



Glen Road Community and Economic Needs Assessment

Prepared for
Castle Hill Glen Pty Ltd

February 2024

HIIPDA
CONSULTING

CONTENTS

1.0	Introduction	6
1.1	The site	6
1.2	The proposal	7
2.0	Strategic policy context	8
2.1	Our Greater Sydney 2056 – Central City District Plan	9
2.2	Housing Strategy 2019 (LHS)	9
2.3	Hills Future 2036 – Local Strategic Planning Statement 2019 (LSPS)	9
2.4	Recreation Strategy 2019	10
3.0	Demographic context	11
3.1	Study areas	11
3.2	Demographic snapshot	11
4.0	Existing social infrastructure	13
4.1	Social infrastructure	13
4.1.1	What is social infrastructure?	13
4.1.2	Social infrastructure assessment	14
5.0	Demand for social and community facilities	18
5.1	Population at the site	18
5.2	Projected demand for social and community facilities	19
6.0	Justification for increased residential development	21
6.1	Projections	21
6.1.1	Population	21
6.1.2	Households	22
6.2	Improving dwelling diversity	24
6.2.1	Dwelling structure	24
6.2.2	Age structure	24
6.2.3	Household composition	25
6.2.4	Household composition by dwelling type	26
6.2.5	Dwelling typology by number of bedrooms	27
6.2.6	Dwelling typology by number of persons usually resident	27
6.2.7	Dwelling suitability by typology	28
6.3	Supporting housing affordability	29
6.3.1	Residential sales trend	29
6.3.2	Residential rent trend	30
6.3.3	Rental and mortgage stress	31
6.4	Meeting strategic planning goals	31
7.0	Key findings	32

Tables

Table 1: Social infrastructure near the site	14
Table 2: Projected population at the site (assuming full development)	18
Table 3: Estimated population at the site by service age group (assuming full development)	18
Table 4: Projected social infrastructure demand arising from the proposal	19
Table 5: Active open space provision assessment.....	20
Table 6: Passive open space provision assessment	20
Table 7: Population and age composition projections 2021-41	21
Table 8: Household type projections (2021-2041)	23
Table 9: Average household size (2021-2041, projected)	23
Table 10: Age by service age group (2021)	24
Table 11: Household composition, 2021.....	26
Table 12: Household composition by dwelling structure (2021).....	26
Table 13: Number of bedrooms by dwelling type (study area, 2021)	27
Table 14: Dwelling typology by number of persons usually resident in dwelling (study area, 2021)	28
Table 15: Dwelling suitability by typology (study area, 2021).....	29
Table 16: Mortgage and rental stress, study area and comparator areas (2021)	31
Table 17: LHS dwelling mix target (2036).....	31
Table 18: Dwelling mix target contribution.....	32

Figures

Figure 1: The site 6	
Figure 2: The site and its surrounds	7
Figure 3: Indicative render of proposed terraces at the site.....	8
Figure 4: Indicative master plan overview	8
Figure 5: The site and study area	11
Figure 6: Social infrastructure near the site	14
Figure 7: Dwelling structure by location, 2021.....	24
Figure 8: Population by service age group (2021)	25
Figure 9: Household composition (2021)	26
Figure 10: Dwelling suitability by typology (study area, 2021).....	29
Figure 11: Median sale prices by quarter, 2154 postcode area	30
Figure 12: Median weekly rent by quarter, 2154 postcode area	30

Quality Assurance

Report Contacts

Jesse Rowlings

Consultant

BSci (Human Geog.) MURP (current) DipGov

jesse.rowlings@hillpda.com

Finn Stephenson

Consultant

BA MUP (current)

finn.stephenson@hillpda.com

Supervisor

Alex Peck

Associate

BSci BSocSci MPlan MPIA

alexander.peck@hillpda.com

Quality Control

This document is for discussion purposes only unless signed and dated by a Principal of HillPDA.

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Executive summary

HillPDA was commissioned by Castle Hill Glen Pty Ltd (the client) to provide an independent Community and Economic Needs Assessment report to support a planning proposal for a site in Castle Hill within The Hills Shire local government area in Sydney's northwest.

The proposal seeks to amend the planning controls pertaining to the site to enable redevelopment, largely for residential purposes, and consists of:

- 185 dwellings (147 units +38 terraces), 15 per cent of which to be provided as affordable housing
- Retention of existing trees (where possible) and increasing the tree canopy
- Works to mitigate identified land slide risks
- A 2,000 square metre community park and a series of pocket parks
- A viewing platform and trail would be provided through the existing forest landscape on the site, which would be retained and managed.

This Community and Economic Needs Assessment report focuses on existing social infrastructure within the study area of the proposed development and aims to understand the impact of a proposed development on community needs. The report utilises GIS software and various data sources to examine social infrastructure categories, including education, health care, community and culture, as well as active and passive recreation.

Adhering to industry-standard benchmarks for community facilities and open space requirements, the report draws insights from benchmarks adapted from the Parramatta Community Infrastructure Strategy and The Hills Shire Council's Recreation Strategy to address the study area's social infrastructure needs.

Justification for the proposal

The basis for assessing the justification for increased residential supply within the Hills Shire locality is partly sourced from plans including *Our Greater Sydney 2056 – Central District Plan*, *Housing Strategy 2019* (LHS), the *Hills Future 2036 – Local Strategic Planning Statement* (LSPS) and *The Hills Recreation Strategy 2019*, which placed emphasis on:

- Meeting anticipated residential demand growth in Castle Hill
- Increasing housing density in the LGA (in suitable locations)
- A need to provide more diverse housing
- Housing affordability concerns
- Accessible housing (including for seniors and people with a disability).

Assessment of 2021 ABS Census data and a review of State and local planning policies and strategies indicate a need for increased provision of medium density dwellings to provide greater choice for residents and visitors. The LHS forecasted a need for 38,000 new dwellings by 2036, with a shift towards apartments. The project aligns with this goal by including both units and terraces. Additionally, priorities established under the LHS emphasise the need for diversity, affordable housing, and higher residential densities, especially around new Sydney Metro stations, which the proposal meets through the allocation of 15 per cent affordable housing within 1.2 kilometres of a metro station and 900 m of Cherrybrook Station. In terms of meeting the objectives of the *Residential Strategy*, the proposed development incorporates a new park and nature trail, aligning with planning priorities for housing in suitable locations.

The proposal aligns with Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure (DPHI) projections, addressing the need for additional housing supply. DPHI's current population projections are slightly more conservative than earlier estimates in the Hills Shire LSPS and LHS. Despite this, the anticipated number of households is expected

to surpass earlier Council plans. DPHI estimates over 95,000 households in The Hills Shire by 2041, contrasting with previous projections of 93,000 dwellings required by 2036. Consequently, the proposed development is crucial in aligning residential supply to meet future demand.

The proposed development comprising 185 dwellings will also address the projected 1,800 person population increase in Castle Hill-South by 2041. By accommodating around 430 individuals, it intends to provide a diverse range of typologies and prices, including 15 per cent to be dedicated to affordable housing. Overall, this development is strategically sound, providing a solution to the growing housing demands while promoting local planning objectives in the Hills Shire.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This community and economic needs assessment report has been prepared for Castle Hill Glen Pty Ltd to accompany a planning proposal for a site in Castle Hill, in The Hills Shire local government area, in Sydney's northwest.

1.1 The site

The site is located at 1020 Melia Court, Castle Hill, east of the Castle Hill centre. It consists of three lots:

- Lot 2 DP576773
- Lot 1020 DP876671
- Lot 1021 DP876671.

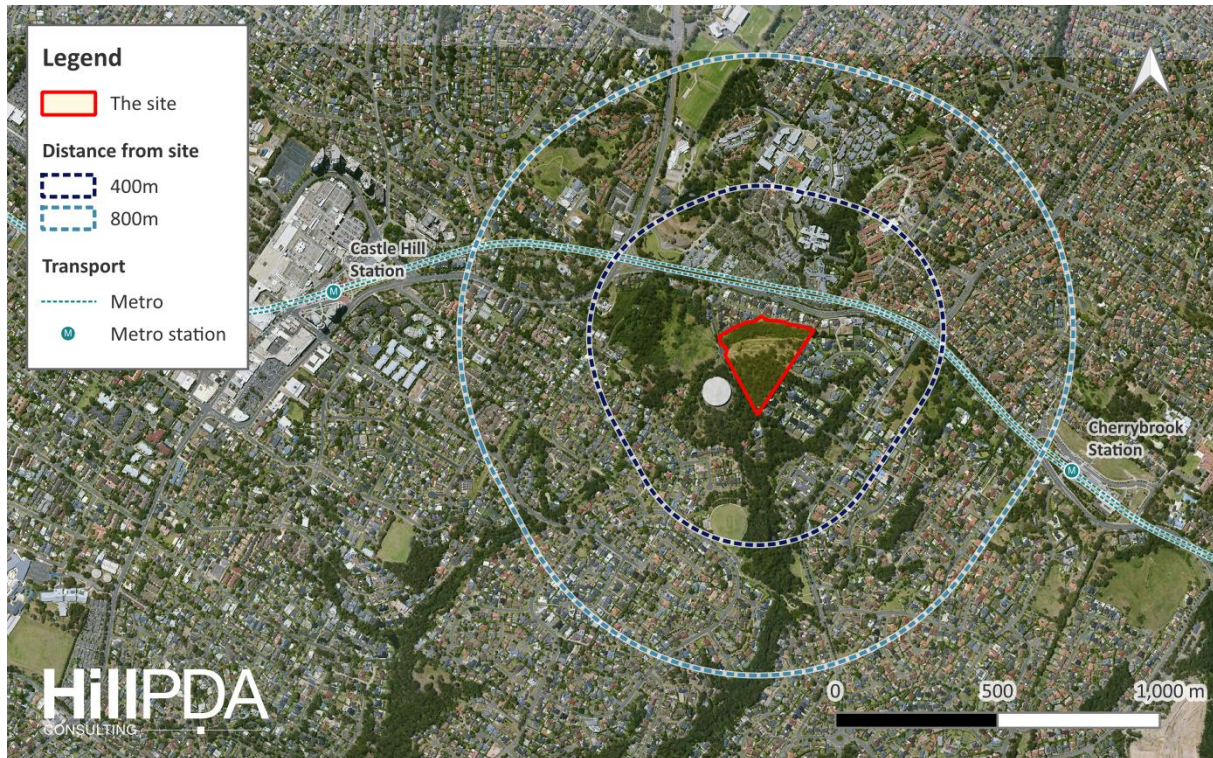
In total, the site is approximately 4.5 hectares, and has frontages to Glen Road and Melia Court. The site and its surrounds are shown in Figure 1. The site is located within close proximity to Castle Hill Metro Station (approximately 1.2 kilometres to the west) and Cherrybrook Station (approximately 900 metres to the east). The proximity of the site to the metro and railway station provides a locational advantage by enhancing accessibility, reducing transportation costs, and promoting mixed-use development, consequently driving increased density and demand in the area.

