Your Future Places and Spaces

Macleay Valley Community Infrastructure Strategy

August 2020

KEMPSEY Shire Council

Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as the traditional custodians of the land for which this strategy applies to.

We pay our respects to the Elders of the past, present and future

Acknowledgement of the 2019/20 Bushfire Season

Council is currently assisting in the recovery response to the bushfire season that unfolded over the 2019/20 summer period.

Preparation of this strategy commenced in early 2019 and does not include any specific actions in response to the impacts of the bushfires. This is being coordinated by a separate process in Council.

Strategy delivery

This strategy presents a long term strategy to plan and manage Council owned community infrastructure across the Shire.

The actions identified in the strategy are not yet funded. They will be delivered over time as Council balances the delivery of services and infrastructure as well as the health of our overall financial position.

Council will continue to identify funding priorities at a whole of Shire level with consideration to the findings and actions identified within this strategy.

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1.0 Introduction

This Community Infrastructure Strategy outlines the future priorities for community infrastructure across the Macleay Valley.

This strategy has been prepared to provide a guide for planning and managing community infrastructure across the Shire. It is a 20-year plan that seeks to respond to our community needs, demographic profile, local values and aspirations as well as the role and characteristics of our diverse townships.

What is community infrastructure?

Community infrastructure is a broad term used to describe the buildings and spaces that provide a range of services, activities and opportunities for the community to meet their social needs and support their health and wellbeing. Community infrastructure can include cultural buildings, like community halls, art galleries and libraries; open spaces including parks and playgrounds and sporting facilities such as sporting fields and swimming pools.

These places and spaces are important parts of our towns and Shire. They help our community to develop new and lifelong skills, support people to be physically and socially active and create social capital. Community infrastructure can also have a broader role in shaping the physical layout and character of an area and contribute its local identity.

For the purposes of this strategy community infrastructure are those community spaces and services owned and delivered by Kempsey Shire Council.

What is Council's role?

Kempsey Shire Council has a responsibility to improve and promote the health and wellbeing of its community. Council also has a responsibility to ensure the prudent expenditure of public funds. It is recognised that Council performs a range of roles across the municipality regarding community infrastructure, ranging from being a direct service provider to planner, advocate and partner.

Kempsey Shire Council currently provides a range of community infrastructure along with other government and non-government agencies and community organisations.

The purpose of this strategy

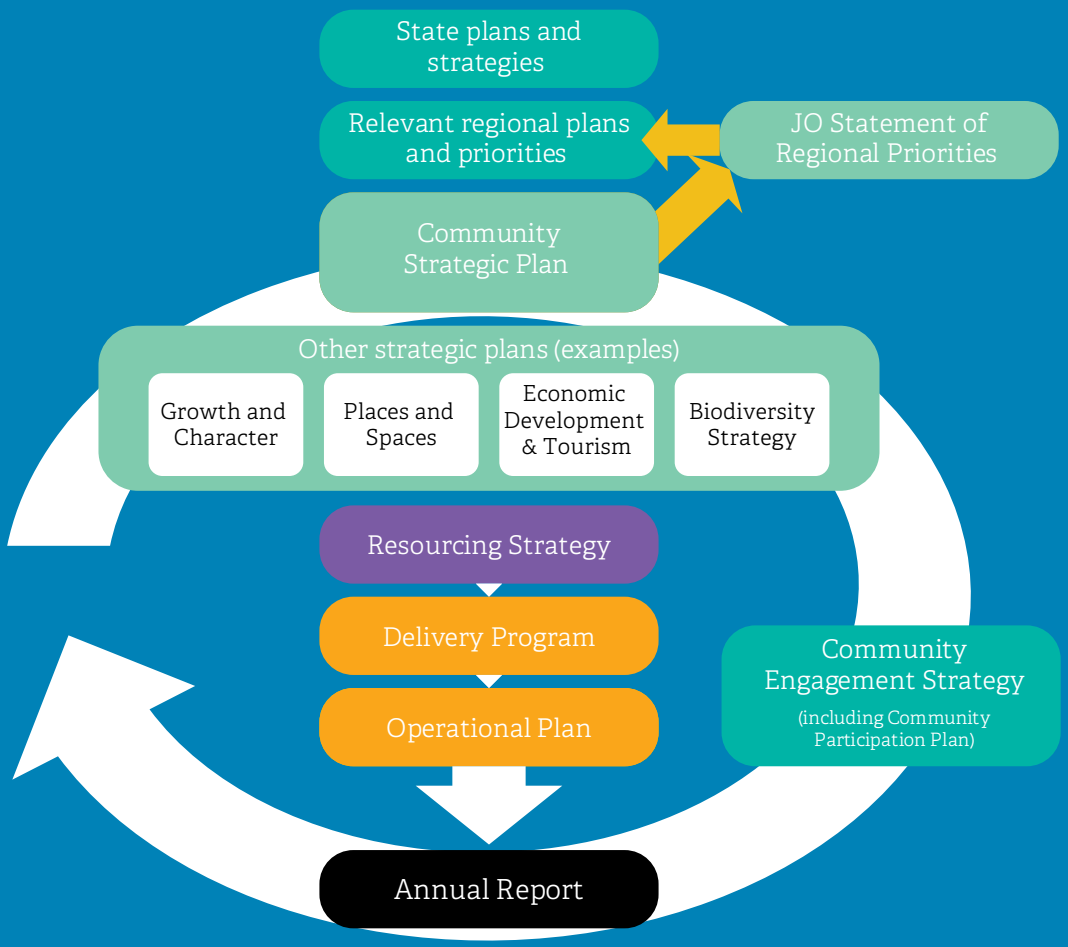
This strategy provides a 20-year plan to make sure residents and visitors to Kempsey Shire continue to have access to quality and fit-for-purpose community infrastructure. It has been informed by a range of inputs, including community and stakeholder feedback through workshops, interviews and online surveys, an audit of existing facilities, benchmarking, research and review of population and demographic trends.

The strategy will provide the basis for Council investment in new or upgraded facilities and help to make decisions about other assets which are nearing the end of their operational life or no longer meet the needs of their community. The strategy will inform our overall Community Strategic Plan and internal operations. It will be delivered alongside, and does not replace, existing strategies and policy such as the Crescent Head Master Plan, the Horseshoe Bay Reserve Master Plan and the Macleay Valley Sports Strategy.

Upgrades or new facilities referenced within this strategy are yet to be funded. Council will continue to identify funding strategies and delivery partners to deliver actions identified within this strategy over time.

This strategy provides a 20-year plan to make sure the residents and visitors to Kempsey Shire continue have access to quality and fit-for-purpose community infrastructure.

It will provide the basis for Council investment in new or upgraded facilities and help to make decisions about other assets which are nearing the end of their operational life or no longer meet the needs of their community.



