah-nsw))

## Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework

The goal of the Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework (IP&R Framework) is to support councils to develop a suite of plans that respond to community aspirations. The intent of the Framework is to ensure integration of the various plans developed by councils collaboratively with the communities they serve.

The Framework recognises that most communities share similar aspirations: a safe, healthy and pleasant place to live, a sustainable environment, opportunities for social interaction, opportunities for education and employment, and reliable infrastructure. The difference lies in how each community responds to these needs. It also recognises that council plans and policies should not exist in isolation - that they are inter-connected. This Framework allows NSW councils to draw their various plans together, understand how they interact and get the maximum leverage from their efforts by planning holistically and sustainably for the future.

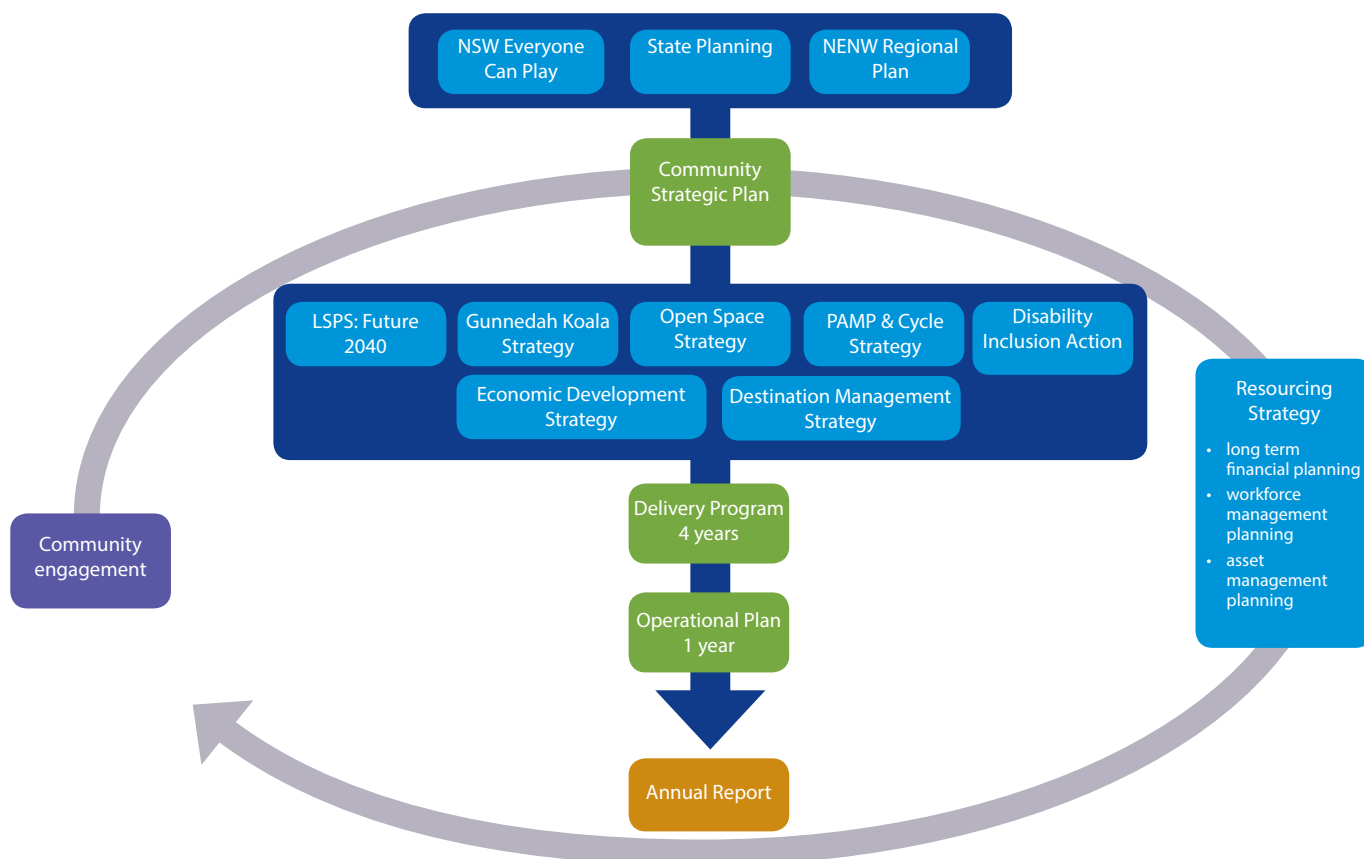


Fig.03 Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework (source: New South Wales Office of Local Government)

### New England North West Regional Plan 2036

The New England North West Regional Plan is a 20-year blueprint mapping out the NSW Government’s vision for the region:

“Nationally valued landscapes and strong, successful communities from the Great Dividing Range to the rich black soil plains.”

The regionally focused goals, detailed below, acknowledge the opportunities provided by natural resources and strong communities:

- a strong and dynamic regional economy
- a healthy environment with pristine waterways
- strong infrastructure and transport networks for a connected future
- attractive and thriving communities.

## Design guidelines

- Urban Design for Regional NSW
- Collaboration between the Government Architect NSW (GANSW) and the Department of Planning, and using information gathered through a survey of local governments in regional NSW, resulted in development of the Urban Design for Regional NSW - A guide for creating healthy built environments in regional NSW. The Guide has been prepared specifically for regional NSW with seven design objectives for NSW further detailed into urban design strategies for regional NSW. The Guide recommends "What To Do":
- engage with the history and culture of places
- integrate with the natural environment and landscape
- revitalise main streets and town centres
- prioritise connectivity, walkability, and cycling opportunities
- balance urban growth
- increase options for diverse and healthy living
- respond to climatic conditions and their impacts.

The Guide is particularly relevant to Council's future intent to focus on the liveability of towns and villages, and activate public spaces including the main street and connecting streets and laneways around the town centre.

### NSW Everyone Can Play

In early 2019, the NSW government released Everyone Can Play: A Guide to Create Inclusive Playspaces, as a best practice resource aimed at councils, community groups, designers and local residents. The Guide provides recommendations for the planning, design and delivery of inclusive spaces.

"At the heart of Everyone Can Play is the declaration that play is for everyone - regardless of age, ability or cultural background."

- Fiona Morrison (Commissioner, Open Space and Parklands, NSW Department of Planning and Environment)

There are three principles of Everyone Can Play that are to be considered when developing inclusive playspace outcomes, and that are applicable to all open spaces across NSW. These principles are:

1. Can I get there? (i.e. layout and location)
2. Can I play? (i.e. provision for appropriate equipment and theming for the setting and local context)
3. Can I stay? (i.e. amenity, shade and rest opportunities).

In 2019, Council created an inclusive playspace at Wolseley Park, near the Gunnedah Central Business District (CBD) using the Guide as a key planning tool. The playground was recognised at the 2020 Kidsafe National Playspace Design Awards.

## Connecting with Country GANSW (Draft)

Currently in draft form, the Government Architect NSW has released the Draft Connecting with Country Guide as a framework for understanding the value of Aboriginal knowledge in the design and planning of places.

The Draft Guide aims to assist communities, local government, government agencies, industry and developers to establish connections with council to inform planning, design, and delivery of built environment projects in NSW. It aims to "help project teams gain a better understanding of, and to better support, a strong and vibrant Aboriginal culture in our built environment."

### Universal Design

Universal Design is an approach that ensures that products, buildings, environments and experiences are accessible to as many people as possible, regardless of their age, level of ability, cultural background, or any other differentiating factors that contribute to the diversity of the community.

The seven Universal Design principles are:

- equitable use
- flexibility in use
- simple and intuitive use
- perceptible information
- tolerance for error
- low physical effort
- size and space for approach and use.

Universal Design differs from accessible design by focusing on the seamless integration of inclusive features from the earliest stages of a project, rather than retro-fitting at the end, with the goal of minimising stigmatisation or separation of users.

### Healthy Active by Design

Healthy Active by Design is a website created by the Heart Foundation to highlight best-practice planning and design and includes research, advice and case studies to assist develop healthy and active neighbourhoods.



Image: Universal Design - making design accessible to everyone in society.



01\_ Gunnedah Town Hall and Street Tree  
 02\_ Gunnedah Showground  
 03\_ Disability Inclusion Action Planning  
 04\_ Koala population in Gunnedah

## Council Strategic Planning

### Your Say, Our Future: Gunnedah Community Strategic Plan 2017-2027

Your Say, Our Future: Gunnedah Community Strategic Plan 2017-2027 is a 10-year plan, identifying the community's priorities and aspirations. Key themes underpinning the Plan are:

- engaging and supporting the community
- building our Shire's economy
- retaining our quality of life
- protecting and enjoying our beautiful surrounds.

An identified outcome of the Plan is:

*"Enhanced streetscapes and open spaces in Gunnedah and Villages."*

Strategies aimed at achieving this outcome, and relevant to the Open Space Strategy are:

*"Continue to beautify the main street and improve the attractiveness of our urban streetscapes.*

*Continue to beautify and improve the facilities available in our parks and gardens, open spaces, sporting and recreational areas.*

*Provide attractive town entrances to Gunnedah and Villages.*

*Support access to and availability of facilities to a wide variety of people using reserves including crown reserves and travelling stock routes in our Shire and support the introduction of national parks in the future."*

### Gunnedah Shire Economic Development Strategy 2015

The Gunnedah Shire Economic Development Strategy was developed and adopted in 2015 and provided a framework and directions for economic development with the Shire between 2015 and 2020. Council intends reviewing the priorities and actions identified in the 2015 Strategy, to assist in development of a new Economic Development Plan for the future.

Development of quality recreation and sport parks and facilities is recognised as contributing to the attractiveness and liveability of places, and is an essential ingredient for locally relevant economic development strategies.

### Gunnedah Street Tree Strategy 2015

Council adopted the Street Tree Strategy for the planting and replacement of trees to enhance the town's environment, and to provide a simple, systematic and readily usable procedure for the selection, planting and placement of new trees, as well as ongoing maintenance of trees in the public realm.

Consultation with Council officers and members of the community, identified limitations of the Strategy when considering broader revegetation of key corridors in Gunnedah. As a result, the Open Space Strategy has expanded the preferred species list to be used in conjunction with green corridor mapping.

### Gunnedah Shire Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2017

The DIAP was adopted by Council in 2017 and has a 10-year timeframe. Through the Plan, Council aims:

*"To be recognised as both an advocate and champion for the rights of people of all abilities in our community ensuring all*



of our residents are treated equally and respectfully and have opportunities to enjoy the benefits of full participation in a caring, proud, prosperous and inclusive community.”

The Plan has four key implementation strategies:

1. Developing positive community attitudes and behaviours
2. Creating liveable communities
  - » create and maintain parks, playgrounds, sporting fields and shopping areas that are accessible to all
3. Supporting access to meaningful employment
4. Improving access through better systems and processes.

The Gunnedah Shire Access Working Group includes Councillors, Council officers and community representatives and meets bi-monthly to challenge and lobby for the removal of social and physical barriers preventing residents and visitors from accessing and participating fully in community life including events, services and programs.

#### Gunnedah Shire Open Space Strategy 2010

In 2010, Council adopted its first Open Space Strategy, providing strategic direction to ensure recreation parks, sport parks and facilities, and significant open spaces were planned, designed and developed to meet the needs of the community. Council has successfully implemented many of the recommendations in the Strategy.

The review of this Strategy, and development of a new Open Space Strategy for the next decade, will position Council to leverage its progressive vision for the Gunnedah Shire.

#### Gunnedah Showgrounds Masterplan 2014

The Gunnedah Showgrounds Equine Precinct/Master Plan was developed in 2014 and anticipates relocation of the sporting activities currently using the John Longmuir Fields, namely junior rugby league and netball.

The masterplan identifies a range of recommendations to enhance functionality of the Showgrounds for equine activities, however does not fully investigate and resolve the needs of non-equine community and sporting groups currently located at the Showground.

Through consultation with key users, this Open Space Strategy aims to investigate and resolve some of these issues, however this will not take the place of a more detailed master planning process for the Showground.

#### Riverine Landscape Masterplan 2010

In 2010, the Riverine Landscape Masterplan was developed over the Namoi River foreshore and parklands. It provides a long term vision for the area aimed at reinforcing the relationship between the Namoi River and Gunnedah’s town centre. The key objectives of the masterplan are to:

- protect and enhance the existing riparian environment
- appropriately design and locate new facilities in the study area to complement the environmental, recreational, landscape and cultural heritage of the location
- provide a design and management framework for agencies and groups to become actively involved in the development and management of the area
- develop and design walking and cycle tracks
- encourage community ownership, care and use of the area
- promote and encourage regional use of the local riverine environment.



01



02



03

01\_ Gunnedah Showground from aerial perspective

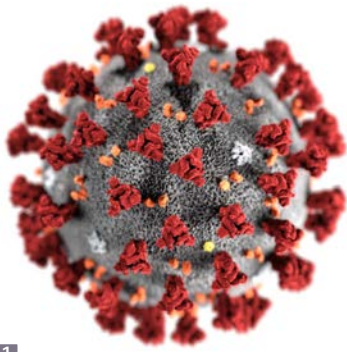
(image source: [www.eimexgunnedah.net.au/](http://www.eimexgunnedah.net.au/))

02\_ On-the-ground during the Grand Parade

(image source: [www.gunnedahshowsociety.com.au/show-info/entertainment/](http://www.gunnedahshowsociety.com.au/show-info/entertainment/))

03\_ Overlooking the Weetaliba property fronting the Namoi River

(image source: [www.theland.com.au/story/6915465/namoi-frontage-with-zone-4-groundwater/](http://www.theland.com.au/story/6915465/namoi-frontage-with-zone-4-groundwater/))



01



02



03



04

- 01\_ COVID-19 has impacted the use of the public realm
- 02\_ Technology changes impact recreation participation
- 03\_ Social media provides new ways for people to engage with parks
- 04\_ Walking remains the activity with the highest participation rate

## 2.4 Major trends in open space and recreation

Participation patterns in recreation and sport are changing at a community level. Factors such as a move toward non-organised or social sport, increased outdoor nature-based recreation and increased use of technology have all had a significant impact on how people recreate and use public open space. Understanding these trends (and their impacts) is important as Council looks to develop strategies, programs and facilities to encourage people to engage in activities in public open spaces.

### COVID-19

At the time of undertaking this work, the COVID-19 Coronavirus pandemic was impacting many aspects of traditional society. After Australia's initial lockdown period in the first half of 2020, a number of new, staged public protective measures commenced with State and Federal Governments enforcing restrictions to maintain good hygiene and stop the spread of the virus. The government recommendations included:

- social distancing of a minimum 1.5m from any other person
- limited numbers of people for indoor and outdoor gatherings
- limited number of patrons for restaurants
- restrictions on team sports including change rooms, number of supporters and physical distancing.

Toward the end of 2020 and early 2021, with distribution of a vaccine commencing worldwide, it is likely that the impact of the pandemic will have lasting effects on the design and use of the public realm.

In response to social distancing, an association named NACTO (or National Association of City Transportation Officials, which is comprised of 81 major North American cities and transit agencies) released a widely shared guide, in May 2020, entitled Streets for Pandemic Response and Recovery.

NACTO city transportation officials around the world quickly developed this new street design and management tool "to keep essential workers and goods moving, provide safe access to grocery stores and other essential businesses, and ensure that people have safe space for social/physical distancing while getting outside". These evolving practices will shape our towns and cities as we respond to the COVID-19 pandemic and are key to our long-term recovery.

Streets for Pandemic Response and Recovery is a compilation of emerging practices around the world and provides a set of implementation resources for all population centres. These regularly updated resources provide advice on how authorities and government can manage their public spaces in response to the rapidly changing nature of the pandemic.

There are currently seven different strategic guides available that address changing conditions and provide the best possible information on each design practice. Detailed implementation guides can be downloaded for the following street strategies:

- urban street design guide
- designing streets for kids
- designing for all ages and abilities
- urban bikeway design guide
- don't give up at the intersection.

Council's future planning and design of public parks and places will benefit from referring to guides such as Streets for Pandemic Response and Recovery to ensure the optimum in public health standards are maintained in public spaces including parks.

## Technology

In just one generation, there has been a dramatic shift in childhood activity from outdoors to indoors. This has been driven in part by increased use of technology. Technology remains one of the main contributors towards decreased physical activity and increased sedentary behaviour. However, active gaming is becoming a contemporary approach to exercise. In some technology-based games, participants are engaged in physical movement by using their bodies as the controllers (thus increasing their heart rate).

Increasing use of smart phones and apps allows people to obtain information, communicate with each other very quickly, and provide feedback on their recreation experience at any time of the day or night. Many people using parks, playgrounds, paths and trails make the decision on where to recreate based on the information available via the internet, blogs, forums and social media.

A number of mobile phone apps are aiding the community in tracking, recording and mapping their activities including walking, running and mountain bike riding. The apps allow participants to compete against themselves, as well as other app users. It can also be a useful tool for managing authorities in determining where the community is currently participating in activities (whether authorised or not).

There are also increasing community expectations of access to technology in recreation areas including WiFi access in key parks, and use of digital tools for information and marketing on tracks and signage.

### Increasing 'screen time' during leisure time

Time spent looking at a screen is somewhat unavoidable in many workplaces and schools. More of our leisure time is also being spent looking at screens, at the cost of active leisure activities including socialising, reading, writing, arts and crafts, sports, exercise and recreation<sup>1</sup>.

A study conducted using data from the US Bureau of Labor Statistics found a clear trend of adult Americans participating in increased screen time (for leisure) and decreasing active leisure over a 13-year period ending in 2015. It is believed that a similar trend applies to adults in Australia. Excessive screen time has been associated with negative health outcomes as people have less time available to participate in physical activity.

### Social media

The rise of social media over the past 15 years has provided new ways for people to engage with parks and public places and share their experiences on platforms such as Instagram and Facebook. In some cases, this process of sharing and promoting locations has increased visitation. A recent study conducted in the United States identified that millennials are seeking 'brag-worthy' experiences to share on social media<sup>2</sup>.

## Participation trends

Since 2015, Sport Australia has conducted a national sport and physical activity participation survey, Ausplay. The most recent results of the survey were released in April 2020. In 2011-12 and 2013-14, a similar survey, the Participation in Sport and Physical Recreation Survey was conducted by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS). Between 2001-2010, the Exercise, Recreation and Sport Survey (ERASS) was conducted by the Committee of Australia Sport and Recreation Officials (CASRO).

Overall, participation in sport and physical activity has increased in the last two decades. More adults participate more frequently compared to 2001. Female participation (at least once each year) has remained on par with male participation throughout. However, more women have constantly participated, more often.

Participation in sport-related activities has not increased, while non-sport physical activities have increased significantly (by more than 20 percent from 2001 to 2019). Participation in non-sport recreation activities such as walking and fitness/gym have increased the most.

More children participate in organised (out-of-school) sport, than adults. The top activities children participate in changes as children age, with a focus on the life skill of swimming for infants and toddlers and running, fitness/gym, football and walking being the dominant activities by the time children reach the ages between 15 and 24 years old.

Of the respondents to the community survey, undertaken as part of this Strategy, approximately 53% stated they participate in an organised sports competition in either Gunnedah or outside the Shire. This rate of participation in organised sport is surpassed by respondents participation in walking alone (75%). Bushwalking 53% and playing in the park 52%, are also popular recreation activities.

National participation rates in organised sport have been declining for a number of years as participants move toward more social (drop-in drop-out) sport and informal recreation. Participation in organised sport in Gunnedah is traditional and remains popular. It will be important for Council to monitor participation trends into the future to ensure resources are allocated appropriately to support a broad range of both recreation and sport activities.

Of the survey responses received from Gunnedah sporting clubs, most clubs report either static or declining membership. Despite this, many clubs believe participation will increase in the future due to projected increases in children and female participation.

<sup>1</sup> Krause and Sawhill. How free time became screen time. 2016  
<sup>2</sup> Ways to Make Your Parks Millennial Friendly, US NRPA. 2015

## Walking

Walking continues to be the most popular physical activity across age groups. The most popular facilities used for this activity include local footpaths (63%), bushwalking tracks (53%), and local roads for walking and cycling (53%), in the absence of suitable pathways.

Implementation of Council's strategic planning for infrastructure that supports walking and cycling for transport and recreation will continue to increase in importance in future years. Council intends reviewing its Pedestrian and Mobility Plan and Bike Plan in coming years.

## Walking the dog

Australia has one of the highest rates of dog ownership in the world with 36% of households owning a dog.<sup>3</sup> People walk their dogs for several reasons, the most obvious being to maintain the health and wellbeing of the dog, and contributing to their own in the process. Responsible dog ownership includes regularly walking the dog to provide exercise and stimulation as they explore the sights and smells and interact with their owners and other people, as well as socialising with other dogs. Regular walks prevent dogs from becoming bored or destructive.

For people, walking with a dog is recognised as having positive benefits to our physical and psychological wellbeing. Research indicates that dog owners enjoy many health and social benefits including improved cardiovascular fitness, lower blood pressure, stronger muscles and bones and decreased stress. Walking with a dog can promote social interaction as well, with the dog providing a neutral and generally positive talking point.

Walking the dog can be done with the dog on a leash or off-leash. Exercising dogs safely off the leash while keeping them under effective control can be difficult in an urban setting. In Gunnedah, protecting koalas (a threatened native species) from dog attack is an additional incentive to proactively provide safe places for dogs. Ideally, councils should provide several suitably located unfenced off-leash areas and some fenced dog parks. These areas can become effective community centres for people, as much as dogs.

Dog parks are purpose-designed spaces for dogs and their owners, often separated into small and large dog parks, adjacent to each other. Successful dog parks are carefully designed with key considerations including:

- locations are accessible by walking or driving, and avoid conflicts with significant flora and fauna
- separate large and small dog sections
- parking provision
- entry/exit design to minimise the likelihood of a dog escaping while others arrive/depart
- long, linear park shapes with regular seating and shelter/shade
- fences, water, waste management, signs.

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.adelaide.edu.au/news/news62461.html>

## On Your Bike

In Australia in 2005, 13% of the population (or 2.1 million people) cycled regularly or occasionally. By 2019 this figure reached 19% (or 3.7 million people)<sup>4</sup>. Cycling has been reported as one of the top five sport and physical activities from results of the AusPlay survey released in 2020. Over 90% of participation in cycling is non-organised, with only 8% of cyclists participating in organised competitions.

Mountain bike riding includes a number of off-road biking styles, including cross-country, downhill, observed trials, cross-country marathon and cyclocross. Mountain Bike Australia (MTBA) has over 15,000 members and 175 affiliated clubs nationwide<sup>5</sup>. There are many mountain bikers who are not registered with MTBA. It is estimated that up to 60% of mountain bike riders are not club or group members.

At the time of writing this report, mountain bike riding was evident in southern parts of Porcupine Reserve and Black Jack State Forest. The popular app Trailforks records a range of green, blue and black rated trails leading from Dries Avenue, Gunnedah extending into Black Jack State Forest. It appears that mountain bike riders in Gunnedah are currently individuals and informal groups, who have not formed a formal club. If the number of mountain bike riders continues to increase, it may become necessary for this activity to be managed to ensure it can continue without impacting negatively on the ecological values of Porcupine Reserve and Black Jack State Forest.

The past decade has seen a steady increase in registered BMX club members with over 17,000 active members (excluding volunteers) nationwide in 2018. BMX bikes are also popular for non-competition recreation and skate parks are popular locations for BMX bikes, as well as other wheeled recreation devices, such as scooters.

Pump tracks are also becoming one of the more popular recreation facilities for all ages. A pump track is a 2-6m wide track for mountain bike, BMX, pedal-less balance bikes, scooters and skateboard riders. The track consists of rollers and banked turns (berms). While there is no set dimensions or design template, layouts consist of continuous loops with different combinations of rollers and berms. The 'pump' part is the pushing-down and pulling-up action performed by riders as the key source of momentum. A well-designed pump track will allow advanced riders to jump from roller to roller and across berms to different parts of the track, rather than just pumping and riding over a prescribed route. In Australia, larger pump tracks tend to be made of asphalt or dirt, with smaller plywood composite and pre-cast concrete tracks also popular.

The various forms of cycling and the growing popularity of all types of bike riding supports evidence of a shift away from structured sport to unstructured recreation. Cycling is also growing in popularity as an active transport method.

<sup>4</sup> Roy Morgan Single Source (Australia), April 2014–March 2015 (n=15,913)

<sup>5</sup> Ginsberg, N. How many Australians participate in mountain biking? 2018

## Declining number of volunteers

The rate of volunteering in sport and recreation clubs has been declining for many years. Often, the responsibility for running clubs falls to a small group of key personnel. To address this issue, there is a move toward amalgamations, with multi-sport clubs becoming more common. In other cases, organisations may become aligned to larger licensed clubs, that take over some or all of the volunteers' roles, as well as asset management responsibilities.

Several of the sport facilities in Gunnedah Shire are home to multiple sports. There is an opportunity to investigate alternative governance models for clubs, that reflect and take advantage of changes in technology, participation trends and contemporary facility management practices.

## Adventure and imagination play

New terms are increasingly being used to describe different forms of play that contribute to healthy child-development outcomes. These terms are used to broaden the concept of play beyond the primary-coloured, plastic, off-the-shelf play equipment used in many playgrounds historically.

In response to a growing body of research, play opportunities are being designed and created that encourage children to use their imaginations, learn social skills, build their self-confidence and test their physical skills through adventure and exploration.

Challenge parks are another emerging type of park. They generally feature multiple play nodes to cater for different ages, gardens, water play areas and lagoons, large open grassy spaces, shady picnic spots with quality facilities, ponds and water features, areas of natural woodland and vegetation and kilometres of shared paths and boardwalks to explore. High tree house structures, sky walks and natural elements are introducing risk back into play, enabling children to develop an awareness of limits and boundaries.

Children and youth living in Gunnedah have opportunities for nature-play and challenge as they have access to a range of outdoor recreation opportunities. Some formalisation of challenging play could be considered in the long term future.

There is an opportunity for Gunnedah to plan and design play and recreation opportunities for children and youth that contributes to personal development, socialisation and community connection.

## Placemaking

Placemaking by definition refers to a multi-faceted approach to the planning, design and management of public spaces. Placemaking is a collaborative process aimed at inspiring people to collectively reimagine and reinvent public spaces they share as the heart of the community. Placemaking pays particular attention to the physical, cultural and social identities that define a place and support its ongoing development.

Through community-based participation, effective place making processes leverage local community's assets, inspiration and potential to create quality public open spaces that contribute to people's health, happiness and wellbeing.

## Increasing health and environmental awareness

People are becoming increasingly concerned about their health, with conditions such as obesity and stress-related illness on the rise. Surveys conducted in Melbourne and Sydney indicated that residents with easy access to the natural environment reported a higher quality of life (regardless of public or private housing<sup>6</sup>). It is acknowledged that these areas are cities, unlike Gunnedah).

These city-based surveys showed steady increases in people's preference for large, managed and accessible natural areas. This, combined with a growing awareness of the environment and its challenges (global warming, pollution and urbanisation), has led to a growth in visitation to natural areas. A term referred to as 'returning to nature' has emerged where people feel the desire to become reconnected to their natural environment.

## Ageing population

15% of Australians (3.7 million) were aged 65 and over in 2016. This cohort is projected to grow to 22% of the total population (approximately 8.7 million) by 2056.

In 2020, AusPlay data revealed that less than half (44%) of older Australians aged 65+ participated in physical activity five times per week.

The change in age structure for people living in Gunnedah Shire between 2011 and 2016, indicates a relatively minor increase (+77) in people aged 70+ living in the Shire. Overall, this group represents over 12% of the population, and approximately 1,650 individuals.

Ensuring access to a range of recreation opportunities for older residents in Gunnedah will require conscious planning and design, including elements to ensure inclusion and access. Recent research shows that older adults who maintain a higher level of physical capacity may actually slow their ageing process, contributing to improved personal health outcomes including managing cardiovascular disease or diabetes, for example<sup>7</sup>.

6  
7

SKM. Recreation Implication from Residential Densification. 2006  
Richards, R & May, C. Mature-aged sport and physical activity. 2019



## 03\_ considerations

### 3.1 Open space achievements

Since the Open Space Strategy delivered in 2010 (and over the past decade), a commendable volume of work has been undertaken to improve the open space network. A concise summary of achievements is provided here to contribute to the strategic context for proposed development of the open space network over the next decade.

Key achievements since 2010 include:

- establishment of an open space classification, hierarchy, desired standards of service and performance standards
- capital works and maintenance program strategies implemented for several open space parcels
- extension of suggested strategies relating to walking and cycling by development of the Gunnedah Shire Bike Plan and Pedestrian and Mobility Plan (PAMP) to guide development of appropriate infrastructure to improve walk and cycle connectivity
- development of a Tree Management Strategy to guide selection, planting, placement, maintenance and removal of street trees, and installation of additional street trees throughout Gunnedah
- installation of an outstanding inclusive playground 'Livvis Place' at Wolseley Park.

The 2010 strategy recognised the sound planning and design of parks in the town and outlying communities in Gunnedah Shire, however identified a lack of high level recreation parkland. In particular, the 2010 Strategy noted that:

- the Shire had not yet capitalised on the potential recreation opportunities offered by development of the Namoi River Parklands and other water bodies close to the Gunnedah town centre
- Wolseley Park is positioned to provide a Shire-wide, and potentially regional, destination recreation park, however to achieve this strategic goal, sport will need to be relocated
- opportunity to review and redistribute Council resources to reflect use and demand for passive recreation parks, compared with active sport parks.

The 2010 Strategy provided detailed planning to rectify the backlog of identified asset maintenance, and Council has achieved the vast majority of this work.

Furthermore, several parks were identified as surplus to the open space network and were recommended for disposal. Council has not yet commenced this undertaking, as further work is required to complete this process.

The Gunnedah Open Space Strategy 2022 builds on the 2010 Strategy, with renewed focus on strategic goals to position Gunnedah Shire as a unique and regionally significant lifestyle location.



considerations

## 3.2 Community profile

Understanding the Shire's demographic profile including age, household composition and income and employment patterns provides an insight into potential leisure and recreation needs for the people living across Gunnedah Shire. Key demographic information is provided here as an input to further analysis of participation in recreation and sport activities by individuals, as well as groups of people with similar demographic characteristics in the community.

### 3.2.1 Population projections

Three scenarios have been applied when projecting the future population of the Gunnedah Shire.

Scenario one uses the 2019 NSW Government Population Projection that estimates an increase in population of 100 people overall between 2016 and 2041. It is acknowledged that several NSW councils currently dispute the methodology used by the NSW Government to develop population projections.

Scenario two uses the population growth rate of 0.79% per year applied by Council when planning for essential services such as sewer and potable water capacity.

Scenario three uses a population projection nominated by current Councillors that aspires to see 20,000 people living in the Gunnedah Shire by the year 2040. This represents a population growth rate of 2% per year.

The scenarios have been used to calculate the provision of core open space provision to determine surplus or deficits (refer to the Open Space Network section).

### 3.2.2 Demographics

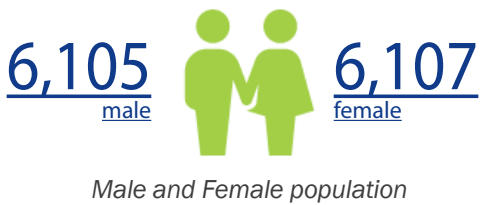
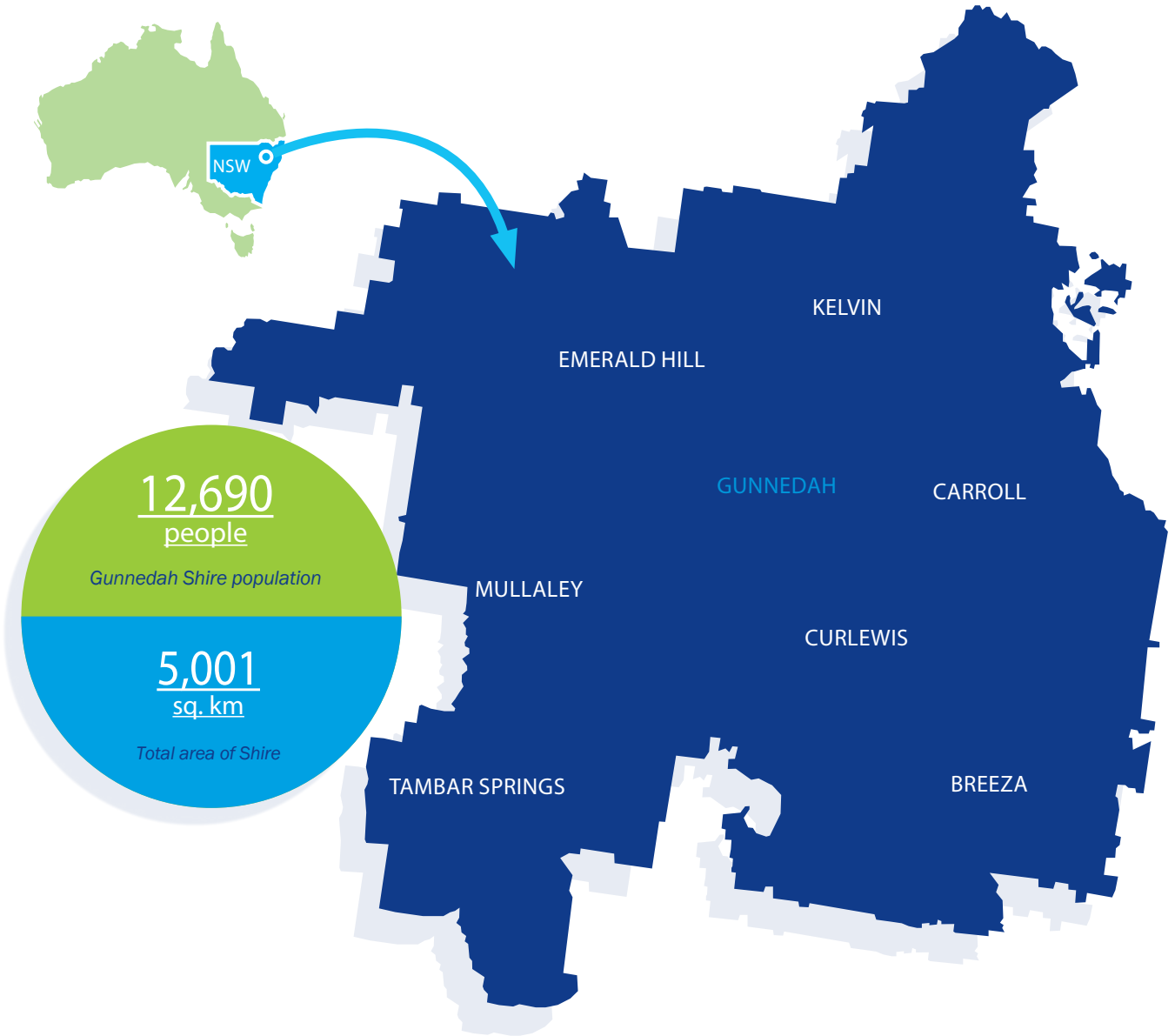
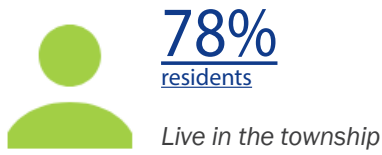
The following demographic information is provided as a snapshot in time and is aimed at providing context, and a reference point, as readers consider the information in this Strategy.

The demographic profiles on the following pages were sourced from Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Census 2016 data and Gunnedah profile.id.com.au population estimates.

Table 03: Summary of scenarios using different population projections

Population projections							
Scenario	2016	2021	2026	2031	2036	2041	Population Change
One	12,500	12,600	12,700	12,700	12,700	12,600	100
Two	12,500	13,001	13,523	14,066	14,630	15,217	2,717
Three	12,500	13,801	15,237	16,823	18,574	20,508	8,008



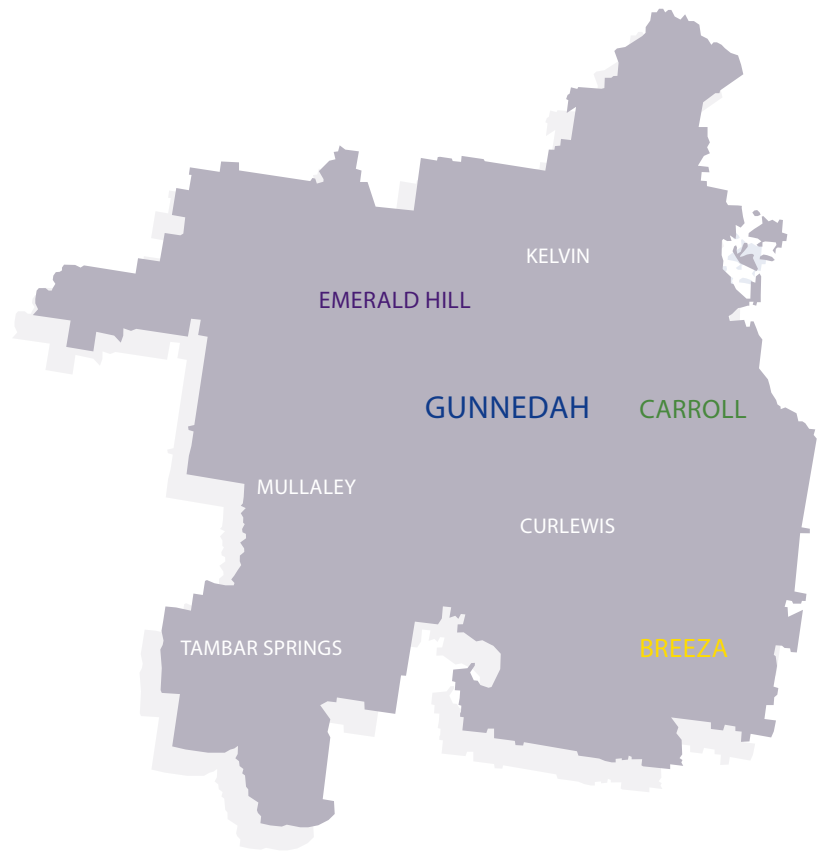


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Fig. 04 Gunnedah Shire Local Government Area and Villages

## Gunnedah township

<u>9,728</u>	population
<u>39</u>	median age
<u>4,944</u>	(50.8%) female
<u>4,781</u>	(49.1%) male
<u>2.3</u>	average people per household
<u>\$1,167</u>	median weekly household income
<u>1,330</u>	Aboriginal/Torres Straight Islander people
<u>3,900</u>	(90.5%) occupied private dwellings
<u>397</u>	(9.2%) unoccupied private dwellings



### Breeza "one hill"



<u>147</u>	population
<u>44</u>	median age
<u>79</u>	(53.7%) male
<u>76</u>	(51.7%) female
<u>2.6</u>	average people per household
<u>\$1,300</u>	median weekly household income
<u>34</u>	Aboriginal/Torres Straight Islander people
<u>53</u>	(74.6%) occupied private dwellings
<u>18</u>	(25.4%) unoccupied private dwellings

### Carroll



<u>336</u>	population
<u>38</u>	median age
<u>182</u>	(54.2%) male
<u>160</u>	(47.6%) female
<u>2.6</u>	average people per household
<u>\$1,196</u>	median weekly household income
<u>74</u>	Aboriginal/Torres Straight Islander people
<u>119</u>	(81%) occupied private dwellings
<u>28</u>	(19%) unoccupied private dwellings

### Emerald Hill



<u>143</u>	population
<u>43</u>	median age
<u>74</u>	(51.7%) male
<u>60</u>	(42%) female
<u>2.6</u>	average people per household
<u>\$1,792</u>	median weekly household income
<u>4</u>	Aboriginal/Torres Straight Islander people
<u>57</u>	(89.1%) occupied private dwellings
<u>7</u>	(10.9%) unoccupied private dwellings

## Curlewis

<u>774</u>	population
<u>43</u>	median age
<u>400</u>	(51.7%) male
<u>364</u>	(47%) female
<u>2.5</u>	average people per household
<u>\$1,100</u>	median weekly household income
<u>103</u>	Aboriginal/Torres Straight Islander people
<u>290</u>	(84.8%) occupied private dwellings
<u>52</u>	(15.2%) unoccupied private dwellings



considerations

## Mullaley



<u>155</u>	population
<u>43</u>	median age
<u>85</u>	(54.8%) male
<u>74</u>	(47.7%) female
<u>2.3</u>	average people per household
<u>\$1,024</u>	median weekly household income
<u>13</u>	Aboriginal/Torres Straight Islander people
<u>69</u>	(92%) occupied private dwellings
<u>6</u>	(8%) unoccupied private dwellings

## Kelvin



<u>178</u>	population
<u>44</u>	median age
<u>89</u>	(50%) male
<u>84</u>	(47.2%) female
<u>2.6</u>	average people per household
<u>\$1,449</u>	median weekly household income
<u>4</u>	Aboriginal/Torres Straight Islander people
<u>68</u>	(80.8%) occupied private dwellings
<u>15</u>	(18.1%) unoccupied private dwellings

## Tambar Springs



<u>191</u>	population
<u>52</u>	median age
<u>109</u>	(57.1%) male
<u>83</u>	(43.5%) female
<u>2.2</u>	average people per household
<u>\$749</u>	median weekly household income
<u>7</u>	Aboriginal/Torres Straight Islander people
<u>90</u>	(89.1%) occupied private dwellings
<u>11</u>	(10.9%) unoccupied private dwellings

### 3.3 Community consultation outcomes and analysis

To inform development of the Open Space Strategy, community views were sought through various workshops, separate community and sport club surveys, and individual or small group interviews. A summary of the consultation feedback is provided below.

#### 3.3.1 Community survey

A link to the online survey was distributed via Gunnedah Shire Council’s website and social media with hardcopies also made available. Survey responses were received from a cross-section of residents living in:

- Breeza
- Carroll
- Curlewis
- Emerald Hill
- Gunnedah
- Kelvin
- Milroy
- Mullaley
- Orange Grove
- Pialloway
- Rangari
- Tambar Springs
- Wandobah.

#### 3.3.2 Profile of respondents

The survey was voluntarily answered by 270 Gunnedah Shire residents, almost 76% of respondents were female and 24% were male. This is not unusual, with research indicating that females are more likely to respond to surveys, than males. The age distribution of respondents is provided in the graph below:

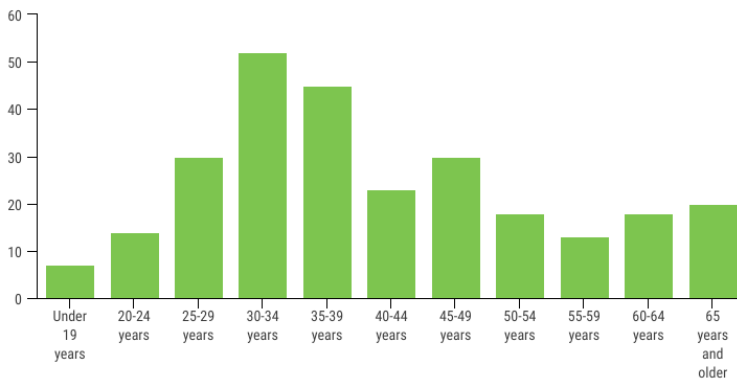


Fig.05 Age of community survey respondents

#### 3.3.3 Participation in outdoor recreation activities (other than organised sport)

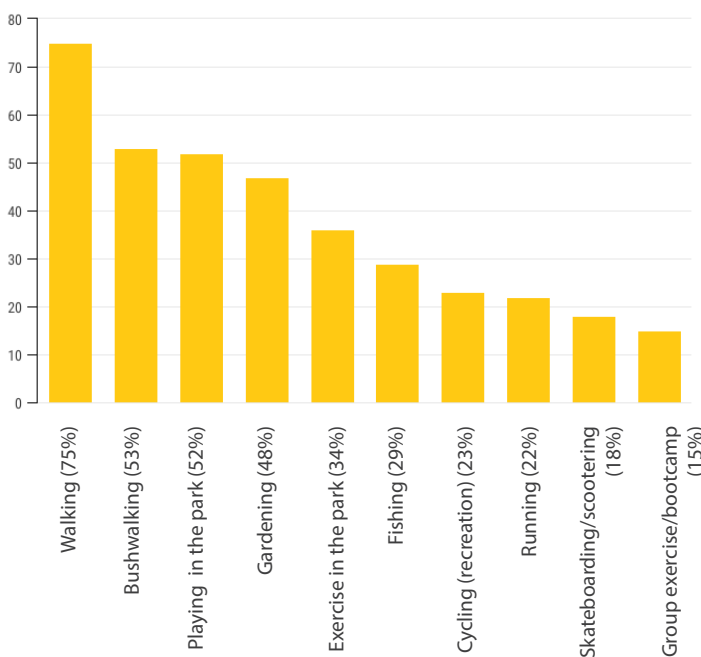


Fig. 06 Top ten most popular activities

Figure 06 shows the Top Ten Most Popular Types of Outdoor Recreation Activities (other than sport) selected by survey respondents.