Figure 1: The site



Source: HillPDA, Google Maps (2021)

Figure 2: The site and its surrounds



Imagery: Metromap (2023)

1.2 The proposal

The proposal seeks to amend the controls pertaining to the site to enable redevelopment, largely for residential purposes. The indicative masterplan for the site proposes a development footprint of around 2.3 hectares (of the total 4.5 hectares), which would consist of:

- 185 dwellings (147 units + 38 terraces)
- Retention of existing trees (where possible) and increasing tree canopy
- Works to mitigate identified land slide risks
- A 2,000 square metre community park and a series of pocket parks
- 15 per cent of the dwellings would be provided as affordable housing
- A viewing platform and trail would be provided through the existing forest landscape on the site, which would be retained and managed.

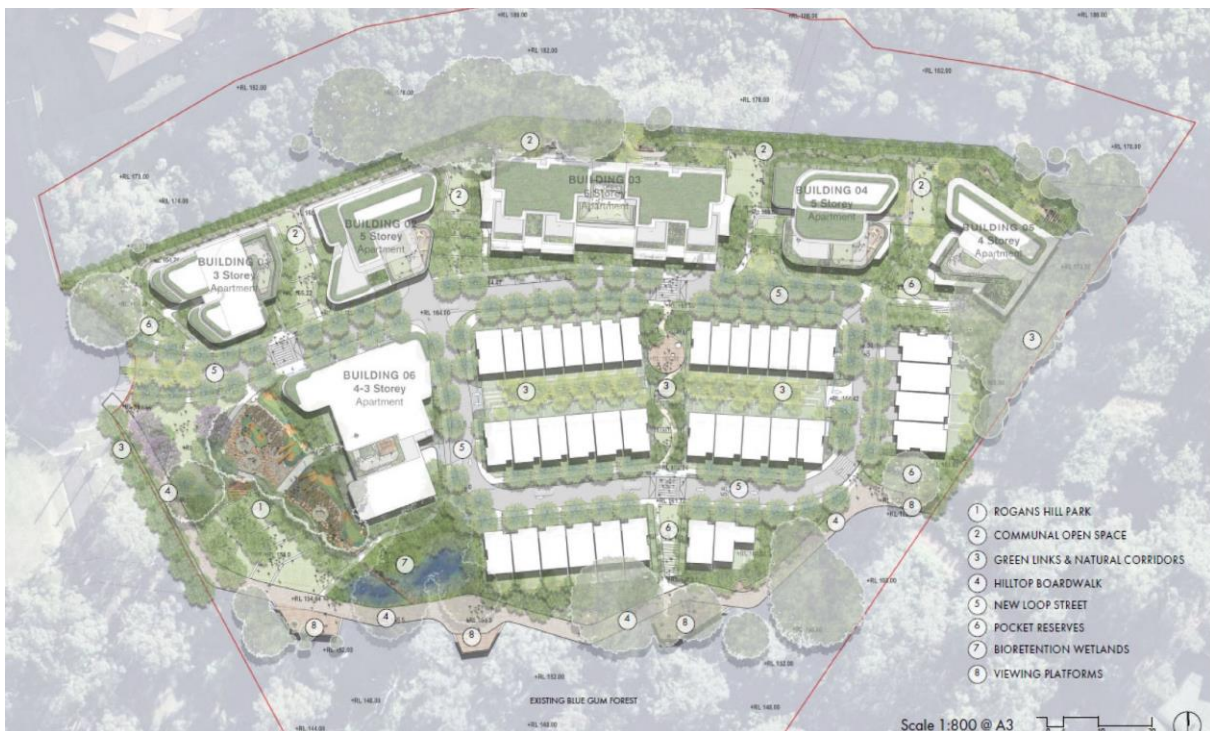
A render of the proposal is shown in Figure 3, with the indicative master plan is shown in Figure 4.

Figure 3: Indicative render of proposed terraces at the site



Source: DKO Architecture (2023)

Figure 4: Indicative master plan overview



Source: DKO Architecture (2023)

2.0 STRATEGIC POLICY CONTEXT

This section provides a review of State and local planning policies/strategies the section further identifies areas where the application assists in achieving the intent of these strategies from a housing and economic perspective.

2.1 Our Greater Sydney 2056 – Central City District Plan

The Central City District Plan (district plan) sets a 20-year strategic land use planning framework, seeking to manage growth by setting out planning priorities and actions for the Central City District. This area covers Blacktown, Cumberland, Paramatta and The Hills LGAs. Of relevance to this study are the following planning priorities:

- **Planning Priority C3:** Providing services and social infrastructure to meet people's changing needs
- **Planning Priority C4:** Fostering healthy, creative, culturally rich and socially connected communities
- **Planning Priority C5:** Providing housing supply, choice and affordability with access to jobs, services and public transport
- **Planning Priority C6:** Creating and renewing great places and local centres, and respecting the District's heritage
- **Planning Priority C9:** Delivering integrated land use and transport planning and a 30-minute city
- **Planning Priority C15:** Protecting and enhancing bushland, biodiversity and scenic and cultural landscapes
- **Planning Priority C16:** Increasing urban tree canopy cover and delivering Green Grid connections
- **Planning Priority C17:** Delivering high quality open space

The Central City District Plan is to be taken into consideration when preparing strategic planning documents including planning proposals.

2.2 Housing Strategy 2019 (LHS)

This report states how The Hills council will provide housing and supporting infrastructure to cater for the changing housing needs of the community to the year 2036.

Across The Hills Shire, the LHS projects that 38,000 additional dwellings would be required between 2016-2036. The change in dwelling mix is anticipated to be:

- Separate houses: From 80 per cent to 57 per cent
- Semi-detached dwellings: From 14 per cent to 13 per cent
- Apartments: From 6 per cent to 30 per cent

The demand for the Castle Hill area is projected to be 6,500 dwellings by 2036, and 3,000 beyond 2036.

Other key highlights in the LHS that are of relevance to this study are:

- There is a need for greater housing diversity, including affordable housing and housing for seniors or people with a disability.
- Council is planning for higher density development around new Sydney Metro stations.
- It is predicted that couples with children will remain the dominant household type, which represents a potential opportunity to increase the diversity of apartment types.

A key premise of the LHS is that Council considers increased residential densities to achieve greater housing diversity, choice and affordability, particularly in station precincts. As such, the subject proposal aligns with the LHS.

2.3 Hills Future 2036 – Local Strategic Planning Statement 2019 (LSPS)

The Local Strategic Planning Statement (LSPS) sets out The Hills Shire Council's vision for future land use planning through a set of broad planning priorities. Of relevance to this study are the following planning priorities:

- **Planning Priority 6:** Plan for new housing to support Greater Sydney's growing population
- **Planning Priority 7:** Plan for new housing in the right locations
- **Planning Priority 8:** Plan for a diversity of housing

- **Planning Priority 9:** Renew and create great places
- **Planning Priority 10:** Provide social infrastructure and retail services to meet resident's needs
- **Planning Priority 12:** Influence travel behaviour to promote sustainable choices
- **Planning Priority 15:** Provide new and upgraded passive and active open spaces
- **Planning Priority 17:** Protect areas of high environmental value and significance
- **Planning Priority 18:** Increase urban tree canopy cover
- **Planning Priority 19:** Manage natural resources and waste responsibly

The application would support the above planning priorities of the LSPS and contribute to its overall vision. As such, the subject proposal aligns with the LSPS.

2.4 Recreation Strategy 2019

The Recreation Strategy sets out The Hills Shire Council's plan for the future of the open space network. It responds to a range of planning priorities for the area, including:

- Provide social infrastructure to meet residents' needs
- Provide new and upgraded passive and active open spaces
- Expand and improve the active transport network

Of relevance to this study is the 400 metre catchment area benchmark for basic and local parks. The application would support the above planning priorities through the development of a new publicly accessible park and nature trail. As such, the subject proposal accords with Recreation Strategy 2019.

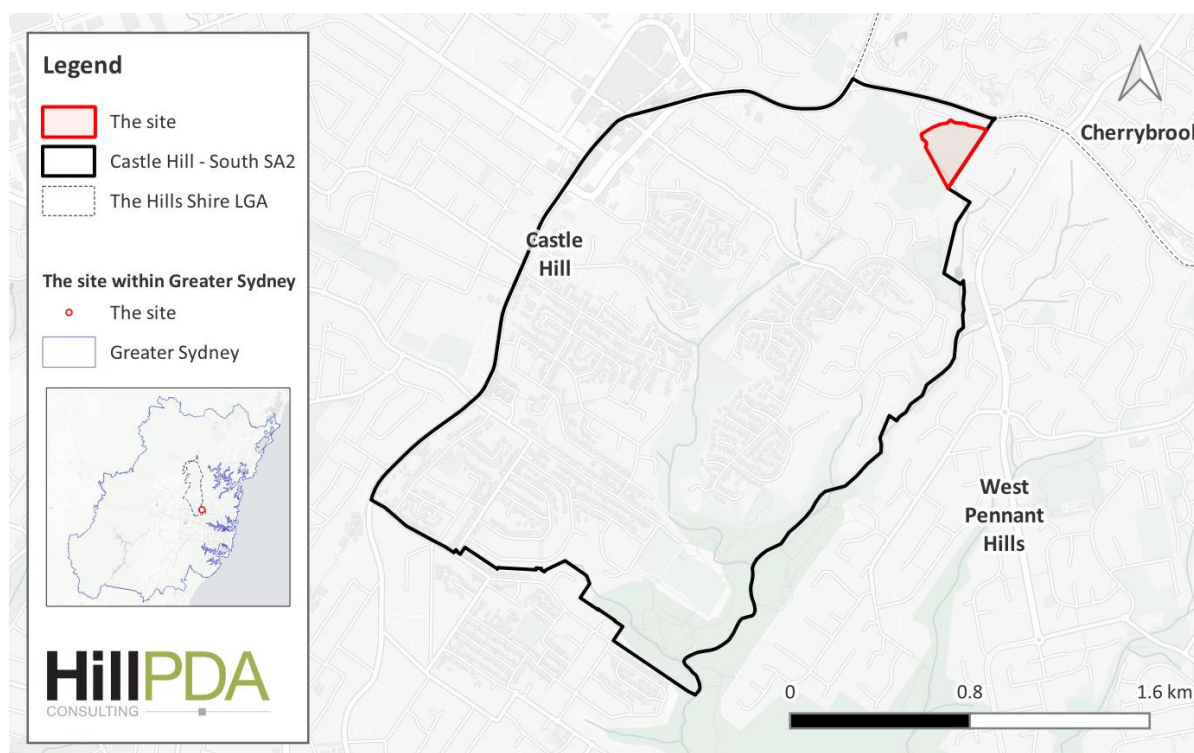
3.0 DEMOGRAPHIC CONTEXT

3.1 Study areas

The study area for the site has been defined as the Statistical Area Level 2 (SA2) Castle Hill – South. The study area is situated entirely within The Hills Shire LGA. The Hills Shire LGA and the Greater Sydney Greater Capital City Statistical Area (GCCSA) have been used as comparator areas.