2.0 Macleay Valley Snapshot

Almost 30,000 people currently reside within the Shire. It is forecast that over the next 20 years our population will grow to around 34,148 residents.

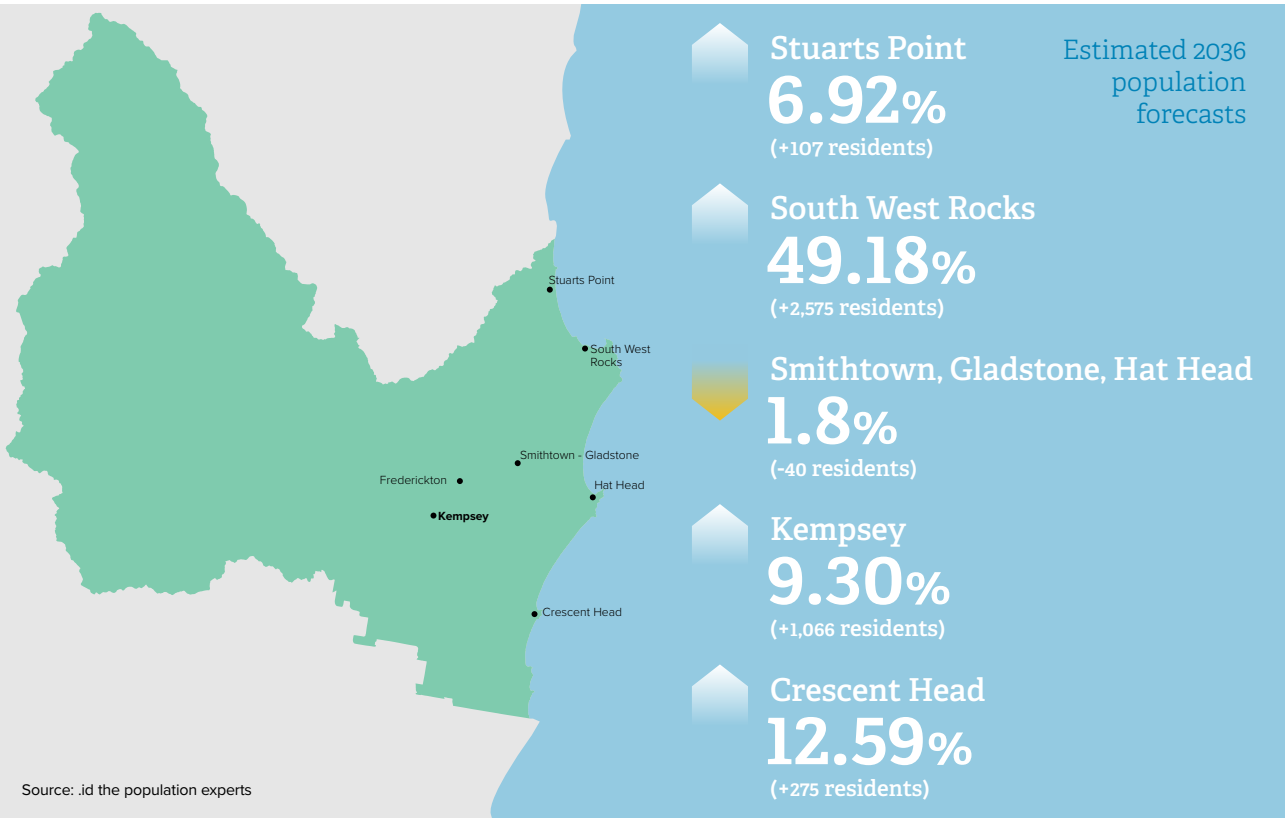
The Macleay Valley is a diverse region – comprising mountain and forested areas, open farmlands, urban areas, coastal beaches and seaside towns. Kempsey has the largest residential population and is the principal service centre for the Shire, providing higher order administrative, civic, education and health services. South West Rocks is the next largest town and functions as a secondary service centre.

South West Rocks is expected to experience the most significant growth within the Shire, while the populations of Kempsey, Stuarts Point, Frederickton and Crescent Head are projected to experience a steady increase in residents. This strategy recommends upgrades to existing facilities in South West Rocks, such as the South West Rocks (SWR) Sporting Complex, to respond to this projected growth.

Some of our more remote communities, such as Gladstone, Smithtown, Bellbrook, Aldavilla, Euroka and Yarravel are forecast to accommodate very low rates of growth and in some cases, population decline.

This strategy identifies opportunities to improve existing community facilities and open space and also maximising the use of our existing assets. In some instances, existing facilities which are underutilised and not providing our community with an immediate benefit may need to be re-purposed or divested in order to ensure Council maintains a financially and socially sustainable community infrastructure network.

This strategy responds to our settlement pattern as well as our current and forecast demographic profile. These factors inform the type and scale of social infrastructure that is provided across the Shire.



Source: .id the population experts

2.1 Population and demographic trends

Population

2016
28,665

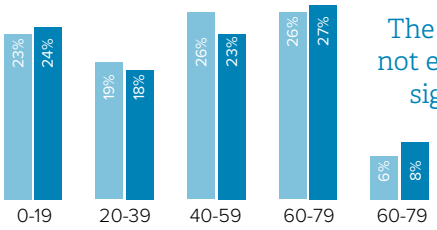
2036
34,148

Median age

47 years

The population is older compared to Regional NSW (43)

Age structure



The age structure is not expected to shift significantly from current day

Median income

Lower average household incomes than Regional NSW

Indigenous representation

11.6%

Significantly higher number of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander residents in the community than Regional NSW (5.5%)

Household structure

26.3% Lone person households	19.2% Couples with children	27.3% Couples without children	13.5% One parent families	2.8% Group households
Regional NSW 25.5%	25.4%	27.0%	11.0%	3.1%

Key trend - accessibility

It can be difficult to move around the Macleay Valley if you don't drive a car. There are many households that do not own their own car while some people are too old and others are too young to drive. The accessibility and location of community infrastructure are key factors to be considered now and in the future.

Key trend - internet access

Approximately 25% of all households don't have access to the internet. Community facilities, such as libraries, can play an important role in providing access to the internet. It also means that a variety of methods should be used to provide information to the community about what is going on in the Macleay Valley.

Key trend - youth crime

Youth crime accounts for 20% of all crime in the Shire. It is important that community places, spaces and services are provided to support and engage young people.

Source: .id the population experts

2.2 Existing community infrastructure

4 Aquatic Facilities

Our aquatic facilities are located across the Shire's key centres. Our aquatic facilities include Kempsey McElhone Swimming Complex, Crescent Aquatic Centre, South West Rocks Swimming Pool and Macleay Memorial Pool (Gladstone).

13 Arts and Cultural Facilities

We have a diverse range of arts and cultural facilities including art galleries and museums. Some key landmarks include the Dunghutti-Ngaku Aboriginal Art Gallery, Slim Dusty Centre and the Macleay Valley Community Art Gallery.