Other activities selected by respondents included:

- canoe/kayaking (14%)
- mountain biking/BMX (14%)
- golf (13%)
- off road motor/quad biking (13%)
- horse riding (12%)
- bird watching (12%)
- cycling (road) (11%)
- physical activity as transport (6%)
- lawn bowls (2%)

Other activities identified in the open comments section included:

- walking the dog(s)
- sailing on nearby Lake Keepit
- picnicking
- swimming (recreation)
- roller skating/roller blading.

### 3.3.4 Popular open spaces and outdoor facilities

When asked about the open space and facilities where they liked to recreate, survey respondents identified the following:

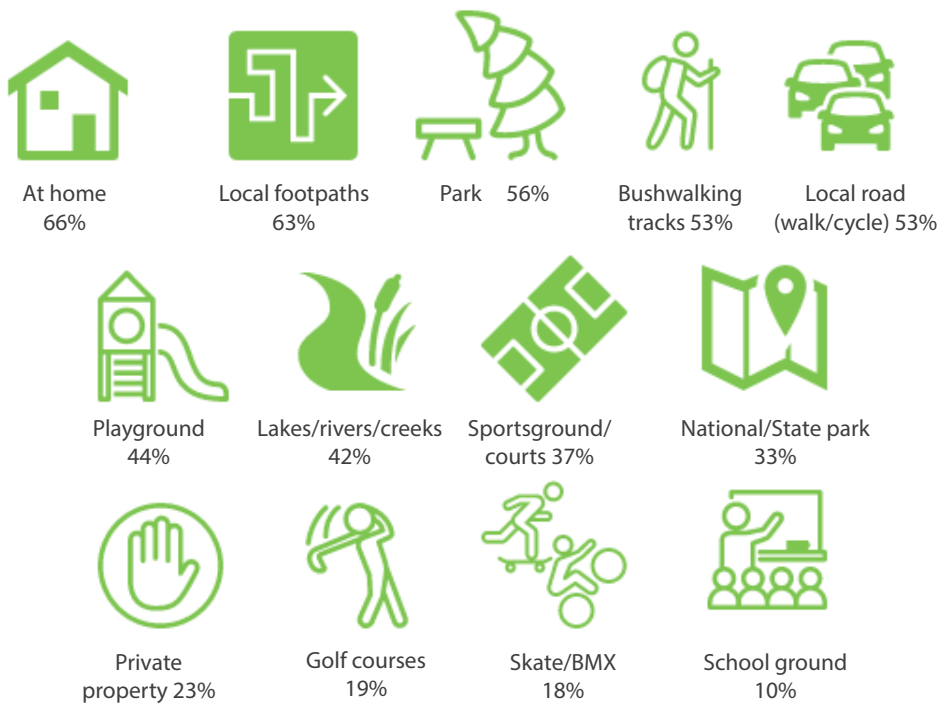


Fig. 07 Open spaces and outdoor facilities where residents recreate

### 3.3.5 Participation in organised sport competition

Survey respondents were asked about their participation in organised sports competition.

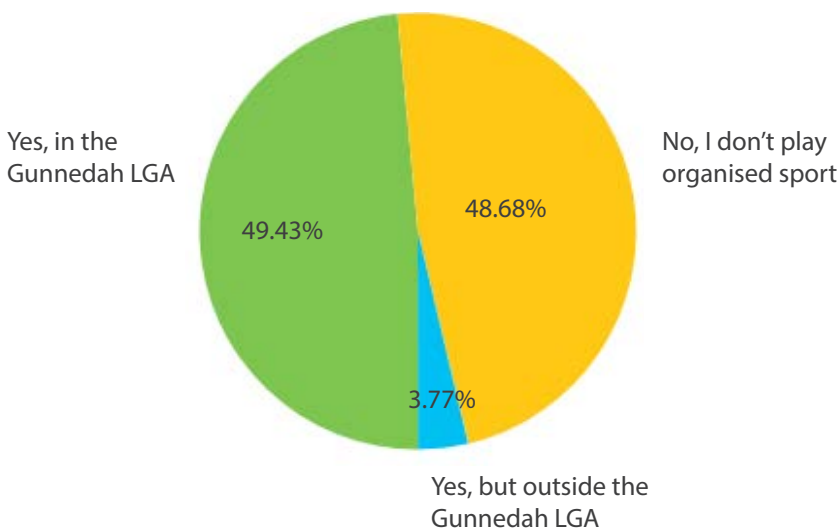


Fig. 08 Participation in organised sports competition

Importance of open space (playgrounds, sporting fields/courts, skateparks, picnic facilities etc.)

Survey respondents were asked to rate the importance of open space to them and their families. Overwhelmingly, survey respondents rated open space as very important or important to them and their families.

**94.4%**

79.85% Very important, plus 14.55% Important

**1.86%**

1.49% Not very important, plus 0.37% Not important

What priority should open space be for Council?

When asked what priority open space, recreation and sport should be for Council, respondents' responses were, overall, quite similar to the important for them personally. Respondents were asked to use the same rating scale.

**95.15%**

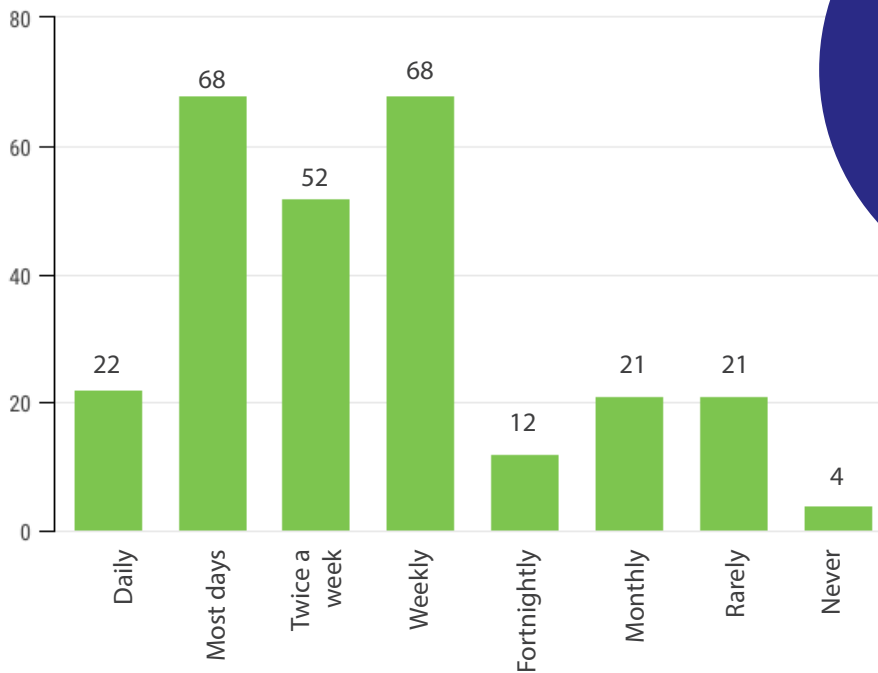
65.67% Very important, plus 29.48% Important

**0.37%**

0.37% Not very important

### 3.3.6 Regularity of visits to parks and sport facilities

When asked about the regularity of visits to parks and sport facilities, the 270 survey respondents reported the following (column representing number of respondents):



Almost 80% of respondents visit a park or sports facility at least weekly.

Fig.09 Regularity of visits to parks and sport facilities

### 3.3.7 Top ten open space values

A comprehensive list of open space values were provided and respondents were asked to select all that applied to them. The results are provided in figure 10 below and reflect broad trends from research across Australia, particularly appreciation of nature and the opportunity to connect with other people, that use of public open space can provide. The top ten responses are provided in the graph below:

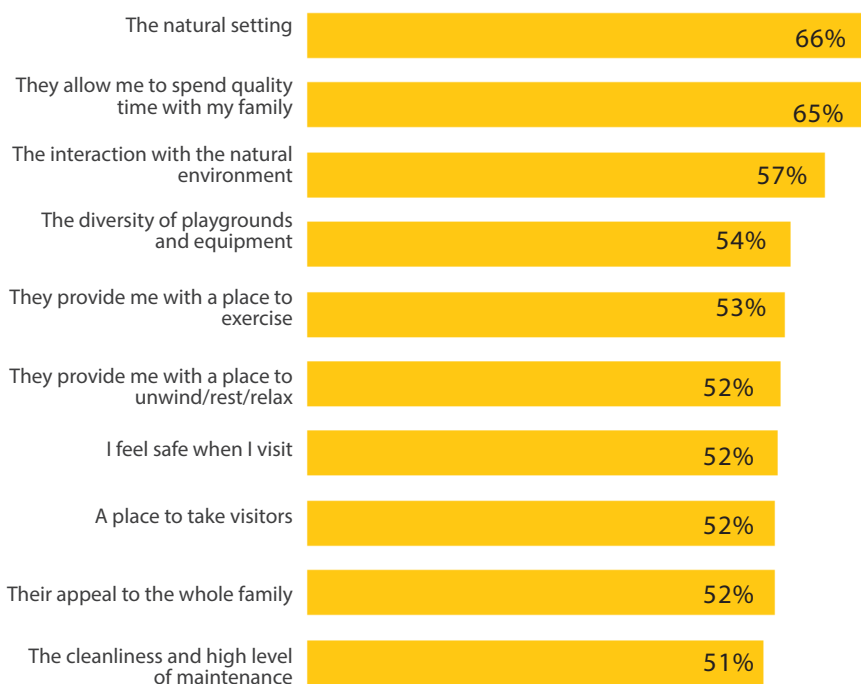


Fig. 10 Top ten open space values

Other open spaces valued by survey respondents, included:

- the range of sporting fields/ courts/facilities provided (50%)
- they encourage social interaction with the community (49%)
- a place to spend time with friends (47%)
- the access to water (lake/rivers/ creeks) (46%)
- I can take my dog (41%)
- they are close to my home (41%)
- the high quality facilities provided (35%)
- the views they provide (28%)
- I can meet new people there (26%).

### 3.3.8 Favourite open space/park within the area

Survey respondents were asked to record their favourite open space/park, including the reasons why. The following table lists the responses in descending order.

No.	Place and main reasons
53	Livvi's Place - excellent playground that caters for different ages and abilities, and is close to town centre
35	Wolseley Park - picnic facilities, kickabout space at oval, shelters, and playgrounds either side of oval AND training and competition for AFL
23	Porcupine Lookout and walking tracks - views, natural environment and walking tracks
18	Stock Road walking path and exercise equipment - close to home and safe
15	Namoi River walking path - trees, native animals and birds and access to river
11	Kitchener Park - training and competition, use area to exercise, walk the dogs
11	Curlewis Park - close to home for Curlewis residents and war memorials are important
10	Skate park - youth area, natural setting, shade from trees
10	Pensioners Hill - high level of maintenance, views and public art
9	Wandobah Reserve - walking path, trees, native animals, close to home
9	Showground - equestrian activities, large open areas for exercise and/or dog walking/running
7	Donnelly and Namoi River sport fields - training and competition
7	Black Jack Forest - natural setting, bushwalking, mountain biking, motorbike/trail bike riding
5	Lake Keepit - boating, sailing, fishing, walking tracks
4	Tambar Springs Park - playground, kickabout space and shade trees
3	Aquatic Centre - recreational swimming and childrens water play
3	Path around Golf Course - safe, continuous circuit
3	Longmuir Fields - social sport, kicking a ball with mates
2	Netball courts - roller blading and roller skating, bike riding for young children
2	Cushans Reserve - natural environment, mature native trees, access to the river, quiet
2	ANZAC Park - views, museum
2	Rotary Park (West) - close to home, quiet, can walk dogs

Several parks or places were identified by individual survey respondents. The parks nominated were the Golf Course, Travelling Stock Routes, Breeza Park, Tambar Springs bowling club, Rob Pople Park, Tennis Courts, and mountain bike track near archery.

A small sample of comments received as part of the survey have been provided below. These comments provide a glimpse into how residents currently use open spaces and the value they place on those spaces and facilities.

**"For the kids... Definitely Livvi's place. Thanks for creating such a great playground."**

**"Porkie. It is a beautiful natural landscape. My children (aged 5 and almost 3) also love the walking paths and little Porkie picnic area."**

**"Stock Road walking path and Ashford Watercourse. They are close to my house and work place. The footpath makes walking safer than being on the road. The tree-lined paths create shade and habitat for a range of bird and wild life."**

**"The Skate Park, however due to there being no toilet or water facilities it's hard to allow the children to spend an extended amount of time there. This is really disappointing."**

**"Pensioners Hill, the space is great for family events, picnics, has a great outlook and shade. I like this space because of the improvements by local organisations. The space has strong community "ownership" and investment and is loved. It's not been imposed on the community it has been created by the community."**

**"Wolseley Park close to town centre. "**

**"Livvi's Inclusive playground. I have two children (one with additional needs) and it enables both to play at the same park and enjoy playing together."**

**"Curlewis Park- because it's local, easy access, lovely big open space, fully fenced for safety with kids, bbq area."**

considerations

### 3.3.9 Open spaces/parks that may be unnecessary

Survey respondents were asked if there are any open spaces/parks that they believe are unnecessary due to low usage, safety concerns, a better park close by, poor location, etc.

Not surprisingly, the vast majority of respondents stated that there were no open spaces or parks that are unnecessary. Some respondents took the time to communicate the importance of all open spaces, for native flora and fauna, if not people. This is not disputed.

However, several survey respondents identified a limited number of open spaces and parks that Council could investigate further for:

- repurposing to meet other community needs
- enhancement for environmental or nature preservation purposes
- sale, with proceeds reserved for identified upgrades to other parks across the open space network.

The open spaces/parks identified by survey respondents are detailed below.

#### Arthur Heath Park

Arthur Heath Park is located at the end of Hunter Street and is bordered by Wentworth, Hunter, South and Meldrum Street, and the railway line reserve along the rear boundary of the park. Survey respondents identified this park as having minimal use for recreation and nominated it as having high potential for repurposing or sale.

#### Ken Green Park / Stewart Park

There are two parks between McAndrew and Stewart Streets that are within 200m of each other. Survey respondents identified sale of one of these parks as a logical course of action, with another suggesting that one of the two parks has services for residential development already in place. This claim would require further investigation to confirm.

#### Jae-High Park

Jae-High Park is located on High Street and is a large (7,140m<sup>2</sup>) area with a children's playground and limited trees and landscaping. Survey respondents claimed that the park and playground is not used often (if at all). Jae-High Park is in relatively close proximity to McAndrew Park, Wandobah Reserve and the Golf Course.

#### McDonagh Park

The "park at the rear of Baker Street" and the "secret park on George Street" was identified by survey respondents as both having potential for sale, yet also being a pleasant, quiet place to rest and relax. The Park is only accessible via narrow easements from either Colin Court or George Street, and is otherwise landlocked by residential properties.



Arthur Heath Park



Stewart Park



Jae-High Park



McDonagh Park



### 3.3.10 Barriers to using parks and sport facilities

When asked if they had experienced any barriers to using parks and sport facilities within the Gunnedah LGA, survey respondents reported a range of barriers. The top ten barriers identified are provided in the graph below.

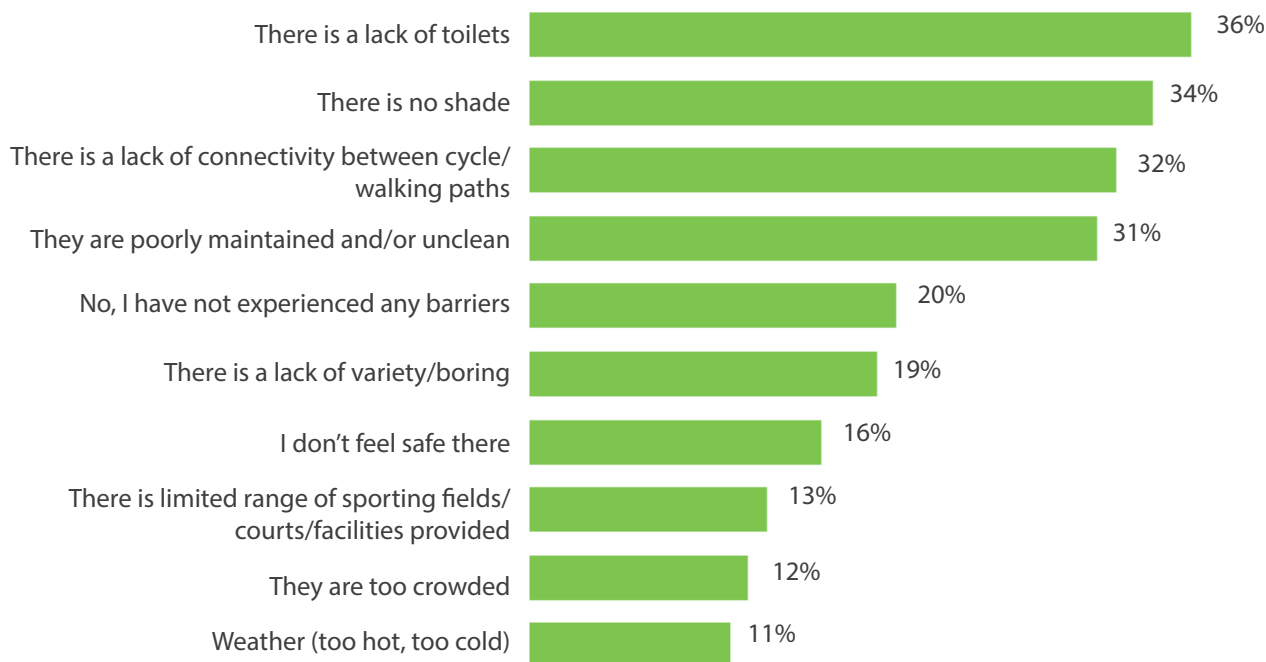
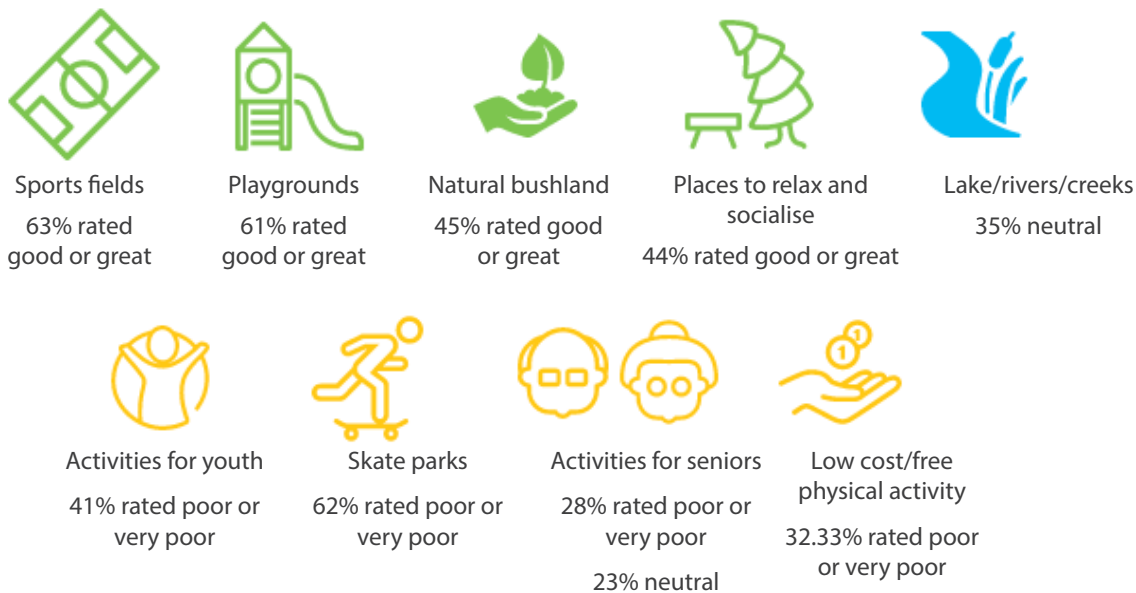


Fig. 11 Top ten barriers to use of parks and sport facilities identified by survey respondents

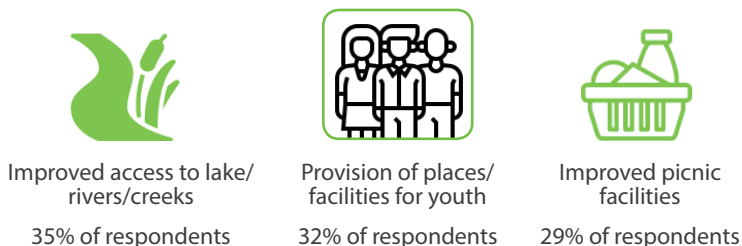
### 3.3.11 Overall quality of recreation and sporting opportunities

When asked to rate the overall quality of recreation and sporting opportunities in the area, using a scale out of 5, 1 being poor and 5 being great, survey respondents revealed their opinions.



### 3.3.12 Top three open space priorities

Survey respondents were asked to nominate the top three open space priorities that they would fund, if they were in charge of Gunnedah Shire Council. The responses are summarised (over page) and provide an insight into the values of the community.



### 3.3.14 Sport club survey

Sport clubs and associations that provide sport training and competition for residents living in Gunnedah, were asked to complete a specific survey to gather data regarding facilities and registered members. Sport groups that have responded to the survey, to date are listed below:

- Gunnedah Gymnastics Club
- Gunnedah and District Pony Club
- Gunnedah Junior Cricket Association
- Gunnedah Tennis Association
- Gunnedah Netball Association
- Gunnedah Softball
- Gunnedah Junior League
- Gunnedah District Cricket
- Gunnedah Show Society
- Gunnedah Basketball Association
- Swimming Gunnedah Inc
- Gunnedah Bulldogs Australian Football Club
- Gunnedah and District Soccer
- Black 'n' Blue Boxing.

A community member also responded to the sport club survey. This individual was interviewed via telephone to gain a deeper understanding of the valuable information they provided in the survey.

Information provided by sport clubs has informed focus area directions as well as recommendations in the planning areas directions for the sport parks and facilities where these clubs undertake their activities.

Organisations that had not yet responded to the sport club survey were encouraged to provide feedback during public exhibition of the Draft Strategy, and information gained during this stage of the project is reflected in the Directions provided for specific sport parks.

### 3.3.15 Key stakeholder interviews

Interviews with additional key stakeholder community organisations is summarised below.

#### Local Aboriginal People

Several issues and ideas raised by representatives of key Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) community organisations are provided below.

- local ATSI people are keen to provide assistance to Council to achieve social, economic, health and environmental objectives for the community
- including ATSI representatives at early stages in Council's project management cycle, may reveal opportunities for significant and valuable contributions
- including ATSI representatives on Council's committees would provide a voice for ATSI communities
- registration fees and equipment costs to participate in sport and entry fees to access the aquatic centre are cost-prohibitive to families and result in social inequity
- consider inclusion of place-names on signage and use of Indigenous language e.g. greetings such as hello and goodbye
- family-focussed recreation opportunities are important
- propose development of a major water park at Wolseley Park (preferably free) as a regional recreation attraction and community facility.

### Gunnedah Urban Landcare Group

The Gunnedah Urban Landcare Group (GULG) has been active in land management including weed eradication and revegetation for decades. Several parks include signs acknowledging the group's significant contributions.

In summary, key issues and ideas raised by representatives of the GULG include:

- recognition of the potential for improved destination management and promotion, particularly the increasing popularity of cultural heritage tours and the range of opportunities to meet this demand in Gunnedah Shire
- breadth and scope of parks and open spaces that the GULG is actively involved in managing within the town and Shire
- the importance of protecting koala habitat that is connected (naturally or by means to overcome barriers, such as fences), including planting food trees and providing water (particularly during dry times)
- need for planning controls to protect green links, recommend appropriate species, and prevent dog attacks (on koalas and wildlife)
- user conflicts and track damage caused by unauthorised use of walking tracks by motorbikes, trail bikes and mountain bikes
- opportunity to communicate significant and interesting history about places through interpretive signage at key locations
- review of Council's fire management and maintenance programs to provide additional services to natural reserves, such as Porcupine and Cushans Reserves.

### Access Working Group

Gunnedah Shire's Access Working Group includes community stakeholders, Council staff and elected representatives. The Group's aim is to remove social and physical barriers that prevent access and full participation in community life. The Group also oversees implementation of the Gunnedah Shire Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2017-2021.

The Group raised several important considerations for future planning and design of parks and open spaces to ensure equitable access. These considerations are summarised below:

- consult the Access Working Group at every stage of the project's design and construction life-cycle to ensure important access provisions are included early and continue to be considered as inevitable project changes occur during detailed design and construction
- connectivity and improved physical access:
  - » accessible pathways of a suitable standard include those at Stock Road, the footpath around the Golf Course, and Wandobah Reserve
  - » lack of continuous connected pathways and appropriately designed and located kerb ramps, pedestrian refuges and zebra crossings, prevents safe and independent travel for people living with mobility impairments
  - » accessibility improvements are required in Gunnedah's town centre on Conadilly Street (Kamilaroi Highway) and cross-streets
- selection and installation of park furniture and embellishments need to consider the needs of people living with a disability, including access to drinking water, back and arm rests on seating, accessible furniture and access to public toilets
- provision of appropriate car parking and the ability to travel safely from the car park into parks are key considerations for park accessibility, particularly parks that are key attractors for community events (e.g. Kitchener, Wolseley, Donnelly parks)
- undertake proposed stage 2 of Livvi's Place design including development of an accessible water park at Wolseley Park
- provision of shade is an important feature for people living with a disability, including over play spaces
- information regarding accessible places and features needs to be clearly communicated to assist destination decision-making and planning.

### 3.4 Current open space provision

Current open space provision in Gunnedah Shire is shown in the table below. This identifies the current area of open space against the 2016 population (available Census data) and projected population growth in 5-year increments with provision of open space per 1,000 head of population. The current provision of open space in Gunnedah is high when compared with other local government authorities (LGAs) in New South Wales, and across Australia. A provision ratio of 3.5ha or 4ha/1,000 population is typical for most LGAs. Gunnedah Shire Council currently provides 6.4ha/1,000 population of core open space. Given this relatively high provision rate, Gunnedah Shire is currently well supplied overall with open space. This is an important fact to keep in mind when considering the deficiencies and surpluses identified in the tables below.

When separated into recreation parks and sport parks, there is a deficiency (red) of land for recreation parks and a surplus (green) of land for sport parks. Demand is based on a total DSS of 6.4ha/1,000 population, made up of 3.5ha/1,000 population for recreation parks and 2.9ha/1,000 population for sport parks.

The deficiency in recreation parks is not critical in scenario one, and may be relatively easily resolved. One way of reducing the deficiency of recreation parks is to repurpose active open space (sport parks) into passive open space (recreation parks). Provision of land for sport parks remains in surplus under scenario one. Additionally, it should be noted that well designed and embellished sports parks can provide a dual function as a recreation park through provision of play spaces, picnic nodes, and path systems etc.

Scenarios two and three show deficiencies in passive open space, and deficiencies in the overall network as the population surpasses 13,500 people. When reflecting on the trends indicating increasing use and demand for passive open space (recreation parks), and reducing participation in formal sport, planning and design will need to balance need and demand carefully to resolve deficiencies across the network. The generous provision of open space overall, places Council in a relatively comfortable position currently, and for the foreseeable future. However, additional open space may be required if the population projection in scenario three is met. This open space should be acquired through the contributions associated with residential development.

Table 04: Scenario one: NSW Department of Planning population projections - static population. Provision of core open space required for current and projected population in 5-year increments

Open space classification	Current supply (ha)	Current (2016) 12,500		Future (2021) 12,600		Future (2026) 12,700		Future (2031) 12,700		Future (2036) 12,700		Future (2041) 12,600	
		Demand	Gap	Demand	Gap	Demand	Gap	Demand	Gap	Demand	Gap	Demand	Gap
Recreation parks	35.74	43.75	-8.01	44.1	-8.36	44.45	-8.71	44.45	-8.71	44.45	-8.71	44.1	-8.36
Sport parks	47.93	36.25	+11.68	36.54	+11.39	36.83	+11.1	36.83	+11.1	36.83	+11.1	36.54	+11.39
Total core open space	83.68	80.00	+3.68	80.64	+3.04	81.28	+2.4	81.28	+2.4	81.29	+2.4	80.64	+3.04
Calculations using the alternative provision rate of 4ha/1,000 people													
Total core open space	83.68	50.00	+33.68	50.40	+33.28	50.80	+32.88	50.80	+32.88	50.80	+32.88	50.40	+33.28

Table 05: Scenario two: Infrastructure provision population projection of 0.79%. Provision of core open space required for current and projected population in 5-year increments

Open space classification	Current supply (ha)	Current (2016) 12,500		Future (2021) 13,001		Future (2026) 13,523		Future (2031) 14,006		Future (2036) 14,630		Future (2041) 15,217	
		Demand	Gap	Demand	Gap	Demand	Gap	Demand	Gap	Demand	Gap	Demand	Gap
Recreation parks	35.74	43.75	-8.01	45.51	-9.77	47.33	-11.59	49.23	-13.49	51.21	-15.47	53.26	-17.52
Sport parks	47.93	36.25	+11.68	37.70	+10.23	39.22	+8.71	40.79	+7.14	42.43	+5.5	44.13	+3.8
Total core open space	83.68	80.00	+3.68	83.21	+0.46	86.55	-2.87	90.02	-6.35	93.64	-9.97	97.39	-13.72
Calculations using the alternative provision rate of 4ha/1,000 people													
Total core open space	83.68	50.00	+33.68	52	+31.68	54.08	+29.60	56.02	+27.66	58.52	+25.16	60.84	+22.84

Table 06: Scenario three: Council population projection of 20,000 residents by 2040. Provision of core open space required for current and projected population in 5-year increments

Open space classification	Current supply (ha)	Current (2016) 12,500		Future (2021) 13,801		Future (2026) 15,237		Future (2031) 16,823		Future (2036) 18,574		Future (2041) 20,508	
		Demand	Gap	Demand	Gap	Demand	Gap	Demand	Gap	Demand	Gap	Demand	Gap
Recreation parks	35.74	43.75	-8.01	48.30	-12.56	53.33	-17.59	58.88	-23.14	65.01	-29.27	71.78	-36.04
Sport parks	47.93	36.25	+11.68	40.02	+7.91	44.19	+3.74	48.79	-0.86	53.87	-5.94	59.47	-11.54
Total core open space	83.68	80.00	+3.68	88.33	-4.65	97.52	-13.84	107.67	-23.99	118.88	-35.2	131.25	-47.57
Calculations using the alternative provision rate of 4ha/1,000 people													
Total core open space	83.68	50.00	+33.68	55.20	+28.48	60.92	+22.76	67.28	+16.40	74.28	+9.40	82.00	+1.68

This map shows core recreation and sport parks under the direct management and control of Council, and excludes all other non-core open space.

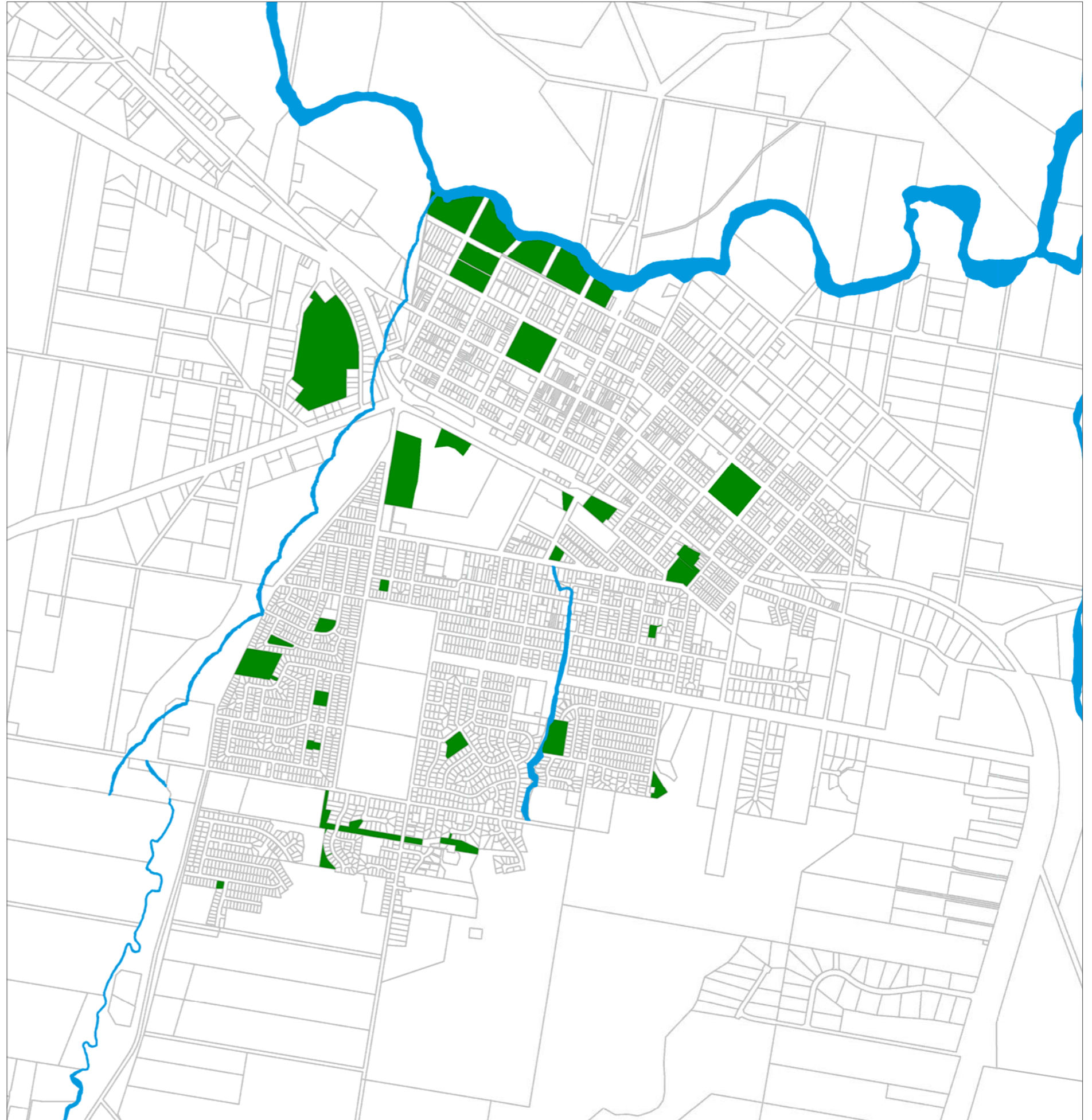
The land identified in this map, and a relatively minor amount of land in outlying communities, makes up the total open space calculations of 83.68 hectares referenced in tables 04, 05 and 06, on the previous page.

Core open space consists of local and district recreation and sport parks.

Non-core open space can consist of:

- specialised sport
- amenity open space
- utility, commercial, community, drainage, ecological open space
- private open space
- undeveloped open space.

In reality, residents and visitors make use of a significantly broader range of open space, beyond that of Council's core open space network.



## 4.1 Vision for 2032

The open space vision for the Gunnedah Shire for the next 10 years is:

“Gunnedah Shire’s open space network contributes to an enhanced quality of life, through open spaces that are sustainable, accessible and resource-efficient, and that enhance the recreation, environmental, social and health needs of current and future generations.”

The vision underpins Council’s commitment to deliver quality open spaces and facilities that positively contribute to the quality of life of residents, workers and visitors to the Gunnedah Shire.

The vision recognises the contribution that quality open spaces makes to the character of the Gunnedah Shire and the positive experiences and memories people make as they live their lives. Current residents have a custodian role to fulfil to ensure open spaces are managed and maintained to ensure they are retained for future generations.

## 4.2 Guiding principles

Council’s existing Guiding Principles have been retained and are outlined below, describing Council’s intentions relating to the provision and management of open space.

### Environmental sustainability

Council will act in a way that ensures open spaces are sustainable and access is equal to, or improved, for future generations.

### Health and wellbeing

Council will provide open spaces that support people’s physical and mental health and wellbeing.

### Effective planning

Council will ensure that provision of recreation and open space opportunities accurately reflects current community needs and Council resource constraints.

### Effective use

Council will encourage and assist maximum utilisation of recreation, sport and open space infrastructure.

### High quality

Council will ensure that all recreation and open space opportunities are designed and maintained to a high quality, commensurate with the nature and use of the facilities and spaces.

### Community involvement

Council will provide a range of opportunities for the community to be involved in the provision of recreation and open space opportunities.

### Resourcing

Council will identify and allocate resources for the provision of recreation and open space opportunities in an efficient, effective and equitable manner.

### Access

Council will ensure that all new and, where possible, all existing recreation and open space facilities, can be safely and conveniently accessed by all existing and potential users.

### Minimal impacts

Council will ensure that recreation and open space facilities and activities have minimal impacts on surrounding land uses.

### Effective management

Council will ensure that recreation and open space facilities and events are managed in the most efficient and cost effective way.

### Public safety

Council will ensure that recreation and open space facilities are safe for public use.

### 4.3 Open space classification<sup>1</sup>

Various open space types possess different values, functions and settings. Compatible and incompatible uses of open space can result in impacts, changing the nature of open space types over time. To promote appropriate use of open space, a classification framework has been developed for application to the open space network. The classification identifies the primary purpose of the land, the size and scale (hierarchy) of the park and the embellishments required to provide recreation and sport opportunities. The open space classifications are detailed in table 07 according to function, purpose, hierarchy and description.

### 4.4 Hierarchy of parks

Assessment and allocation of parks within a hierarchy provides a useful framework to manage the level and variety of embellishments in a particular park type. The park hierarchy also assists park users expectations as they can select to visit parks that provide the recreation experience and opportunities they are seeking. The hierarchy levels for Gunnedah's open space network have been refined and are detailed in table 07 below.

Table 07: Open space classification by function, purpose and hierarchy

Function	Purpose	Hierarchy	Description
Passive open space (Recreation parks)	Provides a setting for informal play and physical activity, relaxation and social interaction	Local (core) District (core)	Provides a range of passive recreation activities in predominantly informal settings. The sites can also contribute to the amenity and environmental values of towns and villages.
		Linear (non-core)	Long and relatively narrow interconnected open space that can contain natural creek lines and associated riparian vegetation. Linear reserves can also play an important secondary role providing cycle and pedestrian pathways and values consistent with other open space categories.
		Encumbered (non-core)	Encumbered open space is often associated with areas for stormwater, drainage, utility infrastructure and cemeteries. However, it can also add value to the core open space network through provision of pedestrian connections and enhancing visual amenity.
Active open space (Sport parks)	Provides a setting for formal structured sporting activities	Local (core) District (core)	Site predominantly used for active or competitive recreation including grassed or synthetic playing fields and courts.
		Specialised (non-core)	Open space provided for sporting activities where the nature of the sport precludes the easy transfer to an alternative sport, or the nature of the activity precludes free, unrestricted access to members of the public, or where the land and facility requirements result in high level provision (e.g. large stadia).
Environmental protection open space	Provides a setting where biodiversity is the primary purpose of the reserve	Natural areas (non-core)	Reserves that contain biodiversity features of local, regional, state or federal significance. As the primary use of open space is for environmental protection, the area is likely to be significantly encumbered and may preclude unrestricted public access.

### 4.5 Desired Standards of Service

Desired Standards of Service (DSS) is the level of open space that Council aims to provide as a minimum to all residents in the Shire. DSS is calculated using quantitative and spatial measures.

The current passive and active open space supply for Gunnedah Shire is provided below (noting the discussion at section 3.4):

- Passive open space - 3.5ha/1,000 people
- Active open space - 2.9ha/1,000 people.

<sup>1</sup> Classification framework for public open space, Western Australian Government, 17 March 2021. Open space types and categories, Victorian Government, 2017. Nochian, A., Modh Tahir, O., Mualan, S. & Rakhhandehroo, M. (2016) A comprehensive public open space categorisation using classification system for sustainable development of public open spaces. Alam Cipta, Universitas Putra Malaysia.

## 4.6 Levels of Service

To achieve the potential benefits of open space to individuals and the community, parks need to provide established minimum levels of service. This section aims to provide guidance on the siting and design of open space types delivered by local government. It includes:

- factors for consideration when designing parks
- principles that influence good design
- performance standards detailing land size, catchments, minimum and optional embellishments for core open space types.

### 4.6.1 A planned and strategic approach

A well planned and strategic approach to the design and development of open space will contribute to the long term sustainability of the open space network for current and future generations. Benefits of a planned and strategic approach include:

- open space located to reflect Council's open space and land use planning outcomes relating to distribution and access, connectivity and linkages, co-location of compatible services/opportunities, and shared use of available resources
- design considerations that reflect the Council's policies and objectives relating to diversity of opportunities and settings, integration with natural and urban landscapes, accessibility features and environmental sustainability
- continual enhancement of the open space network in line with Council's capital works program and budgets, changing local needs and changes in the urban environment
- improvements in the quality or distribution of open space in line with relevant local strategies and plans.

### 4.6.2 Distribution

- provide new parkland in growth areas and in areas that have an under supply of parkland
- public open space should be provided along foreshores, streams and permanent water bodies
- provide a network of well-distributed neighbourhood public open space that includes:
  - » local parks within 600m safe walking of at least 95% of all dwellings
  - » active open space of sufficient size within 2 kilometre of 90% of all dwellings
  - » linear parks and trails along waterways, vegetation corridors and road reserves within 1 kilometre of 95% of all dwellings (where practical).

### 4.6.3 Connectivity

- ensure that land is set aside and developed in residential areas for local recreation use and to create pedestrian and cycle links to commercial and community facilities
- ensure that open space networks:
  - » are linked through the provision of walking and cycle trails and rights of way

- » are integrated with open space from abutting subdivisions
- » incorporate, where possible, links between major parks and activity areas, along waterways and natural drainage corridors, connecting places of natural and cultural interest, as well as maintaining public accessibility on public land immediately adjoining waterways.
- ensure land identified as critical to the completion of open space links is transferred for open space purposes
- the provision of public open space should be linked to existing or proposed future public open spaces where appropriate
- an application for subdivision that creates public open space should be accompanied by a landscape design that provides for walking and cycling networks that link with community facilities.

### 4.6.4 Access

- ensure public access is not prevented by developments along stream banks and foreshore
- ensure public land immediately adjoining waterways remains in public ownership.

### 4.6.5 Urban Design

- ensure open space is designed to accommodate people of all abilities, ages and cultures
- accessibility - provide ease, safety and choice of access for all people
- inclusiveness and interaction - create places where all people are free to encounter each other as equals.

### 4.6.6 Layout options and features

- maximise road frontage to the boundaries (minimum of 50%) of any shape, piece or linear section of open space
- maximise surrounding residential frontage to the open space (minimum 50%) to provide visual surveillance
- maximise safe pedestrian connections and links to the open space.

### 4.6.7 Appropriateness and useability

- ensure the size of the open space land is suitable for its intended primary purpose
- ensure the shape of the land can accommodate the required embellishments
- ensure the topography including appropriateness of the slope, vegetation, drainage, cultural or heritage values:
  - » slope no steeper than 1:10 for recreation parks
  - » slope no steeper than 1:50 for sport parks
  - » land that is steeply sloping or has natural water flowing through it may be suitable for environmental or conservation purpose.
- aspect/orientation of the land for the proposed activities.



## 4.7 Performance standards

Performance standards are required to ensure that land offered by developers as part of their developer contribution, or acquired by Council with other funds, is capable of supporting the recreation activity intended from the site.

Basic performance standards have been established for recreation and sporting parks. These will generally only be applicable to new open space acquisitions or additions to existing spaces to improve their functionality.

