



Social Impact Assessment

157 Maitland Street, Muswellbrook

for Richard Gill National Music Academy

April 2020

Communities places and cities. for people. by people



Report Title: Social Impact Assessment:
Richard Gill National Music Academy K-6,
157 Maitland Road, Muswellbrook

Client: Richard Gill National Music Academy
Pty Ltd

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1. Introduction

1.1. BACKGROUND

Cred Consulting is an independent social planning consultancy based in Sydney. Cred was engaged by Stanton Dahl Architects on behalf of Richard Gill National Music Academy Ltd to prepare a Social Impact Assessment for 157 Maitland Road, Muswellbrook.

In accordance with Schedule 1 of the *State Environmental Planning Policy (State and Regional Development) 2011*, development for the purpose of a new school (regardless of the capital investment value) is considered State Significant Development (SSD-10380) within the meaning of *Clause 4.36* of the *Environmental Planning Assessment Act 1979* (EPA Act).

The request for Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements (SEARs) was granted 14 November 2019. The issued SEARs require that the EIS must address the social impacts of the proposal, in particular to:

- provide an assessment of the social consequences of the schools' relative location; and
- Identify and describe how facilities are to be shared with the community outside of school hours.

The development proposes change of use of the existing building from *Public Administration Building* (Council Administrative Centre) to *Educational Establishment*, with physical alterations and additions to the internal spaces of the building.

State Environmental Planning Policy (Educational Establishments and Child Care Facilities) 2017 outlines:

A school (including any part of its site and any of its facilities) may be used, with development consent, for the physical, social, cultural or intellectual development or welfare of the community, whether or not it is a commercial use of the establishment.

Muswellbrook Local Environmental Plan 2009 (LEP) defines an Education Establishment as meaning:

a building or place used for education (including teaching), being:

- (a) a school, or
- (b) a tertiary institution, including a university or a TAFE establishment, that provides formal education and is constituted by or under an Act.

1.2. WHAT IS A SOCIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT?

Social impact Assessment (SIA) is a method for predicting and assessing the social consequences of a proposed action or initiative, on affected groups of people and on their way of life, life chances, health, culture, and capacity to sustain these. This includes those people living in a community already, and the new incoming population.

SIA has been completed in accordance with requirements of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 Sec 79C(1), and the Planning Institute of Australia's Social Impact Position Statement.

This SIA assesses the positive and negative impacts of the proposal, and how any positive impacts can be enhanced and negative impacts mitigated.

1.3. METHODOLOGY

The study has been undertaken using the following methodology:

- Review of local planning and policy context and implications;
- Place context analysis including neighbouring uses, access to transport and services;
- Current and forecast community profile of the Muswellbrook Shire local government area and the Muswellbrook suburb including total population, age profile, income, cultural diversity and implications relating to social need;
- Community engagement findings relating to the proposal;
- Existing community infrastructure analysis including mapping of social infrastructure and open space within 400m, 800m and 2kms of the site, as well as other significant infrastructure;
- Analysis of social impacts in accordance with the specific SEARs requirements and the EPA Act 1979 Sec 79C(1); and
- Recommendation of mitigation measures to address identified impacts.

1.4. ABOUT THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

The Site

The subject site is 157 Maitland Road in the suburb of Muswellbrook, located within the Muswellbrook Shire local government area. The site has a total area of 5.19 hectares, as shown in Figure 1.

The development site is zoned R1 General Residential under the provisions of the Muswellbrook Local Environmental Plan (LEP) 2009. Under the LEP, educational establishments are permissible with consent in the R1 zone.

The subject site is located at the eastern edge of the Muswellbrook town centre area on the New England Highway. The surrounding area adjoining the subject site is predominantly residential with some neighbouring commercial uses (childcare, motel and food outlet) fronting the New England Highway.

The site is currently occupied by the Muswellbrook Shire Council Administration Building and a community care centre. The southern section of the site is currently open space.



Figure 1 - 157 Maitland Road, Muswellbrook site map

The Proposal

The Richard Gill National Music Academy Ltd is seeking to establish a new primary school in Muswellbrook, The Richard Gill National Music Academy – Muswellbrook (NMA). The NMA will deliver a first of its kind, educational experience based on the central philosophy of music and physical education-based education for year K through 6.

The development proposes internal alterations and additions to the existing building, facilitating its conversion from the Muswellbrook Shire Council Administrative Centre to a K-6 primary school.

The school is proposed to accommodate 165 students with 15 staff, including 7 full-time teaching positions with allocations up to 3 additional specialised teachers and 5 supporting staff. With an initial intake of approximately 25 students, it is envisaged to have subsequent intakes each year up to grade 6.

The current proposal indicates no major changes to the external wall of the current site building. The proposed development considers internal alterations and additions to the site to accommodate the first intake of students.

The proposal has been endorsed by both the Muswellbrook Shire Council and the Upper Hunter Conservatorium of Music, which is also partnering with the proponent for the successful delivery of the school.

The Proponent

Richard Gill National Music Academy Ltd is an independent board formed under the guidance of the late Richard Gill AO to oversee the establishment, and the operation, of the school.

The NMA is envisaged to be an independent demonstration school addressing the need for specialised contemporary music teacher training. The school will aspire to become a model for the establishment of similar schools across regional Australia. It will draw music education students for placement across the nation.



Figure 2 - Artist Impression: Richard Gill School playing area.
Source: Richard Gill NMA (richardgillschool.org.au)

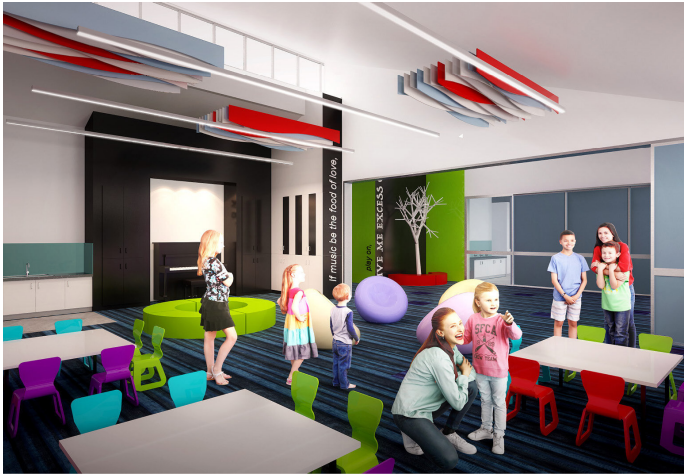


Figure 3 - Artist Impression: Richard Gill School classroom.
Source: Richard Gill NMA (richardgillschool.org.au)



Figure 4 - Site and External Works Plan. Source: Stanton Dahl Architects



Figure 5 - Existing floor plans at 157 Maitland Road, Muswellbrook Source: Stanton Dahl Architects

