

STRATHFIELD MUNICIPAL COUNCIL



STATE OF THE CITY



Endorsed by Council 22 October 2024



RECOGNITION OF TRADITIONAL CUSTODIANS

ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF COUNTRY We acknowledge the Wangal people as the Traditional Custodians of the land on which the Strathfield area is located.

We pay respect to Elders past, present and emerging.

We recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders continued custodianship of Country – land, seas, and skies.

We acknowledge the historical stewardship of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and the important contribution they make to our communities and economies.

We reflect on the continuing impact of policies of the past and recognise our responsibility to work with and for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, families, and communities, towards better economic, social and cultural outcomes.



Message from the General Manager

The State of the City report provides an overview of our progress in implementing the Strathfield Community Strategic Plan. It also provides an overview of the strategic issues facing the Council for the upcoming term. The State of the City report is an addendum to the Council's Annual Report for 2023-2024 which covers the last financial year of the previous Council term

In the last Council term, significant progress was made in addressing a range of major issues and preparing the Council to deal with significant future challenges. Council initiated a series of actions to address its declining financial sustainability, operating deficits and growing backlog of infrastructure assets. Without these remedial actions, Council would have had insufficient funding to maintain current service levels and asset renewals and by 2027 have a negative cash position.

Of particular concern given the increased housing and population targets set by the New South Wales (NSW) Government, Council would be severely underfunded to manage expected population growth and expansion of services that the community would expect is available. In 2024, the NSW Government announced the Homebush

Transport Orientated Development draft Masterplan, which is initially estimated a yield of 8,900 new dwellings or 22,500 new residents. This and other planning initiatives affecting Strathfield LGA will result in Strathfield planning for and servicing a high growth environment.

Council has received over \$21 million in grant funding under the Western Sydney Infrastructure Grants (WSIG) program for upgrades of a number of facilities and an additional \$5.9 million for active transport infrastructure near Parramatta Road. These projects and other capital works including renewals and maintenance of assets such as roads, footpaths and buildings will be delivered in the new term of Council.

Council has also commenced preparing strategies to identify how will we progress a range of issues including strategies such as Land and Property, Resilience, and Recreation and Wellness. These are discussed in more depth in this report. Underpinning these strategies and plans, is a robust civic leadership and governance structure to ensure our operations and decision making are effective, efficient, accountable and transparent.

The State of the City report captures where we are currently positioned and where we are going. It is intended that this report will provide guidance to the newly elected Council for the next Council term. I look forward to continuing to work closely with our Councillors, my Executive Team and Council staff to serve our local community and continue to build for a prosperous future for Strathfield.

Michael Mamo
General Manager
Strathfield Municipal Council



About this report

The State of the City report is an important part of the Integrated Planning & Reporting framework. Council is required to prepare and present the State of the City report to the incoming Council after the Council election on 14 September 2024. This State of the City Report is an addendum to Council's Annual Report 2023-2024.

This report provides an overview of the progress of implementing the Strathfield Community Strategic Plan (CSP). This Plan represents a whole of community approach to addressing the priority issues of the Strathfield community. In this way, it differs from the Annual Report, which is primarily focused on Council.

This report also provides an overview of the key current and projected issues and challenges affecting the Strathfield community. As such, it provides the newly elected Council with information on strategic directions, challenges and opportunities.

The Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework (IP&R) provisions of the Local Government Act 1993 require that the Community Strategic Plan address social, environmental, economic and civic leadership in an integrated way. This is known as the Quadruple Bottom Line (QBL). QBL indicates whether the community is moving to or away from a sustainable future, when compared to baseline data.

The Strathfield Community Strategic Plan includes a range of performance indicators, which are used to track progress. Data is collected from a variety of sources including community surveys, Council systems, statistics from government agencies including Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), Department of Health, Transport for NSW, Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research, and Resilient Sydney.

Council responsibilities

Strathfield Council is incorporated under the Local Government Act 1993 (LG Act). Council is an elected system of government and is directly accountable to the local community. It is an independent, statutory corporation responsible for administering a local government area (LGA) under its jurisdiction.

The LG Act gives NSW Councils broad powers to independently plan for and manage local community services and facilities in consultation with their local community.

The Council's governing body is made up of the elected Councillors. Strathfield Council is comprised of seven Councillors, who are elected by the residents and ratepayers of the Strathfield Local Government Area (LGA). The Mayor and Deputy Mayor are elected by the Councillors. Under the LG Act, the Mayoral term is two (2) years, and the Deputy Mayor may be elected for the Mayoral term or a shorter period.

The General Manager is appointed by the Council and is responsible for the management of Council's administration.

**Reporting to
Council on
activities and
outcomes**

COUNCIL'S GOVERNING BODY - ELECTED COUNCILLORS

- Providing policy framework
- Setting strategy
- Monitoring performance
- Allocating resources

GENERAL MANAGER - COUNCIL STAFF

- Implementing strategy & policy
- Ensuring compliance
- Advising council on strategies

COUNCIL'S ADMINISTRATIVE BODY

**Implementation
of Council's
decisions**

Role of Councillors

The role of the Councillors is to direct and control the affairs of the Council in accordance with the LG Act and other applicable legislation. The elected Councillors make the policies and decisions that drive and shape the direction and achievement of the Local Government Area's vision into the future.

They work together with the community and Council's General Manager to set the strategic direction of the LGA.

Integrated Planning & Reporting (IP&R) responsibilities

The IP&R Framework begins with the community's aspirations for a period of at least ten (10) years. It includes a suite of integrated plans that set out a vision and goals and strategic actions to achieve them. It involves a reporting structure to communicate progress to Council and the community as well as a structured timeline for review to ensure the goals and actions are still relevant.



Councillors and the Mayor

Councillors comprise the governing body of a Council in the same way that a Board of Directors is the governing body of a corporation. As a governing body, the Council responsibilities in relation to IP&R are:

- provide effective civic leadership to the local community
- ensure as far as possible the financial sustainability of the Council
- ensure as far as possible that the Council acts in accordance with the principles set out in Chapter 3 of the Act and the plans, programs, strategies and policies of the Council
- develop and endorse the Community Strategic Plan, Delivery Program and other strategic plans, programs, strategies and policies of the Council
- determine and adopt a Rating and Revenue Policy and Operational Plans that support the optimal allocation of the Council's resources to implement the strategic plans (including the Community Strategic Plan) of the Council and for the benefit of the local area
- keep under review the performance of the Council, including service delivery.

As members of the governing body, and in the interests of ensuring the organisation operates effectively to achieve the best outcomes for the community, Councillors should endeavour to work constructively with Council staff that are responsible for implementing Council decisions. This need is reflected in the Act which requires the governing bodies of Councils to consult with the General Manager in directing and controlling the affairs of the Council.

As individuals, Councillors are expected to:

- participate in the development of the documents of the IP&R framework.



The Mayor

The Mayor's role is to:

- ensure the timely development and adoption of the strategic plans, programs and policies of the Council
- promote the effective and consistent implementation of the strategic plans, programs and policies of the Council
- promote partnerships between the Council and key stakeholders
- advise, consult with and provide strategic direction to the General Manager in relation to the implementation of the strategic plans and policies of the Council
- in conjunction with the General Manager, ensure adequate opportunities and mechanisms for engagement between the Council and the local community.

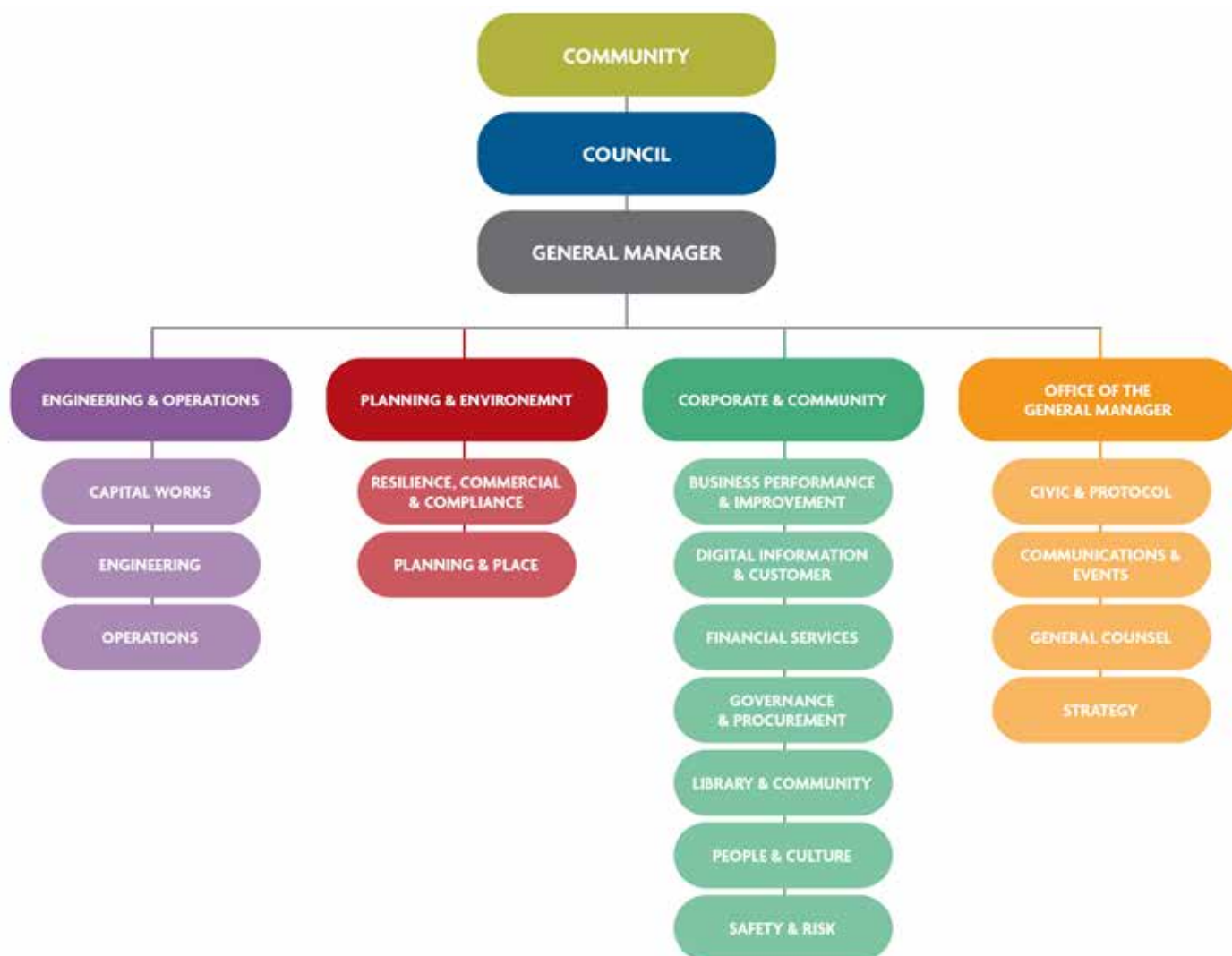
The General Manager

The General Manager role in relation to IP&R is to:

- conduct the day-to-day management of the Council in accordance with the strategic plans, programs, strategies and policies of the Council
- advise the Mayor and the governing body on the development and implementation of the strategic plans, programs, strategies and policies of the Council
- advise the Mayor and the governing body on the appropriate form of community consultation on the strategic plans, programs, strategies and policies of the Council and other matters related to the Council
- prepare, in consultation with the Mayor and the governing body, the Council's Community Strategic Plan, Community Engagement Strategy, Resourcing Strategy, Delivery Program, Operational Plan and Annual Report
- implement the Council's Workforce Management Strategy

Our administration

Strathfield Council's administration is managed by the General Manager under the following organisational structure.



Each of the key areas outlined above plays a key component to Council's service delivery as follows:

- **Councillors:** Act as the voices of their constituents, championing their needs and concerns in Council meetings and engagements with other government entities.
- **Engineering & Operations:** Oversee the execution of the Council's infrastructure projects and asset management initiatives, including essential services like open space maintenance, civil works, waste management, and general maintenance tasks.
- **Planning & Environment:** Ensure community operations align with environmental sustainability goals and local government regulations. This department spearheads the development of planning strategies, conducts reviews, and offers support on planning matters, such as Development Applications.
- **Corporate & Community:** Provide crucial internal support services to facilitate the Council's service delivery, including the management of Council library and community programs.
- **Office of the General Manager:** Manages the overarching organisation of Council, as well as Council's internal legal services, integrated planning and reporting, civic engagements, including citizenship ceremonies, community communications, and major events.

Our Planning Framework

All Councils in NSW are required to conduct their business based on an IP&R framework. The framework allows NSW councils to draw various plans together, understand how they interact and get the maximum leverage from their efforts by planning holistically and sustainably for the future. The framework ensures long-term planning for the future, with the community having a say in what happens in the area.

The framework requires Council to take a long-term approach to decision making which considers the Quadruple Bottom Line - social, economic, environmental and civic leadership, and the social justice principles of equity, access, participation and rights.

The diagram below shows the framework hierarchy:



Strathfield Community Strategic Plan

The Community Strategic Plan (CSP) is the highest-level plan that identifies the community's main priorities and aspirations for the future and the broad strategies for achieving these. While Council has a custodial role in initiating, preparing and maintaining the plan on behalf of the residents of Strathfield, it is not wholly responsible for its implementation. Other partners such as State and Federal Governments and community groups have a role in delivering the long-term community outcomes of this plan.