The data and analysis in this chapter is generally based on 2021 Census data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS).

Figure 5: The site and study area



Source: HillPDA, ABS (2022)

3.2 Demographic snapshot



The Census usual resident population of the study area in 2021 was 10,419. The average household size of 2.9 was lower than The Hills Shire (3.1) but higher than Greater Sydney (2.7).



In 2021, the median age of residents in the study area was 40, older than the median age of for The Hills Shire or Greater Sydney (38 and 37, respectively). 10.1% of the population were aged between 25-34 years, the same as The Hills Shire but much lower than the 15.5% across Greater Sydney. The study area also had a slightly higher percentage of the population aged between 5-14 years (14.8%) and 35-49 years (23.6%) than Greater Sydney (12.5% and 21.5%, respectively).



At the 2021 Census, a language other than English was used in 48.5% of households in the study area, higher than both The Hills Shire and Greater Sydney (44.2% and 42%, respectively). 52% of residents in the study area were born in Australia, lower than the 57.5% of residents in The Hills Shire and 56.8% of residents in Greater Sydney.



At the 2021 Census, the top responses for religious affiliation in the study area were No Religion (31.9%), Catholic (23.3%), and Anglican (10.2%). This ranking is the same in both The Hills Shire and Greater Sydney, with the following percentages - No Religion (26.7% and 30.3%), Catholic (25.3% and 23.1%) and Anglican (10.9% and 9.2%).



In 2021, 71% of dwellings in the study area were separate houses while 21.9% were flats or apartments. This compares to 81.2% and 9.8% respectively in The Hills Shire, and 55.8% and 30.7% respectively in Greater Sydney. 29.6% of dwellings in the study area were rented, compared to only 20.4% in The Hills Shire and up to 35.9% across Greater Sydney.



On the day of the 2021 Census, households most commonly had two motor vehicles registered (39.6% of households). 18.9% of dwellings in the study area had 3 or more motor vehicles registered, while only 4.7% had no motor vehicles registered. This is similar to households in The Hills Shire, which most commonly had two motor vehicles (43.5%), while 24.9% had three or more. In comparison, households in Greater Sydney most commonly had one motor vehicle (39.5%), while 11.1% had no motor vehicles.



In 2021, the median household income in the study area was \$2,482, compared with \$2,831 in The Hills Shire and \$2,077 across Greater Sydney. Median monthly mortgage repayments were \$3,000 and median weekly rent was \$550. This is similar to The Hills Shire (\$3,000 and \$580, respectively), and higher than Greater Sydney (\$2,427 and \$470, respectively).



At the 2021 Census, the study area recorded a much larger proportion of family households (83.9%) compared to Greater Sydney (72.6%), but a slightly lower proportion than The Hills Shire (86.4%). Of families, 53% were couples with children, lower than The Hills Shire (59.2%) but higher than Greater Sydney (48.4%).

At the 2021 Census, 63.8% of residents aged 15 years and over were in the labour force. This compares to 66.5 percent in The Hills Shire and 60% in Greater Sydney. Of those residents in the labour force, 95.2 percent were employed.

The most common industries of employment are shown below:



	Top three employment industries
Castle Hill – South	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Computer System Design and Related Services (4.9%) Hospitals (except Psychiatric Hospitals) (3.4%) Banking (3.3%)
The Hills Shire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Computer System Design and Related Services (4.2%) Hospitals (except Psychiatric Hospitals) (3.8%) Banking (3.2%)
Greater Sydney	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hospitals (except Psychiatric Hospitals) (4.1%) Computer System Design and Related Services (3.1%) Banking (2.6%)



At the 2021 Census, the most common occupation for employed people aged 15 years and over in the study area were Professionals (35.7%), Managers (17.9%) and Clerical and Administrative Workers (14.1%). This ranking is the same in both The Hills Shire and Greater Sydney, which had the following percentages - Professionals (32.5% and 29.3%), Managers (18.9% and 15.2%) and Clerical and Administrative Workers (15% and 13.8%).



In 2021, approximately 44.6% of residents of the study area had a bachelor's degree level of educational attainment or above, significantly higher than Greater Sydney (33%) and The Hills Shire (40.5%).

4.0 EXISTING SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE

4.1 Social infrastructure

An audit of social infrastructure in the area surrounding the site has been conducted using GIS software and has drawn from a range of data sources, including:

- NSW DPHI Points of Interest Layer
- Australian Department of Education MySchool database
- Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) Child Care Finder.

4.1.1 What is social infrastructure?

Social infrastructure is comprised of the facilities, spaces, services and networks that support the quality of life and wellbeing of our communities. Social infrastructure is important to a community as it provides the tangible infrastructure to support the safety, health and wellbeing of that community which allows individuals to be happy, safe and healthy, to learn, and to enjoy life. A network of social infrastructure contributes to social identity, inclusion and cohesion and is invariably used by all at some point in their lives, often on a daily basis. Access to high-quality, affordable social services has a direct impact on the social and economic wellbeing of all community members.

This report has considered the following types of social infrastructure:

- Education – child care, schools, tertiary facilities
- Health care – community medical centres, aged care facilities
- Community and culture – libraries and community centres
- Active and passive recreation – such as parks, sporting ovals and social clubs, halls etc.

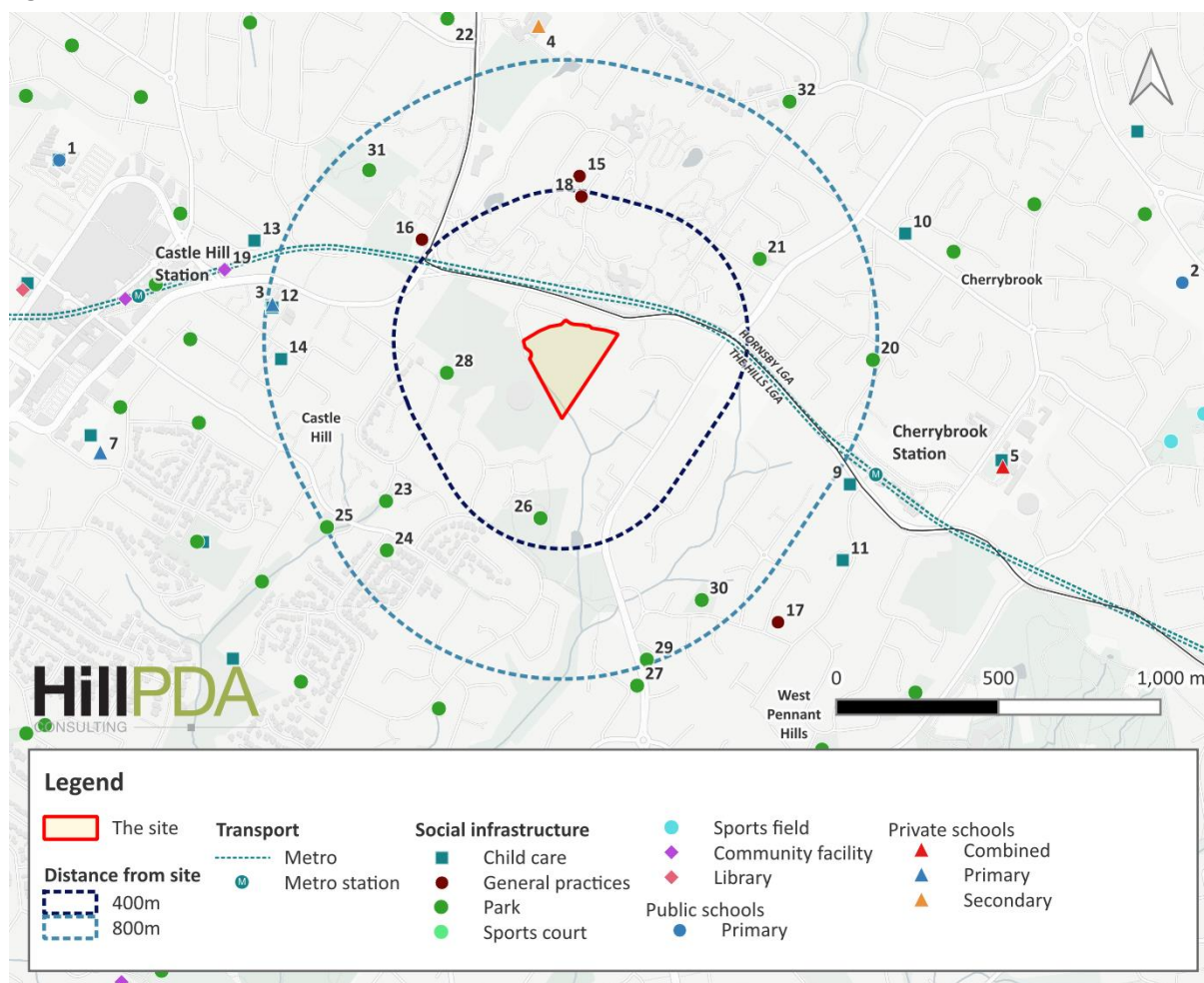
This report focuses less on businesses such as retail or commercial services which may claim to offer social benefits or services. While these facilities can provide valuable social functions, the future provision of these businesses in any area is typically market-led and does not benefit from formal government funding.

Social infrastructure facilities generally operate at three levels of provision. These are local, district and regional. The different scales of infrastructure service different sized catchments. Catchments refer to both geographical areas and the size of the population serviced. For example, a primary school is intended to serve the local population, usually within walking distance. However, a university will cater for a much wider population across the region.

4.1.2 Social infrastructure assessment

Social infrastructure located in proximity to the site is mapped in Figure 6 and listed in Table 1 below.

Figure 6: Social infrastructure near the site



Imagery: CartoDB (2023). Data sources per list above.