16 Community Spaces

Our community spaces include community halls and centres which run a range of different programs and support community hosted events. Some of our most successful spaces include the Gladstone Youth and Community Centre, the School of Arts Community Centre, Crescent Head Community Hall and Sherwood Hall.

4 Libraries

Our libraries are made up of the Kempsey Library, which fulfils a regional function, as well as the South West Rocks, Stuarts Point and Hat Head libraries. Council also runs a mobile library service that travels to various rural communities across the Macleay Valley.

22 Sporting Facilities

This includes sporting ovals, tennis courts, bowling clubs and key facilities such as the SWR Sporting Complex.

100+ha of Community Parkland

Our parklands offer a range of recreation facilities, such as playgrounds, picnic areas, boat ramps and lookouts.

Note: While Council operates the majority of the above community infrastructure, the totals also include community infrastructure that is provided or operated by private entities, not-for-profit organisations or Section 355 committees (community led management).

3.0 What we heard

You told us how you currently use community infrastructure, your priorities and the actions needed to deliver on your aspirations.

The strategy has been informed by a range of community and stakeholder feedback, obtained through workshops, interviews, online surveys and virtual Q&A sessions.

- 655 website visits
- Over 100 attendees to community workshops
- Over 100 online surveys
- Over 40 students involved in a school workshop
- Over 20 interviews with service providers, facility managers and industry representatives

You told us

The Macleay Valley is generally well serviced by community infrastructure

There is acknowledgement that the Macleay Valley has a good network of community infrastructure, open space and recreational facilities. Our links with Port Macquarie are also important, particularly to access spaces and services that are not available.

Open space is highly valued

Open space supports health, wellbeing and sense of place. Foreshore areas are important places for relaxation and enjoyment. Local playgrounds are important for families and young people living in the area.

Information sharing

There is a need for better communication across the community. You want to know what is going on and how you can get involved in different community activities and initiatives.

More things for young people to do

We need more spaces and programs for young people across the Macleay Valley, that reflect their range of interests.

Access for all abilities

We need to make sure our community infrastructure and open spaces are accessible to people of all ages and abilities, particularly those living with a disability or with limited mobility.

A desire for more arts and cultural facilities

There is a strong community desire for more arts and cultural facilities throughout the Macleay Valley to showcase the work of our local artists.

Developing community pride

There is a need to improve community pride across the Macleay Valley to build stronger relationships with place and each other.

Celebrate our strong Aboriginal culture

Our Shire has a strong and proud Aboriginal community. It is important that this is acknolwedged and reflected in our community facilities and public spaces.

4.0 Community Infrastructure Planning Framework

The following community infrastructure framework and provision standards have been developed and applied to the Macleay Valley's community infrastructure network.

The framework considers community infrastructure needs at a local and Shire wide level and reflects best practice and industry experience.

4.1 Community buildings

Community buildings are Council owned facilities which are used to deliver community services and programs. The following rates of provision have been applied to the current and future population of the Macleay Valley. It is acknowledged that these benchmarks may evolve over time in line with change to government policy, delivery models, funding mechanisms and community expectations. Furthermore, the strategy recognises there are limitations in relying on institutional and industry standards alone in assessing current and future social infrastructure needs. It is also important to consider qualitative aspects such as the role, usage and condition of facilities and spaces in understanding current and future needs.

An assessment found that the Shire currently has an abundance of community buildings. There are no significant gaps within the network. In the future there are some facilities which will need to be upgraded or expanded to meet population needs (e.g. South West Rocks Library and Kempsey Library).

Community infrastructure category	Locational catchment	Description	Rate of provision (Number of facilities by population range)
Community space	Local	Community buildings which offer general meeting space, basic amenities. It can include break-out spaces such as community gardens.	1:5,000 – 10,000
Art gallery	Local	Space dedicated for the display and exhibition of art.	1:15,000 – 30,000
Branch library	Local	Provides a collection of books and other material as well as meeting spaces.	1:6,000 – 15,000
Library	Shire	Provides a central collection of books and other material as well as meeting space. Differs from a branch library based on its larger size.	1:15,000 – 30,000
Neighbourhood house	Shire	Community building which has a range of services and programs that occur on a regular basis.	1:20,000 – 50,000
Youth centre	Shire	Dedicated youth space which can include space for recreation, education and cooking facilities.	1:20,000 – 50,000
Regional art gallery	Shire	Space dedicated for the display and exhibition of art. Differs from a local art gallery based on its larger size.	1:30,000 – 150,000
Performing Arts / Exhibition Centre / Convention Centre	Shire	Provides a regional venue for a range of programmed activities such as conferences and large theatrical performances.	1:50,000 – 200,000
Museum / Historical centre	Shire	Provides dedicated space for the appreciation of historical landmarks or items.	1:30,000 – 120,000

4.2 Open space and sporting facilities

The following rates of provision have been applied to understand current and future community needs for open space and sporting facilities.

The assessment found that the Shire has an abundance of space dedicated to community parks and sporting facilities. However, the quality and usability of this space varies greatly. There is a large amount of informal open space which provides the potential for future embellishment to improve the supply of community parks, or could be divested to reallocate funds to new or existing community infrastructure.

Community infrastructure category	Locational catchment	Description	Rate of provision (population and area based)
Open space			
Community park	Local	Parks that are predominantly developed for general recreation. These parks provide basic amenities for local use.	2 – 3ha:1,000
	Shire	Parks that are predominantly developed for general recreation and community use. These parks may include active elements such as playgrounds, spaces for young people or outdoor gyms that are located to serve the wider community.	
Sporting facilities			
Sport	District	Spaces developed for formal organised sport. There are formal organised sport facilities located in/ serving villages and small towns – these have been included in the district category.	1.5ha:1,000
	Shire	Spaces developed for formal organised sport.	
Aquatic	District	Public swimming facilities, owned/ managed by Council; leased or operated by a third party.	Included in land provision for Sport (District and Shire)
Special	N/A	Public land developed for special purposes such as showgrounds, horse or car racing.	Nil – Special facilities are generally opportunistic facilities that reflect the context of the community it is provided within.
Other	N/A	Other open space and formed drains including buffer lands, undeveloped open space, overland flow paths or where the purpose is unknown.	Nil

4.3 Community infrastructure principles

The following principles have been developed to guide the future planning, management and delivery of community infrastructure across the Macleay Valley. These principles provide further guidance to the provision rates to ensure that community places are engaging, functional, safe and activated.

Evidence-based decisions

Community infrastructure planning, management and delivery should be informed by a robust and up-to-date evidence base and founded on contemporary management practices, including regular audits and evaluation. It is also acknowledged that delivery models are changing and evolving – in the future there will be new ways of delivering services and meeting their social infrastructure needs.

Ongoing asset management

Community infrastructure will be effectively managed and maintained, supported by clear policies and guidelines associated with roles, responsibilities, standards of service and developer contributions. This will ensure the community has access to a high quality and functional network of spaces and places.

