

# **HILLS SHOWGROUND STATION PRECINCT**

## **Social Infrastructure Assessment**

Prepared for Landcom

Date: April 2020

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# 1. INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

# INTRODUCTION

## Need for this study

Urbis has been engaged by Landcom to undertake a Social Infrastructure Assessment for the Hills Showground Station Precinct within the Showground Station Precinct.

In 2019 Landcom lodged a State Significant Development Application (SSDA) for the site on behalf of the landholder (Sydney Metro). The Hills Shire Council prepared a submission requesting the proposal review the social infrastructure needs of the future residents, as the concept proposal exceeded the yields anticipated for the site as part of the precinct planning.

The concept SSDA for the Hills Showground Station Precinct was informed by the Open Space and Community Facilities Assessment prepared by Arup in 2015. This study updates the assessment prepared by Arup in 2015 to identify social infrastructure requirements associated with an increased yield for the Hills Showground Station Precinct.

In addition, the Department of Education also requested that Landcom continue discussions with Schools Infrastructure NSW to identify suitable land for future school sites and to provide a more detailed response to the educational needs generated by the proposal.

This study also identifies likely educational needs for the broader Showground Station Precinct including those generated by the future population of the Hills Showground Station Precinct.

## Scope and Methodology

This Social Infrastructure Assessment has been prepared in response to Council's and the Department of Education's submissions on the concept SSDA. The purpose of this study is to identify what impact the increased yields proposed for the Hills Showground Station Precinct are likely to have on social infrastructure requirements for the site.

While the scope of this study focuses on the increased yields associated with the Hills Showground Station Precinct only, we acknowledge that yields have increased in the broader Showground Station Precinct and this can have cumulative impacts on the demand for social infrastructure.

For the purpose of this report, social infrastructure includes community and cultural facilities, libraries, education, childcare, health services and open space.

This assessment included the following tasks:

- Document review of relevant government strategies and plans and former assessments for the Showground Station Precinct
- Analysis of 2016 Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Census data and comparison with the community profile developed in the 2015 study prepared by Arup
- Mapping of existing social infrastructure within 2km of the site
- Consultation with Hills Shire Council staff and Schools Infrastructure NSW
- Assessment of the proposal's future demand for social infrastructure
- Development of recommendations for the Hills Showground Station Precinct.

# SITE CONTEXT

## The Showground Station Precinct

The vision for the Showground Station Precinct is for “a vibrant urban centre, which will deliver nearly two hectares of parks and new open space and provide community facilities, recreation areas and a mix of housing choice for people at all life stages” (NSW Department of Planning Industry and Environment).

The Showground Station Precinct consist of multiple landholdings which total to 271 hectares. The subject of the State Significant Development Application (SSDA) is referenced as the Hills Showground Station Precinct (refer adjacent diagram) and is one land area (8.4 ha) within the Showground Station Precinct.

According to Council’s Contribution Plan for the Showground Station Precinct, the estimated future population of the Precinct is approximately 21,819 people.

There are three existing open spaces within the Precinct boundaries which are planned for upgrades and embellishment; the Castle Hill Showground, Chapman Avenue Reserve and Cockayne Reserve as well as extensive revitalisation of the Cattai Creek riparian corridor.

## Hills Showground Station Precinct

The Hills Showground Station Precinct has a total area within the development lots of around 8.4 ha and a total developable area of 3.95 ha. The government owned land proposes a new public plaza with minimum area of 1,400sqm (Doran Drive Plaza) and a new public park with minimum area of 3,500sqm (Precinct East Park). The concept master plan includes up to 1,620 dwellings.

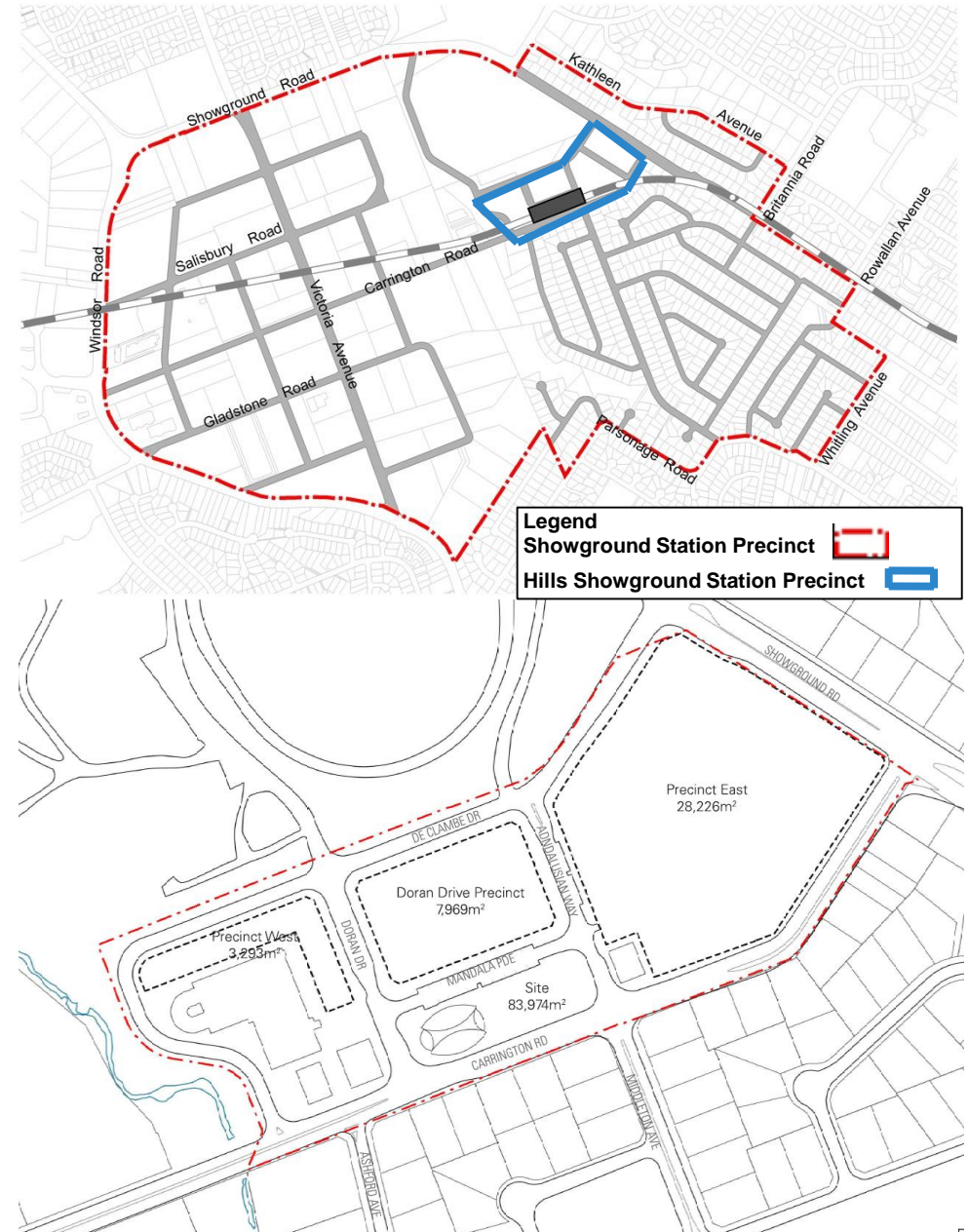


Figure1: Top right: The Hills Showground Station Planned Precinct- The Hills Shire Council Development Control Plan 2012 (Hills Showground Station Precinct in blue)

Figure 2: Bottom Right: Hills Showground Station Precinct Site and Development Lots, Cox Architecture

## 2. DOCUMENT REVIEW

# DOCUMENT REVIEW

A review of relevant government strategies and plans and former assessments for the Showground Station Precinct was undertaken to understand the planning direction for the area and the expected social infrastructure needs of the local community. A summary of each document, as it relates to the proposal, is provided below.