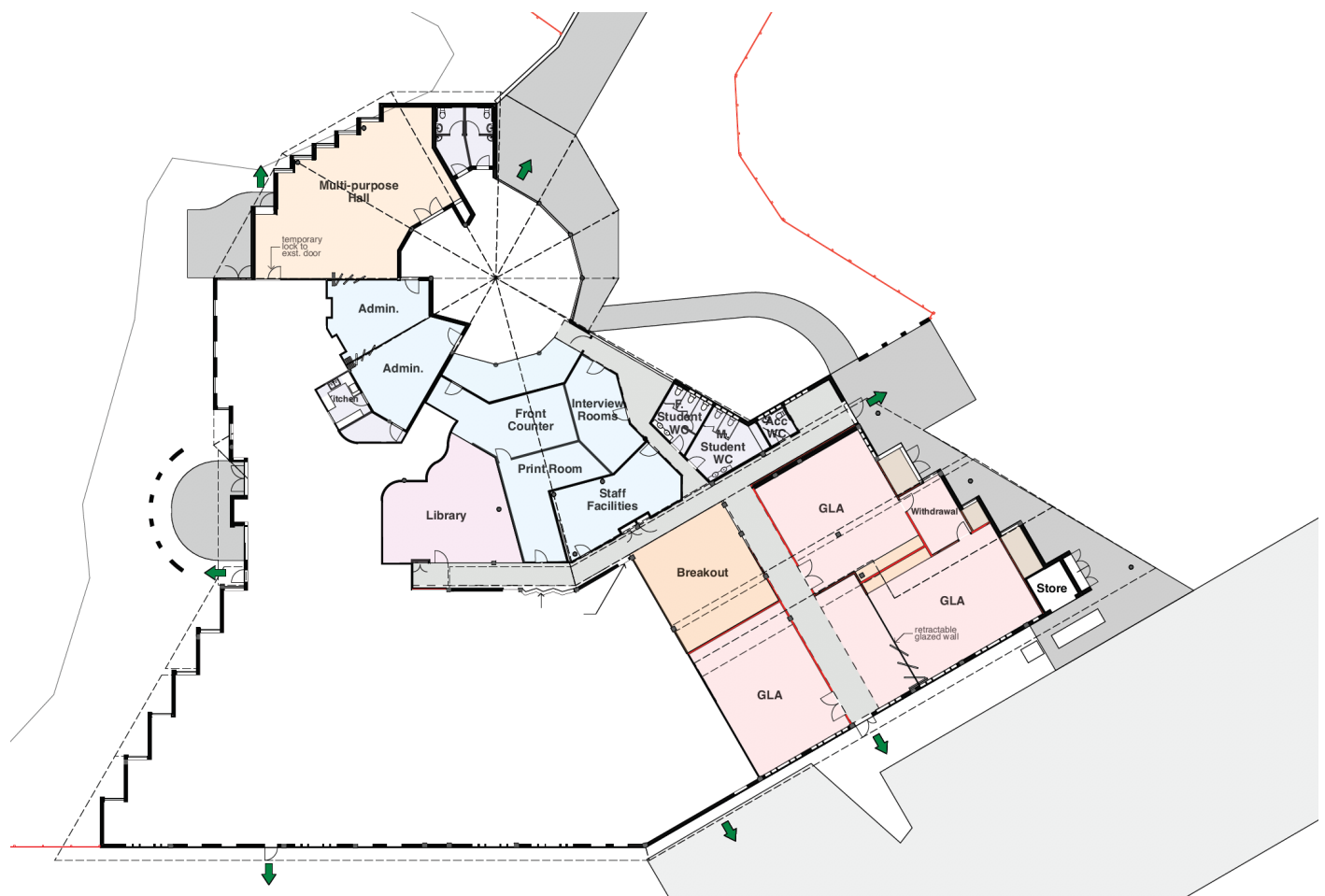


Figure 6 - Richard Gill School Proposed Floor Plan. Source: Stanton Dahl Architects

2. Strategic context

This chapter summarises relevant state, regional and local plans and strategies that set the framework for the planning and development of the region, Muswellbrook Shire and this proposal.

2.1. NSW GOVERNMENT

State Infrastructure Strategy 2018 - 2038 Building the Momentum

The State Infrastructure Strategy 2018 (SIS) sets out the current state of NSW's infrastructure and the needs and priorities over the next 20 years. It looks beyond the current projects and identifies policies and strategies needed to provide infrastructure that meets the needs of a growing population and a growing economy.

Infrastructure NSW's recommendations set geographic directions for infrastructure planning, investment and policy. In the context of Regional NSW, the geographic strategy outlines:

Regional NSW needs to be supported by good transport links to key markets by leveraging Inland Rail and upgrading east-west links. Better digital connectivity is needed to enable regional business to compete and to improve basic services like health, education and a reliable supply of drinking water. Infrastructure NSW supports moving to a 'hub and spoke' model that focuses major investment in regional centres that can then support the communities that surround them.

A key target under the Geographic Direction for Regional NSW directions is to strengthen growing regions to ensure education infrastructure and technology are comparable to that in Greater Sydney.

Cultural Infrastructure 2025+

The Cultural Infrastructure Plan 2025+ provides the strategic framework for how the NSW Government will invest in and support cultural infrastructure across the state until 2025 and beyond. The Plan articulates the strategic priorities for New South Wales to be a place where:

- Culture is recognised as an integral part of communities and a key element of creating great places for people to live, work, visit, play and do business. Cultural infrastructure planning is integrated with state and local planning processes.

- Everyone can access the infrastructure they need to make culture part of their everyday lives.
- There is an increased availability of affordable, fit-for-purpose and sustainable space to support growth of the cultural sector and creative industries.
- Cultural infrastructure delivery and funding is supported by partnerships across NSW Government, local councils, cultural organisations, philanthropists and business.
- Greater Sydney's three cities become a leading cultural capital in the Asia-Pacific and continue to grow the visitor economy, employment and growth.
- Creativity and access to culture thrives across NSW through a strategic and coordinated approach to cultural infrastructure planning.

The Plan recognises cultural infrastructure is required to support growth in the creative sector and to build the skills required for the future, as it plays a critical role in education and supporting education across a variety of streams and disciplines.

Better Placed (NSW GAO, 2017)

Better Placed is an integrated design policy for the built environment of NSW and seeks to place good design at the centre of all development processes from project definition to concept design through to construction and maintenance. Better Placed is based around seven distinct objectives that together seek to create a 'well-designed built environment that is healthy, responsive, integrated, equitable and resilient':

- Better fit: contextual, local and of its place
- Better performance: sustainable, adaptable and durable
- Better for the community: inclusive, connected and diverse
- Better for people: safe, comfortable and liveable
- Better working: functional, efficient and fit for purpose
- Better value: creating and adding value, and
- Better look and feel: engaging, inviting and attractive.

Future Transport Strategy 2056

The Future Transport Strategy 2056 (the Strategy) sets out the long term vision for mobility and transport provision in NSW over the next 40 years.

The Strategy recognises transport as an enabler of economic and social activity and contributes to long term economic, social and environmental outcomes. The vision for this strategy is built on 6 outcomes.

In the context of regional cities and centres, the Strategy follows the 'hub and spoke' network of services model, radiating out from regional cities rather than a network focused on Sydney. This will capitalise on the role that regional cities and centres play as hubs for employment and services such as education, retail, health and cultural activities.

Hunter Regional Plan 2036

The Hunter Regional Plan 2036 is a 20 year blueprint for the future of the Hunter region. The document provides an overarching framework to guide subsequent and more detailed land use plans, development proposals and infrastructure funding decisions.

While a series of priority actions are included, medium and longer term actions are identified to coincide with population growth and economic change. The vision is to create a leading regional economy in Australia, with a vibrant metropolitan city at the heart. We will deliver our vision through four goals:

- A leading regional economy in Australia
- A biodiversity-rich natural environment
- Thriving communities
- Greater housing choice and jobs.

The Plan details priorities for each council within the Hunter Region, to build on the directions and actions in this plan to achieve outcomes on the ground.

The Plan identifies Muswellbrook as a regionally significant centre, with two key priorities including:

- Maintain its regional centre role in providing educational, administrative, government, retail and commercial functions for the Upper Hunter, and
- Support the development of Muswellbrook as a centre of educational excellence.

Safer By Design

Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) is a crime prevention strategy that focuses on the planning, design and structure of cities, communities and neighbourhoods. It reduces opportunities for crime by using design and place management principles that reduce the likelihood of essential crime ingredients (law, offender, victim or target, opportunity) from intersecting in time and space.

CPTED principles can help deliver community safety and comfort. Safe, active and lively community spaces are often supported by events and promotion. In turn, healthy living through physical activity, social interaction and community pride is fostered.

