



The Social Plan informs and assists Council in providing, in a fair and equitable way, appropriate and accessible services and facilities for the residents of Strathfield Local Government Area.



# SOCIAL PLAN

## 2009-2014

“our world is more than a collection of buyers and sellers, producers and consumers; we are also people that depend on learning, trust, knowing each other and forming close links with those around us in order to discover our identity and build the communities we desire and want to belong to”

OECD, (1996) The Knowledge Economy: Science, Technology and Industry Outlook. p24. Paris: OECD

This Social Plan was prepared in accordance with the Local Government Act 1993 by Sue Davies of Arrunga Connections Consulting and Cathy Jones, Policy & Projects Officer, Strathfield Council with contributions and assistance from the following Strathfield Council Officers: Neale Redman, Elizabeth Graves, Lise Lafferty, Suzanne Qui and Michael Chau.

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Strathfield Council  
65 Homebush Rd  
Strathfield NSW 2135  
Website: [www.strathfield.nsw.gov.au](http://www.strathfield.nsw.gov.au)  
Ph: 9748 9999 Fax: 9748 9914

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# GLOSSARY OF TERMS

<b>ATSI</b>	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
<b>BOCSAR</b>	Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research
<b>CALD</b>	Culturally and Linguistically Diverse
<b>CPTED</b>	Crime Prevention through Environmental Design
<b>FLAC</b>	Flemington Local Area Command
<b>LOTE</b>	Language other than English
<b>LGA</b>	Local Government Area
<b>PACT</b>	Police and Community Team
<b>WHO</b>	World Health Organisation
<b>Census</b>	Australian Bureau of Statistics
<b>ACOSS</b>	Australian Council of Social Services
<b>DSP</b>	Disability Support Pensioner

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Social Plan is one of Council's key planning documents. The plan identifies strategies and actions to address the needs of the local community and the delivery to all members of the community of fair and equitable access to services, facilities and participation, especially those with special needs. The Social Plan has significant links to Council's Recreation Plan, which is focused on management of community land, recreation and sporting facilities, physical activity and health strategies. A new Recreation Plan has been developed to complement the Social Plan.

The analysis of the community profile of Strathfield LGA has shown that the community is changing rapidly, mainly as a result of building activity creating population growth. The population has increased from 29,433 in 2001 to 35,124 in 2008. The increase in population is due to supply of new dwellings, rather than an increase in household sizes. The population growth is the largest increase since the 1920s and is one of the largest increases in NSW.

Since 2001 there has been a 39% increase in units and now constitutes 40% of all dwelling stock in Strathfield. This is significantly higher than the Sydney average of 26%. The areas of highest population increase are in Homebush, Homebush West and Strathfield Town Centres, mainly housed in medium to high density unit developments. It is anticipated that building activity will continue in the future and the majority (over 95%) will occur in the vicinity of major town centres and transport hubs at Strathfield, Homebush and Homebush West.

The 2006 Census indicated that all age groups, except 70-74 years, increased numerically from 2001 to 2006. There were significant increases occurred in the 25 to 34 years category (added 1390 people) and 18 to 24 years (added 792 people). Combined these groups constitute 28.2% of total population and an increase of 3.7% since 2001. The increase of numbers of younger people also resulted in changes to the median age of Strathfield residents dropping from 36 to 34 years, therefore defying the NSW and Australian trend of an aging population. It is assumed that many of the younger residents, especially those aged 18-24 years are students and of these a portion are overseas students. The prosperous economic conditions of this time supported a higher intake of overseas students but also encouraged the movement away from Strathfield of many older residents who sold their homes. The impact of this created a slight loss of older persons, but also affected home ownership rates in Strathfield LGA. The levels of home ownership dropped in Sydney but also in Strathfield LGA. There was also an increase in supply of rental property and increase in the number of people who were purchasing property and had a mortgage.

As some of these conditions may be the result of the positive economic conditions of 2001-2006, the turndown in the economy may create different outcomes over the next few years.

Strathfield LGA has higher numbers of youth aged 12 to 17 years than the Sydney average, which is partly attributable to the availability of well regarded schools in Strathfield. Strathfield LGA is a well educated community, exceeding Sydney standards across all indicators. 80% of all adults aged 20 to 29 years completed Year 12 schooling and 60% of all residents across all age groups completed Year 12. 46% of all residents hold tertiary qualifications at a Bachelor or higher degree level. Accessibility to home internet is higher in Strathfield LGA compared to the State and National average also.

The Census indicates that nearly 50% of the local population was born overseas. Lack of proficiency in English language skills is increasing, partly due to increased numbers of newly arrived migrants.

The Social Plan involved significant community consultation involving questionnaires and interviews covering 2500 people. The main issues raised by the community included:

- Strathfield LGA is a learning community highly valuing education and services such as library. However, there was an unmet demand for adult learning and English speaking classes in the local area.
- General dissatisfaction with pace of development and changing streetscapes.
- Need for additional green space in areas of higher density but also need to protect existing parks and open spaces.
- Community concern about crime in Strathfield LGA especially robbery, cyber safety, theft from person and home break and enters.
- Need for a wider range of activities and programs, especially for women.
- Complaints about poor access to transport in parts of Strathfield and problems accessing rail stations by people with disabilities, seniors and parents with prams due to lack of ramps and lifts.
- Need to upgrade the Strathfield Town Centre eg shops, transport and traffic management.

Analysis of demographic and research material coupled with community feedback indicated that strategies and actions were required to:

- Build a safer Strathfield eg crime prevention strategies.
- Build a stronger Strathfield by creating social capital by actions to promote and strengthen networks and communities.
- Address specific issues of target groups to promote fair and equitable access to facilities, services and participation.
- Improve and plan for community infrastructure and facilities.

The actions developed for the Social Plan identify areas of Council responsibility but acknowledge that delivery of services and facilities require forming partnerships with other councils, government agencies and the non-government sectors, both non-profit and commercial. There are also issues identified which are outside of Council's authority or resourcing where Council may need to raise issues with other levels of government on behalf of the local community.

# 1. ABOUT THE PLAN

## 1.1 Legislative and Policy Requirements

Strathfield Council's Social Plan (2009-2014) has been developed in accordance with the requirements of the Local Government Act and guidelines published by the Department of Local Government (DLG).

All councils in New South Wales are required to develop a Community or Social Plan to highlight and document the key issues facing the community then formulate a list of recommendations and strategies for implementation to address community needs.

Proposed amendments to the Local Government Act (2009) will change the current planning and reporting framework for local government. The amendments to the Act will require Councils to develop ten year community strategic plans and develop community consultation frameworks. It is anticipated that the new planning framework will replace the requirement for separate social/community plans as community needs are integral to the development of the new community strategic plan.

However, in the interim, the Social Plan will continue to inform and assist Council in providing, in a fair and equitable way, appropriate and accessible services and facilities for the residents of Strathfield Local Government Area (LGA).

Council adopted the first Social Plan 'A Fair Go for Strathfield' in 1996. This was followed by the Community Plan (2000) and Social Plan (2004-2009). This plan builds on the 2004-2009 Social Plan and has evolved through a process that has involved feedback from over 2,500 residents through a range of social research methods including questionnaires, focus groups and telephone interviews. From the data collected, Council has identified gaps and needs, proposed strategies, prioritised operations and proposed projects and activities that reflect community needs.

This consultative process has identified many issues and needs. While documenting these issues and developing strategies to meet them, Council's focus is to work towards the enhancing of community well being.

The Social Plan is an evolving, dynamic process and as priorities and issues change from time to time, Council will consider these factors in its annual review. From this continual planning process, Council then assesses and implements programs in a staged manner that is dependent on available resources.

Community feedback often identifies issues which are not within Council's area of authority or resourcing. When this occurs, Council works with other agencies and government departments encouraging them to develop new services, change policies or provide the required resources.

The DLG guidelines for Social Plans require councils to include seven mandatory target groups (listed below) in their social plans. The plans need to highlight and document the key issues facing these mandatory groupings then formulate a list of recommendations and strategies for implementation to address these community needs.



The mandatory groups are:

- Children (those aged between 0-11)
- Young people (those aged between 12-24)
- Women
- Older people (people aged 55 years and over)
- People with disabilities (includes all types of disabilities)
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (TSI) (those who are of Aboriginal or Islander descent, who identify as such and are accepted by the respective Aboriginal or TSI communities)
- People from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds (CALD) (including racial, ethnic and ethno-religious minority groups).

Consistent with a best practice an emerging group of concern in Strathfield LGA is:

- Unit dwellers with children.

They have been identified as a target group in the Social Plan through particular strategies to meet their need.

Additionally, the plan addresses a number of issues identified by all respondents and grouped under the following areas:

- Making Strathfield safer
- Making Strathfield stronger
- Developing and improving community infrastructure.