Table 08: Minimum performance standards for recreation and sport parks

Recreation parks (passive open space)	
Local Parks	<p>Typically, local parks will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» be 0.5-1.5ha in size (or joined to a network of open space areas)</li> <li>» have slopes no greater than 1:10 for 25% of the park area. Where wheelchair access is more likely to occur then some of the park should have slopes of 1:15 or less</li> <li>» retain and integrate natural vegetation and creek lines where possible into the park design</li> <li>» have 50% of the park boundary with road frontage</li> <li>» have access to required services such as electricity and water</li> <li>» be linked to other open space where possible.</li> </ul>
District Parks	<p>Typically, district parks will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» be 2-5ha in size (or joined to a network of open space areas)</li> <li>» have slopes no greater than 1:10 for 50% of the park area. Where wheelchair access is more likely to occur then some of the park should have slopes of 1:15 or less</li> <li>» have at least 50% and preferably 75% of the park boundary with road frontage</li> <li>» retain and integrate natural vegetation and creek lines where possible into the park design</li> <li>» have sufficient land above 100 year flood levels for infrastructure (notionally at least 10%)</li> <li>» have access to required services such as electricity, sewerage and water</li> <li>» be linked to other open space where possible.</li> </ul>
Sport parks (active open space)	
Sport Parks	<p>The following criteria are for typical open space areas used for field and courts sports. Specialised facilities, such as indoor sports or lawn bowling greens may be adequately accommodated on other land types. Typical open space for sporting fields will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» be at least 8ha in size as this allows for efficient development of infrastructure, adequate buffers and adequate space for competitions. There is no limit to maximum size</li> <li>» have at least 75% of the park boundary with road frontage</li> <li>» have adequate space for car and bus parking</li> <li>» be relatively flat to minimise the earthworks required to provide level playing fields</li> <li>» if the site is a closed landfill, then have some virgin areas for facilities</li> <li>» have sufficient land area above the 100 year flood level for infrastructure (e.g. clubrooms, change rooms, storage sheds etc.)</li> <li>» have soils that offer adequate drainage.</li> </ul>

## 4.8 Recreation setting and diversity

The open space network also needs to offer variety in the recreation setting. This is a measure of the diversity within the recreation park network and recognises people's needs and expectations for a variety of recreation experiences. The figure below provides a scale or range of naturalness from wild to urban settings<sup>1</sup>.



Fig. 12 Range of naturalness of outdoor recreation settings

## 4.9 Embellishment and maintenance standards

Embellishment standards describe the typical levels of infrastructure and services expected for recreation and sport parks. Detailing the typical level of embellishment for park types within the open space hierarchy assist local government managers, development assessment staff and developers by providing:

- descriptions that convey the typical embellishments to expect at different park types
- a basis to estimate typical capital costs of development (for infrastructure charging and/or budgeting)
- an initial set of parameters guiding appropriate versus inappropriate embellishment, ensuring functionality, diversity and values are not eroded.

Management and maintenance standards can be developed that are related to the planning framework, classification and hierarchy categories. These standards provide a structure for allocating resources in the areas where they best service community needs.



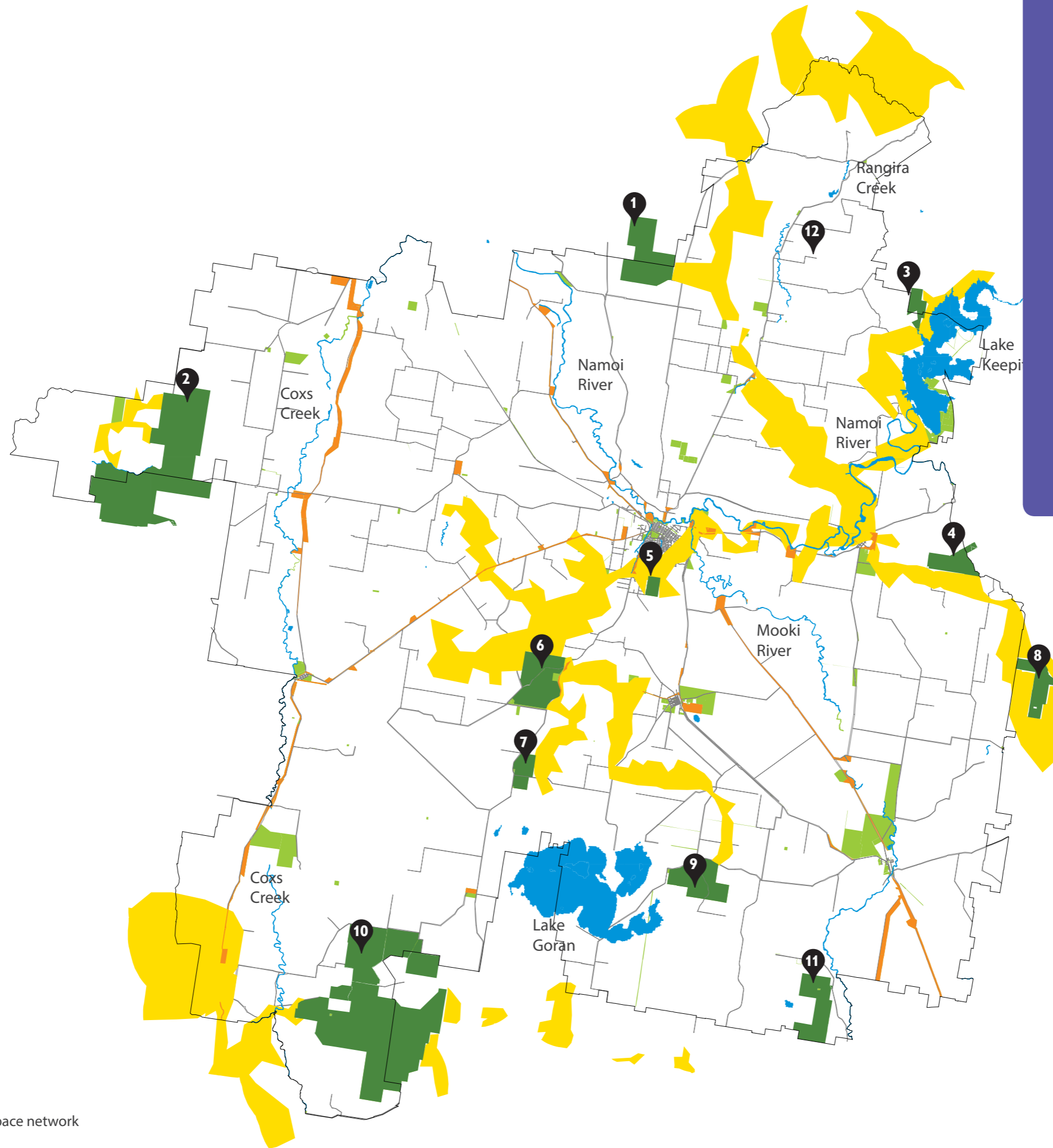
<sup>1</sup> Providing for a diverse range of outdoor recreation opportunities: a "micro-ROS" approach to planning and management, 2000

Table 09: Open space levels of service for core open space types

Park	Size	Function	Access	Minimum embellishments	Optional embellishments
Local open space	0.5ha-1.5ha	Recreation	400m catchment  minimum 50% road frontage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>turf</li> <li>paths</li> <li>bins</li> <li>seating</li> <li>shade (natural and built)</li> <li>play space.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>lighting</li> <li>drinking fountains</li> <li>elements that contribute to the aesthetics and appeal.</li> </ul>
District open space	2ha-5ha	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recreation</li> <li>Sport</li> </ul>	2km  5 min drive  minimum 50% road frontage (75% preferred)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>turf</li> <li>paths</li> <li>bins</li> <li>seating</li> <li>lighting</li> <li>shade (natural and built)</li> <li>multiple play spaces</li> <li>drinking fountain</li> <li>irrigation</li> <li>public toilets</li> <li>bicycle racks</li> <li>elements that contribute to the aesthetics and appeal.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>picnic tables</li> <li>barbeques</li> <li>dog exercise area and dog amenities</li> <li>event infrastructure</li> <li>mobile food vendor zones/amenity</li> <li>sport infrastructure, clubhouse and ancillary facilities.</li> </ul>

- Open space network
- National Park and State Forest
- Biodiversity links
- Travelling stock routes
- Water feature/corridor

- 1 Vickery State Forest
- 2 Kerringle State Forest
- 3 Dowe National Park
- 4 Somerton National Park
- 5 Black Jack State Forest
- 6 Wondoba State Forest
- 7 Goran State Forest
- 8 Melville Range Nature Reserve
- 9 Breeza State Forest
- 10 Trinkey State Conservation Area
- 11 Doona State Forest
- 12 Boonalla Aboriginal Area



#### 4.10 Regional Green Space

Gunnedah Shire Council is located in the North West Slopes region of New South Wales. The Shire is located on the Liverpool Plains in the Namoi River valley, between the Nandewar and Great Dividing Ranges. As a primarily rural and agricultural region, residents living in the Gunnedah Local Government Area have access to vast open spaces, including waterways, nature reserves, State Forests, National Parks and travelling stock routes (TSRs).

While Council does not necessarily own or manage these sites, it is worthwhile recognising the role they place in forming a regional perspective for green space. For strategic planning purposes, a regional overview can assist to identify significant corridors and key connections for preservation and enhancement.

Fig. 12 Map of the regional green space network

4.11.1 Gunnedah township open space

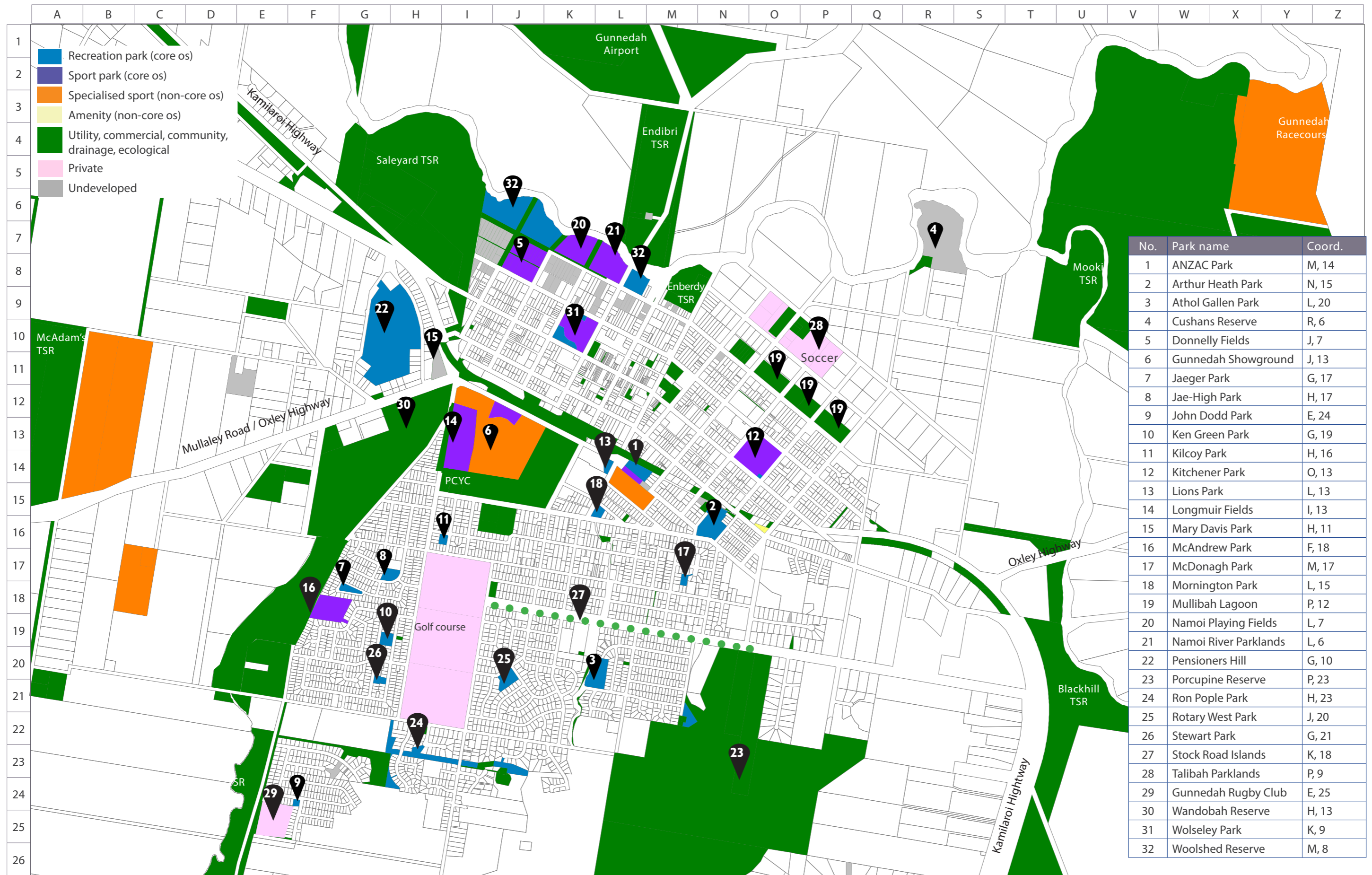


Fig. 12 Map of the open space network in Gunnedah township

4.11.3 Kelvin



Fig. 14 Map of the Boonalla Aboriginal Area and other open space in Kelvin

4.11.6 Curlewis



Fig. 17 Map of the open space in Curlewis

4.11.4 Emerald Hill

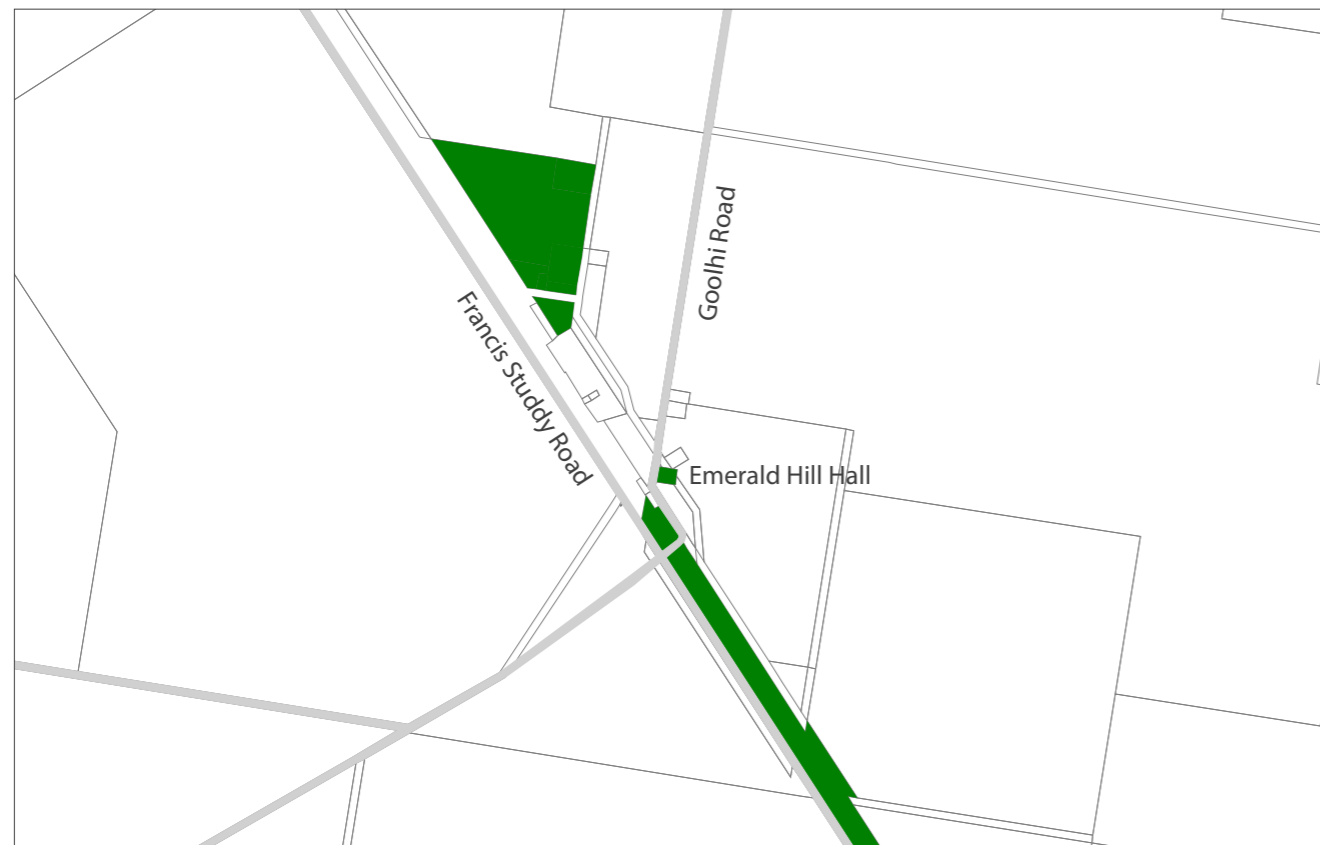


Fig. 15 Map of the open space in Emerald Hill

4.11.7 Breeza



Fig. 18 Map of the open space in Breeza

4.11.9 Carroll

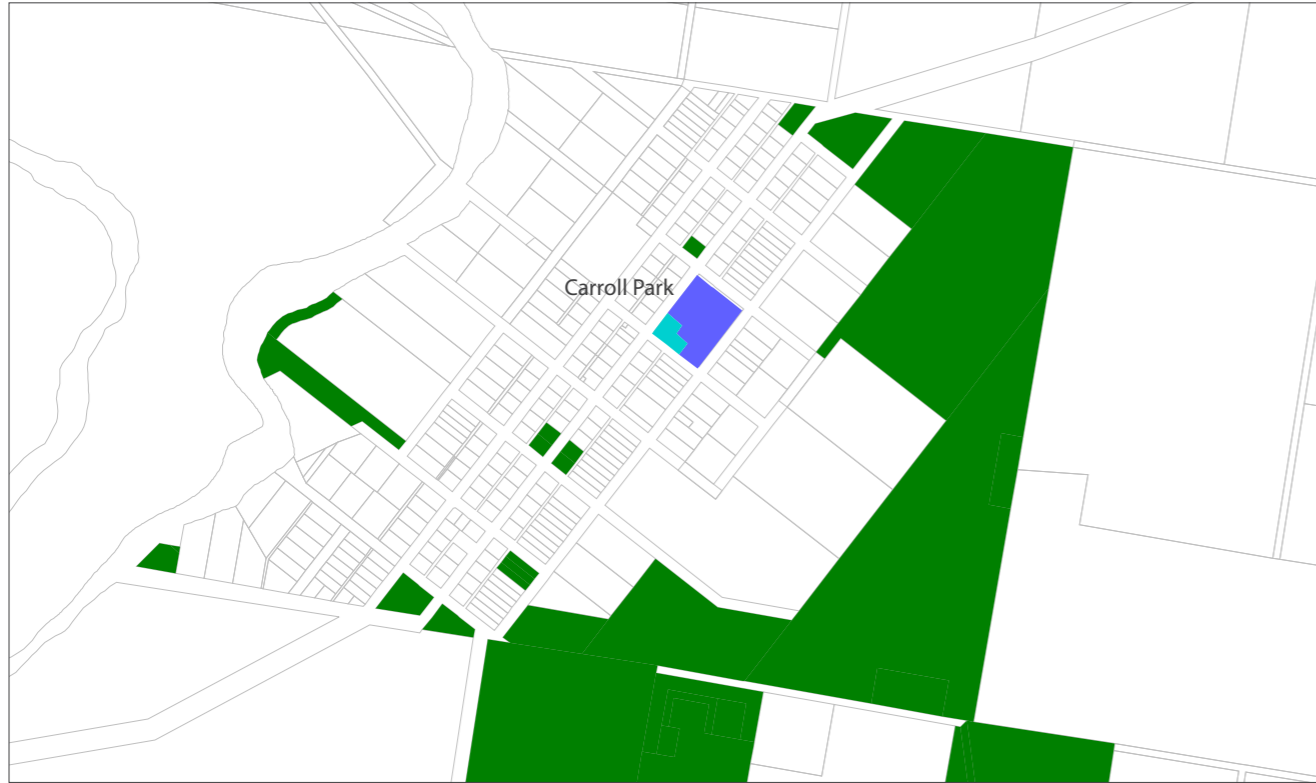


Fig. 20 Map of the open space in Carroll

4.11.10 Piallaway



Fig. 21 Map of the open space in Piallaway

4.11.12 Mullaley



Fig. 23 Map of the open space in Mullaley

4.11.13 Tambar Springs



Fig. 24 Map of the open space in Tambar Springs



## 05\_ Focus Areas: Directions

### 5.0 Focus Areas

This section outlines directions for each Focus Area (Priority) through an overarching objective and strategic directions. Relevant legislation, policy and best practice is provided, and key findings for Gunnedah Shire are detailed.

Maps, diagrams and exemplar images are provided where relevant to present recommendations and a proposed priority has been nominated for each strategic direction.

#### 5.1 Overarching vision and principles

The Vision and Guiding Principles have been applied to the Focus Areas to ensure consistent strategic direction. For reference, the vision for 2030 and guiding principles are provided below.

*“Gunnedah Shire’s open space network contributes to an enhanced quality of life, through open spaces that are sustainable, accessible and resource-efficient, and that enhance the recreation, environmental, social and health needs of current and future generations.”*

The guiding principles are:

- Environmental sustainability
- Health and wellbeing
- Effective planning
- Effective use
- High quality
- Community involvement
- Resourcing
- Accessible and inclusive
- Minimal impacts
- Effective management
- Public safety.



The open space achievements, community profile, results of community consultation and assessment of available open space land for current and future residents, that were detailed in the Considerations section of this Strategy, have several consistent themes. These themes have been developed into focus areas to guide integrated planning across the open space network.

The following focus areas aim to provide clarity for prioritisation and planning of the open space network, taking into consideration elements that influence open space and elements that open space may have an influence on. In the following section, each of these focus areas is described in more detail, including relevant legislation, policy, guidelines and best practice examples.

Table 11: List of focus areas and objectives to contribute to the Strategy Framework

Focus Area	Objectives
Focus area 1: Open space provision	Ensure equitable provision of suitably developed parks and reserves in accordance with agreed Desired Standards of Service (DSS), particularly in new residential areas
Focus area 2: Recreation destinations	Create recreation destination parks in the Shire that provide a diverse range of high quality recreation opportunities and experiences
Focus area 3: Sport and aquatic facilities	Continue to provide and improve sport and aquatic facilities to support participation in organised competition and events
Focus area 4: Open space connections	Enhance the walkability of towns and outlying communities through functional, safe and attractive connections, including developing and maintaining paths, trails, recreation nodes, landscapes and streetscapes
Focus area 5: Biodiversity and nature	Coordinate and plan the approach to protecting, managing and enhancing natural areas to strengthen the biodiversity and natural settings along linear corridors, biodiversity corridors and nature reserves
Focus area 6: Public realm	Enhance the quality and diversity of open space through innovative landscape design including a strategic approach to landscape architecture principles and design trends
Focus area 7: Placemaking and activation	Create and promote unique and vibrant places and activities, and empower the community to activate public places, thereby achieving place making
Focus area 8: Open space asset management	Achieve well managed and maintained open spaces through a coordinated and planned approach to ensure best value-for-money outcomes for Council and the community



## 5.2 Issues and opportunities

As part of the process to develop this Strategy, an audit of all open spaces in Gunnedah Shire was undertaken to assess characteristics including accessibility, amenities, appearance, maintenance, safety and security. The community consultation undertaken with residents of the Shire gathered data relating to recreation and sport participation, park and facility preferences, real or perceived barriers to using open space, regularity of use, as well as needs and desires for future opportunities. An Issues Paper documented these initial findings and is provided as Appendix D to this Strategy. The following table provides a summary of key issues and opportunities (in no particular order) resulting from the open space audit and community consultation, and forms the basis of recommendations contained in the future directions identified in the Focus Areas. The focus area(s) that aims to resolve the issue/opportunity has been identified in the numbered columns on the right of the table.

Table 10: Issues and opportunities linked to focus areas: directions

Issue/Opportunity	Observation/Assessment	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
		Open space provision	Recreation destination	Sport and aquatic facilities	Open space connections	Biodiversity and nature	Public realm	Placemaking and activation	Open space management
<b>STRATEGIC PLANNING AND DESIGN</b>									
Settlement pattern	Important corridors for stormwater management, biodiversity, native wildlife habitat and outdoor recreation require strategic identification to allow for development of planning mechanisms that protect and conserve important values, while allowing appropriate development.				✓	✓			
Planning instrument	Incorporation of the Desired Standards of Service (DSS) for core open space into appropriate planning instruments (e.g. LEP, DCP, Developer Guides) is essential so that future core open space land contributions meet DSS criteria including size, shape, access to surrounding residents, road frontage, flood immunity and embellishment levels. Important corridor mapping can be included in appropriate planning mechanisms to achieve strategic outcomes for environmental conservation, stormwater management, recreation parkland and cultural heritage.	✓			✓	✓			
Open space provision rates	Currently, the provision of open space in Gunnedah is higher than other similar local government authorities (as a ratio per 1,000 population). The current provision rate has been retained. Given several strategic goals identified by Council and the community, a higher provision rate is a logical outcome to support achievement of these strategic objectives (for example, koala habitat and biodiversity corridors).	✓			✓	✓			
Universal design	Council's development of Livvi's Place inclusive playground at Wolseley Park provides for more comprehensive consideration of inclusive design throughout the public realm. "Universal design allows everyone, to the greatest extent possible, and regardless of age or disability, to use buildings, transport, products and services without the need for specialised or adapted features." The National Disability Strategy is an essential reference guide for Council to develop policy and design criteria for development of open spaces and the public realm.	✓					✓	✓	✓

Issue/Opportunity	Observation/Assessment	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
		Open space provision	Recreation destination	Sport and aquatic facilities	Open space connections	Biodiversity and nature	Public realm	Placemaking and activation	Open space management
Gateways	Council has invested in contemporary signage at key gateways into the Shire, villages and the town of Gunnedah. While signage is an important element of gateways, landscaping treatments and additional elements can create gateway statements that leave a lasting impression. There is an opportunity to enhance existing gateway treatments to further convey Gunnedah's branding.						✓		
Design Guide to implement placemaking	Placemaking is an overarching idea and a process with community-based participation at its centre. Effective placemaking processes leverage the assets, aspirations, and possibilities of a local community, to create quality public spaces that contribute to people's health, happiness and well being. An Open Space Design Guide would be a useful tool for Council, that provides guidance to design and create places for people.	✓					✓		✓
A showground for the future	Given that there have been redrafts and reiterations of the Showgrounds masterplan, it is difficult to confidently determine a way forward for the user groups and stakeholders currently at the site. There is an opportunity to develop a comprehensive masterplan based on detailed consultation into the current and future needs of user groups. Additionally, an important consideration is ensuring that further investment and development attracts multiple users to future-proof the Showground's financial sustainability.		✓				✓	✓	✓
Signage and wayfinding	Identified as an objective of the Open Space Strategy, observations across the open space network confirm that the lack of consistent signage likely contributes to residents and visitors not being informed of the opportunities available for recreation across the town, Villages and Shire.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Avoiding ad hoc and precedence	Residents living in Villages and outlying communities need recreation parks to provide opportunities for play, recreation and physical activity. However, asset management, particularly whole-of-life assets costs, require careful consideration when responding to community demands. The capital cost of construction will almost always pale into insignificance when compared with the ongoing operational and maintenance costs (over the life of the asset). Audits revealed some examples of over-embellishment of parks in outlying communities.	✓							✓

focus areas

Issue/Opportunity	Observation/Assessment	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
		Open space provision	Recreation destination	Sport and aquatic facilities	Open space connections	Biodiversity and nature	Public realm	Placemaking and activation	Open space management
<b>COMMUNITY NEEDS</b>									
Access to rivers and waterways	There is a clear desire by residents to have improved access to the Namoi River for recreation. The existing footprint of recreation and sport facilities provides a framework for further activation, in a way that preserves the natural values and setting along the waterway. There is an opportunity to review and update the 2010 Riverine Landscape Concept Plan, including adjacent sporting grounds, to guide appropriate development, and improve the connection between the Namoi River parklands and the town centre.	✓			✓	✓		✓	
Regional destination recreation park	Wolseley Park is highly valued by residents (and visitors) for its proximity to the town centre and recreation values. Development of the Livvi's Place inclusive playground, and ideas for further expansion, and plans to develop a Friendship Garden all point toward increased recreation use of this popular park. While relocation of cricket, Australian rules football and tennis was considered, community consultation provided clear direction that this was not preferred, and that the existing use of the Park should be retained. A master plan is recommended to deliver contemporary planning and design for Wolseley Park that contributes to it being a regionally significant destination park, as well as supporting activation of the Gunnedah CBD and contributing to the liveability of the Shire.	✓	✓				✓	✓	
Connect people to where they want to go - walking and cycling	Walking and cycling are popular activities in Gunnedah across the full spectrum of the community. Council has commenced implementing recommendations from its adopted Pedestrian and Mobility Plan (PAMP) and Bike Plan and this needs to be a continued focus to ensure people can walk and cycle to key destinations within the community easily and safely. People walk for different reasons (commuting vs recreation) and this is important when determining the location, design, surface treatment and setting of the path.				✓				
Shade	Several parks and playgrounds in Gunnedah Shire lack sufficient shade. Shade trees and structures provide protection from exposure to harmful ultraviolet (UV) light and heat. Provision of shade is an essential design component for parks and particularly playgrounds to encourage people to utilise these public spaces safely, regardless of the time of day. Shade trees contribute significantly to the amenity of parks and shade structures can provide effective all-weather shelter. Council's existing Street Tree Strategy has potential for expansion to encourage residents to plant appropriate native species, including koala food trees, and increase the visual appeal of the urban environment.	✓						✓	✓

Issue/Opportunity	Observation/Assessment	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
		Open space provision	Recreation destination	Sport and aquatic facilities	Open space connections	Biodiversity and nature	Public realm	Placemaking and activation	Open space management
Play infrastructure	Livvi's Place playground at Wolseley Park is highly valued by the community and provides diverse play opportunities for a range of ages. There are several playgrounds across Gunnedah that consist of off-the-shelf play equipment and softfall. These playgrounds tend to show signs of little use and appear dated. Future trends in play space creation require the integration of select pieces of play equipment with natural elements and landscaping to encourage imagination play and inquisitive investigation of the environment.	✓	✓			✓		✓	✓
Youth spaces	Youth are people typically aged between 15-24, who, for recreation purposes, need places to be active, socialise and contribute positively to their community. Youth spaces are best developed close to town centres where youth travel to by walking, cycling or using public transport, and where they can access shops. The Gunnedah skate park was identified as a popular place for youth, however its age, lack of diversity for skill development and lack of services, such as toilets, detract from its value.	✓	✓					✓	✓
Public toilets	Lack of public toilets was the barrier identified by the most survey respondents. Upon further investigation, a significant level of frustration appears to stem from toilets at parks being locked e.g. McAndrew Park and Kitchener Park.	✓	✓	✓				✓	✓
User conflicts and unauthorised use	Unauthorised use of motorbikes and trail bikes was identified through consultation with the community and Council officers. Anecdotally, people living on small residential properties within the town, purchase a motorbike, that they then use in parks and reserves, including Wandobah Reserve and Porcupine Reserve. User conflicts also exist between walkers and mountain bike users at Porcupine Reserve	✓						✓	✓
Recreation as a secondary use of TSRs, State and National Parks	Travelling Stock Routes, and State and National Parks are located across the Gunnedah local government area and provide additional locations for outdoor recreation opportunities, secondary to the primary purpose of the site. Outdoor recreation activities undertaken on these sites include those that are considered low-impact and authorised and those that may negatively impact the primary purpose of the site and are unauthorised	✓			✓	✓			

Issue/Opportunity	Observation/Assessment	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
		Open space provision	Recreation destination	Sport and aquatic facilities	Open space connections	Biodiversity and nature	Public realm	Placemaking and activation	Open space management
<b>FINANCIAL AND OPERATIONAL CONSIDERATIONS</b>									
Asset management	Audits revealed a range of park embellishments that are aged, in disrepair and lacking appeal. Park assets that no longer function or serve a purpose should be removed in a timely manner. It will be important in future years, when assets reach the end of their useful lives and are considered for renewal or replacement, that Council and the community undertake planning to ensure the current and future needs of residents are met, rather than simply replacing infrastructure 'like-for-like'.	✓	✓	✓				✓	✓
Rationalisation	There are several parks that should be considered for rationalisation from the open space network. These include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arthur Heath Park</li> <li>• McAndrew Street/Stewart Street Parks</li> <li>• Jae-High Park</li> <li>• McDonagh Park.</li> </ul> Conversion from community to operational land should be considered to allow Council additional flexibility for repurposing and/or disposal (sale).	✓							✓

## 5.3 Open space provision

### 5.3.1 Provision objective

Ensure equitable provision of suitably developed parks and reserves in accordance with agreed Desired Standards of Service (DSS) and performance standards, particularly in new residential areas.

### 5.3.2 Open space provision strategy

Gunnedah Shire currently manages almost 84 hectares of core open space. Based on a population of 12,500 (2016 ABS Census) the current provision of core open space is 6.7 hectares/1,000 people.

The importance of providing quality recreation parks, sport facilities and active transport corridors has been detailed previously in this Strategy. To recap, the following key elements are critical to achieve a high-quality, functioning open space network:

- Classification
  - » it is important to identify and recognise the values, function and setting of open space parcels when planning use and development of the land
  - » allocating a hierarchy for parks provides a framework to manage the level and variety of embellishments, aligning with Council's asset management processes
  - » people have different preferences for the setting of the park they visit. Some people prefer very natural areas, while others like urban settings. Providing a range of different settings is important
- Desired Standard of Service
  - » planning is required to ensure that a sufficient quantity of land is set aside for passive and active open space, that is based on the current and future projected population
  - » passive open space is typically provided at a higher rate (per 1,000 population) than active open space, as the whole population uses passive open space to different degrees
- Catchment
  - » local parks should be 0.5 hectares (ha) to 1.5ha in size and within 500-600m of most residences (or a 5-7 minute walk)
  - » district parks should be 2 ha to 5 ha in size and within 2 kilometres of most residences (or a 5 minute drive)
  - » specialised open space does not typically have a catchment
- Levels of Service
  - » a well planned and strategic approach to the design and development of open space will contribute to the long-term sustainability of the open space network
  - » distribute open space to ensure almost all

residents can access at least a local passive park in the hierarchy, within a 5-minute walk

- » actively plan to set aside new, or retrofit into existing land to create pedestrian and cycle links to town and village centres and community facilities, including open spaces
- » ensure open space is designed to accommodate people of all abilities, ages and cultures - with ease, safety and choice of access
- » maximise road frontage, residential frontage and safe pedestrian connections and links to open space
- » ensure the size, shape, aspect and topography of open space is suitable for its intended purpose, and that the existing site values will not be negatively impacted by proposed use.

When considering open space provision standards, it is also important to identify the existing values of places, community values and opportunities for recreation experiences when planning strategically. For example, significant values identified within the Gunnedah community include:

- natural setting
- ability to spend time with friends and family
- interaction with natural environment
- diversity of playgrounds and equipment.

### 5.3.3 Statutory context

A range of Commonwealth and State legislation protects land that has values including biodiversity, threatened species, cultural heritage, and waterways, for example. These areas are important in the overarching open space network, however these values can also be constraints, resulting in recreation use being secondary to the primary purpose of the land.

Under the NSW Environmental Planning and Assessment Act, statutory planning instruments can be created, such as Local Environmental Plans (LEP), Development Control Plans (DCP), and Development Guides that can support the provision of core open space, particularly in accordance with Desired Standard of Service (DSS) and Levels of Service (LOS). Ensuring appropriate provision of open space with the core, or primary purpose, of providing passive and active recreation, is essential for a healthy and vibrant community.

Open Space Strategies, developed by councils, to guide provision of sufficient suitable land for recreation, sport, active transport, and to protect land with values important to the community, are key tools to ensure provision of open space through appropriate planning instruments.

### 5.3.4 Provision based on hierarchy and type

Gunnedah town and villages have sufficient land for the current population, as well as forecast population growth in the future, unless significant population growth occurs, as depicted in scenario 3 (refer to page 37). To ensure diverse recreation needs of the community are met, different open space land types within the hierarchy require appropriate design and development.

In outlying villages, design and development should be based on providing diverse recreation opportunities that meet a broad cross-section of the community's needs. Priority should be placed on passive recreation pursuits, such as walking for example, ahead of structured sport activities.

In Gunnedah township, the type and hierarchy of the park is more relevant and provides a framework strategic provision of diverse open spaces.

Local recreation parks are distributed across the town and it is estimated that 95% of the population can walk to a local or district level park within 600m of their residence. The setting of local parks could be more diverse across the 'recreation setting and diversity' spectrum (refer to page 43), providing different recreation experiences for residents. For example, a local park could be a more natural setting by planting additional trees and understory plants, and creating a trail through the park using decomposed and compacted gravel, rather than concrete.

District sport parks serve a catchment of 2km and are between 2-5 ha (or larger). There are several district sport parks in Gunnedah that have been developed for multiple sports, and typically include a play space as well.

District recreation parks are lacking in Gunnedah and there is a clear need and demand for repurposing of existing open space land to provide additional passive recreation open space for residents and visitors to Gunnedah. This strategy recommends master planning of Wolseley Park into a district recreation park to provide diverse and inclusive recreation opportunities for a broad cross-section of the community.

### 5.3.5 Trends and the design of parks

#### Value of open space

Open space planning and design increasingly features the need for parks to stimulate and support environments for more active lifestyles, for physical and psychological restoration, for food production and increased biodiversity. An additional emphasis is the social and cultural values as well as the green infrastructure values inherent in urban open space provision. This is apparent in Gunnedah through use of ANZAC Park for memorial and cultural purposes, and active involvement of the Urban Landcare Group in restoration and management of several reserves. Recreation parks are typically valued more by community members, than sport parks, however this community preference is not always reflected in the level of embellishment and maintenance dedicated to these different types of parks, by councils.

#### Recreation vs Sport

Participation in formal sport (for the purpose of competition) has been declining for the last couple of decades. Sport participation is highest in people between 5 and 35 years of age. Walking for recreation is the most participated in activity across all age groups and other demographic characteristics. Fitness and gym, athletics including jogging and running, swimming (for exercise, not sport), cycling, bushwalking and yoga are the top activities participated in by adults<sup>1</sup>. This preference for recreation, rather than sport, is reflected in results from the Gunnedah community survey. Walking, bushwalking, playing in the park, gardening and exercising in the park were the top five activities highlighted by survey respondents.

#### Community engagement and inclusive design

Quality community engagement requires planning to identify a clear scope and purpose, and anticipate outcomes. Increasing evidence is building, to support tailored engagement processes that successfully build relationships and trust that strengthen over time. In relation to park planning, engaging with the community, using inclusive design mindset and methodology will achieve better outcomes for a larger proportion of the community.

A range of tools exist to support local government to undertake meaningful and well-planned community engagement for community projects. Allowing sufficient time for the process is critical, as understanding, relationships and trust develops over time.

The Gunnedah community place high value on genuine community engagement and inclusive design, with the evidence for this in the numerous positive comments regarding the design process and construction of Livvi's Place at Wolseley Park

1 AusPlay Survey 2020



### 5.3.6 Key findings

- As identified in Table 04 in section 3.4, the provision of open space in Gunnedah Shire is adequate, with a future desired provision rate of 4 hectares (ha) per 1,000 people for each of the three different scenarios:
  - » Scenario one: 12,600 people by 2041<sup>1</sup>
  - » Scenario two: 15,217 people by 2041<sup>2</sup>
  - » Scenario three: 20,508 people by 2041<sup>3</sup>.
- It is important to note that Council's current adopted provision rate is 6.4ha per 1,000 people. This is a very high provision rate, with most local government authorities across Australia typically providing in the range between 3ha and 5ha per 1,000 people.
- Not all of Council's local parks are embellished to a standard to maximise their function and use, and this can impact on the amenity and opportunity for recreation and social connection at the neighbourhood level.
- The Shire currently lacks a district level recreation park that provides diverse recreation opportunities for people of all ages, abilities and cultures, capable of hosting people for extended periods and potentially attracting visitors from outside Shire boundaries.
- It is important to create a connected open space network via paths, trails and linear corridors to improve access to a diverse range of recreation settings, opportunities and experiences.

### 5.3.7 Strategic directions

Table 12: Prioritising provision of open space focus areas and their strategic directions

Focus	Strategic direction	Priority
New residential development areas	Seek the provision of good sized (0.5 hectares or larger) and shaped parks, and usable open spaces and recreation nodes along linear corridors and connections in future urban developments.	High
Shared use of schools	Engage with schools to implement the NSW Education policy encouraging community use of school facilities, for recreation and sporting activities, particularly for junior sport activities. Encourage a partnership approach between school and junior sport to foster a collaborative effort to support participation. Negotiation of an agreement for management and maintenance may be required.	High
Existing open space improvements	Enhance the quality, function and hierarchy of existing parks and reserves accordance with this Strategy to contribute to the overall open space network. Refer to detailed recommendations in the Planning Areas Section.	High
Land rationalisation	Undertake steps to convert parks identified for rationalisation from 'community' to 'operational' (under the Local Government Act) to allow Council additional flexibility for repurposing and/or disposal.	Medium

1 NSW Department of Planning population projection  
 2 Gunnedah Shire Council infrastructure provision population projection of 0.79%  
 3 Gunnedah Shire Council



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## Open space network analysis

The open space network has been analysed through a series of scenarios to provide direction on future enhancement and development. The following section examines the existing open space network against a range of variables, including:

- residential lot access to open space within 600m walkability catchments
- school and sport playing fields within 1km of residential homes
- public transport access to open space
- playground accessibility to residential areas within 500m
- youth space accessibility to residential areas and using public transport.

## Recreation parks with 5-7 minute walk (600m)

When a catchment area of 600m (or 5-7 minute walk) is overlaid with existing recreation and sport parks, the majority of residents can access a park relatively quickly. However, while sport parks are embellished and fit-for purpose, not all recreation parks have been developed to function for the intended purpose.

Council has ample open space for the current and projected population. There is an opportunity to rationalise the number of recreation parks and develop a strategic network of recreation parks to provide a well-utilised and valued network for residents across the town.

Development of a district recreation park will meet current and future demand for passive recreation parkland, as well as a location for community connection.

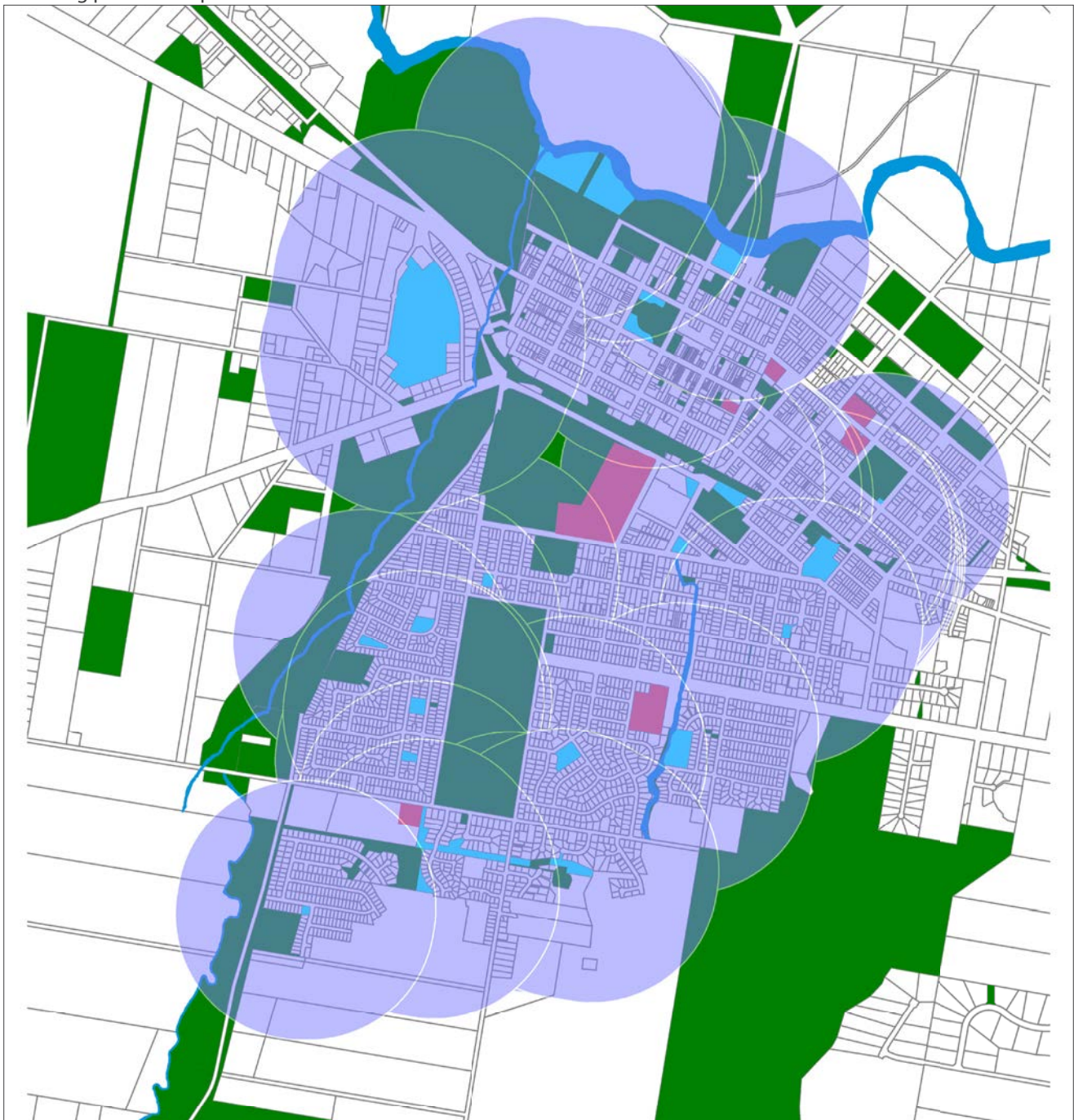


Fig. 25 Map of the open space network and recreation parks within 600m of residents in Gunnedah township

### School and Council sport playing field accessibility

Sporting fields are a resource for formal sport training and competition and also provide an open recreation space for unstructured play and social sport. Most schools provide at least one sport field within their grounds for health and physical education classes, as well as physical activity by students during breaks. With consultation and approval by the school principal, these sport fields can provide additional open space accessible to surrounding residents for appropriate use, outside of school hours and on weekends. When included in mapping of Council owned and managed sport fields, school sport fields increases the number of residents with access to sport fields within 1km of their residence. Council is encouraged to negotiate community access to school sport fields, working actively to remove any real or perceived barriers to these public assets.

