

Attachment 2

Blacktown Recreation and Open Space Strategy

recreation and open space

planning for open space in a growing city



CONTENTS

Page 3	EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	
Page 4	BACKGROUND	
	- About the Strategy	
	- About Blacktown	
	- Council's Integrated Planning Context	
	- Priorities for Blacktown	
	- Key Issues for Consideration	
	- Recreation and Open Space Provision	
	- Approach to the Strategy	
Page 12	VISION AND PRIORITIES	
	- Strategic Vision	
	- Synergy and Integration with Key Council Strategies and Plans	
	- Synergy and Integration with External Influences	
Page 14	AN ACTION PLAN FOR SPORT	
	- Sportsgrounds	
	- Key Sport and Equestrian Facilities	
	- Sports Development	
Page 21	AN ACTION PLAN FOR INFORMAL RECREATION	
	- Parks	
	- Playground Facilities	
	- Linear Parks and Trails	
	- Youth Facilities	
Page 31	AN ACTION PLAN FOR AQUATIC AND INDOOR FACILITIES	
	- Aquatic Facilities	
	- Indoor Recreation and Sport Facilities	
Page 37	AN ACTION PLAN FOR NATURAL AREAS	
	- Natural Area Reserves and Watercourses	
	- Other Natural and Heritage Resources	
Page 42	AN ACTION PLAN FOR COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION (WELLNESS)	
	- Facility Use	
	- Program Potential	
	- Community Participation	
	- Wellness through Physical Activity	
Page 49	AN ACTION PLAN FOR FUTURE PLANNING	
	- Future Recreation and Open Space Provision	
Page 53	IMPLEMENTING THE STRATEGY	
Page 55	APPENDIX 1- Definitions	
Page 56	APPENDIX 2- Sport Facility Summary	
Page 57	APPENDICES	
	Map of Open Space provision in LGA	
	Map of Land Categorisation	
	Map of Parks	
	Map of Sportsgrounds	
	Map of General Community Use Land	
	Map of Areas of Cultural Significance	
	Map of Natural Areas	
	Map of Playgrounds	
	Map of Outdoor Courts	
	Map of Aquatic and Leisure Centres	
	Map of Equestrian Centres	
	Map of Indoor Community Facilities	

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Recreation and Open Space Strategy (ROSS) provides future direction to the provision, development, management and maintenance of open space and recreation facilities for Council and our community over the next eight years. The Recreation and Open Space Strategy is progressive and comprehensive, considering the needs, issues and opportunities relating to existing communities as well as guiding the approach to providing for future communities in a fast paced and dynamically changing environment.

Recreation and open space facilities contribute to quality of lifestyle and are important to our community. The social, environmental and economic benefits can be high, particularly where open space facilities and activity opportunities are safe, appealing and accessible.

Blacktown City Council (Council) recognises the importance of recreation and open space facilities and is committed to enhancing the provision and activity opportunities in the Local Government Area (LGA).

Overall, the Recreation and Open Space Strategy will enable Council to effectively and efficiently plan for and manage enhancements to open space and service provision for current and future communities. The Strategy will assist Council to address the needs and issues relating to recreation and open space and support communities in their recreation and lifestyle pursuits.

In keeping with the Blacktown City Vision 2025 – Delivering the Vision Together, the Recreation and Open Space Strategy demonstrates Council's commitment towards achieving the vision. It provides clear, decisive and meaningful actions directly related to the achievement of key strategies such as '*Clean, Green Spaces and Places*' and '*A Sporting City*' and reflects the framework for achievement in these areas over the coming years.

The Recreation and Open Space Strategy comprises six key areas:

1. Sport
2. Informal Recreation
3. Aquatic and Indoor Facilities
4. Natural Areas
5. Community Participation
6. Future Planning

Action Plans have been developed for each of these areas in order to form the strategy and address the overall recreation and open space needs of our community. Each Action Plan includes background material, objectives, strategic directions, specific actions and priorities.

An Implementation Plan for the strategy is included at the conclusion of the Action Plans.

BACKGROUND

About the Strategy

The Recreation and Open Space Strategy provides future direction to the provision, development, management and maintenance of open space and recreation facilities for Council and our community over the next eight years. The study has involved community consultation and a detailed assessment of demand and supply, as well as consideration of what will be required to adequately meet the needs of the existing and future communities. This strategy acknowledges that a diverse and growing community such as Blacktown presents many challenges in adequately planning, managing and monitoring its recreational pursuits. These challenges are further enhanced when combined with the following influences:

- Health and welfare trends and patterns
- Demographic and economic factors (e.g., employment, population, income, cost of living, etc.)
- City growth and development
- Sports development and planning
- Lifestyle factors (e.g., technology, nutrition, recreation time, etc.)
- State and Commonwealth Government funding, planning and legislation

The Recreation and Open Space Strategy aims to provide an understanding of:

- The needs and issues for our existing population, including community and sporting groups
- The issues and gaps for provision of existing recreation and open space and sporting facilities
- The opportunities for improving existing recreation and open space and sporting facilities
- Priorities based on the level of need

The Recreation and Open Space Strategy aims to achieve an equitable allocation of quality recreation and open space facilities, and encourage a commitment to priority needs and opportunities. This will enhance the appeal of Blacktown, lifestyle opportunities for people living and working in Blacktown and assist Council to achieve the best use of available resources.

Information utilised for the development of this study has come from a number of sources, including:

- Supply and demand research
- Information and feedback from individuals, user groups, sporting bodies and Park Committees
- Council records and data
- Blacktown City 2025 – Delivering the Vision Together and Blacktown City Council's Management Plan
- Blacktown City Council's Social Plan 2007 and Demographic data (Census 2006)
- Industry and government sources

About Blacktown

A growing Local Government Area of over 47 residential suburbs, Blacktown is home to over 285,000 people - making it the fifth largest in Australia and home to one in every 73 Australians.

The growth of Blacktown is phenomenal. Nearly 60,000 residents have moved to the City during the past 10 years and Blacktown welcomes approximately 5,000 new residents every year. That trend is set to continue as more people discover that Blacktown offers the family lifestyle and educational and employment opportunities they seek. In the near future, rural areas will be developed as part of the North West Growth Centre, which will see another huge influx of over 140,000 people.

Blacktown offers a rare combination of suitability with commercial success, attractive and popular residential estates, a growing employment base and acclaimed commercial areas.

Blacktown is the heart of the Greater Western Sydney region: a booming area leading New South Wales in population growth, community and recreational services and employment growth.

Just 35 kilometres from the Sydney CBD, Blacktown features two major regional centres: Blacktown Central Business District (CBD) and Mount Druitt CBD.

One of the outstanding features of Blacktown is its extensive road and rail infrastructure. The City hosts 10 railway stations along two railway lines for commuters, as well as regional transport interchange facilities at Blacktown and Mount Druitt. By road, Blacktown City is equally well-connected. The City is located on the M4, M2 and M7 road networks.

Within this growth, Blacktown Council recognises the importance of open space and recreation facilities and the role this plays in contributing towards the quality of lifestyle and the social, environmental and economic benefits it can provide for its community.



Council's Integrated Planning Context

Blacktown City 2025 – Delivering the Vision Together

Blacktown City 2025 - Delivering the Vision Together, is Council's guiding strategic document that steers the direction of Blacktown over the next 15 years. The proposed Recreation and Open Space Strategy links into a wide range of strategies and trigger projects within this framework and reflects key actions associated with the following key strategies:

- Clean Green Spaces and Places
- A Sporting City

The Blacktown City Council Management Plan provides:

Vision Statement

"To be a vibrant, healthy and safe City - A City of Excellence"

Mission Statement

"To provide our community with the best living and working environment through commitment to service"

Community Service and Facilities Long Term Outcomes – What Council aims to achieve for the Community

- Social Equity
- Affordable and accessible services and facilities
- A healthy living environment
- Greater involvement by our community in social and cultural activities
- Accessible and safe active and passive open spaces

Council will achieve this through the following objectives considered relevant to this proposed strategy

- Continue to provide support to our community and volunteer groups
- Provide recreational and community services that reflect the changing demographics and lifestyles of our residents
- Provide an accessible, safe and diverse range of community services and facilities that ensure value for money to our residents

Priorities for Blacktown

The Recreation and Open Space Strategy is arranged around the following priorities reflecting the long term achievement of key strategies in the Blacktown City 2025 – Delivering the Vision Together document:

- Directions for sport, including:
 - The provision and development of sportsgrounds within a hierarchy
 - The provision of key facilities for some sports and organised activities
 - Promoting community and sport development
 - Development of Blacktown as the sporting capital of Western Sydney
- Catering for informal recreation, particularly:
 - The provision and development of parks
 - The provision of linear parks and trails
 - Local parks and playgrounds
 - Youth facilities
- The future provision and development of aquatic and indoor facilities
- Directions for the protection, enhancement and maintenance of natural areas including bushland and watercourses
- Opportunities for using facilities and supporting community participation
- Directions for future planning

Key Issues of Consideration

Equality

Overall, the provision of open space in the LGA is approximately 5.01 ha* per 1,000 people. Amidst growing development, this level of open space provision has the potential to create a unique environment that appeals to existing and future residents. There is a high demand for sportsgrounds and other open spaces in Blacktown due to the large proportion of families and young people in the LGA and the anticipated growth in physical activity participation rates. With these factors in mind, future consideration should be given to the issue of equality across the city.

Quality

Overtime, reserves across Blacktown will require further development to enhance their amenity and continue to encourage use. This is a key issue that Council should continue to address as a high priority. Development of reserves is an issue that Council has acknowledged and proposes to address this on an ongoing hierarchical basis.

Access

Accessibility for people with a disability; for people with prams, and for older people, has been identified and relates to the usability of paths and the potential to access facilities in parks. Council will continue to provide access to open spaces and recreation facilities for all its community members.

Safety

Research in the context of this strategy indicates that the community values safety as a high priority when accessing recreation and open space facilities. A community is more likely to use recreation and open space facilities when they feel safe and secure. The adopted Open Space Maintenance Strategy is an example of how Council is addressing this need and enhancing the recreation and open space values for the benefit of the community.

Sustainability

Council has a commitment to sustainability and the triple bottom line, which is demonstrated through Blacktown City 2025. Sustainability aims to balance economic, environmental and social considerations in the decision making process. As growth and development occurs, and land availability assumes a priority, the community seeks to acknowledge the balance and ensure the values of biological diversity, ecological integrity and intergenerational equity are respected whilst also maintaining a balance with the community demands and needs.