Accessible for all

Community infrastructure needs to be designed for everyone and be accessible by all people, regardless of age, ability, socio-economic status or ethnicity. This is not a special requirement, for the benefit of only a minority of the population. It is a key foundation of good design. If a place is accessible, usable, convenient and a pleasure to use, everyone benefits.

Wherever possible, and as relevant, community infrastructure should be centrally located near commercial, retail and other community uses to improve its accessibility.

Diverse and place-based

Provide a range of open spaces, buildings and services that provide residents and visitors with a range of experiences which respond to the unique characteristics of a particular place or community. This will encourage people to spend more time in their community and help create local pride and a strong sense of identity.

Multi-functional and adaptable

Community infrastructure should be designed to allow different user groups to enjoy and use the same space, and to allow the facility to evolve over time responding to changing community preferences and needs. User groups and service providers should be encouraged to share spaces in order to make efficient use of resources and infrastructure.

The community hub model is a contemporary model for delivering community infrastructure, which should be considered in the future planning and delivery of community places and spaces. It co-locates or integrates a range of community buildings, services and open space in a location. This model can provide improved accessibility, improved activation and use, supports cross-referral between services and can be more financially successful.

Safe

People should feel safe and secure when accessing community infrastructure across the Shire. Community infrastructure planning and design should reflect the Crime Prevention through Environmental Design principles (CPTED).

5.0 Vision

"We have access to diverse, community infrastructure that responds to our needs and supports a healthy, safe and connected community."

South West Rocks Foreshore

A Connected and Inclusive Community

Residents and visitors have access to a variety of spaces and services, and they are informed and engaged in community life.

A connected and inclusive network of community infrastructure means that residents and visitors have access to a variety of spaces and services, and they are informed and engaged in community life. Our population is dispersed across large and small towns, which means that people often travel within and out of the Shire to access community infrastructure.

Community halls provide an important focal point for different parts of our community. However, the use and condition of the facilities varies greatly between towns. There are some facilities which are frequented daily, while others do not appear to be actively used. There is the opportunity to review the current extent and provision of community halls to ensure that our facilities best respond to the needs of their local community and to consider the ongoing financial sustainability of providing this type of space.

The community have told us that libraries are a highly valued part of the community infrastructure network. As the Macleay Valley grows and changes there is a need to consider how this service is best delivered to ensure the optimal use of our shared resources. There is an opportunity for the mobile library service to be revamped – to increase its frequency and coverage, host regular programs and groups and provide a customer service function (e.g. allow people to pay bills, access to information). This will better connect and service our remote localities. In other locations, upgraded library facilities will be required over the short and longer term.

There are currently a range of community facilities, activities, programs and events which operate within the Macleay Valley which would benefit from greater promotion. Council will improve communication, building on the Hey Hey Macleay website, through both traditional and digital formats to ensure residents are informed about what is going on in the Shire.

Access to our community facilities will be improved to ensure members of our community who have limited mobility or lack access to a private car. Council will investigate better design solutions, facilities, events and potentially modes of transport to make community spaces and services more accessible.

Action	Possible funding sources	Council's role	Project timing and duration
Develop a library based multipurpose hub at South West Rocks Prepare a service delivery plan for a multi-purpose community hub to serve the area's growing population. This plan will support future decision making and funding applications to secure its delivery.	• Development Contributions • Grant • Council	• Provider	• Short • Estimated duration 48 months
Expand and enhance the mobile library service Expand the function and coverage of the mobile library service. Provide residents with the ability to pay bills, get up to date Council information, provide programs / groups and access other Council services. An upgraded service will fill gaps in the current service and allow opportunities to deliver Council services in a more cost effective way than fixed buildings.	• Grant • Council	• Provider	• Medium • Estimated duration 18 months
Review facilities management Undertake a detailed audit and condition assessment of all community facilities across the Shire, in collaboration with local 355 management committees, to develop a long-term program of improvements and rationalisation. This process should consider factors such as the role of the facility, utilisation, proximity of nearby facilities, capacity of future facilities to perform the same or similar role. *(Further guidance is provided in the Tools and Frameworks Chapter)*	• Council	• Policy maker	• Medium • Estimated duration 18 months
Kempsey Library Upgrade Upgrade the Kempsey Library to expand the range of activities, programs and services provided. This could include multi-purpose meeting spaces, access to technology, a dedicated youth space and art gallery.	• Grant • Council • Development Contributions	• Provider	• Long • Estimated duration 24 months
Look for ways to provide residents access to community facilities without a car Investigate alternative means of providing residents without access to a car, access to community infrastructure.	• Council	• Policy maker	• Long • Estimated duration 18 months
Prepare and Implement Activation Plans As part of local planning processes, identify opportunities in consultation with community members, for potential programs, activities and events to better activate local community facilities.	• Grant • Council	• Policy maker • Provider • Partner	• Annual • Estimated duration ongoing

Note: Timing referenced in the above table is generally defined as short term (1–2 years), medium term (2–5 years), long term (5–10 years) and ongoing.

Beautiful Spaces

Beautiful parks, beaches and community spaces which foster social connections and opportunities for recreation.

We currently have a range of beautiful parks and beaches which foster social connections and opportunities for recreation. Having access to spaces like these provides benefits to our community such as improved air quality, improved mental health outcomes as well as providing access to non-transactional spaces that we can all enjoy. Overall, our community has an adequate supply of open spaces for our current population and beyond.

Whilst we have access to a range of open spaces, your feedback identified the need for a central meeting place of the community. It is envisaged that this space will provide a central focal point for the community which will facilitate a range of activities, celebrations and organised events.

Recognising there is a strong representation of Indigenous persons within our community, there is an opportunity to leverage and celebrate the Shire's first peoples. Council is seeking to partner with the Aboriginal Land Councils and other local groups to support key projects which will result in improved social and economic outcomes.

Council does not currently have formalised guidance materials to guide the planning and delivery of open space. This strategy includes an open space framework in the form of Desired Standards of Service (DSS) to ensure future open spaces are delivered in an equitable and consistent way. A Shire-wide Open Space Plan is needed to provide more localised direction into the future.

This strategy should:

- Confirm the planning and performance criteria to guide provision of public open space
- Provide strategic direction for the future provision of recreation and sport parks including the classification, category and location of sites
- Review the existing network and identify priorities for acquisition, upgrading, redevelopment or disposal
- Ensure recreation and sport parks are delivered and developed in accordance with state planning legislation, corporate priorities and emerging community needs
- Recommend the distribution of recreation spaces appropriate to the Shire's population, projected growth, demographic make-up, recreation trends and changing needs.

The table summarises the hierarchy of open space areas and the preferred outcomes for each.