The CPTED framework is based on four key strategies:

- *Territorial reinforcement:* Community ownership of public space sends positive signals to the community. Places that feel owned and cared for are likely to be used, enjoyed and revisited. People who have ownership of areas and feel an association with, or responsibility for it are more likely to provide effective supervision.
- *Surveillance:* People feel safe in public areas when they can see and interact with others, particularly people connected with that space, such as shopkeepers or adjoining residents. Surveillance can be achieved naturally (ie. normal space users can see and be seen by others), technical measures (ie. CCTV); and formal measure (ie. use of on-site supervisors or security guards)
- *Access Control:* Restricts, channels and encourages people and vehicles into, out of and around the development. Way-finding, desire-lines and formal/informal routes are important crime prevention considerations. Effective access control can be achieved by using physical and symbolic barriers that channel and group pedestrians into areas.
- *Space/Activity Management:* strategies are an important way to develop and maintain natural community control. All space, even well planned and well-designed areas need to be effectively used and maintained to maximise community safety.

2.2. MUSWELLBROOK SHIRE COUNCIL

Muswellbrook Draft Community Strategic Plan 2017-2027

Muswellbrook Community Strategic Plan 2017-2027 (CSP) is Council's draft strategy that identifies the community's main priorities and vision for the future of Muswellbrook over the next 10 years.

The CSP has 25 goals, themed under six sections. A key target of the CSP is to transition and establish Muswellbrook as a Regional Centre, and to maintain and expand the infrastructure needed to support this. Encouraging economic and cultural growth is acknowledged as an important component to achieve this status.

Goals relating to education are covered under the themes of Economic Prosperity, Social Equity and Cultural Vitality. Key outcomes for these goals, in the context of education and culture, are to:

- Increase levels of education, particularly higher education
- Increase opportunities to pursue higher education
- Support for, and increased access to, early childhood education, childcare facilities and the associated children's services, and
- Collaboration with local Aboriginal people on projects which enhance an appreciation for, and which develop the vitality of Aboriginal culture.

Draft Local Strategic Planning Statement 2018 - 2038

The Muswellbrook Local Strategic Planning Statement 2018-2038 is Muswellbrook Shire Councils draft strategy that identifies key land use planning and policy outcomes for the LGA.

The vision of this strategy aims to put Muswellbrook Shire in a long term position to transition from being the State's primary coal mining centre, to a more diversified economy based upon being:

- One of the State's major food bowls, through large scale food production and processing (agribusiness)
- A major regional location for tertiary education services
- The leading location for equine industries

- A location of significance for the viticulture industry
- A sustainable and diverse visitor economy
- The State's ongoing and innovative major energy centre
- A place that celebrates its natural, Aboriginal and non Aboriginal heritage; and
- A Regional Centre with higher order services and facilities, including aged care.

The document recognises the education sector as a key actor in diversifying Muswellbrook's economic performance, with the opening of the Upper Hunter Tertiary Education Centre, which houses TAFE and the University of Newcastle.

Upper Hunter Regional Cultural Development Strategy 2017 - 2021

The Regional Cultural Development Strategy 2017-2021 was collaboratively developed by the Upper Hunter Shire Council and Muswellbrook Shire Council. The Strategy outlines a framework to support the community's vision and the strong commitment of both Councils to enhance cultural development in the region.

The Strategy recognises the rich cultural activity and cultural assets within the Upper Hunter region, and develops six goals to achieve its vision of increasing and enhancing cultural development, including:

- Support existing creative industries and develop opportunities for new participants that can deliver a stronger cultural economy
- Support options for new cultural infrastructure and the renewal of existing cultural assets
- Engender cultural education and collaboration across the Upper Hunter
- Celebrate vibrant and creative communities.

Strategy 9 recognises the importance of arts and culture, particularly music and musical performance in the Upper Hunter. However this is limited by the lack of performance spaces available in the region, as well as the lack of available education providers, particularly opportunities for tertiary musical education in the area. The following are other strategies relevant to this proposal:

- Share and grow the stories of the Upper Hunter and our local people and strengthen our cultural identity beyond the Upper Hunter.

- Support the recognition and promotion of cultural infrastructure and spaces as cultural tourism assets.
- Increase local attainment of educational qualifications in the arts, music and production in collaboration with existing and new providers.
- Support infrastructure spending on cultural infrastructure that facilitates significant growth in the cultural economy and cultural tourism.

Muswellbrook Local Environmental Plan 2009

Muswellbrook Local Environmental Plan (LEP) 2009 is the principle planning instrument within the Muswellbrook Shire Council and has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979.

The subject site is zoned R1 General Residential under the provisions of the Muswellbrook LEP 2009. Pursuant to the LEP, the development of an educational establishment is permissible with consent.

The proposal will be required to consider, and address, all the requirements of the Muswellbrook LEP 2009 as they apply to the development:

- To enable other land uses that provide facilities or services to meet the day to day needs of residents.
- To minimise the impact of non-residential uses and ensure these are in character and compatible with surrounding development.

Key strategic considerations for the proposal

- The Hunter Regional Plan 2036, outlines a strategic priority as being "to promote Muswellbrook as a centre for education. This proposal provides an opportunity for regional students to take part in a unique academic and cultural learning experience in the local area.
- The proposal responds to the Upper Hunter Regional Cultural Development Strategy to achieve its vision of increase cultural development within the region, through the provision of supporting new cultural infrastructure and developing opportunities for cultural education and collaboration across the Upper Hunter.
- The proposal is consistent with the Council's Community Strategic Plan 2017-27 which seeks to provide greater access to education, knowledge, and to enhance the cultural and creative economy.
- The development proposes a specialised school which would support Council's vision to promote Muswellbrook as a Regional Centre.
- Integration of the school and involvement with the surrounding residents and wider Muswellbrook community will ensure that it is safe, used, and enjoyed.

3. Place context + Community Profile

This sections summarises the current community profile and forecast population of the Muswellbrook suburb. It also provides an analysis of the place context within which the site is located including current use, neighbouring uses, and local character.

3.1. PLACE CONTEXT

The Traditional Owners of the land covered by the Muswellbrook Shire are the Wanaruah and the Kamilaroi peoples.

Muswellbrook Local Government Area is located in the centre of the Upper Hunter Valley and is the predominant location for the State's power generation. It is also a key location for coal mining activities and an important agricultural area.

Muswellbrook is the primary centre for the Muswellbrook Shire Council area servicing a number of surrounding rural communities. It provides a range of community, civic, administrative, education, health and recreation facilities that services the local community and the Upper Hunter region.

The area adjoining the subject site is predominantly detached residential with some neighbouring commercial uses (childcare, motel and food outlet) fronting the New England Highway. The immediate area to the north of the Highway contains the Muswellbrook Golf Course.

The Muswellbrook Town Centre is approximately 3.3km from the subject site. The town centre offers a range of retail and commercial services, education, cultural and artistic facilities and significant historic sites, community facilities, including Muswellbrook Hospital.

Muswellbrook boasts an extensive network of open spaces, natural reserves, recreation and sporting facilities, many of which are within 2-3km of the subject site.

Muswellbrook is situated on the New England Highway, which is the major inland route linking Sydney and Brisbane. Regular rail passenger services connect Muswellbrook with Newcastle, Sydney and Brisbane.

The site is serviced by two bus routes with direct link to the Muswellbrook Town Centre and other major institutions such as Muswellbrook Hospital. with six services in the morning and three in the afternoon.

Both services link the site to the Muswellbrook Train Station, which provide two services in the morning and two services in the evening to Newcastle Interchange via Maitland. A daily train service direct to Sydney also services Muswellbrook, via Newcastle (Broadmeadow Station).



Figure 7 - Muswellbrook residents
Source: Muswellbrook Chronicle

3.2. MUSWELLBROOK LGA CHARACTERISTICS

The subject site is located in the suburb of Muswellbrook, in the Muswellbrook Shire local government area (Muswellbrook Shire). In 2016, Muswellbrook Shire was home to 16,086 people (URP), an increase of 1.9%, or 293 residents since 2011.