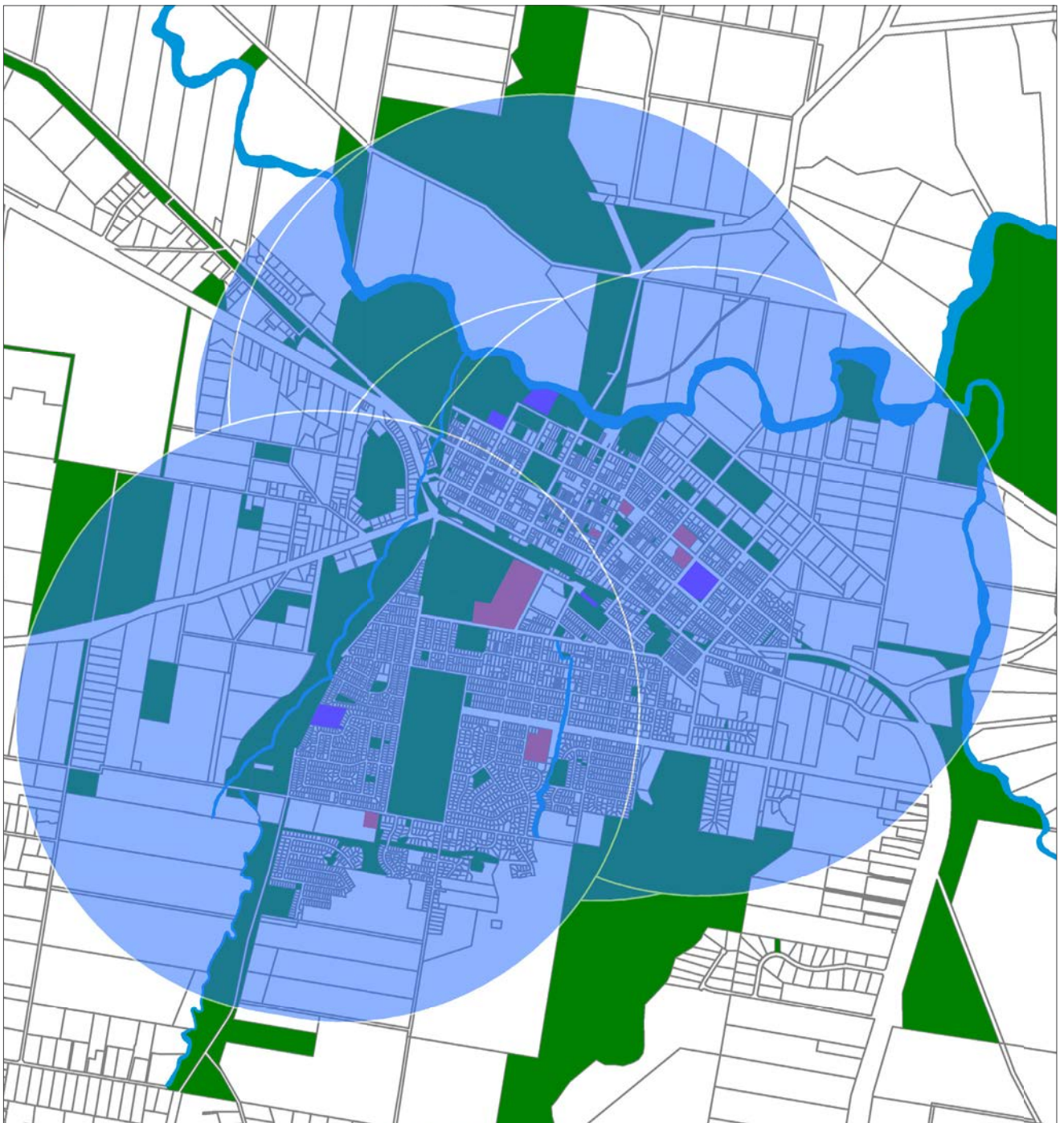


Fig. 26 Map showing proximity of school and Council sport parks to residents within 1km in Gunnedah township

### Playground accessibility

To gain an understanding of the relative access of playground infrastructure to the resident population of Gunnedah, all playgrounds were mapped and 500m catchments assessed. The analysis indicated:

- an estimated 75% of the population has access to playground facilities within 500m of their residence
- Livvi's Place is highly valued by the whole community
- the quality of local park playgrounds is generally good, however it does vary, with shade a significant missing element
- some playgrounds are tired and aging and require replacement or removal
- inappropriate placement of the equipment may be discouraging use.

### Youth space accessibility

Youth are typically people in the 15-24 age group and from a recreation planning perspective this group has characteristics including:

- significant 'free time'
- are high users of public transport
- are attracted to town/city centres and public spaces to socialise and gather
- are going through a challenging period of transition and change.

A 'youth space' is a public space deliberately designed to attract youth to participate in recreation, socialising, events and contribute to their community. Gunnedah has one purpose built youth space, the Skate Park. This youth space is some distance from the town centre and is lacking toilets.

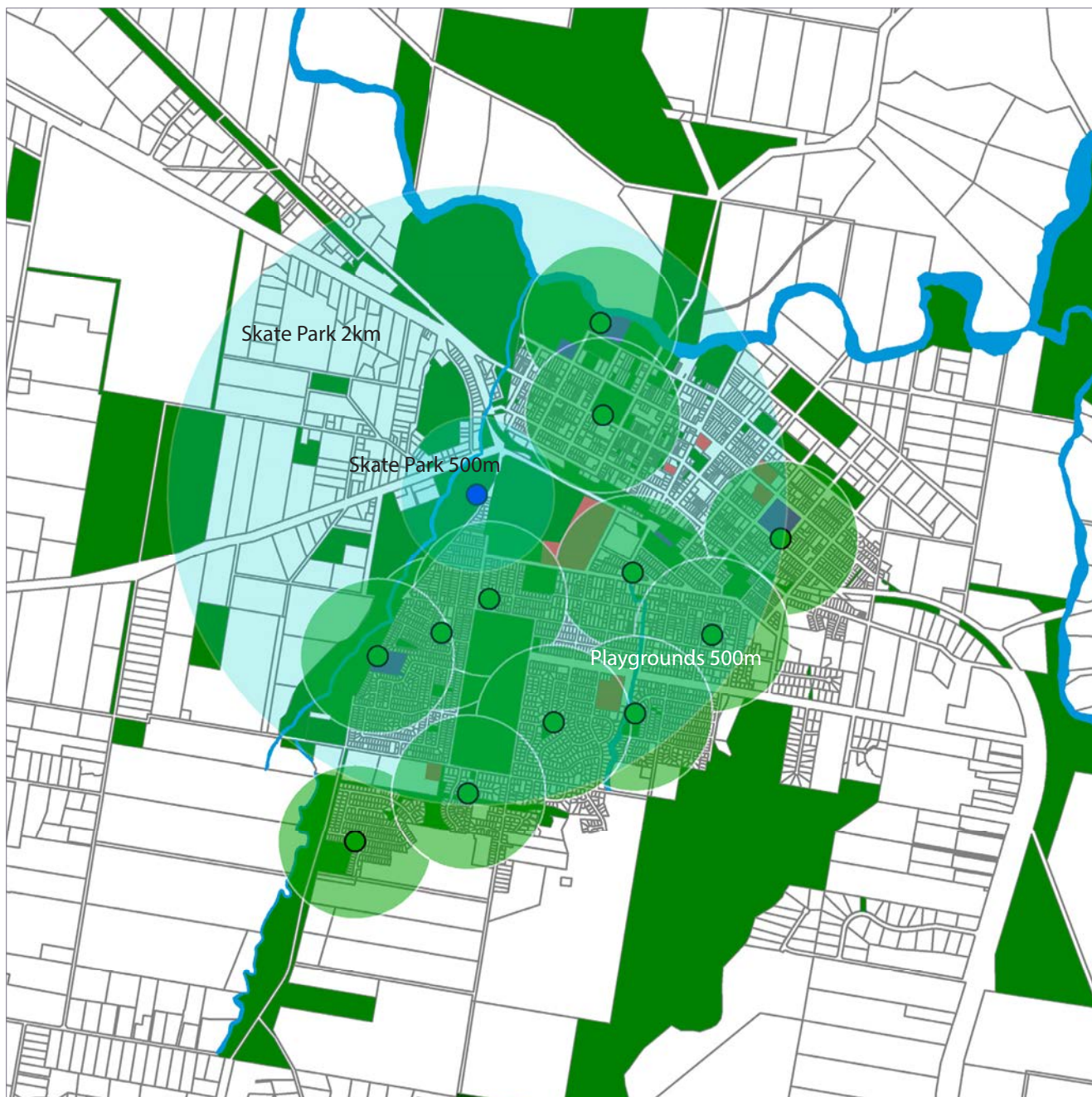


Fig. 27 Map showing the location of playgrounds and youth spaces in relation to residences.

## 5.4 Recreation destinations

### 5.4.1 Recreation destinations objective

Create recreation destination parks in the Shire that provide a diverse range of high quality recreation opportunities and experiences attracting users and visitors from across Gunnedah Shire and beyond.

### 5.4.2 Recreation destinations strategy

There is strong community demand for high quality and unique recreation parks and play spaces in Gunnedah township, including river parkland providing increased access to water-based recreation. Larger and higher profile district recreation parks have the potential to accommodate the community's demands. It is not appropriate or feasible to develop all parks and reserves to a high level and therefore a targeted approach to providing destinations is recommended.

### 5.4.3 Statutory context

A range of legislation, industry standards and guides are relevant when designing and constructing recreation destination parks. The following summary is provided as a guide, however an assessment of applicable laws, codes and guides should be made on a case-by-case basis.

- Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Commonwealth)
- Disability Inclusion Act 2014 (NSW)
- Public Health Act 2010 (NSW)
- Public Health Amendment (Review) Act 2017 (NSW)
- Crown Land Management Act 2016 (NSW)
- NSW Everyone Can Play: A guide to create inclusive playspaces
- Cancer Institute NSW Guidelines to Shade - A practical guide for shade development in New South Wales (2013)

### 5.4.4 Trends

#### Integrating technology with outdoor play

Increasing 'screen time' by children and youth has initiated innovative use of technology integrated into outdoor play equipment. This integration of physical activity and technology, with lights, sounds, games and activities tests reflexes, speed and coordination and encourages social interaction as well as fine and gross motor skills.

#### Destination playgrounds

Destination playgrounds combine adventure, variety, innovative and inclusive design, and an atmosphere that encourages social interaction and connection. Destination playgrounds are often designed around a central theme and embrace all ages and abilities, attracting local community and tourists alike. Livvi's Place at Wolseley Park is an excellent example of a destination playground.

It is important that the design of destination playgrounds reflect and align with the setting of the park, within a scale of urban and natural settings.

#### Play for all

Gunnedah has embraced inclusive play, developing stage one of Livvi's Place for the whole community to enjoy. The NSW Everyone Can Play guide was used extensively in the design of Livvi's Place, and provides an excellent framework for playgrounds and play spaces of varying sizes and scope. Inclusive playgrounds result from good design, early in the process, and continuing through construction, and does not automatically mean higher costs. No longer an afterthought, inclusive play equipment is often 'leading the charge' in terms of innovative and engaging play.

#### All the senses

Activities that stimulate a child's senses, or sensory play, is crucial to cognitive development and creativity. Innovative playspace design is emerging that recognises the importance of integrating all the senses: sight, smell, taste, hearing, touch, vestibular (perception of our body in relation to gravity, movement and balance), and proprioception (sense of relative position of neighbouring parts of the body and strength of effort being employed). Design innovations can include tactile experiences, outdoor musical instruments, water features, play panels, spring and rotating equipment, for example.

#### Fostering curiosity and adventure

The importance of challenge and risk in helping children to learn to navigate the world confidently, independently and safely is assumed, underpinned by research. The introduction of age-appropriate adventure including tree climbing, monkey bars, flying foxes, wobbly walkways, giant slides and tall climbing nests are essential to healthy development.

#### Outdoor nature-based recreation

There is an increasing shift away from organised sport participation to individual activities, and particularly a return to nature-based activities. Outdoor recreation activities are those undertaken in the outdoors, without built facilities or infrastructure, at times requiring large areas of land, water and/or air and requiring predominantly unmodified natural landscapes.

Access to, and the impacts of, outdoor recreation can sometimes be better managed by providing facilities and site modifications, however participation in outdoor recreation activities is not reliant on these. Consultation with the community clearly indicates a desire by the community for outdoor recreation opportunities.

## Recreation on wheels

There is emerging research indicating that bike riding, scooter riding and skateboarding are more popular activities for both young people and adults than previously thought. Pump tracks are emerging as more flexible facilities than traditional skate parks, as they are designed for use at any time during the day (or at night if lit). Pump tracks are designed for pumping/pulling and rolling rather than continuous pedalling (bikes) or pushing off (scooters and skateboards), and can be designed to cater for a broad range of age groups (3 years of age +).

## Youth spaces

A 'youth space' is a public space deliberately designed to attract youth to participate in recreation, socialising, events and contribute to their community. The Gunnedah Skate Park is valued by the community, however key issues impacting enjoyable use include the lack of toilet facilities nearby and the distance from the town centre. It is important that youth spaces are accessible by walking, bike, skateboard and scooter riding, and public transport.

## 5.4.5 Key findings

- There is an increasing trend, apparent for several years, toward developing high-quality parks that provide a destination for surrounding districts, and potentially the region.
- The community survey and other consultation activities undertaken to develop the Strategy, indicate a strong demand for creation of a destination recreation park that caters inclusively for diverse age groups, abilities and cultural backgrounds. Essential elements include playspaces and activity opportunities for children and young people, particularly opportunities for free water play, as well as traditional park uses including picnicking, market stall locations, kickabout space and art and cultural appreciation.
- There is also high demand for increased access and development of the Namoi River banks to accommodate recreational use and opportunities.
- Good quality local recreation parks and playspaces that people can walk to, including with young children.
- Lookout parks often become destination parks due to their attraction to visitors and tourists. Lookout parks are not typically recreation parks and require specific planning and design for their intended purpose and use.

## 5.4.6 Strategic directions

Table 13: Prioritising Recreation Destination focus areas and their strategic directions

Focus	Strategic direction	Priority
Recreation destinations Play destinations Event spaces	Develop a master plan over Wolseley Park, with particular focus on the passive recreation areas (i.e. non-sport) around the perimeter of the park. Investigate upgrading of existing amenities at the park.	High
Youth space / skate park	Undertake design of the existing youth space (skate park) to include on-site amenities and additional landscaping and park embellishments. Include additional wheeled recreation devices, for ages 3 years plus. in the design.	Medium
Namoi River Mullibah Lagoons	Maintain and enhance the quality and amenity of recreation nodes along the Namoi River and Mullibah Lagoon, while preserving the natural values, landscape and setting.	High
Lookouts	Ensure lookouts (Pensioners Hill and Porcupine Reserve) are developed and maintained to perform their intended purpose with facilities to support use.	Medium
Local destinations	Maintain and strengthen the destination value of other key recreation parks strategically located across the Shire. Consider opportunities for meeting particular needs such as youth oriented facilities, dog parks, exercise equipment, ball courts and other targeted infrastructure. This could include spaces for temporary 'pop up' youth and recreation activity opportunities.	Medium





Fig. 27 Map of existing sporting facilities within Wolseley Park and potential field layout on Council owned and undeveloped land. This does not necessarily indicate priorities or sport facilities that require accommodation at this site.

The following exemplar images provide an insight into the possible recreation elements to be included in redevelopment of Wolseley Park to transform it into a Destination Park. These examples are from Chinchilla Botanic Parkland.



focus areas

## 5.5 Sport and aquatic facilities

### 5.5.1 Sport and aquatic facilities objective

Continue to provide and improve sport and aquatic facilities to support participation in organised competition and events.

### 5.5.2 Sport and aquatic facilities strategy

- Actively seek to form partnerships with schools to enact the NSW Department of Education's Community Use of School Facilities Policy, particularly for junior sport training after school hours and competition on weekends.
- Develop a master plan over Wolseley Park focussing on the passive recreation space on the perimeter of the park to create a Destination Recreation Park.
- Review and update the Showgrounds master plan.

### 5.5.3 Statutory context

The design and development of sport reserves must take into consideration current standards (i.e. minimum and maximum dimensions, including runoff distances and buffers) of each sport and should seek guidance from the relevant state sporting body. A useful reference is the Department of Sport and Recreation Western Australia Sports Dimensions Guide for Playing Areas: Sport and Recreation Facilities (2006).

### 5.5.4 Trends and influences

Changes in flexible work practices, an increase in both parents working, cultural influences and socio-economic factors have all played a role in decreasing participation in formal competition sport, and an increasing number of people who are keen to play regular sport on a casual basis with friends and family. Areas where casual sport can be easily played without impacting on organised sport would ideally be provided and promoted.

The structure of sport has changed and there is increased competition between sports to secure members. New and high-quality facilities can be a major attractor for sport participants, and this fact can be used by National and State sporting organisations to influence investment in facilities by clubs and councils. This can result in facilities being developed and upgraded beyond what is required at the local level, resulting in facilities that are financially difficult to maintain, for the long term.

Major sporting events can attract participants and spectators creating opportunities for economic stimulus to the local area and revenue raising through canteens, bars and raffles, for local clubs. Securing events locally is encouraged, however facilities should not be constructed based on the premise that regional, state or national events will be secured.

### 5.5.5 Council managed sport parks

Provision of land and facilities for sport is well catered for in Gunnedah through a combination of Council-managed and community-managed facilities. Notably, football (soccer) and rugby union operate from community-managed facilities.

#### Donnelly and Namoi Playing Fields (+undeveloped land)

Donnelly and Namoi Playing Fields are located adjacent to the Namoi River and currently accommodate field sports including junior cricket, touch football, athletics, and softball. The fields are in good condition.

A single clubhouse and amenities building overlooks both Donnelly and Namoi Playing Fields. The building is positioned at the top of a built up area to protect it from flooding. Ramps and stairs leading to the building are currently incomplete or insufficiently connected to a continuous path of travel, particularly for those with mobility issues. The building is up to 300m from playing fields, which is considered too far for convenient use, particularly by young children, older people and parents with infants.

Additional toilet and change facilities are recommended in closer proximity to playing fields to improve access and the overall experience of participants, officials and spectators.

Maximising utilisation of Donnelly and Namoi Playing Fields in the future will require increased programming and use during evenings. Lighting of Donnelly Fields for evening training may be required.

The design and development of the additional Council land into sporting fields and facilities should contribute to enhancing this precinct further as a multi-sport facility.

#### Gunnedah Showgrounds and John Longmuir Playing Fields

The Gunnedah Showgrounds and John Longmuir Playing Fields cater for a diverse range of sport and recreation activities including basketball, gymnastics, equestrian and animal sports, cricket, rugby league and netball. A range of community groups also use the facilities.

With the end of the lease over adjacent TAFE land pending, and with it the dressage arenas and car parking overflow, the future of the John Longmuir Playing Fields has been somewhat clouded. Development of additional fields near the Donnelly and Namoi Playing Fields may provide an opportunity for field sports to relocate. Expansion of the netball courts, and construction of a new toilets and canteen building is required, and if constructed appropriately, could be used for car parking during large events.

The current master plan over the Showgrounds and Playing Fields does not provide sufficient direction regarding current and future use and demand, and therefore requires review and updating.

### Kitchener Park

Kitchener Park is a well developed sport park catering for senior rugby league and senior cricket. Two tennis and two basketball courts are located on one corner of the park, however these courts are dated and require consolidation and replacement. A small playground is located in one corner providing passive recreation for surrounding residents.

Enhancement of this playground, review of the opening times for the nearby toilets, and encouraging casual use of the field for recreation and exercise are key considerations for Kitchener Park.

### McAndrew Park

Currently, senior cricket utilise the turf wicket at McAndrew Park. It is proposed that use of McAndrew Park as a sport park is critically assessed. In the long-term future, repurposing this park into a recreation park is probable, if current participation patterns and trends continue.

### 5.5.6 Key findings

- Sport is well catered for in Gunnedah Shire, with sufficient land and sport facilities provided by Council and by private community owned and/or managed member clubs (e.g. football (soccer), rugby union).
- Additional sportsgrounds may not be required in the future and instead the focus should be placed on accessing school facilities and enhancing the quality and capacity of existing sportsgrounds.
- Current use of fields and courts indicate additional capacity at existing facilities (available days and times for use), recognising that additional lighting for evening use will be required, and maintenance regimes will need to change and increase proportionately with increased use, in the future.
- Some facilities are at the end of their useful asset life, or in need of major maintenance (renewal). It is critical that strategic goals are considered prior to any works occurring.
- A major upgrade of the Aquatic Centre was undertaken in 2018, and water-based sports for the population can be accommodated at this facility.

### 5.5.7 Strategic directions

Table 14: Prioritising of sport and aquatic facility focus areas and their strategic directions

Focus	Strategic direction	Priority
Maximise utilisation	Maintain and where required undertake improvements to sportsgrounds in accordance with their allocated hierarchy level. This includes considering opportunities to improve the quality and capacity of playing fields and facilities to support future population growth demands. Specific opportunities are considered in the Planning Areas: Directions. Ensure that unrestricted access is maintained, and encouraged, for Council managed sportsgrounds for casual sports use across the Shire.	High
Sports Hubs	Continue to improve the quality and function of the existing sports hubs at Donnelly Fields, Namoi Playing Fields, Kitchener Park and the Showgrounds. Ensure appropriate master planning is in place for each of these sites, and that the master plans are reviewed and updated every five years to recognise changes in community needs.	Medium
Community use of School Facilities	Establish partnerships with schools regarding the future use of school ovals and fields for community sport. Larger schools that have accessible amenities and are supportive of community use should be approached in the first instance. Council should be a leader in establishing and formalising partnerships with schools and consideration should be given to contributing to infrastructure and maintenance as part of negotiations.	Low
Master planning of undeveloped land	Design and development of the Council owned land bordered by Bloomfield, Rosemary, Maitland and Tempest Streets should consider the needs of sports being relocated from other locations, as well as population growth and demand generated from sport participation rates.	Low



01



02



03



04



05



06

focus areas

01\_ Donnelly Playing Fields  
 02\_ Typical shelter and picnic setting at Donnelly Playing Fields  
 03\_ Synthetic cricket pitch/wicket at Donnelly Playing Fields  
 04\_ Netball courts at John Longmuir Playing Fields  
 05\_ McAndrew Park turf cricket pitch/wicket  
 06\_ Kitchener Park main oval

## 5.6 Open space connections

### 5.6.1 Open space connections objective

Enhance the walkability of towns and outlying communities through functional, safe and attractive open space connections, including developing and maintaining pathways, trails, recreation nodes, landscapes and streetscapes.

### 5.6.2 Open space connections strategy

Open space corridors are often comprised of waterway corridors or land provided for other infrastructure networks, such as water-cycle management/drainage, natural area protection and road/rail buffers. Where there are sufficient areas of useable space, free from hazards or major constraints, there is an opportunity to develop some basic facilities which can provide some valuable, however limited, recreation opportunity. These open space connections can contribute to the planned provision of parks and sport facilities, as well as facilitate active transport by providing walking and cycling connections.

Council is committed to providing long-term planning for pedestrian access and mobility, to promote walking and cycling, as desirable replacements for short trips, and to link public transport services and community facilities under its Pedestrian and Mobility Plan (PAMP). The PAMP is a strategic document that identifies the pedestrian network hierarchy and an associated pedestrian facilities action plan. The process to develop the Plan identified pedestrian routes within the study area that form a coherent pedestrian network and resulted in an action plan to ensure the routes are safe, convenient, coherent and meet current standards. In addition, Council has developed a Bike Plan to provide similar guidance for cycle routes and infrastructure. Both these plans have been identified for review and updating in the LSPS.

There are several key elements that contribute to creating successful open space connections. These include:

- minimum corridor widths of 15-50m from top of bank or high-water mark (subject to state government reviews)
- combination of footpaths, shared paths and bike paths developed, and access points provided
- pause points are provided for pedestrians offline of the pathway thoroughfare
- maximise road frontage and good visibility (50% desirable)
- informal use only (not sport training or competition)
- lighting and fencing provided, where necessary
- may have recreation nodes developed adjacent to create links
- may include natural areas adjacent to create links
- signage and pavement markings to denote shared, cycleway or pedestrian pathway use, and to provide direction and distance markers

- consider providing end-of-trip facilities (e.g. seats, standby areas, secure bicycle parking and picnic facilities) at common destinations or regular intervals along the journey.

### 5.6.3 Statutory context

Council's PAMP and Bike Plan outline the key legislative and planning framework for walk and cycle infrastructure. In summary, these include:

- Community Strategic Plan (part of the Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework)
- Gunnedah Development Control Plan 2012 (amended 2014)
- Gunnedah Economic Development Strategy 2014
- NSW Long Term Transport Master Plan 2012
- NSW Bike Plan 2010
- National Cycling Strategy 2011-2016.

Opportunities to implement walk and cycle pathways connections through developer contributions for new development should be fully explored by Council to ensure new neighbourhoods are connected from the outset.

Trail grading systems are used to categorise the relative technical difficulty of recreation trails. These systems are essential to assist trail users:

- make informed decisions
- encourage visitors to use trails that match their skill level
- manage risk and minimize injuries
- improve the outdoor experience for a wide variety of visitors
- aid in the planning of trails and trail networks.

A summary of trail classification and grading systems is provided as a reference tool in the Appendices.

### 5.6.4 Trends and influences

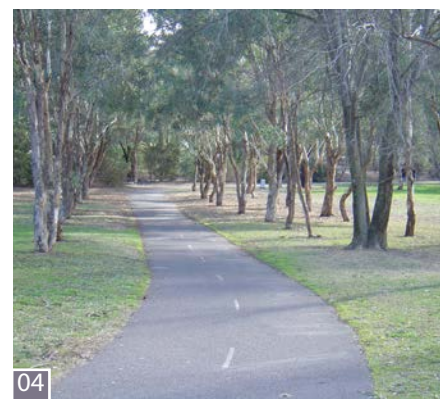
Better links between open spaces, pathways and trails, and other community assets and attractions will contribute to Council's overarching goals of creating desirable and liveable communities.

Recreational pathways and trails are used for non-motorised recreational pursuits such as walking, cycling, horse riding (and canoeing or kayaking in waterways). However, in some circumstances, trails can be designed for use by small wheeled vehicles such as motorised wheelchairs to enable access for people with mobility impairments. Gunnedah has a mix of settings between urban environments and natural areas, where pathways and trails vary significantly in establishment, surface treatment and maintenance.

A range of guidelines for pathway and trail planning, design and management have emerged over the past decade, are readily available online and can assist Council to meet growing expectations of the community relating to pathways and trails.

### 5.6.5 Key findings

- The community survey confirmed that walking, and to a lesser extent cycling, are popular activities participated in by a broad cross-section of the community. There is community demand for continued focus on improving and expanding the walk and cycle network (overlaid with the open space network) in both Gunnedah township and in outlying communities.
- People walk for different reasons, including for recreation and transport (to travel to school, services, work etc.) and therefore the surface of paths and trails needs to reflect the setting of the park or corridor, as well as the primary purpose of the facility, to contribute to the recreation experience people are expecting.
- Council has planned a network of pathways that created a continuous circuit around, through, and to key destinations. It is a high priority for this circuit to be completed, particularly the following routes:
  - » trail through the Enderby TSR, connecting the Namoi River path to Elgin Street
  - » pathway along Maitland Street, between Elgin and Carroll Streets
  - » pathway extending along Carroll and Pearson Streets, and left into Stock Road to connect with the existing pathway
  - » trail north-west along the Namoi River through the Woolshed Reserve and Saleyard TSR
  - » trail along the stormwater corridor extending from the river to the new highway overpass and South Street, Wandobah Reserve and View Street/ Wandobah Road and the Showground
  - » new connection from Wandobah Reserve and along the perimeter of McAndrew Park and through the easement to connect to Hopedale Avenue and the Golf Course
  - » new connections through residential development extending from Tallowood Drive
  - » new connection linking the golf course with Wattle Street, and beyond into the new residential area.
- A significantly longer trail along along the Namoi River, connecting with Cushans Reserve has been proposed and is worthy of consideration as a longer term project.
- Manage and maintain pathways and trails in accordance with the setting (natural vs developed).



- 01\_ Natural area walking trail approximately 60cm wide at Cushans Reserve
- 02\_ Trail gate and sign post with regulatory and warning signs
- 03\_ Trail head sign including trail grading, time estimate, distance
- 04\_ Bitumen shared pathway 2.5-3m wide with dash line to separate direction of travel

## 5.6.6 Strategic directions

Table 15: Prioritising of open space connection focus areas and their strategic directions

Focus	Strategic direction	Priority
Missing connections	<p>Encourage the community to undertake walking audits of their local neighbourhoods to identify barriers, issues and improvements. Ensure communication with residents is clear regarding how the information will be used, to clarify expectations and timeframes for identified issues, e.g. hazards vs programmed maintenance vs capital works.</p> <p>Several audit tools are readily available online, including via Heart Foundation Walking, Queensland Walks and Victoria Walks, for example. The Heart Foundation Walkability Checklist is divided into four sections:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• walker friendliness</li> <li>• comfort</li> <li>• convenience</li> <li>• safety.</li> </ul>	Ongoing program
Pathways and trails	<p>Ensure the identified LSPS action to review the Pedestrian and Mobility Plan (PAMP) and Bike Plan is undertaken in the short to medium term.</p> <p>Undertake a continual program of pathway and trail maintenance and upgrade within and through open spaces to support walking and bike riding. This includes implementing Council's Bike Plan and PAMP priorities and considering opportunities for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» design and surface treatment</li> <li>» pathway upgrade</li> <li>» lighting</li> <li>» seating and shelters</li> <li>» shade trees</li> <li>» landscaping.</li> </ul> <p>It is important to note that in August 2020, Council secured State government funding for four shared pathway projects creating a 3.97 km linear metre circuit, as well as improvements to the 2.16km Wandobah Road walking trail.</p>	High
Namoi River trail	<p>Create a continuous pathway along the Namoi River to allow people of all ages and ability to access and appreciate the natural values of the area. Ensure the creation of recreation nodes along the linear corridor to provide different recreation opportunities appealing to different age groups.</p>	High
CBD connections	<p>In addition to routes identified in the Bike Plan and PAMP, ensure that connected pathways are created to allow easy navigation of walking routes throughout the town centre extending down connecting streets and lanes to open space and parkland, particularly the Namoi River and Mullibah Lagoons.</p>	High

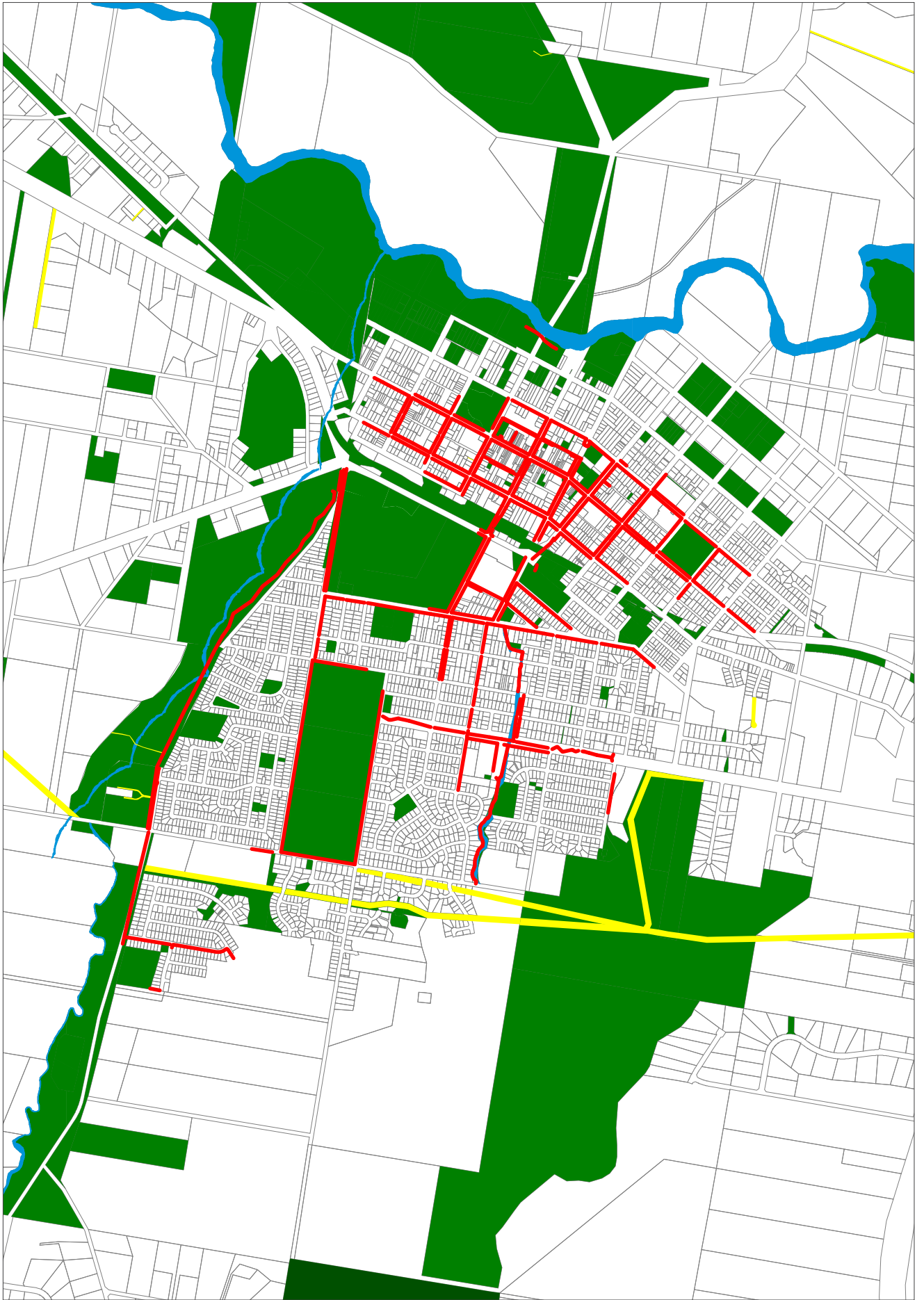


Fig. 28 Map of existing walk and cycle pathways (red), utility easements (yellow), waterways and stormwater (blue) and open space network (green) within Gunnedah township

focus areas



## 5.7 Biodiversity and nature

### 5.7.1 Biodiversity and nature objective

Coordinate and plan the approach to protecting, managing and enhancing natural areas to strengthen biodiversity and natural settings along linear corridors, recognised biodiversity corridors and nature reserves.

### 5.7.2 Biodiversity and nature strategy

Integrate the open space network with identified biodiversity corridors, the Gunnedah Koala Conservation Landscape Plan and stormwater management corridors to coordinate and plan approaches to protecting, managing and enhancing natural areas.

### 5.7.3 Statutory context

#### Commonwealth Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999

The Commonwealth Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act) aims to protect and manage nationally and internationally important flora, fauna, ecological communities and heritage places. These are defined in the EPBC Act as 'Matters of National Environmental Significance' and its provisions apply to listed key threatening processes, migratory species and nationally threatened species and ecological communities. Any actions on community land that may have a significant impact on one or more Matters of National Environmental Significance require consideration and potential assessment and approval under the EPBC Act. Council must also consider and implement actions in relevant recovery and threat abatement plans.

#### Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979

The Environmental Planning & Assessment Act 1979 (EP&A Act) regulates the use and development of all land within the LGA. Any use or development of land (including community land) must be consistent with applicable State Environmental Planning Policies (SEPP), Councils Local Environmental Plan (LEP) and relevant provisions within Councils Development Control Plan (DCP). Any change in the use (including both activities and development) of community land is subject to an environmental assessment under the applicable provisions of this Act.

#### National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974

Aboriginal objects and places are protected in NSW under the National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974 (NPW Act). Under the NPW Act, it is an offence to damage known Aboriginal heritage, unless the work is listed in the NPW Act as exempt. Locations of known Aboriginal heritage are recorded on the Aboriginal Heritage Information Management System (AHIMS), and is maintained by the State government. Heritage is categorised as either an Aboriginal object or place, and work that may affect places or objects require an Aboriginal Heritage Impact

Permit (AHIP) from the Department. It is an offence under the NPW Act to harm Aboriginal heritage that was not known (even if unintentionally) unless it can be demonstrated that due diligence was undertaken prior to any work, to determine whether such heritage might exist. The only exemption to this, is if the work is listed in the legislation as exempt. A Due Diligence Code of Practice for the Protection of Aboriginal Objects in NSW provides detailed guidance to assist comply with legislation and includes descriptions of common types of Aboriginal objects that may be encountered.

#### Water Management Act 2000

The Water Management Act (WM Act) provides for the sustainable and integrated management of the water sources of the State for the benefit of both present and future generations. It aims to:

- the fundamental health of our rivers and groundwater systems and associated wetlands, floodplains, estuaries has to be protected
- the management of water must be integrated with other natural resources such as vegetation, soils and land
- to be properly effective, water management must be a shared responsibility between the government and the community
- water management decisions must involve consideration of environmental, social, economic, cultural and heritage aspects
- social and economic benefits to the state will result from the sustainable and efficient use of water.

#### Water Management (General) Regulation 2018

The Water Management (General) Regulation 2018 specifies procedural and technical matters to administer the WM Act, and specifies exemptions from licence and approval requirements. Controlled activities are typically carried out on waterfront land, and defined as a controlled activity in the WM Act. Waterfront land includes the bed of any river, lake or estuary, and the land within 40 metres of the river banks, lake shore or estuary mean high water mark (MHWM). As a public authority, Council may be exempt for activities in accordance with the WM Act and regulations.

### 5.7.4 Trends

Participation in outdoor recreation activities that are self-directed are increasing and include mountain biking, bush walking, bird watching, kayaking and nature appreciation. Increased environmental awareness is contributing to an increasing momentum to 'return to nature'. Residents of Gunnedah Shire have ample opportunities to experience nature.

Water sensitive urban design (WSUD) is a land use planning and engineering design approach that improves the aesthetic and recreation appeal of stormwater, groundwater and wastewater management

and water supply. NSW Transport and Maritime Services has developed a Water sensitive urban design guideline to provide guidance, and Stormwater NSW has additional resources to support WSUD.

### 5.7.5 Key findings

- the community survey confirmed that a large proportion of the community are seeking additional opportunities to access waterways and banks for various recreation pursuits
- maintenance programs for natural areas require a different approach to other parks, with priority given to flora and fauna, rather than people
- stormwater management corridors provide opportunities for revegetation and enhanced biodiversity, as well as linear corridors for potential walk and cycle trails or pathways.

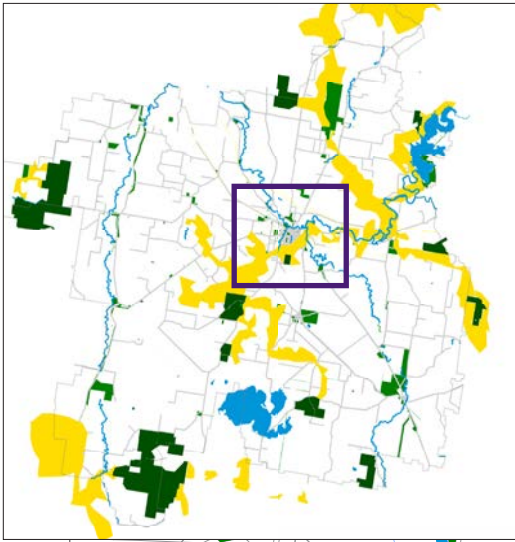
### 5.7.6 Strategic directions

Table 16: Prioritising of biodiversity and nature focus areas and their strategic directions

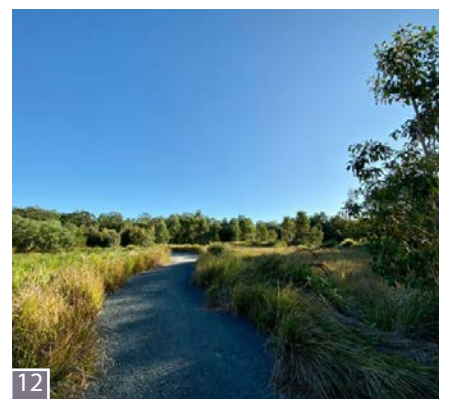
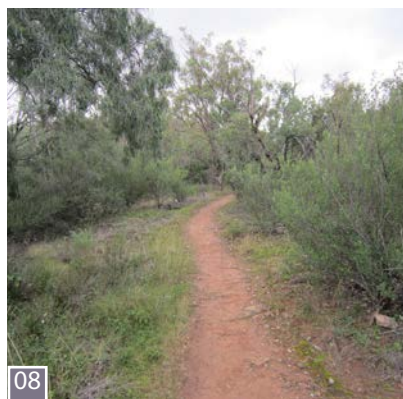
Focus	Strategic direction	Priority
Planning for biodiversity	Review existing, or develop new Revegetation Plans and develop Biodiversity Action Plans that outline specific projects, plant species and biodiversity initiatives. Plans should be developed for higher level biodiversity sites including the Namoi River, Mullibah Reserve, Porcupine Reserve and Cushans Reserve.	High
Plant species	Review Council's existing Street Tree Plan and develop a guide for planting species within biodiversity sites to reflect climatic and soil conditions as well as site character and to assist in the management of pest species.	High
Biodiversity related planning	Implement directions and actions included in the Gunnedah Koala Conservation Landscape Plan 2016 and other relevant documents that relate to green infrastructure and biodiversity.	High
Biodiversity corridors	<p>Develop connected landscape corridors that provide opportunities for animal and insect movement, particularly in relation to bird species. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Investigating the potential to develop biodiversity bridges that connect isolated biodiversity areas, giving particular consideration to:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Rail corridors and greenways</li> <li>o Namoi River corridor including Cushans Reserve</li> <li>o Wandobah Reserve extending into the stormwater corridor to the Namoi River</li> <li>o Porcupine Reserve and the biodiversity corridor identified extending along the southern flank of Gunnedah township to the Namoi River</li> <li>o Roads connected to biodiversity corridors</li> </ul> </li> <li>&gt; Retaining and creating habitat within corridors and connected open spaces.</li> <li>&gt; Encouraging the community to provide similar levels of biodiversity in private open spaces.</li> </ul>	Ongoing

Gunnedah biodiversity corridors

- Open space network
- Biodiversity corridors
- Green urban corridors
- Waterways



focus areas



- 01\_ Mullibah Lagoon sign and park in foreground
- 02\_ Illegal vehicle use and damage at Mullibah Lagoons on mown parkland
- 03\_ Natural area maintenance regimes need to minimise mowing and trimming
- 04\_ Wandobah Reserve defunct fencing and lighting

- 05\_ Wandobah Reserve park and regulatory signs
- 06\_ Wandobah Reserve is a large open space corridor with native vegetation
- 07\_ Park residential development in an identified biodiversity corridor, on the eastern flank of Gunnedah
- 08\_ Porcupine Reserve would benefit from increased management of its natural vegetation and walking trails

- 09\_ Stairs on the walking trail at Porcupine Reserve
- 10\_ Rainwater harvesting
- 11\_ Treatment system for urban stormwater flow path
- 12\_ Integrated path and stormwater corridor with native planting

## 5.8 Public realm

Delivering good urban and landscape design outcomes in the public realm requires an in depth understanding of four key contributing factors:

- site characteristics and parameters (i.e. physical attributes including extent of works, existing and proposed uses, infrastructure needs, existing conditions and any other opportunities, restrictions or limitations)
- the community and various user groups, including asset owner/s, key stakeholders and tourists
- design expectations and desirable outcomes
- budget and time.