Residents were also concerned about creating and maintaining green space for the enjoyment of current and future generations. Their issues and concerns have been integrated into the three areas above and within the strategies listed under the seven mandatory groups.

## 1.2 Outline of the Social Plan

The Social Plan is set out in the following sections:

### **Introduction and profiles of Strathfield LGA – Sections 1-5**

These sections outline the framework that defines the social plan, provides a community profile on Strathfield, outlines a summary of data from the 2006 census and drawing on this data considers current trends facing Strathfield.

### **Literature Review, Community Feedback, Strategies and Action Plans – Sections 6-20**

This section contains:

A literature review of the seven mandatory groups: children, young people, women, older people, people with disabilities, ATSI people, CALD people.

A list of concerns and issues identified by each mandatory group and targeted strategies to meet the identified issues and concerns.

The inclusion of an additional group needing attention – families with children in unit developments.

Feedback from community responses identifying a range of common concerns about living in Strathfield and included under the following three areas:

- Making Strathfield safer
- Making Strathfield stronger
- Developing and improving community infrastructure.

A series of action plans relating to each of the targeted strategies above.

### 1.3 Recreation Plan

A new Council Recreation Plan is being developed to replace the current Recreation Plan (1999). This is designed to complement this Social Plan. Council has traditionally separated the two plans as open space and recreation in Strathfield involve significant and complex issues such as community land management which require more detailed responses and planning. Therefore, issues relating to open space, recreational activities including physical fitness and health strategies, parks playgrounds and sporting facilities etc may be raised in this report but are fully addressed in the new Recreation Plan.

### 1.4 Council Addressing Community Needs

Council is committed in addressing the issues and needs identified by the community and will achieve this through:

1. Communications – achieving a quantum shift in communications to become a leading council in Australia in communications performance. The focus will be on improving communication with the community. Council will also improve communications within the council itself and with other government bodies.
2. Financial resourcing – maintaining and improving a position as one of New South Wales' top performing councils in financial management and the ability to deliver services to the community in the long term.
3. Sustainable development – embracing sustainable development principles, so that growth delivers a balance of social, environmental and economic outcomes for the community.
4. Strategic planning – developing a mature strategic planning culture excelling in strategic planning and decision-making.
5. Staff development – building and developing high quality staff to be an employer of choice in local government in Australia.
6. Integrated transport – achieving a balance between transport modes including motor vehicles, public transport, cyclists and pedestrians.
7. Marketing – adopting the marketing concept philosophy, which is to know the needs of the community and make decisions to satisfy those needs.
8. Community building – giving greater emphasis to community building and diversity, including community facilities, community events, and community involvement.

Strathfield Council is committed to working with its residents to ensure a better community for all. This means focusing on achieving social, cultural, economic and environmental outcomes that not only meet but also exceed its goals and objectives.

To this end, Strathfield Council concentrates on sound financial management and governance practices that means all of its operations and practices are conducted with honesty, fairness, and respect for its residents, stakeholders and other people who play a role in Council. Good governance in Council also involves being accountable, transparent in its actions, ensuring probity and compliance with all ethical and legal requirements.

Sustainability of its resources is also high on Strathfield Council's focus. This requires Council to juggle the needs of its present community while ensuring the needs of its future generations will not be compromised. This is embedded in the principles of ecologically sustainable development incorporated in the Local Government Act. Council's response to these principles is the integration of sustainability values into all its practices, planning and decision making.

The Act also requires Councils to include the principles of social justice in all its planning. Social Justice means that people have fairer access to the economic resources and services essential to meeting their basic needs and improve their quality of life.

Access to services and resources, consultation and equity in participation are embedded in the principles of social justice. Strathfield Council believes it has a responsibility that adequate resources and services will also be available for future generations.

Evidence that Council ensures these principles of social justice and ecological sustainability for today's residents and future generations are part of its everyday practices, are integral to the Management and Financial Plan with linkages to its Social Plan, State of Environment Report, Local Environment Plans and Developmental Control Plans, Operational Plan and Annual Reports.

## 2. DEFINING THE SOCIAL PLAN FRAMEWORK

Strathfield Council has adopted Vision 2020, which articulates the Council's strategic direction until 2020. Under the Local Government Act, the Council is also required to detail its strategic direction over a three-year period in the Management Plan. The Social Plan is one of the strategic documents that informs the Management Plan and is in force for a five year period.

The planning process includes reporting on the principal activities and services that Strathfield Council intends to undertake, how these activities are to be measured, considers the proposed activities and services in light of proposed capital works and council's expected income and expenditure and rates, fees and charges.

### 2.1 What is social planning?

Social planning is a process of investigating and responding to the social needs and desires of all the people who live and work in Strathfield. Council often works in partnership with other agencies and organisations and through this process of planning prioritises and addresses identified needs. Sometimes however Council may not have the resources or brief to respond to all identified needs, therefore consideration for any activity and service is influenced by its intended sustainability eg social, environmental or economic outcome. Yearly reviews of the Social Plan involve an assessment of each activity and service against a set of performance criteria detailed in the action plans.

The Social Plan is a core component of Council's overall Management Plan, which is also reviewed annually as part of the planning process. The annual review determines which recommended access and equity activities from the Social Plan would be included in the Management Plan's expenditure for that year.

Above these various planning documents is Council's 20 Year Plan, which becomes the key framework for Council in achieving its long-term vision for Strathfield. It includes a number of goals for the Council and part of those goals will be the goals identified in the Social Plan.

The goals and priorities identified in the Social Plan for the next five years are detailed more specifically in action plans that list the priorities, whose responsibility they will be to see them through and how the outcomes will be evaluated.

### 2.2 How is the Social Plan defined?

- It concentrates only on the Strathfield Local Government Area.
- It relies on the information gathered from a range of consultative process with the community and government and non government agencies and organisations.
- It is informed by secondary evidence such as demographics and other research.
- It is limited to those areas of social, cultural and community needs where the Council's involvement is appropriate and possible.
- It relies on working in partnerships with other organisations.
- It depends on the whole of Council approach to responding to social, cultural and community needs.

## 2.3 Reviews

To ensure the Social Plan remains relevant and responsive to the community of Strathfield it will be continually reviewed, modified if need be and updated over the following five years. The action plans will also be reviewed and updated annually, with high priority activities identified for inclusion into Council's Management and Operational Plans. This ensures that services and programs are implemented in a planned manner according to community need and available funding.

## 2.4 Participatory Process

One of the principles of social justice is to provide the opportunity for people to participate in the social planning process. To this end strategies were put in place to seek input from residents, community organisations, service providers and relevant government organisations. This coordinated and collaborative process has resulted in the identification of a broad range of issues and needs through the enhanced working relationship between council and community and key government and non-government agencies.

## 2.5 The Plan in Action

In developing the Social Plan, Strathfield Council consulted with a range of other participatory groups across the community and received feedback from over 2,500 residents and stakeholders on identified needs and unmet needs.

The draft plan was placed on public exhibition in October 2009.

## 2.6 Methodology

A range of methodologies was used to ensure that the data collected was accurate, relevant and reflected the views of Strathfield residents.

- Analysis of demographic material from a range of government documents and Census material
- Review of International and Australian literature relating to identified community needs and issues
- Analysis of 2006 Census material across a wide range of topics
- Focus groups with service providers, service users and residents
- Questionnaires distributed to residents and users of services in Strathfield
- Telephone interviews with residents.

## 3. LIVING IN STRATHFIELD – A COMMUNITY PROFILE

### 3.1 Overview of Strathfield Local Government Area

### 3.2 Boundaries

Strathfield Local Government Area (LGA) is located in Sydney's Inner West sub-region. It is approximately halfway between Sydney and Parramatta with Strathfield Post Office approximately 10.5 kilometres from the Sydney GPO and 11 kilometres from Parramatta. Strathfield LGA covers 14.1 square kilometres<sup>1</sup> and is bounded by Homebush Bay Drive in the north, Powell's Creek, The Boulevard and Coronation Parade to the east, Punchbowl Road and Juno Parade in the south and Roberts Road, Chullora rail yards, Rookwood Cemetery and the Sydney Olympic Park Line Rail line to the west.

Strathfield LGA includes the suburbs of Strathfield (postcode 2135), Strathfield South (2136), Homebush (2140), Homebush West (2140), part of Belfield (2191) and part of Greenacre (2190). Sydney Markets is also located within Strathfield LGA and has its own postcode 2129. The area of Flemington is also known as Homebush West.

Several rivers and creeks pass through the LGA including the Cooks River, Cox's Creek, Powell's Creek, Saleyard's Creek and Boundary Creek.