Indicative DSS Extracts

Park Type	Hierarchy of Provision	Preferred Minimum Size	Service Access Radius	Example
Local Park	Serves local neighbourhood within an urban area or township	0.3ha	400–500m or 5-minute safe walking distance of most dwellings	Memorial Park (Stuarts Point)
Village Park	Serves a village community	Min 1ha	Within 1–2km	
Township Park	Serves Townships	2ha	Up to-15 min drive	Horseshoe Bay Reserve
Village Sports Park	Serves Village	Min 2ha	Up to-15 min drive	Baker Drive Oval
Sports Park	Serves whole Township	5+ha	10–20 min drive	SWR Sports Complex
Regional Destination Park	Serves whole Council area and some regional demand	2ha + for park area 10ha for sports	30-minutes to 1 hour drive	Riverside Park (Kempsey)

Action	Possible funding sources	Council's role	Project timing and duration
Confirm and implement an Open Space Framework Confirm and implement a Desired Standards of Service (DSS) framework to ensure an equitable and consistent delivery of open space across the Shire. *(Further guidance is provided in the Tools and Frameworks Chapter)*	• Council	• Policy maker	• Short • Estimated duration 18 months
Create a community event space in Kempsey Provide for a community gathering place for large, Shire-wide or regional community events.	• Development Contributions • Environmental Levy • Grant • Council	• Provider	• Medium • Estimated duration 48 months
Develop an Aboriginal Cultural Centre Partner with the Aboriginal Land Council to deliver a new Aboriginal Cultural Centre in the Shire which incorporates arts, culture, language and history. This space could also incorporate a meeting place, indigenous performance space, talking circle or youth facility. Engagement with local indigenous groups is fundamental to delivering this action.	• Grant • Council	• Partner	• Medium • Estimated duration 36 months
Prepare Open Space Plan Prepare an open space plan that provides actions which will assist in the strategic direction of open space, identify upgrades for existing open space in accordance with the adopted DSS and identify sites underutilised and inadequate open space sites for divestment. *(Further guidance is provided in the Tools and Frameworks Chapter)*	• Council • Crown Land Reserve Fund	• Policy maker	• Medium • Estimated duration 24 months

Note: Timing referenced in the above table is generally defined as short term (1–2 years), medium term (2–5 years), long term (5–10 years) and ongoing.

Healthy and Active Community

Sport and recreation facilities play an important role in keeping people of all ages active in community life, contributing to higher levels of self-esteem and self-worth.

The Macleay Valley features a wide range of sport and recreation facilities that everyone can enjoy. We have access to facilities such as golf courses, swimming pools, tennis courts and football fields which play a fundamental role in supporting positive health outcomes. They also play an important role in keeping people of all ages engaged in community life, contributing to higher levels of self-esteem and self-worth. A range of opportunities have been identified to ensure the ongoing efficient delivery, operation and management of our sporting and recreation facilities.

The existing four swimming pools across the Macleay Valley offer similar traditional outdoor lap swimming pools with some programs available. Acknowledging that most of these facilities are ageing and generally costly, there is an opportunity to review and enhance these aquatic facilities to improve their viability and offering to all. Successful aquatic facility redevelopment projects have seen innovative water areas linked to traditional competition and event swimming pools that appeal to broader markets like recreation and leisure, health and therapy and education. Such facilities include things such as water play and splash pads, programmable warm water areas for education and therapy activities and the inclusion of general health and fitness facilities.

An Aquatic Strategy should be developed over the medium term to inform future investment decisions. A successful aquatic strategy will typically:

- Provide strategic direction for the future provision of aquatic facilities including the type, number, and location of facilities
- Identify priorities for upgrading, redevelopment or disposal
- Ensure facilities are delivered and developed in accordance with corporate planning directions
- Recommend a facility mix that is appropriate to the Shire's population, projected growth, and demographic make-up
- Deliver concept plans that support the strategic direction for swimming pools
- Identify indicative capital costs of any redevelopment, and potential funding sources
- Indicate ongoing operating and maintenance implications for Council of any redevelopment(s)
- Provide an analysis of the pros and cons of different management models.

As part of Council's Macleay Valley Sports Strategy, the South West Rocks (SWR) Sports Complex was identified as requiring additional land dedicated to sport infrastructure to support the significant increase in population within the immediate area as well as the general increase in population across the Shire. The strategy identified an additional 6.1 hectares is required by 2036.

Action	Possible funding sources	Council's role	Project timing and duration
Prepare Aquatic Strategy Prepare an Aquatic Strategy that considers the viability of existing public pools and the future needs for the community. *(Further guidance is provided in the Tools and Frameworks Chapter)*	• Grant • Council • Development Contributions	• Provider	• Short • Estimated duration 18 months
Upgrade Verge Street Ovals and Services Park Increase the capability for a range of sports and events across.	• Grant • Council • Development Contributions	• Provider	• Short • Estimated duration 36 months
Expand the SWR Sports Complex Expand the SWR Sports Complex, as per the Macleay Valley Sports Strategy, and improve the current facilities.	• Grant • Council • Development Contributions	• Partner • Provider	• Medium • Estimated duration 36 months

Note: Timing referenced in the above table is generally defined as short term (1–2 years), medium term (2–5 years), long term (5–10 years) and ongoing.

Policy and Planning

Good governance and management underpin our corporate objectives and drive improvement.

There is an opportunity for Council to improve some of its internal processes and undertake new initiatives to improve the delivery, management and ongoing operation of community infrastructure.

A range of community facilities across the Shire are managed by community members via a Section 355 agreement. Whilst this arrangement by and large works for both parties, there are some issues. For example, commercial activities are taking place in some facilities with no profit back to Council, some buildings have become inaccessible to the community or are not being actively managed, there are inconsistent contracts and agreements with the various committees and ad-hoc maintenance is being undertaken by Council of some buildings.

Council will investigate opportunities to provide tools and templates to assist the committees meet their statutory obligations and improve lines of communication. Council will also investigate alternative management structures to put in place where committees are unable to meet their obligations or unable to be resourced.

The community have consistently told us that there needs to be more things for young people to do in the Macleay Valley. The best way to deliver this is to talk to young people themselves, to better understand the types of places and activities that they desire. This could provide an opportunity to better activate and utilise existing facilities, while also responding to the needs of the wider community.

The Macleay Valley is currently home to a diverse and active artistic community. The community have told us that they want our arts and culture to be obviously and proudly expressed across the Shire. By leveraging our collective creativity and unique identity we will be on the way to creating a proud and engaged community.