Table 1: Social infrastructure near the site

ID	Name	Type	Note	Area
1	Castle Hill Public School	Public primary school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public primary school (K-6). 2023 enrolment: 1,053 2023 enrolment cap: 624 	N/A
2	Cherrybrook Public School	Public primary school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public primary school (K-6). 2023 enrolment: 931 2023 enrolment cap: 509. 	N/A
3	St Bernadette's Primary School	Catholic primary school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Catholic primary school (K-6). 	N/A
4	Oakhill College	Independent high school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Catholic secondary school (7-12). 	N/A
5	Tangara School for Girls	Independent combined school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Catholic girls school, combined (K-12). 	N/A
6	Cherrybrook Technology High School	Public high school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Secondary school (7-12). The current drawing high school for the site, located 3.1 kilometres northeast by road. 2023 enrolment: 2,088 	N/A

ID	Name	Type	Note	Area
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2023 enrolment cap 2023: 1,460. 	
7	Hills Adventist College (Castle Hill campus)	Independent primary school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seventh-day Adventist Christian school (K-4). 	N/A
8	Oakhill Drive Public School	Public primary school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public primary school (K-6). The current drawing primary school for the site, located 2.9 kilometres north by road. 2023 enrolment: 777 2023 enrolment cap: 370. 	N/A
9	Kindalin Early Childhood Learning Centre - West Pennant Hills	Centre-based care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approved places: 58 Vacancies: Y 	N/A
10	Kindalin Early Childhood Learning Centre - Cherrybrook	Centre-based care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approved places: 39 Vacancies: Y 	N/A
11	Guardian Childcare & Education Cherrybrook	Centre-based care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approved places: 42 Vacancies: Y 	N/A
12	Ambrose School Age Care, St Bernadette's, Castle Hill	Outside school hours care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approved places: 120 Vacancies: Y 	N/A
13	Milestones Early Learning Centre Castle Hill	Centre-based care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approved places: 72 Vacancies: Y 	N/A
14	Alphabet Cottage	Centre-based care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approved places: 66 Vacancies: Y 	N/A
15	Proverbs Family Medical Practice	GP Practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mixed billing practice 	N/A
16	Castle Medical Centre	GP Practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Private billing practice 	N/A
17	Brotohusodo and Associates	GP Practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> N/A 	N/A
18	Pine Lodge Medical Centre	GP Practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bulk billing practice 	N/A
19	Castle Hill Senior Citizens Centre	Community facility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social club for over 55s. Runs regular events and activities for older residents in the local community. 	N/A
20	Robert Road Park	Local park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fully fenced playground in open shady park with sheltered picnic tables. 	0.3ha
21	Treetops Reserve	Local park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fenced grassy park with play and climbing equipment and sheltered picnic tables. 	0.3ha
22	Old Castle Hill Reserve	Local park (basic)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grassed picnic area with tables and seating. 	0.2ha
23	Glenwood Way Reserve	Local park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fenced grassy park with play and climbing equipment and sheltered picnic tables. 	0.7ha
24	Darcey Road Reserve	Local park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grassed reserve with shade and landscaping. 	0.3ha
25	Crane Road Reserve	Local park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shaded linear park. 	0.6ha
26	Castlewood Community Reserve	Local sports facility (active) Local suburban park (passive)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A single sports field with a turf cricket pitch. Used for rugby league in winter and cricket in summer. Includes kiosk, change rooms, picnic shelter and BBQ area, a playground (suited to 12 to 16 year olds), and outdoor gym equipment. 	2.8ha
27	Brookpine Place Reserve	Local park (basic)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grassed roadside reserve 	0.1ha
28	Telfer Way Reserve	Local park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Telfer Way Reserve, Castle Hill with children's playground with slide and climbing structure, basket swing, wave rider and seating. 	0.3ha
29	Silverfern Crescent Reserve	Local park (basic)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grassed roadside reserve 	0.2ha
30	Salisbury Downs Drive Reserve	Local park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grassed reserve with playground and seating 	0.5ha

ID	Name	Type	Note	Area
31	Pioneer Place Reserve	Local park	• Grassed reserve with playground and landscaping.	3.6ha
32	Westminster Park	Local park	• Fenced playground with toddlers play equipment, a small kids bike track and open grassy area.	0.4ha

Source: The Hills Shire Council (2019), DPHI (2022), NSW Education (2022), ACECQA (2023), Department of Health (2023)

Education

Two schools are located within approximately one kilometre of the site, one Catholic primary school (St Bernadette's Primary School) and one Catholic high school (Oakhill College).

Further afield, Oakhill Drive Public School is the public catchment primary school for the site, located approximately, located 2.9 kilometres north by road. As at early 2023, Oakhill's enrolment was almost 800 students, well above its enrolment cap of 370. Enrolment caps are calculated based on the capacity of a school's permanent buildings (i.e. ignoring any additional capacity from demountable classrooms), schools exceeding their cap are prohibited from accepting out of area enrolments, but are still required to accept enrolments within their drawing area.¹ The nearest public high school, and the catchment high school for the site, is Cherrybrook Technology High School, located around 3.1 kilometres northeast of the site by road. As at early 2023, Cherrybrook's enrolment was roughly 2,100 students, well above its enrolment cap of 1,460. Two additional public primary schools are located near the site, Castle Hill Public School and Cherrybrook Public School.

Child care

Within an approximately one kilometre catchment of the site, there are five Long Day Care (LDC) centres with a total capacity of 277 places, and one Out of School Hours Care (OSHC) centre with total capacity of 120 places.

A survey of vacancy data available on *StartingBlocks.gov.au* indicated that all surrounding child care services and out of school hours care services had vacancies at 22 November 2023.²

Open space and recreation

There are several open space and recreation facilities of varying size and utility within around one kilometre of the site. There is roughly ten hectares of open space within around a kilometre of the site, consisting largely of local parks, with several playgrounds and some formal and informal sporting fields and areas.

Health

There are three GPs located within approximately 500-600 metres of the site, as well as an additional GP located roughly one kilometre from the site. These GPs operate under a variety of models, including private, bulk billing, and mixed billing. Pine Lodge Medical Centre, located around 500 metres from the site, is a bulk billing practice.

Community facilities and libraries

Our review identified one community facility near the site, located roughly 1.1 kilometres to the west. This facility hosts the Castle Hill Senior Citizens Centre, a community group that organises events and activities for local residents aged 55 years and over.

There are no Council libraries within 800 metres of the site. However, Castle Hill Library is located in the Castle Hill town centre, roughly 1.6 kilometres west of the site. In addition to borrowing facilities, the library offers a

¹ Carroll, L and Gladstone, N (14 May 2023), *Sydney's most overcrowded schools breaching their student cap*.

[<https://www.smh.com.au/national/nsw/sydney-s-most-overcrowded-schools-breaching-their-student-cap-20230511-p5d7mt.html>]

² ACECQA (2023), *StartingBlocks.gov.au – child care finder* [www.startingblocks.gov.au]

range of services including computer and printing access, limited Council services, and a Justice of the Peace service.

5.0 DEMAND FOR SOCIAL AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES

This section provides an overview of how the proposal would impacts and address community needs identified in the earlier sections of this report.

5.1 Population at the site

In order to evaluate how the proposal would affect community needs, it is first necessary to understand the on-site population at full development.

Based on the current draft masterplan provided by the proponent, we can estimate a total population at the site using the average number of persons per household at the 2021 Census across the study area and comparator areas, for the respective dwelling types and sizes. According to these metrics, at full development, the 185 dwellings proposed would host a resident population of between (roughly) 390 to 430 people. For the purposes of this assessment, we will use the estimate derived from the study area (427 people).

This is shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Projected population at the site (assuming full development)

Dwelling type (bedrooms)	Count	Persons per dwelling			Implied resident population		
		SA2	LGA	GCCSA	SA2	LGA	GCCSA
Unit (1)	44	1.5	1.4	1.3	66	62	57
Unit (2)	78	2.4	2.1	2.1	187	164	164
Unit (3)	25	2.7	2.6	2.7	68	65	68
Terrace (3)	38	2.8	2.7	2.7	106	103	103
Total	185	n/a	n/a	n/a	427	393	391

Source: HillPDA, ABS (2022)

By combining the above figure and the observed 2021 Census age structure of the study area, we can generate a projected breakdown of the population at the site by age group. This has been broken into 'service age groups', age categories developed by demographers .id to reflect typical 'life stages' and support the consideration of demand for different types of services (.id, 2023). This is shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Estimated population at the site by service age group (assuming full development)

Service age group (age range in years)	Proportion of study area residents	Projected population at the site
Babies and pre-schoolers (0 – 4)	4.8%	20
Primary schoolers (5 – 11)	10.1%	43
Secondary schoolers (12 – 17)	8.5%	36
Tertiary education and independence (18 – 24)	8.1%	35
Young workforce (25 – 34)	10.2%	43
Parents and homebuilders (35 – 49)	23.5%	100
Older workers and pre-retirees (50 – 59)	12.0%	51
Empty nesters and retirees (60 – 69)	11.0%	47
Seniors (70 – 84)	10.0%	43
Elderly aged (85+)	1.7%	7
Total	100.0%	427

Source: HillPDA, ABS (2022)

5.2 Projected demand for social and community facilities

In assessing the nature and level of social infrastructure need, historic practice has been to apply a population-based approach which relies on thresholds for social infrastructure provision. Recent research has revealed that such models can be limited in outer-suburban settings, where they can lead to more limited social infrastructure access in areas with lower densities, presenting risks of double disadvantage or deprivation amplification.³ A response to addressing these issues is to apply an access-based social infrastructure model (one that considers location/access, as well as population).

An indicative level of social infrastructure need that will arise from the proposal can be ascertained using standards from a variety of sources, as well as average servicing levels derived from aggregate statistical data.

The Parramatta Community Infrastructure Strategy (the CIS) provides benchmarks for the provision of social infrastructure within the Parramatta LGA.⁴ These benchmarks are considered to be best-practice benchmarks across NSW and have been applied to the projected population calculated above, along with open space benchmarks provided in The Hills Shire Council's *Recreation Strategy*.⁵

The proposal is projected to be home to approximately 43 primary school aged students and 36 secondary students. Applying the ratio of public school attendance in the study area at the 2021 Census, which is broadly similar to Greater Sydney at 68 per cent of enrolled residents attending public primary schools and 55 per cent attending public secondary schools, the implied additional demand for public schools is projected at approximately 30 primary places and 20 secondary places.

The resulting social infrastructure demand is shown in Table 4.

Table 4: Projected social infrastructure demand arising from the proposal

Type	Metric	Existing (within 1km)	The proposal		Additional need
			Parameter	Need	
District library	1 facility: 20,000 – 35,000 residents	0 libraries (nearest is 1.6km from the site)	427 residents	<0.1 libraries	Negligible
Community space	80sqm: 1,000 residents	0sqm	427 residents	34sqm	Negligible
Long day care	1 place: 2.48 children 0-4 years	124 places	20 children aged 0-4 years	8 places	Negligible (total 277 places within 1.1km of the site)
OSHC	1 place: 2.7 children 5-11 years	120 places	43 children aged 5-11 years	16 places	Negligible
Play space	1 play space: 2,000 residents	7 play spaces	427 residents	<1 play space	Negligible
Open space (total)	2.83ha: 1,000 people	9.6ha	427 residents	1.2ha open space	Negligible Existing local provision and provision within the proposal addresses this need.
<i>Active open space</i>	<i>1.21ha: 1,000 people</i>	<i>2.8ha</i>	427 residents	0.5ha active open space	Negligible Existing local provision is sufficient.
<i>Passive open space</i>	<i>1.62ha: 1,000 people</i>	<i>9.6ha</i>	427 residents	0.7ha passive open space	Negligible

³ Davern et. al. (2018). *Using spatial measures to test a conceptual model of social infrastructure that supports health and wellbeing*, Cities & Health 1(2).