Our Community

The Blacktown LGA has a growing and dynamic community: it is the most populated LGA within NSW with over 285,000 people (*Source: Community ID*) residing within the LGA. Our ever expanding community consists of a diverse cross-section of people which is highlighted through the following key statistics (2006):

- 24.6% of our population are children aged between 0-14 years
- 17.4% are persons aged 55 years and over
- Blacktown City LGA has the highest proportion of Indigenous people in the Sydney Metropolitan Area at 2.4% (6,093 people)
- 84% of our community are Australian citizens and 34.3% were born overseas
- 38% of households speak a language other than English with the most common being Tagalog, Arabic, Hindi, Filipino and Samoan
- 53.3% of households are couples with children

Source: Blacktown City 2025- Delivering the Vision Together

Recreation and Open Space Provision

Snap Shot

The Blacktown LGA covers 246.9 square kilometres (km²) and in the 2006 Census had a population density of 1,103 persons per km².

Listed below is the breakdown of land categories within the Blacktown Local Government Area as of January 2009.

Categorisation	Categorisation <u>without</u> drainage component	Categorisation <u>with</u> drainage component	Categorisation <u>Total</u>
Area of Cultural Significance	29.04 ha	0.00 ha	29.04 ha
General Community Use	54.72 ha	5.49 ha	60.21 ha
Natural Areas	259.22 ha	103.96 ha	363.18 ha
Park	522.83 ha	12.30 ha	535.13 ha
Sportsground	439.03 ha	2.76 ha	441.79 ha
Total	1,304.84 ha	124.51 ha	1,429.35 ha*

*Excluding Department of Planning and Western Sydney Regional Parkland, otherwise land is zoned 6(a) Public Recreation or 5(a) Special Uses- Drainage under the Blacktown Local Environment Plan (LEP) 1988 (updated 2008)

Legend: The term 'drainage component' refers to land that serves a dual purpose between drainage and land categorisations. Definitions of the categorisation areas are listed in the Local Government Act as below:

Area of Cultural Significance

Land described which has Aboriginal, aesthetic, archaeological, historical, technical or research, or social significance.

General Community Use

Land should be categorised as general community use if the land:

- May be made available for use for any purpose for which Community Land may be used; whether by the public at large, or by specific sections of the public; and
- Is not required to be categorised as a natural area; or does not satisfy the guidelines for categorisation as a sportsground, a park, or an area of cultural significance.

Natural Area

Land, regardless of whether or not it is in an undisturbed state, possesses significant geological features, geomorphological features, landforms, representative systems and other natural features, and attributes that would be sufficient to further categorise the land as bushland, wetland, escarpment, watercourse or foreshore. Community Land that has been a declared critical habitat, or which is directly affected by a recovery plan or threat abatement plan under the NSW Threatened Species Act 1995 or the NSW Fisheries Management Act 1994, must be categorised as a Natural Area.

Park

Land that is, or is proposed to be, improved by landscaping, gardens or the provision of non-sporting equipment and facilities for use mainly for recreational, social, educational and cultural pursuits that do not unduly intrude on the peaceful enjoyment of the land by others.

Sportsground

Land is used or proposed to be used primarily for active recreation involving organised sports or the playing of outdoor games.

Note:

A mapped outline of this provision is provided in the Appendices section commencing at page 57.

A summary of Council's Sporting, Recreation and Community facilities is provided on page 56.

It is important to note that the figures provided in the snap shot are correct at the time of publication and do not take into consideration private ownership of facilities such as tennis courts, martial arts centres, ten pin bowling alleys, indoor rock climbing centres, PCYC centres, golf courses, private gymnasiums and backyard pools used for commercial means, etc. which also serve to cater for the community's recreation needs.



Approach to the Strategy

The Recreation and Open Space Strategy is comprised of six Action Plans. These include:

1. An Action Plan for Sport
2. An Action Plan for Informal Recreation
3. An Action Plan for Aquatic and Indoor Facilities
4. An Action Plan for Natural Areas
5. An Action Plan for Community Participation (Wellness)
6. An Action Plan for Future Planning

Each Action Plan includes:

- Background information highlighting why particular directions and actions are recommended
- A proposed Strategic Direction that provides a framework for specific actions
- Recommended Actions, including objectives and priorities

Priority

The priority listings have corresponding timeframes based on the following:

High- Commence within three years

Medium- Commence within three to six years

Ongoing- To be maintained throughout the strategy period

The suggested priority and timing is indicative and will be reviewed on an ongoing basis by those involved in the implementation of the Action Plans to ensure that it continues to address its objectives in the best possible way. The suggested priority ranking provided is based on initial community consultation, industry information and assessment, local needs analysis, Management Plan objectives and Blacktown City Vision 2025 - Delivering the Vision Together strategic framework.

An update on the Strategy will be reported every two years to Council in order to gauge the effectiveness of the directions, monitor the progress made, and provide for flexibility to adapt to a number of variables influencing the key actions. Two years is considered suitable based on the nature of the actions proposed and the research and investigative process associated with them.

VISION AND PRIORITIES

Vision for the Future

The Blacktown Recreation and Open Space Vision is as follows:

Blacktown offers residents and visitors with every opportunity to pursue vibrant, healthy and family-oriented lifestyles all year round. Blacktown's open space, leisure and recreational facilities and services are renowned for being safe, appealing, accessible and diverse in nature. They are underpinned by a rich, unique and varied environment for recreation, sport, leisure and a range of passive pastimes.

This vision will be achieved through:

- An equitable spread of safe, accessible, diverse and quality recreation and open space facilities
- The effective management of recreation and open space facilities within a hierarchy of provision
- A commitment to the promotion of physical activity in the community as a contribution toward achieving physical, mental, cultural, social and environmental health and wellbeing
- Development of the city as the sporting capital for Western Sydney

Synergy and Integration with Key Council Policies and Strategies

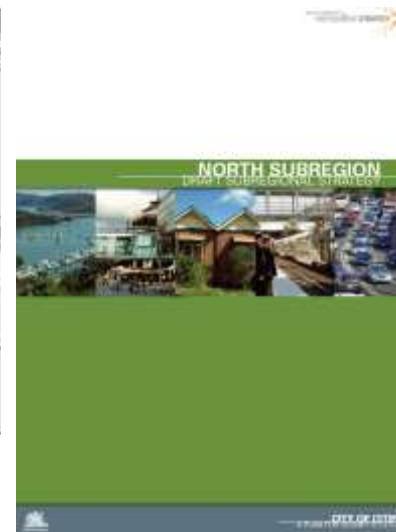
Many current Council plans and strategies provide synergies with the Recreation and Open Space Strategy. These include:

- | | | |
|---|--|--|
| • Blacktown City 2025- Delivering the Vision Together | • Environmental Health Strategy 2005 | • Clean Cities Strategy 2007 |
| • Blacktown City Council Management Plan | • Bushland Revegetation and Regeneration Strategy 2007 | • Blacktown Economic Development Strategy 2003-2008 |
| • Wellness through Physical Activity Policy 2008 | • Open Space Maintenance Strategy (OSMS) 2007 | • Blacktown City Tourism and Commercial Development Strategy 2004/05 |
| • Social Plan 2007 | • Landscape Strategy 2004 | |
| • Cultural Plan 2007-2017 | • State of the Waterways Management Plan 2005 | |

Synergy and Integration with External Influences

Many external documents also provide synergies with the Recreation and Open Space Strategy. These include:

- Australian Sport: Emerging Challenges, New Directions (2008)
- NSW Sport and Recreation: Industry Strategic Directions - Game Plan (2008 – 2012)
- Draft North West Subregion Draft Strategy (2007)
- Guidelines for the Use of Physical Activity for Community Development Purposes (2008)
- Western Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils: Inquiry into Sportsground Management in NSW (2007)
- Legislative Assembly Standing Committee on Public Works: Inquiry into Sportsground Management in NSW (2007)
- Local Government and Shires Association NSW: Creating Active Communities - Physical Activity Guidelines for Local Councils (2006)
- Western Sydney Parklands Vision (2004)
- Department of Infrastructure Planning and Natural Resources (DIPNR) Assessing recreation demand and opportunities, Western Sydney Region (2004)





This year we all start equal.
Kids paint signs.
And I am seven again.
I know I will see my heroes soon.
I feel the excitement.
I have hope in March,
and I might share the glory in September.

Blow that whistle ref!
Send that ball soaring!
Blow that whistle ref!

Thomas Keneally, NRL TV ad campaign (1999)

1. AN ACTION PLAN FOR SPORT

About the Plan

Sport is a high priority for Blacktown due to a wide participation base and the high demand for sportsgrounds and facilities. Sporting facilities service a range of groups and encourage participation in physical activity. Sport contributes to the health of communities by providing an organised means to achieve physical, mental, environmental, economic and social benefits. Participation in physical activity is increasing and organised sport absorbs a large percentage of this participation.

Key Objectives - Sport

- Maintain and embellish the quality and function of sportsgrounds within an appropriate hierarchy of provision
- Further develop some significant and higher standard sporting facilities, with an equitable spread where possible
- Support ongoing community development through sport and encourage participation
- Promote the city as the sporting capital of Western Sydney

1.1 Sportsgrounds

Background to Sportsgrounds

Blacktown has over 60 sportsgrounds across the LGA with over 130 playing fields in total. Future provision of sportsgrounds must balance the challenges of urban development, population growth and land availability in order to meet anticipated community demand. High growth areas with young families will create greater demands for junior sporting activities and changing patterns of women's involvement in traditionally male-dominated sports will add to this pressure.

In planning for future communities, identified sportsgrounds should be of a quality reflecting a hierarchical standard in the provision of structures such as fencing, amenities, pathways and playgrounds. Council's Open Space hierarchy and Maintenance Strategy, adopted in 2007, seeks to provide a framework for management, maintenance and development of these sportsgrounds.

Other issues include:

- The diversity of sport or club needs and expectations; e.g., amenities, storage, parking, and related facilities
- The limited capacity of some sportsgrounds to cater for a variety of sports restricting their viability
- The location of sportsgrounds in residential streets which may cause an impact on residents
- The need to integrate sportsgrounds and recreational spaces and a related lack of trees and shade

Demand analysis reflects that whilst participation in some areas within Blacktown may be static or declining, other areas are experiencing significant growth and as such, there is need for a flexible approach in the provision and management of sportsgrounds throughout the LGA.