Overall compared to Regional NSW, Muswellbrook Shire is characterised by a younger age profile, moderate cultural diversity, and higher levels of relative disadvantage. Key statistics compared to Regional NSW include:

- A similar household size at 2.47 persons per dwelling (compared to 2.41 persons per dwelling)
- A younger population, with a higher proportion of 0-4 years olds (7.7% compared to 5.8%) and children aged 5-9 years (7.7% compared to 6.4%)
- A higher proportion of children aged 10 to 14 (7.2% compared to 6.1%)
- A much higher young workforce population aged 30-34 years (7.2% compared to 5.5%)
- 21.0% of the overseas born population arrived to Muswellbrook Shire between 2011 and 2016, a significantly higher proportion than Regional NSW at 14.8%
- Less cultural and linguistic diversity, with 3.7% of Muswellbrook Shire speak a language other than English (compared to 6.0%)
- A lower SEIFA score, indicating higher levels of relative disadvantage (930.0 compared to 971.0)

3.3. MUSWELLBROOK SUBURB CHARACTERISTICS

Total Population

In 2016, the Usual Resident Population of Muswellbrook suburb was 12,072 people. The population grew by 2.4%, or 281 people between 2011 and 2016.

Age Profile

Compared to Muswellbrook Shire, Muswellbrook suburb has a similar age structure, however it does possess:

- A younger population, with a slightly higher proportion of children between 0-9 years (16.1% compared to 15.4%), a significantly higher proportion compared to Regional NSW (12.2%)
- A higher proportion of adults aged 30-39 years (14.4% compared to 13.8%), a significantly higher proportion compared to Regional NSW (10.9%)
- A higher young workforce population aged 20-29 years (14.1% compared to 12.9%), a significantly higher proportion compared to Regional NSW (11.1%)
- A slightly lower proportion of children aged 10 -19 years (12.8% compared to 13.3%), similar proportion compared to Regional NSW (12.1%).

Density and housing

A low density area

Muswellbrook suburb is primarily a low density area, with 90.1% of the suburb consisting of separate housing dwellings. This is a similar proportion compared to Muswellbrook Shire (91.0%), and a significantly higher proportion than the Regional NSW average (80.2%).

More families with children

In Muswellbrook suburb, households are more likely to be made up of single family households (64.3%), a similar proportion compared to Muswellbrook Shire (65.4%).

Compared to Muswellbrook Shire, Muswellbrook suburb has a similar proportion of couples with children (41.9% compared to 42.3%), a significantly higher proportion than Regional NSW at 25.4%.

21.3% of household in Muswellbrook suburb are one parent families, a higher proportion compared to Muswellbrook Shire (19.4%), and a significantly higher proportion compared to Regional NSW (11.0%).

27.8% of residents are lone person or group households, a slightly higher proportion compared to Muswellbrook Shire (26.2%), however a slightly lower proportion compared to Regional NSW (28.6%).

Similar household sizes

With 2.4 persons per dwelling, Muswellbrook suburb has a similar average household size compared to Muswellbrook Shire and Regional NSW (2.5 and 2.41 persons per dwelling respectively).

More households renting

The Muswellbrook suburb population is more likely to be renting compared to Muswellbrook Shire (40.0% compared to 35.5%), a significantly higher proportion compared to Regional NSW (26.5%).

It should be noted, data sourced from Remplan Community does not indicate the proportion of households renting privately and the proportion of households renting social housing in the Muswellbrook suburb. According to the Muswellbrook Shire CSP, Muswellbrook Shire offers a significantly high proportion of social housing dwellings, with over 450 social housing dwellings in Muswellbrook¹.

More home owners with a mortgage

17.7% of the Muswellbrook suburb population own their homes outright compared to 20.1% of households in Muswellbrook Shire, a significantly lower proportion than the Regional NSW average (35.5%). Overall, households in the Muswellbrook suburb are more likely to own their home with a mortgage (34.6%), a similar proportion compared to Muswellbrook Shire (35.0%) and a significantly higher proportion than Regional NSW (28.6%).

Education and employment

Students

Residents in Muswellbrook suburb (49.5%) are more likely to attain a Certificate Level qualification than any other educational qualification, a similar proportion to Muswellbrook Shire (49.7%).

In Muswellbrook suburb, 15.6% of residents had a Bachelor or Higher degree qualification, a significantly higher proportion compared to Muswellbrook Shire and Regional NSW (14.8% and 14.5% respectively).

Compared to Muswellbrook Shire, the most common fields of study in Muswellbrook suburb include:

- Engineering and Related Technologies (26.9% compared to 26.6%)
- Management and Commerce (14.6% compared to 14.4%)
- Health (7.6% compared to 7.4%)
- 1.1% of Muswellbrook suburbs population completed their field of study in Creative Arts.

Employment

8.7% of the Muswellbrook suburb is unemployed and actively looking for work, a significantly higher proportion than Muswellbrook Shire at 6.3% and Regional NSW at 6.6%.

Compared to Muswellbrook Shire, the largest industries that residents in Muswellbrook suburb work in include:

- Mining (24.0% compared to 22.7%)
- Retail Trade (10.4% compared to 9.0%)
- Health Care and Social Assistance (8.6%), and
- Accommodation and Food Services (7.1% compared to 6.8%).

Unpaid childcare

In 2016, Muswellbrook suburb had a higher proportion of unpaid child carers compared to Muswellbrook Shire (31.1%), and significantly higher than Regional NSW (27.1%).

Cultural Diversity

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander

Muswellbrook suburb (9.3%) has a higher proportion of residents identifying as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, compared to Muswellbrook Shire (8.1%) and Regional NSW (5.5%).

Cultural and linguistic diversity

8.4% of residents in the Muswellbrook suburb were born overseas, a slightly higher proportion compared to Muswellbrook Shire (7.8%), however a significantly lower proportion than Regional NSW (11.2%).

In Muswellbrook suburb, 5.8% of households spoke a language other than English at home, with the most common languages including Tagalog (0.3%), Filipino (0.3%), Malayam (0.3%) and Mandarin (0.3%).

Income and wellbeing

Compared to Muswellbrook LGA, Muswellbrook suburb has a similar household weekly income. 12.1% of households in Muswellbrook suburb earned an income of \$2,000-\$2,500 per week in 2016, a similar proportion compared to Muswellbrook Shire (11.9%), a significantly higher proportion than Regional NSW (8.9%).

This was followed by 7.4% of Muswellbrook suburb households that earned an income of \$2,500-\$2,999 per week, and 6.5% of households that earned an income of \$1,000-\$1,249 per week.

Need for assistance

4.9% or 595 people in the Muswellbrook suburb reported a need for assistance due to disability in 2016, an equal proportion compared to Muswellbrook Shire (4.9%), and a lower proportion than Regional NSW (6.3%).

Access to an internet connection

25.0% of households in Muswellbrook suburb do not have an internet connection. This is similar compared to Muswellbrook Shire with 25.2% of households that do not have an internet connection, and lower compared to Regional NSW (26.9%).

Method of travel to work

In Muswellbrook suburb, 32.0% of residents travel to work by car, as either the driver or passenger, as their main mode of travel. This is similar to Muswellbrook Shire at 30.2%, however is significantly lower than Regional NSW at 73.4%.

SEIFA Index Score

In 2016, Muswellbrook suburb (914) had a lower SEIFA score indicating higher levels of relative disadvantage, lower than Muswellbrook Shire (930.0) and significantly lower than Regional NSW (971.0)

3.4. POPULATION FORECAST FOR MUSWELLBROOK LGA

By 2041, Muswellbrook Shire's population will increase by 11.6%, or 1,900 people to 18,350 residents. It is projected household sizes in Muswellbrook Shire will decrease, while total households and dwellings will increase by 2041 (23.3% and 23.8% respectively).