⁴ City of Parramatta (2020). *Community Infrastructure Strategy*.

⁵ The Hills Shire Council (2019). *Recreation Strategy*.

Type	Metric	Existing (within 1km)	The proposal		Additional need
			Parameter	Need	
					The proposal includes a 0.3ha local park and linear park areas and pocket parks that would adequately address this.

Source: The Hills Shire Council (2019), City of Parramatta (2020)

Table 5: Active open space provision assessment

Classification	Metric	Existing provision	Additional need
Ancillary	Any area within 1-2km	0ha within 2km	Negligible
Local	5ha within 1-2km	7.2ha within 2km	Nil
District	5-10ha within 2km	0ha within 2km	5-10ha
Regional	5-10km	58ha (1 facility, approximately 3.5km from site)	Nil

Source: The Hills Shire Council (2019)

As shown in Source: The Hills Shire Council (2019), City of Parramatta (2020)

Table 5, local active open space provision near the site is good, with the Castlewood Community Reserve located less than 500 metres from the site boundary. Additional facilities are located at Greenup Park Reserve (1.2 kilometres southwest of the site) and George Thornton Reserve (1.5 kilometres southeast of the site). Regional active open space provision is also adequate, with Fred Caterson Reserve providing a large quantity of such space within approximately 3.5 kilometres of the site. No district or ancillary active open space was identified within the relevant catchment areas.

Table 6: Passive open space provision assessment

Classification	Metric	Existing provision	Additional need
Local parks			
<i>Basic</i>	0.5-1ha within 400m	0ha within 400m	Negligible The proposal includes linear park areas and pocket parks that would adequately address this shortfall for local residents.
<i>Local park</i>	0.5-1ha within 400m	0.3ha within 400m	Negligible The proposal provides additional 0.3ha local park within 400m.
<i>Suburban park</i>	0.5-2ha within 1km	2.8ha within 1km	Nil
District park	2-5ha within 2km	20ha within 2km	Nil
Subregional park	5+ha within LGA	0	5+ha

Source: The Hills Shire Council (2019)

Passive open space provision near the site is mixed, with the existing provision and the area in the proposal considered adequate to meet additional demand, as shown in Table 6. There is, however, a significant shortfall at the subregional park level, with only the Castle Hill Showground classified as such within Councils Recreation Strategy. This facility is separated from the site by some distance (over three kilometres) its main purpose appears to be hosting events, rather than providing passive open space. Overall, however, the provision of various trails, pocket parks, and landscaping within the proposal and pedestrian connectivity improvements would contribute greatly to passive open space access for future residents at the site.

6.0 JUSTIFICATION FOR INCREASED RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

The following section undertakes a review of the socio-demographic and housing characteristics within the study areas, Castle Hill – South (SA2), The Hills Shire (LGA), and Greater Sydney (GCCSA). The intent of the section is to inform the justification of enabling additional residential housing development in the local area to meet the current and future needs of the population.

This assessment is based on the principles and findings from various strategic planning policies for the Hills Shire, including:

- Meeting anticipated residential demand growth in Castle Hill
- Increasing housing density in the LGA (in suitable locations)
- A need to provide more diverse housing
- Housing affordability concerns
- Accessible housing (including for seniors and people with a disability).

6.1 Projections

6.1.1 Population

Over the 20-year period to 2041, it is projected that The Hills Shire’s population will reach over 284,000 persons. This represents a growth of slightly over 100,000 people (or 54 per cent) over the period. The Castle Hill - South population is projected to grow by around 1,800 people over the same period, reaching a total of 12,366 people by 2041 (or around 17 per cent growth). These projections are shown in Table 7.

Both the Shire and Castle Hill - South are forecast to continue to experience an ageing of the population with persons aged 55 years and over representing 41 per cent and 96 per cent of net growth respectively. In fact, the population aged under 29 is expected to see a net decline of 12 per cent. Meanwhile, children (in particular, between five and fourteen years of age) are projected to make up a much smaller proportion of the study area’s population in 2041, compared to 2021.

Persons aged 85 years and older are projected to constitute over six per cent of the study area population by 2041, compared to under two per cent in 2021. Various other five year age groups aged 50 years and older are also projected to represent a larger proportion of the study area population by 2041, with most increasing in proportion by between one and two per cent. The study area’s future older residents would likely benefit from increased housing options, such as medium density dwellings, as their lifestyle and needs change allowing them to age in place.

Table 7: Population and age composition projections 2021-41

Age group (years)	Castle Hill - South						The Hills Shire					
	2021		2041		Net change		2021		2041		Net change	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
0-4	519	4.9%	490	4.0%	-29	-1.0%	10,349	5.6%	15,309	5.4%	4,960	-0.2%
5-9	753	7.1%	545	4.4%	-208	-2.7%	13,850	7.5%	17,704	6.2%	3,854	-1.3%
10-14	799	7.6%	612	4.9%	-187	-2.6%	14,176	7.7%	18,719	6.6%	4,543	-1.1%
15-19	674	6.4%	673	5.4%	-1	-0.9%	12,704	6.9%	19,231	6.8%	6,527	-0.1%
20-24	634	6.0%	594	4.8%	-40	-1.2%	11,794	6.4%	17,044	6.0%	5,250	-0.4%
25-29	565	5.4%	558	4.5%	-7	-0.8%	10,122	5.5%	14,681	5.2%	4,559	-0.3%
30-34	536	5.1%	636	5.1%	100	0.1%	10,036	5.5%	15,212	5.4%	5,176	-0.1%

Age group (years)	Castle Hill - South						The Hills Shire					
	2021		2041		Net change		2021		2041		Net change	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
35-39	751	7.1%	740	6.0%	-11	-1.1%	13,472	7.3%	17,281	6.1%	3,809	-1.2%
40-44	827	7.8%	844	6.8%	17	-1.0%	14,367	7.8%	19,624	6.9%	5,257	-0.9%
45-49	815	7.7%	949	7.7%	134	0.0%	13,942	7.6%	21,049	7.4%	7,107	-0.2%
50-54	666	6.3%	964	7.8%	298	1.5%	12,273	6.7%	20,584	7.2%	8,311	0.6%
55-59	602	5.7%	929	7.5%	327	1.8%	10,759	5.8%	19,010	6.7%	8,251	0.8%
60-64	568	5.4%	834	6.7%	266	1.4%	9,718	5.3%	15,917	5.6%	6,199	0.3%
65-69	553	5.2%	727	5.9%	174	0.6%	8,358	4.5%	13,759	4.8%	5,401	0.3%
70-74	511	4.8%	562	4.5%	51	-0.3%	7,378	4.0%	11,563	4.1%	4,185	0.1%
75-79	375	3.6%	483	3.9%	108	0.4%	5,098	2.8%	9,797	3.4%	4,699	0.7%
80-84	223	2.1%	472	3.8%	249	1.7%	3,035	1.7%	7,988	2.8%	4,953	1.2%
85+	187	1.8%	755	6.1%	568	4.3%	2,499	1.4%	9822	3.5%	7,323	2.1%
Total persons	10,560	100.0%	12,366	100.0%	1,806	0.0%	183,930	100.0%	284,294	100.0%	100,364	0.0%

Source: 2022 NSW Common Planning Assumption Projections

6.1.2 Households

Over the 20-year period to 2041, it is projected that the number of households in The Hills Shire will exceed 95,000, representing a net growth of roughly 37,000 households (over 60 per cent). The number of households in Castle Hill – South is projected to reach nearly 4,700 by 2041, a net increase of over 1,100 households (or just over 30 per cent) over the 20-year period.

Larger households are expected to remain the dominant household type, with couple families with dependents forecast to represent 38 per cent of households in Castle Hill – South and 46 per cent of households in The Hills Shire in 2041. However, smaller households – including couples without dependents and lone person households – are expected to represent 65 per cent of net growth in Castle Hill – South and 47 per cent of the growth in households across the Shire. The average household size is also forecast to decline both in Castle Hill – South and across the Shire. Smaller households would likely benefit from increased housing choice, such as medium density dwellings, that better align with their needs and provide a comparably more affordable option.

These findings are shown in Table 8 and Table 9.

Table 8: Household type projections (2021-2041)

Household type	2021		2041		Change	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Castle Hill - South						
Couple families with dependents	1,569	44.0%	1,801	38.5%	232	-5.5%
Couples without dependents	894	25.0%	1,322	28.3%	428	3.2%
Group households	52	1.5%	59	1.3%	8	-0.2%
Lone person households	519	14.5%	812	17.4%	293	2.8%
One parent family	326	9.1%	429	9.2%	103	0.0%
Other families	208	5.8%	254	5.4%	46	-0.4%
Total	3,569	100.0%	4,678	100.0%	1,109	0.0%
The Hills Shire						
Couple families with dependents	29,250	50.2%	43,688	45.8%	14,438	-4.4%
Couples without dependents	13,551	23.3%	24,300	25.5%	10,749	2.2%
Group households	930	1.6%	1,477	1.5%	547	0.0%
Lone person households	6,952	11.9%	13,471	14.1%	6,519	2.2%
One parent family	4,684	8.0%	7,969	8.4%	3,285	0.3%
Other families	2,885	5.0%	4,441	4.7%	1,556	-0.3%
Total	58,252	100.0%	95,346	100.0%	37,094	0.0%

Source: DPHI (2022) NSW Common Planning Assumption Projections

Table 9: Average household size (2021-2041, projected)

Location	Average household size		
	2021	2041	Change
Castle Hill – South	2.9	2.6	-0.3
The Hills Shire	3.1	3.0	-0.1

Source: DPHI (2022) NSW Common Planning Assumption Projections

The proposal would contribute to addressing these changes by improving the range of dwellings available in the local area, in particular, for the increasing proportion of smaller households anticipated across the study area.