### 3.3 Population

The estimated resident population (ERP) in Strathfield LGA was 29,433 (2001), 30,611 (2003), 32,645 (2005), 34,208 (2007) and 35,124 (2008). The Australian Bureau of Statistics ERP figures are updated annually taking into account births, deaths, internal and overseas migration. The estimated figures are re-reviewed after the current Census is taken.

#### 3.3.1 Population Density

Population density measures the number of people per kilometre of land area. Population density of Strathfield LGA has increased significantly since the 2001 Census and is above the Sydney Metropolitan average.

As at 2006, the population density of Strathfield LGA was 2295 people per km<sup>2</sup>. The 2001 population density was 2029 people per km<sup>2</sup>. The population of Strathfield in June 2008 is estimated at 35124, therefore population density is currently 2526 per person per km<sup>2</sup>.

However, there are some variations across suburbs of Strathfield LGA. Strathfield, Homebush and Homebush West, have the highest density (over 2500 people per km<sup>2</sup>) and the largest number of multi-unit dwellings, whereas Belfield/Greenacre and Strathfield South have lower densities (about 1200 people per km<sup>2</sup>) and significantly lower numbers of multi-unit dwellings.

<sup>1</sup> Note that Census uses 13.9km<sup>2</sup> for measure Strathfield LGA, while Council's estimates are 14.1m<sup>2</sup> for total area. The report uses 13.9km as the measurement as statistics are derived from Census calculations.

<sup>2</sup> Estimated Resident Population 1996-2007, ABS Category no.3235 Population by Age and Sex, Regions of Australia 2007

**Table 1. Population Density Strathfield LGA 2006**

Location	Population (2006)	Land area	Density
Belfield/Greenacre	2548	1.98 km	1286 people per km <sup>2</sup>
Homebush	5552	2.13 km	2611 people per km <sup>2</sup>
Homebush West	4212	1.57 km	2690 people per km <sup>2</sup>
Strathfield	16474	5.64 km	2925 people per km <sup>2</sup>
Strathfield South	3101	2.58 km	1204 people per km <sup>2</sup>
<b>Total</b>	<b>31887</b>	<b>13.9 km</b>	<b>2295 people per km<sup>2</sup></b>

### 3.4 Land Use

The major land uses in the Strathfield LGA are as follows:

**Table 2. Land Use in Strathfield LGA**

Land use	Area in hectares	Area in km <sup>2</sup>	% of total area
Residential	472ha	4.72km <sup>2</sup>	33.4
Roads	310ha	3.19km <sup>2</sup>	22.6
Railway lands <sup>++</sup>	182ha	1.82km <sup>2</sup>	12.9
Industrial	125ha	1.25km <sup>2</sup>	8.9
Open Space	124ha	1.24km <sup>2</sup>	8.8
Educational/Religious <sup>#</sup>	87ha	0.87km <sup>2</sup>	6.2
Commercial	6ha	0.06km <sup>2</sup>	0.4
Other	95ha	0.95km <sup>2</sup>	6.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>1410ha</b>	<b>14.1 km<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>100%</b>

<sup>++</sup> Note that Census uses 13.9km<sup>2</sup> for measure Strathfield LGA, while Council's estimates are 14.1m<sup>2</sup> for total area. The report uses 13.9km as the measurement as statistics are derived from Census calculations.

<sup>#</sup> Estimated Resident Population 1996-2007, ABS Category no.3235 Population by Age and Sex, Regions of Australia 2007

#### 3.4.1 Residential

Residential land use accounts for 33.4% of all land use in Strathfield LGA. There are two different types of zoning for residential land use: (a) separate houses, dual occupancy housing and (b) medium density including townhouses, villas, semi-detached and home unit development. Medium density zoning is generally located around town centres and transport corridors in Strathfield LGA.

The 2006 Census indicates that Strathfield LGA at 45.3% has significantly higher amounts of multi-unit dwellings than the Sydney average of 34.7%.

**Table 3. Forms of residential housing per suburb in Strathfield LGA 2006**

Location	Population (2006)	Land area	Density
Suburb	Houses	Medium density	High density
Belfield/Greenacre	66.3%	21.2%	3.7%
Homebush	31.3%	23.1%	38.3%
Homebush West	10.3%	29.1%	51.1%
Strathfield	59.5%	13.3%	21.2%
Strathfield South	62.0%	30.6%	1.3%
<b>Strathfield LGA</b>	<b>47.5%</b>	<b>19.7%</b>	<b>25.6%</b>

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing, 2006

### 3.4.2 Commercial and Industrial

Strathfield Town Centre is the primary central business district of Strathfield LGA. Commercial/shopping areas are also located in Homebush, Homebush West, Sydney Markets, Strathfield South and Cave Road Strathfield.

Industrial land measures 8.9% of all land use in Strathfield LGA and supplies the highest amount of industrial land in the inner west of Sydney. The main industrial and employment areas are located along Parramatta Road, including Sydney Markets, and to the south, covering the area between Roberts and Cosgrove Roads in Strathfield South and Greenacre.

The majority of the former Enfield Marshalling Yards was formerly railway land and was approved in 2007 for use as a major truck/freight intermodal terminal.

### 3.4.3 Education and Religious Use

Educational and religious institutions use 6.2% of all land in Strathfield LGA. A large portion of this land is located in areas which are typically residential areas of Strathfield LGA. Strathfield is a significant centre for education in the Inner West with a wide variety of private and public educational institutions including the Australian Catholic University.

There are many churches and religious institutions located in Strathfield of various religious affiliations. Some churches or institutions are related or located adjacent to religious affiliated schools.



### 3.4.4 Open Space and Recreation

8.8% of Strathfield LGA is open space, which includes parks and reserves. Parks can be found throughout Strathfield LGA, including a large concentration of open space in the south near the Cook's River.

Strathfield has a number of areas of major open space including Mason Park, Strathfield Park, Airey Park, Bressington Park, Hudson Park, Freshwater Park and Bark Huts Reserve as well as the natural environmental areas of Mason Park Wetlands and Cox's Creek Reserve. Sportsgrounds support a wide array of sporting and recreational activities including cricket, rugby league, rugby union, soccer and netball, outdoor bowls, tennis, basketball, volleyball and golf.

Local parks are well regarded feature of Strathfield LGA and are considered parks located within walking distances of homes. They are smaller than major open spaces and provide open spaces for informal activities, passive recreation and children's playgrounds. Local parks together with established nature strips and street trees are distinct elements of Strathfield's streetscape.

There are a number of large recreation facilities in Strathfield LGA including Hudson Park Golf Course and Driving Range, Southend Tennis Complex and Strathfield Private Golf Club.

### 3.4.5 Roads and transport

Roads account for 22.6% of land use and railway lands account for 12.9%, which include commuter, freight and former historical land uses such as marshalling yards in the south of the Strathfield LGA.

The Main Western Railway Line, includes the railway stations of Strathfield, Homebush and Flemington, runs in an east and west direction through the northern section of Strathfield LGA. The Main Northern Line branches off from the Main Western Line just west of Strathfield Station. The main goods line from Port Botany to the main Western Line runs through the western part of the Strathfield LGA through the former Enfield marshalling yards.

There are a number of major roads classified as 'state roads' that pass through the Strathfield LGA, which are under control of the NSW Government. State roads include Parramatta Road, M4 Motorway, Liverpool Road, The Boulevarde, Coronation Parade, Punchbowl Road, Roberts Road, Centenary Road and Homebush Bay Drive.

Other public local roads are controlled by Strathfield Council.

There are a number of public and private bus operators covering a wide range of routes throughout Strathfield LGA. Strathfield Station is a major bus-rail interchange.

The Bay to Bay walk and cyclepath links Botany Bay with Homebush Bay and runs predominately along the Cooks River. The walk passes through various parks and roads in the Strathfield LGA.

There are 175 km of footpaths within Strathfield LGA (excluding the Bay to Bay walk and parks).

## 3.5 History

Although knowledge of life in Sydney prior to European settlement is limited there is evidence that Aboriginal people were living in the Sydney Basin for at least 20, 000 years prior to 1788. The Wangal clan of the Darug tribe once inhabited the Strathfield Local Government Area (LGA). The Wangal clan's country or territory was known as Wanne and it originally extended from the suburbs of Birchgrove and Balmain in the east, to Silverwater and Auburn in the west, the northern boundary was the Parramatta River but the southern boundary is unknown. There are no known relics in existence from the Aboriginal occupation of this area.

The first European land grants to free settlers commenced in 1793 in the District of Liberty Plains, partly located within the current Strathfield LGA. Other grants followed including 1808 grant of 230 hectares to James Wilshire, which was later known as the Redmire Estate. Redmire (later known as Redmyre) was the original European name of the suburb of Strathfield. Other significant grants in the early 1800s were made to D'Arcy Wentworth ((Homebush North), John Fleming (Homebush West) and Father John Therry (Village of St Anne's).