Council is committed to leading the way in areas where we have a significant role and responsibility. We advocate on behalf of the community in other areas that are not the responsibility of Council. Strathfield Community Strategic Plan 2035 was adopted in June 2022 with a long-term outlook to 2035. Strathfield community's long-term vision for the future of the Council area guides future strategic directions and planning for the Strathfield community that states:

“Located in the heart of Greater Sydney, Strathfield is highly connected to transport, education and employment. It’s culturally diverse and socially cohesive community is proud of its heritage and residential character, safe neighbourhoods, leafy environments and parklands. Strathfield is a place that embraces learning, culture, productivity and opportunity.”

- Strathfield Community Vision

The CSP is reviewed following an ordinary Council election and addresses social, environmental, economic and civic leadership matters in an integrated manner.

Council last adopted its CSP in June 2022. This Plan is the overarching strategic plan for the Strathfield Local Government Area. The CSP, titled ‘Strathfield 2035’ is organised under 5 key themes, which are supported by goals and strategies:

1. Connectivity
2. Community Wellbeing
3. Celebrating Culture and Place
4. Liveable Neighbourhoods
5. Responsible Leadership.

Delivery Program and Resourcing Strategy

The Delivery Program is where the community's goals in the CSP are systematically translated into actions that the Council will deliver. The Delivery Program is the elected Council's statement of

commitment to the community. Priorities and activities are set to the goals and strategies in the CSP, and appropriate methods to measure the success of the Delivery Program are identified.

The Operational Plan sits under the Delivery Program. It lists all the actions that the Council will undertake and the annual operating budget to be applied during a financial year to achieve its strategic goals. To carry out the

activities in the Delivery Program, the Resourcing Strategy sets out how time, money, assets and people will be allocated. Council has prepared three resourcing strategies to support the delivery of the CSP. It consists of the Long-Term Financial Plan, Asset Management Strategies and Plans, and a Workforce Management Plan.

Reporting

Council reports regularly to the community on the progress of the CSP, Delivery Program and Operational Plan. This includes:

- Quarterly budget reviews presented to Council at the end of each financial quarter. Annual audited financial statements presented to Council in October annually.
- 6 monthly progress reports are presented to Council on the principal activities in the Delivery Program.
- Presentation of the Annual Report, which outlines Council's achievements in implementing its Delivery Program, the performance of the annual Operational Plan and financial summaries showing key income expenditure areas for the financial year. The audited financial statements for the prior financial year are presented with the Annual Report.
- State of the City Report is reported to the incoming Council following the 2024 Council election.

Strategies, Plans and Policies

The CSP is overarching strategic plan of the IP&R framework. However, within the CSP framework, other strategies and studies which address specific issues, but integrate with the CSP and other plans under the IP&R framework.

The following strategies and plans are either adopted or in the planning phase:

- Biodiversity Conservation Strategy (2019)
- Growth Strategy – What's on the horizon
- Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Strategy 2025 – 2030
- Land & Property Strategy
- Recreation & Wellness Strategy
- Climate Adaptation Strategy
- Waste Strategy
- Resilience Plan.

Council has also adopted plans, which are required under legislation:

- Local Environment Plan (LEP) and Development Control Plan (DCP)
- Plans of Management for management of community land
- Local Strategic Planning Statement (LSPS).

Council also adopts policies. Policies set out clear direction provide clear guidance on an issue or set of issues to guide decision making. Some Council policies are required under legislation and apply to all Councils in NSW e.g. Code of Conduct and Code of Meeting Practice. Other policies relate to an issue relevant to Strathfield Council such as allocation of facilities, financial grants etc.

Partnerships and advocacy

The Strathfield CSP is a whole of community plan. Within this framework and areas of responsibilities, Strathfield Council provides services, partners with government, non-government organisations and businesses and advocates on behalf the community to State and Federal Government to achieve the community vision.

Advocacy

We frequently advocate on behalf of the Strathfield community on a range of issues including transport and traffic management, state planning and open space. As an example, Council sought support from local members of parliament to lobby for land acquired for the Westconnex expansion by Transport for NSW to be allocated for open space. In 2024, subject to a deed of agreement, this land called Ismay Reserve was dedicated in 2024 for public recreation use.

Collaborations

We collaborate with NSW Government Agencies to deliver projects in the Strathfield LGA. We collaborated with the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure with regards to the Parramatta Road Urban Amenity Improvement Plan. Some of the works finalised under this collaboration includes upgrade of Station Street and Bridge Road Homebush, installation of artwork at Bridge Road and Loftus Crescent and the construction of two (2) bridges over Powell's Creek.

We seek collaboration with Government agencies on issues which have significant impact on the Strathfield LGA. An example is the Homebush Transport Orientated Development (TOD), where the NSW Government is the lead agency. Council

has engaged with the NSW Government and advocated for appropriate funding for infrastructure to support the proposed growth and new populations.

We seek grants from State and Federal Government to provide funding for programs and capital works in the Strathfield LGA. Without assistance, many projects would not be achievable given their scale and cost. An example is the \$21 million allocated to Strathfield LGA under the NSW Government's WSIG program. This will fund the upgrades to Airey Park, Hudson Park, Begnell Field, Strathfield Park and Cooke Park.

We deliver programs in collaboration with State agencies including road safety programs (with Transport for NSW). Our weeds program is partly funded by NSW Government and includes weed inspections of Sydney Markets to prevent the regional spread of weeds from wholesale traders.

Partnerships and Alliances

We worked in partnerships with other Councils on regional projects and programs or those which cross over LGA boundaries. Council is an active member of the Cooks River Alliance and Parramatta River Catchment Group and works in alliances to deliver environmental programs. Council is a member of the Southern Region of Councils (SSROC).

We partner with government agencies, community and not for profit sector to deliver services and programs to the community. Many of our community services are delivered in partnerships with Metro Assist, Australian Catholic University, CABL and SSI. We partner with local schools and community organisations such as the Strathfield-Homebush District Historical Society in presenting exhibitions at our Ironbark Gallery.

About Strathfield LGA



POPULATION

- Total 47,824 (ABS ERP 2023)
- Density: 3,423 persons per sq km (2023)
- Area: 14.1 sq kms

HEALTH & WELLBEING

- Birthrate 1.21 (2022)
- Life expectancy males 81.3 yrs
- Life expectancy females 85.2 yrs
- SEIFA Index: 1011 (2021)



SUBURBS

- Greenacre (part)
- Homebush
- Homebush West
- Strathfield (part)
- Strathfield South

HOUSEHOLDS

- Average household size 2.73 people (2021)
- Family households 40% (2021)
- Lone households 19% (2021)
- Group households 8% (2021)



PARKS & TREES

- Number of park trees 24,000 (estimated)
- Number of street trees 12,000 (estimated)
- Bressington Park
- Public open space 9%
- Number of sportsgrounds 23
- Number of parks 60
- Largest parks Hudson Park, Mason Park, Strathfield Park,

HOUSING

- Total dwellings 16,700+ (2023)
- Medium-high density 67% (2021)
- Separate dwelling 31% (2021)
- Own or purchasing residence 48% (2021)
- Renting 44% (2021)



TRANSPORT & INFRASTRUCTURE

- Number of rail stations 3
- Number of streets 239
- Length of Kerb and Guttering 194 km
- Length of Footpaths and Cycleways 199 km

EDUCATION

- Local schools - 18
- Universities - 1
- Degree or higher qualification - 44% (2021)
- University attendance - 9% (2021)
- Completed Year 12 - 77% (2021)



AGE GROUPS

- Median Age 33 years (2023)
- 0-14 years 15% (2021)
- 15-29 years 27% (2021)
- 30-44 years 26% (2021)
- 45-64 years 20% (2021)
- Over 65 years 12% (2021)

ECONOMY

- Gross regional product \$3.8 billion (2023)
- Total jobs 23,951 (2023)
- Local businesses 6,934 (2023)
- Professional workers (over 15) 33%
- Residents living and working in SLGA 14%
- Residents in the labour force 63%
- Professionals and managers 46%



DEMOGRAPHICS

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People 0.4% (202 persons)
- Overseas born residents 58.9% (2021)
- Languages spoken at home 65% speak a language other than English including Mandarin, Nepali, Cantonese, Korean, and Arabic (2021)

LARGEST INDUSTRIES (BY EMPLOYMENT)

- Transport, Postal, and Warehousing
- Retail Trade
- Education and Training
- Construction



Wellbeing of Strathfield LGA

Introduction

Based on the model developed by SGS Economics, wellbeing is measured by seven dimensions including environment, equality, health, housing, employment, income and wealth and economy. The data is drawn primarily from sources such as ABS, which enables Strathfield LGA to compare how it performs across a range of 24 wellbeing indicators

Strathfield LGA Strengths

The dimensions in which Strathfield LGA scores highly are:

- Health: community has higher life expectancy and absence of chronic health conditions

- Employment: community is well educated with high levels of participation and employment in the workforce.
- Equality, Community and work-life balance: community has high levels of equality e.g. higher levels of income equality, fewer working hours.

Indicators on Environment and Economy are similar to neighbouring Burwood and Canada Bay Councils (figure 3). Housing is higher than Burwood in Strathfield and Canada Bay.

The sub-index scores range from 0-10. Zero being the poorest while ten (10) indicates the strongest performance.

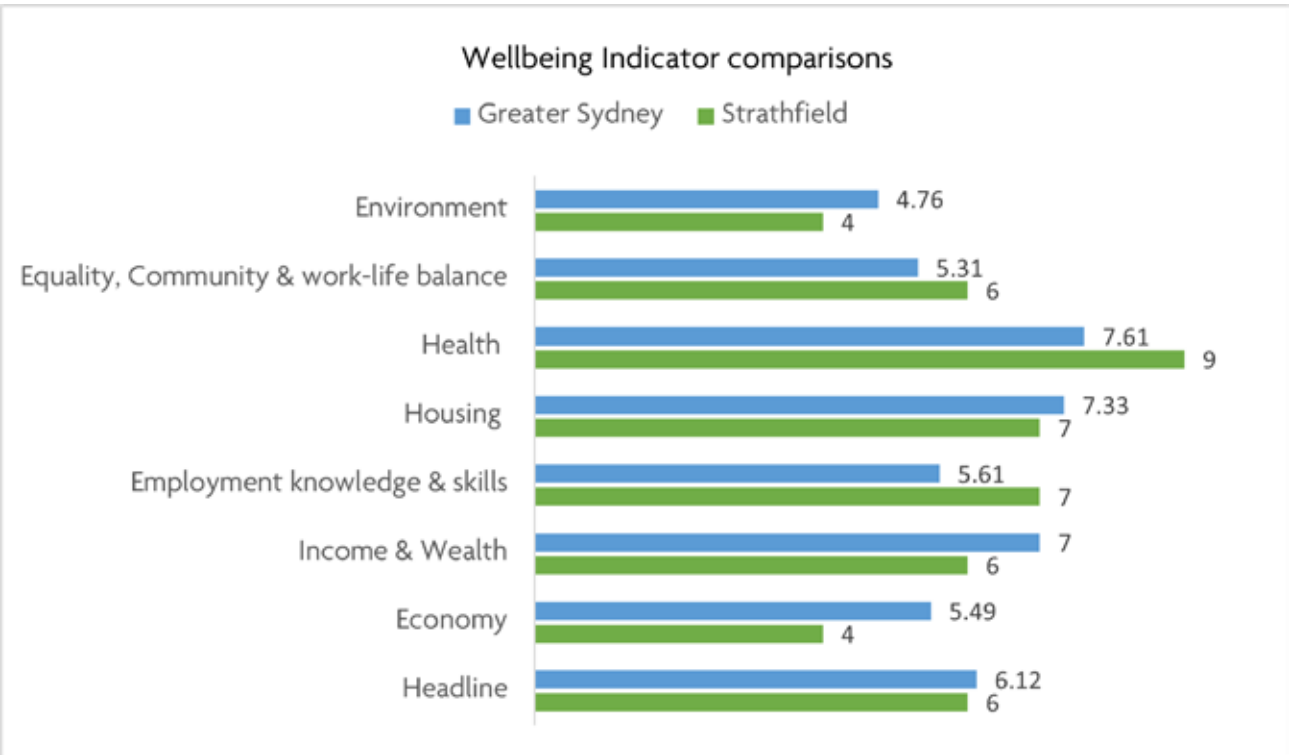


Figure 1 Headline data comparison of Strathfield LGA to Greater Sydney. Source: SGS Economics and Planning 2024

Wellbeing Index 2024 – Strathfield LGA and Greater Sydney

Topic	Index	Strathfield LGA	Greater Sydney
Environment	Environmental Hazards index	2.3	1.1
	Environmentally protected land	>1%	12.0
Equality, Community & Work-life balance	Gender domestic work gap	103.66%	97.42%
	First Nations participation gap	103.66%	97.42%
	Gender participation gap	7.21%	4.69%
	Volunteer rate	8.81%	9.31%
	Income equality (gini coeffiency)	51%	42.88%
	Long working hours	46.61%	43.44%
	Gender pay gap	17.71%	22.91%
Health	Life expectancy	85 years	84.1
	One or fewer major health conditions	88.5%	85.8%
Housing	SGS Rental affordability index (relative to income)	102	109
	Homelessness	58 (per 100,000)	-
	Housing overcrowding incl. boarding houses, overcrowding	1591 (per 100,000)	909
Employment, knowledge & skills	Participation rate	54.94%	48.24%
	Employment rate	69.54%	61.91%
	Higher education rate	54.03%	51.62%
Income & wealth	Home equity	\$212,000	\$263,000
	House prices	\$1,048,000	\$1,048,000
	Dwellings owned outright	20%	25%
	Median household income	\$2,498/wk	\$2484
Economy	Gross regional product	\$3710M	-
	Labour productivity (output per hour worked)	\$55.87	\$58.33
	Economic diversity (diversity of industries)	2.61	2.53

Figure 2 Comparison Strathfield LGA to Greater Sydney based on SGS Economics Wellbeing Indexes 2024