Overall, sportsgrounds should be part of an integrated provision of open space and be accessible to the general community, as well as various sporting groups. Generally, exclusive use of open space for a particular sport should be avoided and flexible arrangements with sporting groups adopted. However exclusivity, should be supported should the benefits to the wider community be of significant value as determined by Council.

Strategic Direction for Sportsgrounds

The recommended strategic directions for sportsgrounds are as follows:

- Maintain and enhance the hierarchy of sportsgrounds to provide state, regional, city-wide and district sportsgrounds
- Continue to improve the quality of sportsgrounds on an ongoing basis whilst reflecting the hierarchical framework
- Continue to identify a number of high grade sportsgrounds strategically located across Blacktown to cater for higher grade competitions and events
- Continue to encourage and establish shared use amenities and as buildings age, consider new opportunities for shared use buildings and partnership arrangements
- Where possible, avoid exclusivity of use by sporting groups and adopt flexible arrangements in the allocation of sporting grounds, unless there is a justification for specifically designated areas or enhanced community benefits and commitment to a particular sport

1.2 Sporting Facilities

Background and Strategic Direction for Sporting Facilities

A number of issues and opportunities have been identified in the Recreation and Open Space Strategy regarding sporting facilities. The main findings are as follows:

- Continue to liaise with the NSW State Government and various stakeholders in the development of the Blacktown Olympic Park (BOP) precinct, based within the Western Sydney Parklands to ensure integration and effective development of a high-class sporting precinct which extends to consideration of a major regional indoor sporting / recreation complex as proposed by the NSW Department of Planning.
- International Peace Park is currently used at a maximum level and its use by both Softball and Netball impacts on the local community. The strategy proposes to investigate the possibility of relocating sporting activities to an appropriate site whilst continuing to liaise with the NSW State Government and the Western Sydney Parkland Trust on the establishment of a potential major regional indoor sporting / recreation complex within the Western Sydney Parklands.
- Existing tennis facilities for competition and coaching through the Blacktown District Tennis Association are currently inadequate in relation to size, quality and location. There is a need to consider establishing a larger tennis complex in collaboration with the Blacktown District Tennis Association.
- Continue to review the process of assessing submissions made to Council by Sport and Recreation bodies or groups wishing to establish a major base in the Blacktown LGA, and consider the contribution these bodies or groups offer towards Council and the Community in a sustainability context.
- Continue to liaise with Football NSW on expansionary plans for Western Sydney.

Overall, there is demand for these issues and opportunities to be addressed as a priority. Other sports such as Baseball and Athletics should continue to have a equitable spread of district level facilities across the LGA in accordance with previous planning methods. It is also acknowledged that Athletics has access to the regional facility at Blacktown Olympic Park.

1.3 Equestrian Facilities

Background and Directions for Equestrian Facilities

Blacktown has a small number of equestrian facilities and user groups located in the northern part of the LGA, including two pony clubs and one horse sporting facility. These equestrian facilities require direction in terms of location in view of planned development as part of the North West Growth Centre. This strategy proposes that consideration be given to the establishment of one or two equestrian facilities to support horse sports, pony clubs and events, and acknowledges the presence of and access to the Sydney International Equestrian Centre (SIEC) at Horsley Park.

1.4 Sports Development

Background to Sports Development

Issues facing sporting groups in Blacktown include:

- The cost of operations, particularly increasing insurance costs
- Fluctuating participation rates throughout various sports within the LGA
- Declining numbers of volunteers
- Funding and ability to attract sponsorship
- The desire for facilities to be improved to accommodate growth

These issues are common across NSW and Australia. Sport plays a valuable role in providing positive activities for young people as well as providing opportunities for people to maintain health and fitness and a social network across all age groups. Council continues to maintain and strengthen sport in the Community. Blacktown City Council's Sport and Recreation Advisory Committee plays a role in the consultative process between Council and the sport and recreation community. In preparing for the future demands of the sport and recreation community, and in the pursuit of sporting development, it will be recommended that a working group be established to assist in shaping future direction.

Strategic Direction for Sports Development

Blacktown can continue to support the development of sport by providing quality sporting facilities at a competitive level. Ideally, all sports would have access to quality facilities that people from across the LGA can use. To further support sports development across the LGA, Council can assist sporting groups to address issues and promote initiatives which encourage participation and develop programs including:

- Council facilitating ongoing communication between sporting groups and with Council; e.g., an annual forum to discuss issues, consider partnerships and projects and promote development
- Establishment of a working party to position the Sport and Recreation Advisory Committee for future development of the sport and recreation community
- Council facilitating access to grant funding opportunities to assist with promotions and development programs
- Council supporting volunteer and development programs initiated by sporting associations and the NSW Department of Arts, Sport and Recreation
- Maintaining a presence and involvement in organisations such as the Western Sydney Academy of Sport, and seeking representation on other relevant bodies and organisations charged with the development of sport in Western Sydney
- Ensuring that the balance between elite development and facility-based projects and community participation and development is maintained as part of the aim of becoming the sporting capital of Western Sydney
- Remain informed about increasing participation rates and the Commonwealth Government's intention to make sport part of the preventative health agenda
- Review Commonwealth and State Government initiatives that promote, support and recognise Women in Sport Programs; Indigenous Sports Programs and Disabled Sports and Physical Activity Programs, with the intention of assessing their value for implementation with the local community



AN ACTION PLAN FOR SPORT

Recommended Actions

Objective	Action	Priority
1.1 Sportsgrounds To provide an equitable spread of quality sportsgrounds which are strategically managed and maintained to provide opportunities for the Blacktown community	1.1.1 Maintain and enhance the hierarchy introduced in the OSMS and suggested development and management for Sportsgrounds	Ongoing
	1.1.2 Continue to maintain a number of city-wide sportsgrounds to support high grade competition and events	Ongoing
	1.1.3 Continue to undertake master planning of key sportsgrounds in order to accommodate current and future sporting growth in a sustainable manner	Ongoing
	1.1.4 Continue to provide planned routine and major maintenance/renovation works and include research into emerging science and technologies related to sportsgrounds	Ongoing
	1.1.5 Continue to allocate the use of sporting grounds through a short-term license or seasonal arrangement (a maximum of 5 years), unless there is a significant contribution of resources from the user group, enhanced community benefit, and/or commitment to a particular sport in which a longer term lease arrangement could then be considered (in accordance with the Local Government Act, 1993); e.g., Joe McAleer Reserve	Ongoing
	1.1.6 Review Council's Goods and Services Pricing Schedule in relation to the use of sporting grounds by sport and recreation groups	High
1.2 Sporting Facilities Develop and maintain key facilities for identified sporting associations that will assist in meeting required demand from their user groups and allow for future growth	1.2.1 In partnership with the Blacktown and District Soccer Football Association, continue to plan for a facility development promoting sport and Blacktown in the Western Sydney Parklands	Ongoing
	Establish a positive relationship with the Western Sydney Parklands Trust over use and access to regional sporting facilities within the Parklands jurisdiction	
	Continue to work with AFL and Cricket NSW on the development of BOP and the promotion of the sporting precinct with particular focus on community development	
	1.2.2 Investigate opportunities to establish a tennis facility in the north eastern part of the LGA, as well the opportunity for partnerships with key stakeholders	High

	1.2.3	Investigate the possible centralisation of softball to a single city-wide facility with links to the new development areas	Medium
	1.2.4	Review the current provision for Blacktown District Netball Association. This review is to include partnership opportunities at a state and local level	Medium
	1.2.5	Regularly review the needs of both regional, state or peak sporting organisations and users and implement the process to identify the appropriate provision, location and feasibility of future facilities and venues	High
1.3 Equestrian Facilities Analyse current provision and future direction of equestrian facilities throughout the city	1.3.1	Undertake a detailed review of equestrian facilities, in consultation with equestrian groups, with a view to assessing the establishment of an equestrian facility	High
1.4 Sports Development Develop communities through sport participation and involvement	1.4.1	Facilitate an annual sports forum and/or relevant club development training program to improve interaction, networking and development	High
	1.4.2	Council to facilitate access to grant funding that will assist sports development programs	Medium
	1.4.3	Develop a framework, in collaboration with governing bodies and sporting associations, that will assist clubs to develop their professional delivery of sport, leading to long term club sustainability and increased community participation	High
	1.4.4	Establishment of a working party and discussion paper to position the Sport and Recreation Advisory Committee for future development of the local sport and recreation community	High
	1.4.5	Consider the expansion of the current Blacktown City Sports Awards program which also acknowledges and rewards local sports club development initiatives within the Blacktown Sports Community	High
	1.4.6	Implement the process of assessing submissions made to Council by Sport and Recreation bodies or groups wishing to establish a major base in the Blacktown LGA, and consider the contribution these bodies or groups offer towards Council and the community in a sustainable context	Ongoing
	1.4.7	Review Commonwealth and State initiatives that relate to Women in Sport, Indigenous Populations and People with Disabilities with a view to assessing suitability and application to the local community for maximum benefit	High

The Value of a Park

“We all, at some time, search for peace,
solitude,
contemplation,
inspiration,
physical and emotional release from stress,
refreshment of the mind, body and spirit,
positive thoughts and feelings,
creative expression,
true communication with the people
who are important to us,
a time to allow patience and
wisdom back into our thoughts,
the ability to see problems in perspective,
a renewed love and zest for life.
All of these can be found anywhere,
at any time
but you greatly increase the chances
of finding them
when you are in a park.”

Peter Nicholls, Royal Australian Institute of Parks and Recreation
National Newsletter, Vol 21 No7, August 1997

2. AN ACTION PLAN FOR INFORMAL RECREATION

About the Action Plan

Informal recreation has a high participation rate and is valued by the Blacktown community. Key activities include walking, swimming, picnicking, riding a bike, walking a dog, bushwalking and utilising small local parks and playgrounds for informal recreation purposes. As with other sport and recreation activities, informal recreation is acknowledged to increase physical activity and contribute positively to community wellness.