Until the subdivision of the 'Redmire Estate' in 1867 on which much of the suburb of Strathfield is built, residential development of the area was limited to some small farms and development around Liverpool and Parramatta Roads. The establishment and expansion of the railway linking Strathfield to the City and Parramatta promoted Strathfield as an accessible and desirable place to live and attracted wealthy professionals and businessmen to the area, who built large 'country-style' estates. Later development was more modest but involved well designed homes and gardens on larger than average sized blocks of land. Many of these homes remain in existence and form the basis of Strathfield's built heritage.

Establishment of the railway is important to Strathfield's development. Railway stations were built in 1855 (Homebush), 1877 (Redmire, later Strathfield) and Flemington (1884). Enfield Marshalling Yards were established in 1916.

The Council of the Municipality of Strathfield was incorporated on 2 June 1885, including the suburbs of Redmire (now Strathfield), Homebush and Druitt Town (now Strathfield South). The name Strathfield was derived from a local home called 'Strathfield'.

Strathfield Council has expanded its boundaries over time. Extensions include: incorporation of Flemington area (1892), amalgamation with Homebush Council (1947), incorporation of west ward of Enfield Council (1949) and adjustments at the north-west boundary with Auburn Council (1992).

The policies and programs of the Council from the outset promoted Strathfield as an exclusive residential district supported by infrastructure programs such as 'boulevarding' which included street tree planting, road widening, gas lighting in streets, public open spaces, footpaths, development of nature strips etc. Much of the distinctive streetscape character of Strathfield Municipality developed as a result of these early programs. The Council amalgamations of the 1940s added industrial land to Strathfield LGA such as Parramatta Road, Sydney Markets (then Homebush Stockyards), the former Enfield Marshalling Yards and Cosgrove Road industrial precinct.

Strathfield LGA has experienced cycles of rapid population growth in its history. From 1911 to 1933, Strathfield residential population grew faster than Sydney averages with extensive land subdivision and building activity. Growth slowed during the Depression and WWII but again increased after the war. From 1954 until the late 1990s, population of Strathfield stabilised at about 27,000 people due to unavailability of sites for continued building development.

Population growth has increased since the late 1990s in response to rezoning of land and development of medium to high-rise development chiefly in the Strathfield Town Centre and transport corridors in Homebush and Homebush West.

Since World War II, Strathfield has become highly multicultural. After WWII, Strathfield was a destination for many European emigrants and refugees, especially Russian. In more recent times, residents born in China, India and Korea are residing in Strathfield. The most recent Census in 2006 indicated that nearly 50% of the population was born in countries other than Australia.

### 3.6 Built Form and Housing

Strathfield LGA contains a number of recognisable architectural styles from each period of Strathfield's residential development commencing c.1870s. These include Victorian, Colonial Georgian, Queen Anne, Federation, Californian Bungalow, Spanish Mission, Tudoresque, Interwar, Post War II, Contemporary and Modern.

Statutory heritage listing protects significant and rare examples of these architectural styles.

In 1920, the Strathfield Council was the first Council to proclaim most of the Council area as a residential district. The proclamation excluded any trades, industries, shops, hotels and residential flats. This proclamation largely stayed in place until 1969 when the Strathfield Planning Scheme Ordinance (SPSO) was adopted.

Since 1969, a significant number of residential flat developments have been built particularly around the commercial centres of Strathfield, Homebush and Homebush West. In the 1990s several high-rise residential developments were constructed in and around the Strathfield Town Centre. Further land rezoning in the late 1990s-allowing medium to high-rise development has resulted in large increases in the numbers of multi-unit housing in Strathfield LGA.

### 3.7 Governance

The three levels of government in Australia: federal, state and local, share responsibility for governing and delivering services to local communities. Some services and responsibilities are delivered as a result of partnerships between different levels of government. Council's Social Plan relies on building partnerships with other levels of government and other Councils as well as partnerships with the non-government sector.

In broad terms, the Federal Government has responsibilities for immigration and citizenship, taxation, technology and communications, employment, welfare, national security and defence. Strathfield LGA is currently located within the Federal Electorate of Lowe and small portion of the LGA located in the electorate of Blaxland.

The State or NSW Government has responsibilities for services including police and corrective services, education, schools, hospitals, urban planning, community services, public transport and major roads. The NSW Government also operates utilities such as water and electricity. Strathfield LGA is currently located within the State Electorates of Drummoyne and Strathfield.

Local government or Council is the level of government located closest to the community. Strathfield Council is responsible for a wide range of services and activities within the local government area of Strathfield which include local roads and traffic planning, drainage and flood

mitigation, street lighting, street cleaning, development and building assessment, strategic planning and heritage, environmental and waste management, compliance including ranger services, library, community services, community land management, parks and recreation and tree management.

Strathfield Council is incorporated under the Local Government (NSW) Act 1993. The Council has two 'arms', the elected Council and Council administration (staff).

The elected Council comprises of seven councillors, who are directly elected by the residents and ratepayers of Strathfield LGA at elections conducted by the NSW Electoral Commission in accordance with the Local Government Act and regulations.

The role of Councillors is to direct and control the affairs of the Council in accordance with the Local Government Act and other applicable legislation. Each year, the Councillors elect a Mayor who presides at meetings of the Council and carries out the civic and ceremonial functions of this civic office.

Council's administration is directed by Council's General Manager, who is responsible for Council's operations and for implementing decisions of the Council. The General Manager is also responsible for the day to day management of Council and its staff and the exercise of any functions delegated to him by the Council.

### 3.7.1 Councillors

Councillors are elected at ordinary elections or at bi-elections. Ordinary elections are held every 4 years. The most recent election was held on 13 September 2008. The following Councillors were elected to serve until September 2012.

- Paul Barron
- Hope Brett-Bowen
- Bill Carney
- Sundar Eswaran
- Keith Kwon
- Danny Lim
- Tony Maroun.

Councillors elect the Mayor for a one-year term. Elections are held in September or as required, if casual vacancies occur.

## 4. COMMUNITY PROFILE OVERVIEW

The Australian Census of Population and Housing is taken by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) every five years. The last Census was taken in August 2006 and the next Census will be taken in 2011. The Census is the primary source for compiling the Strathfield Community Profile, however where other or more recent information is available it has been included to more accurately inform the community profile.

### 4.1 Population

The 2006 Census recorded a residential population of 31,983 persons usually resident in Strathfield Local Government Area. The 2006 Census recorded an increase of population in Strathfield LGA of 4,028 persons. The growth in population between the 2001 and 2006 Census is 13.4%, which constitutes one of the highest population growths in Sydney, the largest recorded population increase in Strathfield LGA since 1921. Additionally, from 2006 to 2007 Strathfield has recorded the second fastest growth rate in New South Wales with a population increase of 977. This is a 2.9% increase, well above the Sydney average of 1.1%

The increase in population from 2001 is a response to increased building activity, primarily home units, rather than increases in sizes of households.

The estimated resident population (ERP) in Strathfield LGA was 29,433 (2001), 30,611 (2003), 32,645 (2005), 34,208 (2007) and 35,124 (2008)<sup>3</sup>. The Australian Bureau of Statistics ERP figures are updated annually taking into account births, deaths, internal and overseas migration. The estimated figures are re-reviewed after the current Census is taken.

As indicated in the table below, the population of Strathfield LGA had been increasing since 1996 with significant increases from 2003 onwards.

**Table 4. Estimated Resident Population (ERP) 1996-2008**

Year (ending June 30)	Number	Annual Change Number	Annual Change %
2008	35,124	832	2.4
2007	34,208	977	2.9
2006	33,231	586	1.8
2005	32,645	945	3.0
2004	31,700	1,089	3.6
2003	30,611	956	3.2
2002	29,655	222	0.8
2001	29,433	510	1.8
2000	28,923	241	0.8
1999	28,682	460	1.6
1998	28,222	587	2.1
1997	27,635	465	1.7
1996	27,170	--	--

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Cat. No.3235.0 – Population by Age and Sex, Regions of Australia, 2007

<sup>3</sup> Estimated Resident Population 1996-2008, ABS Category no.3235 Population by Age and Sex, Regions of Australia 2007

The areas of highest population increase are in Homebush, Homebush West and Strathfield Town Centre. The large increases in population measured in the Census periods of 1996 to 2001 and then the rapid increase from 2001 to 2006 is a direct response to the large increase in the building of a number in medium to high density developments. Since 2001 there has been a 39% increase in units and now constitutes 40% of all dwelling stock in Strathfield. This is significantly higher than the Sydney average of 26%.