## Open Space and Community Facilities Assessment Showground Station Precinct, Arup (2015)

On behalf of NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment (DPIE), Arup were commissioned to assess the expected open space and community facilities needs of the Showground Station Precinct. This assessment was based on the expectation that the Precinct would include 5,000 dwellings with a projected population of 10,500. A summary of the expected social infrastructure needs of the Precinct is provided below.

### Open space needs

The assessment uses a combination of quantitative and qualitative standards to determine suitable open space provision for the precinct. The study adopted an indicative benchmark of 1ha; 1,000 people, with a 50/50 split between passive and active open space. Overall, the assessment found that:

- The Showground Station Precinct contains 23.09ha of open space which, at approximately 1ha: 1,000 people, significantly exceeds the average rate of 0.35ha; 1,000 people for other renewal precincts
- This proposed open space network is considered adequate to meet the likely recreation needs of the incoming community.

The study provided the following recommendations to further guide decision making during the detailed master planning process:

- Provide open spaces which cater for a range of informal and programmed activities e.g. weekend markets
- Consider flexible and adaptable active open space to provide quality space for new residents as a short term planning solution
- Provide indoor courts co-located with other community facilities at the Castle Hill Showground for community and school use
- Enhance green links to sporting fields and courts outside the Precinct, such as Fred Caterson Reserve. The study notes that existing sports fields across the LGA are at, or reaching capacity
- Potentially upgrade existing active recreation facilities to increase capacity and usability e.g. synthetic grass.

### Community facility needs

The study uses a range of benchmarks, predominately from DPIE Draft Development Contributions Guidelines (2009), to determine suitable community facility provision for the precinct. Based on this, the assessment found that the Showground Station Precinct will require the following facilities:

- A multipurpose youth centre, accommodating youth and community needs
- Children services, including 2 – 3 preschools, a long day care centre, a occasional care centre and a outside of school hours care centre.

The expected education needs of the precinct were being addressed separately by DPIE and were not included for benchmarking in this report. At the time of this report (2015), the Precinct did not contain the above facilities.

The following recommendations were made to further guide decision making during the detailed master planning process:

- Locate child care in close proximity to the future Hills Showground Station to allow for ease of drop off and pick up for care givers using the metro
- Design community facility typologies to include vertical buildings
- Undertake early engagement with the private sector to assess market readiness to respond to the provision of private sector social infrastructure to promote early activation.



## The Hills Shire Council Recreation Strategy, (2019)

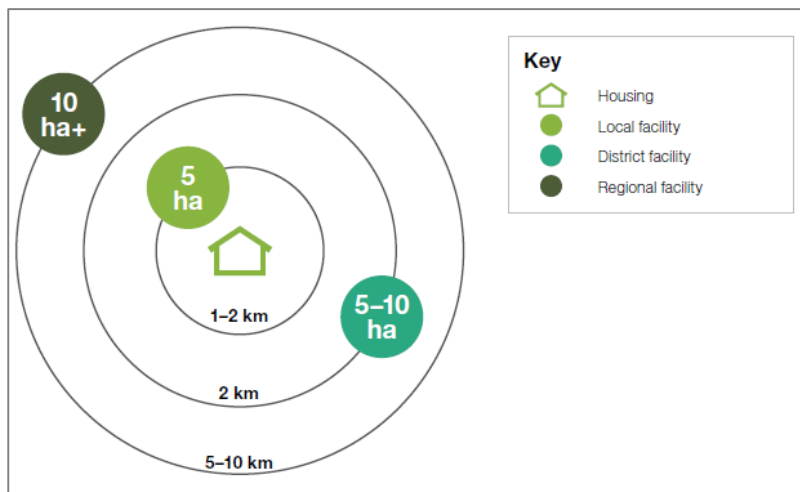
The Hills Shire Council (THSC) Recreation Strategy focuses on establishing a framework for how open space and recreation facilities will be managed in the future. The Strategy recognises that most of the urban areas in the LGA have sufficient access to active recreational facilities and passive open space. However, increased housing density (particularly around the metro corridor) and population growth is expected to increase the demand for open space.

### Benchmarks

The Strategy establishes several benchmarks to help guide the provision of open space and recreation facilities in the LGA. Key benchmarks relevant to this study include:

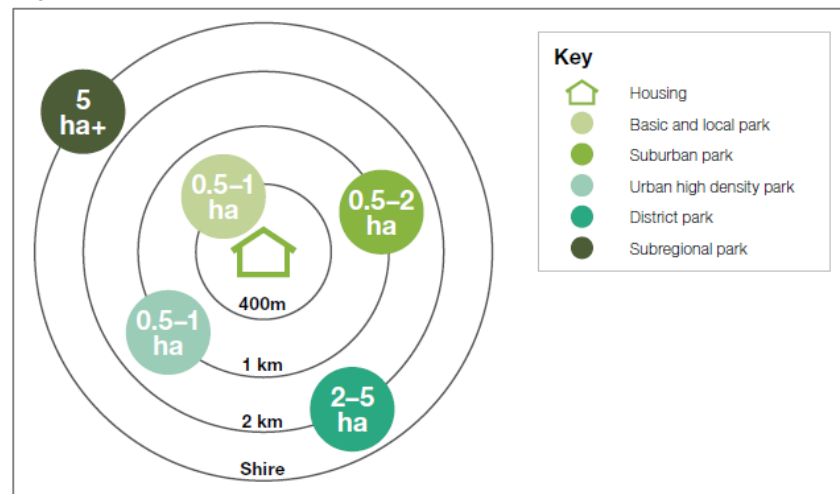
- Aim for most households to have a local park with an appropriate level of equipment and facilities within a 400m walk of their home
- Playgrounds generally should be located within 400m of any residence. Where possible, playground should be used by people of all ages and abilities
- Aim for 1 playing field per 4,530 people for the Showground Station Precinct
- Planning for passive open space will involve establishing new local open space where possible, increasing the capacity of existing open space (embellishing existing basic parks) and ensuring that parks are appropriately distributed and accessible in growth areas (in the metro corridor, new and expanded local parks will be identified and existing parks upgraded to a high standard and level of service as part of the master planning process)
- Where the overall quantity of open space falls short of the standard benchmark (2:83 ha; 1,000 people), THSC aims to provide well distributed and high quality open space to support a higher number of people
- Planning for open spaces should be aligned with Council's hierarchy (as outlined below).

Figure 3 – Active recreation benchmarks and area catchments



Source: THSC Recreation Strategy 2019

Figure 4 – Passive recreation benchmarks and area catchments



Source: THSC Recreation Strategy 2019

## Planning criteria

In addition to the benchmarks, the Recreation Strategy also establishes a planning criteria to help guide the development of new passive and active open space areas. This criteria is outlined below.

### Planning for Passive Open Space

When planning for new passive open space THSC will apply the following criteria:

- Parks will have an area of at least 5,000 sqm and development will reflect their level on Council's open space hierarchy
- Plazas are encouraged around railway station entrances and town centre cores
- All residents within 400m of a local park
- Where possible and appropriate, creek corridors are to be utilised as greenway links
- Embellished in accordance with the open space hierarchy and level of service benchmarks
- Parks located where they can be seen from residential properties or areas with high pedestrian activity
- Development that adjoins open space should have an attractive outlook to that open space
- Parks in high density locations will not be overshadowed from 11am to 2pm during mid-winter.

### Planning for Active Open Space

The Recreation Strategy identified a deficit of 18 playing fields within the metro corridor. To help meet this demand, THSC proposes to implement the following:

- Provide new urban fields in locations as close to possible to urban areas
- Provide new synthetic playing fields through strategic partnerships with the private sector
- Implement shared-use agreements with local schools
- Expand existing open space facilities to provide additional playing fields, or to increase the capacity of existing facilities
- Build small courts under the Sydney Metro Northwest viaduct to help address the playing field shortfall in these locations.

Some reserves also have capacity to accommodate new or expanded fields or be upgrade to synthetic. The identified fields in proximity to the site include:

- Castle Glen Reserve (new facilities to attract winter sport)
- Fred Caterson Reserve (pony club)
- Eric Mobbs Reserve.