Action	Possible funding sources	Council's role	Project timing and duration
Prepare Youth Strategy Prepare a youth strategy to ensure the Shire provides community infrastructure that responds to our young peoples' needs.	• Council	• Provider	• Medium • Estimated duration 18 months
Prepare Public Art and Culture Plan Prepare a public art and culture plan that identifies opportunities to incorporate public art throughout the Shire, including opportunities to reflect indigenous culture.	• Council	• Provider	• Medium • Estimated duration 24 months
Continually improve the management of community facilities Investigate alternative management arrangements and structures for Council owned community infrastructure, where they demonstrate a benefit such as improved utilisation and maintenance. Prepare policies, tools and templates to assist facility managers and support Council systems. Regularly undertake a detailed audit and condition assessment of all community facilities across the Shire, in collaboration with local facility managers and community groups. Develop a long-term program of improvements and rationalisation. (*Further guidance is provided in the Tools and Frameworks Chapter*)	• Council • 355 Committee Reserve Fund	• Policy maker • Provider	• Ongoing

Note: Timing referenced in the above table is generally defined as short term (1–2 years), medium term (2–5 years), long term (5–10 years) and ongoing.

7.0 Action Timeline

Theme	Short term 1–2 years	Medium term 2–5 years
A Connected and Inclusive Community	Develop a library based multipurpose community hub at South West Rocks	
Beautiful Spaces	Confirm and Implement an Open Space Framework	
Healthy and Active Community	Prepare Aquatic Strategy	
Healthy and Active Community	Upgrade Verge Street Ovals and Services Park	
A Connected and Inclusive Community		Expand and enhance the
A Connected and Inclusive Community		Review facilities manage
A Connected and Inclusive Community		Kempsey Library Upgrad
Beautiful Spaces		Create a community eve
Beautiful Spaces		Prepare Open Space Pla
Healthy and Active Community		Expand the SWR Sports
Policy and Planning		Prepare Youth Strategy
Policy and Planning		Prepare Public Art and C
Beautiful Spaces		
A Connected and Inclusive Community		
A Connected and Inclusive Community		
Policy and Planning		

	Long term 5–10 years	Ongoing
e mobile library service		
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n spaces in Kempsey		
n		
Complex		
ulture Plan		
	Develop an Aboriginal Cultural Centre	
	Look for ways to provide residents access to community facilities without a car	
		Prepare and Implement Activation Plans
		Continually improve the management of community facilities

8.0 Tools and Frameworks

The following tools and framework have been developed to assist Council deliver this strategy.

Open Space Framework

Desired Standards of Service (DSS) are the provision guidelines that ensure a sufficient supply of functional land to meet open space recreation and sport needs of the community. These standards are based around a range of performance criteria that help ensure the desired range of recreation opportunities are provided and that public open space is fit for purpose.

Performance outcomes in relation to land quantum or quality are necessary to be able to identify the space or land needed to meet needs, and to assess capacity of existing assets to accommodate increased demand. This minimum level of supply is further informed by performance criteria relating to the suitability of the land to accommodate recreation and sporting use. The standards of service are also designed to ensure that land proposed for parks and sporting areas can be developed and maintained effectively without unreasonable costs which can be associated with poor quality land.

The below tables provide an indicative DSS for the Macleay Valley. The information contained within the below tables is drawn from professional reasoning and real standards used across similar local government areas. This framework should be further refined and applied to open spaces across the Shire as part of the development of the municipality-wide Open Space Plan.

Indicative DSS

Park Type	Hierarchy of Provision	Preferred Minimum Size	Service Access Radius	Example
Local Park	Serves local neighbourhood within an urban area or township	0.3ha	400-500m or 5-minute safe walking distance of most dwellings	Memorial Park (Stuarts Point)
Village Park	Serves a village community	Min 1ha	Within 1–2km	
Township Park	Serves Townships	2ha	Up to-15 min drive	Horseshoe Bay Reserve
Village Sports Park	Serves Village	Min 2ha	Up to-15 min drive	Baker Drive Oval
Sports Park	Serves whole Township	5+ha	10–20 min drive	SWR Sports Complex
Regional Destination Park	Serves whole Council area and some regional demand	2ha + for park area 10ha for sports	30-minutes to 1 hour drive	Riverside Park (Kempsey)

*Indicative DSS – Table of Minimum Levels of Development, Facility Provision and Activity Opportunities**

Park type	Hierarchy of provision	Preferred min size (standalone)	Service access radius	Road frontage (minimum)	Useable area for main purpose	Slope and topography (maximum)	Flooding and other hazard	Paths and access	Other comments
Local Park	Serves local neighbourhood within an urban area or township	0.3ha	400–500mor 5-minute safe walking distance of most dwellings	50%	0.25ha	1: 20 for main use area 1: 6 for remainder.	Main use area free of regular flooding (i.e. above ARI10) with at least 10% of total area above ARI50. Free of hazards.	Safe walking access and pathway links to park. Car access to boundary and parking available.	Should have good visibility from surrounding residences. Narrow linear shapes are not preferred
Village Park	Serves a village community	Min 1ha Larger public open space areas mean more opportunities can be provided in one location.	1-2km	50%	.9ha	1: 20 for main use area. 1:50 for kick about area. Variable topography for remainder.	Main use area free of regular flooding (i.e. above ARI10) with at least 10% of total area above ARI50. Free of hazards.	Safe walking access and pathways into the park and facilities. Car access and parking.	Provides local and district park opportunities. Can be provided as part of multi-use park combined with sports
Township Park (Destination)	Serves Townships	2ha Larger public open space areas mean more opportunities can be provided in one location.	up to-15 min drive	50%	1.5ha	1: 20 for main use area. 1:50 for kick about area. Variable topography for remainder.	Main use area free of regular flooding (i.e. above ARI10) with at least 10% of total area above ARI 50. Free of hazards.	On site car parking. Walking and cycle track links.	Destination parks will also provide local park opportunities and can include activity nodes or the local memorial or be the civic/ celebration space for the community.
Village Sports Park	Serves Village	Min 2ha	up to 15 min drive	25-50%	1.75+ha	1: 50 for all playing surfaces	Free of hazards. Facilities above ARI 100. Fields above ARI 20.	Car, foot and bike access. Off-street parking. Linked to village trail/ bikeway network.	Often provided as part of a multi-use park providing informal and formal recreation. Can also include community facilities/ meeting areas
Sports Park or Precinct.	Serves whole Township	5+ha	10–20 min drive	50%	3ha	1: 50 for all playing surfaces	Free of hazards. Fields above ARI 20. Built Facilities above ARI 100.	Car, foot and bike access. Internal road and parking.	Preferred approach is to provide local or township informal recreation nodes as well. Usually Master Planned
Regional Destination Park or Sports Precinct/ Event venue	Serves whole Council area and some regional demand	2ha + for park area Larger public open space areas mean more opportunities can be provided in one location. 10ha for sports	30-minutes to 1 hour drive	25%	Varies	Varies Use areas (e.g. picnic facilities) 1:20 – playing surfaces 1:50	Use areas above ARI 20. Free of other physical hazards. Fields above ARI 20. Built Facilities above ARI 100.	Road access. Off street parking.	Regional parks are provided based on opportunity to develop a significant feature. Regional parks can often be provided by State. Only one Council Sports precinct/ event venue would be provided