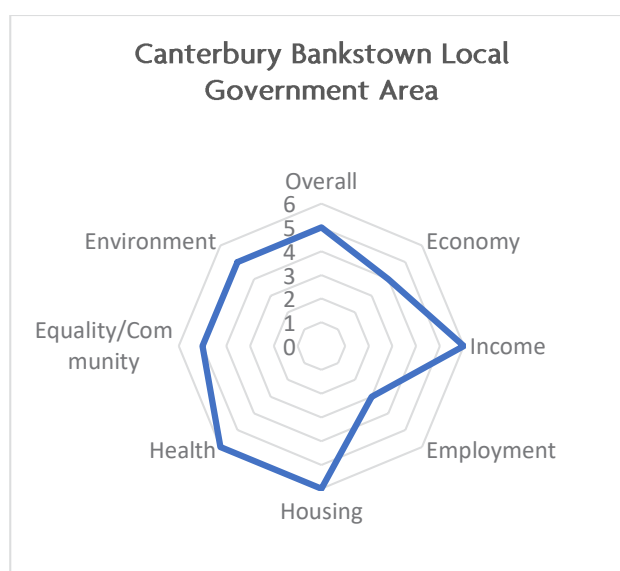
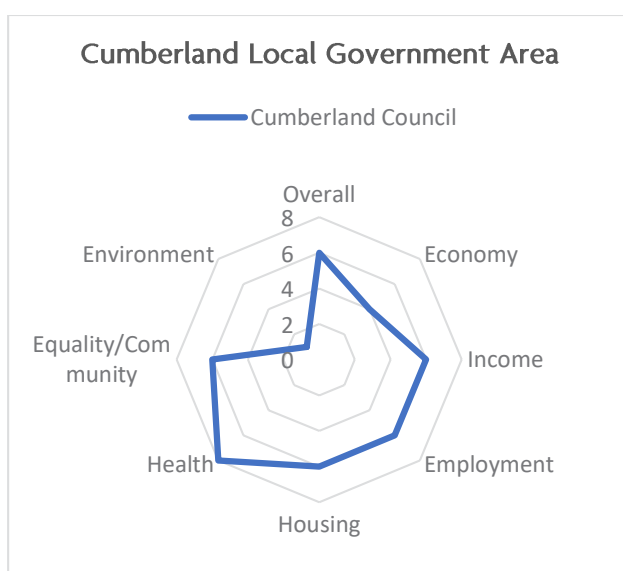
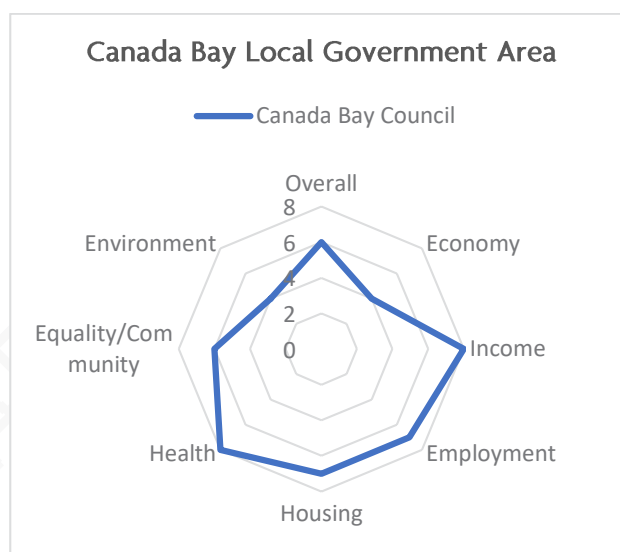
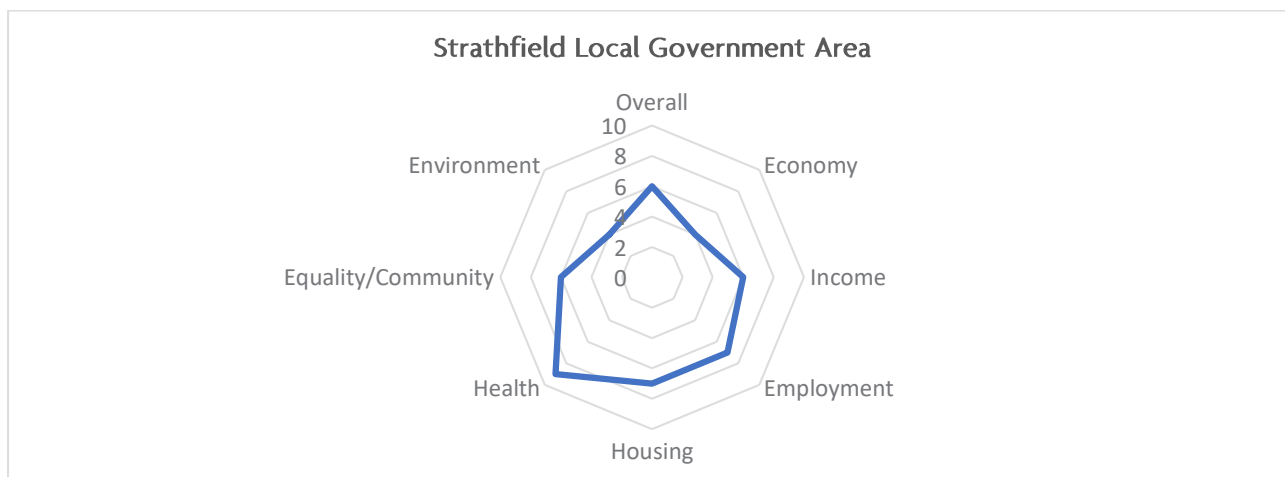


Figure 3 Wellbeing indexes of neighbouring Local Government Areas

Community Strategic Plan (CSP) progress report

Overview

The Strathfield CSP was adopted in 2022 following the delayed December 2021 Council election, which had been postponed due to the COVID pandemic. This election resulted in a shortened Council term of less than three (3) years instead of the usual four (4).

COVID-related measures, including border closures and lockdowns, also affected the 2021 Census results, indicating a population decline and reduced interstate and overseas migration than would usually occur. Indications are that population, migration and also emissions have increased since COVID measures were lifted.

Post COVID economic conditions have presented new challenges. The National (and international economy) has experienced high inflation coupled with crisis in housing supply and affordability. National and state-level responses, such as the National Housing Accord and programs targeting housing and population growth in Strathfield, are significant influences on local planning.

This progress report relies on data from various sources, including government agencies such as ABS, NSW Health, BOSCAR, and Transport for NSW. Council-specific data comes from records and independently commissioned Community Surveys conducted in 2021 and 2023.

The 2021 survey, carried out during the pandemic, showed unusually high satisfaction ratings, likely due to residents spending more time and remotely working in the Strathfield area. In contrast, many 2023 results had lower satisfaction ratings. The longer-term trend will be more apparent when the next survey is taken.

“The 2021 survey, carried out during the pandemic, showed unusually high satisfaction ratings, likely due to residents spending more time and remotely working in the Strathfield area. In contrast, many 2023 results had lower satisfaction ratings. The longer-term trend will be more apparent when the next survey is taken.”



Strathfield LGA has strong locational and transport connectivity in the Sydney metropolitan area, with access to quality transport networks and established built and social infrastructure. The high levels of connectivity of Strathfield LGA are significant attractors for residents, businesses, students, and visitors.

This theme has three (3) goals that include ensuring growth is supported by well-planned and accessible infrastructure and services across the Strathfield LGA, integrated and safe transport networks and access and delivery of service and information through effective communications and digital technology

Goal 1.1: Population and density growth is supported by well-planned and accessible infrastructure and services

- Strategy 1.1.1 Collaborate with NSW Government and agencies to plan and deliver high quality and accessible infrastructure to support population growth and increasing density
- Strategy 1.1.2 Plan and deliver high quality and strategically located local infrastructure to support current and future population needs

Since 2006, the population of Strathfield LGA has increased by about 15,000 people. Population growth is in response to increased housing supply, generally units built near town centres and transport hubs. It is primarily due to overseas migration, rather than an increase in the natural population. The COVID pandemic measures involved border closures and restricted movement, which resulted in abnormal decline in growth from 2020-2022.

State and local planning policies support increasing housing and population growth in the Strathfield LGA. Based on community engagement feedback, the community wants growth to be supported by accessible and appropriate state and local infrastructure in order to ensure infrastructure is available to accommodate growth. The CSP strategies acknowledge that planning, designing and providing quality infrastructure and services requires a collaborative, well-planned and integrated approach to ensure effective outcomes and efficient use of resources.

Council has continually collaborated and advocated with neighbouring councils to the NSW Government and key stakeholders for the delivery of regional infrastructure required to support population growth. Council progressed



work on a new Masterplan for the Parramatta Road Corridor Urban Transformation Strategy (PRCUTS). An example of a successful collaboration is the Powells Creek Three Bridge project, a project involving Council and the NSW Government under the Parramatta Road Urban Amenity Improvement Program (PRUAIP). This project involves construction of three new pedestrian and cycleway bridge crossings across Powells Creek Homebush. These projects expand active transport and access to parks and reserves. 2 bridges have been completed with the third scheduled for completion in 2025.

There is significant future growth projected for the Strathfield area, particularly in the area of the Homebush Transport Orientated Development (TOD) with the entire precinct (in Strathfield and City of Canada Bay Councils) planned to have a population of 45,000 residents. The future growth will place additional pressure on infrastructure and resources. In order to fund upgrades and new infrastructure, a review of the Local Infrastructure Contributions Plan was conducted which is expected to be adopted and operational in 2025.

An assumption underpinning the CSP goals in the 2021-2022 review was that Council's primary challenge was planning and delivering new or enhanced local

infrastructure and existing infrastructure was being maintained within service levels. However, following an extensive review of Council assets including roads, footpaths and buildings, it was clear that Council had a significant funding infrastructure backlog. The backlog ratio is the cost to bring assets to satisfactory condition as a proportion of the total asset value, which was higher than the Office of Local Government ratio of less than 2%. The backlog would continue to increase unless additional funding was allocated to asset renewal programs. The result of deteriorating assets would be that assets like roads, footpaths and buildings would become unfit for purpose.

Council has taken action on its long-term financial sustainability and increased funding of asset renewals to reduce backlogs and improve the safety and condition of Council's assets. In the 2023 community survey, the quality of our local assets received increased community satisfaction ratings including footpaths which received 51% excellent to good ratings, up from 41% in 2021, quality of kerbs, gutter and drainage 46% up from 35% in 2021 and quality of roads 51% up from 38% in 2021.





Some major capital works projects included:

- Continued staged development of Hudson Park, a former golf course, into a district park. Recreational facilities and amenities were completed in 2023 in the northern section of Hudson Park East. The Hudson Park driving range was also upgraded with individual hitting bays and expanded operating hours.
- Council was successful in obtaining \$21 million in grants under the WISG Program, which will be allocated to improvements to open space and community facilities at Airey Park, Begnell Field, Hudson District Park East, Strathfield Park and Cooke Park. These projects will improve access to quality sport, recreation and other community facilities and commence from 2024.
- Completion of capital works programs for renewal of roads, footpaths, stormwater, parks

and playgrounds. During the 2023/2024 financial year, Council spent approximately \$13.5 million on infrastructure and asset renewals.

- Restoration and conservation work on the heritage listed Strathfield Town Hall were completed prior to celebration of its 100th anniversary in October 2023
- Most public land in the Strathfield LGA owned or managed by Council is community land, which now includes Crown Land. All community land must be managed under a Plan of Management (PoM). The PoMs for the 4 Crown Land parks were adopted by 2024. All plans are reviewed regularly. A Land and Property Strategy is scheduled in the 2024-2025 Operational Plan to provide guidance for the optimal management of Council's land and property assets.





Goal 1.2: Strathfield LGA is accessible and connected by integrated and safe transport networks

- Strategy 1.2.1 Ensure transport networks are integrated and connected and offer efficient and safe movement to, from and around Strathfield LGA.
- Strategy 1.2.2 Ensure local transport infrastructure, networks and services are connected, safe and well-maintained across the Strathfield LGA

Access and availability of transport networks are key attractors and of high value to the Strathfield community. The Strathfield LGA is situated along the Western Rail Line with three rail stations at Homebush, Flemington and Strathfield. Strathfield Station is the most central and connected node on the metropolitan network, providing connections to Sydney's CBD, the Northern corridor and the Central Coast, and to the North West and South West growth areas. The Sydney Metro West, scheduled for completion in 2032, will link Sydney CBD to Greater Parramatta. The closest Metro station at North Strathfield will particularly support expansion of population in Homebush, as set out in the draft Homebush Transport Orientated Development (TOD) Masterplan (2024).

Strathfield also has important road connections including Parramatta Road/Great Western Highway, Westconnex/M4 Western Motorway, Liverpool Road/Hume Highway, supported within the LGA with well-maintained local and regional roads and public and private bus services. Council commenced a Strathfield LGA wide transport and traffic report, which is expected to be completed in 2024.

Active transport involves travelling by physical movement such as walking and cycling. Council has been working to expand the available facilities to support active transport. In 2023, 2 of the 3 pedestrian and cycle bridges across Powell's Creek were completed with the third scheduled for 2025. The bridges link with parts of the Bay to Bay shared pathway, a continuous collection of cycle and pedestrian paths linking Botany Bay to Sydney Olympic Park. In 2024, the design phase of Stage one of the Homebush Active Transport Network commenced which will eventually link Homebush West to the Strathfield Town Centre.

Community engagement and review of the Strathfield Connector service was undertaken in 2022-2023. Reviews indicated the service had high operational costs but low patronage and, on some routes, duplicated other bus services. However, parts of the LGA in Homebush and Homebush West have no or low access to public transport, therefore the Connector Bus service routes were reduced and modified to service these areas until 2026. Council is advocating to the State Government to provide transport services to these areas of the LGA.