This Action Plan aims to guide the provision and development of parks and facilities that support informal recreation and in particular provides a direction for:

- Parks
- Playgrounds
- Open space corridors via linear parks and trails
- Youth facilities

Key Objectives - Informal Recreation

- Continue to provide quality open space areas in line with the hierarchy
- Assess the diversity of playgrounds, including the provision of some significant playgrounds spread across the LGA, and investigate the issue of consolidation where relevant
- Increase the provision of trails and cycleways within linear parks and improve the corridors across and beyond the LGA
- Continue to improve on an ongoing basis the quality of open spaces utilised for informal recreation
- Provide additional strategically located facilities for young people across the LGA

2.1 Parks

Background to Parks

Blacktown has a large number of parks varying in quality and size. Council's Open Space Maintenance Strategy (2007) addresses the issue of quality and will continue to enhance development in this area. Other issues relating to parks are:

- A number of parks are less than 0.15ha with limited development opportunities
- Blacktown parks are faced with a number of challenges, including:
 - The quality of infrastructure, including amenities, pathways, seating and tables and occurrences of anti-social behaviours
 - Issues with landscaping
 - Playground equipment variety
 - Enhancing access through pathways and opportunities
 - Issues with fencing quality, including adjoining property fences
 - Drainage or electricity easements

With a number of parks less than 0.15ha, and development opportunities limited, this action plan will recommend the investigation of these parks with a view of potentially consolidating the size and number of smaller parks. This will help Council identify whether such consolidation could increase the effectiveness of resources that could be utilised to further develop other parks in the area and offer increased value to the community. Any investigation would need to balance Council's ongoing commitment to providing accessible local open space where the community can take advantage of opportunities for play and places for people to sit and relax whilst also providing safe, appealing and usable facilities for the community.

Blacktown also has a small number of city-wide parks, i.e., larger, higher quality and/or unique parks that have the potential to draw people from a wide catchment. The main city-wide parks are:

- Nurragingy Reserve
- Woodcroft Park
- Alpha Park
- Orana Park
- The Rooty Hill

In addition, Council has endorsed the development of Blacktown Showground and Francis Park as a significant community and cultural precinct that will host city-wide community activities and events. Council is also planning to develop sections of the former Grantham Estate Poultry Research Station at Seven Hills as a city-wide park and promoting the future development of The Ponds Parkland in the new release areas. It is also acknowledged that Council has already approved the development of a City Garden in Alpha Park and Grantham Estate.

Rouse Hill Regional Park (managed by the NSW Department of Environment and Climate Change) and the Prospect Reservoir area (managed by Sydney Water) also provide appealing recreation settings that draw large numbers of people from across the region, and in particular, Blacktown residents.

Demand analysis indicates increased community usage is likely if additional city-wide parks are established across Blacktown within a hierarchy. This can be achieved by continuing to improve existing parks and creating additional parks. In particular, these parks should focus on family and group activity such as picnic areas, trails and unique play areas to increase usage and participation.

Strategic Direction for Parks

The Community values parks that are appealing, safe, provide a connection to the natural environment and have the potential for activities such as children's play and exercise, or provide a place to walk to and relax. Council has demonstrated its commitment to enhancing the quality of parks through the OSMS. To continue this enhancement work, it is important to review the provision of parks and consider initial assessment of small parks less than 0.15ha to further assess their development potential.

In relation to improving the provision and value of larger city-wide parks, it is recommended that Council adopt the following approach:

- Continue to maintain and improve the quality of existing city-wide parks, including engaging management partners in establishing ongoing development programs in key non Council parks, such as Rouse Hill Regional Park and the picnic areas around Prospect Reservoir
- Continue to improve, on an ongoing basis, the quality of city-wide parks, whilst reflecting the hierarchical framework; e.g., Blacktown Showground and Francis Park
- Investigate additional city-wide parks along open space corridors and in other key locations with diverse settings which will link to linear paths; e.g., Whalan and Tregear Reserves

2.2 Playgrounds

Background to Playgrounds

Playgrounds provide an activity opportunity for children outside of the home environment and have been recognised as an important recreational facility for the Community. Blacktown has over 290 playground facilities across the LGA. Issues relating to the playground facilities, including opportunities for enhancements, include:

- Strategic planning and construction of diverse, innovative and unique playgrounds and play areas such as the Rouse Hill Regional Park
- Play equipment for children with a disability
- Quality of a number of playgrounds (as a result of anti-social occurrences)
- Community desire for a number of unique 'regional' playgrounds, a greater diversity of design in local playgrounds and more playgrounds that support older children

Strategic Direction for Playgrounds

The overriding strategic direction recommended for playgrounds is to provide:

- A hierarchy of playgrounds that is consistent with the hierarchy of the parks in which the playground is located; e.g., a playground located on a district level park should generally be district level
- A small number of significant and unique city-wide playgrounds located in key parks across the LGA. This includes playgrounds that support children with a disability
- More playgrounds that appeal to older children (aged 8-12 years)
- A greater diversity of playground equipment and design
- Rationalisation of the provision of older playgrounds to effectively manage the attraction, maintenance and replacement costs
- Playgrounds that continue to be appealing and safe, and maintained and upgraded in accordance with relevant Australian Standards
- Playgrounds with maximum flexibility, use, and appeal for the community, through provision on reserves greater than 0.3 ha in size to ensure diversity in play and other activities, and a balance with the surrounding environment

2.3 Open Space Corridors – Linear Parks and Trails

The Western Sydney Parklands is a major new regional park that will provide quality open space facilities for new and existing communities in Western Sydney. The Western Sydney Parklands were identified as a regional open space corridor in 1968 (Sydney Region Outline Plan). This long term planning has ensured regional open space is available for future generations.

NSW Government's Metropolitan Strategy – Northwest Subregional Strategy 2007 p 140.

Background to Open Space Corridors - Linear Parks and Trails

A number of significant open space corridors such as the Eastern Creek Corridor and Ropes Creek Corridor exist within Blacktown. Blacktown City Council and the NSW State Government have been progressive in retaining open space corridors and connections, and acquiring land to complete existing and create potential corridors.

Quality and accessibility of these open space corridors is the major issue, as a large proportion of land along Eastern Creek is not yet accessible and parts of the Ropes Creek Corridor require enhancement to maximise the natural land values. These and other open space corridors would benefit from substantial trail systems and connections between the various corridors and regions. However, the existence of telecommunication lines does affect the quality of a number of these corridors and planning should investigate enhancements in this area to improve quality.

Planning is underway and works are proposed to address the quality and accessibility of open space corridors in the Blacktown LGA. In particular, the NSW Department of Planning has completed planning for the Eastern Creek (Parklands Strategy and Trails project) and for Ropes Creek Corridors. Council is also

aiming to develop trails based on the City of Blacktown Bike Plan (Ropes Creek Walk). The Blacktown Creek Walk is an example of a popular walk and planned trails around the Second Ponds Creek Parkland Corridor should be seen as positive steps towards achieving these strategic directions.

There is a demand for walking, dog exercise areas and cycle trails and track systems for bike riders. The continued improvements and additional trail systems can be seen as a positive step towards increased physical activity options for the community.

The Western Sydney Parklands is an important open space corridor for the Blacktown community and wider region. Its 5,280 ha covers the low ridge of hills midway between Parramatta and the Blue Mountains that run north/south from Prospect Hill and fall to the floodplain of Eastern Creek. The vision of the parklands is to *“form a unique component of the Sydney metropolitan open space system, linked to surrounding areas and providing a diverse range of recreation and cultural learning experiences integrated with the natural and cultural values of the land”* (The Western Sydney Parklands Management Vision, 2004). To this effect, the Department of Planning recently established a 27km cycle track that runs from Quakers Hill to Leppington (Liverpool City Council) forming one of the many roles of this regional corridor.

Strategic Direction for Open Space Connections - Linear Park and Trails

The continued enhancement of open space corridors and the development of linear trail systems should be seen as an opportunity for Council and other NSW State Government bodies, such as the Department of Planning and the NSW Department of Arts, Sport and Recreation, to encourage the region to engage in physical activity. Walking and cycling are key recreation activities and linear trail systems provide alternative transport opportunities that improve the function of cities and the health of communities.

Particular strategic directions that Blacktown and the NSW State Government should consider include:

- Adopting and implementing directions in planning coordinated by the Department of Planning, in the development of trail systems and amenities in the Ropes Creek and Western Sydney Parklands (Eastern Creek)
- Increasing the amount of accessible open space along the Eastern Creek Corridor, including a linear trail system along the corridor
- Continuing to establish linear trail systems along other open space corridors to enhance the quality of corridors, whilst assisting in facilitating accessible connections between various forms of open space and community facilities

2.4 Youth Facilities

Youth is a period of rapid emotional, physical and intellectual transition, where young people progress from being dependant children to independent adults.

This is often a period where young people face a range of life events and make decisions that can impact on their immediate and longer term health and wellbeing ...

All levels of governments are interested in positively influencing the environment of young people by providing support to them and their families in areas such as health, education, welfare, employment and safety...

Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, Young Australians - Their Health and Wellbeing, 2007. p.1

Background to Youth Facilities

Youth facilities in Blacktown include:

- A number of outdoor basketball courts (14 in total, including half-courts)
- A skate park at Rooty Hill
- A skate facility linked to the Blacktown Aquatic Centre (half pipe)
- A BMX facility at Willmot
- A BMX facility at Rooty Hill
- A BMX facility at Bidwill
- Rooty Hill Leisure Centre (included in Aquatic and Indoor Facilities)
- Emerton Youth Recreation Centre (included in Aquatic and Indoor Facilities)
- Other informal or unapproved facilities that are identified from time to time; e.g., BMX tracks

The continued City growth and the planned incoming population of the North West Growth Centres reflects a growing need for more youth facilities that are accessible and designed to contemporary standards. Feedback from young people indicates that social spaces and activity options are in demand and that young people appreciate safe, appealing and accessible settings.