*Indicative DSS – Table of Minimum Levels of Development, Facility Provision and Activity Opportunities**

Park type / Features	Local park/ village park	Township (destination) park	Village sports park	Sports park/ precinct	Regional destination park or regional sports precinct	Rest areas and other open space
Boundary fencing	Bollards to prevent car access.	Bollards to prevent car access.	Bollards to prevent car access onto fields.	Fencing/ bollards to control access into site as well as limiting internal traffic access to field and facilities.	Range of fencing/ boundary definition styles as appropriate to location.	As needed.
Water taps Irrigation	1–2 drinking taps/ fountains where potable water is available.	2+ drinking fountains where potable water is available. Taps for picnic areas and active recreation nodes.	Taps located on built facilities and 1 per field where potable water is available.	Taps located on built facilities where potable water is available	Drinking fountains and taps provided at picnic nodes and built amenities/ facilities.	Not provided.
Lighting	Safety lighting provided by adjacent streetlights.	For carpark, toilets, youth space and picnic area. For natural area parks. Lights in carpark and Toilets.	For carpark, toilets, security lighting for buildings. Field lighting responsibility of clubs.	For carpark, toilets, security lighting for buildings. Field lighting responsibility of clubs.	For carpark, toilets, picnic shelters. Where possible. May include field lighting for sports precinct.	Not normally provided.
Toilets	Not provided for local Parks. Provided for Village Parks.	Usually provided.	Provided if not being provided as part of club facilities.	Provided as part of facilities.	Provided.	Not usually provided unless combined with Village Park.
Picnic tables, seats, BBQs	1–2 tables 2+ seats BBQ normally provided for Village Parks.	2+ tables 4+ seats BBQs usually provided. Sheltered tables.	Not provided except as part of recreation nodes. 2–4 perimeter seats.	2 perimeter seats per field. Picnic facilities provided as part of recreation node.	Multiple picnic nodes provided as required.	1–2 tables.

Park type / Features	Local park/ village park	Township (destination) park	Village sports park	Sports park/ precinct	Regional destination park or regional sports precinct	Rest areas and other open space
Shade	Shade from trees or structures provided for play events and picnic nodes.	Built shade for play and picnic facilities if natural shade unavailable.	Perimeter shade from appropriate tree species.	Perimeter shade for fields from trees.	Shade for picnic facilities and all use nodes. Combination of shade planting and structures as required.	Natural shade and picnic shelters.
Landscape works	Ornamental plantings. Shade species. Buffer plantings with other use nodes.	Enhancement plantings and shade plantings along with screening and buffers.	Planted buffer areas adjacent to residential. Screening/ buffer plantings for recreation nodes.	Planted buffer areas adjacent to residential. Screening/ buffer plantings for recreation.	Significant works including plantings, features, and rehabilitation work where natural vegetation critical to site. Works at entry points and plantings as appropriate to enhance or rehabilitate site.	Defined access points, regeneration and enhancement plantings.
Car parks and internal roads	On street. Mainly a 'walk-to-park'	Off-street parking provided unless sufficient on-street available.	Off street parking provided.	Off street parking provided as central hubs to facilities/ field areas linked by internal road network.	Off street or dedicated on street parking possibly provided in several locations. Internal roads if needed.	Off street or on street parking.
Maintenance standard	Medium Level KSC Category 2	Medium Level KSC Category 2	Medium Level KSC Category 2	High Level KSC category 1	High Level KSC category 1	Low Level KSC Category 3

*The above table provides a summary of the embellishment outcomes considered as the preferred level of development (or embellishment) for each park type. The information in this table should be considered as a summary only and should be further informed by any current or future park planning and design guidelines undertaken by Kempsey Shire Council.

*Indicative DSS – Table of Recreation and Sport Facility Provision^*

Park type / Features	Local park/ village park	Township (destination) park	Village sports park	Sports park/ precinct	Regional destination park or regional sports precinct	Rest areas and other open space
Bike/ pedestrian paths and facilities	On footpath and providing access to boundary (local parks only)	Paths and links to park and within park Bike racks provided	Bikeway links to park Bike racks provided	Bikeway links to park Internal links to facilities. Bike racks provided	Internal paths to facilities and use areas	In large areas (>20-30ha with appropriate topography), potential for off-road cycle cycling
Playgrounds	1 play event, approx. 50m2; inclusive and possibly for parents and young children (<5 years)	Large multiple play events catering for wider range of age and abilities	Not provided except in associated recreation nodes (e.g. local Park)	Not provided except as part of recreation nodes	Sometimes provided as part of picnic and use area. Depends on the other opportunities at park; could be large destination play area, range of ages and abilities included.	Not provided
Facilities for young people	Facility for older youth e.g. ½ court or open area for kickabout. Usually provided in Village Park or nearby	Youth "active" facilities provided e.g. ½ court, bike tracks, youth space etc	Available as public access to sporting fields	Not provided except as public access to sporting fields or as dedicated facility (e.g. skate park)	Multiple activities and uses means a single space can cater for a range of needs and attract a broader user base, which in turn helps to create a sense of community and encourages interaction and social cohesion	Not provided
Informal active facilities	Fitness equipment/ exercise site or station Could be part of linear network	Examples that could be considered: community tennis courts, bocce courts or outdoor sport courts				

Park type / Features	Local park/ village park	Township (destination) park	Village sports park	Sports park/ precinct	Regional destination park or regional sports precinct	Rest areas and other open space
Sporting Fields	Sometimes provided if space permits as an informal field	Sometimes provided if space permits as an informal field	Fields provided and developed to playing standard	Fields developed to playing standard	Informal fields/ playing areas sometimes provided in Regional Parks. Fields and Amenities sometimes provided for Sports Precincts	NA
Waterfront; foreshores and beaches	Can be adjacent/ linear, possible trail or path for walking cycle or running	Can be adjacent and site for picnic, kick-about, (nature) play or fitness equipment	NA	NA	Can be adjacent with play, picnic, water-based (sport) club (surf, rowing, boating etc) Jetty, pontoon and/ or boat ramp	

^ The above table provides a summary of recreation and sport facilities and opportunities that could be considered as preferred levels of provision within park types. These activity settings and outdoor recreation or open space opportunities are not mutually exclusive, e.g. in many/most situations local play for very young, local children's play and older children's activity space can be delivered together. The information in this table should be considered as a summary only and should be further informed by any current or future park planning and design guidelines undertaken by Kempsey Shire Council.