## The Hills Shire Council Local Strategic Planning Statement, (2019)

The Hills Shire Council (THSC) LSPS sets out the 20 year land use vision for the LGA based on an understanding of the area's economic, social and environmental needs. The LSPS notes the planned renewal around the metro stations will bring greater housing choice, more opportunities to work closer to home and easier access to services. The LSPS expects the Showground Precinct will have over 7,000 dwellings.

It's considered critical in high growth areas to provide the right types of cultural and social infrastructure to help create great places. The LSPS includes the following directions to help guide this provision:

- All residents should be within easy distance of high quality and well maintained playing fields, parks and playgrounds
- Passive open space is generally provided a minimum rate of 1.62 ha; 1,000 people
- The LGA needs a cycling and pedestrian network that links public transport hubs to key open spaces, centres and services to encourage greater use of recreational areas
- THSC is currently developing a library and community facilities strategy to guide the future provision, upgrade and expansion of these facilities (the timeframe for this strategy was not identified within the LSPS).

## The Hills Shire Council Showground Station Precinct Contributions Plan (2018)

The Hills Shire Council Showground Station Precinct Contributions Plan identifies the open space and community facilities to be provided to cater for the needs of a projected population of 24,114 people (which includes an existing population of 2,301 people + 21,819 future population). The Contributions Plan outlines the potential for the Precinct to accommodate approximately 10,743 additional dwellings and 551,527 sqm of additional gross floor area for retail and commercial uses. For open space the Contributions Plan recommends an open space provision of 1 ha per 1,000 population (comprising 0.5 ha of active open space and 0.5 ha of passive open space). With an additional population of 21,819 people, this indicates the Precinct would require approximately 21.8 ha of open space.

The Contribution Plan notes that using this standard, the population would generate a demand for 10.9 ha of active open space and would require 4-5 playing fields, 4 cricket ovals, 6 tennis courts and 5 netball/basketball courts. However, the Plan states that due to high cost and availability of land within the Showground Precinct, the provision of 4-5 new playing fields will not be possible. Therefore, to meet the demand for active open space the following solutions are proposed:

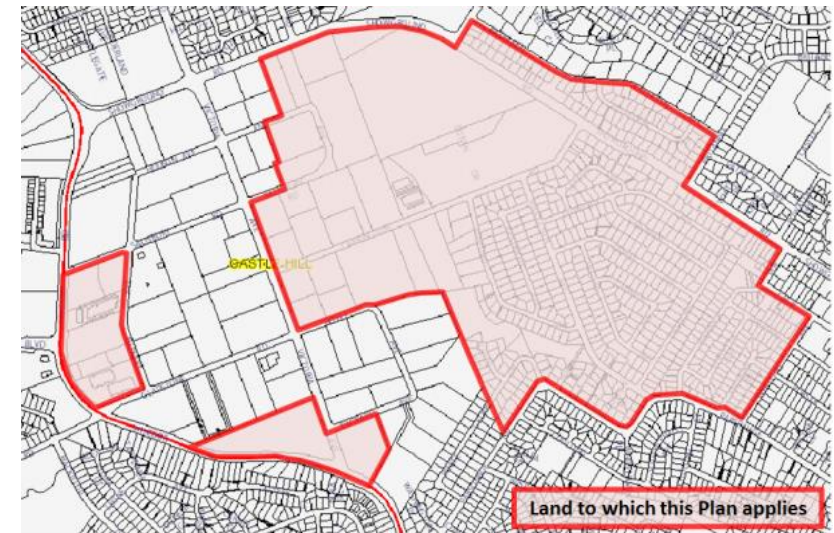
- Expansion of Fred Caterson Reserve to provide an additional 3 single playing fields and associated parking, amenities, pathways and planting
- Provision of 1 synthetic field co-located in Castle Hill
- Expansion of Castle Glen Reserve Playing Fields including car parking, amenities and lighting

The amount of passive open space required is 10.9 ha and will typically take the form of designated local and neighbourhood parks and more informal areas within riparian corridors. To meet the demand for passive open space, the following provision is proposed:

- Acquisition, expansion and revitalization of the creek corridor connecting to Cockayne Reserve (Creek Corridor) to include an addition 10,236sqm
- Expansions of Chapman Avenue Reserve to include an addition 4,059sqm
- A town square urban plaza, located on the station site to the east of Doran Drive (connecting the station to the Showground), with an area of 1,150sqm.

For community facilities the Plan references the need for a new multipurpose community facility with a minimum floor area of 1,500sqm as outlined in the Department of Planning and Environment's Finalisation Report. However after receiving advice from the Department of Planning and Environment (now DPIE), the Plan notes the community facility will not be funded through the Contributions Plan, but that alternative funding sources for the provision of new community facilities must be investigated.

Figure 5 – Land to which the Contributions Plan applies



Source: THSC Showground Station Precinct Contributions Plan 2018

## Draft Open Space for Recreation Guide, Government Architect NSW (2018)

The Draft Open Space for Recreation Guide provides a consistent approach and framework to encourage innovation in public open space planning and to promote higher community use of, and satisfaction with, public open space. The Guide aims to outline the delivery of better quality, easily accessible and more functional open space for recreation which keeps paces with the expected population growth and increased density in urban areas. The Guide addresses the provision of public open space that supports outdoor recreation, sport and exercise.

### **Key directions from the Guide include:**

- Desirable minimum size of a local parks to be 3000sqm (in high-density areas, parks may be as small as 1,500sqm where more efficient provision does not exist or opportunities for re-use of small spaces arise)
- Quantity of open space should be considered in terms of the number of opportunities available for active and passive recreation with a variety of spaces that cater to different demands and age groups
- For a high-density neighbourhood, residents must be within:
  - A 2–3 minute walk / 200m walking distance to open space
  - A maximum of 25 minute walk / 2 km proximity to any district park district-level open space area that provides a range of activities (2ha+)
  - 10 minutes walking or 800m (400m preference for high density areas) to linear open space
  - Within 20 minutes safe walking or 2km to district level organised sport and recreation spaces such as field sports, outdoor court sports, indoor sports, aquatic sports spaces
  - A maximum of 30 minutes travel time on public transport or by vehicle to regional open space (5ha+).

# 3. EXISTING PRECINCT COMMUNITY

# EXISTING COMMUNITY PROFILE

A community profile was prepared to inform Arup's 2015 Open Space and Community Facilities Assessment Showground Station Precinct using 2011 ABS Census data. Since this report was delivered, the 2016 Census data has been released. Below is an update to that community profile using 2016 ABS Census data including identification of any changes to the community since Arup's 2015 Open Space and Community Facilities Assessment was prepared.

As the data shows, the community living in the existing Showground Precinct area has not changed significantly since the 2015 Study was prepared. Median age has increased slightly, employment levels remain the same, car ownership and methods of travelling to work and dwelling types are all consistent with the 2015 Study. Proportion of people born in Australia and speaking English at home has increased and proportion of people who have completed a post-school qualification has decreased slightly.

While the 2015 Arup Study didn't include assessment of tenure, the 2016 ABS data showed those living in the Precinct had higher rates of people who owned their home outright compared to Greater Sydney and significantly lower proportions of people renting. Couples with children was also the dominant family type (as opposed to couples without children or single parent families).



In 2016, the population of the Showground Station Precinct was 2,887 which is largely consistent with the population in 2011 (2,846 people). In 2016 the Precinct had higher proportions of people aged between 40-54 compared to Greater Sydney and higher proportions of children aged 10-19 compared to Greater Sydney. This is consistent with Arup's 2015 study which showed the average age was 38.5 years and that there was a high proportion of people in their 40s living in the precinct.



The proportion of people born in Australia has increased from 68% in 2011 to 84% in 2016. Similarly those who spoke English at home has increased from 75% in 2011 to 85% in 2016. Mandarin, Korean and Cantonese remain the top languages spoken at home other than English.



1,482 of the Precinct's residents were employed in 2016 which is consistent with Arup's 2015 study which stated 1,542 residents were employed. There has been no change since 2011 to the unemployment rate in the precinct which was 4.3% in 2016.



In 2016, the proportion of people who completed a post-school qualification was 58%. This has reduced slightly from 61% in 2011.