Strategic Direction for Youth Facilities

Blacktown has a large proportion of young people and families and is anticipated to continue to have high demand in this area, given the forecast demographic growth. The type of facilities provided for young people in the future should include skate spaces/plazas and BMX tracks, but not be limited to these facilities. Although Skate and BMX tracks appeal to and cater for a proportion of young people, they also provide a social space and reason for meeting. Future youth facilities should consider:

- Safe walking and cycle paths
- Multi-purpose outdoor courts (that are accessible to the public)
- Safe and appealing seating to support meeting places in parks
- Adventure type play equipment for younger age groups (12-14 years)
- Exercise equipment in parks
- Indoor facilities that support physical activity, such as gyms, courts and climbing walls
- Indoor facilities that support social and cultural activities (arts, crafts, drama, dance, performances, music and multi-media)
- Facilities for young people could be included in larger recreational parks and key sportsgrounds

Future youth facilities should continue to address the following key issues:

- Easy and affordable access to transport and equity in usage (considering the limited options and income levels for young people)
- Proximity to other recreation infrastructure / amenities with a 'youth-centric' feel. This may extend to spaces surrounding youth services and agencies, libraries, aquatic / recreation centres, sports clubs and existing youth infrastructure in parks.
- An open and accessible location promoting a safe and appealing presence via open surveillance, compatible surrounds and suitable amenities; e.g., toilets, seating, shade etc.
- Provision of adequate meeting, social or event space next to activity areas
- Input into planning, design and ongoing management by young people as demonstrated by Council's Rooty Hill Skatepark

AN ACTION PLAN FOR INFORMAL RECREATION

Recommended Actions

Objective	Action	Priority
2.1 Parks	2.1.1 Continue to undertake priority works in parks as reported to Council	Ongoing
Enhance the quality of parks through ongoing management and maintenance, and develop and maintain city-wide parks in key locations throughout the City of Blacktown	2.1.2 Establish and continue to improve recreation picnic areas linked to parks, particularly where there is a link to a natural or other appealing settings	Medium
	2.1.3 Continue to plan for Blacktown Showground and Francis Park, and Grantham Estate as unique and diverse recreation spaces	High
	2.1.4 Assess the provision of local parks less than 0.15ha and review the capacity for development in line with community need	Medium
	2.1.5 Investigate the establishment of additional city-wide parks with quality and unique features that support the community and are strategically located across the LGA	High
	2.1.6 Liaise with Sydney Water and the NSW Department of Environment and Climate Change on the potential development and enhancement of recreation and picnic areas around Prospect Reservoir and Rouse Hill Regional Park	Medium
2.2 Playgrounds	2.2.1 Develop a playground strategy that specifically guides the provision of playgrounds throughout the LGA	High
Develop and maintain an equitable spread of quality playgrounds operating in a hierarchical framework	2.2.2 Plan for key playgrounds to incorporate accessible options for children with disabilities	High
2.3 Open Space Corridors- Linear Parks and Trails	2.3.1 Plan for and establish major linear parks (including trails) along the Eastern Creek Corridor (within the Western Sydney Parklands) and Ropes Creek Corridor, and create links to other corridors, including regional connections	Medium
Develop and implement plans that will assist in the development and enhancement of corridors and linear trail systems	2.3.2 Investigate the acquisition of land to establish and strengthen strategic corridors, including links between various forms of community facilities	Ongoing
	2.3.3 Promote the use and existence of the trail system within the LGA, including the City of Blacktown Bike Plan	Ongoing

Objective	Action	Priority
2.4 Youth Facilities Develop and maintain a number of additional youth-related recreation facilities that strategically cater for demand across the LGA	2.4.1 Plan for various activity opportunities for older children and young people in consultation with young people and the community	Ongoing
	2.4.2 Investigate a number of future youth places across the Blacktown LGA to achieve a spread of youth facilities to meet demand	High
	2.4.3 Continue to support the development of the Blacktown Showground precinct as a venue for youth space and actively encourage the engagement of young people in the recreation planning for the site	High





*"I used to beg my parents to take me to the pool whenever they could and I used to sit for hours in front of the television watching videos of my favourite swimmers from the Olympics or the Commonwealth Games...
I'm not too sure what it was about swimming that I love.
Maybe it was being part of a team, or maybe it was the competition.
It could have been having great coaches who encouraged me to love the sport or
it might have been that awesome feeling of having legs like jelly after a race or
even just the cool, refreshing feel of the water.
It couldn't have been that I was good at it because I wasn'tbut I now love spending an hour or so at the pool,
just relaxing or swimming a few laps"*

Anonymous young person

3. AN ACTION PLAN FOR AQUATIC AND INDOOR FACILITIES

About the Action Plan

This Action Plan provides a strategic direction for the provision and development of aquatic and indoor facilities and identifies priorities for the future.

Key Objectives - Aquatic and Indoor Facilities

Continue to develop a quality hierarchy of aquatic, leisure and indoor centres spread throughout the LGA, which meets existing and new development area needs.

3.1 Aquatic Facilities

Background to Aquatic Facilities

Blacktown has an expansive and varied hierarchical network of aquatic and leisure centres spread across LGA. These include:

- Blacktown Leisure Centre, Stanhope (regional)
- Blacktown Aquatic Centre (regional)
- Emerton Leisure Centre (district)
- Mount Druitt Swimming Centre (local)
- Riverstone Swimming Centre (local)

In 1998, an 'Aquatic Facility Redevelopment and Feasibility Study' was undertaken which guided facility provision and upgrade to offer residents and visitors a unique setting and experience in each of the facilities. The upgrades and development focused on the following:

- Creation of Blacktown Leisure Centre, Stanhope as a regional facility and industry leader
- Staged upgrade of Blacktown Aquatic Centre whilst maintaining its role as the main competition pool for the region
- Creation of Emerton Leisure Centre as a community-based modern leisure centre
- Minor upgrades to Riverstone and Mt Druitt Swimming Centres

Key Issues and gaps for Aquatic / Leisure Centres:

- Continuing to position and reinforce the Blacktown Leisure Centre, Stanhope as a regional facility and industry leader capable of accommodating anticipated population growth
- Increasing demand for leisure experiences at Blacktown Aquatic Centre and elements of aging infrastructure
- Reviewing future options for continued growth and increased visitations to Emerton Leisure Centre, consistent with its future relationship with Mt Druitt Swimming Centre
- Reviewing the future viability of Riverstone Swimming Centre
- Investigate the likely demand for an additional Aquatic / Leisure centre to service the new release areas of Marsden Park and Shanes Park and the relationship with the existing Riverstone Swimming Centre

Strategic Direction for Aquatic Facilities

The strategic direction recommended for implementation includes:

- Continue to provide a hierarchy of Aquatic / Leisure centres with safe, appealing and varied leisure experiences spread across the LGA
- Maintain the Blacktown Leisure Centre, Stanhope as an industry leader and investigate ways to maintain this position and capitalise on future growth of the northern area of the Blacktown LGA
- Review the original staged Master Plan of Blacktown Aquatic Centre to assess its relevance and advise on suitable directions for facility development and community demands in the next five years. This review should aim to ensure that the facility is regarded as the best competition venue in Western Sydney, whilst appealing to the wider community on a modern leisure basis without detracting from the Blacktown Leisure Centre, Stanhope.
- Continue to investigate measures to increase program appeal and visitations to Emerton Leisure Centre, including community recreation options, child / youth play and community centre, and strengthen management links with Mt Druitt Swimming Centre
- Continue to provide and increase the range of programs and services at all facilities with a key focus on partnership opportunities
- Continue to plan for the development of Riverstone Swimming Centre to ensure that it meets the needs of the proposed growth in the North West Growth Centre.
- Investigate the need for an additional aquatic / leisure centre to service the North West Growth Centre, in particular, Shanes Park and Marsden Park

3.2 Indoor Recreation and Sport Facilities

Background to Indoor Recreation and Sport Facilities

Indoor facility provision has been linked to development associated with aquatic / leisure centres throughout the industry over recent years and this has substantially improved provision in this area. Within Blacktown, the following is provided:

- Two indoor court facilities and a health and fitness area were included in the development at Blacktown Leisure Centre, Stanhope. Two additional courts plus an aquatic , leisure, fun and attraction area were included in the original master plan for future staging. A further extension of the health and fitness facility is currently underway and due for completion in 2009.
- A health and fitness facility was included in the initial redevelopment stages at Blacktown Aquatic Centre, and further court development was initially planned for in the master plan for future staging
- Two indoor courts have been included as part of the development of Emerton Leisure Centre

Other facilities (including non-Council provision) includes:

- A two court stadium at Mt Druitt (Kevin Betts Stadium)
- Indoor youth centres at Bidwill, Shalvey and Blacktown (PCYC facilities)
- A one court stadium at Rooty Hill (Rooty Hill Leisure Centre)
- A one court hall at Emerton Youth Recreation Centre
- A two court multi-purpose facility at Riverstone (Riverstone Sports Centre)
- A proposed two court private development in Seven Hills (due to open in mid-2009)
- The expansion and development of a large health and fitness facility at Rooty Hill RSL

Key Issues and gaps for Indoor Recreation and Sport Facilities:

- Major competitions and associations usually operate on a four court facility, however, neighbouring facilities at Penrith and The Hills provide such facilities at this point
- Future provision should consider strengthening the relationship between health and fitness facilities and indoor recreation centres to expand a range of activities that meet community need and provide greater viability
- The Emerton Youth Recreation Centre is a facility that supports socially and financially disadvantaged youth and continues to focus on a range of cultural and recreation activities for the development of young people
- Review the current provision of services and management of Rooty Hill Leisure Centre in order to increase patronage and provide for local youth recreation needs
- Ongoing assessment of the plans for the Western Sydney Parklands to include a regional indoor sporting / recreation centre in the Bungaribee / Rooty Hill Precinct
- Investigate the role and extension of sport and recreation activities in community halls, centres and other facilities, and the use of NSW Department of Education facilities on this basis

Strategic Direction for Indoor Recreation and Sport Facilities

The strategic direction recommended for implementation includes:

- Investigate the provision of court space as part of the review of the development of Blacktown Aquatic Centre and Blacktown Leisure Centre, Stanhope. Liaise with the NSW Department of Planning on their development plans for a major indoor regional sporting / recreation facility in the Western Sydney Parklands and assess its impact and affect on supply and demand in the region
- Link additional courts and health and fitness facilities in the North West Growth Centre (including Riverstone Swimming Centre) to planned future developments associated with either community centres or aquatic / leisure facilities once feasibility studies are completed
- Investigate the future options for service delivery from Rooty Hill Leisure Centre
- Continue to explore creative and innovative uses of indoor court facilities to attract patronage, increase usage and improve viability
- Investigate partnerships with private parties to pursue provision of facilities, programs and activities
- Analyse the role that community centres and halls play in the provision of indoor recreation and sport opportunities for the community and provide adequate advice and supportive resources
- Avoid the provision of indoor recreation centres in isolation due to their viability concerns unless the provision entails innovative and leading edge activities