Population forecasts for Muswellbrook Shire reflect an older population, with a decrease in children aged 0-14, and young people and young adults aged 15-29. Despite this predicted decrease, by 2041 families with children are expected to increase by 3.5%.

This proposal does not result in additional residents living in the Muswellbrook Shire, rather it provides future opportunities for the future young people of the Shire and those looking for job opportunities within the teaching and creative industries.

The Hunter Regional Plan identifies the following future housing and urban renewal opportunities:

- Deliver existing Urban Release Areas at Denman and Muswellbrook.
- Manage demand for rural residential development with the potential for longer term demand for residential development, and balance both in the context of potential mining activity surrounding Muswellbrook.
- Diversify housing opportunities to respond to changing demographics and housing affordability.

3.5. POPULATION FORECAST FOR SURROUNDING LGAS

This proposal is intended to provide educational and artistic opportunities for a more regional catchment rather than being confined to the local Muswellbrook area. Therefore it is important to also understand the forecast population characteristics of the Upper Hunter Region.

The DPIE 2019 population projections indicate that the population of Singleton LGA is estimated to remain stable, changing by -0.8% or 200 people between 2016 and 2041, from 23,600 residents to 23,400 residents.

The proportion of children aged 0-14 years in the Singleton LGA is forecast to decrease by 16.7%, or -850 children between 2016 and 2041.

The DPIE 2019 population projections indicate that the population of the Upper Hunter Shire LGA is forecast to decline by 11.5%, or -1,650 people by 2041. The LGA is also forecast to have a decrease in children aged 0-14 years (-32.8%), and a decrease in families with children (-19.6%), as it is estimated that there will be a continued movement of young families out of area.

Table 1 - Population forecasts Muswellbrook Shire Council.
Source: 2019 NSW Population Projections, DPIE

	2016	2026	2036	2041
Population	16,450	17,600	18,200	18,350
Total Households	6,450	7,250	7,800	7,950
Household size*	2.47	2.35	2.25	2.22
Implied Dwelling Projection**	7,550	8,500	9,150	9,350

*Average persons resident per occupied private dwelling

**Dwellings required if the population forms households in the same ways as in 2016

Table 2 - Age Forecasts Muswellbrook LGA.
Source: 2019 NSW Population Projections, DPIE

Age	2016	2041	Change #	Change %
0-14	3,800	3,500	-300	-7.9
15-29	3,250	2,850	-400	-12.3
30-44	3,350	3,200	-150	-4.5
45-59	3,250	3,500	250	7.7
60-74	2,050	3,050	1,000	48.8
75+	750	2,250	1,500	200.0

Table 3 - Households forecasts in Muswellbrook LGA.
Source: 2019 NSW Population Projections, DPIE

Household Type	2016	2041	Change #	Change %
Family with children	2,850	2,950	100	3.5
Couple-only	1,600	2,200	600	37.5
Loner person	1,750	2,550	800	45.7
Group & other	250	250	0	0.0
Total	6,450	7,950	1,500	23.3

4. Community engagement findings

As required by the SEARs, preliminary community engagement with surrounding residents was undertaken in the preparation of the EIS and has informed the recommendations of this social impact assessment. The following provides a summary of the feedback received and issues raised that the proposal will consider.

As part of the preparation of the EIS preparation for the establishment of the Richard Gill Music Academy, a community engagement process was undertaken between 7 and 22 April 2020. This process provided residents about the proposal a good understanding of the proposal and provided the opportunity to actively engaged in issues of concern.

Due to the restrictions relating to Covid-19, the engagement was limited to a letterbox drop and submission of comments via an online survey or via return letter.

The letter was hand delivered to 230 houses in the area surrounding the subject site. A total of 9 submissions was received, of which one expressed full support for the proposal and the remaining outlined a number of concerns.

There were some consistent themes that emerged from the community engagement. Below is a summary of the key issues raised that, where relevant have been address as part of the assessment of the social impacts of the proposal.

Noise from school operation and construction works

Residents expressed concerns with the potential noise impacts from the school operations and having a number of children on site. In particular they noted the noise from instruments and during breaks and from lunch / recess chimes. One submission asked that the future school operation keep in mind that there are a number of existing neighbours who are shift workers when deciding on the tone/pitch.

Traffic, access and flow of students from site

A number of submission raised concerned about the impact of an increase of traffic in the local area with parent dropping children off to school via private vehicle. The concerns expressed was that this will have a negative impact on the flow of traffic, potentially causing traffic jams and delays.

Concerns regarding the flow of students walking and riding bikes from the site through the surrounding residential areas. In particularly the submission noted the walkway through Weemala Place as it is an existing issue and noted that as the school expands it will only get worse. The respondent asked whether bollards could be fitted in walkway to slow children down going through on bikes.

Impact on the existing open space area on site

Residents expressed concern that the proposed development will extend into the southern area of the site which is currently open space and would limit its use for the personal storage of vehicles and caravans as well as access through the site from the New England Highway to the residential area to the south of the site.

Concern at the potential removal a number of well-established native trees, which are home to a large number of native wildlife was also raised. Some residents expressed concern for the safety of students with the watercourse and dam on the subject site.

Impacts of the proposed use on residents

A number of the submissions noted that the residents in the surrounding are shift workers and retirees that chose the location as it was quiet. They expressed concerns that the future use of the site would impact on the amenity of the area. One submission noted concern with student behaviour walking through the residential areas and impacting on existing residents properties and dogs.

Existing use and landuse zoning of the subject site

The historic use and zoning of the site was an issues raised in a number of submissions. Many felt that while they supported the school for the area, they didn't agree that this was the right location and the area should remain as an public reserve.

5. Community infrastructure assessment

This section provides an audit and mapping of existing social infrastructure and public open space within Muswellbrook (suburb) with a particular focus on the existing education and cultural network.

5.1. DEFINING COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE

Community infrastructure is a collective term that includes both social infrastructure and public open space.

Social infrastructure refers to public and communal/semi-private community and cultural facilities and services. Community and cultural facilities are those indoor (built form) spaces for individuals and organisations to conduct and engage in a range of education and learning, community development, recreational, social, cultural and artistic activities that enhance the community's wellbeing.

Public open space also includes outdoor open space including: parks, outdoor courts, sports fields and play spaces. It is open space, which is publicly owned, accessible to all members of the public, and can be planned and managed by local, state or federal government.

5.2. WHY IS COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE IMPORTANT?

For a healthy, liveable and sustainable community, access to quality employment and educational opportunities, good parks and open spaces, shops, and community services and facilities is fundamental, whether in a high density inner city area, or a rural and regional area.

Quality community infrastructure and services play an important role in supporting and facilitating learning, creative expression and sharing of cultural and local stories. It provides the space for community harmony and connectedness, and open space provides opportunities for play, exercise, connection to nature and a space to build social connections and migrate social isolation, particularly important in regional areas.

There is a need for community infrastructure that provides space to build community, directly connected to the school, but for it to be connected within the broader community, through education and creativity.

5.3. MUSWELLBROOK'S EDUCATION & CULTURAL NETWORK

Existing schools network

Muswellbrook South Public School is the closest primary school to the proposed site, approximately 1.68km away. It is a Government school, with 558 students.

St James Primary School is a primary school located approximately 2.3km from the proposed site. It is an independent private school, with 269 students enrolled.

This school also hosts the Muswellbrook and Upper Hunter Eisteddfod and other events for school bands, school choirs, speech/drama and public speaking.

Muswellbrook Public School is a primary school located approximately 2.93km from the proposed site. It is a Government school, with 548 students.

Muswellbrook High School is a secondary school located approximately 1.8km from the proposed site. It is a Government school, with 859 students.