6.2 Improving dwelling diversity

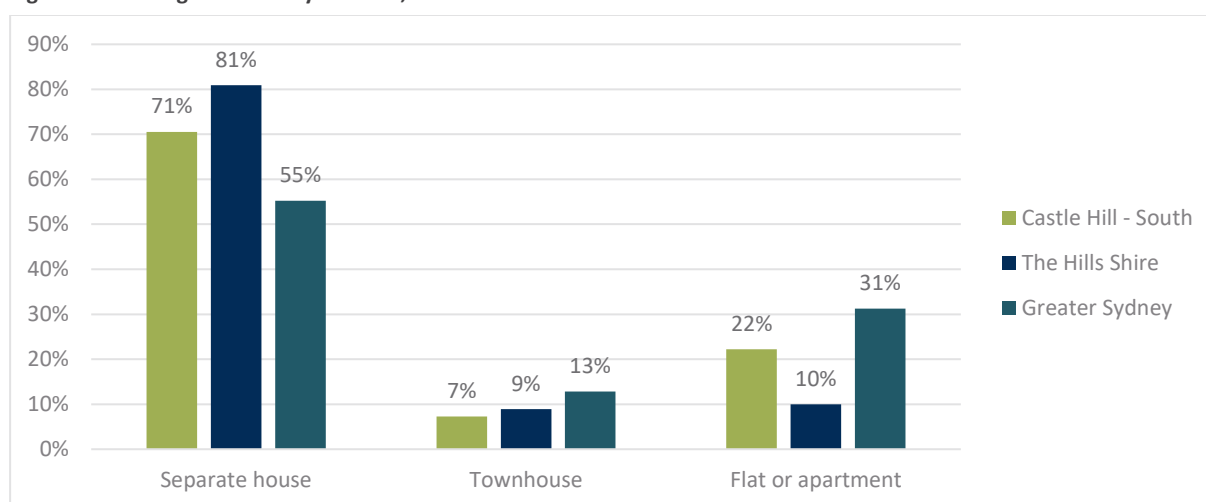
Increasing the supply different types and sizes of dwellings is important in the study area and across The Hills Shire. This would provide housing options that better match people's changing lifestyle preferences, promote social inclusion, increase affordability and enable people to live closer to jobs and services. These outcomes align with key local and State planning objectives.

6.2.1 Dwelling structure

As at the 2021 Census, separate dwellings were the dominant housing typology in both The Hills Shire and Castle Hill – South (81 per cent and 71 per cent of occupied dwellings, respectively). These figures were much higher than the figure for Greater Sydney, of which 55 per cent of occupied dwellings were separate houses.

Conversely, the proportion of townhouses and apartments recorded in The Hills Shire and Castle Hill – South was lower than that of Greater Sydney, though a much higher proportion of dwellings in the study area were flats or apartments compared to across The Hills Shire (22 per cent and 10 per cent, respectively). Improving the available dwelling diversity in the study area and LGA would align with key strategic planning priorities, including the LSPS' Planning Priority 8: "Plan for a diversity of housing."

Figure 7: Dwelling structure by location, 2021



Source: ABS 2021 Census Community Profiles

6.2.2 Age structure

Compared to The Hills Shire and Greater Sydney, the recorded age structure of the study area at the 2021 Census indicated a slightly older resident population, with around 23 per cent of residents aged 60 years or over, compared to around 20 per cent for both comparator areas. This was further reflected in the study areas slightly higher median age of 40 years, three years older than that of Greater Sydney and two years older than that of The Hills Shire.

This was balanced by a higher proportion of residents aged 17 years and younger, constituting over 23 per cent of the 2021 population, slightly higher than the almost 22 per cent recorded across Greater Sydney. Over ten per cent of study area residents were primary school aged children (between five and eleven years old).

This mixed aged structure suggests a need for dwellings of various types and sizes, enabling residents to remain part of the community as their requirements change. These findings are shown in Table 10 and Figure 8.

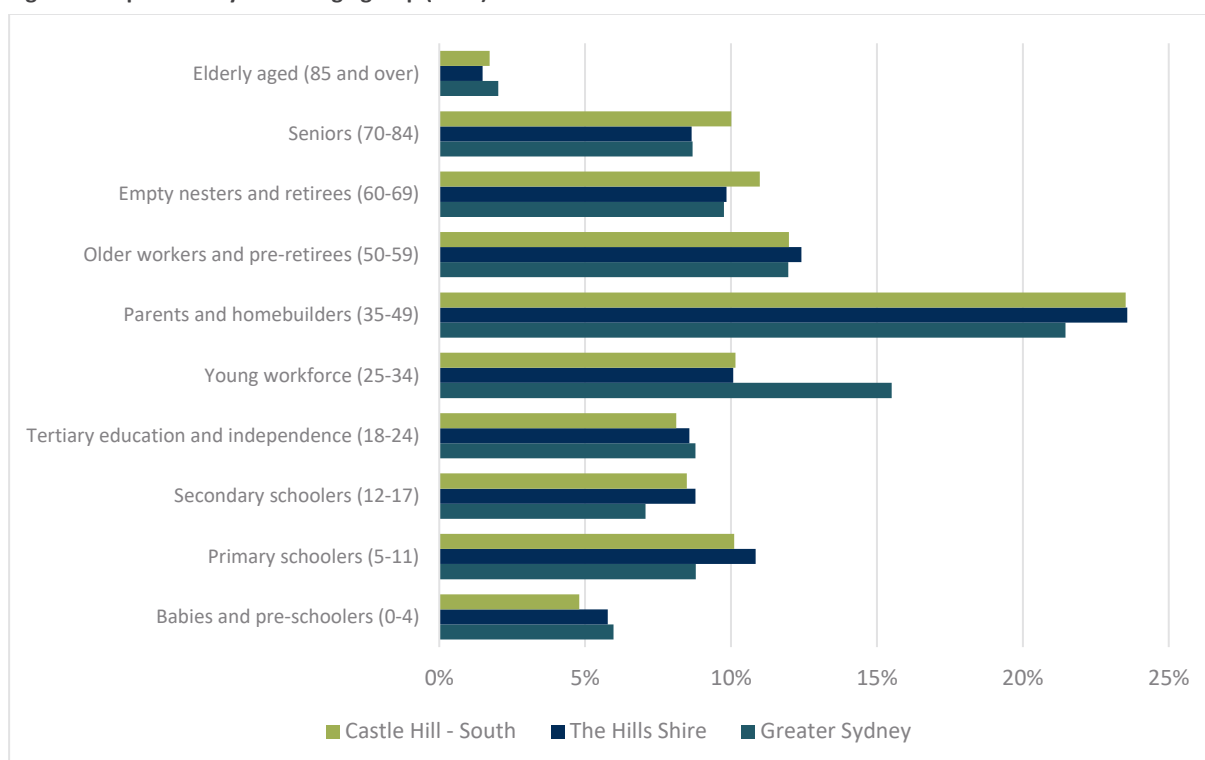
Table 10: Age by service age group (2021)

Service age group	Castle Hill – South	The Hills Shire	Greater Sydney
Babies and pre-schoolers (0 to 4)	4.8%	5.8%	6.0%

Service age group	Castle Hill – South	The Hills Shire	Greater Sydney
Primary schoolers (5 to 11)	10.1%	10.8%	8.8%
Secondary schoolers (12 to 17)	8.5%	8.8%	7.1%
Tertiary education and independence (18 to 24)	8.1%	8.6%	8.8%
Young workforce (25 to 34)	10.2%	10.1%	15.5%
Parents and homebuilders (35 to 49)	23.5%	23.6%	21.5%
Older workers and pre-retirees (50 to 59)	12.0%	12.4%	12.0%
Empty nesters and retirees (60 to 69)	11.0%	9.8%	9.8%
Seniors (70 to 84)	10.0%	8.6%	8.7%
Elderly aged (85 and over)	1.7%	1.5%	2.0%
Total	100%	100%	100%
<i>Median age (years)</i>	<i>40</i>	<i>38</i>	<i>37</i>

Source: ABS 2021 Census Community Profiles (2022); ABS QuickStats (2022)

Figure 8: Population by service age group (2021)



Source: ABS 2021 Census Community Profiles (2022)

6.2.3 Household composition

As at 2021, the dominant household type in the study area and across The Hills Shire was couples with children, accounting for roughly half of all households in both areas, compared to just over a third of households across Greater Sydney.

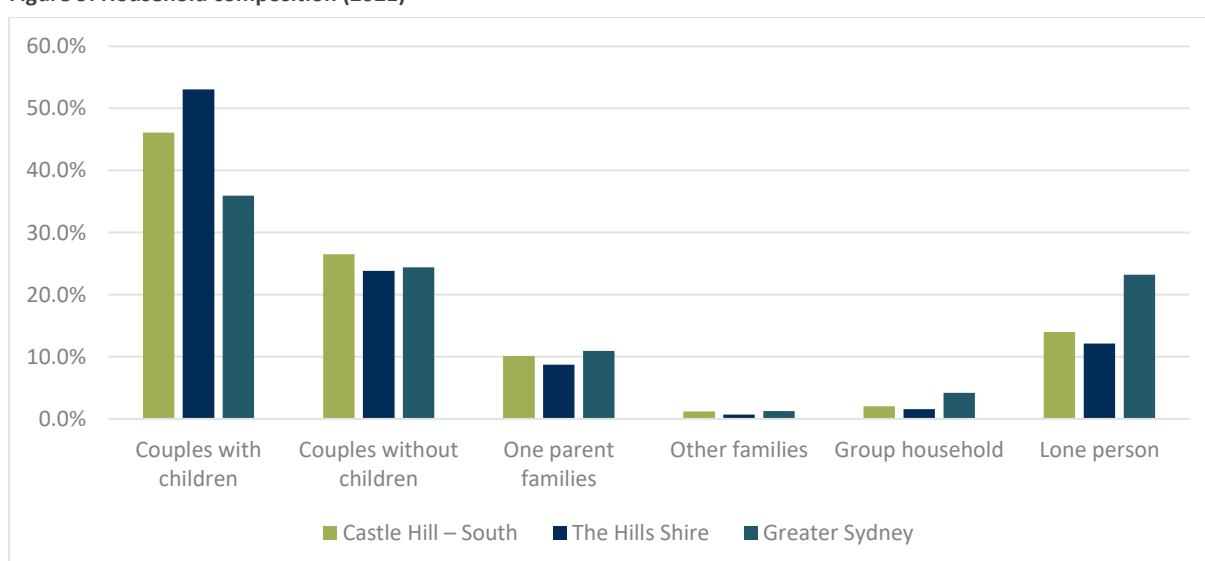
Despite this, 'small households' (couple only and lone person households) constitute a significant proportion of households in the study area at just over forty per cent, larger than that of The Hills Shire (36 per cent), though much smaller than that recorded across Greater Sydney (almost 48 per cent).