AN ACTION PLAN FOR AQUATIC AND INDOOR FACILITIES

Objective	Action	Priority
3.1 Aquatic Facilities Continue to develop a quality hierarchy of aquatic and leisure centres throughout the LGA that meets existing and new development areas needs	3.1.1 Investigate future options for facility development and expansion of Blacktown Leisure Centre, Stanhope in light of regional status and surrounding population growth	High
	3.1.2 Continue to investigate means of expanding the Emerton Leisure Centre's business prospects through program and service delivery	Ongoing
	3.1.3 Undertake a review of the relationship between Emerton Leisure Centre and Mount Druitt Swimming Centre in servicing the same catchment area, program service delivery and management options	Ongoing
	3.1.4 Undertake detailed review and assessment of original staged master plan for Blacktown Aquatic Centre in consideration of current community / regional needs	High
	3.1.5 Review the required facility mix and business projections for the Riverstone Swimming Centre in light of forecasted growth and anticipated demand	Ongoing
	3.1.6 Investigate an additional indoor aquatic centre linked to health and fitness facilities in the North West Growth Centre	High
3.2 Indoor Recreation and Sport Facilities Strategically plan for additional indoor sport and recreation facilities whilst maintaining existing Council related facilities	3.2.1 Investigate indoor courts linked to the Blacktown Aquatic Centre, in consultation with potential users (e.g., Blacktown District Netball Association), including netball, basketball and other indoor sports (see 3.1.4)	High
	3.2.2 Plan for additional health and fitness facilities linked to existing and future indoor aquatic centres, including a feasibility assessment	Medium
	3.2.3 Liaise with the NSW Department of Education and Training on school needs and the potential for schools to utilise community facilities, instead of establishing community facilities in schools	Ongoing
	3.2.4 Continue to liaise with the NSW Department of Planning and Western Sydney Parklands Trust whilst planning for the establishment of a major regional indoor sporting / recreation centre within the Doonside precinct	Ongoing

Note: All planning will require consultation, a feasibility assessment and detailed design.

“The North West Subregion contains an extensive range of National Parks, bushland and conservation areas, waterways, and environmentally sensitive areas. These areas provide important recreation opportunities for residents of the North West Subregion, are key attractors of visitors to the area and protect a diverse range of plant and animals”

NSW Government's Metropolitan Strategy – Northwest Subregional Strategy 2007 p 110.



4. AN ACTION PLAN FOR NATURAL AREAS

About the Action Plan

Natural Areas provide a contrast to urban development and are particularly valuable for their environmental value. They provide habitat for native plants and animals, cleaner air, help absorb greenhouse gases and increase visual amenity. Natural Areas also provide an appealing setting for recreation by providing a quiet place to walk, relax, and experience the environment.

Council is committed to protecting, enhancing and maintaining biological diversity and habitat in Natural Areas, including bushland areas and watercourses, which are particularly valuable resources. It is important to protect, enhance and maintain existing Natural Areas and increase them where practical.

The focus of the Action Plan for Natural Areas is on reinforcing the principles, objectives and actions listed in the State of the Waterways Management Plan (2005) and the Bush Regeneration and Revegetation Strategy (2007) previously adopted by Council. Key actions have been identified to add benefit where required and contribute positively to the delivery of the State of the Waterways Management Plan and the Bush Regeneration and Revegetation Strategy.

Key Objectives - Natural Areas

The key objective for Natural Areas is:

- To protect, restore and enhance the value of Natural and Heritage Areas. This includes:
 - Establishing additional Natural Areas where appropriate
 - Supporting compatible activities in Natural Areas where appropriate; e.g., walking, relaxing, picnicking
 - Supporting the protection, enhancement and maintenance of Natural Areas, including bushland, watercourses and the riparian environment
 - Identifying and conserving existing and future heritage and culturally significant areas

4.1 Natural Area Reserves and Watercourses

Background to Natural Area Reserves and Watercourses

Blacktown spans three major catchments of the Sydney basin, including Sydney Harbour, Georges River and the Hawkesbury-Nepean River, which contain over 230 kilometres of defined drainage, including 153 kilometres of natural watercourse. The State of the Waterways Management Plan (2005) identifies the current state and issues affecting waterways in the Blacktown LGA and provides detailed strategies and actions for their management.

The Natural Areas of the Blacktown LGA exist within an urbanised environment, and as such, there are a number of issues which can impact on different characteristics. Some of these issues and impacts include:

- Pressure of urban development and community use on the quantity and quality of bushland
- Maintaining biological diversity
- The need to provide a safe environment where there is minimal impact on Natural Areas caused by community use whilst also maintaining community safety through effective maintenance
- Reducing stormwater runoff and pollutants
- Continued management of weed infestations
- Increased occurrences of anti-social activity resulting in illegal dumping and littering
- The need to maintain asset protection zones
- The prevalence of threatened Cumberland Plain Woodland and the need to manage these areas in relation to the appropriate legislative requirements

There can often be conflicting uses for Natural Areas with environmental values leading to a high level of protection. The NSW Local Government Act, 1993 guides the development and management of community land and in particular requires the protection of Natural Areas. Council values the contribution these areas make in providing habitat for native plants and animals and as such, a balanced approach for management of these areas is required to ensure the use and development of Natural Areas creates negligible impacts and fosters community respect for the environment. This can be achieved, for example, through the establishment of pathways, boardwalks, protected areas, controlled picnic areas and interpretative signage.

Council is developing a Plan of Management for Natural Areas - Watercourses which will guide the future management of watercourses. This Plan will highlight the importance of managing watercourses to:

- Protect, enhance and maintain biological diversity and preserve ecological values
- Protect the riparian environment, particularly in relation to riparian vegetation and bank stability
- Rehabilitate degraded watercourses
- Promote community education and appropriate community access

This Plan of Management will complement the existing State of the Waterways Management Plan 2005 and the Bushland Revegetation and Regeneration Strategy 2007.

Strategic Direction for Natural Area Reserves and Watercourses

Council is committed to providing and managing Natural Areas. In particular:

- Continuing to retain Natural Areas that provide habitat for native fauna and flora and areas that have a high biological diversity
- Establishing additional accessible Natural Areas where possible; e.g., as part of the North West Growth Centre
- Continuing the development of access to Natural Area reserves through the provision of appropriate trails and activity areas; e.g., boardwalks and tracks
- Linking urban and natural areas through increased community awareness and fostering a sense of ownership amongst stakeholders
- Continue to implement means to reduce pollution entering the watercourses and degrading downstream ecosystems
- Continue to promote and encourage links between various stakeholders to provide for the integrated management and protection of Natural Areas
- Raising awareness to ensure future development is sensitive to the protection, enhancement and management of Natural Areas

4.2 Other Natural and Heritage Resources

Background and Strategic Direction to Other Natural and Heritage Resources

There have only been a small number of reserves with heritage or cultural significance that have so far been identified within the LGA. In order to maintain the integrity of these sites, and in the best interests of future generations, it will be recommended that further assessment based on cultural, heritage and ecological values be conducted to identify any additional items so they can be protected and managed.

It is recommended that a further review of heritage and cultural features be undertaken in a land management context to determine whether additional reserves should be given a 'Natural Area – Heritage and Cultural Significance' category. It is recommended that a framework for managing these types of reserves be developed and implemented by Council to maintain the integrity of the related reserves for the future.

A STRATEGY FOR NATURAL AREAS

Recommended Actions

Objective	Action	Priority
4.1 Natural Area Reserves and Watercourses	4.1.1 Continue to promote and support the objectives and actions identified in the Bushland Regeneration and Revegetation Strategy	Ongoing
Retain, establish and maintain natural area reserves and watercourses that enhance the ecological, social and economic values for the City of Blacktown	4.1.2 Explore opportunities to improve access and link trails between Bushland, Natural Area Reserves, Parks and Waterways	Ongoing
	4.1.3 Continue to promote and support the objectives and actions identified in the State of the Waterways Management Plan 2005	Ongoing
4.2 Other Natural and Heritage Resources	4.2.1 Undertake a further review of heritage sites and items of cultural significance to determine additional natural areas that should have the land management category 'Natural Area – Area of Cultural Significance'	Medium
Ascertain natural areas that have cultural significance and develop an appropriate framework for these to be developed	4.2.2 Continue with development of Plans of Management	Ongoing





Local councils are responsible for contributing to the health and well-being of their communities through the provision of facilities and services. They have the potential to increase physical activity within their communities more than any other body due to their key role in providing and managing environments, facilities and services.

The provision of footpaths and walking and cycle tracks, the provision of safe and appealing environments, the availability of sporting facilities and recreation activities are just a few ways that councils encourage physical activity.

This includes encouraging incidental physical activity, that is, people walking or cycling for a purpose other than recreation, such as to get to the local shops, schools or their workplace.

Creating Active Communities: Physical Activity Guidelines for Local Councils. NSW Department of Local Government (2006)

5. AN ACTION PLAN FOR COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION (INCLUDING WELLNESS)

About the Action Plan

For the purpose of this plan, community participation refers to activity that is organised but not competitive as well as activity that is incidental and casual. Examples could be a walking program, a fitness program in a community hall or neighbourhood centre, an organised community event, an organised social game of tennis or soccer, participation in an arts or cultural program, or organised indoor activities for children or youth or a social group. People of all ages and cultural backgrounds require opportunities to participate in activities for their health and well being, and facilities and programs are necessary to support these activities. In addition, Council's Wellness through Physical Activity Policy will assist in providing an overriding framework and philosophy for the facilitation of community participation in physical activity.

Key Objectives - Community Participation

The key objectives for community participation include:

- Broaden the use of existing recreation and community facilities to support different types of recreation and community activities. This could require modifications to some management practices for community centres to ensure wider appeal
- Increase the number and diversity of community programs through existing recreation facilities and open spaces
- Review the level of support to community groups as well as the role and function of Park Committees
- Promote physical activity as a means of achieving individual and community wellness
- Review Commonwealth and State Government initiatives that promote, support and recognise Women in Sport Programs; Indigenous Sports Programs and Disabled Sports and Physical Activity Programs, with the intention of assessing their value for implementation with the local community

5.1 Facility Use

Background to Facility Use

Council's aquatic / leisure and indoor recreation and sport facilities provide opportunities for community participation through various health, fitness and recreation facilities and programs, such as pools for aqua aerobics and gyms for exercise. However, there are other demands in the community that achieve the key objectives. These include:

- Spaces for dance, drama, performances and martial arts
- Provision of entertainment opportunities for young people
- Spaces for active social gatherings and meetings, particularly for cultural groups from non-English speaking backgrounds
- Activity spaces for children linked to play
- Facilities that enable casual games of sport

These demands can continue to be catered for by:

- Facilitating the continued use of community and neighbourhood centres through a wider range of activities, programs and services
- Continuing to expand the range of programs being provided in aquatic and fitness facilities
- Providing further facilities with a multi-cultural focus
- Focusing existing facilities such as the Rooty Hill Leisure Centre to target young people and cultural groups
- Allocating outdoor spaces for non-sporting community activity and events, such as skate spaces / plazas and outdoor locations that support community activity

This Action Plan for Community Participation includes non-sporting community activities. Participation in sport is included in the Action Plan for Sport.