Pacific Brook Christian School is a primary school located approximately 2.8km from the proposed site. It is an independent private school, with 48 students.

Higher education establishments

Upper Hunter Tertiary Education Centre is a learning hub for tertiary students, located approximately 3.4km from the site. The Centre houses TAFE NSW, the UON Upper Hunter and the Library, in what is known as the Hunter Region Innovation Precinct.

UON Upper Hunter is a research and education facility established by the University of Newcastle in partnership with Muswellbrook Shire Council. It focuses on the delivery of regionally relevant research and engagement activities that help shape the future of the region, support the area's diversification goals of becoming an innovation intensive region play a role in the Hunter's economic transition into a knowledge-based economy.

Early learning establishments

Little Kindy Muswellbrook is the closest long day care centre to the proposed site, approximately a 120m walking distance to the site. The centre has capacity for 34 children.

Tillys Play & Development Centre - Muswellbrook is a long day care centre located approximately 522m from the proposed site. It is a privately owned centre, and has capacity for 48 children.

Muswellbrook Preschool Kindergarten (Sowerby Street) is an early childhood education centre located approximately 522.7m from the proposed site. It is a privately owned centre, and has capacity for 48 children.

Goodstart Early Learning Muswellbrook is a long day care centre located approximately 2.1km from the proposed site, and has 76 places.

Muswellbrook Child Care Centre is a long day care centre located 2.12km from the proposed site, and has capacity for 30 children.

Muswellbrook Out of School Hours Care (MOOSH) is an out of hours school care service located within the Bowman Park Community Centre, approximately 2.8km from the proposed site. The service offers before and after school care, and school holiday and vacation care. It is owned and operated by Upper Hunter Community Services Inc, and has capacity for 60 children.

PCYC- Out Of School Hours Muswellbrook (OOSH) is an out of school hours care service located approximately 2.8km from the proposed site. It offers school holiday and vacation care. The service is owned and operated by PCYC Muswellbrook, a not-for-profit youth organisation, and has capacity for 30 children.

Existing cultural network

Within 3km from the site, there is a range of community and cultural facilities, including:

- Muswellbrook Library is a government owned library, located approximately 2.82km from the proposed site. This library is operated by the Upper Hunter Library Network, which has library branches across the Upper Hunter Shire and Muswellbrook Shire communities.
- There are 3 community centres located within 3km of the proposed site. This includes Council owned and operated Stan Thiess Centre; Muswellbrook

Community Services Centre, owned and operated by Service NSW; and the Upper Hunter Community Services, owned and operated by the UHCS Inc.

- The Upper Hunter Conservatorium of Music (UHCM) is a not-for-profit, community based organisation, that offers music tuition. It is located approximately 2.65km from the proposed site.
- Muswellbrook Regional Arts Centre is a non-profit facility and resource servicing the Upper Hunter Region, owned and operated by Muswellbrook Shire Council. It is located approximately 2.49km from the proposed site.

5.4. MUSWELLBROOK'S OPEN SPACE & RECREATION NETWORK

There are eleven parks, reserves and recreation facilities within 3km of the site providing for a range of passive and active sporting and recreation activities.

Within 800m of the site include:

- Acacia Drive Reserve (O6) is a grassed, natural reserve area, highly valued by local residents.
- Muswellbrook Showground (O1) is a large event space that has a variety of uses, including regular markets, music events and the annual Upper Hunter Show.
- Muswellbrook Skate Park (O5) is a concrete skate park with two open bowls, with rails and ledges.
- Highbrook Park (O3) includes a rugby field, cricket pitch, grandstand, canteen, toilets and change rooms.

Within 2kms of the site include:

- Bowman Park (O9) is a large-sized open space that offers a sports field with a cricket pitch
- Olympic Park (O10) has sporting fields, outdoor tennis courts, cricket pitch, and a velodrome, with grandstand, change rooms, canteen and amenities
- Muswellbrook Indoor Sports Centre (O4) is a multi-purpose building for basketball, volleyball, dance, physical culture, aerobics, roller derby, tae kwon do, as well as courts for hire including badminton, soccer, netball, volleyball and squash.

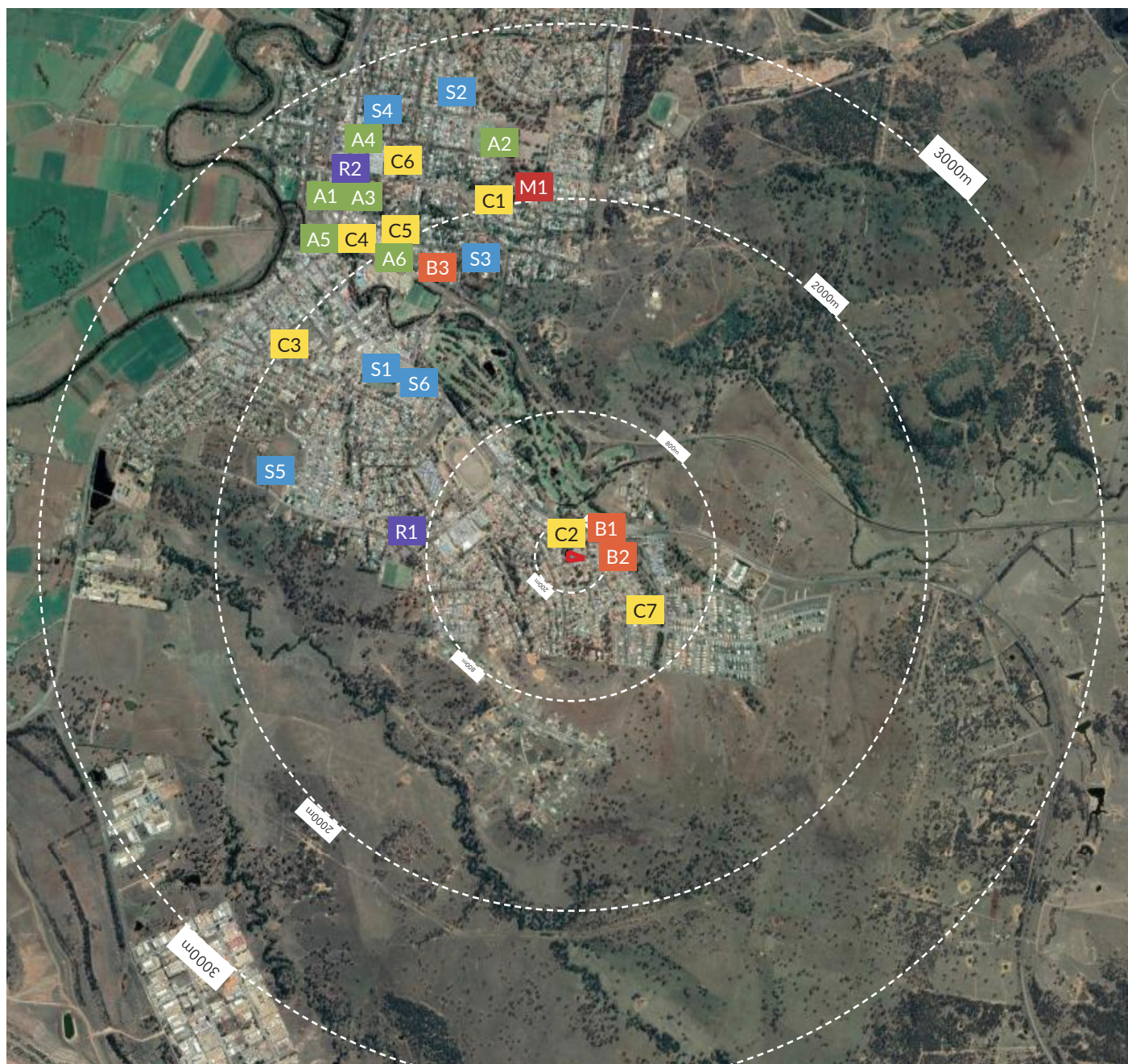


Figure 9 - 157 Maitland Street, Muswellbrook social infrastructure audit map. Source: Cred Consulting