Table 11: Household composition, 2021

Household type	Castle Hill – South	The Hills Shire	Greater Sydney
Couples with children	46.1%	53.0%	36.0%
Couples without children	26.5%	23.9%	24.4%
One parent families	10.1%	8.7%	10.9%
Other families	1.2%	0.7%	1.3%
Group household	2.1%	1.6%	4.2%
Lone person	14.0%	12.2%	23.2%
Total households	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Source: ABS 2021 Census Community Profiles (2022)

Figure 9: Household composition (2021)



Source: ABS 2021 Census Community Profiles (2022)

6.2.4 Household composition by dwelling type

As at the 2021 Census, detached dwellings were the predominant dwelling type across all household types in the study area, with much higher proportions of study area households living in such dwellings compared to all Greater Sydney residents.

This is particularly noteworthy in terms of small households (couple only and lone person households). Across Greater Sydney in 2021, around half of small households resided in separate houses, whereas this figure was over 70 per cent for the study area. Around 29 per cent of small households in the study area lived in a flat, apartment, or semi-detached dwelling, flats or apartments compared to just under half of those across Greater Sydney.

Whilst this contrast may reflect preferences to some degree, it also likely relates to affordability and availability, with fewer options available in the local area for smaller households to relocated to. These findings are shown in Table 12.

Table 12: Household composition by dwelling structure (2021)

Dwelling structure	Household composition					
Castle Hill – South	Couples with children	Couples without children	One parent families	Other families	Group household	Lone person
Separate house	77%	72%	69%	51%	48%	54%
Townhouse	6%	6%	9%	22%	6%	10%

Dwelling structure	Household composition					
Flat or apartment	16%	22%	21%	39%	45%	36%
Other dwelling	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Greater Sydney	Couples with children	Couples without children	One parent families	Other families	Group household	Lone person
Separate house	72%	54%	62%	47%	30%	35%
Townhouse	12%	12%	15%	12%	13%	15%
Flat or apartment	16%	34%	23%	40%	56%	49%
Other dwelling	0%	0%	0%	1%	1%	1%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source: ABS 2021 Census Community Profiles (2022)

6.2.5 Dwelling typology by number of bedrooms

As at the 2021 Census, over 70 per cent of dwellings in the study area consisted of three or more bedrooms, with four bedroom dwellings having the highest share of the total (around 30 per cent). Only around one in five dwellings had two or fewer bedrooms, with the vast majority of these (around 17 per cent) being two bedroom dwellings; leaving roughly three per cent of dwellings as one bedroom.

In terms of separate houses, roughly two thirds of these in the study area had four or more bedrooms, with around a quarter having two bedrooms. By far the most common configuration for separate houses in the study area was four bedroom dwellings, at over 43 per cent. Townhouses and other semi-detached dwellings were even more concentrated, with over 70 per cent of these having three bedrooms, leaving around 13 per cent with two bedrooms, along with a handful of one, four, and five bedroom dwellings.

Apartment dwellings in the study area largely consisted of two bedroom dwellings, at nearly 60 per cent of the total, with the remainder shared between one and three bedroom dwellings (around 12 and 14 per cent, respectively).

These findings are shown in Table 13.

Table 13: Number of bedrooms by dwelling type (study area, 2021)

Castle Hill – South	Studio	One	Two	Three	Four	Five	Six+
Separate house	0.0%	0.7%	3.0%	24.1%	43.4%	18.4%	4.1%
Townhouse	0.0%	1.5%	13.5%	70.2%	2.9%	1.5%	0.0%
Flat or apartment	0.0%	11.7%	59.1%	13.9%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Total	0.0%	3.3%	17.1%	25.2%	30.2%	12.9%	2.9%

Source: ABS 2021 Census TableBuilder

6.2.6 Dwelling typology by number of persons usually resident

The following provides analysis on the number of persons usually resident in each dwelling typology. This is shown in Table 14.

As at the 2021 Census, over 40 per cent of all dwellings in the study area had one or two residents, with a further 20 per cent having three residents. Less than a third of all dwellings had four or more residents.

This trend is relatively steady across the housing typologies, with only around 37 per cent of separate houses having four or more residents; a slightly smaller proportion than the 38 per cent of separate houses with one or two residents. Slightly more than 60 per cent of townhouses had three or fewer residents, whilst over two thirds

of apartment dwellings had three or fewer residents, suggesting that non-separate house dwellings may be better suited to their households' needs.

Table 14: Dwelling typology by number of persons usually resident in dwelling (study area, 2021)

Dwelling type	One	Two	Three	Four	Five	Six	Seven	Eight+
Separate house	10.1%	27.9%	19.3%	21.9%	10.1%	3.4%	0.8%	0.7%
Townhouse	16.0%	25.1%	19.3%	21.8%	2.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Flat or apartment	19.6%	29.7%	18.2%	12.9%	1.8%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Total	12.9%	28.3%	19.3%	20.1%	7.7%	2.6%	0.5%	0.5%

Source: ABS 2021 Census TableBuilder

6.2.7 Dwelling suitability by typology

The ABS provides an indicator called 'housing suitability'. It compares the number of bedrooms required with the actual number of bedrooms in the dwelling. It can be used to analyse the under or over utilisation of dwellings and the dwelling's suitability for the resident household, based on a selection of criteria that determine the bedroom requirements of a household, including:

- there should be no more than two persons per bedroom
- children less than five years of age of different sexes may reasonably share a bedroom
- children less than 18 years of age and of the same sex may reasonably share a bedroom
- single household members 18 years and over should have a separate bedroom, as should parents or couples and
- a lone person household may reasonably occupy a bed sitter.

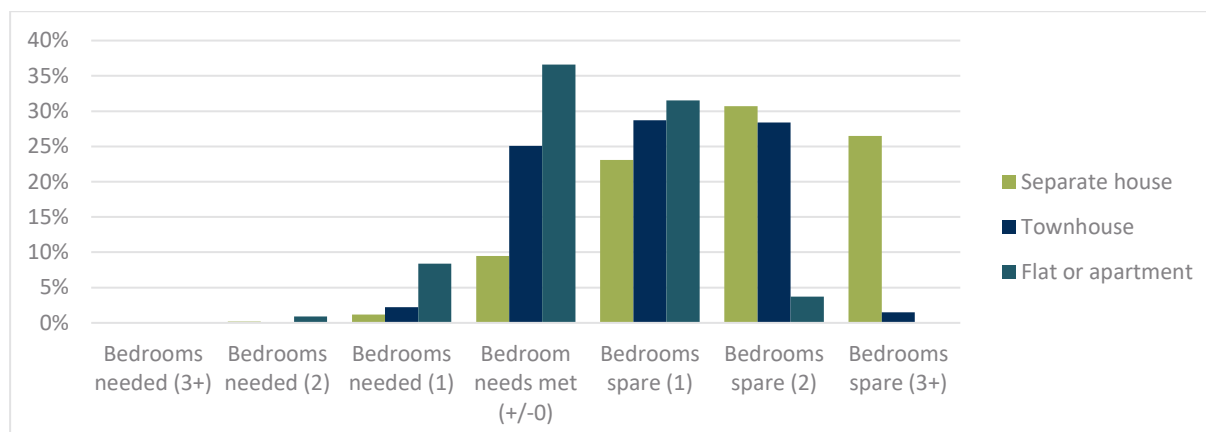
As at the 2021 Census, dwellings in the study area were more likely to have one or more spare bedrooms than to have the 'right' number of bedrooms, or require one or more extra bedrooms. Overall, over two thirds (around 68 per cent) of dwellings had one or more spare bedrooms, whilst around 17 per cent of dwellings had the 'right' number of bedrooms, and only around three per cent of dwellings needed additional bedrooms.

For separate houses, less than ten per cent of dwellings had the 'right' number of bedrooms, whilst over 80 per cent had one or more spare bedrooms; with nearly a quarter of separate houses in the study area having three or more spare bedrooms.

Smaller dwellings were generally better-matched to their occupants' needs, with around a quarter of townhouses and over a third of apartments having the 'right' number of bedrooms, and a much smaller proportion having spare bedrooms. Apartments, however, recorded the highest proportion of dwellings that required additional bedrooms to meet their households' needs, with around nine per cent of apartments in the study area requiring one or more additional bedrooms (the vast majority of which required just one additional bedroom).

These findings are shown in Figure 10 and Table 15.

Figure 10: Dwelling suitability by typology (study area, 2021)



Source: ABS 2021 Census TableBuilder

Table 15: Dwelling suitability by typology (study area, 2021)

Dwelling type	Bedrooms needed				+/-0	Bedrooms spare			
	4+	3	2	1		1	2	3	4+
Separate house	0.0%	0.0%	0.2%	1.2%	9.5%	23.1%	30.7%	20.9%	5.5%
Townhouse	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	2.2%	25.1%	28.7%	28.4%	1.5%	0.0%
Flat or apartment	0.0%	0.0%	0.9%	8.4%	36.6%	31.5%	3.7%	0.0%	0.0%
Total	0.0%	0.0%	0.4%	3.0%	17.2%	25.4%	24.3%	14.6%	3.8%

Source: ABS 2021 Census TableBuilder

6.3 Supporting housing affordability

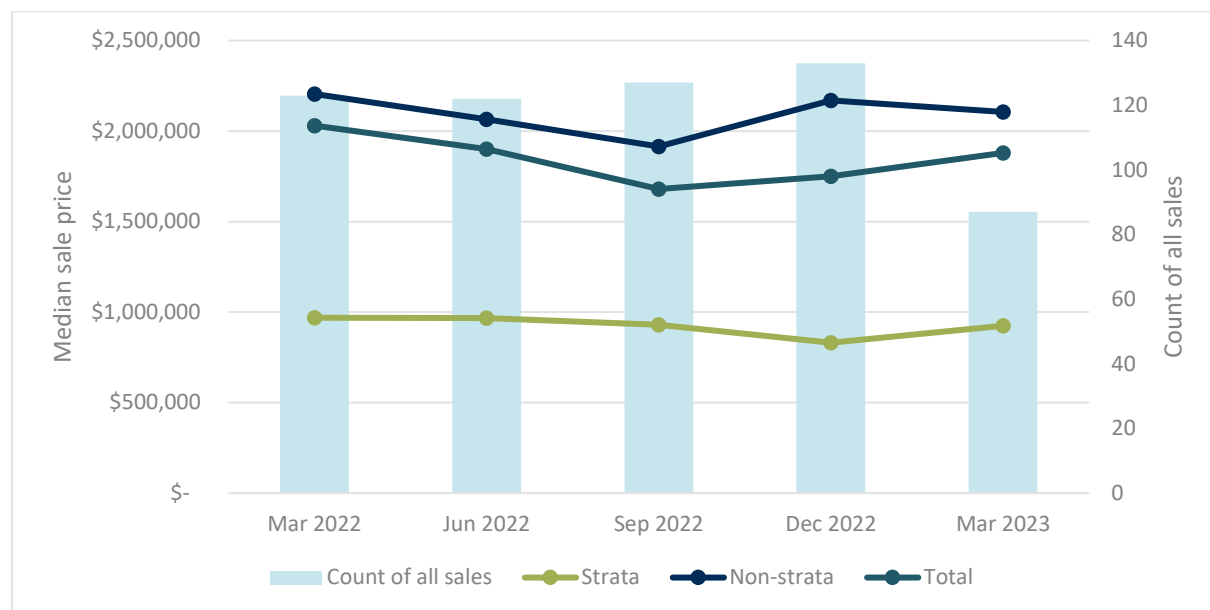
Housing affordability is an issue across Greater Sydney and many parts of Australia more broadly. Affordability is noted as a key concern for Council in its *Local Housing Strategy*, in particular for households facing rental or mortgage stress.