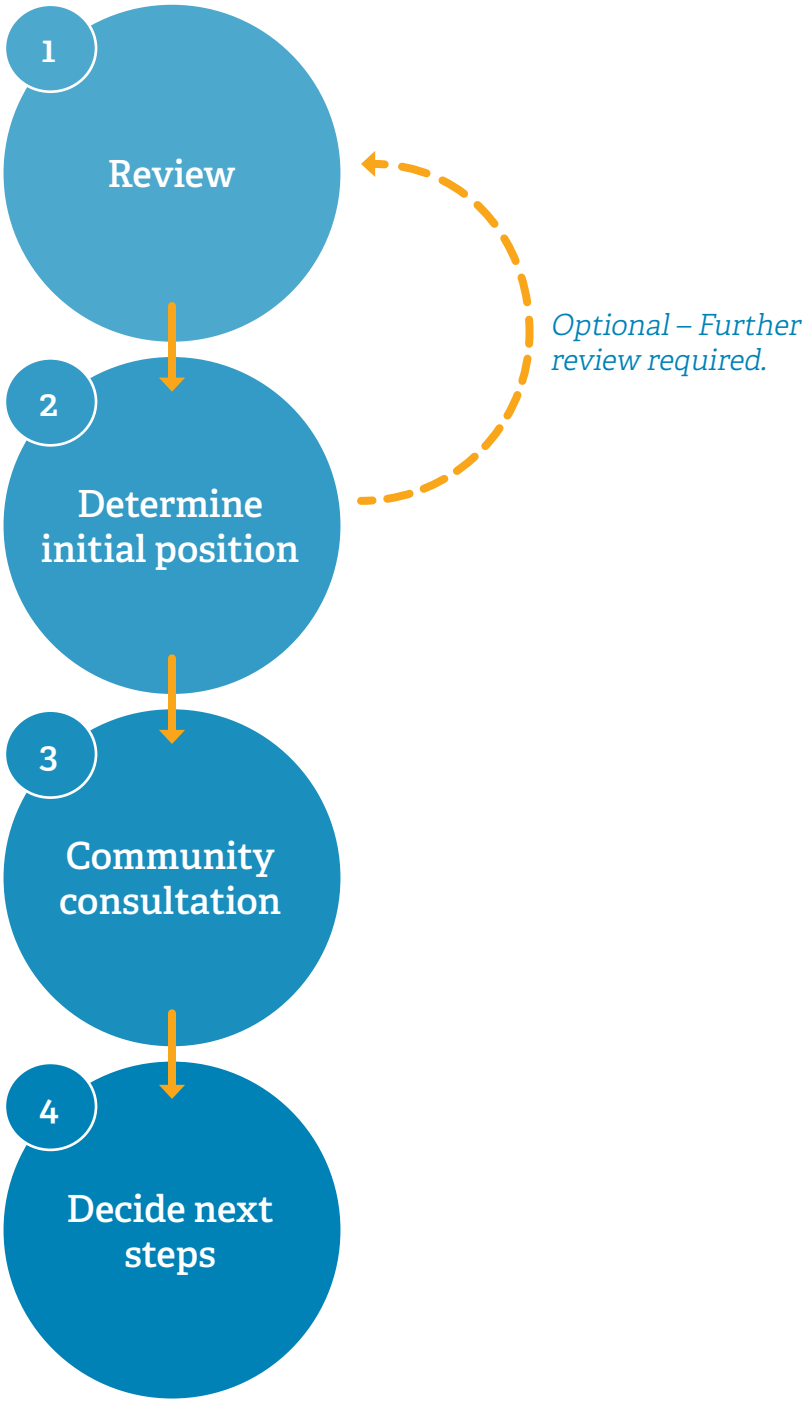
Indicative DSS – Table of General Criteria for all Open Spaces

Parks to avoid:	Minimum widths	Buffers and adjacent land use	Constructed drains and detention basins
Land listed on any Contaminated Land Register or known to be contaminated. Land under High Voltage Power lines or within 50m of the Line easement. Land constrained by Easements.	Land should be greater than 15m wide unless part of a linkage or minor entry point then 5m minimum applies. Land for sporting use should be 150m or greater for any dimension.	Parks should consider adjacent land uses and be adequately buffered from incompatible uses. Solutions include vegetation corridors, planted mounds and fencing.	Constructed drains and detention basins are not suitable for parkland.

Community Building Assessment Framework

This assessment framework is intended to assist in guiding the assessment of community buildings across the Shire. The answers and information that come from applying this framework will provide a suitable evidence base for future investment decisions (improvements, upgrade, repurpose or decommissioning).

Assessment framework overview



Assessment framework

Stage 1 – Review community facility/facilities

1. **Does existing Council policy contain any direction for the community facility**

   Resources

   - Adopted State and local government strategies, policies and/or master plans.

2. **Is there a demonstrated community demand or volume of requests for this facility to be replaced or refurbished?**

   Resources

   - Section 355 committee reports and bookings register.
   - Maintenance requests from community.
   - Local master planning or structure plans.
   - Aligned Council policy
   - Population and demographic trends and forecasts.

3. **Is the existing community facility in poor condition or no longer fit-for-purpose?**

   Considerations

   - Presence of vandalism or graffiti, facilities are unhygienic and difficult to maintain / clean.
   - Obvious signs of wear on the existing facility.
   - Features are broken or do not work.
   - Negative perceptions of safety.

   Resources

   - Condition assessment.

4. **Is the community facility being regularly used?**

   Resources

   - Section 355 committee reports and bookings register
   - Active committee or organisation using the facility
   - Maintenance requests from community.

5. **Is there a suitable or better alternative to the existing community facility within close proximity?**

   Considerations

   - Surrounding community infrastructure which provides a similar purpose (and is not operating at capacity).

6. **Does the community facility meet modern standards?**

   Considerations

   - Disability Discrimination Act 1992 compliance.
   - Current building standards.
   - Meet minimal requirements to mitigate the impacts of natural hazards.

Stage Two – Determine Council's initial position

Determine whether facility should be improved, upgraded, repurposed or decommissioned in liaison with relevant Council departments and Councillors. This should also consider the financial implications of the course of action.

Stage Three – Consult the community

Undertake community consultation regarding proposed action. Council should develop an engagement approach which is fit-for-purpose and responds to the significance of the facility and/or Council's initial position.

Stage Four – Decide next steps

Identify next steps in progressing the improvement, upgrade, repurposing or decommissioning of the community facility/facilities. Next steps may require further detailed investigation and consultation (e.g. master planning a new community facility).

9.0 Monitoring and Evaluation

9.1 Where to from here?

This Community Infrastructure Strategy includes a range of recommendations to improve and ensure ongoing access to quality community infrastructure across the Macleay Valley over the next 20 years. There is likely to be further engagement and investigations required to implement some of these actions, including:

- Targeted consultation with existing service providers and facility operators
- Targeted consultation with particular population groups (e.g. youth)
- Scoping of potential delivery and/or funding partners

9.2 Implementation and Monitoring

It is recommended that Council review the key assumptions, models and actions of this plan in line with the release of new Census data to ensure they are still relevant and reflect the future needs of the local community.

Council will review the status of actions within this strategy every two years.

Crescent Heads

KEMPSEY
Shire Council