2016 ABS data showed 80% of people travelled to work by car and 73% owned a minimum of two vehicles. Only 1% of people did not own a vehicle in the Precinct. This data is consistent with Arup's 2015 study as no change has occurred since 2011.



Of the 894 dwellings in the Precinct, 93% were separate houses, 5.5% were semi-detached and 1.6% were flats or apartments which is consistent with Arup's 2015 study. The average household size in 2016 was 3.1 people and 3.08 in 2011.

# 3. FUTURE POPULATION

# POPULATION PROJECTIONS

To assess community needs, it is important to understand the number of people the proposal will introduce into an area and the likely age profile of the incoming population. This study has adopted an average occupancy rate of 2.2 persons per dwelling. This is based on the average taken from:

- The average occupancy rate for Meadowbank suburb (2.1 persons per dwelling)
- The average occupancy rate for Rhodes suburb (2.4 persons per dwelling)
- The average occupancy rate applied in the 2015 Open Space and Community Facilities Assessment Showground Station Precinct prepared by Arup (2.1 persons per dwelling)
- The average occupancy rate applied in the Kellyville Bella Vista Social Infrastructure and Open Space assessment prepared by Elton Consulting in 2019 (2.0 persons per dwelling)\*.

Meadowbank and Rhodes suburbs were selected as they have a high concentration of relatively new, high density housing stock (approximately 95% of all people live in a flat or apartment) and is also in close proximity to a train station making it a reasonable comparison for the Showground Precinct.

Applying the average household size of 2.2 people per household to a dwelling yield of 1,620, the **proposal is likely to generate a residential population of approximately 3,564 people.**

According to Council's Contribution Plan for the Showground Precinct, the estimated future population of the Precinct is approximately 24,114 people (which includes an existing population of 2,301 people). Assuming this calculation included the 1,521 dwellings Council was originally anticipating for the Hills Showground Station Precinct this study calculates that the **broader Precinct population including the increased dwelling yield of 1,620 would be approximately 24,332 people (an increase of approximately 218 people).**

\*The Kellyville Bella Vista Station Precinct Social Infrastructure and Open Space Assessment 2019 included analysis based on the ABS census data of the The Hills Shire LGA and the following Census Small Areas: Blacktown (1130340), The Hills (1129037), Westmead (1149140). These Small Areas were selected as they are communities in the North West area that have experienced the largest overall change in proportions of high density dwellings between the 2011 and 2016 Census in that area.



# INDICATIVE AGE PROFILE

For the purposes of benchmarking, a likely age profile has been developed for the total incoming residential population (3,564 residents). In Western Sydney where many new apartment building complexes were still under construction at the time of the last Census there is little available data to accurately reflect the profile of people who are moving into recently built, modern high density living. There is even less data on the demographics of people living in transit oriented developments.

Therefore, this study has provided an indicative age profile, using the average proportion of school aged children from Meadowbank and Rhodes suburbs and the age profile adopted in the Kellyville Bella Vista Station Precinct Social Infrastructure and Open Space Assessment 2019\*.

The likely incoming residential population is based on a likely total population of 3,564\*\*

Age bracket	Meadowbank suburb	Rhodes suburb	Age profile adopted for Kellyville Bella Vista precinct	Indicative %	Likely incoming residential population
0 – 4	8%	7%	12%	9%	321
5 – 11	4%	3%	6 %	4%	143
12 – 17	2%	2%	3%	2%	71
18 - 24	9%	18%	9%	12%	428
25 - 34	38%	41%	37%	39%	1,390
35 – 49	23%	16%	20%	20%	713
50 – 59	8%	6%	5%	6%	214
60 – 69	3%	4%	3%	3%	107
70 +	4%	2%	5%	4%	143

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\*\*Due to rounding up of percentages the total population provided in the table is slightly under the 3,564 figure

# LIKELY CHARACTERISTICS OF FUTURE COMMUNITY

To help understand the needs of the new population, it's important to consider the types of people who may be living there in the future. As many apartment buildings were still under construction in Greater Western Sydney at the last Census (August 2016), there is limited data to accurately reflect the profile of people moving into new, high-density dwellings in this area. However, following the 2016 Census, the ABS prepared a broad overview of the characteristics of people living in apartments in Australia as part of the Reflecting Australia - Stories from the Census series.\*

Below is a summary outlining the characteristics of people living in apartments in Australia based on the 2016 ABS Census data.

- The majority of people living in apartments were aged between 25-34. 21% of all people aged 25-34 years were apartment residents. The median age of people living in apartments was 33 which was much lower than the Australian median age of 38.
- Children were also quite prevalent with 9% of all children aged 0-4 years living in an apartment. However, only around 4% of children aged 5-14 years lived in an apartment.
- While most family households living in apartments were couple families without children, close to half of all family households (44%) living in apartments were families with children (either one or two parents).
- There were high proportions of residents born overseas living in apartments, with a particularly high proportion born in North – East Asia (including China and Hong Kong) and Southern and Central Asia (including India). 17% of all the overseas born population live in an apartment compared to 6.7% of Australian born people.
- The majority of people living in apartments were renters (59%), with 13% owned outright and 15% owned with a mortgage. In contrast, 34% of separate houses were owned outright, 38% owned with a mortgage, and 21% rented.
- 21% of Australia's apartment households reported having no motor vehicle compared to less than 5% of those who lived in separate houses, which may reflect the inner city location of some apartments and their close proximity to work, public transport and amenities.

This suggests that the likely future community of this development will include high proportions of young people aged 25-34, high proportions of people renting and higher proportions of people born overseas. It is also likely that there will be significant proportions of young families with children aged 0-4 years and while there is likely to be fewer families with children aged between 5 -14 years, there is an increasing acceptance of apartment living as an option for families and it is likely that we will see more families with children living in apartment than might have been the case in the past.

\* Source: <https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/by%20Subject/2071.0~2016~Main%20Features~Apartment%20Living~20>

# 4. EXISTING SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE

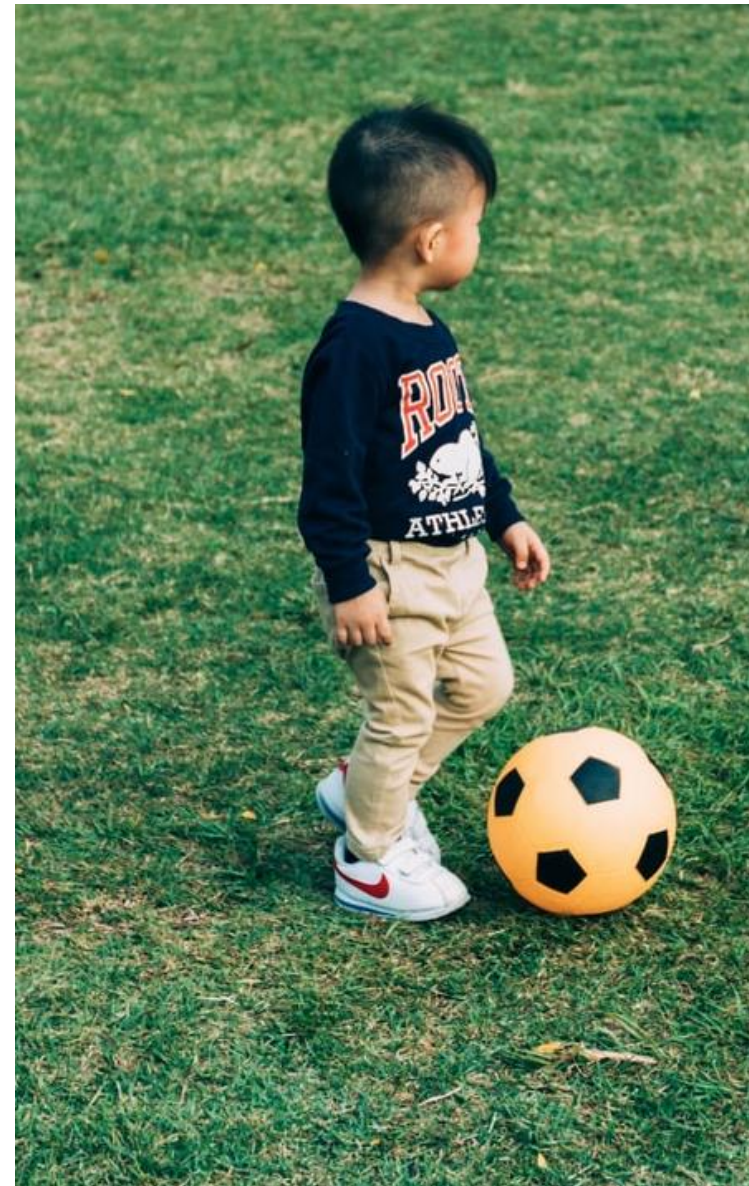
# EXISTING SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE ASSESSMENT

## Methodology

This assessment mapped all social infrastructure within 400m (walking distance) and a 2km radius from the site to understand the existing level of provision and supply. These maps are provided in the following pages and include the following social infrastructure:

- Community and cultural facilities (including libraries)
- Open space and recreational facilities
- Education facilities
- Childcare facilities
- Health facilities

The analysis on the following pages was also supplemented by available information regarding current use and quality and any existing plans for upgrades or additional social infrastructure provision.