The 2006 Census indicates there are slightly more females than males in Strathfield LGA (50.4% to 49.6%). However, between 2001 and 2006, the number of men in comparison to women increased slightly. This is likely attributable to the decline in numbers of people aged 70-74 years, an age group where women outnumber men.

The 2006 Census indicated a substantial increase in the numbers and percentage of overseas born residents in Strathfield LGA. This is a trend in the Inner West of Sydney where there are more overseas born residents (37.8%) than Sydney region (31.8%). However, Strathfield LGA is substantially higher than both (49.9%).

There was a numerical increase in the numbers of Australian citizens but a general decline in Australian citizenship as proportion of population (78.9% in 2001 and 73.4% in 2006). This may be partly attributable to increase in overseas students in Strathfield LGA, who are likely to be on student visas but are not Australian citizens.

**Table 5. Population Strathfield LGA compared to Inner West Subregion and Sydney region 2001 & 2006**

Strathfield Council Area									
Usual resident data	2006				2001				Change 2001 to 2006
	number	%	Inner West region	Sydney Region	number	%	Inner West region	Sydney Region	
Total population	31,981	100.0	100.0	100.0	27,953	100.0	100.0	100.0	4,028
Males	15,856	49.6	48.5	49.2	13,746	49.2	48.4	49.2	2,110
Females	16,125	50.4	51.5	50.8	14,207	50.8	51.6	50.8	1,918
Australian born	13,257	41.5	53.6	60.3	12,922	46.2	56.2	62.2	335
Overseas born	15,947	49.9	37.8	31.8	13,518	48.4	37.2	31.2	2,429
Australian citizens	23,489	73.4	78.1	82.6	22,066	78.9	81.1	84.3	1,423
Australian citizens aged 18+	17,871	55.9	62.1	62.2	16,723	59.8	65.2	63.3	1,148

Source: ABS Census of Population and Housing 2001, 2006

## 4.2 Age Groups

Other factors influenced the results of the 2006 Census include the increases in young people aged 18-29 years and movement away from Strathfield of many older residents who fully owned their homes. Many of the younger people are students, some overseas students, while others are workers and starting families. The increase of numbers of younger people also resulted in changes to the median age of Strathfield residents dropping from 36 to 34 years, therefore defying the NSW and Australian trend of an aging population. These influences may be result of the positive economic conditions of 2001-2006, however with economic downturns these trends may change or not continue in the future.

There was an overall increase of 13.4% in population. All aged groups, except 70-74 years, increased numerically from 2001 to 2006.

Significant increases occurred in the 25 to 34 years category (added 1390 people) and 18 to 24 years (added 792 people). Combined these groups constitute 28.2% of total population and an increase of 3.7% since 2001.

The next largest group is those between 35-49 years constituting 21.8% of the population. This group numbers 6942 people and added 668 people to its total in the last census.

Infants (0-4) and children (5 to 11 years) involve 4327 people, which is 13.6% of the population. Though statistically less than the Sydney region, there was an increase of 253 additional persons in these categories.

There were 2899 youth aged 12 to 17 years, an addition of 344 persons. This group is higher than the Sydney average. Persons aged 50 to 59 years totaled 3594 persons, an increase of 487 people.

Older residents 60 years and over total 5132 persons, which is 16.1% of the population and an increase of 184 people. This included a loss of 62 persons in 70-74 years age group.

Of the total population in Strathfield LGA, the 0.3% Indigenous population is well below the Australian average (2.3%) and the Sydney average (1.1%).

## 4.3 Household types and sizes

The average size of households declined from 2.93 persons per household in 2001 to 2.85 persons per household in 2006, which is likely to reflect the large increase in unit dwellings in Strathfield LGA over this period, which are primarily 2 bedroom units.

Despite a large increase in the number of home units in Strathfield LGA, which traditionally attracts people without children, Census 2006 indicates that the majority of people in Strathfield LGA continue to live in family households with children (53.9%). An additional 287 households of couples with children were added in 2006. This includes dependent children are children under 15 years of age, or children, in a family, aged 15-24 years who are full-time students attending a secondary or tertiary institution and who have no partner or children of their own usually residing in the household. Dependent children include adopted children, step and foster children.

Consistent with trends of increasing numbers of younger people in Strathfield LGA, there was an increase from 3.6% to 5.4% (total of 601 households) in the number of group households, which are likely to be students.

50.6% of persons aged 15 years and over were married, 36.3% never married, 7.4% separated or divorced and 5.7% widowed.

Census 2006 indicated a small increase in the number of lone households, though limited availability of studio/one bedroom units and the high costs of property in Strathfield LGA are unlikely to promote significant increases in sole person households.

Many sole households in Strathfield LGA are in areas of public housing and private “over 55 years” accommodations (eg Marian Court in Margaret St Strathfield is an example). Where accommodations are designed for older persons, future residents are likely to be in this age group also. Most public housing in Strathfield LGA was built late in 1940s-1950s and is likely to be reviewed or redeveloped in future years. State housing policies will determine the future occupation of these housing types.

2006 Census indicated that there are increasing numbers of single parent/dependent children households. These are typically in areas of public housing. Composition of occupants is determined by State housing policies, not by the private housing market.

## 4.4 Cultural Diversity, Ancestry and Language

Strathfield has one of the most culturally diverse communities in Australia, with 49.9% of all residents born overseas. The most common overseas birthplaces were China, South Korea, India and Sri Lanka. 49.9% of the people stated that they were born overseas in Strathfield LGA, compared to 23.8% in NSW. In prior Census results, the number of people born overseas was 13,454 (48%) in 2001, 11,364 (44%) in 1996 and 10,176 (40%) in 1991.

When compared against the Census results for 2001, there is an increase over the 5 years of 4.1% of new residents born overseas. This equates to over 2000 new residents who have settled in Strathfield. The largest groups of new arrivals have been from India (800 persons) and China (860 persons).

China represents the larger percentage of people born overseas (7.8%) followed by South Korea (7.1%), India (5.3%) and Sri Lanka (4.4%). These four groups make up approximately 25% of the total population of Strathfield.

When individual countries are compared against the Sydney average, Strathfield has significantly more people born in China (5.2% more) and South Korea (6.8% more) and a greater proportion of people from Sri Lanka (4.4%), India (4.0% more) and Hong Kong (2.2% more).

13.2% gave their heritage as Australian with the largest percentage citing Chinese heritage where 95% had both parents born in China. Following were English and Indian ancestries as the next highest.

36.1% of the Strathfield population speak only English in their homes, while 63.9% speak another language compared with 26% across Sydney. The most commonly spoken languages in 2006 were Cantonese, spoken by 2695 people (8.4%), Korean (2698 or 8.4%), Tamil (1,867 or 5.8%), Arabic/Lebanese (1847 or 5.8%), Mandarin (2045 or 6.4%).



Analysis of the proficiency in English language data for Strathfield LGA reported that 14.8% of persons spoke English only, and 18.3% spoke another language and English not well or not at all, compared with 34.6% and 14.0% respectively for the Sydney Statistical Division.

## 4.5 Religious Diversity

Overall, in the 2006 Census 77.5% of Strathfield's population nominated a religion, and 12.3% said they had no religion, compared with 74.9% and 14.1% respectively for the Sydney Statistical Division. The dominant single religion was Catholic, with 30.6% of the population of 9,760 as adherents. This was followed by Hinduism (10.3%), Anglican (7.0%), Buddhism (6.4%) and Orthodox (5.0%).

The largest changes of religious affiliation in Strathfield LGA was increases in Hinduism (+789 persons), Buddhism (+456 persons) and Islam (+384 persons). There was a decline in Anglican (-350 persons) and Orthodox (-149 persons). Stating a religion was a non-mandatory category in the 2006 Census and 9.8% or 1900 persons did not state a religion.

## 4.6 Building Activity

The 2006 Census indicates that in years 2001 to 2006 there was a substantial increase in the number of dwellings in Strathfield LGA and significant change in housing form, with an increase of 1991 multi-unit dwellings. There has been a recent decline in building activity (see table below), likely due to the current economic downturn.

There was a sharp increase in high density dwellings<sup>4</sup> from 17.6% in 2001 to 25.6% in 2006 comprising of an additional 1289 dwellings. Medium density also increased from 16.4% in 2001 to 19.7% in 2006 representing an additional 702 dwellings. The majority of new dwellings were units.