Goal 1.3: Access to information and services are supported by effective communications and digital technology

- Strategy 1.3.1 Deliver effective communications using various media forms that inform and engage with diverse communities
- Strategy 1.3.2 Assess and develop digital technology frameworks and systems to improve and expand service delivery and information access

Communications and technology are essential to modern connectivity, shaping how information is shared and fostering community engagement, social inclusion, and innovation. In the Strathfield LGA, using technology and effective communications is important to enhancing information access and improving community connections. In the 2023 community survey, 46% considered the information that connects them with what is happening in the Strathfield Council area to be excellent or good. It should be noted that Council is not the only source of news and information to the Strathfield community, which are also informed and influenced by media and personal interactions.

The communications landscape continues to change. A recent ACMA report stated that 98% of Australians had internet access at home. 95% use mobile phones to connect to the internet and 86% access multiple times a day. The ABS Census in 2021 did not include questions about internet access as penetration is almost universal. 95% of Australians went online for news and information and 87% bought goods or services online.

The Strathfield LGA has significant diversity in culture and language, age, abilities and interests. To engage with its diverse community, Strathfield Council uses a variety of communication channels. Council employs a broad mix of digital and print media to inform and engage

with residents about local issues, events, programs, exhibitions, and major projects, understanding that the community seeks information from multiple sources. These methods include the Council website, weekly E-News digital newsletters (reaching over 31,000 subscribers), monthly print newsletters (distributed to over 19,000 households), leaflets with rates notices, posters, banners, and social media platforms.

The primary goal of these efforts is to keep residents informed and promote interest and active involvement in community programs, events and decision-making. As community needs change, communication methods are regularly reviewed and updated to ensure their relevance and effectiveness.

Statistics indicate that visitors to the Council website are declining, likely due to the availability of alternative sources of information, particularly social media. A new website will be launched in late 2024 aimed at improving the overall communication experience for residents. This site will offer new features designed to increase accessibility and provide more effective community interaction.

Council's digital security was enhanced and improved through software upgrades, digitising records, and planning a new website and intranet. Council's IT and cyber systems were audited by the Audit Risk and Improvement Committee (ARIC) in 2023-2024. Work has commenced on the preparation of an ICT strategy. New Audio-Visual equipment was also installed in the Town Hall and the Council Chambers was upgraded to facilitate live streaming of meetings.

A number of programs and initiatives were implemented focusing on improving the efficiency and effectiveness of delivering high quality Customer Services to the community. Council implemented a new customer request management system and a self-service mobile apps for residents. Council's Customer Experience Strategy will be finalised in 2024 and will help guide and enhance the delivery of quality customer services.



Connectivity QBL reporting

Outcome measure	Status
Access to information about what's happening in LGA	Stable
Council website visits	Moving away from sustainability
No of vehicle registrations in LGA	Moving away from sustainability
Overall access to transport services	Moving away from sustainability
Quality of footpaths	Moving towards sustainability
Quality of kerbs, gutters & drainage	Moving towards sustainability
Quality of roads	Moving towards sustainability
Quality/condition of community centres	Moving away from sustainability
Quality/condition of footpaths	Moving towards sustainability
Quality/condition of kerbs, gutters & drainage	Moving towards sustainability
Quality/condition of library facility	Moving towards sustainability
Quality/condition of parks and open space access	Moving towards sustainability
Quality/condition of playgrounds	Moving away from sustainability
Quality/condition of roads	Moving towards sustainability
Quality/condition of sportsgrounds	Moving towards sustainability

Source: Appendix A Performance Indicator reporting



Community wellbeing is a strategic focus of the Strathfield Community Strategic Plan and covers the various aspects of wellbeing in our community. This includes supporting our culturally diverse community and encouraging socially cohesive and safe communities, providing access to public spaces and community facilities, and opportunities to participate in programs and activities that enhance healthy active lifestyles. Council plays an important role in facilitating opportunities for participation in learning, recreation, community programs and activities, in promoting healthy and active communities through provision of facilities and collaborating with partners in delivering programs and enhancing safety and wellbeing of the community by providing safe, clean, healthy and attractive environments and working with Police on community safety and crime prevention.

Goal 2.1: Strathfield LGA has culturally diverse, connected and social cohesive communities

- Strategy 2.1.1 Provide opportunities and programs to build community capacity and resilience
- Strategy 2.1.2 Deliver programs to meet identified community needs in partnership with key stakeholders, community and government agencies

The Strathfield LGA is highly diverse, with 59% of its population born overseas and 65% speaking a language other than English at home. The experiences of migrant communities are quite diverse with some living in Strathfield for many decades while others are new settlers. The community is also diverse in its age profile, abilities, education, households, socio-economic status and life experiences. The Strathfield community rates the acceptance of community diversity as excellent to good, a rating which increased from 75% in 2021 to 78% in 2023.

Community services are provided to the Strathfield LGA through a large number of government and non-government organisations. Provision of many services such as aged care and social security is delivered through the Federal Government, while other community-based services including health are primarily State based. Council plays a role in advocacy, partnership and service delivery in the local community, however much of Council's focus is the provision of local facilities and facilitating promotions, awareness, programs and events often via partnership targeted to meet local community needs. Examples include working with Sydney Area Health District to promote health initiatives such as falls prevention for seniors or breast screening and targeting information especially to those communities with low rates of participation.



Programs hosted by Council's Community Development team have significantly increased. Council provided a range of activities and programs to support culturally and linguistically diverse communities through delivery of key programs and events such as English conversation classes, promoting health education courses in multi-languages on Dementia, Hepatitis B and gambling. A community service centre is due to open in Homebush in late 2024 to provide advisory and referral services.

Council provided a range of social, recreational and cultural programs to meet the needs of children and teens include school holiday programs, with 17% of Strathfield LGA's population aged under 18 years. Programs offered multi-sport programs, school holiday programs and Council's weekly drop-In program at Strathfield Library to include children and youth. Council held a Youth Career's Expo in 2023 in collaboration with the Strathfield Collaborative Youth Group which featured workshops, digital storytelling, resume writing and car maintenance.

12% of the LGA population is aged over 60 years. Initiatives to support older residents included health and fitness programs including tai chi, fitter and stronger, line dancing, ballroom dancing, aqua aerobics and yoga. Collaborating with partners such as Sydney Local Health District for health education programs including dementia/Alzheimer's preventions and Stepping On programs for older people who have had a fall or at-risk of falling, programs such as Tech Savvy Seniors and Cyber Safe awareness.

Council has adopted a Disability Inclusion Plan and provides programs particularly through partnership for residents who require assistance due to a disability or their carers, who comprise 4.3% of the Strathfield population. Council has partnered with the Physical Disability Council of NSW to promote workshops that cover post-traumatic growth, NDIS Self-management and social morning teas, easy read formats of the 'Discover Your Council' booklet were provided for people with intellectual disability or limited literacy and promoted to community. Works were implemented to upgrade footpaths in the LGA with pram ramps.

Local volunteers play a significant role in the delivery of services and programs in the Strathfield area. Volunteers contribute to various Council programs and/or support a host of community, recreation and culturally based organisations. According to the 2021 ABS Census, 9.6% of the local population are involved in volunteering activities and come from all walks of life including workers, students, professionals, young people, and retirees. Some of the Council programs supported by volunteers include Strathfield Library's Reading Buddies program, volunteer Justice of the Peace (JP) weekly service and Bushcare program. Council also provides support for local community organisations through subsidisation of Council facilities and access to grant funding programs for approved projects. Community, cultural and recreational organisations are integral to the social cohesion and community wellbeing of the Strathfield LGA.





Goal 2.2: Healthy and Active Communities

- Strategy 2.2.1 Manage open space, recreation and community facilities and programs to provide fair access and meet community, leisure and recreational needs
- Strategy 2.2.2 Promote healthy and active living programs

The majority of public open space and recreational facilities in the Strathfield LGA are owned or managed by Council. These facilities enable all members of our community, irrespective of age, to participate in activities that support physical and mental wellbeing. They include provision of sportsfields, playgrounds, hard courts, outdoor gyms and walking tracks for formal sport and informal recreation and leisure. To meet increasing demand for access to sportsgrounds, Council adopted a Sporting Grounds Allocation Policy, to provide a transparent, equitable and consistent methodology for allocation of sporting grounds and facilities and to improve opportunities across the broader community for fairer access to facilities. Council schedules regular maintenance of open space, parks and reserves and sportsfields. This includes regular mowing, line marking, maintenance of wickets and sportsfields equipment, checks of lighting, irrigation and playgrounds.

In the 2023 community survey, the care and maintenance of parks and reserves received 76% (excellent to good ratings), 86% satisfaction with sportsgrounds (excellent-good ratings), 83% satisfaction with playgrounds (excellent-good ratings), 83% satisfaction with playgrounds (excellent-good ratings) and 87% satisfaction with access to parks and open space.



Goal 2.3: Strathfield LGA is safe, resilient and accessible local areas

- Strategy 2.3.1 Collaborate and deliver public safety programs and promote community safety awareness
- Strategy 2.3.2 Promote and build community resilience, capacity and self-reliance

Feeling safe in Strathfield is highly important to local residents. Community safety encompasses several factors that contribute to the overall sense of feeling safe in the area. Council plays a key role in this by providing services, such as regulatory health inspections and ranger services, maintaining the quality and condition of assets like footpaths, and proving clean and well-maintained public spaces. However, many aspects of safety such as law and order are outside of Council's control. According to Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research (BOSCAR) reports of crime in the Strathfield LGA continue to be stable in the Strathfield LGA. Violent crime has been trending down over the past decade. There is rising reported incidents of domestic violence across Sydney, though in the Strathfield LGAs reported incidents have remained stable. Theft and fraud have slightly increased. Council works in collaboration with Police and community stakeholders to target and deliver community education and awareness campaigns on identified issues of importance to the local area including engagement with target stakeholders

The Strathfield Community Safety Plan was reviewed and updated, with the new plan adopted for the 2024-2028 period. This plan outlines actions to enhance safety across the Strathfield LGA. In response to issues like graffiti vandalism, Council also introduced a new Graffiti Management Policy to address graffiti vandalism

The 2023 Strathfield community survey indicated a decline in community feelings of safety in the LGA. 67% rated feeling safe in their streets as excellent or good, 68% rated satisfaction with feeling safe in their suburb while moving around (excellent-good ratings). The 84% satisfaction with feeling safe on local public transport (excellent-good ratings) was unaltered from 2021.

Resilience planning is identified in the CSP to develop strategies and actions that strengthen the community's ability to survive, adapt and thrive in the face of chronic stresses and acute shocks. Chronic stresses are slow moving disasters or challenges that weaken the community on a day-to-day basis or a cyclical basis such as, food and water shortages, climate change, lack of affordable housing and pandemics. Acute shocks are sudden events that threaten a city. Examples include heatwaves, floods, disease outbreaks and cyberattacks. Work will commence in 2024-2025 on preparing a Resilience Strategy for Strathfield LGA





Community Wellbeing QBL reporting

Outcome measure	Status
Feeling safe in their street	Moving away from sustainability
Feeling safe in their suburb (moving around)	Moving away from sustainability
Feeling safe on local public transport	Moving away from sustainability
Major crime offences in LGA (60 month trend for major offences)	Stable
Control of graffiti and vandalism in LGA	Stable
Acceptance of community diversity	Moving towards sustainability
% volunteers in LGA	Moving away from sustainability
Number of residents hospitalised due to falls in the LGA	Moving away from sustainability
Decrease in smoking rates in Sydney Local Health District (incl Strathfield LGA) (adult population)	Moving towards sustainability
Appearance & maintenance of residential areas	Moving away from sustainability
Appearance and maintenance of public spaces	Moving away from sustainability
Care & maintenance of parks and reserves	Moving away from sustainability
Access to parks and open space	Moving towards sustainability

Source: Appendix A Performance Indicator reporting



Celebrating Culture & place strategic theme is focused on creating vibrant and enticing public domains, especially in local town, village and commercial centres to provide access to services as well as opportunities for social connectivity. The theme also celebrates Strathfield as a place of learning, culture and creativity supported by events, cultural programs and acknowledgment of civic and community achievements, which promote a sense of civic pride and belonging

Goal 3.1: Strathfield has enticing, vibrant and safe centres blending services and social connectivity

- Strategy 3.1.1 Plan and deliver vibrant attractive and safe town and village centres and commercial areas
- Strategy 3.1.2 Support programs to promote activity and sustain local business

Town and village centres in Strathfield are essential hubs for transport, shopping, services, and social interaction, making them important to local community liveability. In the 2023 Community Survey, 52% of residents (2023) considered that the local shops and service meet their needs well or very well, which indicates there is room for improvement.

The Strathfield Town Centre, shared by the Strathfield, Canada Bay, and Burwood LGAs, has long awaited a cohesive management plan. After years of inaction, Council initiated the preparation of a comprehensive Masterplan in 2023. This process began with community consultation and the development of an options report, aimed at shaping a shared vision and guiding principles for the Town Centre's future. By 2024, Stage one (1) of the Strathfield Town Centre Masterplan had been completed, laying the foundation for further technical studies and detailed planning. In 2024-2025, the Council will also focus on developing strategies to enhance other town centres and improve public domain areas, ensuring these spaces are vibrant, clean, and meet the evolving needs of the community.

A number of new events were held in the Homebush, Homebush West and Strathfield Town Centres which provided opportunities for community participation but also to support and promote our local businesses. The Strathfield Festival was held at Strathfield Square in April



2023 and May 2024 over 3 days attracting a combined 60,000 people to the Square featuring cultural performances, live music, roaming entertainment, various cuisines from local businesses, art projections and lighting installations. The Strathfield Winter Warmer was held at Strathfield Square in July 2024 with winter markets, live music, local treats and roller skating. Homebush Vibes was held at Rochester Street Homebush in September 2023. The event attracted approximately 5,000 people throughout the day to enjoy live music, roving entertainment, moon cakes, children's activities and local cuisines served by nearby businesses. The FIFA Women's World Cup live site involved 8 live screenings in the Strathfield Town Centre in 2023.