# COMMUNITY AND CULTURAL FACILITIES

## Existing provision

The site generally has good access to community facilities, being within walking distance to two facilities and within 2km of five others.

The Castle Hill Showground is in close proximity and is currently undergoing a major master plan process to revitalise the Showground into a cultural hub and destination space. The master plan aims to diversify the uses on site to also support a variety of community, arts, sports and leisure activities. The master plan includes plans for:

- a new multi-purpose community hub
- a new regional events and entertainment building 'The Icon'
- a promenade that connects the Showground to the metro station and provides new spaces for people to meet up socially and food and beverage offerings
- upgrades to the existing buildings on site (currently used by the horse clubs) to create new community gathering spaces
- a new regional parkland with spaces for gatherings and adventure play
- upgrades to the existing arena to include an active recreation loop around the perimeter.

The Castle Hill Library is also within 2km to the site. However, we understand from previous consultation with Council library staff that the library is currently operating at capacity. The other community facilities within 2km are generally in good condition and provide multiple spaces to hire to support a variety of activities including a 250 theatre space located directly underneath the Castle Hill library in the Castle Hill Cultural Centre.

We understand a community hub with library space was also proposed to be included in the Bella Vista town centre as part of the Kellyville Bella Vista precinct which is approximately 5km from the site.

Figure 6: Proposed Castle Hill Showground Master Plan.



Source: THSC, 2020



# EXISTING COMMUNITY AND CULTURAL FACILITIES



# OPEN SPACE AND RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

## Existing provision

The site has a good provision of open space, with 104 ha within 2km (this includes the 69 ha Fred Caterson Recreation Reserve and 15 ha Showground – it does not include the Castle Hill Country Club as this is considered a private recreational facility).

Castle Hill Showground is within walking distance to the site and is the most significant open space area for the entire Hills Showground Precinct. The proposed master plan for the Castle Hill Showground will significantly improve the quality and diversity of recreational offerings on site and will open up the site to the public for general open space use. According to Council's Contribution Plan for the Precinct, the site will also benefit from embellishment and upgrades to nearby open spaces including:

- Acquisition, expansion and revitalisation of the creek corridor connecting to Cockayne Reserve (Creek Corridor) to include an additional 10,236sqm
- Expansion of Chapman Avenue Reserve which will be expanded and embellished to include an additional 4,059sqm (from 1,900sqm).

Council has also released an EOI for the revitalisation of the Cattai Creek riparian corridor which is approximately 1.4km in length and 16.47 ha in total area. This corridor will increase permeability and linkages across the creek line to the Castle Hill Showground, the Hills Showground Metro station, existing open space at Cockayne Reserve and residential areas to the south. Connections to the north will provide further links to Castle Hills Showground and Fred Caterson Reserve and beyond.

In addition to the 104ha within the 2km radius, this will provide an additional 16.87ha of open space (assuming the expansion of Cockayne Reserve is included in the Cattai Creek total area).

There are also a diverse range of recreational facilities within 2km of the site including the Hills Basketball Stadium (one of only three indoor recreation centres in the LGA), Baulkham Hills Memorial Pool and Fred Caterson Recreation Reserve. The recreation reserve is a major regional facility with several sportsfields, outdoor courts and a recently refurbished BMX track and amenities building.

\*Source: Department of Planning and Environment's Showground Station Precinct Finalisation Report (2017)

# EXISTING OPEN SPACE AND RECREATIONAL FACILITIES





# EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES

## Existing provision

There are 11 schools within 2km of the site, with five primary schools, two high schools and four combined primary and high schools. Enrolment data from the Department of Education indicates that all government schools within 2km have experienced steady enrolment growth over the past five years. In particular, Castle Hill Public School, Castle Hill High School and Excelsior Public School have increased by close to 25% since 2014 to 2018.

Like most of Greater Sydney, The Hills Shire LGA is facing considerable population growth which is placing pressure on its school facilities. To help address some of this demand, Schools Infrastructure NSW have committed to upgrade the following schools:

- Excelsior Public School: construction is underway to provide a new library, canteen and 14 teaching spaces to increase the school's capacity to 650 students.
- Castle Hill Public School: planning is currently underway to upgrade the school. The project is in the initial planning stage and no further details are available.
- Samuel Gilbert Public School: plans have been approved to remove the existing demountables on site and provide 25 permanent teaching spaces, a new library, hall and administrative facilities. Construction is expected to be completed in 2021.

There are also planned upgrades to Cherrybrook Technology High School (approximately 7km from the site) and Matthew Pearce public school (5.2km from site) and there is a new public primary school located in North Kellyville (6.6km from the site) and a new public primary school in Bella Vista (4km from site).

# EXISTING EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES



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# CHILDCARE FACILITIES

## Existing provision

There are eight childcare centres within 2km of the site. The closest facilities are Castle Hill Early Learning Centre and First Grammar Castle Hill which are located outside the 400m walking catchment. The total number of approved childcare places within 2km is 473.

Childcare vacancies are relatively high within 2km of the site. Half of the childcare centres had vacancies Monday to Friday, however two centres only had select days available. First Grammar Castle Hill and Castle Hill Montessori Academy are the only childcare centres which did not have any vacancies. All of the centres offered places for children up to the age of five. Clovel Childcare and Early Learning Centre is the only centre which offers childcare services for children up to 12 years old.

# HEALTH FACILITIES

## Existing provision

There are no health facilities within walking distance to the site and five within 2km. The health cluster around Castle Towers and the metro station provides accessible GP services in close proximity to public transport and retail services. The Castle Towers Medical Practice and Castle Hill Medical Centre in particular are large health facilities with several onsite doctors and specialists.

There are a range of private hospitals in the vicinity of the site with The Hills Hospital within 2km and Lakeview Private and Norwest Private Hospital within 4km. While not public health services, these facilities work to diversify the availability of the acute care services within the health care network. The planned Rouse Hill Hospital is around 8km from the site and the Blacktown and Westmead Hospitals are both approximately 10km from the site.

It's expected that the development of new retail and commercial offerings within the Showground Precinct will accommodate some locally based health services to accommodate the incoming population.