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4 'High density' includes flats and apartment in 3 storeys and larger blocks

**Table 6. Housing types Strathfield LGA compared to Inner West Region and Sydney region 2001 & 2006**

	2006				2001				Change 2001 to 2006
	number	%	Inner West region	Sydney Region	number	%	Inner West region	Sydney Region	
Detached house	5687	47.5	41.8	57.1	5868	58.1	44.2	58.7	-181
Medium density	2363	19.7	26.7	17.4	1661	16.4	25.7	16.8	702
High density	3064	25.6	23.4	17.3	1775	17.6	20.8	15.9	1289
Other/not stated	43	0.3	0.7	0.8	135	1.4	2.1	1.6	-92
Total occupied private dwellings	11,158	93.2	92.6	92.6	9439	93.5	92.8	93.0	1719
Total unoccupied dwellings	808	6.8	7.4	7.4	661	6.5	7.2	7.0	147
Total dwellings	<b>11,966</b>	100.0	100.0	100.0	<b>10,100</b>	100.0	100.0	100.0	1,866

Source: ABS Census of Population and Housing 2001, 2006

To accommodate new buildings, the number of detached houses reduced by 181 dwellings to a total of 5687 detached houses. Though the actual reduction of houses is relatively small; due to the sharp increase in units and townhouses, houses as a percentage of all housing types declined from 58.1% in 2001 to 47.5% in 2006.

Population growth was a result of large increases in building approval and subsequent building activity, mainly units and townhouses in Homebush and Homebush West. Construction of multi-unit dwellings far exceeds approval for separate houses. Most separate dwelling statistics are replacement houses (ie rebuild on existing sites).

**Table 7. Building Approvals Strathfield LGA 1999-2008**

Year (ending June 30)	Separate dwellings	Other dwellings	Total dwellings
2008-09	53	86	139
2007-08	42	78	120
2006-07	69	324	393
2005-06	39	232	271
2004-05	52	475	527
2003-04	47	324	371
2002-03	44	576	620
2001-02	46	204	250
2000-01	24	286	310
1999-00	39	0	39
<b>Total</b>	<b>402</b>	<b>2499</b>	<b>2901</b>

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Building Activity, Australia, (catalogue number: 8752.0 to 8752.7)

Building approvals are driven by activity in the construction industry which fluctuates from year to year. Building activity depends on many factors - interest rates, availability of mortgage funds, government spending, and business investment - that vary with the state of the economy.

The 2006 Census was taken during the height of the economic and housing cycle, however since mid-2008, the global recession has affected the Australian economy. The economic downturn may affect building approvals, which in turn, affects projected population growth in Strathfield LGA in the next few years.

Economic conditions will have impact on the rate of building activity, resulting in cycle upswings and downturns, however in the longer term, building activity is anticipated to continue in line with State planning strategies and policies.

## 4.7 Housing Tenure Types

A major change of housing tenure appeared to have taken place across Sydney in the 2006 Census, with the recording a fall of 9% in the number of owner occupiers (fully owned) and a rise of 8% in the number of people purchasing (with mortgage). This trend was more significant in Strathfield LGA with a fall of 16% in owner occupiers and increase of 10% of people purchasing. There was also a significant increase in persons privately renting throughout the Strathfield LGA from 31.1% in 2001 to 35.4% in 2006, against the Sydney Statistical Division average of 29.7%. Rented property is particularly high in Homebush (42%) and Homebush West (56.5%).

This trend may be attributable to strong growth in housing prices during this period (particularly 2003-2004) and generational change of property owners eg changes of ownership by older persons such as deaths, moving to smaller or retirement accommodation etc). However, some changes of tenure are a result of urban consolidation particularly in Homebush and Homebush West, where long-term residents and homes have been replaced by new home units and townhouses.

**Table 8. Housing tenure by suburb in Strathfield LGA 2006**

Suburb	Owned	Purchasing	Renting	Public housing
Belfield/Greenacre	28.5%	23.0%	16.3%	22.0%
Homebush	20.1%	25.3%	42.0%	1.4%
Homebush West	10.6%	21.7%	56.5%	5.3%
Strathfield	37.4%	24.7%	26.5%	1.8%
Strathfield South	33.1%	35.3%	22.3%	1.9%
<b>Strathfield LGA</b>	<b>29.2%</b>	<b>25.3%</b>	<b>31.4%</b>	<b>4.0%</b>

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing, 2006

The 2006 Census indicates that Strathfield LGA has slightly less than Sydney region and Inner West of fully owned properties, which is a significant change from 2001 when Strathfield LGA was substantially higher than Sydney (45% to 39%). There are less properties being purchased (ie owned with mortgage) than Sydney region or Inner West. However, the portion of properties being rented is higher than Sydney region (35% to 29%) but similar to the Inner West region.

4% of housing in Strathfield LGA is public housing, with the majority of public housing located in Belfield (22%) and Homebush West (5.3%). The Census recorded a decrease of 46 public housing rentals from Strathfield LGA between 2001 and 2006.

The 2006 Census indicates a decline in the size of households from 2.93% to 2.85% on average. This is likely due to large increases in smaller dwellings such as home units and decline in numbers of larger dwellings such as separate homes.

It is anticipated that these patterns are likely to continue.

The increase in high density dwellings was higher than the inner west or Sydney region average. In comparison, Strathfield LGA has more high density (25.6%) than Sydney region (15.9%) or Inner West Sydney (20.8%) and medium density (26.7%) than Sydney region (16.8%) or Inner West Sydney (25.7%). It is anticipated that home units will become the primary form of housing in Strathfield LGA in future.

## 4.8 Housing and population movement

The Census shows that 42% of the population lived in a different area to Strathfield 5 years ago being considerably higher than the Sydney average and highlighting the movement of people in and out of Strathfield. However, this is in part due to significant building activity and new supplies of available housing attracting new residential populations. The trend for higher transitional populations will continue in Strathfield LGA due to anticipated future building growth and large numbers of rental property especially in town centres.

## 4.9 Housing costs

### 4.9.1 Loan repayments

Analysis of the monthly housing loan repayments of households in Strathfield Council area compared to the Sydney Statistical Division shows that 47.9% of households were paying high mortgage payments (\$1,600 per month or more) and 11.3% of households were paying with low mortgage repayments (less than \$950 per month). In comparison, the Sydney Statistical Division paid 40.2% and 15.1% respectively in the Sydney Statistical Division. The Strathfield LGA profile is similar to the Inner West region, with the exception of loan repayments of \$3000 per month or over which includes 23.1% in Strathfield LGA and 26% in the Inner West.

This may be a reflection of cost of housing in Strathfield LGA and suggests that either higher-income people are buying into the area and/or people are paying a substantial part of their disposable income in housing costs. Notably, the highest average mortgages were in Eastern Strathfield, Central Strathfield and Strathfield CBD while the lowest were in Homebush West, Greenacre and Homebush.

Compared to the previous Census, there was an additional 1192 residents purchasing property in Strathfield LGA.

**Table 9. Housing loan repayments by suburb in Strathfield LGA 2006**

Amount (\$)	Number	Strathfield %	Sydney statistical division %
1 to 249	39	1.4	1.6
250 to 399	33	1.2	1.4
400 to 549	71	2.5	2.9
550 to 749	79	2.8	3.8
750 to 949	96	3.4	5.4
950 to 1199	155	5.5	8.2
1200 to 1399	185	6.6	7.7
1400 to 1599	168	6.0	7.1
1600 to 1999	365	13.0	14.1
2000 to 2999	696	24.8	24.5
3000 and over	274	9.8	7.8
Not stated	274	9.8	7.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>2809</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing, 2006

## 4.9.2 Rents

Analysis of the weekly housing rental payments of households in Strathfield Council area compared to the Sydney Statistical Division shows that there was a smaller proportion of households paying high rental payments (\$450 per week or more) as well as a smaller proportion of households with low rental payments (less than \$140 per week).

Overall, 5.4% of households were paying high rental payments, and 13.1% were paying low payments, compared with 10.0% and 16.9% respectively in the Sydney Statistical Division.

Private rents were in the range of \$275-\$349 a week across Strathfield LGA, with the top rents in Central and Eastern Strathfield and the lower rents in Homebush and Homebush West. These rents were comparable to the Sydney average range.

## 4.10 Education

Results from Census 2006 indicate that Strathfield LGA has a highly educated population and community feedback indicates that education and learning are highly valued by the local community. The proportion of people in a community who have attained tertiary qualifications and attained the highest level of secondary education is an indicator of community affluence and social status.

45.3% of residents of Strathfield LGA have formal qualifications (Bachelor or higher degree, Advanced Diploma or Diploma, or Vocational qualifications) and 39.6% have no formal qualifications, in comparison to 43.0% and 42.8% respectively for the Sydney Statistical Division. Strathfield LGA has a larger percentage of people with Bachelor or Higher degrees (28.4% compared to 20.0%), and a smaller percentage of people with Vocational qualifications (9.1% compared to 14.9%).