These factors influence the scale, form, function and on-the-ground attributes that are necessary to deliver a high-quality and successful outcome. These considerations apply to all types of public realm - from natural areas, parks and open spaces to more urban settings, such as town squares and streetscapes.

It is critical for the design approach to holistically consider the very different needs between pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles; where the objective is achieving balanced provisions between each user group with safety being paramount.

The practical aspects of designing in the public realm setting should equally consider accessibility, amenity, user comfort and experience. It is essential for a sustainable future to appropriately respond to climatic conditions, heritage assets, community values, and other distinguishing qualities that are unique to that place. Collectively, this ensures a well-integrated, functional and enhanced outcome can be achieved for the enjoyment of all.

The information provided in this section is an overview on guiding principles that can assist Council and the Gunnedah community in how they approach future beautification works in the public realm, with a specific focus on streetscape design and town/village entrance statements.

“Streets are a key element of the public realm. People-friendly and safer streets with direct connections to cities and centres will promote walking, cycling and public transport use.

Design excellence for great places therefore starts with a public realm and open spaces that are safe and accessible.”

- Greater Sydney Commission for Greater Sydney Region Plan, 2018

### 5.8.1 Statutory context

At a governance level, the NSW government has a suite of policies and strategic documents that provide guidance on best practices for public realm and streetscape design. The documents listed below provide a range of objectives and targets that concertedly seeks to enhance the urban landscape environment across NSW. They also provide technical guidance, minimum standards and desirable levels of service.

Relevant strategic documents include (but are not limited to) the following:

- State and Regional Strategic Plans (e.g. NSW State Plan 2021)
- Better Placed (2016), Evaluating Good Design, Implementing Good Design, Aligning Movement and Place, and the following draft documents: Greener Places and Urban Design for Regional NSW - all published by the Government Architect NSW
- Future Transport 2056 (2018), Connecting to the Future: Our 10 Year Blueprint (2020) and Improving Transport Choice, Guideline for Planning and Development - all published by Transport for NSW
- Local Character and Place Guideline and Planning Guidelines for Walking and Cycling by Department of Planning, Industry and Environment
- case studies published on the Healthy Active by Design website by the Heart Foundation
- Street Tree Design Guidelines and NSW Healthy Planning Action Resource No. 2 : Creating Walkable Neighbourhoods - both published by Active Living NSW.



Revitalising public spaces can present many new opportunities and benefits to a town and its community. Changes in social, environmental and financial trends should be considered when designing for public realm beautification works and includes the following contributing factors:



### Transport options

There is increasing public interest in more efficient and sustainable modes of transport, such as public transport, electric vehicles, bicycles, scooters and walking.



### Walkability

Increase the walkability of places by providing good access to parks and civic spaces that are supported by attractive and functional neighbourhood facilities and services. Walkability can be enhanced further by being accessible by foot and bike.



### Smart cities

Technology, although constantly changing, can be introduced to the public realm to enhance user experience and operations for governing authorities. Examples of smart city technology include:

- providing free WiFi in public spaces
- using smart signals that give additional time to pedestrians at crossings
- providing public electric charging points to facilitate the use of more low-emission vehicles
- planning for a potential future with driverless vehicles, which will undoubtedly change how traditional streets operate
- installing smarter meters for managing waste and public lighting systems. The smart meters report back to a centralised data collection system and provides updates to the operator on waste levels, i.e. sensors placed within rubbish bins can be used to monitor levels of waste and streamline collection services. In terms of street or park lights, those that are on sensors can be triggered by motion, thereby reducing energy demand when no one is using the space.



### Changing workplace behaviours

The impacts of changing customer behaviour and business operations, particularly as a result of COVID-19, is affecting main street retailers and the commercial leasing market. A strong transition to online shopping and operations is placing less reliance on traditional “9 to 5” hours in favour of home delivery and more flexible work arrangements, such as shared work spaces and growing trends towards working from home.



### Modernisation of vehicles

The changing size and type of vehicles in Australia is seeing a general trend towards ownership of large SUV and 4WD vehicles, particularly in regional areas. According to Toyota Australia, there is an increased interest in regional areas for hybrid pick-ups and four-wheel drives.

### 5.8.3 Other influential trends

There are many contributing factors that can influence the design and performance of public spaces. At a basic level, design and constructed outcomes must adhere to relevant legislation, building and development codes, and Australian Standards.

As previously described, there are several main factors that generally apply when planning public realm beautification works. These include the following:

- celebrate historical and cultural attributes
- incorporate local materials and plants to highlight, complement and reflect local character
  - » whole-of-life maintenance costs should be a key driver when selecting hard and softscape components and the type of infrastructure/ furniture introduced within the space
- public safety is critical and cannot be compromised, hence Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles should be applied to the design of the space
- ensure there is clear delineation between public and private space
- design for human scale and cater for a diversity of users, abilities and activities
- striving for 'shared use' outcomes, where possible, in streetscape settings
- integrate greenery wherever possible
- engage the community in the design and activation of the space.

In addition to the above, there are other trends and influential factors that should be considered when planning for public realm works. Often, this reflects current social, environmental or physical trends. For example, the COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the importance of open space for the community, demonstrated by the fact that visitation to parks and natural areas near Sydney doubled during 2020.

The social and physical implications of COVID-19 has highlighted the growing number of pressures that communities were already struggling with, particularly in terms of the form, function and quality of streets and public spaces and the need for pedestrian prioritisation and improved public environments.

COVID-19 will likely be a global issue for the foreseeable future and it is possible that the new restrictions and recommended personal hygiene practices and social distancing measures that have been put in place may become normal aspects of public life.

Accommodating the physical aspects of these recommendations into the public realm will need to consider outcomes such as:

- providing footpaths wide enough to allow for 1.5m social distancing between individuals
- providing additional space on verges for shops that create high demand and long queues
- increasing the footprint of footpath dining zones to accommodate a safe distance between tables
- frequently cleaning commonly touched surfaces such as parking meters, handrails, seats and rubbish bins.

Other trends to consider into the future include:

- population growth and decline
  - » whilst many cities are experiencing rapid growth, many regional towns are experiencing a decline. The region surrounding Gunnedah has experienced a decline in residents over the past decade, however, Gunnedah township continues to grow.<sup>2</sup>
- the rising rate of obesity
  - » affecting nearly half of NSW adults and almost a quarter of children, obesity is costing an estimated \$19 billion in both lost productivity (\$2.7bn) and lost wellbeing (\$16.3bn).
  - » providing walkable environments that also encourage cycling and other alternative transport options will help encourage individuals to use those other modes of travel over vehicles and incidentally experience exercise, thereby contributing to reduced physical and mental health issues.
- an aging population
  - » Australia's aging population is a well known fact and, therefore, the public realm must aim to be equitable to all and cater to the physical needs of an aging demographic. This includes continuous and good quality footpaths, integration of rest points at regular intervals (particularly on roads with steep grades the use of suitable street furniture), supporting people with disabilities by providing convenient and dedicated on-street parking bays and drop-off zones.
- equity and deprivation
  - » residents living in regional areas are often impacted by distance to and frequency of community-based services such as public transport. The young and elderly are often dependent on alternative transportation options (such as rail, bus and bicycles) as these members of the community are often less likely to drive or own personal vehicles.

1 [www.smh.com.au/environment/conservation/good-for-the-soul-visits-to-nsw-national-parks-soar-amid-covid-19-20200805-p55iu8.html](http://www.smh.com.au/environment/conservation/good-for-the-soul-visits-to-nsw-national-parks-soar-amid-covid-19-20200805-p55iu8.html)

2 [www.nvi.com.au/story/6363864/regions-centres-boom-while-small-towns-and-villages-face-rural-decline/](http://www.nvi.com.au/story/6363864/regions-centres-boom-while-small-towns-and-villages-face-rural-decline/)

## 5.8.4 Streetscapes

What makes a great street?<sup>1</sup>

The following characteristics are typical of a well-designed and successful main streets.

### Offer a superior pedestrian experience

- Encourage walking, browsing, lingering and socialising - main streets must be highly walkable to succeed.
- Consider pedestrian needs (i.e. footpath width wide enough to accommodate all users and uses, convenient and safe crossings, shade, and legible shopfronts with active uses such as cafes, retailers, etc.)
- Reduce traffic volumes and speed in high-use pedestrian traffic areas. This may include reducing the number of traffic lanes to make the main street feel more intimate and human-scaled. It also reduces the distance pedestrians have to walk over crossings.
- Maintain clear sightlines between vehicles, pedestrians and cyclists by ensuring landscaping and street furniture elements are appropriately positioned.
- Ensure entrapment zones are designed out. Consider the safety of individuals with special needs or potentially in vulnerable situations (e.g. women, children, persons with disabilities, and elderly).
- Avoid unnecessary obstructions and visual clutter (i.e. proliferation of signs, service pits and power lines).
- Ensure there is good drainage, lighting and security infrastructure.
- Integrate accessibility infrastructure, such as tactile indicators and contrasting colours.
- Manage anti-social behaviour through considerate design, layout and activation rather than exclusionary furniture or restricting access (unless necessary for public safety).

### Density is OK but at a human and regional town scale

- Moderate density is necessary for a main street to be viable, however, should not be overwhelming.
- Encourage a mixture of building heights and articulated frontages to create a dynamic edge to the street.
- Setbacks should be used to character buildings and features.

### Promote and support local businesses

- Encourage a mix of retailers, hospitality outlets, service providers, and arts/community/entertainment based activities (e.g. galleries, museums, library, etc.) along the main street.
- Ensure that main street businesses have adequate on-street parking provision but ensure there is ample space to accommodate a streetscape that buffers walkers from vehicles.
- Ensure that 'placemaking' attributes are authentically represented, particularly in terms of architecture, public art, furniture and materials selection. Historical storytelling helps with the success of a main street, particularly in terms of boosting the local economy by stimulating tourism.

### Celebrate natural, cultural and historical assets

- Maintain greenery within the town centre that is distinctive and functional (such as street trees for shade). Landscaping helps to create amenity, activity and comfort. Ensure materials are robust and affordable.
- Provide spaces / nodes that cater to rest, interpretation and gathering. A civic space at the heart of town encourages community pride and provides a space for events.
- Use locally sourced, high-quality and place-appropriate landscape and urban design treatments.









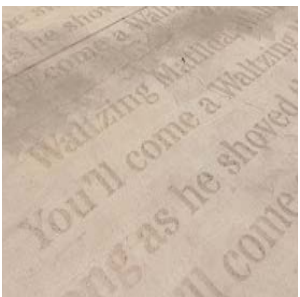




### Promote liveable lifestyle choices

- Encourage walking from local residential areas by providing shady, accessible and continuous paths.
- Cater to cycling as an alternative to driving by providing dedicated cycle infrastructure.
- Consider mixed use developments for any new developments within close proximity of or on the main street. The integration of residential accommodation above commercial/retail shopfronts on the ground level allows for 24-hour passive surveillance and can stimulate activity at quieter times of the day/week.
- Promote good wayfinding by providing visual cues, signs and maps to key destinations and public spaces.
- Employ high standards of maintenance (particularly devoid of rubbish and graffiti).

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.placemakers.com/2016/12/13/what-makes-a-good-main-street-work/>



Below are photographic examples of main streets that have been beautified in recent years and successfully introduced characteristics of “great streets.”

WALKABLE	 <p>Wide footpaths allow multiple uses on the verge.</p>	 <p>Pedestrian prioritisation and traffic calming with a raised “wombat” pedestrian crossing.</p>		
	SHADE	 <p>Structures provided where trees cannot grow.</p>	 <p>Reducing the Urban Heat Island effect with large canopy trees providing shade over footpaths and</p>	 <p>Integrated art opportunity.</p>
NIGHT-TIME ACTIVATION		 <p>Street tree lighting installations.</p>	 <p>Catenary lighting system over a shared laneway.</p>	 <p>Architectural lighting within furniture.</p>
	ART, HISTORY AND CULTURE	 <p>Public art provided within the town centre.</p>	 <p>Cultural references in pavement.</p>	 <p>Storytelling through materials and interpretive</p>
INNOVATION		 <p>An outdoor public art gallery.</p>	 <p>Consolidating lights, sound and CCTV onto</p>	 <p>Misters provided within a town</p>

focus areas

### 5.8.5 Town/village entry statements

Signage (and other urban and landscape design treatments) are often provided within road reserves to mark significant moments along a journey. A common term for these installations are town or village “entry statements.”

Entry statements inform motorists when they are entering (or leaving) a place. They can also be used to highlight proximity to unique features or assets within the area (such as key tourism destinations). A place name and/or “welcome” message is typically used to identify border crossings (at either a state, regional or local level) or to highlight a significant asset or destination located nearby.

Given that most entry statements are located within the road reserve, there are several road safety standards that must be considered and ratified before being installed. Contributing design factors include the road’s classification and asset ownership - who has jurisdiction over the road (i.e. federal, state, or local government). These factors determine where in the signage hierarchy the pre-approved signage type sits and what other infrastructure and messaging is permitted. The varying types of town entry signs are discussed further in the following section, including references to relevant standards and design requirements and exemplars of similar signage to provide context and recommendations around potential “look and feel” for future signs in the Gunnedah Shire.

#### What is the purpose of an entry statement?

Entry statements help individuals to navigate their surrounding environment and can also give the first impression of a place (particularly in terms of its history, cultural heritage, community and natural assets).

These statements are an opportunity to promote and celebrate the local area. Incorporating place-specific attributes into the concept for the sign and statement is desirable to ensure the uniqueness of the place is translated, as often the viewer has only seconds to take in the sign/statement. The following design considerations apply to entry statements:

- What is the appropriate size or scale for the statement?
- Is the sign part of a “signage family” and is therefore categorised by hierarchy and consistent use of motif, treatments, fonts, etc.?
- Is a message to be provided (e.g. logo, name, tourism slogan, etc.)?
- What types of soft landscaping and other urban design treatments are to be used?
- Is there a standard colour and/or materials palettes to be used?
- Is it an appropriate opportunity to integrate art or other artistic elements?

#### Guiding principles for signage

- In order for the signs to be clear and legible, graphic and text standards apply. Refer to the relevant authority for guidance.
  - » this may require graphic design assistance to ensure that a high contrast is achieved between text and any background colour or image. There is likely to be a suite of preferred font types, sizes, and lettering expectations (e.g. upper- and lower-case). Refer to the relevant authority for further information or specifications.
- Language used on the signs is to be in English, however, these signs are also an opportunity to acknowledge the traditional landowners, the Gunnedah people of the Kamilaroi Tribe. Reference to the traditional Gomeroi (or Kamilaroi) place name should be considered.
- Pictograms/symbols may be used (if appropriate and in accordance with relevant authority standards).
  - » generally, the use of pictograms is needed to communicate with a broad audience and typically identify common services and facilities (such as national parks, caravan parks, rest areas, regional pathways or tracks, playgrounds and parks, public amenities, local facilities and services, visitor information centres, public transport nodes, village centres or main street, police station, hospital, and post office).

#### Other considerations

- Where possible, avoid installing signs facing due north. This will help to minimise the effect of sun exposure and UV bleaching.
- For custom signs, consider the use of natural forms and incorporate a mix of locally sourced materials with place-appropriate references to the region.
- All custom signage designs will require the approval of the relevant authority and Council’s engineering and asset management sections.
  - » certification should be obtained upon completion of construction/installation.
- As new signs are developed and implemented, it is important to remove all previous superseded ones at the same time. This will help to minimise confusion and ensure there is consistency across the region, as well as present a well-maintained road environment.
- Responsibility and authorisation for the installation of road signs is vested with the roads authority which controls the road – either Transport for NSW or local Council.
  - » Transport for NSW are responsible for classified roads.
  - » Gunnedah Shire is responsible for unclassified roads.

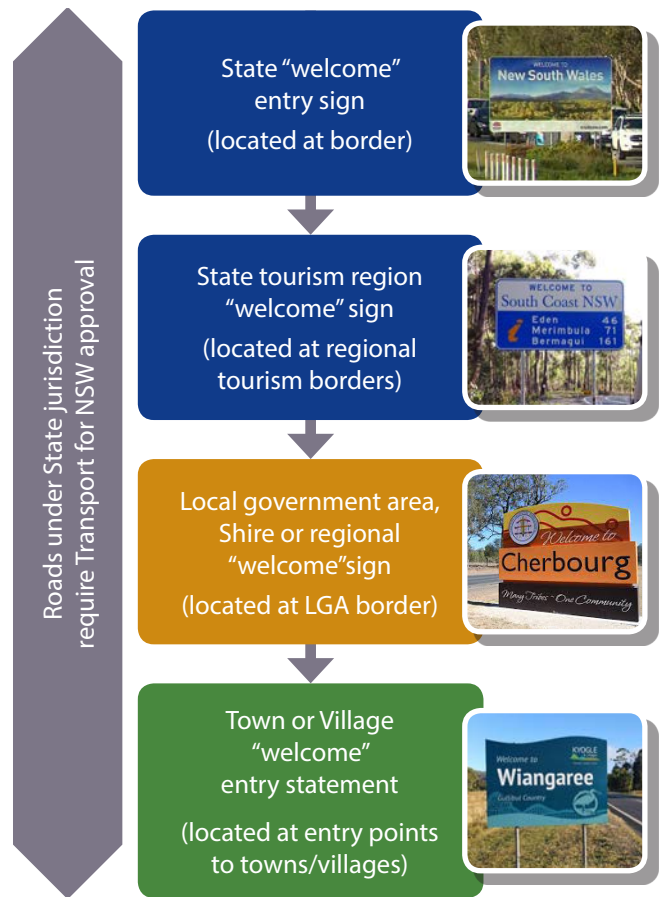
**Typical signage family hierarchy**

A signage family provides a hierarchy for signage types permitted for use. These are scaled between state and local level and motorist or pedestrian point of view.

In the absence of Gunnedah Shire having a Regional Wayfinding Strategy, the following signage descriptions are provided as a high-level guide. Where relevant, Transport for NSW signage requirements have been noted. This list is not exhaustive, rather it itemises the signage types considered most applicable to the Shire. Other signage types might apply, however, may not have been listed.

**Relevant legislation/standards**

- Tourist Signposting - Destination NSW and Transport for NSW Roads & Maritime Services (2012)
- Guide Signposting - Roads and Traffic Authority NSW (2007)
- Installation and Maintenance of Signs - Roads and Traffic Authority NSW (2010)
- AS172 Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices
- AS 1743 Road signs - Specifications
- AS2899 Public Information Symbol Signs
- AS2156.1 Walking Tracks Classification and Signage.



Signage family hierarchy on roads in NSW.



Example of a standard Destination



Gunnedah Shire's new regional welcome sign.



Example of a double-sided town entry







Example of integrated art within a regional entry sign.



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Table 17: Signage hierarchy and details on implementation.

Sub-categories	Applicable Standard/s	Additional Information	Indicative Price Range
Regional Tourism Signs			
<p>This sign is used to introduce visitors to the “Destination NSW” tourism region.</p> <p>These signs also identify the locations of Level 1 or 2 accredited visitor information centres.</p>	<p>Standard signage type is G11-212 (see example below)</p>  <p>Refer to sections 2.4.2 and 3.10.1 of Destination NSW and Transport Roads &amp; Maritime Services 2012 guide entitled Tourist Signposting.</p>	<p>The Destination NSW tourism region for Gunnedah is classified “New England North West.”</p> <p>The “New Destination Network” for Gunnedah is “Country and Outback NSW” as classified in the Destination NSW strategy from 2017 entitled Destination Networks: Driving Growth of the Visitor Economy in Regional NSW.</p>	<p>\$50,000 - \$100,000</p>
Local government area / regional “Welcome” signs			
<p>This sign is used to welcome road users to a local government area when passing through the main gateways into the region.</p> <p>These signs have considerable flexibility in terms of their design. Typically, they are developed to reflect the variety of elements that make the Shire special and unique.</p> <p>These signs must avoid attempts to guide traffic, distract motorists, or imitate any other sign type.</p>	<p>Standard signage type is G11-213, however, these signs can be custom (as per the examples below).</p>  <p>The following conditions will apply to the design:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The name of the place is to be used, not the regional name.</li> <li>• Signs may include logos and other text. It may use any range of colours providing they do not look like replica directional, regulatory, or warning signs. It must not contain photographic images.</li> <li>• The sign must show a permanent message (i.e. no digital signs permitted).</li> <li>• It must not list directions.</li> <li>• It must be located outside the clear zone.</li> <li>• No signs of this type are permitted on motorways.</li> </ul>	<p>The installation of “welcome” signs must only be undertaken following a process of consultation between Transport for NSW and the Shire.</p> <p>For sign design criteria and examples, refer to section 3.10 of Destination NSW and Transport Roads &amp; Maritime Services 2012 guide entitled Tourist Signposting.</p>	<p>\$50,000 - \$100,000+</p> <p>(cost could be higher for custom signs. Influencing factors are the type, size and quantity of custom-made signs)</p>

Sub-categories	Applicable Standard/s	Additional Information	Indicative Price Range
<b>Town entry signs</b>			
<p>This type of sign is used to welcome visitors to individual towns, villages, or communities.</p>	<p>Standard town entry sign is a G6-1 or a G6-1-10 (see example below).</p>  <p>Examples of custom town entry signs below.</p>  <p>The following conditions apply:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The essential elements of the G6-1 sign must be maintained (i.e. black on white, 180mm letters in series D or E) in each patch.</li> <li>• Other colours for other legend or background use is acceptable, however, excludes the use of red or yellow.</li> <li>• Any fonts can be used.</li> <li>• Cannot be erected on motorways. See section 2.4.2 of Destination NSW and Transport Roads &amp; Maritime Services 2012 guide entitled Tourist Signposting.</li> </ul>	<p>This is an opportunity for the signage design to be developed with community input.</p> <p>The enhanced town entry sign (G6-1-10) allows for the local government's logo to be placed on the sign. NOTE: if Gunnedah is not classified a focal point, then the enhanced town entry sign may be used at Council's cost.</p> <p>If a tourist message (specific to a suburb, town or route) is desired then the sign must comply with Tourist Signposting guidelines, use a sign with a brown background, and be funded by the Council.</p>	<p>\$25,000 - \$50,000</p>
<b>Park, open space and sporting facility signs</b>			
<p>Park entry sign</p> <p>These signs typically mark the entry point/s to public open spaces and community places of interest, including memorials, cemeteries, showgrounds and sporting parks.</p>		<p>Standardisation of park name signs is at the discretion of Council. They can be customised and installed at the arrival point to a place or to denote a natural or recreation asset that merits a unique type of sign. Locations often have environmental, cultural or historical importance, which lends itself to a place-making style of approach and outcome (in terms of signage design).</p>	<p>\$200+ (cost is dependent on the type, size and quantity of a custom-made signs)</p>

focus areas

Sub-categories	Applicable Standard/s	Additional Information	Indicative Price Range
<p><b>Regulatory signs</b></p> <p>A range of authoritative information presented on signage to advertise acceptable terms of use within a space and can include references to local laws, regulations or restrictions. These conditions apply to the specific reserve.</p>		<p>These are typically standard signs managed by Council (or other authority), which provides clear, legible and concise messages, often accompanied by pictograms. Other considerations include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• locating the sign with or within proximity to a park/facility entry sign</li> <li>• warning signs installed adjacent to the location or feature that poses a potential risk (e.g. flood zone).</li> </ul>	<p>Cost is dependent on the type, size and quantity of a custom-made signs.</p>
<b>Wayfinding mechanisms for open space network</b>			
<p><b>Directional signs</b></p> <p>Directional signage is typically placed at an arrival/entry point to help visitors to navigate the surrounding environment and provide direction to other places of interest.</p> <p>The target audience is typically pedestrians and cyclists.</p>	<p>Directional signage can include maps of the trail or places of interest and show links to surrounding walking and cycling networks.</p> <p>Examples of directional park signs:</p> 	<p>These signs often indicate key destinations by name, direction of travel and an approximate distance and travel time (by foot and/or cycle), as well as, a “you are here” site map.</p> <p>Directional signs may also provide directions to nearby community facilities using commonly known infographics, such as toilet, park or camping symbols. They may also display regulations and permitted uses.</p>	<p>Cost is dependent on the type, size and quantity of a custom-made signs.</p>
<p><b>Path markers</b></p> <p>Path markers can provide permanent visual cues that mark trails and paths with numbers, distance and directions. Common path markers include blade signs or surface treatments.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider fixtures: either free-standing or affixed to an existing object (e.g. boulder)</li> <li>• Must be highly visible, robust and unobtrusive.</li> <li>• Ensure that each marker displays appropriate information which is scaled in relation to the marker.</li> </ul>	<p>Cost is dependent on the type, size and quantity of a custom-made signs.</p>

focus areas



01 | ARRIVING FROM THE EAST: Oxley Highway



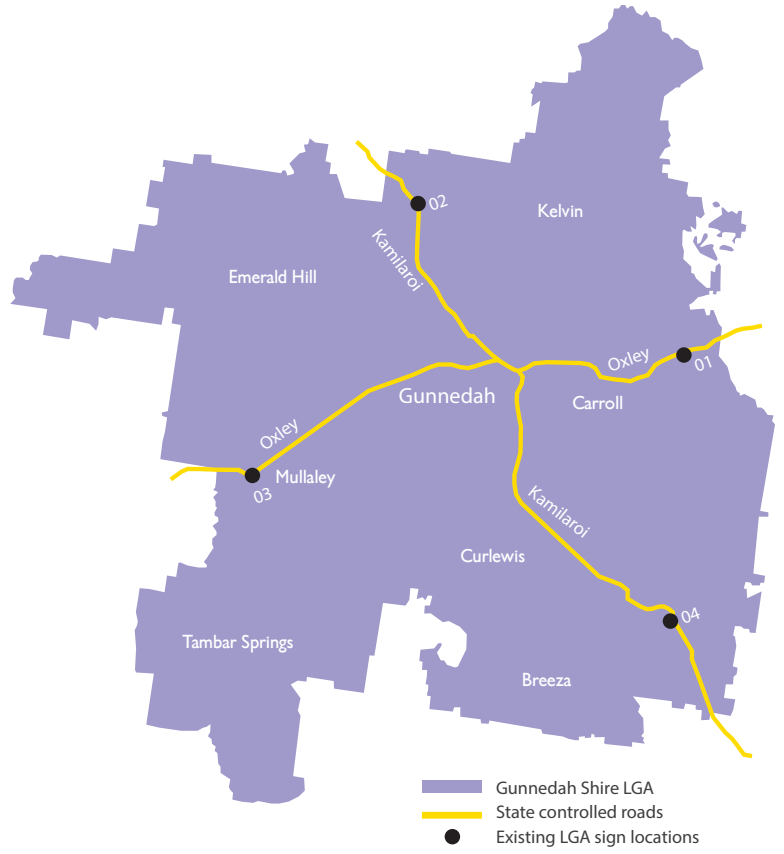
02 | ARRIVING FROM THE NORTH: Kamilaroi Highway



03 | ARRIVING FROM THE WEST: Oxley Highway



04 | ARRIVING FROM THE SOUTH: Kamilaroi Highway



● Entry sign location



focus areas

## Curlewis

Entry signs from the highway and at Voca Road (see reference images).



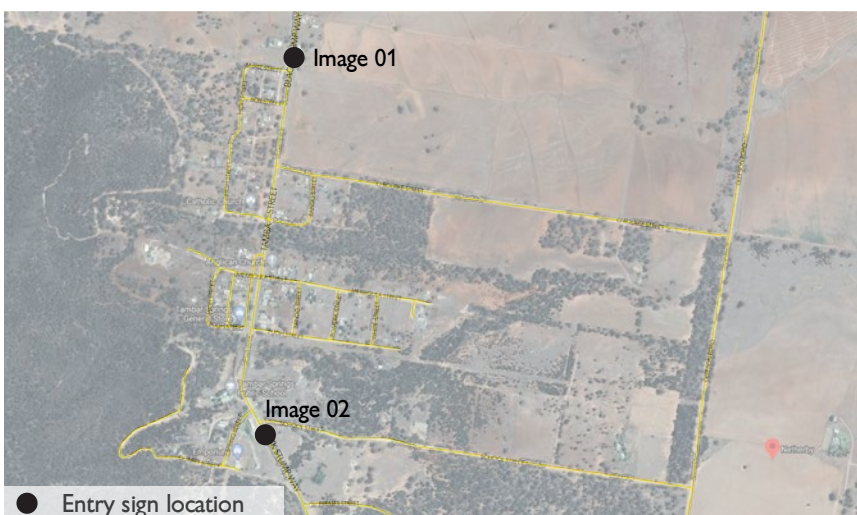
## Mullaley

Entry statements to this township are situated alongside the Oxley Highway (see reference images).



## Tambar Springs

Two entry statements alongside Black Stump Way placed north and south of the township (see reference images).



## GunnedahShire



## Carroll

Entry signage is located at either end of the Carroll community, alongside Oxley Highway (see reference images).



## Emerald Hill

Data regarding signage for Emerald Hill was not able to be confirmed.



## Kelvin

Data regarding signage for Kelvin was not able to be confirmed.



focus areas

## 5.8.6 Public Realm Opportunities

Existing conditions: Gunnedah town centre

### Location and climate

- Approximately 450 km from Sydney, 310 km from Newcastle, 655 km from Brisbane, and just over 1,000 km from Melbourne<sup>6</sup>, making Gunnedah an accessible day-trip and long weekend destination.
- Gunnedah is situated between the tropical and temperate climate zones, and therefore experiences very hot summers and to cool winters.
  - » extremes exceed 35 degrees in summer and averages 2.9 to 16.8 degrees in winter.
- Average annual rainfall across the shire is between 500 and 600 millimetres, predominantly falling in the summer (43% falling in the four months between November to February)<sup>1</sup>.

### Road reserve, arrangement and provisions

- Conadilly Street is a 30.0m wide corridor - a common trait of Australian regional towns is the history of wide streets, which is thought to have been due to the length of horses and carriages parked on either side of the roadway.
- Currently 40 and 50 km/hour speed limits posted. Business centre portion is 40km/hr.
- A centre line is marked. Medians are only provided at signalised intersections.
- Reverse-in, 45 degree angled parking to verges.
- Continuous footpaths provided on both verges.
- No dedicated on-road cycle lanes.
- Mid-block zebra crossings are provided, which link publicly accessible alleys.
- Regular provision of street furniture (i.e. bollards, tree guards, seats and rubbish bins).

### Character

- The town hall clocktower is a dominant feature on the main street viewed from most directions.
- Existing streetscape character reflects that of many regional Australian towns in terms of its scale, built form (height and architectural styles) and the function of the street. Typically, regional town centres have two traffic lanes (a single lane in each direction) with on-street car parking to the verges, as is the case in Gunnedah township.
- Heritage facades are in good condition and help to define the retail portion of the town centre.
- Footpaths are predominantly finished with clay pavers in a double row, stacked border and Herringbone arrangement for the footpath finishes.
- Brick landscape walls are installed as pedestrian restriction barriers at roundabouts.

- Awning cover over footpaths is intermittent.
- Colour palettes consist primarily of dark red, light brown and dark green hues.

### Street trees

- Street trees are consistently planted along the street at regular spacings. Single tree plantings create a "boulevard" style of streetscape.
- Mixed species have been planted, which include Platanus or "Plane" trees, Eucalypt species, Canary Island date palms, Cocos Island palms and Grevillea species; of which, several of these latter species are memorial trees historically planted to honour Australian servicemen and women.
- Some street trees are planted within the road pavement in on-street parking areas, which may be a safety risk and hindering the tree's growth.
- Some street tree species are deciduous, which is a common trait for regional areas with a temperate climates, which experiences cold winters. The deciduous trees allow warmth and light through to the street in winter.
- Nearby is the 8th Division Memorial Avenue, lined with 45 flowering Ironbark gums planted in 1957 to honour those who died in and returned from World War I. Brass plaques are placed beneath each tree.<sup>2</sup>

### Wayfinding

- There is minimal provision of entry statements in the approach to Gunnedah town centre. There is therefore an opportunity for new entry statements to be installed to mark the main entries into town. In some instances, these could potentially be integrated within new bypass works.
- The main street lacks clarity around the boundaries to the start and end of the retail core for the town centre.

### Public art

- The award winning Rainbow Serpent Water Feature installed at the entrance to the Cultural Precinct in Chandos Street.
- There are existing bronze Miners Memorial and Dorothea Mackellar statues.
- Recently, four murals have been painted by local artists in the alleyway between Conadilly and Little Conadilly Streets.
- There are several silo/tower murals in the area.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.visitgunnedah.com.au/index.php/welcome/fast-facts#:~:text=With%20Gunnedah%20being%20situated%20between,2.9%20degrees%20to%2016.8%20degrees.>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.gardenhistorysociety.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/Avenues-of-Honour-sorted-by-states-2017-update.pdf>

# Public realm beautification: What are the opportunities for Gunnedah township?



## LEGEND

### Movement

- Existing rail line & station
- Existing cycle path (off-road)
- Proposed cycle link
- Existing on-street parking
- Potential links to open space







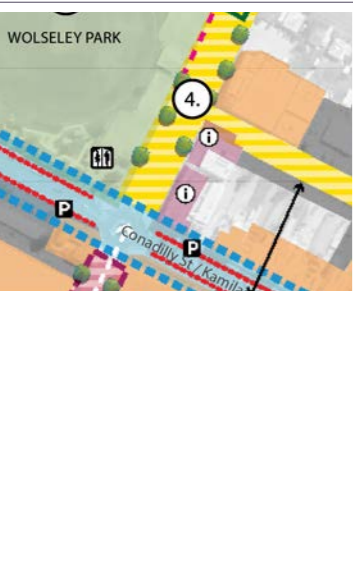

### Key Uses & Destinations (existing)

- Civic & support services
- Educational institution
- Hotel / accommodation
- Mid-block link (through alleyways)
- Open space & recreation
- Pedestrian zebra crossing
- Public art / cultural or historical feature
- Public car parking (off-street)
- Public toilets
- Retailers & hospitality


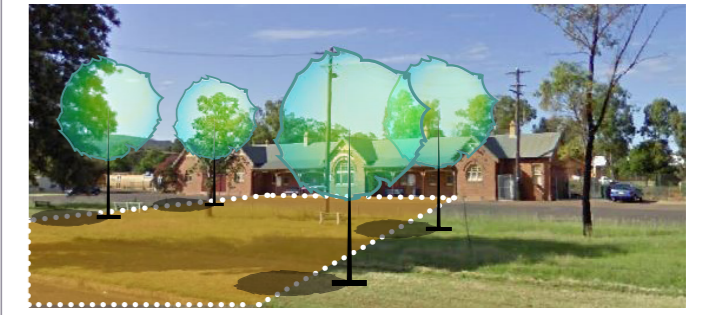


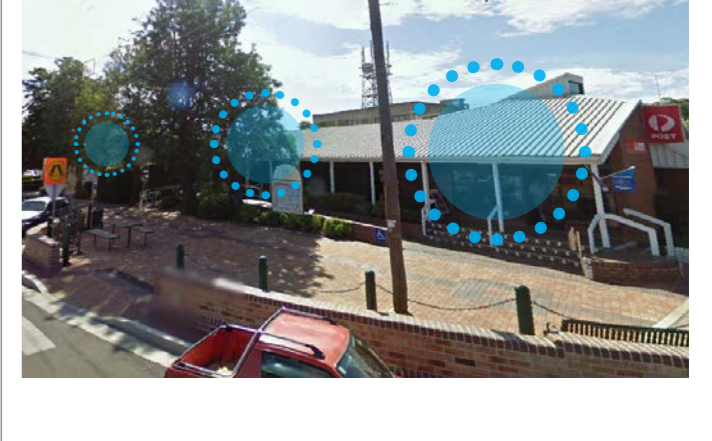
### Public Realm Catalyst Projects

- Pedestrian prioritisation & streetscaping opportunity
- Main street beautification
- Main street beautification - extension of treatments (if desirable)
- Town entry statement (gateway)
- Town centre: threshold & pedestrian node opportunity (i.e. crossing / rest stop / interpretation / wayfinding)
- Shared zone (10km/hr speed limit) & potential laneway strategy
- Streetscape upgrades (along key pedestrian desire lines/links)

Table 18: Public realm opportunities and Challenges: Gunnedah's main street - Conadilly Street

Plan No. Reference	Opportunities	Challenges	Potential location and siting of infrastructure
	<p>1. Town entry gateway at New Street</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There is a potential location for a new gateway (e.g. sign, public art, totem/marker) which would provide a sense of arrival at the main south-western entry point to the town via New Street.</li> <li>The location has an historical building in the background, which could be integrated as a feature within the entrance statement.</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The location is within proximity of the rail corridor, which is potentially subject to state government jurisdiction.</li> <li>Positioning the entry statement will need to avoid impacting visibility to the railway crossing.</li> </ul>	
	<p>2. Town entry gateway at the western end of Kamilaroi Highway</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There is a potential location for a new gateway (e.g. sign, public art, totem/marker) which would provide a sense of arrival at the main western entry point to the town via the Kamilaroi Highway.</li> <li>Crossing the road bridge acts as a threshold into town; some signage provided on approach of this bridge may create a distinctive and memorable moment upon entering the main street.</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This is a state road and is therefore subject to application processes and approvals.</li> <li>Verge space may be limited. The provision of signage must maintain clear zones and sightlines.</li> <li>This area is low-lying and may be subject to flooding. Confirmation is needed.</li> </ul>	
	<p>3. Wolseley Park</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wolseley Park has the potential to become a must-see when visiting the town, as both a central destination and landmark for the community and visitors alike. The recommendations of this report recommend additional enhancement of the passive recreation spaces around the perimeter of the park to cater for community demand for a destination recreation park, to provide residents and visitors with a range of new uses not currently catered for.</li> <li>Preserve existing trees to ensure there is established shade and scale for the space, and to encourage visitors to comfortably recreate.</li> <li>The park's location (situated one block from the Woolshed Reserve and Namoi River) presents another opportunity to create a "green corridor" that would connect existing open space reserves to the town centre via shady shared path links.</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Existing tennis courts and cricket fields would remain on current footprints.</li> <li>Park embellishments to support passive recreation and events would need to be accommodated around the perimeter of the park.</li> </ul>	
	<p>4. Pedestrianisation of Chandos Street into a shared street</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wolseley Park's location opposite two key destinations within town (the Town Hall and Visitor Information Centre) presents an opportunity where the spaces could be physically connected. At the time of preparing this report, a draft proposal was under consideration, which reenvisioned this area as a future Cultural Precinct. Transforming Chandos Street into a shared use zone between Conadilly and Little Conadilly Streets, together with future works for a Cultural Precinct, would effectively create a significant "civic heart" for the community of Gunnedah. A shared zone gives priority to pedestrians, enabling them to easily move between the park and civic facilities. The shared zone could also be equipped for temporary closure to traffic for events, extending the event space available.</li> <li>The Cultural Precinct and shared zone could be extended further into Little Conadilly Street. A "Laneway Strategy" would present Council and the community with a range of revitalisation initiatives to activate the laneway. See opportunity number 08 for more information.</li> <li>A shared zone in this location would help strengthen the proposed shared pathway connection from the town centre to Woolshed Reserve via Wolseley Park.</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Jurisdiction over Chandos Street may require approval by the state government, which has a process to convert streets to shared zones.</li> <li>Potential disruption to traffic conditions. A detailed traffic investigation would be required.</li> </ul>	

Plan No. Reference	Opportunities	Challenges	Potential location and siting of infrastructure
	<p>5. Town entry gateway at Cohen's Bridge.   Possible change of use to an existing open space parcel.   A new "river link" shared path.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There is a potential location for a new town entry gateway (e.g. sign, public art, totem/marker) which would provide a sense of arrival at the main northern entry point to the town.</li> <li>There is an opportunity to connect from the existing sports grounds ("Donnelly Fields" to the west), Woolshed Reserve and the town centre by continuing the shared path link along Chandos Street.</li> <li>Existing open space land located adjacent to the river could potentially undergo a change of use to become a new caravan and campground, given the location is relatively flat, has good amenity and is located on the outer edge of town. The growth in domestic tourism and self-drive holidays have peaked due to COVID-19 restrictions; a market to capture.</li> <li>The introduction of a continuous shared path "river link" would offer locals and tourists an opportunity to engage with the Namoi River. This link could be delivered in stages, ultimately aiming to connect residential areas to the town centre and other open spaces on a safe, continuous and accessible cycle network. Along the path, interpretive signage could inform users of the local catchment and the revegetation work undertaken as part of the Gunnedah Urban Riverine Sustainability Project where nearly 5 ha of riparian zone was regenerated.</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Disruption of existing uses on the existing land identified as a potential caravan and campground opportunity.</li> <li>Risk of damage to the riparian zone during construction and thereafter upon opening for community use. A sensitive and collaborative approach would be necessary to deliver the "river link."</li> <li>Management of multiple organisations (local and state governments, community groups, broader community, etc.)</li> <li>Introduction of a shared connection through this natural waterway corridor would likely require state government approval.</li> </ul>	
	<p>6. Streetscape upgrades (Tempest Street, Marquis Street and Abbott Street)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Potential to develop stronger pedestrian and cycle connections between the existing showgrounds, schools and the town centre by beautifying north-south oriented streets. The objective would be to provide a wide, continuous footpath with street trees and occasional provision of rest stops. Recommended streets typically originate at the Gunnedah Train Station, the main street and beyond to Woolshed Reserve.</li> <li>The existing bike link could pass through the town centre to connect with the Woolshed Reserve; best achieved by introducing dedicated on-road cycle lanes. The wide road reserve in town could accommodate the provision of a 1.2m lane (subject to further investigations).</li> <li>Existing bike paths could connect with the proposed bike paths, as identified by the "Existing and Proposed Bicycle Tracks" plan available on Gunnedah Shire Council's website.</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Limited extent and provision of dedicated cycle infrastructure.</li> <li>Footpath provisions are intermittent.</li> <li>Lack of street trees to provide shade.</li> <li>Crossing South Street/Oxley Highway is a high-risk for pedestrians and cyclists. Appropriate traffic planning would be required.</li> </ul>	
	<p>7. Pedestrian nodes (for rest, interpretation and wayfinding)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Minor gateway moments for pedestrians entering the town centre. These nodes could benefit from wayfinding signage or are another opportunity for a rest node or interpretation (e.g. art or interpretive signage about local history or cultural significance).</li> <li>By providing pedestrian nodes that replicate features/elements of the town entry statements, the experience travelling from the highway to the town centre would be a succession of visual cues that build up to arriving at the main street.</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Potential for localised site restrictions. Each location would be subject to further investigation.</li> <li>Avoid locations that may interfere visibility to the rail corridor and crossing.</li> </ul>	
	<p>8. Laneway strategy</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To increase pedestrian movements (north-south and east-west) by providing mid-block links and activating the rear portion of properties that front Conadilly Street.</li> <li>Laneway strategies may be incorporated to increase activity through a variety of treatments and provisions, such as architectural lighting, public art, greenery, interactive elements, and pop-up and temporary businesses. The implementation of these design interventions may enhance these spaces and trigger activation (day and night).</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Existing laneways have little aesthetic value.</li> <li>Maintaining access for large service vehicles and trucks may limit the potential for overhead structures.</li> </ul>	

Plan No. Reference	Opportunities	Challenges	Potential location and siting of infrastructure
	<p>9. Pedestrian prioritisation and streetscape beautification</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gunnedah Train Station is located within close proximity of the main street. In order to strengthen the amenity and activity within this precinct, Railway Terrace could transition to a pedestrian-oriented space by introducing a raised crossing/threshold. The threshold could extend out from a forecourt plaza provided at the entry to the station.</li> <li>Given this is a public transport node, streets that directly connect to the main street would benefit from streetscaping works to enhance the experience for pedestrians and cyclists, including dedicated on-road cycle lanes, street trees, continuous footpaths and signage.</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The surrounding area is industrial in use and appearance.</li> <li>Maintaining access to the rail corridor.</li> <li>Ensuring public safety is not compromised in terms of pedestrian and cyclist movements versus vehicles and the needs of maintaining railway access. Appropriate traffic planning would be required.</li> </ul>	
	<p>10. Main street beautification</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The existing streetscape qualities of Conadilly Street reflect the township's history and establishment in the late 1800s. With heritage facades offering rich character and amenity to the overall streetscape. This character is further reflected in the use of brick landscape walls and a traditional heritage colour palette. With significant street trees already in place, the additional of supplementary planting within garden beds would help to soften the road pavement and generous footpaths.</li> <li>The 30.0 m wide road reserve is ample space to consider reconfiguration of the current road cross-section in order to integrate features that are common with great main streets, such as dedicated on-road cycle lanes, kerb build outs to incorporate landscaping, the addition of pedestrian nodes with furniture/outdoor dining/interpretation/wayfinding/etc.</li> <li>In order to prioritise pedestrians in the town centre, Council may wish to consider implementing additional measures recommended for a 40 km/hr speed limit zone. Given this main street is a high volume pedestrian area the Transport for NSW guideline entitled 40 km/h speed limits in high volume pedestrian areas: A guide to identifying and implementing 40 km/h speed limits in high volume pedestrian areas provides further interventions that could enhance pedestrian movements. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Traffic calming measures could be installed and may include raised crossings, the introduction of medians and kerb build outs, threshold treatments at key gateways/crossings, introduction of dedicated cycle lanes, reduction in on-street car parking provisions, etc.</li> </ul> </li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The existing 45 degree angled on-street parking bays could be retained (with a target of zero net loss of car parks as part of the project KPIs), however, the loss of occasional bays for the gain of "green" kerb build outs would help provide much needed garden beds.</li> <li>Overcoming the common perception that main street beautification will reduce car parking provisions and, in turn, businesses fear will reduce the number of patrons. This is most often not the case and business centres thrive.</li> <li>Ensuring public safety is not compromised in terms of pedestrian and cyclist movements versus vehicles. Appropriate traffic planning would be required.</li> <li>State government authority to proceed.</li> </ul>	
	<p>11. Extension of main street beautification works</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There are several support service businesses located within this section of Conadilly Street, as well as other open spaces and educational institutions. These uses typically generate high volumes of foot traffic, and therefore, presents an opportunity for beautification works to be extended beyond the "Local Centre" zone of the Town Centre LEP Zonings (2012). This area is also highlighted in the Gunnedah Urban Land Use Strategy (2016) as a B4 Mixed Use Zone, wherein the Strategy identifies several underutilised land parcels as future redevelopment sites. Extending the beautification works into this section of the main street would enable pedestrian prioritisation, which might include introducing traffic calming measures, footpaths, street furniture and additional landscaping.</li> <li>Embellishments applied to demark this node could include threshold surface treatment applied to the road (e.g. StreetPrint or similar), signage, art, landscaping, street furniture, etc.</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Potential lack of verge space to safely accommodate signage or other infrastructure.</li> <li>Ensuring clear lines of sight to the pedestrian crossing are not compromised by introducing entry statement infrastructure.</li> <li>State government authority to proceed.</li> </ul>	

### 5.8.7 Next steps for the beautification of Gunnedah's main street

Understand the street and its function

- Use a place-based approach to set a vision for the future form and character of the street
- Develop a landscape master plan, which will capture the vision and objectives by proposing physical changes needed to improve the amenity and functionality of the street.