# EXISTING CHILDCARE FACILITIES





# EXISTING HEALTH FACILITIES



# 5. SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE REQUIREMENTS



# SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE REQUIREMENTS

## Approach

This study takes a leading practice approach to identifying social infrastructure requirements for the Hills Showground Station Precinct including:

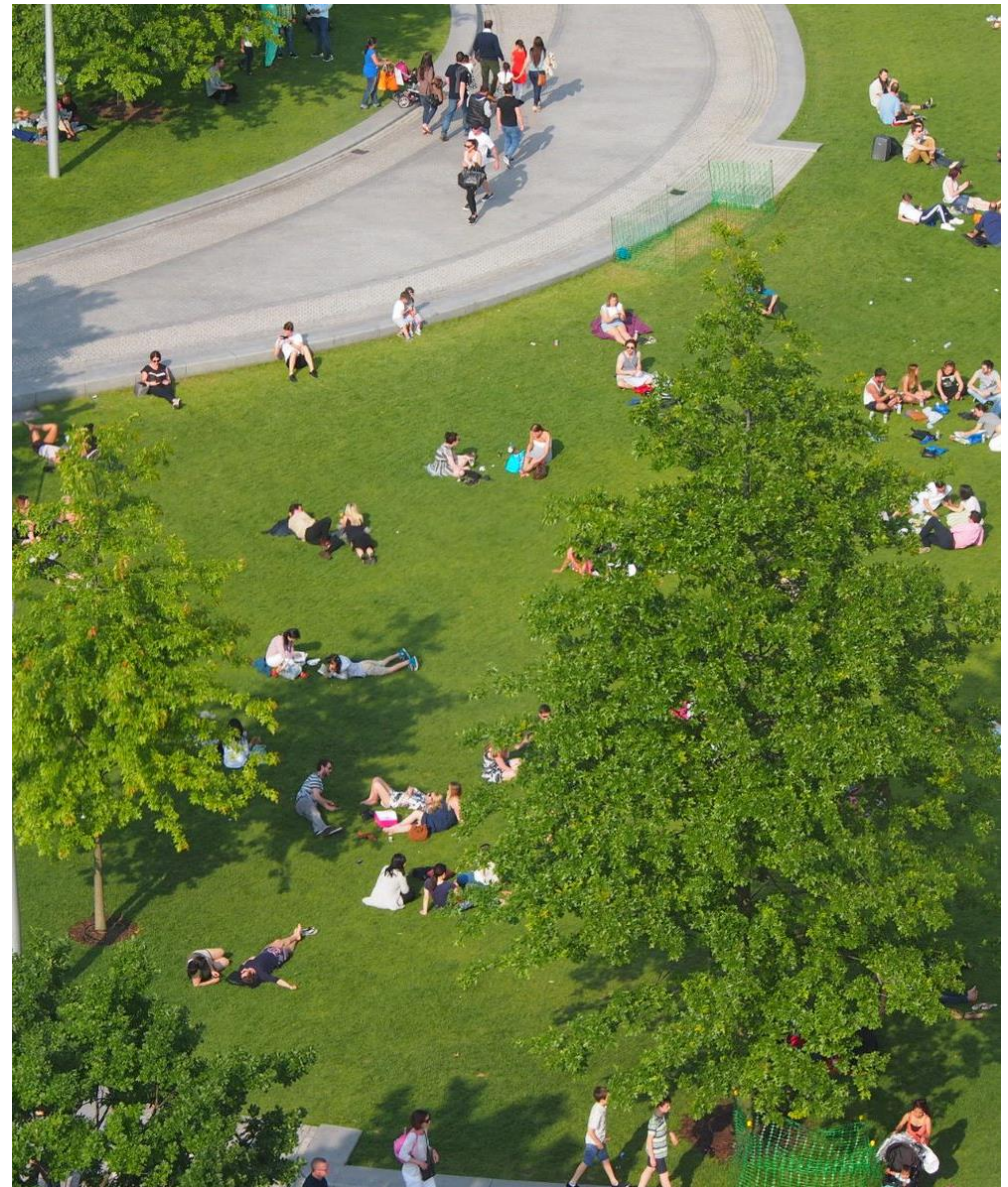
- Identifying the demographic characteristics of the current community and the likely demographic characteristics of the future population to understand future needs and demands for social infrastructure
- Understanding the existing provision of social infrastructure and identifying key gaps in existing provision
- Understanding the site context including the unique features and characteristics of the area including current plans or strategies that may have implications for this study
- Understanding leading practice principles and benchmarks and applying these appropriately to the site.

Planning for higher density areas also requires a focus on quality over quantity, particularly when it comes to open space planning. In higher density environments, where land costs drive strong land efficiency, there needs to be an increased focus on ensuring a high quality of open space provision and a focus on maximising connections to and from existing open space networks. While a certain quantum of open space is required, it is the quality of that space that is most important in a higher density context.

Quality is determined by both good design, quality of materials used and management which allows more benefit to be gained from relatively efficient spaces. Similarly for community and cultural facilities, higher density environments require facility models that maximise floorspace and focus on being well located, high quality with flexible spaces and multipurpose uses.

While standards and benchmarks are a useful reference, they do not consider many of the factors needed to develop a nuanced assessment of community need requirements and rarely reflect the complexities for planning for growth in established areas.

Where standards are used in contemporary urban renewal practice, they are used mostly as a reference or checking point, rather than the sole driver for the quantity of social infrastructure provision. Recommendations for this study have taken a holistic approach to understanding needs and tested this against contemporary benchmarks.





# SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE REQUIREMENTS

## Community facilities and libraries

The site is in close proximity to the planned community and cultural facilities in the Castle Hill Showground site. This includes plans for a new multi-purpose community hub and a new regional events and entertainment building as well as upgrades to the existing buildings on site for use as community gathering spaces. The site is also within 2km of the Castle Hill Library and the Castle Hill Cultural Centre which includes a 250 theatre space, however, we understand from previous consultation with Council library staff that the library is currently operating at capacity. A community hub with library space was also proposed to be included in the Bella Vista town centre as part of the Kellyville Bella Vista precinct which is approximately 5km from the site.

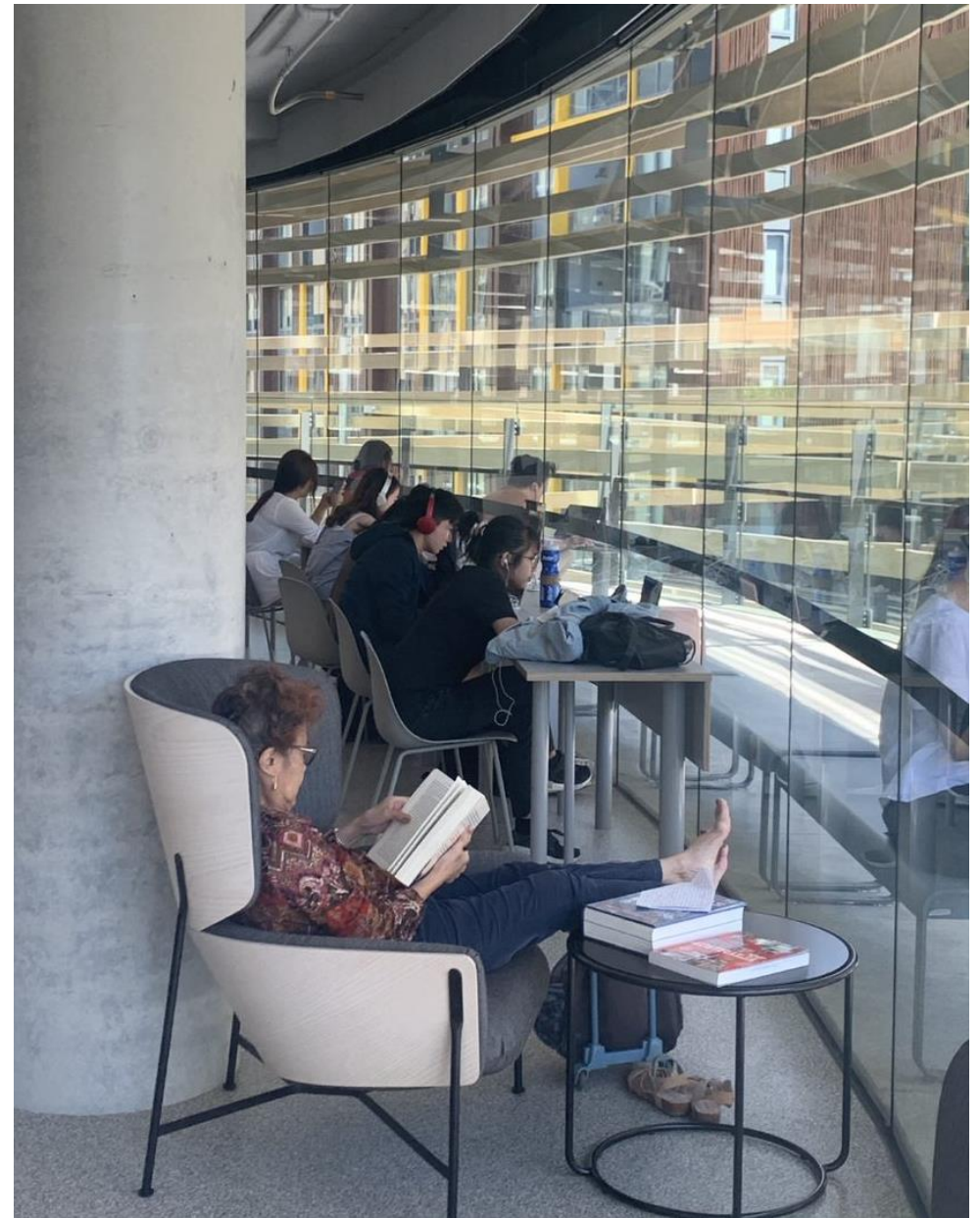
Consultation with Council has confirmed that given the proximity to existing and planned community facilities and libraries, Council's preference is for development contributions to be made to the delivery or expansion of a facility off site that would help meet demand generated by the incoming population. Council's Contribution Plan outlines the need for a multipurpose community hub of approximately 1,500sqm to serve the Showground Station Precinct to be delivered through alternative funding sources.