Council endorsed the major program of events annually, which is supplemented by many smaller and targeted events and programs in Council facilities such as Strathfield Library, community centres, town hall, parks and sportsgrounds. Regular events including the Strathfield Spring Fair returned in September 2022 and 2024 at Strathfield Park. Civic events including Australia Day and ANZAC Day were celebrated annually.

The annual Christmas Carols were held at Strathfield Park in early December 2021 to 2024. This popular event attracted about 4,000 people to listen and sing along to Carols to celebrate the festive season. The popular Movies in the Park is held in Strathfield Park on various weekends during the summer season, aimed at children and young people. The films attract a solid crowd and are highly popular. Council celebrated the 100th Anniversary of the opening of the Strathfield Town Hall on 9 October 2023. The Town Hall is an important part of the community life of the Strathfield area and has been used for the last 100 years for numerous functions including Council Meetings, Citizenship Ceremonies, weddings, parties and dances, public meetings, orchestral, singing and theatrical performances and civic functions. Following major restoration works, the Town Hall was opened with an official dinner and an exhibition, produced in collaboration with the Strathfield-Homebush District Historical Society.





Goal 3.2: Strathfield LGA is a place of creativity, culture and learning

- Strategy 3.2.1 Facilitate and support learning, community and cultural programs, events and activities
- Strategy 3.2.2 Foster and celebrate local identity

Census 2021 indicates that the Strathfield LGA has a highly educated population with 44% awarded with a bachelor or higher degree, which has increased 10% in a decade. Similarity retention of students to Year 12 has increased. Though Council is not responsible for education, the LGA is centrally located to many public and private schools and the Australian Catholic University. Education and training is the third highest industry of employment (2021 ABS Census). Council provides public library, programs and services which support and promote education, creativity, culture and learning.

The Strathfield Library service was adversely affected by COVID measures including sustained lockdowns and limited opening hours. By 2024, the patronage of the service had returned to pre-COVID levels and recorded 250,000 visitations and 160,000 loans. The host of programs managed by the Library and Community Development team has significantly increased. Many are delivered in partnerships with community organisations. The Ironbark Gallery at Strathfield Library promotes opportunities to showcase arts, culture and historical exhibitions with rotating exhibitions. Exhibitions are supported by programs such as education programs, talks and performances which cover a wide range of topics of relevance to the local Strathfield community. Over 87% reported excellent-good community rating with the library service. Sixty nine percent of Library members are residents of Strathfield LGA.

Council's Library Service and Community Development team provide a range of education, literacy and learning programs targeted to meet specific community needs such as English conversation classes for persons from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and programs such as Baby Bounce for infants 0 – 18 months to introduce babies to the wonderful world of songs and rhymes. Access and availability of programs is promoted through Council's many media channels but also through visitations by library staff to local schools, childcare centres and community meetings.

Many of our services and programs were delivered in partnerships including Justice of the Peace program, English Conversation Club with Metro Assist and ACU, Tax Help with ATO, Tech Savvy Seniors with State Library and Parenting Class, exhibitions and talks from partnerships with Strathfield School for Seniors and Strathfield-Homebush District Historical Society.

In recognition of its established Korean community, Strathfield Council established a Sister City relationship with Gapyeong County in South Korea in 2011 to promote cultural, economic, educational and social exchanges between the two (2) Local Government Areas. This long-



standing relationship was enhanced by reciprocal visits to Strathfield and Gapeyong. In October 2022, a delegation from Council visited Gapeyong. In May 2024, Council hosted delegates from Gapeyong County, who attended a welcome ceremony, tour and ceremonial dinner.

Council organised Australia Day celebrations on 26 January each year which included the presentation of annual awards for Strathfield Citizen and Young Citizen of the Year. ANZAC Day services were held annually on ANZAC Day at Davey Square Memorial, Homebush.

Australian Citizenship ceremonies were returned to an in-person format in December 2021 with the easing of COVID restrictions. From 2021-2024, Council addressed the citizen ceremony backlogs and 2058 residents were conferred with Australia citizenship at ceremonies conducted by Council and presided by the Mayor and other dignitaries, usually in the Strathfield Town Hall.

Council prepared and adopted its first Reconciliation Action Plan in 2024 and celebrates annually the National Aborigines and Islanders Day Observance Committee (NAIDOC) Week in July to increase community awareness of the status and treatment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians. Events included dance performances, smoking ceremonies, didgeridoo performance, art exhibitions and interactive children's holiday activities, talks and guided walks along the Cooks River.





Celebrating Culture and Place QBL reporting

Outcome measure	Status
Number of borrowings/loans of Council library	Moving towards sustainability
Number of members of Strathfield library	Moving towards sustainability
Number of visitors to Council library	Moving towards sustainability
Satisfaction with Council Library service	Stable
Appearance and maintenance of public spaces	Moving away from sustainability
Local shops and services meet needs	Stable
Gross Regional Product	Moving away from sustainability
Number of local Jobs in LGA	Moving away from sustainability
Number of local businesses in LGA	Moving towards sustainability

Source: Appendix A Performance Indicator reporting

STRATEGIC THEME 04

liveable neighbourhoods

This theme concerns ensuring well planned urban design, protection, and maintenance of the built and natural environment of the Strathfield LGA. Liveable Neighbourhoods involve high quality, well planned, sustainable, clean, and well maintained urban and natural environments that balance new development with the retention and reflection of established local character and healthy thriving and resilient natural environments. Development, changing lifestyles and increasing population also create higher levels of waste, resource usage and pollution, creating pressure on the local area, at a regional and local level, to maintain the high standards of amenity, character, and liveability of the Strathfield LGA.

Goal 4.1: Quality, liveable and sustainable urban design and development

- Strategy 4.1.1 Urban design and development that balances growth with quality living, sustainable and aesthetic outcomes
- Strategy 4.1.2 Deliver effective and efficient planning and development processes

In response to projected housing and population growth in the Strathfield LGA and NSW Government regional planning strategies, Council has prepared a number of key strategic studies, plans and progressed work on a new Masterplan for the Parramatta Road Corridor Urban Transformation Strategy (PRCUTS). In December 2023, the NSW Government announced the Homebush TOD program and identified Homebush as a Tier one (1) TOD with a draft Masterplan released in July 2024.

Early Masterplan works identifies a yield of 8,900 new dwellings or 22,500 new residents, which is a significant change in population and housing density in the Strathfield LGA. The NSW Government is the lead agency with Council actively participating in this process to ensure the best outcomes for the Strathfield LGA.

Council adopted a new Affordable Housing Tenancy Policy and implement an Affordable Housing Contribution Plan with the Homebush TOD Masterplan. This will establish the contribution rates for affordable housing in the Homebush TOD area and mechanisms for delivery.

The Medium Density Housing study involved investigating opportunities for additional medium density housing options to improve housing diversity and choice available across the community and assist housing affordability. The Medium Density Housing Strategy is designed to initiate the planning proposal process and commence the gateway determination process with NSW Government.



Goal 4.2: Clean, attractive and well-maintained neighbourhoods and public domains

- Strategy 4.2.1 Provide high quality, efficient and sustainable waste services and education to reduce landfill and improve recycling and reuse
- Strategy 4.2.2. Maintain high standards of public health, amenity and safety.

Waste collection involves commercial and domestic waste. However, Council only provides domestic waste services and 42% of all waste in the Strathfield LGA is commercial. Waste diverted from landfill has remained around 32% over 2021-2024, which falls well short of the target 80% diversion rates. This reflects the many ongoing challenges for waste management in the Strathfield LGA. In future, Council aims to transition to a zero-waste strategy by 2035, address current waste management challenges and identify opportunities for improvement. 73% of the community rated the quality of Council's waste service as excellent to good, which declined since 2021.

Based on feedback from community engagement, public domain maintenance is a high priority for the Strathfield community, which is a responsibility of Council in the areas under its control e.g. local roads, parks and the public domains in town centres. Council delivered a regular cleansing and maintenance programs in public domains throughout the Strathfield LGA. Town Centres are cleansed daily with a twice weekly graffiti inspection program. Council staff serviced parks on a fortnightly cycle (weather permitting) including visual inspections and reporting of needed repairs of defects or hazards. Sixty five percent of the Strathfield community rated the appearance and maintenance of public spaces as excellent to good, which had declined since 2021.

Major parks were serviced for litter and rubbish collection three (3) times a week and on both days on the weekend. Staff also attend to customer requests within 24 hours of receipt when a safety concern is raised by residents. Quarterly inspections of Council playgrounds are undertaken by a contractor. Council also operates a regular street sweeping service across the Strathfield LGA. Seventy six percent of the Strathfield community rated the care and maintenance of parks and reserves as excellent to good, which had declined since 2021.



Goal 4.3: Healthy, thriving, sustainable and resilient environments

- Strategy 4.3.1 Conserve, restore and enhance Strathfield's biodiversity, ecological health, tree canopies and resiliency
- Strategy 4.3.2 Implement sustainable practices and efficiencies in resource use to support a healthy built environment.

Key natural environment locations in the Strathfield LGA include Mason Park Wetlands, Cocks Creek Reserve and Greenacre Frog Ponds with primary biodiversity or wildlife corridors along the Cooks River/Cocks Creek in Strathfield and Strathfield South. Works to reduce weeds were undertaken in bushland reserves such as Cocks Creek Reserve and monitoring of *W. Backhousei* species condition at Mason Park Wetlands. Adult Green and Golden Bellfrogs (GGBF) and tag poles were recorded for the first time on a decade in reestablished breeding GGBF habitat at the Greenacre Frog Ponds.

Council conducted monthly water monitoring to ascertain health of waterways and detect pollution incidences. Council collaborated with partners on education, events and projects to improve environmental sustainability such as National Tree Day, Bushcare and community planting days, regional programs to improve our region or catchment such as Cooks River Alliance and Parramatta River Catchment Group.

Strathfield LGA's urban forest is comprised of trees on public and private land areas. They contribute significantly to the liveability, natural environment and aesthetics of the Strathfield area. The urban forest is facing many challenges including urban densification, a changing climate, urban heat and canopy loss. In Strathfield LGA, tree canopies are under threat especially through removal of urban trees on private lands, low levels of tree canopy in industrial and commercial areas and illegal tree works and vandalism of street and public trees.

Council commenced a program to collate detailed data on its street trees, which in 2024 is over 70% complete. From the data, a management inventory and program will be prepared for maintenance and replacement street and public tree planting. Council engaged contractors to undertake maintenance of street trees including road and building clearances, crown lifting, dead wooding, tree removals, formative pruning and stump grinding and removals. Council initiated new and replacement street tree plantings as well as additional plantings along the Cooks River and parks across the Strathfield LGA.

Emissions in the Strathfield LGA generally declined during COVID, however recent results indicate that emissions are returning to pre-COVID levels as movement, especially vehicles, has increased.





Liveable Neighbourhood QBL reporting

Outcome measure	Status
Community satisfaction on how well new development blends with neighbourhood character	Stable
Attractiveness of buildings, streetscape and surroundings in local area	Moving away from sustainability
Care and protection of historic and heritage buildings and areas	Moving away from sustainability
Aboriginal heritage registered finds	Stable
No of non-Aboriginal heritage items and heritage conservation areas	Stable
Appearance and maintenance of residential areas	Moving away from sustainability
Appearance and maintenance of public spaces	Moving away from sustainability
Council satisfaction with waste services	Moving away from sustainability
Increase of waste diversion from landfill	Moving away from sustainability
Increase of total waste materials diverted from landfill (tonnes)	Moving away from sustainability
Maintenance of tree coverage and natural environment	Moving away from sustainability
Tree Canopy in Strathfield LGA and suburbs	Moving away from sustainability
Reduction of emissions in Strathfield LGA (tonnes CO2-e)	Moving towards sustainability
Reduction of energy consumption (Council operations)	Moving away from sustainability
Reduction of Council Greenhouse Gas emissions – total	Moving towards sustainability
Total water consumption (Council)	Moving away from sustainability
Total water consumption in Strathfield LGA	Moving towards sustainability

STRATEGIC THEME 05

responsible leadership



The theme of Responsible Leadership is concerned with leadership and accountable Council services directed by the priorities of an engaged and connected community. Responsible leadership requires the community having confidence in the Council to make decisions based on community priorities and values reflecting meaningful and informed community engagement. Effective management of Council's operations is underpinned by transparent, effective and accountable governance which is responsive to the needs of the community.

Goal 5.1: Council's leadership and decision making reflects community priorities and values

- Strategy 5.1.1. Strathfield community is well informed, engaged and represented in Council policy making and advocacy
- Strategy 5.1.2 Deliver ethical, effective and responsible leadership and transparent and accountable decision making.

The Strathfield CSP is a whole of community plan. Council regularly advocated on behalf of the Strathfield community to relevant state and federal government agencies and to local members of Parliament on a wide range of issues affecting Strathfield LGA, examples include acquisition of land for recreational purpose, traffic management and planning issues. As an example, Council sought support from local members of parliament to lobby for land acquired for the Westconnex expansion by Transport for NSW to be allocated for open space. In 2024, subject to a deed of agreement, this land at Ismay Reserve has been dedicated for public recreation use.