In the period between 2001 and 2006, Strathfield LGA gained an additional 2299 persons with Bachelor or higher degrees and additional 507 persons with advanced diploma or diplomas.

The majority of residents (61.2%) of Strathfield LGA have completed Year 12 or equivalent in comparison to 49.1% of the Sydney Statistical Division. 33.2% of Sydney Statistical Division left school at Year 10 while only 21.3% of Strathfield residents left at Year 10.

The presence of well regarded schools and accessible transport influences participation rates in education, both in Strathfield LGA and within the region. There is an unusual pattern of participation which suggests that residents move into Strathfield to access facilities such as schools and transport, especially at secondary and tertiary levels.

However at preschool, attendance is less than Sydney average and primary school is slightly under Sydney average.

Participation in preschool education is relatively low. 2006 Census records 342 children attending preschool (1.1% of the population) against the Sydney Statistical Division average of 1.7%. The numbers of children 0-4 years is less than the Sydney average (4.9% against 6.6%) but the reasons for non-attendance could include lack of affordable places, which is complicated by the absence of government preschools in Strathfield LGA (generally free with small voluntary contributions) and problems in parents obtaining rebates. Community based preschools in NSW are not currently eligible for the Federal Government's 50% childcare rebate, which is generally available for registered long day care providers. The inequities in state and federal government funding and provision of preschool services are a likely cause of under participation in preschool in Strathfield LGA.

The Census indicates that 2366 children attend primary school in Strathfield, which is 7.5% of the population and comparable to the Sydney average of 8.1%. There was a decrease of 92 persons attending Catholic primary school, however during this period St Dominic's Catholic Primary School at Homebush West closed, which may account for the decrease.

There was an overall increase in secondary school attendance with 2526 young people or 8% of the population attending secondary schools in Strathfield LGA, compared to 6.6% of the Sydney Statistical Division. There was an increase of 170 persons attending government secondary schools, 47 persons attending Catholic and 49 attending Independent.

The largest increase was tertiary education with 8.1% Strathfield residents attending University in comparison to 4.4% of Sydney statistical division. This was an increase of 539 persons.

Strathfield is considered a regional centre for educational services. Schools located within Strathfield LGA, which include private and public primary and secondary schools. The Australian Catholic University – Mount St Marys Campus is located in Strathfield. Public schools generally cater to local residents, though the catchment for high schools may extend outside of the local government area boundary. Catholic systemic primary schools enrolment policies favour local residents. However, the private colleges (Santa Sabina, Meriden, Trinity Preparatory Grammar School, St Patrick's College, Sydney Adventist etc) appear to draw students across a region, rather than from the local area.

5234 Strathfield residents attended primary and secondary schools in the 2006 Census, though the number of student enrolments offered in schools located in Strathfield LGA exceeds the number of local residents.

Enrolment data for Sydney Adventist College, Meriden College, Trinity Grammar Preparatory School, Australian Catholic University and Australian International Academy has not been published and therefore, it is difficult to estimate numbers of enrollments.

Department of Education statistics indicate a total of 4640 places in government schools in Strathfield and enrolment at Catholic private schools in Strathfield is 3249 as at 2007 (see tables below). This is a total of 7889 student places, though the likely number of student places is over 10,000 including the other institutions.

**Table 10. Enrolments in public schools Strathfield LGA**

School	Enrolments
Strathfield Girls High	1046
Chalmers Road School	56
Homebush Boys High	1236
Homebush West Public School	339
Homebush Public School	532
Strathfield South High School	601
Strathfield South Public School	830
<b>Total</b>	<b>4640</b>

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing, 2006

**Table 11. Enrolments at Catholic private schools Strathfield LGA**

School	Enrolment	Source of Information
Santa Sabina College <sup>+</sup>	1413	Annual Report 2007 <a href="http://www.ssc.nsw.edu.au">www.ssc.nsw.edu.au</a> (note Santa Maria Del Monte (junior) is 443 students)
St Patrick's College	1424	Annual Report 2007 <a href="http://www.spc.nsw.edu.au">www.spc.nsw.edu.au</a> (Years 5 to 12)
St Martha's Catholic Primary School	256	Annual Report 2007 from website at <a href="http://stmstrathfield.catholic.edu.au">stmstrathfield.catholic.edu.au</a>
St Anne's Catholic Primary School	156	Annual Report 2007 from website at <a href="http://stastrathfield.catholic.edu.au/docs/annualreport2007.pdf">http://stastrathfield.catholic.edu.au/docs/annualreport2007.pdf</a>
<b>Total</b>	<b>3249<sup>**</sup></b>	

<sup>+</sup> Note Santa Sabina College is located on The Boulevard which is the boundary between Strathfield and Burwood Councils. Part of the school is located in each Council area, however junior and senior school use facilities in Strathfield LGA.

<sup>\*\*</sup> St Dominic's Catholic Primary School Homebush West has closed since the 2006 Census was taken, therefore, enrolments for this school are not included in the total.

## 4.11 Household Income

Household Income is one of the most important indicators of socio-economic status. The amount of income a household generates is linked to a number of factors:

- the number of workers in the household
- the percentage of people unemployed or on other income support benefits
- the type of employment undertaken by the household members.

Analysis of household income levels for the Strathfield LGA based on the 2006 Census shows that 27.7% of households earned a high income (\$1700 per week or more) and 18.0% were low income households (earning less than \$500 per week), compared to 29.5% and 16.8% respectively for the Sydney Statistical Division.

There is some deviation across suburbs of Strathfield LGA as shown below.

**Table 12. Household income by suburb in Strathfield LGA 2006**

Suburb	High income	Low Income
Belfield/Greenacre	15.8%	16.8%
Homebush	25.8%	16.5%
Homebush West	17.4%	20.6%
Strathfield	33.5%	16.5%
Strathfield South	26.7%	17.0%
Strathfield LGA	27.7%	18.0%

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing, 2006



Households vary in size and within a household, there may be non-working persons dependent on the overall household income. The view that there is a large number of persons who are dependent on household income is supported by analysis of individual income levels. 3637 persons aged above 15 years or 13.9% of the Strathfield LGA population reported they earned either negative or no weekly income, compared to 8.7% of the Sydney statistical division. A further 6.3% reported they earned less than \$149 per week. In Strathfield LGA, there is a high student population 15 years and above, a low participation rate of women in the paid workforce as well as many retirees, who may be 'asset rich-income poor'. These factors may explain the high proportion of people with no or minimal incomes, which are insufficient to meet standard living costs without other forms of income and accommodation support.

Analysis of individual income levels in Strathfield Council area in 2006 compared to Inner West region shows that there was a smaller proportion of persons earning a high income (those earning \$1,000 per week or more) but a larger proportion of low income persons (those earning less than \$400 per week).

Overall, 19.2% of the population earned a high income, and 41.2% earned a low income, compared with 27.6% and 35.1% respectively for Inner West Region.

Census 2006 measured income quartiles which allow measurement of relative income-earning capabilities over time. Analysis of the distribution of households by income quartile in Strathfield Council area compared to the Sydney Statistical Division shows that there was similar proportion of households in the highest income quartile, but a larger proportion in the lowest income quartile.

The most significant change in Strathfield Council area between 2001 and 2006 was in the Medium lowest quartile which showed an increase of 488 households.

## 4.12 Employment/Unemployment

Analysis of the employment status of the population in Strathfield Council area in 2006 compared to the Sydney Statistical Division shows that there were similar proportions employed and unemployed.

The 2006 Census reported that 57.2% of the population was in the labour force with 34.2% not in the labor force. A total of 8.6% did not complete this section of the Census. These figures have slight variance to the Sydney Statistical Division of 60.7%, 31.8% and 7.6% respectively.

The size of Strathfield LGA's labour force in 2006 (aged 15 years and over) was 14,935 persons, of which 4,404 were employed part-time (29.5%) and 9,147 were full time workers (61.2%). This is contrast to the Sydney Statistical Division of 63% employed full-time and 29.5% employed part-time. The total unemployed in Strathfield LGA in 2006 was reported at 6%, in contrast to the Sydney average of 5.3%.

Between 2001 and 2006, the number of people employed in Strathfield Council area showed an increase of 2,131 persons. The number unemployed showed an increase of 53 persons.

Between 2001 and 2006 in Strathfield Council area the number of people in the labour force showed an increase of 2,184 people, or 17.1%.

There are discrepancies between participation rates of men and women. 73% of employed males worked 35 hours or more each week (full time) while female full time participation rate was considerably lower (57%). This may be due to child caring and home duties.

Women have a higher rate of participation in part-time work (18%) in contrast to males (11%). The number of women unemployed but looking for work was 3.1% compared to males (3.6%), while women not in the paid workforce and not looking for work was 41% compared to men 27%.