Based on the community facility benchmark of 80sqm/1000 people adopted by a range of Sydney metropolitan Councils (including City of Parramatta, City of Ryde, Hornsby Shire Council and Blacktown City Council) the population (3,564) would generate demand for around 285 sqm of community centre space and based on the NSW State Library Population Based Library Calculator\*, the population is likely to generate demand for around 246sqm of library space.

Given the proximity to planned and existing community facilities in the surrounding area, it is recommended that contributions are made towards the delivery or expansion of a facility off site rather than delivery of a community facility onsite. This may include the contribution towards upgrading the community spaces within the Showground facilities.

Given the Castle Hill Library is currently operating at capacity and we understand Council are looking to prepare a Library Strategy for the LGA, it is recommended that further consultation be conducted with Council to determine an appropriate development contributions arrangement with the view to increasing the capacity of library services in the surrounding area.

Source: <https://www.sl.nsw.gov.au/public-library-services/population-based-library-calculator>





# SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE REQUIREMENTS

## Open space and recreation

Access to open space is critical to the health and wellbeing of a community and is particularly important in high density developments where access to backyards is limited. Planning for open space often falls into two broad categories:

- Passive recreation – spaces that allow for unstructured activities such as walking, running, cycling, playing, meeting friends, walking the dog or relaxing.
- Active recreation and organised sport – spaces that enable more structured or organised sporting activities such as courts, fields, aquatic facilities etc.

This assessment considers demand generated by the development for passive recreation, following feedback from Council staff that demand for active recreation facilities will be managed and delivered for the Precinct according to the Showground Station Precinct Contributions Plan.

As identified in Section 4, the site has a good provision of open space, with 104ha within 2km. The site will also benefit from the planned upgrades and embellishments to the Castle Hill Showground, Chapman Avenue Reserve and Cattai Creek.

To determine an appropriate amount and configuration of open space that will provide good community outcomes for the future population, this study has considered the performance criteria from the NSW Government Architect's Draft Open Space for Recreation Guide and benchmarked the proposed provision against the World Health Organisation's (WHO) standards outlined in Health Indicators of Sustainable Cities in the Context of the Rio+20 UN Conference on Sustainable Development, 2012.

Leading practice largely favours an approach to determining open space provision based on performance outcomes, taking into consideration things such as accessibility, quality and minimum size requirements. Using traditional spatial standards such as the 2.83ha/1,000 people as a starting point is no longer considered an effective approach and often does not provide feasible recommendations in high density settings. Application of standards like this in a 'one size fits all' approach can also result in negative impacts, including the need for taller buildings or higher housing costs to achieve viability in higher density areas.

Performance criteria outlined in the NSW Government Architect's (GANSW) Draft Open Space for Recreation Guide that have relevance for this study include:

- Desirable minimum size of a local parks to be 3000sqm (in high-density areas, parks may be as small as 1,500sqm where more efficient provision does not exist or opportunities for re-use of small spaces arise)
- Quantity of open space should be considered in terms of the number of opportunities available for active and passive recreation with a variety of spaces that cater to different demands and age groups
- For a high-density neighbourhood, residents must be within:
  - A 2–3 minute walk / 200m walking distance to open space
  - A maximum of 25 minute walk / 2 km proximity to any district park district-level open space area that provides a range of activities (2ha+)
  - 10 minutes walking or 800m (400m preference for high density areas) to linear open space
  - Within 20 minutes safe walking or 2km to district level organised sport and recreation spaces such as field sports, outdoor court sports, indoor sports, aquatic sports spaces
  - A maximum of 30 minutes travel time on public transport or by vehicle to regional open space (5ha+).

This approach is also largely supported by Council's 2019 Recreation Strategy which includes a direction that residents should be within 400m walking distance of a local park. The Strategy also recommends parks should have an area of at least 5,000sqm (noting this a larger minimum size to that outlined in the GANSW document). However, a minimum size requirement of 5,000sqm would be considered particularly high given the high density nature of the Hills Showground Station Precinct (noting the GANSW minimum of 1,500sqm for parks in high density areas).

# SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE REQUIREMENTS

## Open space and recreation

The Hills Showground Station Precinct proposes a new public plaza of approximately 1,400sqm (Doran Drive Plaza) and a new public park of approximately 3,500sqm (Precinct East Park). This is a total of 4,900sqm of open space in addition to the 32.47 ha already included in the Precinct (Chapman Avenue Reserve 6,000sqm, Cattai Creek corridor 16.87ha, Castle Hill Showground 15ha) which would bring the total Precinct open space provision to almost 33ha).

The concept master plan addresses the performance criteria outlined in the GANSW Guide with the provision of a local park of 3,500sqm (noting the Guide recommends a minimum of 3,000sqm and in high density areas 1,500sqm) and has ensured all residents and workers are within 2-3 mins walking distance to open space (the concept master plan shows residents and workers are within 100 metres of some form of open space). While the master plan doesn't meet Council's criteria for a minimum size of 5,000sqm for an individual park, the combined open space of Doran Drive Plaza and Precinct East Park provide a total of 4,900sqm of open space.

The site is also within 2km of major district level open space and recreational facilities including the Castle Hill Showground (15 ha) and the Fred Caterson Recreation Reserve and associated recreational facilities (69 ha).

Additionally, the World Health Organisation\* recommends the provision of a minimum of 9sqm of total green space per person or 0.9ha/1000 people. With an approximate precinct population of around 24,332 people (see page 16 on population projections) and a total Precinct open space provision of 33ha this would equate to approximately 1.35ha/1000 for the entire Precinct, exceeding the WHO recommended provision.

Given the proximity of the site to significant open space and recreational facilities including the Showground, Cattai Creek and Fred Caterson Reserve and that the concept master plan addresses and exceeds the performance criteria outlined in the NSW Government Architect's Open Space for Recreation Guide around accessibility, minimum size requirements and proximity to larger open space and recreational facilities (2ha+), this study supports the open space provision proposed in the concept master plan. It is recommended that consultation with Council occurs around the level of embellishment and open space design of the park if it is to be transferred to Council to manage and maintain.

Figure 7: The Hills Showground Station Precinct Concept Master Plan.



\*Source: Health Indicators of Sustainable Cities in the Context of the Rio+20 UN Conference on Sustainable Development, 2012.

# SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE REQUIREMENTS

## Education

Based on the indicative age profile on page 16, it is likely the site population will generate approximately 143 primary school children (5 – 11 years) and approximately 71 high school children (12 – 17 years).

Maximum government school enrolment numbers are outlined in the School Infrastructure NSW (SINSW) document Mixed-Use Developments: School Design Requirements – A Guide for the Development Sector. These include 1,000 students for primary schools and 2,000 students for secondary schools. The future population of the Hills Showground Station Precinct does not generate enough demand by itself to require either a primary or secondary school.