Council has provided and improved opportunities for the community to participate in decision-making processes. Council adopted a Community Engagement Strategy, which sets out principles for engagement, stakeholder identification and an engagement assessment matrix based on IAP2 principles of inform, consult, involve, collaborate and empower. The CES is based on IAP2 principles and recognises that engagement must be tailored to circumstances, considering factors such as level of impacts, complexity, risk, significance, sensitivity, timing or opportunity. Strathfield's community is highly diverse and made up of many stakeholders with various interests, opinions, interests and experience. Council engages the community through a range of methods, including online



and face to face. Engagement can be about specific projects, or ongoing dialogue with key stakeholders, such as community groups, sporting groups, business and industry, State and Federal agencies, advisory committees and partners.

In November 2022, Council launched its online 'Have Your Say' site, which facilitates engagement on draft proposals, plans or policies. The site features a range of engagement tools such as surveys and online digital maps, supported by language translation. Initially the site focused on major projects but since 2023, all engagements are included on this site. Between November 2022 and June 2024, over 20,000 visits were recorded with over 3,000 comments or submissions received.

Not all public exhibited proposals or plans receive comments or submissions, however based on numbers of views and downloads of related documents, it is evident that all engagements generate public interest, regardless of whether a

comment is made. This was impossible to assess prior to implementing the online engagement site.

Council undertook a review of the CSP after the 2021 election and adopted 'Strathfield 2035'. The Plan sets out 5 key strategic themes of Connectivity, Community Wellbeing, Celebrating Culture and Place, Liveable Neighbourhoods and Responsible Leadership to deliver on the.

Strathfield community's long-term vision. The Delivery Program 2022-2026, which sets out the Council priorities for the four-year period, Annual Operational Plans and Budgets, Resourcing Strategies and Annual Reports and Financial Statements and regular progress and quarterly financial reviews were all presented to Council and are published on the Council website.

A recent survey indicated that 86% of residents rated Council's overall performance at least favourably, with 54% rating Council's performance as excellent or good.





Goal 5.2: Council is effectively and responsibly managed and responds to community needs

- Strategy 5.2.1 Prepare and implement plans and strategies to deliver and resource efficient and accountable services, programs, and infrastructure
- Strategy 5.2.2 Promote organisational culture of safety, best practice, and continuous quality improvement
- Strategy 5.2.3 Delivery efficient and effective customer services to the community.

To support sustainable operations, efficient and accountable services, Council has established new and robust financial, governance, and planning frameworks.

After the 2021 election, Council undertook a thorough review of its financial sustainability and found that its financial position was unsustainable at the current level of expenditure and income due to a range of issues including rate capping, inflation, cost shifting by NSW Government, long term under-expenditure in asset renewal and growing large asset backlogs. Council also was posting annual operating deficits and had cashflow issues. Without remedial action, it was forecast that Council would reach a negative cash position by 2027, continue to record increasing annual deficits, and have insufficient money to maintain the current service levels and asset renewals. Further Council would be severely underfunded for the expected growth and expansion of services.

By 2024, Council has made considerable progress on reviewing and instigating actions to secure its long-term organisational and financial sustainability and prioritising the needs of current and future communities. This was achieved by implementing a Special Rate Variation and change to a minimum rate structure (approved by IPART and commenced in 2023-2024), improving efficiencies of Council's organisation and increased funding of asset renewals to reduce backlogs and improve the safety and condition of Council's assets. The delivery of quality services and facilities and the effective and efficient management of community assets and resources are supported by

establishing robust financial, governance and planning frameworks.

While the indicator measures would appear that Council's sustainability is declining, Council's Long Term Financial Plan projects that Council will return to sustainable position by 2027, if current measures continue to be implemented.

Council has implemented governance frameworks to improve accountability through audit, service review and development of a new Enterprise Risk Management program. These initiatives are oversighted by the Audit Risk and Improvement Committee (ARIC), an advisory committee that meets quarterly and provides Council with independent assurance and assistance on its compliance, risk management, financial management, governance, audit, fraud control service delivery and integrated performance and reporting responsibilities.

Council has also prepared methodology to undertake service reviews, which are monitored by the ARIC. Reviews of the street sweeping service, Civic Works section and the Golf Driving Range Operations were undertaken in 2023-2024 and further reviews are scheduled for the 2024-2025 year.

The delivery of efficient and effective customer services is a high priority and is supported by the new Customer Experience (CX) Strategy 2024, which recognises that customers perceive their entire interaction with Council as Customer Service. Council implemented a new Customer Request Management (CRM) system and IConcierge, a self-service mobile app for residents in 2024. These upgraded services provide streamlined public access to a range of services and information. The most recent community survey indicates that the satisfaction rating for Council's customer services has increased.



Goal 4.3: Healthy, thriving, sustainable and resilient environments

- Strategy 4.3.1 Conserve, restore and enhance Strathfield's biodiversity, ecological health, tree canopies and resiliency
- Strategy 4.3.2 Implement sustainable practices and efficiencies in resource use to support a healthy built environment.

Key natural environment locations in the Strathfield LGA include Mason Park Wetlands, Coxs Creek Reserve and Greenacre Frog Ponds with primary biodiversity or wildlife corridors along the Cooks River/Coxs Creek in Strathfield and Strathfield South. Works to reduce weeds were undertaken in bushland reserves such as Coxs Creek Reserve and monitoring of *W. Backhousei* species condition at Mason Park Wetlands. Adult Green and Golden Bellfrogs (GGBF) and tag poles were recorded for the first time on a decade in reestablished breeding GGBF habitat at the Greenacre Frog Ponds.

Council conducted monthly water monitoring to ascertain health of waterways and detect pollution incidences. Council collaborated with partners on education, events and projects to improve environmental sustainability such as National Tree Day, Bushcare and community planting days, regional programs to improve our region or catchment such as Cooks River Alliance and Parramatta River Catchment Group.

Strathfield LGA's urban forest is comprised of trees on public and private land areas. They contribute significantly to the liveability, natural environment and aesthetics of the Strathfield area. The urban forest is facing many challenges including urban densification, a changing climate, urban heat and canopy loss. In Strathfield LGA, tree canopies are under threat especially through removal of urban trees on private lands, low levels of tree canopy in industrial and commercial areas and illegal tree works and vandalism of street and public trees.

Council commenced a program to collate detailed data on its street trees, which in 2024 is over 70% complete. From the data, a management inventory and program will be prepared for maintenance and replacement street and public tree planting. Council engaged contractors to undertake maintenance of street trees including road and building clearances, crown lifting, dead wooding, tree removals, formative pruning and stump grinding and removals. Council initiated new and replacement street tree plantings as well as additional plantings along the Cooks River and parks across the Strathfield LGA.

Emissions in the Strathfield LGA generally declined during COVID, however recent results indicate that emissions are returning to pre-COVID levels as movement, especially vehicles, has increased.





Responsible Leadership QBL reporting

Outcome measure	Status
Community satisfaction with Council's efforts to give the community a say on issues that affect them	Moving away from sustainability
Council's overall performance satisfaction rating	Moving away from sustainability
Council's customer services satisfaction rating (excellent-good rating)	Moving towards sustainability
Community satisfaction with Council's communication and information access	Stable
Operating performance ratio *	Moving away from sustainability
Own source operating revenue ratio	Stable
Unrestricted current ratio	Stable
Rates and annual charges outstanding percentage	Moving toward sustainability
Cash expense cover ratio	Stable
Building and infrastructure renewals ratio *	Moving away from sustainability
Infrastructure backlog ratio *	Moving away from sustainability
Asset Maintenance ratio *	Moving away from sustainability

Source: Appendix A Performance Indicator reporting

* The status of these measures is derived from the most recent audited financial statements for the fiscal year 2022-2023, which indicate a trend away from sustainability. However, following the implementation of the financial improvement plan and revenue strategy in 2023-2024, the draft figures for these measures reflect significant improvement and a trend toward sustainability. Council has successfully contained the growth in operating deficits (improving the operating performance ratio compared to prior year) and has been able to make significant investments in infrastructure renewals and maintenance as a directly result of the financial sustainability strategy.



Key Challenges for the new Council term

This section provides information on key challenges, projects and priorities for the Strathfield community over the next 4 years and beyond. There are substantial challenges which will have significant impact on the Strathfield community, much related to NSW growth strategies. However, these challenges also present many opportunities for the future of the Strathfield LGA.

Planning and Place

The Planning and Place Team has been refocused in terms of team structure and operational effort through a service review and team restructure. There has been significant focus on forward strategy planning that will be instrumental in shaping the growth and evolution of Strathfield for the next decade. In addition, a review of the current infrastructure contributions regime has been commenced that will support financially sustainable delivery of new infrastructure into the future. This represents a major shift in focus which previously concentrated on the day-to-day assessment of development applications with reduced efforts on strategic planning. Strathfield, along with the rest of Greater Sydney and indeed, Australia, is responding to the current housing crisis, there is a need to deploy a methodology for planning, monitoring and management. This means getting the right policy settings in place early, but also proactively monitoring their effectiveness as growth occurs, and making amendments to them when necessary. A summary of the flagship projects from the last term are below.



Department Restructure

Through a highly collaborative service review process, the Planning and Development team has been rebranded as the Planning and Place Team. Renamed to reflect the focus of the team on both traditional development assessment but also re-emphasises focus on place management and forward planning. The key shift in the team structure was the creation of dedicated Strategic Planning and Development Assessment Teams, both lead by newly appointed Executive Planners. This important change has been made to ensure the team is able to remain focused on the strategic planning tasks that are ahead of us. Concurrently, there is a team focused on the timely and efficient assessment of Development Applications, plus preparing for new development applications that are likely to grow in scale and complexity. Following a period of recruitment, the team is almost fully staffed and highly engaged.

Homebush TOD Master Plan

Through long term advocacy, Strathfield Council has been successful in securing support from the NSW Government for the delivery of the Homebush Masterplan. Delivered through the TOD Program, this Masterplan is slated for adoption by the end of 2024. Early Masterplan work identifies a yield of 8,900 new dwellings or 22,500 new residents. This is a significant growth horizon for Strathfield and signals a shift from being a low growth LGA to a high growth environment. Council is presently advocating strongly to the NSW Government to review and improve the outputs that were on public exhibition. Council's submission was endorsed by Council at the 13 August 2024 Council Meeting. A strong position has been put forward to the State Government that the present Masterplan is not sufficiently detailed and lacks a planning framework that will deliver a successful community and place for Homebush. Strathfield will continue to work proactively with the Department to review and enhance the current suite of documents.

Medium Density Housing Strategy

This strategy is a flagship piece of work and has been designed to improve the diversity of housing available within our existing low density residential communities. In response to the desire from the community to be able to find the 'right size' of housing in response to changing housing needs, the study seeks introduce dual occupancy dwellings, 2 storey townhouses and 2 storey manor houses into the low-density areas, subject to a review of our existing DCP controls to manage built form outcomes and place outcomes. The strategy has been subject to extensive public consultation but will continue post gateway determination with a further period of public exhibition. It is anticipated that the strategy will be adopted and changes to the Strathfield LEP will be brought into effect early 2025.

Strathfield Town Centre Masterplan



A new Masterplan is a topic that has been exhaustively discussed for a long period of time with an abundance of varying and strong views put forward on the direction the town centre should take. As the first step of the project, staff have focused on engaging various stakeholders in the community and have undertaken extensive and broad consultation to gain an understanding of views and attitudes towards the town centre. This has included pop up stalls, an online survey, community meetings and business meetings. The clear message from all the consultation is that there is a desire for the town centre to be greatly improved. Alongside the consultation we have conducted our own analysis of the constraints and opportunities for the town centre. Council now holds a great deal of information and knowledge about

how the centre operates and community attitudes. This has been used to inform a Community Vision, which will be a foundational statement used to inform the preparation of the Masterplan. Additionally, Council has been successful in securing \$750,000 from the Federal Government Housing Support Program to deliver the Masterplan. Work will continue through 2024, with a completed Masterplan being brought forward to Council for adoption by July 2025.

Local Infrastructure Contributions Review

The future growth that Strathfield is likely to experience will place additional pressures on local infrastructure and resources. The financial contributions that Council can levy upon new development is an important source of revenue to fund upgrades and improvements to our open space, local centre, community facilities and more, which will be vital to Council's ability to support the growing population. A review of the existing Section 7.11 Local Infrastructure Contributions Plan has been conducted and it is proposed to revise this to a simpler Section 7.12 Local Infrastructure Contributions Plan but at a higher 3% contribution rate rather than the standard 1%. Whilst a seemingly small technical change, it means that Council levies a contribution based on cost of development, rather than a capped rate per unit of accommodation. It also grants Council the ability to fund a range of projects across the LGA with increased financial flexibility and sustainability. This draft plan has received endorsement to be placed on exhibition and be presented to the NSW Government for endorsement by the Minister of Planning and Open Space. It is expected that the revised plan will be operational by early 2025.

Growth Strategy

There is a considerable amount of change and growth on the horizon for Strathfield. The Homebush TOD Masterplan, once in force, will be a significant source of growth with the entire precinct planned to have a population of 45,000 residents. Whilst this growth is likely to occur overtime, it is important that Strathfield Council is prepared for this growth. The Growth Strategy is how Council, at an operational level, ensures that the correct plans, mechanisms and procedures are in place to support sustainable growth and continue to contribute to the health, wellbeing and lifestyle of the Strathfield Community.



Waste Strategy

The Strathfield CSP 2035 outlines several key objectives and actions related to waste management:

1. **Waste Reduction:** Encouraging the community to minimise waste generation through education and awareness programs
2. **Recycling and Reuse:** Enhancing recycling facilities and promoting the reuse of materials to reduce the amount of waste sent to landfills
3. **Sustainable Waste Management:** Implementing sustainable waste management practices, including the use of advanced technologies for waste processing
4. **Community Engagement:** Involving the community in waste management initiatives to foster a sense of responsibility and participation
5. **Infrastructure Improvement:** Upgrading waste management infrastructure to support efficient and effective waste collection and processing



Strathfield Council is in the process of developing a Waste Strategy and will undertake a waste audit, which is crucial for setting realistic targets and understanding the community's waste management needs.