Strategic Direction for Facility Use

It is recommended that Council's community centres and indoor facilities be reviewed to assess their ability to provide for a wider range of community participation activities; e.g., the Rooty Hill Leisure Centre as an activity centre for children, young people and cultural groups. In addition, key spaces for non-competition outdoor activities can be identified and developed. This direction should be considered in light of the ongoing viability of these facilities with regards to access, operation and community demand.

5.2 Program Potential

Background to Program Potential

Additional programs could be developed in aquatic and indoor recreation and sport facilities; however, Council must give consideration to the following:

- The need for affordable programs and activity opportunities to support lower income families
- The need to consider cultural constraints and requirements and support specific cultural groups, e.g., culturally and linguistically diverse communities
- The need for facilities to cater for casual and 'self-organised' use; e.g., a cultural group requiring a venue for regular casual games of basketball, or a space for a social gathering at an affordable cost

Community centres could provide additional activity opportunities, however, community centres are generally hired out and the lack a person to coordinate activities can be a significant deterrent. Some community groups do not have the resources to organise activities and hire venues, and as such, people tend not to organise and participate in activities of a physical nature. Many new groups often lack the information, skill and experience to be able to access many valid and applicable programs and services. Council views the network of community centres as a vital link in extending the opportunity to participate in a wide range of activity options.

The need to facilitate activities is relevant for all age and cultural groups, but is particularly essential to support young people and cultural groups who are less likely to have the resources to establish their own activities. This is particularly relevant in parts of the city where the mix of cultural groups and identified areas of socio-economic disadvantage is more heightened.

Cultural and community activities require coordination, however, funding and personnel resources to assist in this area are primarily sourced from partnerships with suitable organisations such as NSW Department of Arts, Sport and Recreation to achieve the desired community outcomes.

Strategic Direction for Program Potential

Council should investigate the means to plan for and facilitate a range of community activities and events that support greater community participation in physical activity and achieve broader community use of facilities and open space.

In addition, Council plays a key role in planning and facilitating various events and activity programs that utilise recreation and open space facilities and this should continue to be promoted and developed.

5.3 Community Participation in Management

Background to Community Participation in Management

Community groups contribute significantly to the management of open space and community resources. Bushcare groups and park management committees all contribute to managing resources and servicing the community. Blacktown currently has over 60 park management committees (established under Section 355 of the NSW Local Government Act) that assist Council to manage the use and operation of its reserves.

Whilst community groups are highly valued, consideration should be given to:

- Reviewing and analysing Park Management Committee models in response to changing needs and modern trends

Strategic Direction for Community Participation in Management

Council has already reviewed and commenced enhancements to the management practices of park committees and should continue to review directions relating to existing and potential community groups to ensure that the best value is obtained from community groups and they are appropriately supported. This includes:

- Considering ways to further support community groups such as bushcare and service groups
- Continue to liaise with the NSW Department of Arts, Sport and Recreation on available resources suitable for assisting community groups self-governance in recreation areas

5.4 Wellness through Physical Activity

Background to Wellness through Physical Activity

In March 2008, Council introduced the Wellness through Physical Activity Policy, which outlined a vision to “promote physical activity in the community as a contribution to achieving physical, mental, cultural, social and environmental health and wellbeing”. The objectives of the policy are to:

- To define wellness and how this can be addressed through physical activity
- To assist in improving the overall health of the Blacktown Community
- To support communities in gaining access and opportunities to engage in physical activities that improve wellness
- To provide direction to the development of a ‘wellness through physical activity action plan’
- To provide leadership in establishing safe and supportive environments that foster and promote a physically active lifestyle
- To ensure compliance with Council's Management Plan and collaboration with other formally adopted council documents
- To promote an integrated approach to wellness through physical activity in all areas of Council activity
- To facilitate community education on wellness to promote maximum health outcomes

Strategic Direction for Wellness through Physical Activity

The guiding principles to this policy provide a strategic direction for achieving Wellness through Physical Activity:

- Provision and Access: Council recognises the need for an accessible network of recreation infrastructure provision and an opportunity for all members of the community to engage in physical activity, regardless of ability, age, class, gender, sexuality, culture or race
- Special Needs and Population Groups: Council will encourage a focus on activities that have a positive impact on groups who have lower levels of physical activity
- Community Interaction and Engagement: Council appreciates the rich and powerful resources that the community can provide through identifying needs, obtaining support for programs and initiatives, and providing resources and shaping strategies
- Whole of Council Approach: Council recognises the need to adopt an organisational philosophy where wellness and physical activity is incorporated within the strategic directions of Council and its operations
- Safe, Supportive & Sustainable Environments: Council acknowledges the importance that the physical environment plays in supporting the local community to participate in a range of activities that will lead to community wellness through physical activity
- Partnerships: Council creates and maintains relationships with key stakeholders, including other spheres of government, neighbouring councils, local businesses and community groups, to produce mutually beneficial outcomes related to physical activity and community wellness
- Civic Responsibility/Governance: Council will assume a leadership and advocacy role in developing a setting for wellness in Blacktown City and ensure that physical activity is recognised as a priority in relevant activities and actions
- Ongoing Monitoring and Evaluation: Council recognises the importance of reviewing participation in physical activity in order to adequately meet the demands of the changing demographics and lifestyles of its residents

AN ACTION PLAN FOR COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION (including Wellness)

Recommended Actions

Objective	Action	Priority
5.1 Facility Use Ensure effective and wide-spread use of various facilities that support recreational activities	5.1.1 Undertake an audit with Council's Section 355 Committees, community centre managers, local community agencies and the Community Development Unit to assess and further develop health and wellness programs in Council community facilities	High
	5.1.2 Continue to promote and establish facilities in open space that support community-wide activity such as bocce areas, handball courts or volleyball courts in key parks	Ongoing
5.2 Program Potential Provide a diverse range of recreation programs and events that will benefit the health and wellbeing of the community	5.2.1 Operate and seek grant funding for active community programs across Blacktown	Ongoing
	5.2.2 Investigate establishing additional grant-funded programs and activities in aquatic and leisure centres that extend to include arts and cultural programs; e.g., vacation programs, programs for seniors, fitness and specialised learn-to-swim programs	Ongoing
	5.2.3 In partnership with community organisations and groups, continue to plan for key community events each year in Blacktown that focus on participation in physical activity	Ongoing
5.3 Community Participation in Management Empower members of the community to help facilitate the ongoing management of key recreation areas	5.3.1 Consider additional opportunities for partnering and supporting service groups; e.g., through access to venues, grant funding and service promotions	Medium
	5.3.2 Review Park Management operational procedures in response to changing needs and modern trends	Ongoing

Objective	Action	Priority
5.4 Wellness through Physical Activity	5.4.1 Review and implement (where appropriate) relevant guidelines developed by stakeholders relating to physical activity; e.g., Physical Activity Guidelines for Local Councils and Guidelines for the Use of Physical Activity for Community Development Purposes	Ongoing
Promotion of Physical Activity through working relationships with key stakeholders and their related plans/guidelines	5.4.2 Yearly review and implementation of Wellness projects detailed in the Memorandum of Understanding with the Sydney West Area Health Service that will assist in building relationships and undertaking initiatives to increase physical activity and healthy lifestyle choices	High
Promotion of a healthy, physically active lifestyle	5.4.3 Develop and implement a plan promoting physical activity that will aim to increase community knowledge and understanding of physical activity and related benefit with the vision of getting more people, more active, more often. This could involve active information incorporated into the Blacktown City Council Calendar, web-based promotions, leveraging off existing events, awards to acknowledge community achievement in the promotion of and participation in physical activity etc.	Medium
	5.4.4 Investigate the introduction of incentive schemes for the community and Council employees to partake in health and fitness memberships at Council's Aquatic and Leisure Centres	High
	5.4.5 Along with identified partners, continue to organise, fund and promote community events that endorse physical activity and wellbeing, such as the City Marathon, Sportsfest and Relay for Life.	Ongoing
	5.4.6 Assist in the development of an 'Obesity Policy' as outlined in Council's Social Plan.	High
	5.4.7 Establish guidelines for healthy eating, in collaboration with SWAHS, and provide them to all users/hirers of sporting kiosks / canteens	High
Develop means of measuring the wellbeing of the Blacktown community through regular assessment of key result areas	5.4.8 Undertake a yearly analysis of active sport participation membership and sportsground occupancy across the Blacktown LGA	High
	5.4.9 Undertake an analysis of the physical activity participation rates every second year, commencing 2010, to provide benchmark indications on their relationship to national and state-wide statistics (Commonwealth Government - Exercise, Recreation and Sport Survey)	High
	5.4.10 Periodically gather information regarding healthy weight issues relevant to the Blacktown LGA to determine direction of trends Measure the rates of key non-communicable diseases that can be reduced with increased levels of physical activity	Ongoing

A key focus for the subregion will be to continue to improve access to quality parks and public places, and community facilities to meet the needs of the growing population...

NSW Government's Draft Metropolitan Strategy – Northwest Subregional Strategy 2007, p 140.



6. AN ACTION PLAN FOR FUTURE PLANNING

About the Action Plan

A number of new release areas are planned for Blacktown, as part of the North West Growth Centre and proposals for infill development in the town centres and around key railway stations. It is projected that the population of the Blacktown LGA will increase by around 140,000 over the next 20 years to give a total population of more than 400,000. Housing affordability, lifestyle trends and patterns, transport and technology and modern urban design principles all compete to place pressure on the future provisions of open space areas. There will be a need for additional and improved open space, as well as recreation and sport facilities, to cater for this anticipated growth, and strategic directions are required to guide future provision.