Gap analysis

- A detailed analysis of the existing landscape and urban design and transport functions of the street will identify any current and future issues and opportunities related to the corridor. A comprehensive analysis of the existing situation is crucial to identifying any gaps in performance and provisions before commencing design.
- Some influencing factors to be assessed include traffic counts, hazardous or high-risk spots, accident prone locations, landform, sightlines, drainage, location of existing services, heritage and culturally-significant features, significant healthy trees, etc.

Develop options

- Explore options that address any change to vehicle speeds, desirable pedestrian crossing locations, carriageway and parking arrangements to balance outcomes that enable optimal footpath widths and cycle lanes, and the location and frequency of street trees, landscaping, street furniture and outdoor nodes (i.e. footpath dining, rest stops, interpretation/art) provisions
- Validate the options by consulting a variety of stakeholders and the broader community, particularly in terms of the ultimate vision for the function and character of the street.

Prioritise people and businesses

- The impacts of traffic volume, speed, noise and emissions seriously affects the pedestrian experience, and when these conditions are hostile or allowed to continue to grow (in terms of traffic volumes) often, those streets ultimately fail. A chain effect can occur when pedestrian numbers decline - businesses suffer from loss of patrons and the street becomes entirely about vehicle movements.

Prioritise greenery

- The health of a street - the trees, people and businesses that inhabit it – needs to be co-equal with the impact on its moving parts.

### 5.8.8 Guiding principles for public realm improvements

- Prioritise people over vehicles by encouraging quieter and slower streets.
- Support walking to and from the town centre and residential areas that are within a 10 minute walk of any public space (NOTE: this is a common distance used when linking park access for public health benefit).
- Improve air quality and noise where people congregate along the main street, particularly avoid on-street parking or loading bays situated close or adjacent to footpath dining.
- Avoid the use of grade separation devices such as pedestrian fencing, pedestrian overbridges and underpasses.
- Reduce and manage traffic speeds by considering the main street transitions to a 40 km/hr speed limit zone passing through the town centre and introducing traffic calming treatments to support this (such as gateways, signage, raised threshold/Wombat crossings, kerb extensions, installation of medians, etc.)
- Consider peak times of the day, where movement is congested or high-risk, and pedestrian activity occur, particularly if evening activation is a goal.
- Ensure there is sufficient and efficient provision of dedicated disability parking, commercial loading zones and bus stops.
- Dedicate space and infrastructure for cycling.
- Maintain existing trees and increase the tree canopy along streets.

### 5.6.9 Signs of success after investing in beautification works



More people on the street, especially children.



An increase in walking and cycling.



Lower crime rates, particularly acts of vandalism.



An increase in private reinvestment (i.e. new development).



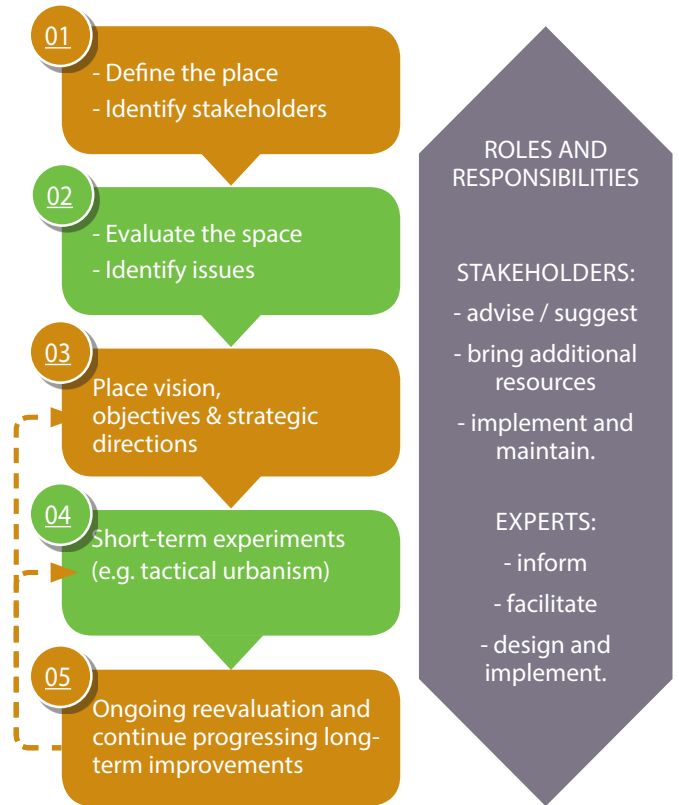
Economic vitality (measurable by a decrease in vacancy rates, a diverse mix of businesses, extended trading hours, activity in the evenings, and a rise in real estate values).

## 5.9 Placemaking and activation

Employing a place making approach can be invaluable in how places are created, as it seeks to ingrain context-specific outcomes that are dynamic, inclusive and flexible and developed in a balanced manner that equally considers social, environmental and economic factors. In fact, Australasia has been on the cutting edge of the place making movement for many years, with government organisations and professionals driving innovation and “new models of place-led design, governance, and economic development.” (Ethan Kent, PSP, 2016)

“Placemaking inspires people to collectively reimagine and reinvent public spaces as the heart of every community. Strengthening the connection between people and the places they share, place making refers to a collaborative process by which we can shape our public realm in order to maximize shared value. More than just promoting better urban design, place making facilitates creative patterns of use, paying particular attention to the physical, cultural, and social identities that define a place and support its ongoing evolution.”

- Placemaking: What if we built our cities around places?, Project for Public Places, 2007



The place making process: a place led, community-based approach<sup>1</sup>

### 5.9.1 What is place making?<sup>1</sup>

Placemaking is a multidimensional approach to the design, activation and transformation of public spaces. The process performs best when collaboration is prioritised; the active involvement of the community, stakeholders and government agencies, in most cases, leads to successful visioning, ongoing community involvement and support, and quality on-the-ground built outcomes.

### 5.9.2 Key principles

There are eleven (11) guiding principles for improving places that have been published by internationally renowned leaders in place making - Project for Public Spaces (PPS), a nonprofit planning, design and educational organisation dedicated to helping people create and sustain public spaces that build stronger communities. These principles are provided on the following page.



Attributes that make great places.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.pps.org/article/what-is-placemaking>

focus areas



Key principles recommended by PPS<sup>2</sup> are:

### 1. The community is the expert

- » identify members within the community with an interest in the project and who can provide skills and/or knowledge (such as historical details, insights into local environmental and social traits) and an understanding of critical issues
- » information gathered at the beginning of the process will help to create a sense of community ownership over the project; a great benefit to the future success of the space.

### 2. Create a place, not a design

- » identify the physical elements to be retained and what features would attract the community and other visitors. Outcomes should ensure user comfort, amenity, enhanced pedestrian and cyclist circulation, and effective relationships to surrounding retailers and destinations.
- » create a place that invokes a strong sense of community and a setting which provides a range of activities and uses that collectively reflects the wants and needs of the community.

### 3. Look for partners

- » partners are critical to the future success and image of a public space beautification project. Partners can assist with project planning, options development and participation in the future
- » these collaborations are invaluable in providing support and getting a project off the ground. Partners can be local institutions, schools, various organisations, and many others.

### 4. They always say “it can’t be done”

- » challenges are inevitable when creating good public spaces. Engaging and involving the community early in the process (and ongoing through out delivery) can help the community feel a sense of ownership for the new space.
- » consider implementing small scale interventions to test cumbersome ideas as demonstration projects, as this can help some individuals to overcome the perceived obstacle. For example, “PARKing Day” is an event where on-street car parks are temporarily transformed into “parklets” for the day to demonstrate how these spaces can be repurposed without significant impact on local parking systems.

### 5. Have a vision

- » a vision needs to be borne from the interests expressed by the community and stakeholders. It is essential for a project to have an overarching vision as it provides all individuals with a clear idea of what the future space will look and feel like.
- » the vision statement should be aspirational and have a good appreciation for the important values of that place. It should also inspire and excite people whilst instilling a sense of pride in residents who live and work in the local area.

### 6. You can see a lot just by observing

- » by undertaking a benchmarking exercise and case study research, much can be learned about the successes and failures of other places.
- » investigate how people use public spaces by finding out what they like and don’t like about the space, what is missing, and what could enhance the activation of the space. This can be achieved either through observing individuals in the space, holding community meetings/workshops, running a questionnaire or survey, school visits, and other community engagement techniques.

### 7. Form supports function

- » inputs from the community and project partners provides an understanding of how other spaces function and can overcoming the future obstacles when implementing the conceptual ideas into built outcomes. Design is important, however, these other elements will establish the “form” needed to accomplish the future vision for the space.

### 8. Triangulate

- » triangulation is “the process by which some external stimulus provides a linkage between people and prompts strangers to talk to other strangers as if they knew each other” (Holly Whyte)
- » the selection and arrangement of different elements and how they relate to each other can affect the triangulation process.

### 9. Experiment: lighter, quicker, cheaper

- » public spaces are complex and it may be that staged delivery is required to achieve the overall vision, particularly due to cost. In other instances, concepts may be challenging for others to envision and therefore could benefit from an “experiment” whereby the initiative/s are introduced in a short term manner that can be tested and refined. Pending the success of the experiment, it can then be made permanent.

### 10. Money is not the issue

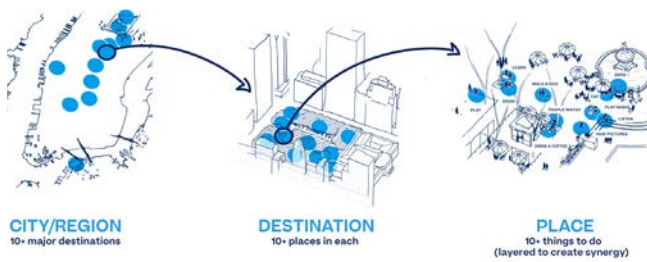
- » by experimenting first or undertaking works in stages, the elements that are added into that space will contribute to the future success of the finished space (e.g. pop-up vendors, cafes, shade and seating) and are reasonably inexpensive. It also creates enthusiasm for the project.
- » involving the community and other partners can help with programming and other activities, which can also reduce costs.

### 11. Works are never finished

- » regular management and maintenance of public spaces must respond to the ever changing needs of the community, the environment and technology. Plan ahead for when amenities provided within the space come to the end of their life. Build-in flexibility and funding to readily enact repairs, replacements and upgrades, as needed, to maintain great public spaces and towns.

### 5.9.3 Placemaking concepts

#### The Power of 10+



Graphic representation of the Power of 10+ concept from PPS.

This concept (developed by PPS) is an evaluation tool to help facilitate place making across varying urban setting scales. It enables constructive conversations to help identify priorities, opportunities and challenges.

The tool helps to identify a range of reasons (10+) for people to visit a place. Activities may include relaxation and respite, taking children to a playground, attending an event, dining at an on-site cafe, educational purposes, or a meeting point. Seek out which of these activities are unique to that particular place as they positively represent local culture and history. Local residents are the best source for identifying and prioritising the top 10+ list.<sup>3</sup>

#### Place Activation



Example of evening activation in a park in Maitland (image source: [www.maitland.nsw.gov.au](http://www.maitland.nsw.gov.au))

The activities that happen in a public space and the people there enjoying those moments are what typically makes a successful public space. It is, therefore, important that Council and the community prepare (from start to completion and beyond) a public space activation program/strategy that will plan for a variety of community events to occur at a range of times (day and night, weekdays and weekends) to generate opportunities for the community to interact with each other and the space. Examples include pop-ups, outdoor cinema nights, giant board games (such as chess), and potentially regular events such as monthly markets or annual festivals.

#### Tactical urbanism or 'Lighter, Quicker, Cheaper'



Example of PARKing Day from the Maitland Activation Strategy (2016).

Introducing interim or trial measures that, in most instances, are low-cost can yield a high return and have significant impact on community support when entering into any public space beautification project.

This approach helps to capitalise on the excitement of the community generated by new opportunities to engage in ways that the space previously may not have been equipped to cater for. This helps the community to prepare for the transformation whilst the space is still familiar. From small and 'tactical' interventions such as PARKing Day and temporary art installations to large temporary structures and community events.

#### Place governance / management



Place management flow diagram (source: [www.townteammovement.com/whats-the-difference-placemaking-place-management-and-place-activation/](http://www.townteammovement.com/whats-the-difference-placemaking-place-management-and-place-activation/))

Place management can be defined as:

"A coordinated, area-based, multi-stakeholder approach to improve locations, harnessing the skills, experiences and resources of those in the private, public and voluntary sectors." - [www.placemanagement.org/](http://www.placemanagement.org/)

This intentional form of governance can be the key contributing factor in successfully delivering the transformation of a public space into a vibrant and active place. A Place Manager's role is to be the conduit between government, businesses and the community, and drive the collective towards reaching their full potential and the vision for that public space.

focus areas

### 5.9.4 Case studies

The following case studies demonstrate the success of employing a place making approach in how a public space beautification project was delivered. Each of these examples engaged the community, key stakeholders and project sponsors as part of a collaborative design process to create enhanced recreation-based destinations.

#### Australian (NSW): Tamworth Regional Playground

Cost: \$2.2 million

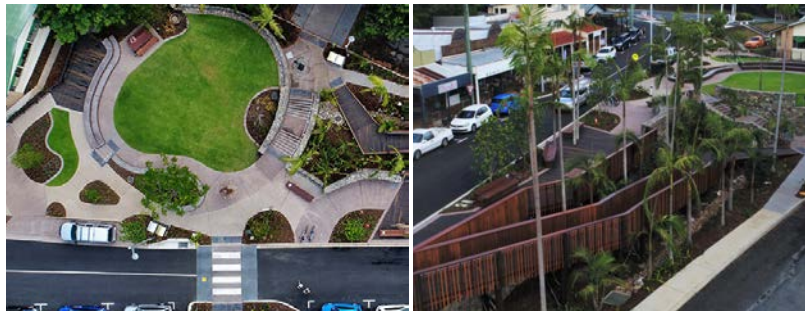
This award-winning park located in the heart of Tamworth's Central Business District was constructed in 2015 and has set a new standard among regional NSW for community parks. This is due to the project's emphasis on community engagement, which highlighted the desire for this new space to be inclusive of all abilities and age groups. The space also includes a café and restaurant, outdoor fitness facilities, large open areas, and a 9.1 metre high "Skywalk" with three giant slides and four towers. Residents are proud of this place and it has become a destination for visitors to the regional town. The space includes a range of smart technology including free WiFi, sensor-based pedestrian lighting, CCTV, a duress button, sensors in rubbish bins, sensor car parking to enable real-time data on the availability of car parks (linked to LED signage for the convenience of visitors).<sup>4</sup>



#### Australian (QLD): Placemaking Palmwoods

Cost: \$3.0 million

The Sunshine Coast community were instrumental in achieving the multi-award-winning Placemaking Palmwoods public realm project; from development of the initial Public Domain Master Plan in 2013 - 2014 (where Council held various workshops with the community) through to opening day in 2018. The Master Plan identified the community's top priorities; constructing a new Town Square over a car parking area, the design of which assisted with traffic calming improvements, safer pedestrian crossings, and landscaping along town centre streets. The design of the Town Square and streetscape involved Council, urban strategists and the community to evolve the priorities into delivered outcomes. A Palmwoods Activation Program was established and Council continuously worked closely with the Palmwoods Action Group created by local businesses, artists and community members interested in driving the project.



### 5.8.5 Potential place themes for Gunnedah



The rich Aboriginal heritage and traditional land of the Gunn-e-darr people of the Kamilaroi Tribe.



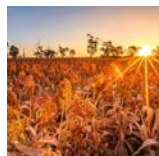
The town's name means "Place of White Stones" in the Kamilaroi language.



The area was known as the 'Woolshed' before being named Gunnedah in 1860, which related to the early settler John Johnston who established a woolshed on the banks of the Namoi River in 1833.



Dorothea Mackellar, the renowned Australian poet who wrote "My Country" inspired by the region, which is an iconic expression of patriotic love of Australia.



Agriculture and coal mining industries (beef cattle, pigs, poultry, sheep, wheat, lucerne, barley, cotton, canola, sunflowers, oats, corn and sorghum).



The second-largest beef-cattle saleyards in the state.



One of the state's largest coal seams yielding 10 million tonnes per annum.



Home to the largest koala colony in inland New South Wales.

## 5.10 Open space management

### 5.10.1 Open space management objective

Achieve well managed and maintained open spaces through a coordinated and planned approach, to ensure best value-for-money outcomes for Council and the community.

### 5.10.2 Open space management strategy

Integrate project management and whole-of-life asset management principles into open space work systems.

### 5.10.3 Statutory context

#### Local Government Act 1993 and the Local Government (General) Regulation 2005

Local councils in NSW are required to undertake planning and reporting activities in accordance with the Local Government Act 1993 and the Local Government (General) Regulation 2005. An Integrated Planning and Reporting Manual provides guidance to councils to comply with the Essential Elements required under the LG Act. The essential elements are depicted in Figure 03 in Section 2 of this Strategy, and include the requirement for a Delivery Program, Operational Plan, and Resourcing Strategy including:

- long term financial planning
- workforce management planning
- asset management.

#### Other legislation

Refer to additional legislation listed under other Focus Areas in this Strategy.

#### Industry standards

The following is a sample of applicable standards for open space management, and is not an exhaustive list:

- ISO 55001 Infrastructure asset management
- AS2156.1 Walking tracks and classification and signage
- AS 4685 Playground equipment and surfacing
- AS 4422 Playground surfacing - specifications, requirements and test method
- AS 1428 Design for access and mobility
- AS/NZS ISO 31000: Risk management - principles and guidelines
- AS1663: Permanently installed outdoor fitness equipment - safety requirements and test methods
- AS14974:2021: Skateparks - safety requirements and test methods
- AS16899:2020: Parkour equipment - safety requirements and test methods
- AS16579:2020: Playing field equipment - portable and permanent socketed goals - safety requirements and test methods

#### Industry guides

Healthy by Design: A Planners Guide to Environments for Active Living - National Heart Foundation

NSW Greener Places Open Space for Recreation Guide

NSW Safer by Design Evaluation and a Companion to the Safer by Design Evaluation

### 5.10.4 Project management (capital works)

Capital works undertaken in open spaces and parks should follow the project phases to achieve value-for-money and sustainable outcomes for Council and the community. The project phases that make up the project life-cycle are:

Phase 1: Project initiation

Phase 2: Project planning

Phase 3: Project execution

Phase 4: Project monitoring and control

Phase 5: Project closure.

The project management triangle, or triple constraint, refers to the boundaries of time, scope (or quality) and cost that apply to projects. Project managers need to pay attention to the schedule, budget and work breakdown.

In relation to whole-of-life asset management, this triple constraint requires careful consideration during project initiation and planning phases. For example, purchasing superior materials or products may result in higher capital costs initially, however dramatically reduce ongoing maintenance costs, extend the life of the asset, or meet environmental sustainability standards. All options require investigation in the early stages of a project as part of the due diligence process.

By contrast, at the closure of the project, asset maintenance schedules require development to ensure the projected life of the asset is achieved and issues are identified and resolved promptly. Condition assessment tools are important for staff to identify and report asset repair and replacement needs.

### 5.10.5 Key findings

- apply the hierarchy approach to open space planning, development and maintenance to achieve the vision of this Strategy
- the quality of open space has a direct influence on its value and use by the community
- some parks and reserves require upgrade, particularly as existing assets reach the end of their useful life, or as the community around them creates increased or different demand. Master plans will be required to guide improvements and will enable a coordinated and staged approach, as well as assist to attract external funding.

## 5.10.6 Strategic directions

Table 19: Ensuring value-for-money for Council and the community through whole-of-life asset management

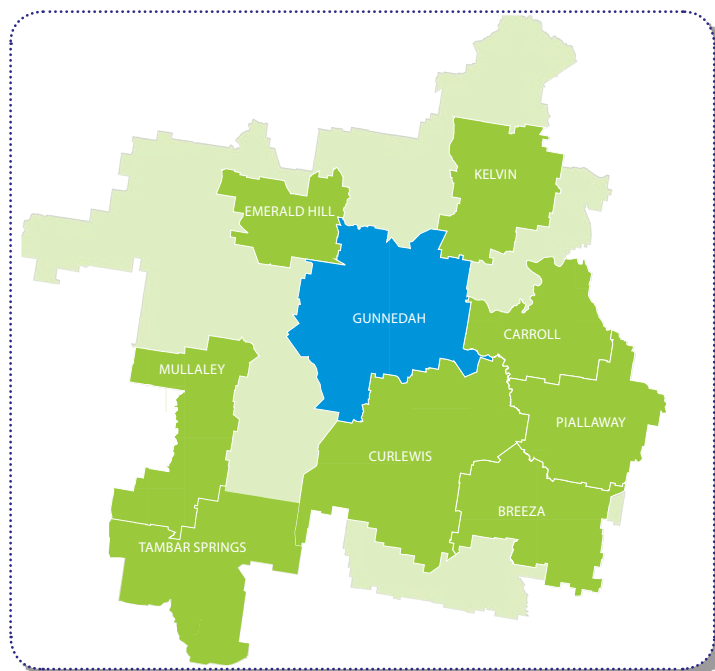
Focus	Strategic direction	Priority
Project management	Refine Council's project management processes to support whole-of-life (WOL) asset management principles, and align with internal governance cycles (4 year delivery plan, annual operational plan). Reflect appropriate resources against project management phases to ensure adequate time and resources are allocated to improve WOL asset management.	Ongoing
Whole-of-life (WOL) asset management	Ensure sufficient funding is available to maintain assets to deliver the required service, and to maintain safety.  Develop a tool to assess the total cost of open space assets over their life, including initial capital cost (procurement), operational, maintenance, repair, upgrade (operation/maintenance) and eventual disposal costs (disposal).	High
Works identification	Develop a tool to undertake site and condition assessments on open space assets to identify required works, allow scheduling of maintenance, replacement and/or renewal. Apply WOL principles to identify, prioritise and incorporate works into future capital works budgets.	High
Maintenance review	Undertake a review of the maintenance levels allocated to each park and reserve in the Shire to ensure an appropriate level of service that reflects the hierarchy and setting (natural vs developed) identified in this Strategy.	High
Maintenance resources	Review current resources (people, plant and equipment, operational budgets) required to achieve the desired open space network and objectives. This will require an assessment of the capacity of staff to maintain different reserve types and hierarchies and the identification of trigger points for requiring additional or different resources.	Ongoing
Master planning and landscape concept planning	Develop and implement master plans and landscape concept plans for district parks and reserves to guide future staged development and place making opportunities.	Ongoing

## 06\_ planning areas: directions

### Planning areas: directions

Planning areas have been identified across the Shire to allow strategic analysis and direction for open spaces and specific parks and reserves. The planning areas are:

- Gunnedah township
- Breeza
- Carroll
- Curlewis
- Emerald Hill
- Kelvin
- Mullaley
- Tambar Springs.



## Gunnedah Township

### ANZAC Park

ANZAC Park is a linear shaped park divided by South Street. The MacKellar Centre, dedicated to arts, culture, literature and history, and the Gunnedah Museum dominate the northern part of the park, with manicured lawns and landscaping creating a peaceful aesthetic. A sandstone retaining wall and steps is an attractive feature and defines the parkland at street level, with a lawn area parallel with the railway line. The Gunnedah Memorial Pool Complex occupies most of the parkland on the other side of South Street. Landscaping, a sculptural monument of Dorothea MacKellar (the poet), and war memorial plaques create the Poetry Precinct - a pleasant park area for residents and visitors to learn, reflect and enjoy.

The Gunnedah Memorial Pool Complex was extensively upgraded in 2017/2018 and is an excellent example of a high-standard regional pool complex. The pools are major contributors to Council's power use, and implementation of more efficient and cost effective power sources, including solar power, will be required in the future, to ensure these facilities are as sustainable as possible. A stand-out feature of the complex, that is not commonly found, is the expansive lawns and shade trees surrounding the pools in complex and providing ample space for people to set up and spend the day.

A disused lawn bowls facility is located on the south-eastern corner of the park, at the rear of the pool complex. The Gunnedah RSL Sub-Branch has requested to lease and develop the lawn bowls area for use as a memorial garden to house memorial plaques in an accessible location. This is supported, however Council's and the community's role, responsibility and financial commitment toward the development, maintenance and upkeep of parks and gardens of this nature should be clearly detailed to manage expectations, and ensure equitable allocation of resources for the benefit of the whole community.

### Directions

- continue to promote the park as an event space for photos, weddings, boot camps and other small gatherings
- pursue solar power for both pool complexes, and secure external funding to transition to more efficient power sources for these facilities that are major contributors to Council's power use
- collaborate with the Gunnedah RSL Sub-Branch to develop the terms of the proposed lease, including ongoing maintenance.







## Athol Gallen Park

Athol Gallen Park is a large area that is currently undeveloped, apart from a small infants playground in one corner. A key feature of the park is the continuous pathway extending along the unformed Parkview Drive corridor and is a good example of colocation of stormwater and active transport infrastructure. Additional tree planting and simple, yet effective landscaping would increase the amenity and attractiveness of this corridor, without negatively impacting on stormwater management.

Additional residential development will increase the demand for good quality recreation parks in the neighbourhood and Council should plan to develop Athol Gallen Park to cater for current and emerging community's needs. This work is a high priority and needs to occur within the next 1-3 years.

### Directions

- develop and implement a landscape plan for the park that incorporates district level play spaces for children and youth, and kick-about areas, increased shade-tree planting, picnic facilities, internal pathways and landscaping to increase the amenity and appeal of the park
- install additional pedestrian bridges to connect the park with the pathway along the adjacent stormwater drainage corridor
- ensure neighbourhood pathways connect to the park providing safe and accessible walk and cycle routes through the park.



## Cushan's Reserve

Located on the edge of town and adjacent to the Namoi River, Cushan's Reserve is a large (over 9ha) natural area with mature established native trees, understorey plants and walking trails from the entry. Revegetation and weed control is undertaken by the Gunnedah Urban Landcare Group (GULG), and there are information signs to educate visitors and increase awareness about the values of the native flora and fauna.

Increased access to the river and waterways is a high priority for residents of the Gunnedah Shire, and Cushan's Reserve could provide another location for water- and nature-based recreation activities, if managed appropriately.

While it is feasible to identify this location as a potential kayaking / canoeing access point, the distance to the proposed trail head (off Old Tamworth Road) is some distance away. Transporting kayaks/canoes from vehicles may be problematic if not controlled adequately, and inadvertently lead to negative impacts on the reserve.

## Directions

- connect Cushan's Reserve with the Namoi River Parklands via a continuous walking trail (preferably a 30-60cm up to a maximum 1m wide trail)
- create a trailhead at the Reserve entry at the end of the dirt road off Old Tamworth Road
- consider dedicating additional resources (budget and staff) toward revegetation and weed management activities, particularly through programs such as Greening Australia
- investigate the potential, and costs, for controlled vehicle access to the area.



## Donnelly Fields

Donnelly Fields is part of a larger open space area on the northern edge of Gunnedah township, that includes the Namoi Playing Fields, Namoi River Parklands, stormwater drainage reserve and parcels of Travelling Stock Routes (TSRs). The Namoi River, stormwater reserves and undeveloped TSR border Donnelly Fields to the north and north-west, and the other two sides are bordered by Bloomfield and Rosemary Streets. Namoi Playing Fields extends east from Donnelly Fields, running almost parallel with the river. Council has recently acquired an additional town block neighbouring Donnelly and Namoi Playing Fields, creating a potential sport and recreation precinct of at least 14 hectares.

Donnelly Fields currently caters for junior and senior cricket, junior rugby league and touch football, however the regular shape and size of Donnelly Fields allows for adaptation for various field sports, if required for events or future demands.

The fields are irrigated, and five synthetic cricket wickets are positioned to provide for U11s, U13s and U18s competition. Shelters are positioned at each corner of the fields and post and rail fencing on most boundaries, and large stone blocks on others, prevent vehicles from driving on and damaging the fields. The main clubhouse is positioned about 100m from the north-east corner of Donnelly Fields, and almost 300m 'as the crow flies' from the farthest corner (intersection of Bloomfield and Warrabungle Streets).

Donnelly Fields can be easily accessed from surrounding roads, which are a combination of dirt, gravel and bitumen sealed. Sealed car parking has been included along the verge of Rosemary Street and near the main clubhouse, all other parking areas are informal, unsealed and not line marked. The dirt road and informal car parking area at the end of Rosemary Street becomes damaged when used during or after rain.

## Directions

- the entire sport and recreation precinct including Donnelly Fields, Namoi Playing Fields, Namoi River Parklands, acquired Council land, stormwater drainage reserve and parcels of Travelling Stock Routes (TSRs) require a Master Plan to guide development of this important community asset over the next 10 years.



## Gunnedah Showgrounds

The Gunnedah Showgrounds is over 13 hectares (excluding Longmuir Fields) and while primarily dedicated to equestrian and animal sports, indoor facilities for basketball and gymnastics are also located on the site, along with a range of agricultural, community and craft organisations (e.g., dog obedience and spinners and weavers). The Showgrounds hosts a wide variety of events throughout the year.

The Gunnedah High School campus wraps around the eastern and part of the southern sides of the Showgrounds, and the TAFE campus and PCYC is located on the southern side of the site. Of note, the High School has five tennis courts and a full-size field appropriate for most field sports, including those currently played on the Longmuir Fields.

NSW Education introduced a Community Use of School Facilities Policy to encourage and facilitate use of public facilities by the broader community outside of school hours. Licences and leases are possible for community use arrangements extending beyond 12 months. It is worth considering exploring use of school facilities for community sport due to the potential benefits to the school, the community and Council, more broadly.

Part of the TAFE land has been leased by the Showgrounds for equestrian activities, however this arrangement will not continue in the future. This is expected to place pressure on use of John Longmuir Fields by traditional field and court sports.

A Master Plan was developed over the Showgrounds and John Longmuir Fields in 2014, and a revised plan developed in 2016. Significant upgrades completed in 2021 include:

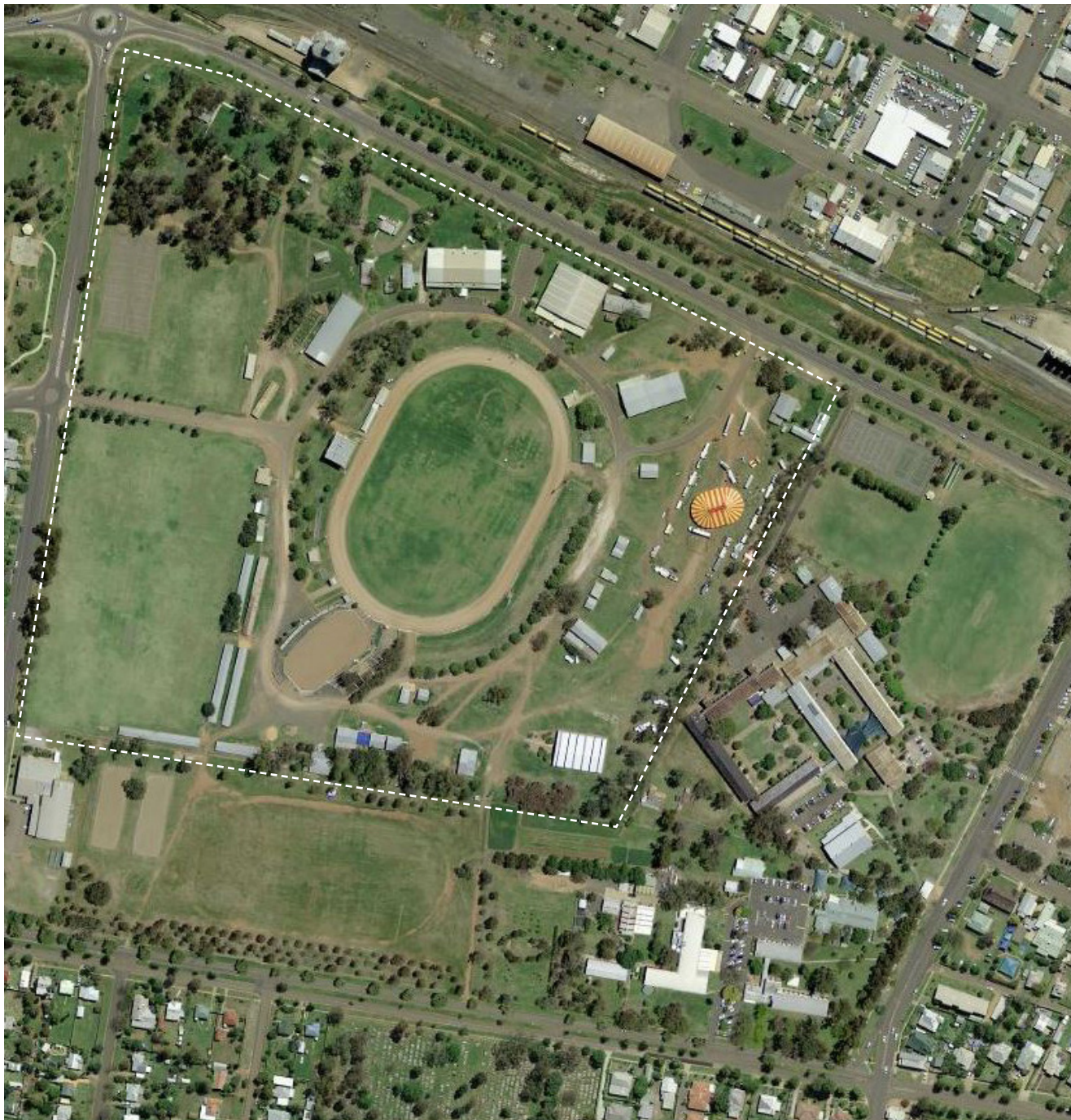
- new rodeo and camp draft arenas
- new grandstand seating
- new amenities and shower block
- refurbishment of existing amenities buildings
- disability access upgrade to the gymnasium
- accessible picnic tables and chairs.

Under the NSW Crown Land Management Act 2016, Council is required to develop a new Plan of Management (POM) for Crown land under its control and management. The Gunnedah Showgrounds is one of the Crown Reserves. Development of a POM provides an opportunity for Council to revisit the Master Plan, as a supporting document to the POM, and ensure that clear direction for further development and enhancement is provided for the Showgrounds and user groups.

### Directions

- develop a new, comprehensive Master Plan over the Showgrounds, including comprehensive consultation with user groups and adjacent land users to ensure this significant community asset is future-proofed and meets contemporary users needs.





## John Dodd Park

John Dodd Park is a new park on the corner of Tallowood Drive and Bottle Brush Avenue. Although the park is small (approximately 1,500m<sup>2</sup>), it has been well designed and embellished with a playground, shade sail, park benches, bin and a grassy mound for imagination play. With excellent road frontage, a pathway circling within the park and connecting to footpaths, the park is easy to enter and navigate on foot or on wheels (e.g. prams, scooters, bikes).

### Directions

- position and plant additional shade trees to allow removal of the shade sail at the end of its useful life.



## John Longmuir Playing Fields

The John Longmuir Playing Fields is an area of approximately 5.5 hectares within the Gunnedah Showgrounds that are used for cricket, rugby league, softball, netball and other sports.

Four bitumen sealed netball courts are located in the northern corner of the fields, and additional grass courts are marked out when required on the adjacent fields. The canteen building is functional, although facilities such as these are typically located closer to courts, for ease of access and use. The toilets are located even further away, across an internal access road, posing safety issues for younger players.

The irrigated sport fields on the southern portion of the site are used for cricket, rugby league, and softball.

There is limited shade and spectator seating, inadequate field lighting for evening training, and amenities/toilets are old and unappealing.

Due to the likelihood of use of the TAFE land ceasing, demand for land for equestrian and animal sports and ancillary uses is likely to increase. This will place pressure on use of the sport playing fields for alternate uses, including equestrian warm up facilities and car parking for events.

Sport fields and courts are able to be used for irregular event car parking, when this is scheduled appropriately (not when the ground is soft from irrigation/rain) and any necessary repairs are undertaken to minimise interruptions to training and competition.

## Directions

- Relocate sports to Donnelly/Namoi Playing Fields: Investigate relocation of field and court sports currently at John Longmuir Playing Fields, to the Council acquired land near Donnelly and Namoi Playing Fields, that is yet to be developed, and include current and future facility needs in any requisite master planning for the site
- Plan for this area to be included in the review of the Showground Master Plan



## Jae-High Park

Jae-High Park is located on High Street and is a large (7,140m<sup>2</sup>) area with a fenced children's playground with multiple elements, however very limited shade, trees and landscaping. Jae-High Park is in relatively close proximity to McAndrew Park, Wandobah Reserve and the Golf Course.

Respondents to the community survey claimed that the park and playground is not used often (if at all). Several reasons may contribute to this apparent lack of use, and it is suspected that the lack of shade and shelter is a key contributor.

### Directions

Further targeted consultation with the immediate neighbourhood (400m catchment) is recommended prior to taking definitive action. The options below warrant consideration:

- Option 1: install shade sails/structures over the play equipment, ensuring the positioning maximises shade during the peak of summer. Plant shade trees to replace shade structures at maturity/asset replacement timing (may require a series of mulched nature strips). Install irrigation to establish a grassed kick-about area
- Option 2: consider removing the play equipment and retaining the fencing to develop a dog off-leash park
- Option 3: consider complete removal of embellishments and undertake necessary steps for sale of the land.



## Jaeger Park

Jaegar Park provides limited recreation opportunity however disposal is not considered feasible, and the park does contribute to the amenity of the streetscape. The park is a level grassed acre (4000m<sup>2</sup>) with a picnic shelter and table and waste bin. A limited number of native trees are scattered throughout the park, some of which are mature and substantial.

### Directions

- it is recommended that the existing embellishments in the park are removed at the end of their useful lives, and significant additional tree and shrub planting in mulched garden beds is undertaken, as well as suitable ground cover, to increase the amenity of the park and reduce mowing and maintenance.



## Ken Green Park

Ken Green Park extends between Stewart and McAndrew Streets and is a pleasant local recreation park. The children's playground is in good condition with a shade sail providing protection. Established trees throughout the park contribute to the amenity of the park. A plaque and sign near a shade tree provide information about the park's namesake, Ken Green.

### Directions

- remove the fencing and old park furniture, and reposition the sign to a road frontage. Provide a park bench for carers.



## Kilcoy Park

Three lots combine to make up Kilcoy Park, on the corner of Johnston and Beulah Streets. A single, three swing piece of play equipment, softfall and a park bench currently embellish the park.

### Directions

The following recommendations are aimed at retaining a local recreation park in the catchment, while reducing Council's maintenance burden.

- plan for a contemporary park that creates a small well designed local park on lot 3 DP 758492, similar to John Dodd Park in size, however consider play equipment for older children, and include landscaping and shade tree planting
- consider sale of lot 2 and lot 4 DP 758492, with retention of proceeds toward implementation of this Strategy.





## Kitchener Park

Kitchener Park is a prominent sport park located on Conadilly Street (the Kamilaroi Highway) about half a kilometre from the town centre. Kitchener Park is about 4 hectares in size and is dominated by a sport field used for rugby league and cricket.

The sport field is fenced and surrounding by a raised mound for spectators, and a sealed internal road wraps around half of the field. Extensive infrastructure has been established, including field lighting allowing training and night competition, a clubhouse, change rooms, public amenities and tiered seating on the north-western side of the field. The tiered seating is uncovered and future provision of shade and weather protection should be considered.

Cricket practice nets, two tennis courts and two basketball courts are located on one side of the park. The courts are in disrepair however, anecdotally, they are used by students at nearby St Mary's College.

A playground and public toilet block is located on the southern most corner of the park, and can be accessed via a gate on Wentworth Street. This area would benefit from additional landscaping integrated with the playground to create an attractive local park, and play space when sport competition is being held.

Consultation with the community and elected representatives has indicated a desire to identify and leverage opportunities for exhibition games by professional NRL teams at Kitchener Park. This would likely require removal of the existing grass wicket to meet prerequisites. This option should only be investigated if a multi-visit partnership arrangement is secured, and under the provision that a full sized cricket field with a grass wicket is developed elsewhere, or adequate field lighting is installed at Wolesely. Funding sources external to Council should be sourced for these actions.

Kitchener Park is an impressive sport park providing a positive image for town on entry from the south. When assets require renewal or replacement, ensure that investigation into new technologies that are sustainable is undertaken.

## Directions

Council should continue to maintain Kitchener Park and the following enhancements are recommended:

- investigate external funding for shade and weather protection over sections of the tiered seating/grandstand
- remove the existing tennis and basketball courts and replace with two multisport courts, including basketball, tennis and handball
- develop an irrigated turf area for warm-up activities and training
- undertake additional landscaping integrated with the playground and lawn area parallel with Conadilly Street
- Investigate opportunities for a partnership arrangement with a professional team for multiple visits, and the requisite field and facility requirements, including potential relocation of the grass cricket wicket.



## McAndrew Park

McAndrew Park is a sport park with a turf wicket and a children's playground, shelter and toilets near the park frontage to Wandobah Road.

McAndrew Park is used for cricket by senior cricketers, along with Wolseley, Kitchener and Longmuir fields. Continued need for use of this park by cricket should be carefully monitored, to ensure that the number of fields and space allocated to sports reflects participation numbers and need.