However, the broader Precinct population of 24,332 people is likely to generate demand for approximately 973 primary and 486 secondary school places (assuming the same indicative age breakdown outlined on page 17). This would suggest the need for a new primary school to serve the needs of the broader Precinct. However, the Hills Showground Station Precinct development would generate demand for only 15% of the total number of primary and secondary school places for the broader Precinct.

Consultation with SINSW confirmed the need for school space in the wider Hills Showground Precinct to meet future demand from a growing population, with the ideal outcome being a K-12 school. SINSW requested consideration be given to a high school only, on the Hills Showground Station Precinct site which would require 1ha of building footprint and 1ha of associated open space but could be less if multi-purpose sporting spaces were created. SINSW is also considering options for other sites owned privately and Landcom and SINSW have committed to continued engagement in relation to a school site to service the future needs of the wider precinct.

# SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE REQUIREMENTS

## Health

Consultation with the Western Sydney Local Health District (WSLHD) has confirmed that there are significant acute care services in the north and north west Sydney district including Blacktown hospital and Westmead hospital, as well as Mount Druitt, Nepean and Bankstown hospitals and that these are sufficient to meet the needs of the new population generated by the development. The site is also in close proximity to the planned Rouse Hill Hospital and Health Service. The support services around the smaller hospitals will also be able to provide non-acute health services. Residents of the area would also have access to services provided in the Castle Towers Medical Practice and Castle Hill Medical Centre.

Based on a national benchmark of one general practitioner per 1,000 people, the development may also be able to support between 3 - 4 general practitioners. Some of the need for general practitioners may be absorbed by existing GP practices, but there is also likely to be demand for additional medical services. Assuming that contemporary medical practices employ a minimum of four GPs, it is estimated the development could support one new medical practices. The provision of medical practices in most new developments is largely left to market forces once demand can be demonstrated. Medical services in the Doran Drive Precinct will be provided by private sector providers, as demand develops.

## Childcare

The standard typically used for the provision of childcare centres is 1 place per 3 children aged 0 to 4 years old (based on 2016 ABS Census data). The Department of Planning and Environment's Child Care Planning Guideline 2017 provides advice on floorspace requirements for all new child care centres in NSW. The typical total site area required for a child care centre with 100 spaces is 2,363sqm inclusive of parking, landscaping, toilets, administration areas etc. Key elements of this calculation include a rate of 7sqm of unencumbered outdoor space per child and 3.25sqm of main activity space per child.

There are a number of different forms of childcare and activities for young children are generally provided in a community, including long daycare, family daycare, pre-school, occasional care and playgroups. It is not appropriate at this stage of the planning process to try to anticipate need for the various types of services.

Instead, leading practice encourages planning of multi-purpose childcare centres, which can adapt as precise needs are identified or provide a mix of services.

Based on the likely age profile on page 16, the proportion of children aged 0 to 4 years is likely to be approximately 9% of the population indicating there will be around 321 0 to 4 year olds living in the Hills Showground Station Precinct at full development. This equates to an approximate demand for approximately 107 places.

Assuming that a contemporary childcare centre can provide for between 90 to 120 childcare places, this equates to the need for at least one new childcare centre.

As noted on page 26, there is already a large number of child care centres with vacancies in the surrounding areas that may be able to absorb some demand. However, vacancy numbers do fluctuate and demand is difficult to predict particularly in a 20-25 year + timeframe.

It is likely that the increase in residential growth across the broader area will mean demand for childcare will dramatically increase. The provision of these childcare centres would be left to market forces once demand can be demonstrated. It is not necessary that precise requirements for childcare are identified at the concept master plan stage as childcare centres are a permitted use within residential areas and do not require land to be designated at the master planning stage. The GFA allocated for commercial uses in the Precinct could cater for a childcare in permissible zoning.

# 6. SUMMARY



# SUMMARY OF SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE REQUIREMENTS

As the existing community analysis shows, the community living in the existing Showground Station Precinct area has not changed significantly since the 2015 Study was prepared. However, the existing community is likely to differ to the incoming population, with expected increases in people aged 25-34, couples without children, young families with children aged 0-4, renters and people born overseas.

Applying the average household size of 2.2 people per household to a dwelling yield of 1,620, the proposal is likely to generate a residential population of 3,564 people. According to Council's Contribution Plan for the Showground Station Precinct, the estimated future population of the Precinct is approximately 24,114 people (which includes an existing population of 2,301 people). Assuming this calculation included the 1,521 dwellings Council was originally anticipating for the Hills Showground Station Precinct, this study calculates that the broader Precinct population including the increased dwelling yield of 1,620 would be approximately 24,332 people (an increase of approximately 218 people).

A summary of social infrastructure requirements for the Hills Showground Station Precinct is provided on the following page.



# SUMMARY OF SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE REQUIREMENTS

Social infrastructure type	Summary and recommendation
<b>Community facilities and libraries</b>	<p>Based on community facility and library benchmarks, the population is likely to generate demand for around 285 sqm of community centre space and based on the NSW State Library Population Based Library Calculator, the population is likely to generate demand for around 246sqm of library space.</p> <p>Given the proximity to planned and existing community facilities in the surrounding area, it is recommended that contributions are made towards the delivery or expansion of a facility off site rather than delivery of a community facility onsite (to the value of approximately 500 sqm GFA for combined community centre and library space) with the view to increasing the capacity of library services in the surrounding area. This may include the contribution towards upgrading the community spaces within the Showground facilities.</p>
<b>Open space</b>	<p>The site is in close proximity to significant open space and recreational facilities (104ha within 2km). The concept master plan also addresses and exceeds the performance criteria outlined in the NSW Government Architect's Open Space for Recreation Guide and the total open space provision in the Showground Station Precinct exceeds the WHO standard of 0.9ha/1000 with 1.35ha/1,000 people. Therefore, this study supports the open space provision proposed in the concept master plan. However, it is recommended that consultation with Council occurs around the level of embellishment of the park if it is to be transferred to Council to manage and maintain.</p>
<b>Education</b>	<p>The future population of the Hills Showground Station Precinct does not generate enough demand by itself to require either a primary or secondary school. However, the broader Precinct population of 24,332 people is likely to generate demand for a total of approximately 973 primary school places and approximately 486 high school places. This would suggest the need for a new primary school to serve the needs of the broader Precinct.</p> <p>The Hills Showground Station Precinct development would generate demand for only 15% of the total number of primary and secondary school places for the broader Precinct.</p> <p>Consultation with SINSW confirmed the need for school space in the wider Hills Showground Precinct to meet future demand from a growing population, with the ideal outcome being a K-12 school. SINSW is also considering options for other sites owned privately and Landcom and SINSW have committed to continued engagement in relation to a school site to service the future needs of the wider precinct.</p>
<b>Childcare</b>	<p>It is likely the future population of the Hills Showground Station Precinct will generate demand for approximately 107 childcare places. Assuming that a contemporary childcare centre can provide for between 90 to 120 childcare places, this equates to the need for at least one new childcare centre.</p> <p>As there is already a large number of child care centres with vacancies in the surrounding area that may be able to absorb some demand. However, the provision of these childcare centres would be left to market forces once demand can be demonstrated. The GFA allocated for commercial uses in the Precinct could cater for a childcare in permissible zoning.</p>
<b>Health</b>	<p>Consultation with the WSLHD has confirmed that there are significant acute care services in the north and north west Sydney district including Blacktown hospital and Westmead hospital. The site is also in close proximity to the planned Rouse Hill Hospital and Health Service. The support services around the smaller hospitals will also be able to provide non-acute health services.</p> <p>Residents of the area would also have access to services provided in the Castle Towers Medical Practice and Castle Hill Medical Centre. Based on a national benchmark of one general practitioner per 1,000 people, the development may also be able to support between 3 - 4 general practitioners. Assuming that contemporary medical practices employ a minimum of four GPs, it is estimated the development could support one new medical practices. Medical services in the Doran Drive Precinct will be provided by private sector providers, as demand develops.</p>