Name	Code	Name	Code
Muswellbrook South Public School	S1	Muswellbrook Fair	R1
Muswellbrook Public School	S2	Muswellbrook Marketplace	R2
Muswellbrook High School	S3	Muswellbrook Hospital	M1
Pacific Brook Christian School	S4	Upper Hunter Conservatorium of Music	A1
St James Primary School	S5	Stan Theiss Centre	A2
TAFE Muswellbrook	S6	Muswellbrook Regional Arts Centre	A3
Goodstart Early Learning Muswellbrook	C1	Muswellbrook Library	A4
Little Kindy Muswellbrook	C2	Upper Hunter Community Services	A5
Muswellbrook Child Care Centre	C3	Muswellbrook Community Services Centre	A6
Muswellbrook Out of School Hours Care	C4	Bus Stop (413, Muswellbrook-Highbrook Loop)	B1
PCYC- Out Of School Hours Muswellbrook	C5	Bus Stop (418, Muswellbrook-Eastlinks Loop)	B2
Muswellbrook Preschool Kindergarten Sowerby Street	C6	Muswellbrook Train Station	B3
Tillys Play & Development Centre - Muswellbrook	C7		

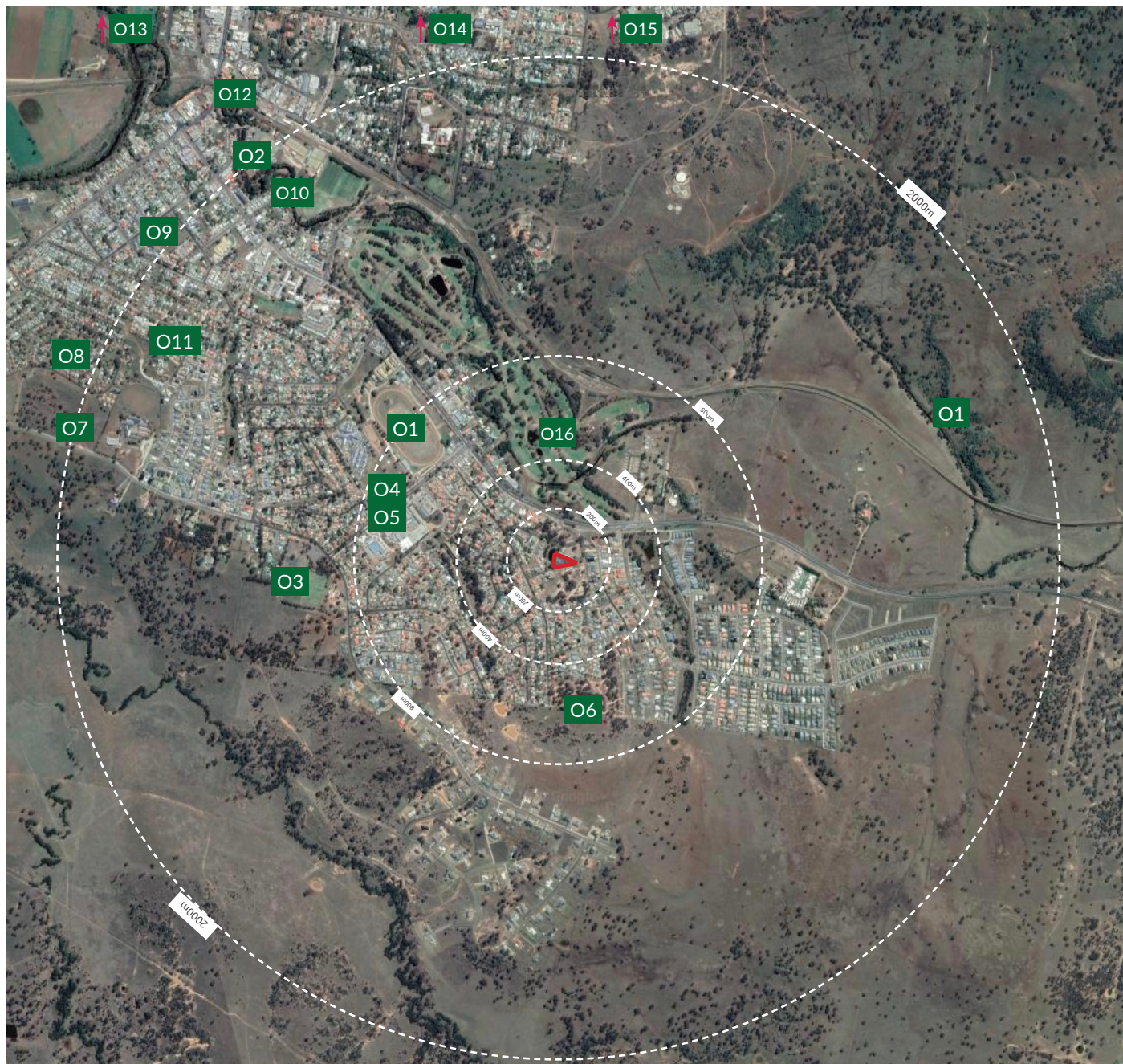


Figure 10 - 157 Maitland Street, Muswellbrook Open space and recreation audit map. Source: Cred Consulting

Name	Map Code	Name	Map Code
Muswellbrook Showground	O1	Bowman Park	O9
Muswellbrook Aquatic & Fitness Centre	O2	Olympic Park	O10
Highbrook Park	O3	Fitzgerald Park	O11
Muswellbrook Indoor Sports Centre	O4	Simpson Park	O12
Muswellbrook Skate Park	O5	Lions Park	O13
Acacia Drive Reserve	O6	Victoria Park	O14
Wollombi Park	O7	Weeraman Fields	O15
Hunter Park	O8	Muswellbrook Golf Course	O16

General community infrastructure needs summary

Based on the place context community profile and community infrastructure assessment, the following summaries the education and cultural needs assessment:

- Muswellbrook has a higher proportion of children aged 0-9 than compared to Regional NSW.
- The proposal is well placed to support the enhancement of Muswellbrook as a centre of educational excellence in the Upper Hunter.
- There are only 1.1% of jobs within the creative industries within the area, the NMA will help to boost opportunities a locally, rather than people having to go to Newcastle or Sydney.
- Access to the school's facilities will add value to the community infrastructure provided in Muswellbrook and contribute to the health and wellbeing of the local community.
- The NMA will contribute to the existing education and innovative network of services and facilities within Muswellbrook, partnering with other local schools and the Upper Hunter Conservatorium of Music.
- The existing community infrastructure is concentrated in and to the north of the town centre, with less facilities currently located in the eastern part of Muswellbrook.

“Well maintained community infrastructure helps .. provide quality lifestyle infrastructure in support of our residents and to attract and sustain further economic and population growth.”

(Muswellbrook Shire Community Strategic Plan 2017-2027)



Figure 12 - Hunter Region Innovation Precinct - UON Upper Hunter and NSW TAFE. Source: Plum Group (pluim.com)



Figure 13 - Muswellbrook Arts Centre. Source: Muswellbrook Shire Council



Figure 11 - Highbrook Park, Muswellbrook. Source: Muswellbrook Shire Council

6. Social impact assessment and mitigation measures

Impact assessment is a method for predicting and assessing the consequences of a proposed action or initiative before a decision is made. Social impact Assessment (SIA) refers to the assessment of the potential social consequences (positive, negative or neutral) of a proposed decision or action.

The SEARs issued by the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment in November 2019 states that the social impacts was a key issue to be address through the preparation of the EIS. More specifically, an assessment of the social consequences of the schools' relative location and identification as to how facilities are to be shared with the community outside of school hours was to be undertaken.