6.3.1 Residential sales trend

Figure 11 shows data for the last five quarters for residential property sales in the 2154 postcode area (includes the site). The data does not indicate any clear price trends, however, the reduction in quantity of sales recorded in the March 2023 quarter is significant, reducing from around 130 sales to under 90 sales. It is notable that the median sale price of strata dwellings in the 2154 postcode area is high, remaining near \$1,000,000 across the observed period.

Sales prices for non-strata dwellings have demonstrated more variability, with the median sale price breaching \$2,200,000 in the March 2022 quarter, and reducing to almost \$1,900,000 in the September 2022 quarter. Overall, the sales market in the 2154 postcode area is expensive, and increasing the amount of smaller dwellings in the market could aid in reducing the median sale price.

Figure 11: Median sale prices by quarter, 2154 postcode area



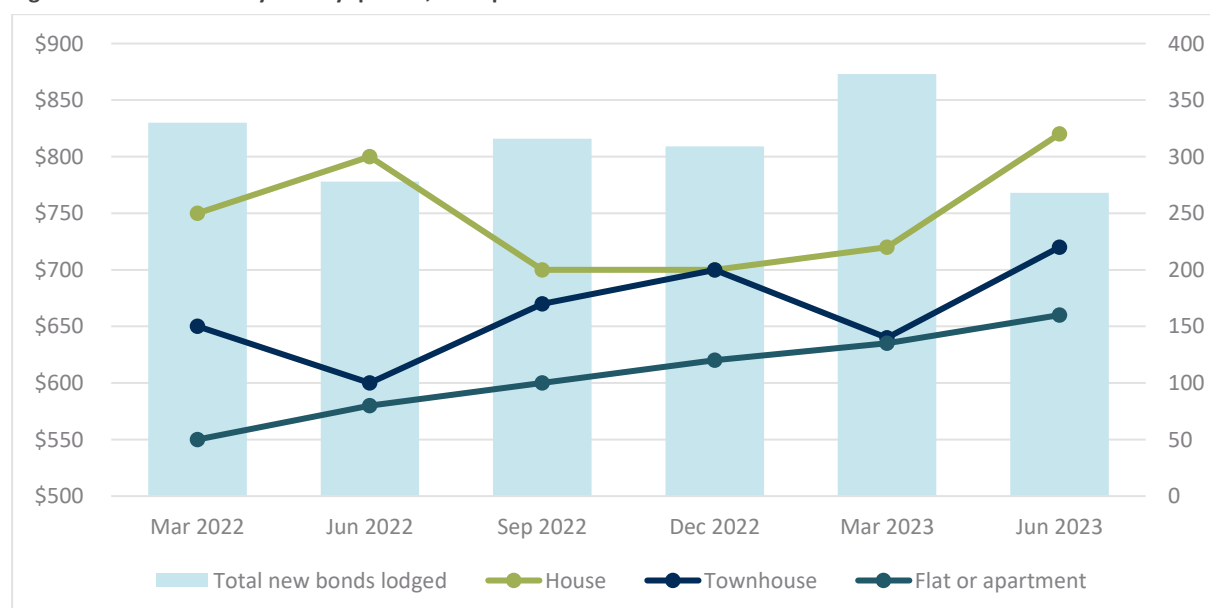
Source: NSW Government Family and Community Services (2023)

6.3.2 Residential rent trend

Figure 12 shows data for the last six quarters for residential property rentals by type in the 2154 postcode area (includes the site). Whilst there is some variability in the data, all property types have demonstrated an increase in median weekly rent over the 18 month period to June 2023. Also noteworthy is the March 2023 quarter peak in new bond lodgements (373), immediately followed by the lowest total for new bond lodgements recorded for the period, in the June 2023 quarter (268).

Over the aforementioned period of the most recent quarters with available data, median weekly rent increased significantly for each of the housing typologies, including a \$100 per week jump in median weekly rent for houses. Overall, across the 18 month period, median weekly rent for new bonds in the 2154 postcode area has increased the most for flats and apartments, up by \$110 per week, whilst both houses and townhouses have increased by \$70 per week over the period.

Figure 12: Median weekly rent by quarter, 2154 postcode area



Source: NSW Government Family and Community Services (2023)

6.3.3 Rental and mortgage stress

Housing stress is a metric used to describe a situation where the cost of housing is high relative to household income. As a rule of thumb, housing stress is defined as where housing costs (rent or mortgage repayments) are 30 per cent or more of gross household income. While this figure provides a useful benchmark of housing affordability, the definition of affordability varies according to a household's individual circumstances.

Our analysis finds that the study area is subject to a greater degree of financial stress related to housing compared to The Hills Shire as a whole, with a slightly higher proportion of mortgagee households experiencing mortgage stress, and a significantly higher proportion of renter households experiencing rental stress. The rates of housing stress in the study area mirror those of Greater Sydney more closely, with only a small difference between the two areas, Greater Sydney recording slightly higher proportions in both regards.

In terms of differentiation in housing stress between dwelling types, differences were smaller across the larger comparator areas, however, in the study area, a much higher proportion of flat or apartment households experienced mortgage stress, whilst townhouse (and other semi-detached dwelling) households recorded a much higher proportion of rental stress than any of the comparator areas or housing types, with over 40 per cent of such households experiencing rental stress.

These findings are shown in Table 16.

Table 16: Mortgage and rental stress, study area and comparator areas (2021)

Locality	Affordability measure/type	Separate house	Townhouse	Flat or apartment	Total
Castle Hill – South	Mortgage repayments >30% of household income	19.5%	22.8%	26.3%	19.5%
	Rent payments >30% of household income	33.5%	40.2%	33.3%	34.4%
The Hills Shire	Mortgage repayments >30% of household income	18.8%	17.5%	20.2%	18.8%
	Rent payments >30% of household income	28.8%	27.6%	29.6%	29.9%
Greater Sydney	Mortgage repayments >30% of household income	19.0%	20.1%	22.5%	19.8%
	Rent payments >30% of household income	35.7%	35.6%	36.6%	35.3%

Source: ABS Census 2021, Tablebuilder

It is worth noting that the above findings were current as at the 2021 Census, when the official cash rate was around 0.1 per cent. The cumulative and increasing impact of cash rate rises since that time (up to 4.35 per cent at the time of writing) is likely to have increased the proportion of households experiencing stress. Increasing supply is one lever that can contribute to downward pressure on the rental market, and providing alternative dwelling types and sizes (as per the previous sections) can support households experiencing increasing financial stress to find a more affordable home in their local community.

6.4 Meeting strategic planning goals

According to its *LHS*, by 2036, Council intends for The Hills Shire's dwelling mix to change significantly, as shown in Table 17.

Table 17: LHS dwelling mix target (2036)

Dwelling type	2016 share	2036 share	Change required
Separate house	80%	57%	-23%
Townhouse	14%	13%	-1%
Flat or apartment	6%	30%	+24%

Source: The Hills Shire Council (2019); ABS Census 2021, Tablebuilder

Whilst the study area hosts a large proportion of flats and apartments compared to the *LHS's* findings across the LGA in 2016, a significant shift is still required. The proposal could support this, providing an increase in terraces and apartments and reducing the deficit to the *LHS's* 2036 dwelling mix target. This is shown in Table 18.

Table 18: Dwelling mix target contribution

Dwelling type	2036 dwelling mix target	2021 Census results		2021 Census results (with the proposal)		
		Castle Hill – South	Difference to target	Castle Hill – South	Difference to target	Dwelling mix improvement
Separate house	57%	71%	+14%	67%	+10%	-4%
Townhouse	13%	7%	-6%	8%	-5%	+1%
Flat or apartment	30%	22%	-8%	25%	-5%	+3%

Source: The Hills Shire Council (2019); ABS Census 2021, Tablebuilder

7.0 KEY FINDINGS

Key findings include:

- There is a diverse range of social infrastructure in proximity to the site, including passive and active open space, education facilities, early learning centres and medical centres
- We estimate that the proposal would contain approximately 427 people when fully developed. The most represented service age group is projected to be Parents and homebuilders (persons aged between 35 and 49 years)
- Owing to the relatively small size of the resident population, the provision of social infrastructure within the site and existing infrastructure in the surrounds, the proposal is not projected to overburden most local infrastructure within the surrounds (open space, child care and health facilities). Schools within the area had enrolments well above their enrolment cap as defined by the Department of Education, although the site is projected to generate demand for less than 30 public primary school places and 20 public secondary school places
- Population projections for the local area and LGA suggest a trend toward smaller household sizes, signalling a need for a greater number of smaller dwellings in the area moving forward.
- The surrounds and LGA have a much lower proportion of medium and high density housing than Greater Sydney, with separate house overwhelmingly being the dominant typology. The proposal would assist in increasing housing diversity in the local area and LGA, aligning with strategic directions to increase housing diversity
- By increasing housing diversity, the proposal would assist in meeting a need for a wider variety of dwellings types and sizes, enabling residents to remain part of the community as their requirements change (most particularly, enabling ageing in place)
- The proposal would assist in improving alignment between housing stock and household size, with small households being overrepresented in separate dwellings, suggesting an unmet demand for smaller sized dwellings. Indeed, at the 2021 Census, over a quarter (26 per cent) of separate dwellings within the study area had 3 or more spare bedrooms, again suggesting a mismatch in the size and diversity of dwellings being delivered within the area
- Sales data from FACS indicates that the area surrounding the proposal has a high median sale price, over \$2 million for non- strata properties, with the median for non-strata (predominantly apartments and smaller attached dwellings) being about half that amount. Amongst rentals, there is a similar difference with bonds lodged on apartments being consistently lower than separate houses. This suggests that an increased amount of smaller dwellings in the market could aid in improving local affordability, particularly with the local rates of rental and mortgage stress.

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SYDNEY

Level 3, 234 George Street
Sydney NSW 2000
GPO Box 2748 Sydney NSW 2001
t: +61 2 9252 8777
f: +61 2 9252 6077
e: sydney@hillpda.com

MELBOURNE

Suite 114, 838 Collins Street
Docklands VIC 3008
t: +61 3 9629 1842
f: +61 3 9629 6315
e: melbourne@hillpda.com

WWW.HILLPDA.COM