Additional shade tree planting would enhance the amenity of this park, potentially attracting increased passive use by residents in the surrounding neighbourhood.

The toilets should remain open during the day for users of McAndrew Park and also walkers using Wandobah Reserve and pathway.

## Directions

McAndrew Park is predominantly designed and developed for sport, and provides a local recreation and play experience. Recommended enhancements to the park include:

- install shade over the playground to encourage use
- plant additional shade trees around the internal perimeter of the park
- monitor use of the park by cricket to assess use, with a view to repurpose the park use from sport to recreation. Initially, this would involve removal of the cricket pitch and additional tree planting around the perimeter
- consider this space as a possible option for a dog off-leash park.



## McDonagh Park

McDonagh Park is accessible via narrow easements from either Colin Court or George Street, and is otherwise landlocked by residential properties. The park has a set of swings and multi-play module suitable for young children, and a single avenue of mature trees creating a pleasant outdoor room.

Parks that have limited or no road frontage rely on surrounding residential properties for neighbourhood surveillance. Unfortunately, in this case, the rear yards of surrounding properties border the park, providing little surveillance.

Respondents to the community survey described the 'park at the rear of Baker Street' and the 'secret park on George Street' as both having potential for sale, yet also being a pleasant, quiet place to rest and relax.

## Directions

It is recommended that Council:

- commence the process to designate the land as operational, rather than community land under the LG Act, to allow sale of the land
- remove existing embellishments while retaining healthy trees.



## Mornington Park

Mornington Park has sport and recreation elements and appears to be well used for social sport games and socialising.

Ensure a tree replacement program is implemented to maintain the aesthetics of the park, as several of the existing trees are mature and ageing.

### Directions

- undertake soft and hard landscaping to refresh the park and connect picnic and play elements.



## Mullibah Lagoon

Mullibah Lagoon is a natural area that is highly valued by the community for its unique setting including the billabong on its south-eastern end. The linear corridor connects to the Namoi River Parklands near Elgin Street, and it is a short distance from Woolshed Reserve.

The lagoon and surrounds provides opportunities for nature appreciation, bird watching, and walking, and has been used for private events, including wedding ceremonies.

Opinions in the community ranged between management of the area to maintain the natural setting and continuing the current maintenance practices. Currently large tracts of land are slashed from the rear of neighbouring property boundaries, extending as far toward the edge of the lagoon as possible.

As the area is low-lying, walking can be difficult if the grass is long and/or after wet weather. A walking trail would provide access, while retaining the natural setting.

Traffic restriction bollards and tree planting with guards should be used along adjoining roadways to prevent vehicles accessing the area.

## Directions

Mullibah Lagoon requires careful management of its natural setting to ensure priority for flora and fauna, rather than people.

To this end, the following recommendations apply:

- create a trailhead at the Wentworth Street entry including a map of the Lagoon and walking trial connections, and consolidate existing signage
- design and install a walking trail along the length of the linear corridor, extending north-west to connect with the Namoi River, and south-east to Carroll Street (where people can divert toward Cushans Reserve via Weaver Street)
- liaise with local Aboriginal People regarding the appropriateness of installing a yarning circle at a suitable location, for use by everyone in the community
- design and place interpretive and directional signage to enhance visitors experiences, taking care not to create sign clutter
- consider upgrading the gravel area used for car parking at the end of Wentworth Street.



## Namoi River Parklands

Over the past decade, Council has succeeded in developing the Namoi River Parklands into a pleasant natural setting where people are able to access the river, walk, bird watch, picnic and appreciate this serene environment.

Council has restricted inappropriate vehicle access and the wide bitumen pathway provides an excellent walkway for recreation and physical activity. The path has been extended south-east, beyond the playing fields, and now travels adjacent to the river at the rear of Woolshed Reserve, ending at Marquis Street.

While it is possible to continue walking from the end of the path to connect to Mullibah Lagoon, there are no signposts or indicators to encourage people to navigate this trail independently. Similarly, those inclined to could conceivably continue along the river eventually connecting to Cushans Reserve, either along the river, or via Old Tamworth Road. A simple trail would be sufficient, along with posts at intervals to confirm the direction of the trail, and distance to destinations.

To the north-west from the playing fields, investigations reveal that restricting vehicles has been less successful with multiple tracks formed throughout the travelling stock routes and surrounding land parcels. This is despite Council placing large concrete blocks (hostile vehicle barrier) at access points to prevent access.

Consultation with the community indicated a strong desire for increased access to the river and waterways. A kayak and canoe launching location on the river would be a welcome addition to the Namoi River Parklands, with a simple facility recommended until demand indicates any requirement for more advanced infrastructure.

Consultation with local government elected representatives indicated a desire to investigate the potential for a weir in the Namoi River.

## Directions

- the Riverine Landscape Master Plan developed in 2010 provides detailed direction for upgrading and development of the open spaces along, and connected to, the river. The Master Plan is aspirational and implementation is dependant on available resources. Key elements have been sourced from the Master Plan and integrated into Focus Areas, previously detailed in this Strategy. It would be beneficial to include the northern side of Cohen's Bridge in future reviews or expansions of the Master Plan area and recommendations
- investigate the process involved to seek the necessary approvals for potential construction of a weir in the Namoi River.



## Pensioners Hill

Pensioners Hill is located on the north-western approach into Gunnedah and is accessed via Lloyd Road. The park is just over 15 hectares and provides views across the Gunnedah basin and township. An unofficial plan over the park has guided development and exemplifies the importance of investing in planning and design for open spaces.

Pensioners Hill has been extensively developed into an attractive landscaped park, including striking sculptures and art as park furniture. Concrete pathways lead from the car park to the summit and lookout. Information and interpretive signs provide points of interest and contribute to the sense of place that the park creates. The park is a credit to the two community groups involved in its development and upkeep: Gunnedah West Rotary Club and Gunnedah Urban Landcare Group.

The toilet needs to be included in Council's cleaning schedule to ensure it is available to visitors, as currently the community groups that maintain the park, keep it locked as they are unable, and should not be expected, to provide this additional service to the public.

## Directions

Pensioners Hill is a quality park and showcases a unique example of the community and Council collaborating to provide valuable community assets for residents and visitors to enjoy.

It is recommended that Council:

- develop a master plan over the Reserve, in conjunction with the Gunnedah Urban Landcare Group (GULG), Rotary West and the broader community
- formalise an agreement between the GULG, Rotary West and Council to define key responsibilities for site maintenance
- consider inclusion of the existing toilet into Council's public amenity program to ensure it is available for visitors to the park, and investigate construction of new public amenities in the future that are fit-for-purpose
- update the signage at the lookout utilising wayfinding consistent with Council's public spaces to enhance visitors' experience of the park, including consideration of self-guided QR code tours.



planning areas

## Porcupine Reserve

Porcupine Reserve is just over 83 hectares of natural bushland on a ridgeline along the south-east flank of the township. The key features of the Reserve are the views across the Gunnedah basin, the natural setting and walking trails.

Apex Road leads to the lookout point, and a sealed loop road and car parking. Simple park furniture including a timber post and colourbond pitched roof shelter with two steal picnic settings, bench seating and bins, are scattered across the lookout area. The lookout facilities are aging and unappealing and generally appear to either require maintenance or removal.

A walking trail circuit has been developed within the Reserve, that is part of the more extensive Bindea Walking Track that starts at the Dorothea Mackellar Memorial, in ANZAC Park.

The walking trail sign at the lookout needs to be upgraded to a trailhead, including a map of trails, distance, key features (vistas, flora and fauna), and trail grading so visitors can assess their abilities and decide if the trail is suitable for them. Currently, the only map of the trail is located at ANZAC Park.

Consultation with the community and the Gunnedah Urban Landcare Group (GULG) indicates that natural areas, such as Porcupine Reserve, are highly valued by the community and increased access is desirable.

Porcupine Reserve has the potential to become a popular nature-based recreation venue for residents and visitors. However, the existing infrastructure framework requires additional capital investment and ongoing maintenance to create an environment that is amenable and attractive for users. Consideration of management strategies, such as access restrictions or 'opening hours', to mitigate the more serious anti-social behaviour that occurs at the Reserve is recommended.

## Directions

The following enhancements are recommended for Porcupine Reserve:

- consider management strategies to mitigate anti-social behaviour, including potentially restricting access
- review signage and upgrade to ensure sufficient information is provided to allow visitors to navigate trails safely
- develop a maintenance regime and schedule that improves the aesthetic of the lookout
- review, or develop a new, Master Plan that details a realistic improvement program for the lookout.





## Rotary West Park

Rotary West Park is almost a hectare (9,286m<sup>2</sup>) in size and located on the corner of Gallen Avenue and Ashford Streets. The park is locally known as 'The Rocket Park' due to the relatively unique rocket ship play equipment located toward the rear of the park. This play equipment holds significant sentimental value for many Gunnedah residents and regular visitors to the Shire. The park has excellent road frontage and the playground, picnic shelters, central kick-about space and mature shade trees create an inviting recreation park to spend time in.

The playground is in good condition and retention until it reaches the end of its useful life is recommended. When a condition report triggers renewal and replacement, it is recommended that the opportunity is taken to design a more contemporary play space incorporating a range of equipment and landscaping elements to create a play space suitable for a broader range of age groups, and to encourage creative and imagination play.

Further, a pathway circuit could be designed to loop around and through the play space, and connect with a circuit around the interior perimeter of the park. Walking is the top activity participated in by Gunnedah residents of all ages. Constructing a pathway circuit that provides an opportunity for safe and stable walking (for very young, older, and people with mobility impairments), as well as for bikes, scooters, roller blades, prams and wheelie walkers would be well used, contributing to the health and wellbeing of residents, and is recommended.

The park has several groupings of mature trees around its boundary leaving a large central area of the park as a grassy kick-about area. Additional tree planting is recommended as succession planting for existing, mature trees, and to enhance the available shade and amenity of the park. Planting trees in the near future and allowing them to mature will provide shade over a future pathway, when constructed.

If the rocket ship play equipment at the rear of the park is to be retained for use, it should be assessed against relevant Standards (refer to section 5.10.3 on page 102) and measures to mitigate risk to users implemented. If it is to be retained for its sentimental value, an interpretive sign providing details of its design, installation, history, value to the community, and reasons for closure could provide a point of interest for locals and visitors alike. This could also warn people of the hazards associated with attempts to use the equipment.

Rotary West Park is of sufficient size and amenity value to provide an alternative play and picnic experience for local residents, particularly when the popularity of Livvi's Place results in people considering alternative parks for recreation.



## Directions

The following enhancements are recommended for Rotary West Park:

- retain the children's playground and shade cover, and investigate the potential of positioning and planting additional shade trees to allow removal of the shade structure at the end of its useful life
- when the playground reaches the end of its asset life, investigate installation of equipment to suit a broader range of ages and abilities, and integrate landscaping elements to provide opportunities for creative and imagination play.
- assess the rocket ship play equipment against relevant Standards and implement measures to mitigate risk to users, or restrict access or remove the equipment
- consider the addition of a pathway circuit inside the perimeter of the park, predominantly as a consistent surface for walking, and of sufficient width to allow for a range of bikes, scooters, roller blades, prams and wheelie walkers. Bench seats interspersed along the path for those who require frequent rests could also be considered
- ensure any future footpath along Gallen Ave and Ashford St connect with internal paths in Rotary West Park
- plant additional trees to create an almost continuous canopy (over time) around the perimeter of the park, creating an oval-shaped open space central to the park as a grassy kick-about space.



## Ron Pople Park

Ron Pople Park is a very pleasant park with several mature shade trees, established lawn, a children's playground and picnic settings. The park entry from Linden Place is quite narrow, however the rear of the park opens up to a long, power easement that contributes to the park feeling larger than it actually is. This easement runs east-west providing a continuous corridor from Wandobah Street to just before Porcupine Reserve.

### Directions

Ron Pople Park is a good example of a local recreation park that does not require additional enhancement. Key recommendations include:

- monitoring tree health and ensuring succession planting of mature trees
- consider installation of a sign including a map to assist people navigate using the easement for walking and cycling
- install traffic restriction bollards where the easement meets roadways to prevent vehicles using the easement as an informal (and unsupervised) road.



## Stewart Street / McAndrew Street Parks

There are two parks within 200m of one another, that extend between Stewart Street and McAndrew Streets. Several community survey respondents identified sale of one of these parks as a logical course of action. Further investigation is required to determine which of the parks is most suitable for disposal.

### Directions

- commence the process to change the designation of one of the parks from community to operational land, to facilitate subdivision and sale, with proceeds reserved to implement recommendations of this Strategy.



## Wandobah Reserve

Wandobah Reserve is a large 40 hectare linear open space, on the south-western side of Gunnedah's residential area. The Oxley Highway, Alford Road and Wandobah Road border the open space. The open space carries stormwater flows during rain events, connecting with the watercourse adjacent to the Livestock Selling Centre, that joins with the Namoi River.

Predominantly a natural setting, the land is well vegetated with native trees and grass coverage. Unfortunately, there is evidence of unauthorised trail bike use throughout the area. This activity appears to be taking advantage of the old BMX track and jumps. Remaining club buildings have been vandalised and require immediate demolition as they pose a hazard.

Previous community consultation, undertaken a decade ago, identified potential construction and development of an equestrian cross-country track through the reserve, and support facilities such as tie-ups and water troughs. Further consultation with horse riders is required, however this is a compatible use of the land. Unauthorised use of the area by motorised trail bikes would require resolution, to facilitate improved horse trails and facilities.

Major embellishments include the skate park and shelters near the northern corner, rest stop and picnic amenities on the Oxley Highway side, and the concrete pathway extending for the length of Wandobah Road to the Gunnedah Rugby Club on the southern edge of the town.

The skate park is an important youth facility in Gunnedah and is in good condition. However, it's location is some distance from the town centre and the nearest toilets are either the Lions Rest Stop 200m cross-country without a path, across the stormwater flow path, or the sport club toilets, across Wandobah Road in the Showgrounds. These toilets are opened for training and competition times for sport users.

### Directions

The following actions are recommended for future development of Wandobah Reserve:

- demolish the old BMX buildings immediately as they are hazardous
- investigate the possibility of a natural wet land project for the Black Jack Creek area
- consider the area as an option for the design and construction of a fenced dog off-leash park either within the Wandobah open space area, across the road from McAndrew Park, or within McAndrew Park itself
- maintain the skate park the existing location, investigate on-site amenities and undertaken landscaping
- plant additional suitable shade trees to increase the amenity and appeal of the area, over time, particularly along the establish pathways
- engage local horse riders in discussions about the need for, and likely use of, a cross-country course through the reserve.



## Wolseley Park

Wolseley Park abuts the town centre and is about 4 hectares in size, covering an entire town block. The park is an acknowledged feature of the town and the Shire, and the recent addition of a contemporary accessible playground 'Livvi's Place' has enhanced the park's reputation even further.

It is Council's and the community's goal to position Gunnedah Shire as a lifestyle choice for people considering living in the region. Development of Wolseley Park into a significant destination park for the Shire and region will support Council to achieve this goal.

The 2010 Open Space Strategy recommended Council develop a master plan over the park to develop it, over time, as an attractive destination park, considering elements including:

- relocation of the tennis club and reuse of this area
- creating a plaza to link Brock's Court with the town hall and civic theatre
- creating a regional level playground in place of the two existing playgrounds
- the use of flowers and paths within the park
- making a feature of the picket fence and cricket scoreboard.

Since 2010, Council has implemented Stage 1 of Livvi's Place with Stage 2 pending Council approval, budget and funding from external grants.

Council has also received a proposal to develop a Friendship Garden. The garden's location is proposed between Livvi's Place and the existing rotunda building.

Tennis NSW recently provided Council with a condition report on the tennis court facilities in Gunnedah, and community use of the facilities. The report has been considered when making recommendations in this Strategy.

Community consultation has revealed a strong preference of the community to retain the current uses and features of Wolseley Park, including retention of both cricket and tennis, on the current footprints for each of those sports. The community is keen for the remaining perimeter of the park to be further developed for passive recreation use in the future.

## Directions

- develop a master plan over Wolseley Park, with particular focus on the passive recreation areas (i.e. non-sport) around the perimeter of the park
- investigate upgrading of the existing amenities
- in reference to proposed directions for Kitchener Park, and at the appropriate time, investigate the requirements and available external funding for upgraded field lighting at Wolseley Park.



planning areas

## Woolshed Reserve

Woolshed Reserve is a recreation park located adjacent to the Namoi River, and one of the designated dog off-leash areas for Gunnedah. The park includes an older style timber post shelter, wood barbeques and steel post and single top rail fencing. The fencing style does not keep dogs within the park and detracts from the visual amenity of this parcel of riverside parkland. Low profile park bollards along the Maitland Street frontage of the park may be more appropriate.

Woolshed Reserve should be included in any master planning for the Namoi River Parklands and the sport playing fields. The park could be designed and developed as a transition point between the developed sport playing fields and the natural setting of Cushans Reserve and Mullibah Lagoons.

## Directions

The following actions are recommended to improve the amenity of Woolshed Reserve:

- remove the wood barbeques
- plant additional suitable shade trees to increase the amenity and appeal of the park, over time
- retain the current use of the park as a dog off-leash area, and consider it as an option for further development for this purpose, when other sites are under consideration.



## Non-core open space

There are several parcels of non-core open space land within the Gunnedah township that have been named as recreation parks, that have not been detailed in this section. These parks include:

- Colin Brady Park
- Mary Davis Park
- Storey Park.

Further embellishment to allow these properties to function as recreation parks (that is, with playground and/or picnic facilities, etc.) is not practical or recommended due to constraints over use of the land. These constraints are associated with the land remaining unencumbered by infrastructure to allow stormwater drainage or as an easement for access for essential utilities or services, for example.

It is acknowledged that these properties currently contribute to the amenity and biodiversity of Gunnedah, and have potential to contribute further, particularly with additional tree planting.

### Directions

- avoid naming land that is not able to be fully developed into a recreation or sport park, as naming may create an expectation within the community of future embellishment of the park, that is not practical
- the installation of interpretive signs at these named non-core open space properties is supported, with inclusion of a statement clarifying the intent of the park (e.g. as a dog off leash area, access easement, amenity park, etc.)
- investigate the potential for additional tree planting at these sites, particularly along property boundaries, where this does not interfere with the essential use(s) of the land, to contribute to the amenity of the property, the immediate neighbourhood, and Gunnedah as a whole.



## Breeza

### Breeza Park

The village of Breeza is located approximately 45 kilometres southeast from Gunnedah township and is a collection of retail and service shops, residential properties and community facilities, including Breeza Park.

Breeza Park is positioned on Main Street, which acts as a service road parallel with the highway, on the northern edge of the village. Two new tennis courts on the northern edge of the park are noticeable additions to the park.

Discussion with members of the Progress Association indicated that use of the park is primarily by travellers using the toilets and playground, however there are hopes that the new tennis courts will generate regular social activities by locals. Installation of court lighting is planned

The playground is aging, however remains functional. When the equipment reaches the end of its useful life and requires removal, consideration should be given to nature / imagination play elements integrated with landscaping. The park does not require any further embellishment.

### Directions

Breeza Park is currently embellished to function as a local recreation park and rest area, and has two new tennis courts providing social sport opportunities. Future directions for the park include:

- undertake additional landscaping with trees and under-storey planting to frame the park boundaries and to create outdoor rooms within the park, creating separation between the formal memorial area, and play space, picnic area and barbeque, as well as screening utility infrastructure from view (e.g. tanks, blank shed walls etc.)
- install a shade structure over the children's playground and plant additional suitable shade trees, to allow removal of the shade structure at the end of its asset life (10-15 years)
- support the Progress Association to apply for external grants to reinstate the Ben Hall Wall artwork.



## GunnedahShire



## Carroll

### Carroll Park

Carroll is a small village on the Oxley Highway, approximately 20 kilometres east of Gunnedah.

Carroll Park is a large parcel of land with a relatively new playground, shade structures, basketball half-court, picnic tables and shelters and toilets. The park covers an entire block within the village and is bordered by the Oxley Highway and David, Phillip and Bernard Streets. A disused concrete cricket wicket near the centre of the park, has recently been replaced.

The Carroll Public School is located across the road on David Street, and many children use the park playground before and after school. The school lacks sufficient area for sport games, and recent efforts to upgrade Carroll Park are aimed at providing a venue for school students to learn and play sport, and other physical activities.

The David Street frontage of the park has an informal gravel entry/exit way, and this is used by park users, the school bus and for school drop off/pick up by parents.

### Directions

Carroll Park has potential to be a popular community meeting point, with future enhancements including:

- additional landscaping (with involvement from the school students) particularly to increase shade and amenity along the road frontages of the park, and to create and define outdoor rooms within the park
- constructing a single large shelter with at least two picnic settings for use by park users and for weather protection, and once constructed, remove the smaller single shelter
- in the longer term (6-10 years), constructing a pathway inside the perimeter of the park boundary (minimum 2m wide) suitable for walking and use by children with scooters, bikes and roller blades etc. Ensure the path is curvilinear to provide recreation interest, rather than four straight paths with 90 degree angles at each corner
- upgrade the existing toilet building when funds become available.



## Curlewis

### Curlewis Recreation Ground

The use of Curlewis Recreation Grounds has changed over time from field sports to animal and equestrian sports. Significant investment has been made into creating the current equestrian sport facilities.

The golf course is overgrown and the clubhouse is deteriorating. The rugby league field is being used for horse agistment.

### Directions

Enhancements to the reserve in the future primarily focus on completing the transition from previous use to current use, and ensuring safety of people and animals. Further consultation with the community to decide on the following actions is recommended:

- demolish and remove facilities and infrastructure that are beyond repair and no longer in use, including:
  - » the clubhouse
  - » golf course signs, bins, posts etc.
  - » brick barbeque
  - » goal posts and tower
- investigate the proposed use of the large self-bunded cylinder tank and ensure it is safe to keep on the site.



## Hamilton Park

Hamilton Park is central to the village of Curlewis and is bordered by Goran, Pike, Donaldson and Brown Streets. A Memorial gateway, marble name plates and a flagpole provide a formal entry to the park on the corner of Goran and Pike Streets. The Police Station and Rural Fire Service is located on the corner of Goran and Brown Streets, on the same town block as the park.

Mature, established pine trees are located near the centre of the park and provide a shaded, cool and pleasant focal point. The roof has been replaced on the large timber shelter, and colourbond has been used to sheet the external walls of the tennis clubhouse.

The clay tennis courts are overgrown with weeds, and fencing is in disrepair. A covered infants playground is located at the Goran Street end of the courts and is in good condition, however it lacks appeal.

A new concrete pathway leads through the park connecting the brick toilet building to a small skate park on the other side.

## Directions

Hamilton Park is a large area in a central location with the essential elements to contribute to a pleasant and valued community asset. Future enhancements need to contribute to improving the amenity of the park to ensure separate elements contribute to a coordinated whole. These enhancements include:

- replace the park boundary fence with a more suitable fencing style including attractive, low maintenance landscaping
- undertake additional landscaping with trees within the park and along the park boundaries to increase the available shade and amenity of the park
- integrate landscaping with the existing infants playground to make this a more inviting play space
- remove the existing shelter and the tennis clubhouse and replace both structures with a single new shelter, potentially incorporating storage and/or canteen space for future social community activities
- continue the pathway on Goran Street around the corner and along Pike and Donaldson Street connecting to the internal park pathway adjacent to the skate park
- upgrade two of the existing courts and lighting to provide opportunities for tennis, netball and basketball
- repurpose the remaining courts into a hard stand for bike, scooter and roller blade activities, by removing the fencing and weeds.



## Emerald Hill

### Emerald Hill Hall

Emerald Hill Hall is located on Goolhi Road and provides a social and recreational meeting place for residents from the surrounding district. The Emerald Hill Progress Association actively coordinates and encourages a variety of community and education events at the hall. The Ooranga Playgroup and fitness classes are regular community events held at the hall.

Throughout 2019 and 2020, an extensive range of upgrades were completed at the hall, including new accessible toilets, electrical rewiring of the hall, LED lighting and ceiling fans, an undercover verandah and handrails. The upgrades were possible due to fundraising by the Progress Association and external grants and funding. Further fundraising is aimed at installing insulation and air-conditioning.

While the hall is an old building, the recent upgrades and ongoing maintenance and upkeep is a credit to the Emerald Hill Progress Association. The grounds, fencing and water tanks are also well maintained.

### Directions

Emerald Hill Hall remains an important community meeting place for all members of the district. Costs to maintain the hall will likely increase over time, placing financial pressure on the Progress Association.

Council should work with the Progress Association to develop a realistic asset maintenance plan for the Hall, and identify acceptable support mechanisms, that may include minor operational grants to assist with annual recurring costs such as, for example, insurance and septic system maintenance.



## Kelvin

### Boonalla Aboriginal Area

The village of Kelvin is a locality in the predominantly agricultural district and surrounding community. While there are no Council managed parks or community facilities in Kelvin, the Boonalla Aboriginal Area provides opportunities for outdoor recreation activities including bushwalking, nature appreciation, bird watching, and mountain bike riding.

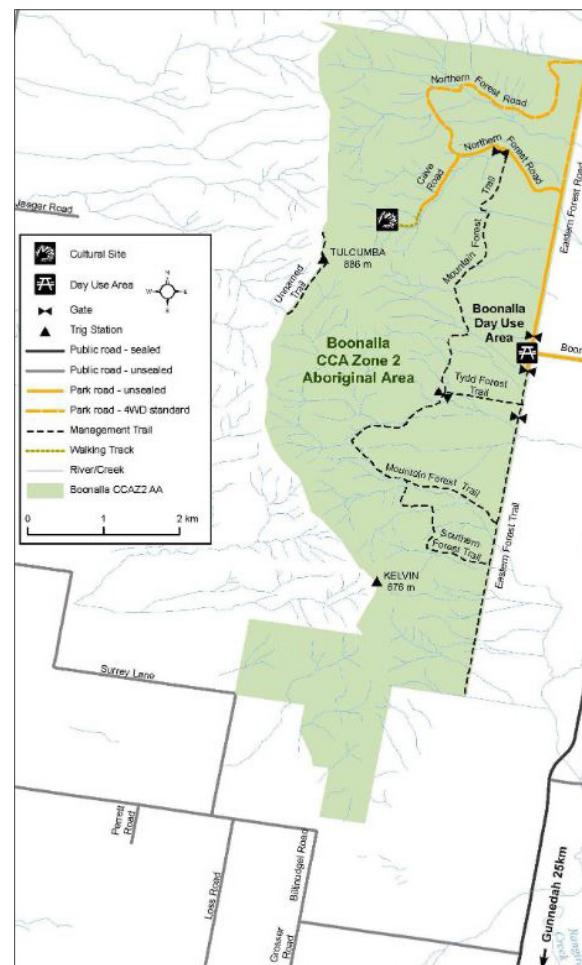
In 1920, the former Kelvin State Forest was managed to provide cypress pine and ironbark timber to local mills, and this continued until 2005. In late 2005, Kelvin State Forest was transferred to the Brigalow and Nandewar Community Conservation Area Act 2005 and declared the Kelvin Aboriginal Area.

The Boonalla Aboriginal Area Community Conservation Area protects significant Aboriginal cultural values and supports habitat for several threatened plant and animal species. The Boonalla Aboriginal Area Joint Management Committee manages the park in accordance with the plan of management. The Boonalla Aboriginal Area is part of a chain of parks stretching along the Brigalow Belt South and Nandewar bioregions.

### Directions

Council should continue to work with local Aboriginal people and the Boonalla Aboriginal Area Joint Management Committee to support appropriate visitation and recreation use of the Boonalla Aboriginal Area. Council may provide support in the following ways:

- assistance promoting education and community events to raise awareness of the cultural and natural values of Boonalla Aboriginal Area by the extended Gunnedah Shire community
- assistance with facilitating appropriate economic development opportunities e.g. cultural and environmental education experiences.



planning areas

## Mullaley

### Mullaley Park

Mullaley is a village on the Oxley Highway, approximately 40 kilometres west of Gunnedah, surrounded by a small community scattered across the agricultural district.

Mullaley Park is the only recreation park in the village, and provides residents of the small community with a place to play, walk the dog, have a picnic, hold community events and socialise with friends. The park also provides a rest area for travellers, and hosts regular Driver Reviver events.

A small number of residents provided a response to the community survey regarding the future development of open space in the Shire. Future development will need to benefit a broad cross-section of the community, rather than a few.

The park has existing facilities that ensure it can function as a recreation park and rest area, including a long, wide vehicle pullover area at the front of the park (suitable for caravans), fencing along all park boundaries, toilets, picnic shelters with tables and benches and a shade covered children's playground with multiple elements that is relatively new. A concrete pathway connects the park entryway to the toilets.

Mullaley Park is a highly valued element of this small community providing a meeting place for residents and visitors, as well as play and recreation opportunities for a broad cross-section of the community. To ensure the park continues to provide appropriate services to the community, several future directions are recommended to accommodate recreation needs and trends. Undertaking these improvements over time will ensure this vital community asset continues as a critical element to residents' well-being.

Focus areas that relate to these recommendations include: open space provision; open space connections; and placemaking and activation.

### Directions

Mullaley Park is a sound example of a small community recreation park, that would benefit from further park facility enhancements including:

- remove the timber barbeques and incinerator
- remove and replace the rusted bench surrounding the electric barbeque
- monitor the condition of the timber shelter and obtain advice from Council's building inspector/certifier regarding the remaining life/ways to extend the life of the asset, or plan to replace with a large shelter
- design a continuous concrete pathway (minimum 2m wide) around the internal perimeter of the park suitable for walking (with bench seats at intervals) and children using bikes, scooters and roller blades etc.
- if demand is demonstrated, consider developing a bike skills park in the existing grassed area, ensuring kick-about space is retained.



## Piallaway

### Piallaway Community Hall

Piallaway Community Hall is located on the Piallaway Road and provides a social and recreational meeting place for residents from the surrounding district. The Piallaway Progress Association actively coordinates and encourages a variety of community and education events at the hall.

Of significance, an Honour Roll for men of the Piallaway District who enlisted in the World Wars I and II hangs in the Hall and the Piallaway War Memorial Obelisk commemorating the First and Second World Wars located near the hall is a registered war memorial in NSW.

The hall also holds tokens of the area's history, including sporting memorabilia when the population of the area supported competition by local sporting teams.

While the hall is an old building, it appears to be structurally sound and its maintenance and upkeep is a credit to the Piallaway Progress Association. The grounds, fencing and water tanks are also well maintained.

### Directions

Piallaway Hall remains an important community meeting place, with local historical importance. Costs to maintain the hall will likely increase over time, placing financial pressure on the Progress Association.

Council should work with the Progress Association to identify ways to increase use of the hall, particularly by youth and young adults, and to develop a realistic asset maintenance plan for the Hall, and identify acceptable support mechanisms that may include:

- identify contemporary activities that may encourage community connection, for example purchase of a pool/billiards table and/or table tennis table, classic and modern board games for 'Games Night' events etc.
- minor operational grants to assist with annual recurring costs, for example, insurance and septic system maintenance.



## Tambar Springs

### Tambar Springs Memorial Park

Tambar Springs is located approximately 70 kilometres south-west of Gunnedah township, on the main link road between the Oxley Highway and the Golden Highway. The village of Tambar Springs is a focal point for the rural community, and Memorial Park is a focal point within the village.

Memorial Park has stone columns with marble name plaques and iron gates with arch including 'Lest We Forget', and this gateway frames a marble obelisk with a young soldier atop. These formal and sombre elements of the park have been used to develop the overall layout of the park. Over the past ten years, additions to the park have included toilets, a shelter with seating, electric barbeque and a new consolidated playground. Concrete pathways connect the entry to the obelisk, and the two buildings that are placed either side and to the rear. A service road provides vehicle access and parking parallel to the park, directly off the highway.

Tambar Springs Park is a fine example of a local recreation park and, with continued levels of maintenance recommended, requires minimal additional enhancements.

### Directions

Minor future embellishments are proposed for Memorial Park, including:

- consider installation of a shade structure over the playground, and plant additional suitable shade trees to allow removal of the shade structure completely at the end of its asset life (10-15 years)
- install a small shelter over the electric barbeque to protect it from the weather
- consider additional planting along the rear park boundary to screen the colourbond fence and neighbouring yards, which detract from the aesthetic of the park
- consider relocating the W-30 tractor to a museum or other appropriate location, or provide a hard shelter and fence around its perimeter.





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## 07\_ Implementation

### Implementation

Implementation of the recommendations outlined in this Strategy will require strong leadership, appropriate resources from Council and a commitment to making some difficult decisions. Importantly, the recommendations do not commit Council as sole lead for implementation. Rather, the report engenders ongoing Council and community partnerships and provides evidence and support for all groups to seek grant funding and other investment opportunities.

The recommendations of this Strategy are summarised in this section and are grouped by planning area - Council-wide first followed by the Gunnedah township and then each of the localities within the LGA. This allows interested readers easy access to those actions most directly related to them.

Priorities are assigned for each action:

- » Ongoing
- » 1-2 years
- » 3-5 years
- » 6-8 years
- » 9-10years.

Excepting 1-2 year priorities, the recommended priorities are provided as a guide—changes in community requirements or earlier opportunities for funding may alter development.

Project responsibility has been assigned for each action as each project identified requires a responsible party to take action, form a project team and drive each project to its successful completion. It is recommended that project leaders identify other groups and individuals in Council and the community for assistance and support to achieve projects identified in the Strategy.

Clearly, many recreation parks have been developed in an ad hoc nature without a set direction of identified park function. The preparation of Council approved master plans will assist to ensure demand-driven development.

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## Master planning

Several parks have recommendations for creation of master plans as a next step prior to further development. A master plan provides a vision for a site, identifying what it should look like and how it should function into the future. It establishes a strong and consistent direction, providing a framework for ongoing improvement. It considers the interrelationship between:

- current character and functionality of the landscape
- public expectations and needs
- emerging issues and trends
- the realities of the economic, social, environmental and legislative context of the time.

The result is a plan that balances needs across a range of often conflicting interests.

Master plans do not suggest that all elements of the plan should proceed immediately, or that Council nor the user groups should be responsible for all capital costs in respect of those items that are progressed. It is important to note that the intent of a master plan is to provide a framework for future development of the Park over an extended time period so that ad hoc improvements are avoided and community use and long-term viability are maximised. A master plan should be regularly monitored to ensure the outcomes continue to meet community needs in the best possible way.

## Community halls

Community halls and sports grounds exist in outlying communities across the Gunnedah Shire and provide focal points for the community to gather to socialise, discuss important local matters, and participate in recreation activities and social sport.

The land and facilities are owned or managed by the community and progress associations in the locality and therefore are not included in open space calculations for Council. However, a short summary and recommendations for future directions are provided in the Strategy in recognition of the value and services these facilities provide to their local communities.

Table 20: Capital Works Schedule

ID	AREA/PROJECT	RESPONSIBILITY	ONGOING	1-2 YRS	3-5 YRS	6-8 YRS	9-10 YRS	NOTES
00	Whole of LGA / Further Planning and Investigation							
0.1	New residential development: Seek the provision of good sized parks (0.5 hectares or larger) and usable open spaces, recreation nodes along linear corridors and connections in future urban developments	Council	X					
0.2	Community use of school facilities: Engage with school to implement the NSW Education policy encouraging community use of school facilities	Council		X				
0.3	Land rationalisation: Undertake steps to convert parks identified for rationalisation from 'community' to 'operational' (under the Local Government Act) to allow Council additional flexibility for repurposing and/or disposal	Council	X					
0.4	Recreation destinations: Develop a master plan over Wolseley Park with the objective of creating a destination recreation park with diverse opportunities for the whole community inclusive of age, ability and cultural backgrounds	Council		\$30,000 - \$40,000				
0.5	Youth space / skate park: Undertake design of the existing youth space (skate park) to include on-site amenities and additional landscaping and park embellishments. Include additional wheeled recreation devices, for ages 3 years plus in the design.	Council		\$20,000 - \$30,000				Amount refers to design cost with anticipated capital cost for on-site amenities of \$200,000 and activity space upgrades between \$250,000 and \$350,000
0.6	Namoi River/Mullibah Lagoons: Maintain and enhance the quality and amenity of recreation nodes along the Namoi River and Mullibah Lagoon, while preserving the natural values, landscape and setting	Council	X					
0.7	Local destinations: Maintain and strengthen the destination value of other key recreation parks strategically located across the Shire. Consider opportunities for meeting particular needs such as youth oriented facilities, dog parks, exercise equipment, ball courts and other targeted infrastructure. This could include spaces for temporary 'pop up' youth and recreation activity opportunities	Council	X					Refer to individual park actions
0.8	Maximise utilisation: Maintain and where required undertake improvements to sportsgrounds in accordance with their allocated hierarchy level. This includes considering opportunities to improve the quality and capacity of playing fields and facilities to support future population growth demands. Specific opportunities are considered in the Planning Areas: Directions. Ensure that unrestricted access is maintained, and encouraged, for Council managed sportsgrounds for casual sports use across the Shire	Council	X					Dependant on master planning outcomes for sport parks
0.9	Master planning: A systematic approach will be required to plan and accommodate existing sports, particularly those that may be relocated (e.g. Showgrounds MP and John Longmuir Playing Fields) at new homes that may be greenfield sites (e.g. Council owned, undeveloped land near Namoi Playing Fields). Prioritise master planning activities to sequence relocation requirements and to align with Council's budget constraints.	Council		\$35,000 per master plan				The cost of master planning is dependant on a range of variables including the scope of works, technical specialists, number of users/stakeholders etc.
0.10	Sports Hubs: Continue to improve the quality and function of the existing Sports Hubs at Donnelly Fields, Namoi Playing Fields, Kitchener Park and the Showgrounds. Ensure appropriate master planning is in place for each of these sites, and that the master plans are reviewed and updated every five years to recognise changes in community needs	Council						

ID	AREA/PROJECT	RESPONSIBILITY	ONGOING	1-2 YRS	3-5 YRS	6-8 YRS	9-10 YRS	NOTES
00	Whole of LGA / Further Planning and Investigation							
0.11	Missing connections/Pathways and trails: Encourage the community to undertake walking audits of their local neighbourhoods to identify barriers, issues and improvements. Ensure communication with residents is clear regarding how the information will be used, to clarify expectations and timeframes for identified issues, e.g. hazards vs programmed maintenance vs capital works. Undertake a continual program of pathway and trail maintenance and upgrade within and through open spaces to support walking and bike riding, including implementing Council's Bike Plan and PAMP	Council	X	\$200,000	\$300,000	\$300,000	\$200,000	
0.12	Namoi River trail: Create a continuous pathway along the Namoi River to allow people of all ages and ability to access and appreciate the natural values of the area. Ensure the creation of recreation nodes along the linear corridor to provide different recreation opportunities appealing to different age groups.	Council		\$50,000	\$150,000	\$100,000	\$150,000	Staged development of River Trail
0.13	CBD Connections: In addition to routes identified in the Bike Plan and PAMP, ensure that connected pathways are created to allow easy navigation of walking routes throughout the town centre extending down connecting streets and lanes to open space and parkland, particularly the Namoi River and Mullibah Lagoons	Council	X					
0.14	Planning for biodiversity: Review existing, or develop new Revegetation Plans and develop Biodiversity Action Plans that outline specific projects, plant species and biodiversity initiatives, including the Gunnedah Koala Conservation Landscape Plan 2016. Plans should be developed for higher level biodiversity sites including the Namoi River, Mullibah Reserve, Porcupine Reserve and Cushans Reserve. Review Council's existing Street Tree Plan and develop a guide for planting species within biodiversity sites	Council	X		Commence review by 2023			
0.15	Public Realm: Develop a Landscape Master Plan for the main street and town centre that explores options and prioritises people and business, with a clear objective to increase greenery. Refer to Section 5.6.6 opportunities and challenges to prepare a comprehensive brief for the Landscape Master Planning process	Council			\$50,000 - \$100,000			Cost of Landscape Master Plan dependant on scope of project
0.16	Placemaking: Adopt a placemaking and activation approach to planning for parks and the public realm to ensure inclusion of the community in key planning and design processes	Council	X					
01	Gunnedah township							
1.1	ANZAC Park: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>continue to promote the park as an event space for photos, weddings, boot camps and other small gatherings</li> <li>pursue solar power for both pool complexes, and secure external funding to transition to more efficient power sources for these facilities that are major contributors to Council's power use</li> <li>collaborate with the Gunnedah RSL Sub-Branch to develop the terms of the proposed lease, including ongoing maintenance.</li> </ul>	Council	X	X				
1.2	Arthur Heath Park: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>retain lot 1 DP 1140258, lot 2 DP 758492 and lots 1-4 DP 6264</li> <li>investigate changing the designation (under the LG Act) and rezone lots 1, 7-13 DP 653376</li> <li>retain lots 1-4 DP 1163256 as a buffer between the railway line and other uses.</li> </ul>	Council	X					

ID	AREA/PROJECT	RESPONSIBILITY	ONGOING	1-2 YRS	3-5 YRS	6-8 YRS	9-10 YRS	NOTES
01	Gunnedah township continued							
1.3	Athol Gallen Park: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>develop and implement a landscape plan for the park that incorporates district level play spaces for children and youth and kick-about areas, increased shade tree planting, picnic facilities, internal pathways and landscaping to increase the amenity and appeal of the park</li> <li>consider inclusion of a fenced dog off-leash park install additional pedestrian bridges to connect the park with the pathway along the adjacent stormwater drainage corridor</li> <li>ensure neighbourhood pathways connect to the park providing safe and accessible walk and cycle routes through the park</li> </ul>	Council			\$30,000 - landscape plan	\$300,000 - implementation		Timing is dependant on uptake of the developing residential areas within this park's catchment
1.4	Cushans Reserve: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>connect Cushans Reserve with the Namoi River Parklands via a continuous walking trail</li> <li>create a trailhead at the Reserve entry at the end of the dirt road off Old Tamworth Road</li> <li>consider dedicating additional resources (budget and staff) toward revegetation and weed management activities, particularly through programs such as Greening Australia</li> <li>investigate the potential, and costs, for controlled vehicle access to the area.</li> </ul>	Council	X*			\$50,000	\$50,000	*\$5,000 per year is suggested toward revegetation and weed management activities as an operational expense to assist attract external funding
1.5	Donnelly Fields: the entire sport and recreation precinct including Donnelly Fields, Namoi Playing Fields, Namoi River Parklands, acquired Council land, stormwater drainage reserve and parcels of Travelling Stock Routes (TSRs) require a Master Plan to guide development of this important community asset over the next 10 years	Council			\$40,000			Dependant on scope
1.6	Gunnedah Showgrounds: develop a new, comprehensive Master Plan over the Showgrounds, including comprehensive consultation with user groups and adjacent land users to ensure this significant community asset is future-proofed and meets contemporary users needs.	Council		\$35,000				
1.7	John Dodd Park: position and plant additional shade trees to allow removal of the shade sail at the end of its useful life	Council		\$5,000				Focussed care for newly planted semi-mature trees will be required for at least 3 years
1.8	John Longmuir Playing Fields: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Investigate relocation of field and court sports currently at John Longmuir Playing Fields, to the Council acquired land near Donnelly and Namoi Playing Fields, that is yet to be developed, and include current and future facility needs in any requisite master planning for the site</li> <li>Plan for this area to be included in the review of the Showground Master Plan</li> </ul>	Council			Refer to items 0.9, 1.5 and 1.6			
1.9	Jae-High Park: Further targeted consultation with the immediate neighbourhood (400m catchment) is recommended prior to taking definitive action. The options below warrant consideration: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>install shade sails/structures over the play equipment, ensuring the positioning maximises shade during the peak of summer. Plant shade trees to replace shade structures at maturity/asset replacement timing (may require a series of mulched nature strips). Install irrigation to establish a grassed kick-about area</li> <li>consider removing the play equipment and retaining the fencing to develop a dog off-leash park</li> <li>consider complete removal of embellishments and undertake necessary steps for sale of the land</li> </ol>	Council				Item 1: \$40,000*		*If item 2 and 3 have been investigated and the decision has been made to retain the playground