Issues relevant for future planning include:

- Increasing populations and city growth in the consideration of land volumes
- Increasing expectations in infrastructure standards and the rising costs of maintaining this infrastructure
- Diverse demands of recreational needs (including latent demand) in light of changing lifestyle and recreation habits and climatic change
- Need for planning to be done on a subregional basis as supply and demand often extends beyond LGA boundaries
- Balance between environmental and recreation needs is important
- Timing, as needs change over time, often prior to funds being available and infrastructure being in place
- Changes and continued availability of Section 94 funding potentially impacting future recreation and open space provision

Key Objectives- Future Planning

- Where possible, ensure equal distribution and access to open space and recreation opportunities across the Blacktown LGA
- Acknowledge the need for adequate provision of open space and recreation facilities that contribute towards the community's wellbeing
- Adopt and promote the key directions related to open space and recreation from the North West Subregion Draft Strategy 2007 when adopted by NSW Government
- Engage key stakeholders in a strategic approach to regional provision across Western Sydney
- Provide guidelines for future open space provision

6.1 Future Recreation and Open Space Provision

Background to Future Recreation Open Space Provision

In order to best meet the needs of the community and maximise outcomes, the provision of recreation and open space infrastructure across the LGA requires strategic and meaningful direction into the future. This applies to the broader context of recreation and open space planning that takes into consideration wider impacting issues to assist in guiding local provision within the Blacktown LGA. Developing a large network of relevant open spaces and recreation facilities is an ongoing challenge that needs to address different growth rates within different areas of the LGA. Further to this, careful consideration will need to be given to matters such as increased housing density, particularly around railway stations, which will affect the future provision of safe, appealing and accessible recreation and open space provision.

Strategic Direction Future Recreation Open Space Provision

In order to effectively plan for future recreation and open space provision, it will be necessary to create planning processes, build and maintain partnerships, provide representation within relevant working groups, and develop planning guidelines. This will require consideration of various factors, including but not limited to housing density, demographics, health and welfare trends, economic factors, lifestyle factors, and state and federal funding. Planning for recreation and open space in a growing and dynamic city will require both flexible and comprehensive management tools to effectively provide infrastructure that will meet the current and anticipated demands of the community.



AN ACTION PLAN FOR FUTURE PLANNING

Recommended Actions

Objective	Action	Priority
6.1 Future Recreation and Open Space Provision Provide advice, guidance and direction on the future provision of Recreation and Open Space provision	6.1.1 Examine information and guidelines relating to healthy physical environments, (natural and built environments) and liaise with relevant Council sections on implementing best practice in this area.	High
	6.1.2 Implement guidelines for open space provision with consideration to key factors such as housing density for the following areas: • Open Space - General • Open Space – Sporting • Open Space – Recreation	High
	6.1.3 Following adoption by the NSW Government, promote the key directions related to open space and recreation from the North West Subregion Draft Strategy 2007	Ongoing
	6.1.4 Seek representation on key organisations and working parties which promote the interests of Western Sydney and focus on open space and recreation provision, management and development in the region	Medium
	6.1.5 Following adoption by the NSW Government, liaise with key partners on the strategic implementation of the Subregional Strategy across the Blacktown LGA and continually review its impact	Ongoing

IMPLEMENTING THE STRATEGY

Across Council Commitment

The implementation of this Strategy will require a commitment from a number of Council sections, particularly those that are involved in open space and recreation planning, strategic planning, open space management and maintenance, facility management, natural resource management, facility development and operations, community services and events.

This Strategy covers a wide spectrum of issues and provisions relating to open space and recreation, and 'recreation' has been considered in a broad sense to include sport, informal recreation, and community activity and events, and for this reason, the strategies and actions are relevant to a number of sections across Council.

To achieve a commitment across Council to implement the Recreation and Open Space Strategy it is recommended that Council adopt the following approach:

- The 'Actions' identified in this study should be continually reviewed, and if necessary, amended
- Different Council sections should include specific Actions within their section's work plan and allocate a priority to their implementation
- Consideration of the Actions in this Strategy in preparation of future financial plans and budgets

Resource Implications

The implementation of this Strategy does not commit Council to the expenditure of additional resources. Instead, the ROSS will draw from a number of existing Council funding channels and external grants that are allocated to the development of community facilities. As the majority of actions require preliminary research and investigation prior to the commitment of works, it is envisaged that many actions will be reported to Council for adoption on a project-by-project basis, prior to any commitment and allocation of additional funding. The projects, if required, will then be funded in part or full through means including but not limited to;

- Operational Budgets
- Works Improvement Program
- Capital Request Program
- Infrastructure Sinking Fund Program
- Environmental Stormwater Management Program

It is also likely that Council will gain suitable grant funding to part or fully fund key projects. The primary funding bodies relating to recreation and open space facilities are the NSW Department of Arts, Sport and Recreation and the NSW Department of Planning. Other grant funding programs may also be available and the identification of these opportunities will be a high priority for Council officers.

There may also be opportunities to establish partnerships, such as the joint development of the Ropes Creek Corridor and Eastern Creek Corridor with the Department of Planning; the implementation of key actions with the Sydney West Area Health Service; the development of a school oval or other facility that also caters for the community in partnership with the Department of Education and Training; or contributions by sporting and other user groups in the development or management of facilities. Partnerships between public departments and between public and private organisations (including developers) have large scope and

significant potential to contribute positively to community facilities and services in the future, especially when both parties are ensuring that public interest is maintained. Any partnerships will require investigation and a formal agreement that considers the interests of Council, the community and the partner group.

Regional Considerations

Recreation and open space facilities in Blacktown should not be planned or developed in isolation. The Blacktown LGA includes a number of open space areas and facilities that are of regional significance, such as the Ropes Creek Corridor, Eastern Creek Corridor and Blacktown Olympic Park. The further development of these areas should be undertaken in cooperation with relevant State Government bodies, such as the NSW Department of Planning and adjoining local councils.

In addition, the development and improvement of facilities should be considered in relation to the existing and potential provision of similar facilities in adjoining LGA's to avoid duplication and ensure facilities are viable. The development of linear pathway networks and strengthening of corridor connections across the region will also help increase overall wellbeing through physical activity opportunities, such as walking and cycling, and have benefits for Natural Areas, such as the creation of habitat corridors.

Ongoing communication and partnerships with adjoining local councils and NSW State Government bodies will ensure a consistent approach to planning and help achieve improvements to open space as well as facility provision and development.



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- Sue Suter and Associates Leisure and Tourism Planners
- Council Officers
- Local Sporting Groups and Associations
- Park Committees
- All Blacktown and neighbouring community members involved
- Industry bodies

Appendix 1

Definitions

Below is a list of definitions relevant to this strategy. Whilst many of these terms are common, it is appropriate to define them in terms of usage within this strategic plan. These definitions include those previously adopted by Council in other strategic or management documents.

Appealing - Of interest and enjoyment

Attractive - Aesthetically pleasing

Community Land - Community land defined for the purposes of the Local Government Act (1993) and amended with the Local Government (General) Regulation (1999) to be that land which is set aside for community use, such as parks, sportsgrounds, general community use, areas of cultural significance and natural areas

Exercise - Activity that requires physical or mental exertion, especially referred to when developing or maintaining fitness

Fitness - Good health or physical condition, usually attributed to exercise and proper nutrition

Formal - Characterised by conformity to a set of regulations, forms or status

Functional - Purpose something exists for

Hazard - Something which has the potential to cause harm to employees, contractors, public, or damage to property of plant

Health - Is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity

Hierarchy - System of classification according to an approved order

Informal - Not being in accord with prescribed regulations, form or status

Leisure - Describes the opportunity to be free from commitments, responsibilities or duties

Open Space - Land under the care, control and management of Council identified in a category related to its purpose and function

Operational Land- Land that is owned by Council for operational purposes which has no special management restrictions other than those that may apply to any piece of land. Operational land is defined under Division 1 of Part 2 of Chapter 6 of the NSW Local Government Act, 1993.

Recreation - Activity that results in stimulation, value or enjoyment of the mind or body. Recreation is normally associated with free time

Safe - Risk which is reduced to the lowest, most reasonably practicable level

Sport - Physical activity that is governed by a set of rules, regulations or customs often played in a competitive environment

Well-Being - The state of being healthy, happy or prosperous relevant to the individual

Wellness - The condition of good physical and mental health, especially when maintained by proper diet, exercise, and habits

Appendix 2

Sporting and Recreation Facilities

Listed below are the sporting facilities located within the Blacktown LGA managed by Council as of January 2009.

Sport	Type	Number of Facilities	Notes
Soccer	Full Size	76 fields	
	Mini/Mod	9 fields	
Australian Rules		4 fields	Includes 3 full-size and 1 junior field
Rugby Union		6 fields	
Rugby League		26 fields	Plus 4 stand-alone mini fields
Cricket	Synthetic	56 fields	
	Turf	3 fields	
Baseball		29 diamonds	Includes senior and junior diamonds Does not include 3 Diamonds at BOP
Softball		14 diamonds	Includes senior and junior diamonds Does not include 4 Diamonds at BOP
Netball	Sealed	80 courts	
	Grass	35 courts	
Tennis Courts	Synthetic	40 courts	Plus 14 owned and/or managed by Blacktown District Tennis Association
	Asphalt	5 courts	
Athletic	Grass	10 tracks	Plus one Synthetic at BOP
Trotting		1 track	
Other Equestrian		3 sites	
BOCCE		3 courts	
Playgrounds		292 playgrounds	
Skate		1 park	Plus one half pipe
BMX		3 informal tracks	
Basketball		14 outdoor courts	Includes 6 half-sized courts
Multi-purpose		2 courts	Outdoor courts not designed for a specific recreation purpose
Aquatic/Leisure		7 facilities	
Community Centres		51 centres	Includes guide/scout halls and senior citizen halls

Legend: The term 'fields' generally refers to a playing field size that will cater for senior age groups unless specified otherwise within the 'notes' column.

Note: The above provision does not take into account sporting facilities managed by private organisations such as the Blacktown Workers Club and Rooty Hill RSL Club, or private providers such as backyard tennis courts. It also does not take into consideration public providers such as the Department of Education in which some sporting clubs choose to operate from.

Appendices

Maps of Recreation and Open Space Provision

The maps listed below, which appear on subsequent pages, illustrate Recreation and Open Space provision within the Blacktown LGA:

- Map of Open Space
- Map of Land Categorisation
- Map of Parks
- Map of Sportsgrounds
- Map of General Community Use Land
- Map of Areas of Cultural Significance
- Map of Natural Areas
- Map of Playgrounds
- Map of Outdoor Courts
- Map of Aquatic and Leisure Centres
- Map of Equestrian Centres
- Map of Indoor Community Facilities