This assessment has also considered the International Association for Impact Assessment (2003) which identifies social consequences or impacts as occurring in one or more of the following areas:

- People's way of life - how they live, work, play and interact with each other
- Their culture – their shared beliefs or customs

- Their community – its cohesion, stability, character, services and facilities
- The population – including increases or decreases in population numbers and population change
- Their political systems – the extent to which people are able to participate in decisions affecting them
- Their natural and built environment
- Their health and well-being
- Social equity and quality of life
- Access and mobility
- Their personal and property rights, and
- Their fears and aspirations and safety.

Based on the documentation provide by the client, the table below provides an analysis of social impacts and where relevant possible mitigation measures to increase the benefits from this proposal to the future school community, surrounding residents and the wider Muswellbrook community.

Table 4 - Summary of social impact assessment and mitigation measures

Potential social impact	Impact Type	Impact Level	Proposed mitigation measure
Demand for education and cultural facilities and learning			
The proposal is for the establishment of a new independent primary school based on the central philosophy of music and physical education-based education for year K through 6.	Positive	High	None required. While the forecast population indicated only a small increase within Muswellbrook, the NMA serves a more regional catchment and provides the opportunity for students to take part in a unique academic and cultural learning experience without having to move to Newcastle or Sydney.
The proposal is consistent with the Hunter Region Plan and Council's Community Strategic Plan vision for Muswellbrook to be a centre for educational excellence and provide greater access the knowledge and creative economy.	Neutral	Medium	None required. In combination with the existing educational establishments, such as schools and the UON Upper Hunter, the addition of the NMA in Muswellbrook continues to support the creative and learning ecosystem that supports the wider Upper Hunter region.
The client has indicated that the school is exploring the potential for partnership around out of school care (OOSH) and vacation care on the school site.	Positive	Medium	While there are already a number of early learning and after school care facilities within Muswellbrook, the point of difference could be the access for younger students from the school and other schools to combine after school care with music lessons and activities.

Table 4 - Summary of social impact assessment and mitigation measures

Potential social impact	Impact Type	Impact Level	Proposed mitigation measure
Community access and usage of facilities			
The proposal includes a multipurpose hall (135m ²), library (63m ²) and teaching spaces (222m ²) which could be used by the wider community outside school hours.	Positive	High	Consideration should be given to the shared use of the performance spaces and learning spaces. The client has indicated that this is being considered as part of the operation of the school.
The school will have access to musical instruments that may be may procured as part of high calibre music programs that could also benefit students from other schools	Positive	High	The applicant has indicated they will consider access to the school's musical instruments by the wider community. Consideration should be given to partnerships with the existing local schools to expand the opportunities for students to participate in music learning.
The proposal provides for a playspace within the schools grounds for students	Neutral	Medium	Consideration should be given to the shared use of the performance spaces and learning spaces. The client has indicated that this is being considered as part of the operation of the school.
Access and connectivity			
The subject site is located at the edge of town, 3.3km from the Muswellbrook Town Centre and in a predominately residential area with limited public transport services to and from the site to the town centre and Muswellbrook Train Station. A Green Travel Plan is being prepared as part of the EIS preparation.	Neutral	Medium	Providing bike parking and considering improvement to local pedestrian and cycle links would increase the connectivity between the school and town centre.
The proposed school will continue to be serviced via the existing access from New England Highway, which will be used by future staff, parents and students attending the school daily. Community feedback expressed concern regarding increased local vehicle traffic during morning and afternoon peak hours in the surrounding local streets.	Negative	Low	It is suggested that the proposal consider signage and traffic management measures to ensure the safe entry and exit of vehicles, on-site parking, and dropoff points for all users of the site and minimise the flow of traffic into the surrounding residential areas.
The proposal is designed to cater for a variety of users; students, parents, guests and teachers, some of who may have special access needs. The client has indicated that the development site and the building must be able to facilitate these requirements.			None required.
Location and amenity			
It is proposed to establish the school at the existing Council administration building with no changes to its footprint or external walls.	Neutral	Low	While there are benefits to a more central location, the location of the school and its facilities provides access to facilities for residents in the eastern part of Muswellbrook which currently doesn't have access to the existing facilities which are located to the north of the suburb.

Table 4 - Summary of social impact assessment and mitigation measures

Potential social impact	Impact Type	Impact Level	Proposed mitigation measure
The subject site adjoins a large number of residential properties. Given the music focus of the proposed school, it is anticipated the proposal would have some level of noise or acoustic impacts over these properties during the daytime. The acoustic assessment prepared for the EIS recommends that the predicted noise breakout from music within the multipurpose hall during the day and in the evening for special events, requires no additional acoustic treatment.	Negative	Low	Consideration be given to minimise the noise impacts on the amenity of surrounding residents by use of a low level sound and PA system for the school bell and announcements over a loud speaker. As this was an issue raised through the consultation, and to increase connection with the surrounding residents, it is suggested that notification of and invitation to evening events be given to residents in surrounding areas.
Employment and Training			
The proposal school is envisaged to be an independent demonstration school addressing the need for specialised contemporary music teacher training and will draw music education students for placement across the nation.	Positive	Medium	None required.
The primary objective of the NMA will be to educate regional students with innovative, creative, and STEM-based curricula and become a model for the establishment of similar schools across regional Australia.	Positive	Medium	None required.
Local job opportunities will be created in the construction and operation of the proposed school.	Positive	Low	None required.
Crime and safety			
The proposed school will be established within the existing building, centrally located on a large property, that has multiple access points from the adjoining residential properties. The client has indicated that the site design and EIS will be informed by a detailed CPTED assessment.	Neutral	Medium	The site design should achieve safety by design requirements, such as maintaining natural surveillance, security lighting and appropriate landscaping. Consideration should be given to the potential light spill of security lighting on the surrounding residential areas.

7. Conclusion

The delivery of the Richard Gill National Music Academy will have a positive impact and deliver social and cultural benefits to the Muswellbrook community as well as the wider Upper Hunter region.

Regional and rural students will have access to a unique academic and creative learning experience.

While the forecast population indicated only a small increase within Muswellbrook, the NMA serves a more regional catchment and provides the opportunity for students within the Upper and Lower Hunter areas to have access to a combined academic and cultural learning experience without having to move to Newcastle or Sydney.

The additional facilities for creative and cultural learning, performance and expression contribute to the health and wellbeing of the wider community

The proposal responds to the Upper Hunter Regional Cultural Development Strategy to achieve its vision of increase cultural development within the region, through the provision of supporting new cultural infrastructure and developing opportunities for cultural education and collaboration across the Upper Hunter.

The high quality facilities and equipment as part of high calibre music programs provided provide the opportunity for shared use and benefits to the wider student population and general community to access and participate in music education, learning and performance. This could provide valuable particularly for student from lower socio economic areas and households.

The shared use of the school's facilities offer residents additional places to meet, gather and perform.

A specialist and nationally recognised music academy contributes to Muswellbrook evolving into a centre of educational excellence

In combination with the existing educational establishments, such as schools and the UON Upper Hunter, the addition of the NMA in Muswellbrook continues to support the creative and learning ecosystem that supports the wider Upper Hunter region.

The uniqueness of the school's envisaged education philosophy and its association with the renowned Richard Gill brand is expected to be a key driver of student enrolments in the Muswellbrook area.

The proposal contributed to achieving the Hunter Region Plan aspiration for Muswellbrook to to be a centre for educational excellence

The provision of specialist teaching training and support creates opportunities for jobs within the creative industries and knowledge sectors

The proposal school is envisaged to be an independent demonstration school addressing the need for specialised contemporary music teacher training and will draw music education students for placement across the nation.

The proposal is also consistent with the Council's Community Strategic Plan 2017-27 which seeks to provide greater access to education, knowledge, and to enhance the cultural and creative economy.