ID	AREA/PROJECT	RESPONSIBILITY	ONGOING	1-2 YRS	3-5 YRS	6-8 YRS	9-10 YRS	NOTES
01	Gunnedah township continued							
1.10	Jaegar Park: it is recommended that the existing embellishments in the park are removed at the end of their useful lives, and significant additional tree and shrub planting in mulched garden beds is undertaken, as well as suitable ground cover, to increase the amenity of the park and reduce mowing and maintenance	Council				X		
1.11	Ken Green Park: remove the fencing and old park furniture, and reposition the sign to a road frontage. Provide a park bench for carers.	Council				X		
1.12	Kilcoy Park: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>plan for a contemporary park that creates a small well designed local park on lot 3 DP 758492, similar to John Dodd Park in size, however consider play equipment for older children, and include landscaping and shade tree planting</li> <li>consider sale of lot 2 and lot 4 DP 758492, with retention of proceeds toward implementation of this Strategy</li> </ul>	Council				X		
1.13	Kitchener Park: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. investigate external funding for shade and weather protection over sections of the tiered seating/grandstand • remove the existing tennis and basketball courts and replace with two multisport courts, including basketball, tennis and handball</li> <li>B. develop an irrigated turf area for warm-up activities and training</li> <li>C. undertake additional landscaping integrated with the playground and lawn area parallel with Conadilly Street</li> <li>D. investigate opportunities for a partnership arrangement with a professional team for multiple visits, and the requisite field and facility requirements, including potential relocation of the grass cricket wicket</li> </ul>	Council	D*	A	B & C - \$70,000			Funding sources external to Council should be sourced for capital costs resulting from any agreement for exhibition games
1.14	McAndrew Park: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>install shade over the playground to encourage use</li> <li>plant additional shade trees around the internal perimeter of the park</li> <li>monitor use of the park by cricket to assess use with a view to repurpose the park use from sport to recreation. Initially this would involve removal of the cricket pitch and additional tree planting around the perimeter</li> <li>consider this space as a possible option for a dog off-leash park.</li> </ul>	Council	X	\$70,000				
1.15	McDonagh Park: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>commence the process to designate the land as operational, rather than community land under the LG Act, to allow sale of the land</li> <li>remove existing embellishments while retaining healthy trees</li> </ul>	Council	X					
1.16	Mornington Park: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>undertake soft and hard landscaping to refresh the park and connect picnic and play elements</li> </ul>	Council				\$30,000*		*Not including asset replacement

ID	AREA/PROJECT	RESPONSIBILITY	ONGOING	1-2 YRS	3-5 YRS	6-8 YRS	9-10 YRS	NOTES
01	Gunnedah township continued							
1.17	<p>Mullibah Lagoon:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>create a trailhead at the Wentworth Street entry including a map of the Lagoon and walking trial connections, and consolidate existing signage</li> <li>design and install a walking trail along the length of the linear corridor, extending north-west to connect with the Namoi River, and south-east to Carroll Street (where people can divert toward Cushans Reserve via Weaver Street)</li> <li>liaise with local Aboriginal People regarding the appropriateness of installing a yarning circle at a suitable location, for use by everyone in the community</li> <li>design and place interpretive and directional signage to enhance visitors experiences, taking care not to create sign clutter</li> <li>consider upgrading the gravel area used for car parking at the end of Wentworth Street</li> </ul>	Council	X		\$20,000*	\$300,000^		<p>^estimate for walking trail</p> <p>*capital works items including trailhead and yarning circle</p>
1.18	<p>Namoi River Parklands:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the Riverine Landscape Master Plan developed in 2010 provides detailed direction for upgrading and development of the open spaces along, and connected to, the river. The Master Plan is aspirational and implementation is dependant on available resources. Key elements have been sourced from the Master Plan and integrated into Focus Areas, previously detailed in this Strategy. It would be beneficial to include the northern side of Cohen's Bridge in future reviews or expansions of the Master Plan area and recommendations</li> <li>investigate the process involved to seek the necessary approvals for potential construction of a weir in the Namoi River.</li> </ul>	Council	X	\$40,000				Dependant on scope
1.19	<p>Pensioners Hill:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>develop a master plan over the Reserve, in conjunction with the Gunnedah Urban Landcare Group (GULG), Rotary West and the broader community</li> <li>formalise an agreement between the GULG, Rotary West and Council to define key responsibilities for site maintenance</li> <li>consider inclusion of the existing toilet into Council's public amenity program to ensure it is available for visitors to the park, and investigate construction of new public amenities in the future that are fit-for-purpose</li> <li>update the signage at the lookout utilising wayfinding consistent with Council's public spaces to enhance visitors' experience of the park, including consideration of self-guided QR code tours.</li> </ol>	Council		B & C	A \$25,000	D \$20,000		
1.20	<p>Porcupine Reserve:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>consider management strategies to mitigate anti-social behaviour, including potentially restricting access</li> <li>review signage and upgrade to ensure sufficient information is provided to allow visitors to navigate trails safely</li> <li>develop a maintenance regime and schedule that improves the aesthetic of the lookout</li> <li>review, or develop a new, Master Plan that details a realistic improvement program for the lookout</li> </ol>	Council in partnership with community organisation(s)		Item 2: \$20,000 Item 3: staff time		Item 3: \$40,000		Master plan project scope to include ecological assessment (biodiversity corridor) to guide areas for conservation and appropriate recreation



ID	AREA/PROJECT	RESPONSIBILITY	ONGOING	1-2 YRS	3-5 YRS	6-8 YRS	9-10 YRS	NOTES
01	Gunnedah township continued							
1.21	<p>Rotary West Park</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>retain the children's playground and shade cover, and investigate the potential of positioning and planting additional shade trees to allow removal of the shade structure at the end of its useful life</li> <li>when the playground reaches the end of its asset life, investigate installation of equipment to suit a broader range of ages and abilities, and integrate landscaping elements to provide opportunities for creative and imagination play.</li> <li>consider the future of the rocket ship play equipment and ensure the community is informed</li> <li>consider the addition of a pathway circuit inside the perimeter of the park, predominantly as a consistent surface for walking, and of sufficient width to allow for a range of bikes, scooters, roller blades, prams and wheelie walkers. Bench seats interspersed along the path for those who require frequent rests could also be considered</li> <li>ensure any future footpath along Gallen Ave and Ashford St connect with internal paths in Rotary West Park</li> <li>plant additional trees to create an almost continuous canopy (over time) around the perimeter of the park, retaining an oval-shaped open space central to the park as a grassy kick-about space.</li> </ol>	Council	Item 6	Item 1: \$2,000 Item 3		Item 2: \$400,000 Item 4: \$200,000	Item 5	
1.21	<p>Ron Pople Park:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>monitoring tree health and ensuring succession planting of mature trees</li> <li>consider installation of a sign including a map to assist people navigate using the easement for walking and cycling</li> <li>install traffic restriction bollards where the easement meets roadways to prevent vehicles using the easement as an informal (and unsupervised) road</li> </ul>	Council			\$10,000			
1.22	Stewart Park: commence the process to change the designation of one of the parks from community to operational land, to facilitate subdivision and sale, with proceeds reserved to implement recommendations of this strategy	Council	X					
1.23	<p>Wandobah Reserve:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>demolish the old BMX buildings immediately as they are hazardous</li> <li>investigate the possibility of a natural wet land project for the Black Jack Creek area</li> <li>consider the area as an option for the design and construction of a fenced dog off-leash park either within the Wandobah open space area, across the road from McAndrew Park, or within McAndrew Park itself</li> <li>maintain the skate park the existing location, investigate on-site amenities and undertaken landscaping</li> <li>plant additional suitable shade trees to increase the amenity and appeal of the park, over time, particularly along the established pathways</li> <li>engage local horse riders in discussions about the need for, and likely use of, a cross-country course through the reserve.</li> </ol>	Council	Item 5 <sup>^</sup> Item 2	Item 1: \$5,000 Item 3: \$30,000 Item 4: Refer to 0.5				<sup>^</sup> Annual operational funding recommended between \$3,000-\$5,000
1.24	<p>Wolseley Park:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>develop a master plan over Wolseley Park, with particular focus on the passive recreation areas (i.e. non-sport) around the perimeter of the park</li> <li>investigate upgrading of the existing amenities</li> <li>in reference to proposed directions for Kitchener Park, and at the appropriate time, investigate the requirements and available external funding for upgraded field lighting at Wolseley Park.</li> </ul>	Council		\$35,000				

ID	AREA/PROJECT	RESPONSIBILITY	ONGOING	1-2 YRS	3-5 YRS	6-8 YRS	9-10 YRS	NOTES
1.25	Woolshed Reserve: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>remove the wood barbeques</li> <li>plant additional suitable shade trees to increase the amenity and appeal of the park, over time</li> <li>retain the current use of the park as a dog off-leash area, and consider it as an option for further development for this purpose, when other sites are under consideration</li> </ul>	Council	X					
1.26	Non-core open space <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>avoid naming land that is not able to be fully developed into a recreation or sport park, as naming may create an expectation within the community of future embellishment of the park, that is not practical</li> <li>the installation of interpretive signs at these named non-core open space properties is supported, with inclusion of a statement clarifying the intent of the park (e.g. as a dog off leash area, access easement, amenity park, etc.)</li> <li>investigate the potential for additional tree planting at these sites, particularly along property boundaries, where this does not interfere with the essential use(s) of the land, to contribute to the amenity of the property, the immediate neighbourhood, and Gunnedah as a whole.</li> </ul>	Council	X					
02	Shire North (Kelvin, Emerald Hill)							
2.1	Kelvin: Council should continue to work with local Aboriginal people and the Boonalla Aboriginal Area Joint Management Committee to support appropriate visitation and recreation use of the Boonalla Aboriginal Area. Council may provide support in the following ways: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>assistance promoting education and community events to raise awareness of the cultural and natural values of Boonalla Aboriginal Area by the extended Gunnedah Shire community</li> <li>assistance with facilitating appropriate economic development opportunities e.g. cultural and environmental education experiences</li> </ul>	Council in partnership with community organisation(s)	X					
2.2	Emerald Hill: Council should work with the Progress Association to develop a realistic asset maintenance plan for the Hall, and identify acceptable support mechanisms that may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>minor operational grants to assist with annual recurring costs, for example, insurance and septic system maintenance</li> </ul>	Council in partnership with community organisation(s)	X					

ID	AREA/PROJECT	RESPONSIBILITY	ONGOING	1-2 YRS	3-5 YRS	6-8 YRS	9-10 YRS	NOTES
03	Shire South (Curlewis, Breeza)							
3.1	<p>Hamilton Park: future enhancements need to contribute to improving the amenity of the park to ensure separate elements contribute to a coordinated whole. These enhancements include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>replace the park boundary fence with a more suitable fencing style including attractive, low maintenance landscaping</li> <li>undertake additional landscaping with trees within the park and along the park boundaries to increase the available shade and amenity of the park</li> <li>integrate landscaping with the existing infants playground to make this a more inviting play space</li> <li>remove the existing shelter and the tennis clubhouse and replace both structures with a single new shelter, potentially incorporating storage and/or canteen space for future social community activities</li> <li>continue the pathway on Goran Street around the corner and along Pike and Donaldson Street connecting to the internal park pathway adjacent to the skate park</li> <li>upgrade two of the existing courts and lighting to provide opportunities for tennis, netball and basketball</li> <li>repurpose the remaining courts into a hard stand for bike, scooter and roller blade activities, by removing the fencing and weeds</li> </ol>	Council in partnership with community organisation(s)		Item 2, 3 & 5: \$100,000	Item 1: \$150,000		Item 4, 6 & 7: \$150,000	
3.2	<p>Curlewis Recreation Ground: enhancements to the reserve in the future primarily focus on completing the transition from previous use to current use, and ensuring safety of people and animals. Further consultation with the community to decide on the the following actions is recommended:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>demolish and remove facilities and infrastructure that are beyond repair and no longer in use, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» the clubhouse</li> <li>» golf course signs, bins, posts etc.</li> <li>» brick barbeque</li> <li>» goal posts and tower</li> </ul> </li> <li>investigate the proposed use of the large self-bunded cylinder tank and ensure it is safe to keep on the site</li> </ul>	Council in partnership with community organisation(s)		\$10,000				Costs include either staff and plant costs or contractor costs as well as waste disposal fees
3.3	<p>Breeza Park: Breeza Park is currently embellished to function as a local recreation park and rest area, and has two new tennis courts providing social sport opportunities. Future directions for the park include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>undertake additional landscaping with trees and under-storey planting to frame the park boundaries and to create outdoor rooms within the park, creating separation between the formal memorial area, and play space, picnic area and barbeque, as well as screening utility infrastructure from view (e.g. tanks, blank shed walls etc.)</li> <li>install a shade structure over the children's playground and plant additional suitable shade trees, to allow removal of the shade structure at the end of its asset life (10-15 years)</li> <li>support the Progress Association to apply for external grants to reinstate the Ben's Hall Wall artwork</li> </ol>	Council in partnership with community organisation(s)	X		Items 1 & 2: \$50,000			

ID	AREA/PROJECT	RESPONSIBILITY	ONGOING	1-2 YRS	3-5 YRS	6-8 YRS	9-10 YRS	NOTES
04	Shire East (Carroll, Piallaway)							
4.1	<p>Carroll Park: Carroll Park has potential to be a popular community meeting point, with future enhancements including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>17. provision of a suitable method to allow irrigation of the oval for social sport (e.g. travelling irrigation) to ensure the grounds are safe for use</li> <li>18. additional landscaping (with involvement from the school students) particularly to increase shade and amenity along the road frontages of the park, and to create and define outdoor rooms within the park</li> <li>19. construct a single large shelter with at least two picnic settings for use by park users and for weather protection, and once constructed, remove the smaller single shelter</li> <li>20. in the longer term (6-10 years), construct a pathway inside the perimeter of the park boundary (minimum 2m wide) suitable for walking and use by children with scooters, bikes and roller blades etc. Ensure the path is curvilinear to provide recreation interest, rather than four straight paths with 90 degree angles at each corner</li> </ul>	Council in partnership with community organisation(s)		Item 1 & 2: \$10,000	Item 3: \$40,000	Item 4: \$200,000		
4.2	<p>Piallaway: Council should work with the Progress Association to develop a realistic asset maintenance plan for the Hall, and identify acceptable support mechanisms that may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• identify contemporary activities that may encourage community connection, for example purchase of a pool/billiards table and/or table tennis table, classic and modern board games for 'Games Night' events etc</li> <li>• minor operational grants to assist with annual recurring costs, for example, insurance and septic system maintenance</li> </ul>	Piallaway Hall Committee, with support from Council	X					
05	Shire West (Mullalee, Tambar Springs)							
5.1	<p>Mullalee Park:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>21. remove the timber barbeques and incinerator</li> <li>22. remove and replace the rusted bench surrounding the electric barbeque</li> <li>23. monitor the condition of the timber shelter and obtain advice from Council's building inspector/certifier regarding the remaining life/ways to extend the life of the asset, or plan to replace with a large shelter</li> <li>24. design a continuous concrete pathway (minimum 2m wide) around the internal perimeter of the park suitable for walking (with bench seats at intervals) and children using bikes, scooters and roller blades etc.</li> <li>25. if demand is demonstrated, consider developing a bike skills park in the existing grassed area, ensuring kickabout space is retained</li> </ul>	Council		Items 1 & 2: \$2,000	Item 3: \$500 Item 4: \$15,000 (design)	Item 5: consideration		
5.2	<p>Tambar Springs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• consider installation of a shade structure over the playground, and plant additional suitable shade trees to allow removal of the shade structure completely at the end of its asset life (10-15 years)</li> <li>• install a small shelter over the electric barbeque to protect it from the weather</li> <li>• consider additional planting along the rear park boundary to screen the colourbond fence and neighbouring yards, which detract from the aesthetic of the park</li> <li>• consider relocating the W-30 tractor to a museum or other appropriate location, or provide a hard shelter and fence around its perimeter</li> </ul>	Council			\$50,000			

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## Appendix A: Trail classification/grading systems

Relevant industry classification/grading systems for walking, mountain biking, horse riding and multi-use trails are provided in the table below. Council's management and maintenance track network may be suitable for some outdoor recreation use and align with some of the trail classification and grading systems below, however will need to be assessed on an individual track-by-track basis.

### Recreation trail classification/grading systems

Activity type	Classification/grading system	Categories				
Walking Tracks	Australian Walking Track Grading System (DEPI Victoria)	A Grade 1 walk AS 2165.1 Class 1 track  Flat, no steps Well formed track No experience required  Grade 1 is suitable for the disabled with assistance	A Grade 2 walk AS 2165.1 Class 2 track  Gentle hills Formed track No experience required  Grade 2 is suitable for families with young children	A Grade 3 walk AS 2165.1 Class 3 track  Short steep hills Formed track, some obstacles  Grade 3 is recommended for people with some bushwalking experience	A Grade 4 walk AS 2165.1 Class 4 track  Very steep Rough track, many obstacles  Grade 4 is recommended for experienced bush walkers	A Grade 5 walk AS 2165.1 Class 5 and 6 track  Very steep and difficult Rough, unformed track  Grade 5 is recommended for very experienced bush walkers
Mountain Bike Trails	IMBA Australia Trail Difficulty Rating System	White circle (very easy)  Firm and stable tread surface  Suitable for families with young children and beginners	Green circle (easiest)  Firm and stable tread surface  Suitable for families with young children and beginners	Blue square (more difficult)  Mostly stable with some variability in tread surface  Suitable for riders with some experience	Single black diamond (very difficult)  Widely variable tread surface  Suitable for experience riders only	Double black diamond (extremely difficult)  Widely variable and unpredictable tread surface  Suitable for very experienced and expert riders only
Horse Riding Trails	Sustainable Recreational Trails: Guidelines for the planning, design and maintenance or recreational trails in South Australia	Green Circle Class 1 (easy)  Suitable for novice riders through to advanced	Blue Square Class 2 (intermediate)  Suitable for intermediate through to advanced riders	Black Diamond Class 3 (advanced)  Suitable for advanced through to expert riders		
Multi-use Trails	Developed by the South East Queensland Active Trails and the Department of Environment and Resource Management to rate trails on the South East Queensland Horse Trail Network according to international industry standards	Green Circle  Novice through to advanced  Trails are designed for users who do not have the skill or desire for more challenging trails. Requires little skill or physical challenge to complete. Lower level of risk for the user and less variety	Blue Square  Intermediate through to advanced  Trails are designed to meet the expectations of the majority of trail users  Requires skills beyond that of novice. Will at times challenge the average trail user	Black Diamond  Advanced through to expert  Trails are designed for users with advanced skills seeking a higher risk level.  Will provide a definite physical challenge. Users contemplating these tracks should have considerable skill in their chosen activity and have a high level of competence in outdoor skills such as navigation, first aid and survival.		

## Appendix B: Planting species list

Botanical Name	Common Name	Mature Height (m)	Mature Spread (m)	Additional Information	Type
<i>Acacia farnesia</i>	Mimosa bush	5m	3m		Tree
<i>Acacia harpophylla</i>	Brigalow	25m	10m	Koala friendly, watercourses, floodplains and slopes.	Tree
<i>Acacia pendula</i>	Weeping myall	12m	8m	Koala friendly, watercourses, floodplains and slopes.	Tree
<i>Acacia podalyrifolia</i>	Mt Morgan wattle	6m	5m	Suitable footpath species, sewer or powerline areas	Tree
<i>Acacia salicina</i>	Cooba	10-20m	8m	Koala friendly, watercourses, shelter, floodplains and slopes	Tree
<i>Acacia saligna</i>	Golden Wreath wattle	8m	8m	Planted in areas without powerlines, sewerlines or footpaths	Tree
<i>Acacia stenophylla</i>					Tree
<i>Acer buergerianum</i>	Trident maple	10m	6m	Planted in areas without powerlines, sewerlines or footpaths	Tree
<i>Acer negundo</i>	Box elder maple	15m	12m	Planted in areas without powerlines, sewerlines or footpaths	Tree
<i>Acer pseudoplatanus</i>	Sycamore Maple	20m	12m	Planted in areas without powerlines, sewerlines or footpaths	Tree
<i>Albizia julibrissin</i>	Silk tree	10m	5m	Planted in areas without powerlines, sewerlines or footpaths	Tree
<i>Alectryon oleifolius</i>	Western rosewood	5m	5m	Suitable catchment species	Tree
<i>Alnus jorullensis</i>	Mexican alder	15m	8m	Planted in areas without powerlines, sewerlines or footpaths	Tree
<i>Angophora floribunda</i>	Rough barked maple	30m	15m	Koala and water-course friendly	Tree
<i>Brachychiton populneus</i>	Kurrajong	10m	8m	Ideal shelter tree	Tree
<i>Callistemon salignus</i>	Willow bottlebrush	12m	6m	Planted in areas without powerlines, sewerlines or footpaths	Tree
<i>Callistemon sieberi</i>	River bottlebrush	5m	3m	Large shrub	Tree
<i>Callistemon viminalis</i>	Drooping bottlebrush	12m	12m	Planted in areas without powerlines, sewerlines or footpaths	Tree
<i>Callistemon viminalis</i> 'Hannah Ray'	Hannah ray	4m	2m	Planted in areas without powerlines, sewerlines or footpaths	Tree
<i>Callitris glaucophylla</i>	White cypress	20m	10m	Shelter tree, grows well on slopes/red soils	Tree
<i>Capparis mitchellii</i>	Wild orange	8m	5m		Tree
<i>Casuarina cristata</i>	Belah	20m	10m	Shelter tree, grows well in floodplains/ black soils	Tree
<i>Casuarina cunninghamiana</i>	River oak	10-30m	15m	Shelter tree, grows well in floodplains, water courses	Tree
<i>Eucalyptus albens</i>	White box	25m	15m	Koala friendly, grows well on slopes/ red soils	Tree
<i>Eucalyptus blakelyi</i>	Blekely's red gum	25m	10m	Koala friendly, watercourse, floodplain and slope friendly	Tree
<i>Eucalyptus bridgesiana</i>	Apple box	20m	15m		Tree
<i>Eucalyptus camaldulensis</i>	River red gum	45m	25m	Koala friendly, watercourse and floodplain friendly	Tree
<i>Eucalyptus chloroclada</i>	Baradine gum	20m	15m		Tree
<i>Eucalyptus conica</i>	Fuzzy box	20m	10m	Koala and floodplain friendly	Tree

Botanical Name	Common Name	Mature Height (m)	Mature Spread (m)	Additional Information	Type
<i>Eucalyptus coolabah</i>	Coolibah	25m	10m	Watercourse and catchment friendly	Tree
<i>Eucalyptus dealbata</i>	Tumbledown red gum	20m	10m	Koala, floodplain and slope friendly species	Tree
<i>Eucalyptus dwyeri</i>	Dwyers red gum	15m	5m	Koala, floodplain and slope friendly species	Tree
<i>Eucalyptus largiflorens</i>	Black box	20m	10m		Tree
<i>Eucalyptus macrorhyncha</i>	Red stringybark	35m	20m		Tree
<i>Eucalyptus marcocarpa</i>	Gum tree	4m	3m		Tree
<i>Eucalyptus melliodora</i>	Honey box	30m	15m		Tree
<i>Eucalyptus microcarpa</i>	Inland Grey box	25m	5m	Koala, watercourse and floodplain friendly species	Tree
<i>Eucalyptus moluccana</i>	Grey box	30m	10m	Koala, floodplain and slope friendly species	Tree
<i>Eucalyptus nandewarica</i>	Mallee red gum	10m	5m		Tree
<i>Eucalyptus pilligaensis</i>	Narrow-leafed grey box	25m	15m		Tree
<i>Eucalyptus polyanthemos</i>	Red box	20m	10m		Tree
<i>Eucalyptus populnea</i>	Bimble box	20m	15m	Koala, watercourse, floodplain and slope friendly species	Tree
<i>Eucalyptus prava</i>	Orange gum	15m	10m		Tree
<i>Eucalyptus sideroxylon</i>	Mugga ironbark	35m	20m	Koala, floodplain and slope friendly species	Tree
<i>Eucalyptus sparsifolia</i>	Narrow-leafed stringybark	20m	15m		Tree
<i>Eucalyptus vicina</i>	Manara hills red gum	8m	5m		Tree
<i>Eucalyptus viminalis</i>	Manna gum	50m	20m		Tree
<i>Eucalyptus volcanica</i>	<i>Eucalyptus volcanica</i>	25m	15m		Tree
<i>Fraxinus griffithii</i>	Desert ash	8m	4m	Planted in areas without powerlines, sewerlines or footpaths	Tree
<i>Geijera parviflora</i>	Wilga	9m	5m	Shelter tree, planted alongside watercourses and floodplains	Tree
<i>Keolreuteria paniculate</i>	Golden rain tree	8m	6m	Planted in areas without powerlines, sewerlines or footpaths	Tree
<i>Lagerstroemia indica</i>	Crepe myrtle	8m	6m	Planted in areas without powerlines, sewerlines or footpaths	Tree



Botanical Name	Common Name	Mature Height (m)	Mature Spread (m)	Additional Information	Type
Melaleuca armillaris	White cedar	10m	9m	Planted in areas without powerlines, sewerlines or footpaths	Tree
Notelaea microcarpo	Native olive	10m	8m	Shelter and slope friendly species	Tree
Photinia serrulatifolia	Chinese photinia	8m	5m	Planted in areas without powerlines, sewerlines or footpaths	Tree
Prunus cerasifera 'Nigra'	Purple leaf gum	8m	4m	Planted in areas without powerlines, sewerlines or footpaths	Tree
Bolboschoenus fluviatilis	Marsh club-rush	1m	1m	Effective soil sabiliser	Sedges, rushes or grasses
Bothriochloa baldhii	Forest bluegrass	1m	1m	Does well in black soils	Sedges, rushes or grasses
Bothriochloa decipiens	Pitted bluegrass	60cm	60cm	Common grass species	Sedges, rushes or grasses
Bothriochloa macra	Red grass	60cm	60cm	Common grass species	Sedges, rushes or grasses
Carex appressa	Tall sedge	1.2m	1.2m	Does well in rocky areas	Sedges, rushes or grasses
Chloris truncata	Windmill grass	20cm	20cm	Short tufting grass, groundcover	Sedges, rushes or grasses
Chloris ventricosa	Tall chloris	40cm	40cm	Tufting grass species	Sedges, rushes or grasses
Cyndoon dactylon	Couch	20cm	20cm	Vigorous grass, soil stabiliser	Sedges, rushes or grasses
Cyperus exaltatus	Giant sedge	1.5m	1.5m	Flood resilient	Sedges or rushes
Cyperus gunnii	White cypress	60cm	60cm	All-rounder	Sedges, rushes or grasses
Cyperus gymocaulos	Spiny sedge	80cm	80cm	Thrives in dryer sites	Sedges, rushes or grasses
Cyperus vaginatus	Tall umbrella sedge	60cm	60cm	All-rounder	Sedges, rushes or grasses
Danthinia linkii var. linkii	Wallaby grass	1m	1m	Common in black soils	Sedges, rushes or grasses
Dichanthium sericeum	QLD bluegrass	1m	1m	Great coloniser	Sedges, rushes or grasses
Eriochloa pseudoacrotricha	Early spring grass	50cm	50cm	Fast growing, found in flood areas	Sedges, rushes or grasses
Leptochloa digitata	Umbrella canegrass	1m	50cm	Excellent bank species	Sedges, rushes or grasses
Lomandra longifolia	Spiny headed mat rush	1m	1m	Tufted rush, flood resistant	Sedges, rushes or grasses

Botanical Name	Common Name	Mature Height (m)	Mature Spread (m)	Additional Information	Type
<i>Microlaena stipoides</i>	Weeping grass	30cm	30cm	Soil stabiliser	Sedges, rushes or grasses
<i>Panicum decompositum</i>	Native millet	60cm	60cm	Tufting species	Sedges, rushes or grasses
<i>Paspalidium distichum</i>	Water couch	50cm	50cm	Creeping grass, great for wet areas	Sedges, rushes or grasses
<i>Pennisetum alopecuroides</i>	Swamp foxtail	1m	1m	Tufted species, great in wet areas	Sedges, rushes or grasses
<i>Phragmites australis</i>	Common reed	2m	2m	Grass that does well on steep banks	Sedges, rushes or grasses
<i>Schoenoplectus validus</i>	River club rush	1.5m	1.5m	All-rounder, does well in wet sites	Sedges, rushes or grasses
<i>Themeda australis</i>	Kangaroo grass	1m	1m	Common slope-growing grass	Sedges, rushes or grasses
<i>Typha orientalis</i>	Broadleaved cumbungo	2.5		Viborous herb	Sedges, rushes or grasses
<i>Muehlenbeckia florulenta</i>					Shrub

Botanical Name	Common Name	Mature Height (m)	Mature Spread (m)	Additional Information	Type
Melaleuca armillaris	White cedar	10m	9m	Planted in areas without powerlines, sewerlines or footpaths	Tree
Notelaea microcarpo	Native olive	10m	8m	Shelter and slope friendly species	Tree
Photinia serrulatifolia	Chinese photinia	8m	5m	Planted in areas without powerlines, sewerlines or footpaths	Tree
Prunus cerasifera 'Nigra'	Purple leaf gum	8m	4m	Planted in areas without powerlines, sewerlines or footpaths	Tree
Bolboschoenus fluviatilis	Marsh club-rush	1m	1m	Effective soil sabiliser	Sedges, rushes or grasses
Bothriochloa baldhii	Forest bluegrass	1m	1m	Does well in black soils	Sedges, rushes or grasses
Bothriochloa decipiens	Pitted bluegrass	60cm	60cm	Common grass species	Sedges, rushes or grasses
Bothriochloa macra	Red grass	60cm	60cm	Common grass species	Sedges, rushes or grasses
Carex appressa	Tall sedge	1.2m	1.2m	Does well in rocky areas	Sedges, rushes or grasses
Chloris truncata	Windmill grass	20cm	20cm	Short tufting grass, groundcover	Sedges, rushes or grasses
Chloris ventricosa	Tall chloris	40cm	40cm	Tufting grass species	Sedges, rushes or grasses
Cyndon dactylon	Couch	20cm	20cm	Vigorous grass, soil stabiliser	Sedges, rushes or grasses
Cyperus exaltatus	Giant sedge	1.5m	1.5m	Flood resilient	Sedges or rushes
Cyperus gunnii	White cypress	60cm	60cm	All-rounder	Sedges, rushes or grasses
Cyperus gymocaulos	Spiny sedge	80cm	80cm	Thrives in dryer sites	Sedges, rushes or grasses
Cyperus vaginatus	Tall umbrella sedge	60cm	60cm	All-rounder	Sedges, rushes or grasses
Danthinia linkii var. linkii	Wallaby grass	1m	1m	Common in black soils	Sedges, rushes or grasses
Dichanthium sericeum	QLD bluegrass	1m	1m	Great coloniser	Sedges, rushes or grasses
Eriochloa pseudoacrotricha	Early spring grass	50cm	50cm	Fast growing, found in flood areas	Sedges, rushes or grasses
Leptochloa digitata	Umbrella canegrass	1m	50cm	Excellent bank species	Sedges, rushes or grasses

Botanical Name	Common Name	Mature Height (m)	Mature Spread (m)	Additional Information	Type
<i>Lomandra longifolia</i>	Spiny headed mat rush	1m	1m	Tufted rush, flood resistant	Sedges, rushes or grasses
<i>Microlaena stipoides</i>	Weeping grass	30cm	30cm	Soil stabiliser	Sedges, rushes or grasses
<i>Panicum decompositum</i>	Native millet	60cm	60cm	Tufting species	Sedges, rushes or grasses
<i>Paspalidium distichum</i>	Water couch	50cm	50cm	Creeping grass, great for wet areas	Sedges, rushes or grasses
<i>Pennisetum alopecuroides</i>	Swamp foxtail	1m	1m	Tufted species, great in wet areas	Sedges, rushes or grasses
<i>Phragmites australis</i>	Common reed	2m	2m	Grass that does well on steep banks	Sedges, rushes or grasses
<i>Schoenoplectus validus</i>	River club rush	1.5m	1.5m	All-rounder, does well in wet sites	Sedges, rushes or grasses
<i>Themeda australis</i>	Kangaroo grass	1m	1m	Common slope-growing grass	Sedges, rushes or grasses
<i>Typha orientalis</i>	Broadleaved cumbungo	2.5		Viborous herb	Sedges, rushes or grasses



**Gunnedah**  
Shire Council  
Open New Horizons

Open Space Strategy  
Community Survey

**Open space land is set aside for public recreation and can include recreation parks and playgrounds, sports fields and courts and green corridors with pathways or trails. Open spaces are significant public assets that contribute to liveable and sustainable communities. Open spaces provide social, health, economic and environmental benefits to individuals and to the community.**

**Gunnedah Shire Council is currently developing an Open Space Strategy. The Strategy will provide a shared and clearly defined vision for the improvement of sport and recreation within the Gunnedah local government area.**

**The Strategy is a community document and will be developed in conjunction with ROSS Planning. As such, your input is critical to create an accurate snapshot and a basis for developing recommendations for the future.**

**While filling in this survey, we encourage you to tell us about what you currently enjoy and appreciate about open spaces in the Shire and also tell us how they can be enhanced and improved. Share your big ideas with us!**

1. Which area of the Gunnedah local government area do you live in?

- |  |                                      |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> Gunnedah               | <input type="radio"/> Kelvin         |
| <input type="radio"/> Breeza                 | <input type="radio"/> Mullaley       |
| <input type="radio"/> Carroll                | <input type="radio"/> Piallaway      |
| <input type="radio"/> Curlewis               | <input type="radio"/> Tambar Springs |
| <input type="radio"/> Emerald Hill           |                                      |
| <input type="radio"/> Other (please specify) |                                      |

2. Do you participate in any outdoor recreation activities (other than organised sport) within the Gunnedah local government area?

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bird watching        | <input type="checkbox"/> Gardening                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Physical activity as transport |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bushwalking          | <input type="checkbox"/> Golf                         | <input type="checkbox"/> Playing in the park            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Canoe / kayaking     | <input type="checkbox"/> Group exercise / bootcamp    | <input type="checkbox"/> Running                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cycling (road)       | <input type="checkbox"/> Horse riding                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Skateboarding / scootering     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cycling (recreation) | <input type="checkbox"/> Lawn bowls                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Walking                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Exercise in the park | <input type="checkbox"/> Mountain biking / BMX        |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fishing              | <input type="checkbox"/> Off road motor / quad biking |   |

Other (please specify)

3. At which open spaces or outdoor facilities do you recreate? Please select all those that apply.

- |   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> At home  | <input type="checkbox"/> Local roads (for walking and cycling) | <input type="checkbox"/> School grounds         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bushwalking tracks                                   | <input type="checkbox"/> National Park/State Forest            | <input type="checkbox"/> Skate/BMX park         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Golf course  | <input type="checkbox"/> Park                                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Sports ground or court |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lake/rivers/creeks (please specify in the box below) | <input type="checkbox"/> Playground                            |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Local footpaths                                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Private property                      |   |

Other (please specify)

4. Do you participate in an organised sports competition (netball, rugby league/union, tennis, cricket, equestrian etc.)

- Yes - in the Gunnedah local government area
- Yes - but I play for a club in another council area (Tamworth, Narrabri etc)
- No

5. Thinking about parks and sport facilities generally, on average, how often do you visit?

Daily

Weekly

Rarely

Most days

Fortnightly

Never

Twice a week

Monthly

6. What is your favourite open space/park within the area? Please detail below, including why this is your favourite.

7. What open space/park would you upgrade within the area? Please detail below, including what you would like to see.

8. Are there any open spaces/parks that you believe are unnecessary due to low usage, safety concerns, better park close by, poor location, etc? Please detail below and include the reasons why.

9. Out of 5, 1 being not very important, 5 being very important, how important is open space (playgrounds, sporting fields/courts, skateparks, picnic facilities, etc.) to you and your family?

1 (not very important)

2

3 (neutral)

4

5 (very important)

Comment

10. What do you value about open space within the Gunnedah local government area? Please tick all that apply

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> The natural setting                                     | <input type="checkbox"/> They encourage social interaction with the community |
| <input type="checkbox"/> The interaction with the natural environment            | <input type="checkbox"/> I can meet new people there                          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> The diversity of playgrounds and equipment              | <input type="checkbox"/> They allow me to spend quality time with my family   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> The access to water (lake/rivers/creeks)                | <input type="checkbox"/> I feel safe when I visit                             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> The high quality facilities provided                    | <input type="checkbox"/> They provide me with a place to unwind/rest/relax    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> They are close to my home                               | <input type="checkbox"/> They provide me with a place to exercise             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> The views they provide                                  | <input type="checkbox"/> I can take my dog                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> The cleanliness and high level of maintenance           | <input type="checkbox"/> A place to spend time with friends                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Their appeal to the whole family                        | <input type="checkbox"/> A place to take visitors                             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> The range of sporting fields/courts/facilities provided |   |

Other (please specify)

11. Out of 5, 1 being a very low priority, 5 being a very high priority, what priority do you think open space, recreation and sport should be for Council?

1 (very low priority)

2

3 (neutral)

4

5 (very high priority)

Comment



12. Have you experienced any barriers to using parks and sport facilities within the Gunnedah local government area? Please tick all that apply

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> No, I have not experienced any barriers   | <input type="checkbox"/> They don't appeal to me  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> They are too crowded                      | <input type="checkbox"/> There is a limited range of sporting fields/courts/facilities provided |
| <input type="checkbox"/> They are poorly maintained and/or unclean | <input type="checkbox"/> There is a lack of variety/boring                                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I don't feel safe there                   | <input type="checkbox"/> There is a lack of connectivity between cycle/walking paths            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> There is a lack of toilets                | <input type="checkbox"/> Weather (too hot, too cold)  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> They don't cater for my mobility needs    | <input type="checkbox"/> I just don't have the time   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> There is no shade                         |   |

Other (please specify)

13. Out of 5, 1 being poor , 5 being great, how would you rate the overall quality of recreation and sporting opportunities in the area?

	1 (Very poor)	2	3	4	5 (Great)	Don't know
Sports fields	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lake/rivers/creeks areas	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Playgrounds	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Skate parks	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Natural bushland parks	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Places to relax and socialise	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Activities for youth	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Activities for seniors	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Low cost/free physical activities/programs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Comments

14. If you were in charge of the Gunnedah Shire Council, what would be your TOP THREE open space priorities that you would fund over the next 10 years?

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> New/upgraded playgrounds   | <input type="checkbox"/> More sports grounds/ovals/courts  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Improved access to lake/rivers/creeks  | <input type="checkbox"/> Improved quality of sports grounds/ovals/courts   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Increased supporting facilities including car parking and amenities                                | <input type="checkbox"/> New/upgraded cycle and walking paths  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Improved bushland maintenance/management/conservation  | <input type="checkbox"/> Improved parks maintenance  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Provision of places/facilities for young people  | <input type="checkbox"/> New/upgraded horse and equestrian facilities  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Provision of places/facilities for seniors   | <input type="checkbox"/> Improved promotion of Council's existing sport facilities, recreation parks and opportunities |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Improved picnicking facilities   | <input type="checkbox"/> More community events in public parks   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Improved pedestrian/cyclist connections between key destinations (e.g. school, work, parks, shops) |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify)   |  |

15. Do you have any other comments or concerns about sport, recreation and open space within the Gunnedah local government area? If yes, please specify.

16. What is your age group?

- |                                      |                                     |  |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="radio"/> Under 19 years | <input type="radio"/> 35 - 39 years | <input type="radio"/> 55 - 59 years      |
| <input type="radio"/> 20 - 24 years  | <input type="radio"/> 40 - 44 years | <input type="radio"/> 60 - 64 years      |
| <input type="radio"/> 25 - 29 years  | <input type="radio"/> 45 - 49 years | <input type="radio"/> 65 years and older |
| <input type="radio"/> 30 - 34 years  | <input type="radio"/> 50 - 54 years |  |

17. What gender do you identify yourself as?

- |                                   |   |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| <input type="radio"/> Female      | <input type="radio"/> Gender variant/non-conforming |
| <input type="radio"/> Male        | <input type="radio"/> Prefer not to say             |
| <input type="radio"/> Transgender |   |



**Gunnedah**  
Shire Council  
Open New Horizons

Open Space Strategy  
Club/organisation Survey

**Gunnedah Shire Council is currently developing an Open Space Strategy. The purpose of the Strategy is to provide strategic direction for the planning and development of future sport and recreation opportunities. It will be the overarching Council policy document that guides the provision of sport and recreation facilities and services.**

**As a local provider of sport and recreation, your input into this Strategy is vital to ensure that future provision is appropriately allocated by Council. Please remember that you are filling this survey out on behalf of your club/organisation/group, not yourself as an individual, and that ONLY ONE response is submitted per club/group/organisation.**

1. Club / organisation / group name

2. What services and programs are offered by your club / organisation / group? Please provide details below (e.g. tennis coaching and fixtures)

3. Throughout which months of the year does your club / organisation / group operate?  
(e.g. early March through until late September, year-round)

Training

Classes / general operation

Competition

4. Which Park, Reserve, Facility or Venue does your club / organisation / group use?

Home Reserve / Facility / Venue

Reserve / Facility / Venue 2

Reserve / Facility / Venue 3

Other

5. How often do you use your home Reserve / Facility / Venue?

Frequency of use

Home Reserve / Facility /  
Venue

6. Are you a formal sporting club/organisation? If yes, please describe your most recent player membership 2019 or 2020, and your membership numbers for previous seasons, if known.  
Please EXCLUDE social members.

Current - 2019 TOTAL

2019 Senior Male

2019 Senior Female

2019 Junior Male

2019 Junior Female

2018 TOTAL

2018 Senior Male

2018 Senior Female

2018 Junior Male

2018 Junior Female

2017 TOTAL

2017 Senior Male

2017 Senior Female

2017 Junior Male

2017 Junior Female

7. Are you an informal recreation club or group? If yes, please indicate your current participation numbers.

8. In the next 3 years, do you expect your membership to:

Increase

Decrease

Remain the same

Why?

9. Does your organisation hire, lease or license Council facilities/land?

Yes (hire/lease/license from Council)

No (freehold or lease of Crown lands)

Other (please specify)

10. Please indicate whether the facilities used by your organisation are suitable for your requirements.

	Exceeds needs	Suitable	Not suitable	Not required
Number of playing fields / ovals / courts	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lighting	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Public toilets	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Change facilities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Gender appropriate facilities i.e. female change rooms	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Canteen / kiosk facilities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Storage areas	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Site accessibility i.e. entrance roads	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Car parking	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Maintenance of buildings	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Seating / shade / water	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Disability accessibility	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Comments

11. Thinking about the majority of your members / participants, how far do they travel to participate in your club / organisation / groups activities (as listed below)?

	From within the local town i.e. 5 to 10 minutes	From nearby towns i.e. 10 to 30 minutes	From outside of the Gunnedah local government area	Unsure
Regular training / practice	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Home games / fixtures i.e. competition	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Away games / fixtures i.e. competition	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Timetabled class / program	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Comments

12. Please describe your top 3 priorities for facility improvements (i.e. NOT maintenance) to best provide for your recreation or sporting activity (the answer at 1 being the higher priority).

**1. Description of facility improvement**

Rationale (why you need it)

**2. Description of facility improvement**

Rationale (why you need it)

**3. Description of facility improvement**

Rationale (why you need it)

Other

13. Please indicate the extent that your club / organisation / group may be experiencing the following issues.

	High	Medium	Low	NA
Falling membership	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lack of youth participation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lack of female participation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Cannot accommodate growing demand (too many people wanting to play)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lack of facilities to accommodate the needs of the club (lack of fields/courts for existing members)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Cost of maintaining the venue for your activity	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Cost of playing or participating is increasing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Declining number of volunteers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lack of disability access to facilities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Difficulty in accessing grant funding	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Comments



14. Please tick the groups below that your club / organisation currently cater for:

- |   |                                  |
|---|----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Females                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Seniors |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Males                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Juniors |
| <input type="checkbox"/> People with a disability |                                  |

15. Does your club have strategic or operational processes and/or documents to assist with delivering club services/programs? Please tick those that are applicable.

- Strategic plan (or master plan)
- Business/operational plan
- Succession planning/rolling committees
- Process to attract/retain volunteers
- Other (please specify)

16. Would your club benefit from education and training opportunities for your members?

- 'How to run a club' training
- Financial management/budget training
- Volunteer recruitment and management
- Support with grant applications and/or fundraising
- Strategic planning (i.e. Club Development Plan or Master Plan)
- Other (please specify)

17. Is there anything else you would like to contribute regarding sport and recreation needs and the provision of facilities within the Gunnedah local government area?

## Appendix D: Gunnedah Shire Council Issues Paper January 2020

The Gunnedah Shire Council Issues Paper was compiled and issued to Council in January 2020 as an interim report for the project, to generate discussion regarding key issues identified to date.

Since issuing the Issues Paper, further research and analysis occurred to inform the Draft Open Space Strategy.

Several minor errors requiring correction have been identified in the Issues Paper and relate predominantly to spelling and mapping errors. These have been corrected in both the Draft and Final versions of the Open Space Strategy.