Strathfield Council's waste strategy will be influenced by various commitments and requirements from international, national, state, and regional levels of government.

- **International Commitments:** Alignment with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 12, which focuses on responsible consumption and production.

- **National Policies:** The National Waste Policy 2018 and the National Food Waste Strategy, will guide waste management and reduction efforts.
- **State Strategies:** The NSW Waste and Sustainable Materials Strategy 2041 sets long-term goals for waste reduction and sustainable material use and will inform our Waste Strategy.
- **Regional Framework:** The SSROC Regional Waste Avoidance & Resource Recovery Strategy 2024 provides a collaborative framework for waste management across the region.

Strathfield Council aims to transition to a zero-waste strategy by 2035, addressing current waste management challenges and leveraging opportunities for improvement.

- **Current Waste Management Challenges:** Strathfield Council faces significant challenges in waste management, including a lack of a previous waste strategy, insufficient historical waste data, and reliance on outdated waste audits. Additionally, the Council is behind other inner-west Sydney Councils in waste management practices.

- **Data Collection and Waste Audits:** Implementing a robust data collection framework and conducting regular waste audits are essential steps for Strathfield Council to track progress and set realistic targets. The last waste audits were conducted in 2016 and 2019, highlighting the need for updated data.
- **Adoption of Circular Economy Principles:** Strathfield Council plans to adopt circular economy principles to transition towards zero waste. This includes promoting sustainable consumption, banning single-use plastics, and encouraging businesses to adopt waste reduction measures
- **Infrastructure and Community Engagement:** Investing in waste management infrastructure and engaging the community through educational campaigns and workshops are crucial. The Council aims to expand recycling programs, implement organic waste collection, and support innovative recycling technologies.
- **Resilience and Adaptability:** Building resilience into waste management systems is vital for Strathfield Council to withstand future uncertainties and disruptions. This involves diversifying waste management practices, investing in robust infrastructure, and fostering stakeholder collaboration.
- **Action Plan and Monitoring:** The Council has outlined a detailed action plan with short-term, medium-term, and long-term objectives to achieve zero waste by 2035. Regular monitoring and reporting frameworks will track progress towards waste management goals

“The Strathfield Community Strategic Plan 2035 outlines several key objectives and actions related to climate adaptation.”

Climate Adaptation Strategy

The Strathfield Community Strategic Plan 2035 outlines several key objectives and actions related to climate adaptation as follows:

- **Risk Assessment and Management:** Conducting comprehensive climate risk assessments to identify vulnerabilities and develop strategies to mitigate these risks.
 - **Infrastructure Resilience:** Upgrading and maintaining infrastructure to withstand extreme weather events and changing climate conditions.
 - **Community Education and Engagement:** Raising awareness and educating the community about climate change impacts and adaptation strategies.
 - **Sustainable Practices:** Promoting sustainable land use and development practices to reduce environmental impact and enhance resilience.
 - **Emergency Preparedness:** Enhancing emergency response plans and resources to better prepare for and respond to climate-related emergencies.
- To progress the CSP objectives Strathfield is actively addressing climate change through various strategies focusing on emissions reduction, renewable energy, and community resilience. Preparation of a Climate Adaptation Strategy is underway and it will address:
- **Climate Change Impacts:** Strathfield is experiencing rising temperatures, more extreme weather events, and increased urban heat island effects, particularly in industrial and commercial areas.
 - **Emission Reduction Goals:** Council is preparing a Climate Adaptation Strategy which will include emission reduction targets.

- **Energy Consumption:** Electricity accounts for most emissions in Strathfield, and the Council is transitioning to renewable energy and improving energy efficiency in its operations.
- **Community Initiatives:** Strathfield is engaging the community through education on energy efficiency, waste reduction, and sustainable practices, aiming to foster a resilient and well-connected community.
- **Climate Resilience:** The Council will enhance its capacity to respond to climate impacts through disaster management plans, urban greening, and improving liveability to mitigate the effects of extreme weather events.



state aims to reduce emissions by 50% by 2030 compared to 2005 levels.

- **Climate Change Policy Framework:** The NSW Climate Change Policy Framework and the draft Climate Change Policy and Action Plan aim to halve greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 and improve resilience to climate impacts, aligning with the Paris Agreement.

Councils Climate Adaptation Plan will be informed by commitments and requirements from global, national, and state tiers of government:

- **Global Efforts:** The Paris Agreement aims to limit global warming to well below 2°C, with efforts to limit the increase to 1.5°C. This includes targets for net zero carbon dioxide emissions around 2050 and other greenhouse gases by 2070.
- **National Commitments:** Australia's National Climate Resilience and Adaptation Strategy 2021-2025 mandates states and territories to implement major adaptation initiatives. The country has committed to a 43% emissions reduction by 2030 and net zero emissions by 2050.
- **NSW State Initiatives:** NSW aims for net zero emissions by 2050 and has introduced several initiatives like the Net Zero Plan Stage 1: 2020-2030 and the Electric Vehicle Strategy. The

Strathfield Council faces several challenges and opportunities in addressing climate change. To improve our corporate and community adaptability to climate impacts we will focus on:

- **Community Engagement:** Strathfield Council aims to strengthen community resilience to climate change through education, awareness, and support for vulnerable groups like the elderly and children.
- **Industry Collaboration:** Industries in Strathfield can innovate to reduce emissions by developing renewable energy projects, enhancing public transportation, and promoting sustainable practices.
- **Energy Efficiency:** Improving energy efficiency and transitioning to renewable energy are central to Strathfield Council's strategy, with a focus on reducing emissions from electricity and supporting community initiatives.
- **Built and Natural Environments:** Strathfield

Council is focused on reducing emissions in the built environment through sustainable construction practices and improving urban resilience to climate hazards like flooding and heatwaves.

Resilience Plan

Council will consider a draft Resilience Plan in 2025. It will be informed by the objectives and actions outlined in the Strathfield CSP 2035 which focus on enhancing community resilience. These objectives and actions aim to build a robust and adaptable community capable of effectively responding to and recovering from various challenges:

- Risk Management and Preparedness:
 - o Conducting regular risk assessments to identify potential threats and vulnerabilities.
 - o Developing and updating emergency response plans to ensure the community is well-prepared for various emergencies.
- Infrastructure Resilience:
 - o Upgrading critical infrastructure to withstand extreme weather events and other potential hazards.
 - o Implementing sustainable building practices to enhance the durability and longevity of community assets.
- Community Engagement and Education:
 - o Raising awareness about resilience and emergency preparedness through community education programs.
 - o Encouraging community participation in resilience-building activities and initiatives.
- Environmental Sustainability:
 - o Promoting sustainable land use and development practices to reduce environmental impact and enhance resilience.
 - o Supporting initiatives that protect and restore natural ecosystems, which play a crucial role in community resilience.

Asset Management

Council is committed to reducing its backlog of assets in a poor or very poor condition, which is higher than the benchmark for local government (<2%). Poor assets are likely to fail and not meet level of service expected by our community.

Assets include buildings, roads, bridges, footpaths, kerb and gutter, stormwater, and open space and recreation. Council will deliver a range of capital works programs to meet these challenges.

Strathfield Council has approximately \$509 million of Infrastructure, Property, Plant and Equipment (IPPE), which include essential community infrastructure such as buildings, roads, bridges, footpaths, kerb and gutter, stormwater, and open space and recreation. In 2023, Council had a backlog of \$23.3 million dollars, which represents assets which are in poor or very poor condition. This is 7% of Council's assets, which is higher than the OLG benchmark of less than 2.0% of assets in poor or very poor condition. Council has been granted a Special Rate Variation which includes a key objective to enhance asset conditions and reduce the growing backlog.

Major Capital Projects

Council has a number of major capital projects which are currently in the planning and design phase. This includes the WSIG projects which are \$4.2 million for Airey Park upgrades, \$7.8 million for Begnell Field, \$8.2 million for Hudson Park and \$1.6 million for Strathfield Park. Council has also received \$5.9 million from the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure for active transport infrastructure near Parramatta Road. Council has recruited additional project managers to deliver these works. Further, a Project Management Framework is now being utilised to ensure appropriate governance and processes in the consistent delivery of capital projects.

Also planned is the delivery of new parking technology, an Asset Management System (Project Elevate) and advocacy with Transport for NSW.

Land and Property Strategy

Strathfield Council is the custodian of community assets which includes a significant portfolio of land and property. Council owns approximately 75 properties, with some classified operational and some classified for community use. Council has not been actively managing these properties in recent years. Council has engaged a consultant to prepare a Land and Property Strategy. The purpose of this Strategy is to provide an analysis relating to the current state of affairs of Council's property and land holdings and will outline Council's strategy for the continued management of these assets. Council's Property Portfolio needs to be carefully managed to:

- Maintain existing services and standards
- Enable the provision of more appropriate and/or additional community facilities
- Earn additional revenue where possible
- Increase value of existing assets where there is an opportunity to do so.

Tree Audits and Street Tree Masterplans

Strathfield Council owns approximately 12,500 street trees and 24,000 park trees. Council has not been actively managing these tree assets in recent years. Council has engaged a contractor to undertake an audit of its street trees. The purpose of this audit is to ensure all tree assets have been captured, including locations and species. Importantly, the health of the tree and any necessary maintenance requirements are also being documented and prioritised.

Once the tree audit has been completed, it is intended to develop an Urban Forest Strategy, including a Street Tree Masterplan. The purpose of a Strategy is to establish a holistic management of Strathfield's urban forest. It recognises the urban forest as an essential, living infrastructure asset and resource that provides a wide range of



social, environmental and economic benefits. The Strategy will be imperative for Council to commit to maintaining and increasing the benefits provided by the Strathfield urban forest and it provides directional statements intended to guide urban forest management decisions.

Master Planning

Council has not been actively preparing master plans for parks and mainstreet areas in recent years. Masterplans identify the long-term plans for key locations. It also allows Council to engage with the community regarding their needs for these public spaces. Council has recruited a Landscape Architect to prepare these master plans. This will assist in preparing and allocating future capital works program funding. It will also assist in applying for external grants opportunities for these important public spaces.

Long Term Financial sustainability

Over the past 4 years, Council has experienced a significant deterioration in its financial position, as evidenced by its audited operating results.

The Council's operating deficits (before capital income) have progressively increased from \$1.3 million in 2019/2020 to \$9.6 million in 2022/2023, reflecting a troubling trend that raised severe concerns about its financial sustainability.

In 2019/2020, Council's operating deficit of \$1.3 million marked the beginning of a concerning trend, which was exacerbated in 2020/2021 with an increased deficit of \$5.5 million. This escalation indicated Council's growing challenges in managing its finances. The subsequent years continued this trajectory of decline, with deficits of \$5.9 million in 2021/2022 and \$9.6 million in 2022/2023, resulting in a cumulative operating deficit of \$22.3 million over this four (4) year period.

These continued financial deficits presented a critical challenge for Council, necessitating urgent attention to develop a sustainable financial strategy. Without decisive action to address the underlying issues, the financial outlook would have further declined, impacting Council's ability to deliver essential services to the community effectively.

Addressing this situation required a comprehensive review of operational efficiencies, revenue-raising opportunities, and long-term financial planning to restore the Council's financial stability and enhance service delivery for its residents.

In March and April 2022, Council conducted a thorough review of its long-term financial sustainability

alongside an organisational service review.

As part of this review, Council's Revised Long-Term Financial Plan (LTFP) for 2022/2033 indicated that operating deficits in the General Fund would persist through 2033. The average annual operating deficit over the ten-year forecast period was estimated to be \$13.0 million.

By 2033, the annual operating deficits for Council was projected to exceed \$15 million, with a cumulative cash deficit expected to surpass \$75 million over the next decade.

Without an increase in income levels, Council would struggle to sustainably fund asset renewals or maintain existing services. In this scenario, it was projected that Council would deplete its unrestricted cash by 2026 and exhaust its total cash reserves by 2029.

“Council has already implemented some of these initiatives, leading to immediate cost reductions and improved service delivery in certain areas.”

This review thoroughly evaluated various functions and service delivery mechanisms, allowing Council to identify specific areas where budgetary efficiencies could be improved. Accordingly, several cost containment and savings initiatives as well as revenue improvements were identified and prioritised based on their potential impact and feasibility.

Council has already implemented some of these initiatives, leading to immediate cost reductions and improved service delivery in certain areas. For example:

- Budgetary savings realised in the delivery of Council's community bus service.
- Improvements to Council's return on its investment portfolio.

- Improvements to revenue derived from Council's golf driving range at Hudson Park.
- No increases to IT service costs and efficiencies from current IT service contracts.

In addition to the budgetary improvements already implemented, the review identified strategies for future enhancements that have been integrated into the Council's revised Long-Term Financial Plan (LTFP).

These strategies will be gradually implemented and realised over the coming years. Collectively, these improvements are expected to yield an annual enhancement of approximately \$1.2 million which will result in a cumulative operational improvement of \$12 million over the next decade.

Despite the thorough review and the identification of various strategies for budgetary improvements and operational efficiencies, these measures alone are insufficient to fully address the Council's sustainability issues.

Furthermore, the Council continues to face pressures from aging infrastructure, increasing demand for services, and the need for significant investments in asset renewal.

The projected annual improvements while beneficial, represent only a fraction of the larger financial challenges facing Council.

Furthermore, Council has a significant infrastructure funding backlog for the renewal of essential community infrastructure assets such as roads, footpaths, bridges, kerbs and gutters and community buildings. Councils' infrastructure renewal funding backlog as

at 30 June 2023 stood at \$23.3 million.

The key factors that have contributed to Council's infrastructure backlog include:

- Aging Infrastructure: As assets age, they require more frequent and costly maintenance or replacement.
- Historical Underinvestment: Persistent historical underfunding over several years, due to limitation in general revenue (rates).
- Cost Increases: Inflation, higher labour costs, and rising material prices over time and (particularly in the current high inflationary economic conditions) have also contributed to escalating the costs of maintaining and renewing infrastructure.

An unfunded infrastructure backlog will negatively affect the residents of the LGA which will lead to deteriorating services, higher long-term costs, and, in severe cases, public safety concerns.

The infrastructure backlog ratio measures how much money is needed to bring all assets up to a good condition compared to the total value of those assets.

The Office of Local Government (OLG) has set the benchmark for this ratio to be below 2%.

Currently, Councils infrastructure backlog ratio stands at 4.2%, which this means that Council needs to increase its spending on asset renewals. Council is required to spend about \$12 million each year over the next 10 years to reduce the backlog to 3% and improve the safety and condition of its assets. Consequently, Council took the decision to apply to the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) to seek their approval to implement a Special Variation (SV) to gradually increase Councils

“In addition to the budgetary improvements already implemented, the review identified strategies for future enhancements that have been integrated into the Council's revised Long-Term Financial Plan (LTFP).”

rates revenue over the next four years, commencing in the 2022-2023 fiscal year.

The SV along with other operational improvements aims to provide a predictable path for revenue growth while balancing the need for additional funds with the community's financial capacity.

Council's approved IPART issued instrument sets its rate increase path over the 4 year period commencing 2023-2024 as follows:

Year	Annual increase in general income	Cumulative increase in general income
Year 2023 - 24	35.1%	35.10%
Year 2024 - 25	14.11%	54.16%
Year 2025 - 26	17.5%	81.14%
Year 2026 - 27	7.5%	94.73%

[Source: Special Variation for Strathfield Municipal Council for 2023-24 to 2026-27 Instrument issued by IPART under section 508A of the Local Government Act 1993]

The IPART-approved Special Variation (SV) includes a total increase of 94.73% in the Council's general income, implemented over 4 years from 2023-2024 to 2026-2027. At the same time, Council has reduced the domestic waste management charge by approximately \$4 million each year (without decreasing service levels).

Furthermore, Council has set minimum ordinary rates for the years 2023-2024 and 2024-2025 as part of its efforts to restructure the rate system and ensure a fairer distribution of the rate burden.

As part of the newly approved rating structure, approximately 80% of all ratepayers in the Local Government Area (LGA) are currently paying the Minimum Rate. The table below illustrates how the changes resulting from the Special Variation (SV) and Minimum Rate will affect these ratepayers.

For the fiscal year 2023/2024, the average total bill for ratepayers on the minimum rate has gone up from \$1,357.50 to \$1,602.50, which is an increase of \$245.00 or 18.0%. This rise is mainly due to the new Minimum Rate of \$1,040. However, this increase is balanced out by a decrease in the Domestic Waste Management Charge (DWMC), which drops from \$795 to \$550 in the first year.

In FY2024-2025, the minimum rate has increased from \$1,040 to \$1,200, and the DWMC has only been indexed in accordance with CPI. As a result, the total rates bill will reach \$1,787.50, an increase of \$185.00 or 11.5%. For FY2025-2026 and FY2026-2027, both the minimum rate and the DWMC will be adjusted by the estimated rate peg of about 3.5% per year. Over the entire four-year period, the total increase in the rates bill will be \$556.00 which when spread out over four years, translates to just \$2.67 per week. In the first year (2023-2024), while the minimum rate sees a significant jump, it is balanced by a considerable reduction in the DWMC, which helps ease the financial impact on ratepayers. This means that for many households, the overall increase in their total rates bill is minimised.

In summary, for approximately 80% of ratepayers, the total increase in the rates bill will be approximately \$556.00 over the entire four (4) year SV implementation period, which amounts to just \$2.67 per week—less than the price of a small coffee.

Further to this, Council reviewed its domestic waste service and identified that the Domestic Waste Management Charge (DWMC) could be lowered without reducing the level of services provided. Thus, at the same time that Council implemented the SV, it also reduced the Domestic Waste Management Charge (DWMC) by \$245 for each residential ratepayer (approx. \$4 million per annum) commencing 2022-2023 which helped to reduce the overall impact on rates bills as a result of the SV increase to ordinary rates.

Instead of overpaying for waste management, the additional funds were redirected to general rates to offset the increase ordinary rates, enabling Council to allocate revenue in more effective and productive ways, ensuring that residents benefit overall services standards.

Due to the newly implemented revenue strategy adopted in Councils LTFP (which encompasses the SV), during 2023-2024, Council has been able to spend approx. \$13.5 million on asset renewals while delivering approx. \$20 million in overall capital works over the financial year.

The increased spending on infrastructure renewals is in accordance with Councils revised Long Term Financial Plan and Capital program to invest on average approx. \$12 million per annum over the next 10 years to improve the condition of its infrastructure assets and reduce the infrastructure backlog to a manageable level.

The Council's infrastructure renewal works over the past year have primarily concentrated on roads and footpaths, recognising that these assets are among the most utilised by the community given their significance for daily transportation and pedestrian safety.

It is essential to maintain and improve these surfaces. Regular upkeep not only enhances the quality of travel for residents but also addresses crucial public safety concerns.

This focus on infrastructure renewal reflects the Council's commitment to supporting community needs and promoting overall public safety in the LGA.

Maintaining the revenue path set by the SV is crucial for the Council to continue delivering its capital works and infrastructure renewal program in line with its adopted Long-Term Financial Plan (LTFP).



The Council's infrastructure works are being forward-funded through an underlying borrowing program (as adopted in its LTFP). The borrowing is planned to be repaid using future rates revenue generated by the SV.

This approach allows Council to address urgent renewal works immediately, particularly in critical areas such as roads and footpaths, without having to delay these essential projects and further exacerbating its infrastructure backlog.

Without the revenue boost provided by the SV, the borrowing program would not be feasible, and Council would be unable to fund its required infrastructure renewal program.

The SV along with the operational improvement strategies adopted in Council's LTFP ensures that the Council can maintain and renew key assets promptly while remaining financially sustainable in the long term.

Additionally, Council's ARIC has provided positive feedback regarding the financial sustainability strategy implemented by the Council. ARIC commended the Council for its thorough and holistic approach to addressing long-term financial challenges through careful planning and sound financial management.



The Committee highlighted the effectiveness of measures such as the SV, which has provided for a stable revenue base, and the strategic use of borrowing to forward-fund essential infrastructure works.

The ARIC recognised these initiatives as critical steps toward ensuring the Council's ability to meet its service and infrastructure commitments while maintaining financial sustainability in the long term. Their endorsement underscores the importance of the strategy in supporting the Council's continued growth, operational efficiency and financial resilience.

Appendix A – Performance indicator reporting

Performance reporting relies on data from various sources, including government agencies such as ABS, NSW Health, BOSCAR. Council-specific data comes from records and independently commissioned Community Surveys conducted in 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021 and 2023. The 2021 survey, carried out during the COVID pandemic, showed unusually

high satisfaction ratings, likely due to residents spending more time and remotely working in the Strathfield area. In contrast, many 2023 results had lower satisfaction ratings. The longer-term trends, based on community surveys, will be more apparent when the next survey is taken and data updates is available for other indicator reporting.

Measure	Target	Baseline	Achieved	Change
% Australian citizens (Strathfield LGA)	Maintain or improve	66.1% (2016)	65.4% (2021)	▼
% volunteers in LGA community	Maintain or improve	15.1% (2016)	9.6% (2021)	▼
Aboriginal heritage registered finds in LGA	Maintain or improve	3 (2019)	3% (2023)	◀▶
Acceptance of community diversity (excellent-good)	Maintain or improve	75% (2019)	78% (2023)	▲
Access to information about what's happening in LGA (excellent-good)	Maintain or improve	n/a	46% (2023)	◀▶
Access to parks and open space (excellent-good)	Maintain or improve	83% (2018)	87% (2023)	▲
Appearance & maintenance of residential areas (excellent-good)	Maintain or improve	73% (2021)	63% (2023)	▼
Appearance and maintenance of public spaces (excellent-good)	Maintain or improve	71% (2021)	65% (2023)	▼
Asset Maintenance ratio	>100%	148.95% (2021)	69.31% (2023)	▼
Attractiveness of buildings, streetscape and surroundings in local area (excellent-good rating)	Maintain or improve	56% (2020)	49% (2023)	▼
Bachelor or higher degree (Strathfield LGA)	Maintain or improve	32% (2011)	44% (2021)	▲
Borrowings/loans from Council library	Maintain or improve	94,150 (2021)	160,278 (2024)	▲
Building and infrastructure renewals ratio	>100%	114.65 (2021)	48.75% (2023)	▼
Care & maintenance of parks and reserves (excellent-good)	Maintain or improve	84% (2021)	76% (2023)	▼
Care and protection of historic and heritage buildings and areas (excellent-good rating)	Maintain or improve	64% (2020)	63% (2023)	▼
Cash expense cover ratio	> 3.00 months	13.21 months (2021)	12.77 months (2023)	◀▶

Appendix A – Performance indicator reporting

Measure	Target	Baseline	Achieved	Change
Citizenship conferees (annual)	Maintain or improve	340 (2021)	596 (2024)	▲
Community satisfaction on how well new development blends with neighbourhood character (excellent-good)	Maintain or improve	40% (2020)	40% (2023)	◀▶
Community satisfaction with Council's efforts to give the community a say on issues that affect them (excellent-good)	Maintain or increase	55% (2021)	45% (2023)	▼
Control of graffiti and vandalism in LGA (excellent-good)	Maintain or improve	64% (2019)	64% (2023)	◀▶
Council website visits	Maintain or improve	693,525 (2021)	543,000 (2024)	▼
Council's customer services satisfaction rating (excellent-good)	Maintain or increase	51% (2018)	59% (2023)	▲
Council's overall performance satisfaction rating (excellent-good)	Maintain or increase	61% (2018)	54% (2023)	▼
Decrease in smoking rates in Strathfield LGA (adult population)	Maintain or decrease	11.7% (2020)	8.8% (2022)	▲
Feeling safe in their street (excellent-good)	Maintain or improve	71% (2019)	67% (2023)	▼
Feeling safe in their suburb (moving around) (excellent-good)	Maintain or improve	74% (2019)	68% (2023)	▼
Feeling safe on local public transport (excellent-good)	Maintain or improve	85% (2019)	84% (2023)	▼
Gross Regional Product	Maintain or improve	\$4.045B (2021)	\$3.87B (2023)	▼
Increase of total waste materials diverted from landfill (tonnes)	Maintain or improve	5851 tonnes (2020)	49623 tonnes (2024)	▼
Increase of waste diversion from landfill	Maintain or improve	36% (2021)	31.4% (2024)	▼
Infrastructure backlog ratio	<2.00%	0.39 (2021)	6.69% (2023)	▼
Local shops and services meet needs (very well-well)	Maintain or improve	n/a	52% (2023)	◀▶
Maintenance of tree coverage and natural environment (excellent-good)	Maintain or improve	75% (2021)	74% (2023)	▼
Major crime offences in LGA (across a 60 month trend)	Stable or decrease	Stable (2021).	Stable (2022)	◀▶
No of local businesses	Maintain or improve	6445 (2021)	6934 (2023)	▲

Appendix A – Performance indicator reporting

Measure	Target	Baseline	Achieved	Change
No of local jobs	Maintain or improve	24571 (2021)	23951 (2023)	▼
Number of members of Strathfield library	Maintain or improve	21,544 (2021)	27,419 (2024)	▲
Number of non-Aboriginal heritage items and heritage conservation areas.	Maintain or improve	232 heritage items and 17 areas (2017)	232 heritage items and 17 areas (2023)	◄►
Number of residents hospitalised due to falls in the LGA	Maintain or improve	790 people per 100,000 (2017-18)	800 people per 100,000 (2020-21)	▼
Operating performance ratio	>0%	(8.71)% (2021)	(16.23)% (2023)	▼
Overall access to transport services (excellent-good)	Maintain or improve	85% (2019)	76% (2023)	▼
Own source operating revenue ratio	>60%	83.48% (2021)	72.40% (2023)	▲
Quality of Council waste services (excellent-good)	Maintain or improve	79% (2021)	73% (2023)	▼
Quality/condition kerbs, gutters & drainage (excellent-good)	Maintain or improve	35% (2021)	46% (2023)	▲
Quality/condition of community centres (excellent-good)	Maintain or improve	74% (2021)	71% (2023)	▼
Quality/condition of footpaths (excellent-good)	Maintain or improve	41% (2021)	51% (2023)	▲
Quality/condition of library facility (excellent-good)	Maintain or improve	88% (2021)	92% (2023)	▲
Quality/condition of playgrounds (excellent-good)	Maintain or improve	84% (2021)	83% (2023)	▼
Quality/condition of sportsgrounds (excellent-good)	Maintain or improve	82% (2019)	86% (2023)	▲
Quality/condition roads (excellent-good)	Maintain or improve	38% (2021)	51% (2023)	▲
Rates and annual charges outstanding percentage	<5.00%	5.08% (2021)	4.86% (2023)	▲
Satisfaction with Council Library service (excellent-good)	Maintain or improve	87% (2021)	87% (2023)	◄►
Tree Canopy in Strathfield LGA and suburbs	Maintain or improve	LGA 16.8%	LGA 16.7%	▼
Unrestricted current ratio	>1.50x	3.32x (2021)	4.32x (2023)	▲
Visitors to Council library	Maintain or improve	64,008 (2021)	248,855 (2024)	▲

STRATHFIELD MUNICIPAL COUNCIL

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