Women's employment rate is similar between 15-24 years but declines significantly in comparison to men (approximately 100% less) once residents left tertiary study.

### 4.13 Occupations

The industries providing employment for the majority of Strathfield residents in 2006 was health care and social assistance followed by the retail trade.

The most popular industry sectors providing employment for Strathfield LGA residents are:

- Health Care and Social Assistance (1,890 persons or 13.5%)
- Retail Trade (1,632 persons or 11.6%)
- Professional, Scientific and Technical Services (1,300 persons or 9.3%).

In combination these three industries employed 4,822 people in total or 34.3% of the employed resident population.

In comparison, the Inner West region employed 10.6% in Health Care and Social Assistance; 9.5% in Retail Trade; and 11.8% in Professional, Scientific and Technical Services. 8.3% were employed in Education and Training compared to 6.5% in Strathfield LGA.

The most population occupations in Strathfield LGA are:

- Professionals (4,133 persons or 29.4%)
- Clerical and Administrative Workers (2,385 persons or 17.0%)
- Managers (1,723 persons or 12.3%).

In combination these three occupations accounted for 8,241 people in total or 58.7% of the employed resident population.

In comparison, the Sydney Statistical Division employed 23.7% as Professionals, 16.7% as Clerical and Administrative Workers, and 13.2% as Managers.

## 5. ADDRESSING CURRENT TRENDS

The 2006 Census indicates that Strathfield's population growth is one of the highest in NSW and analysis indicates a wide range of current and emerging trends which are and will continue to impact on Strathfield LGA.

It is predicted that projected growth will create increasing population across all age groups in Strathfield LGA. Based on results of Census and other data, the anticipated profile of Strathfield LGA of the future is:

- Number of medium-to-high rise home units will exceed the number of separate houses in Strathfield LGA
- Majority of residents will live in home units and to lesser extent townhouses mainly located in the northern end of Strathfield LGA
- Higher number of people born overseas from non English speaking countries
- Increase in people who have a low proficiency in the English language
- Declining number of residents who own their homes
- An increasing number of residents who are in private rental accommodation
- Smaller sized family households
- Increase in the number of people living as couples or single people living with others in non family households
- All age groups will increase numerically due to high levels of population growth. It is anticipated that in particular the numbers of those aged 20-35 years and older residents 55 years onwards may increase. There could also be increases in children and youth (12-17 years).

The significant trends emerging from demographic analysis include:

### 5.1 Population growth

The population of Strathfield LGA has increased from 29,433 people in 2001 to 35,124 people (estimated) in 2008. The large increases in population measured in the Census periods of 1996 to 2001 and then the rapid increase from 2001 to 2006 is a direct response to the large increase in the building of a number in medium to high density developments, rather than an increase in household sizes.

The areas of highest population increase are around the town centres and transport hubs of Homebush, Homebush West and Strathfield Town Centre. It is anticipated that an additional estimated 10,000 people will be added to the local population over the next 10-20 years and the majority will be housed in home units. Over 95% of all new development will be located around the town and transport centres of Homebush, Homebush West and Strathfield.

The large increases in population will have significant impact on recreational, community and open space facilities as well as on services such as health, education, transport and traffic management etc.

## 5.2 Increasing housing densities

Separate homes are declining as sites are being redeveloped into multi-unit housing, mainly home units rather than townhouses. Since 2001 there has been a 39% increase in home units. Units now constitute 40% of all dwelling stock in Strathfield. This is significantly higher than the Sydney average of 26%.

In some suburbs of the LGA, home units are the primary style of residential dwelling. Home units impose restrictions on privacy, movement, personal space and use of common areas (strata), which affect activities such as social gatherings, study, exercise and parties. People living in home units are more reliant on open space, recreation and community facilities due to reductions and restrictions of living space and minimal access to private open spaces. Population growth will increase demand for services and facilities in the Strathfield LGA and region and increase demand for new services and programs to meet specific needs of emerging and new groups of residents.

## 5.3 Decline in English Language skills

The 2006 Census indicates that there is an increase of local residents with poor or no proficiency in English language skills. Inability to speak English is a significant barrier to participate or engage in employment and community, creating isolation and vulnerability and possibly exploitation. Language barriers may also contribute to lack of awareness or access to services including health, transport, events, community activities etc.

## 5.4 Tertiary Qualifications

Strathfield LGA has a higher percentage of people with tertiary qualifications than the Sydney average and the number of people now attending tertiary study is higher than Sydney average. Recognising the existence of skills and abilities already in the community is important for capacity building and strengthening of the community. It would seem that Strathfield has an untapped and underutilised source of human capital.

## 5.5 Education and Adult Learning

Education, skills development and lifelong learning opportunities have positive impacts on the lives of individuals as well as on overall community well being. Community consultations have identified the need for programs, across all age groups, that allow Strathfield residents to pursue affordable and accessible education and lifelong learning and in particular programs that foster the arts and literacy. Though Strathfield is considered a significant educational centre of the Inner West, due to the large numbers of school and tertiary institutions, there are few services providing adult education in the Strathfield LGA.

## 5.6 Diversity

Strathfield's residential population is increasingly diverse, this includes diversity in culture, religious beliefs, incomes, experiences and languages. Diversity can be a strength in a community but also requires consideration of differences and ensuring that needs specific to different groups are acknowledged and addressed.

## 5.7 Changing groups: youth, overseas students and seniors

Defying the general aging trend of the NSW and Australian population, the median age of the Strathfield LGA population reduced from 36 to 34 years in the 2006 Census. This is in part due to a large increase in young people and a slight decline in older people. The younger population appears to be living in units, many built since 2001, located near town centres.

The 2006 Census was taken during a period of sustained economic prosperity in Australia, which affected the actions of particular age groups, particularly young people and older people. The 2006 Census recorded a substantial increase in young people aged 20-24 and 25-29 years. Many appear to be students, some would be overseas students. 8.1% of the Strathfield LGA is attending university compared to 4.3% of the Sydney region, with a total of 11.9% studying at a tertiary level (including TAFE). The 2006 Census recorded an increase of 539 persons attending University in comparison to the 2001 Census.

It is likely that many younger people are overseas students, mainly from Korea, China and India. Australian Government policies supported substantial increases in overseas student visas and enrolment in universities and TAFE. According to Department of Immigration, the highest numbers of overseas students in Australia originate from India, China (Republic of) and Korea (Republic of), which are established communities in the Strathfield LGA. The presence of pre-existing communities in the Strathfield LGA as well as access to major transport facilities (eg rail, train) may attract overseas students to Strathfield LGA.

The effects of a global economic downturn are likely to affect the number of overseas students in the following five years or more. This could result in only a gradual increase or even decline in the number of those aged between 18-24, 25-29 years as well as affecting demographic trends identified by 2001 and 2006 Census.

Not all young people are students. Some are working or have young families, typically renting or living with families.

There was a slight decline in older persons in Strathfield LGA, caused mainly by them moving from Strathfield. Most older and long-term residents of Strathfield fully own their homes. Many older Strathfield residents lived in areas which were targeted for housing consolidation eg Homebush and Homebush West. High property prices in Strathfield LGA and demand for property in areas zoned for medium density development, coupled with changes in personal or financial circumstances led many older residents to sell and move from Strathfield during 2001-2006. This is evidenced by 2006 Census results indicating substantial declines of full home ownership in Strathfield during 2001-2006 and shifts in age group profiles. Older residents are significant contributors to community life eg community leaders, volunteers, participants in community activities and organisations etc. They are usually long-term residents and often contribute to local economy eg shops and services as well as contributing to the 'historic memory' of Strathfield LGA.

Though there has been some current movement from Strathfield of seniors, statistics across Sydney, NSW and Australia indicate the overall population is aging, which creates a number of planning and economic issues. Provision and strategies need to consider aging in Strathfield LGA for current and future older populations.

## 5.8 Mobile populations

Strathfield has increasing highly mobile populations of people moving in and out of the area frequently and living in Strathfield LGA for short durations. The increasing mobile populations are due to increase numbers of new dwellings creating supply of housing for new residents and the emerging groups of young people, generally students, who are likely to live in Strathfield LGA for short periods. There has been a large increase in rental property particularly around in town centres such as Homebush, Homebush West and Strathfield, which in Homebush West accounts for over 50% of the suburb. Rental agreements are often short and renters can find it difficult to maintain stability and certainty in their living arrangements. All residents use the resources of local area to different degrees, but mobile populations are less likely to participate to the same extent in community building activities as long-term residents such as volunteering for community organisations like sporting clubs, arts organisations, Meals on Wheels etc. This has a significant impact on social capital.

## 5.9 Women employment participation

2006 Census indicates that the workforce participation rate for women is nearly 100% less than men. This may be caused by women looking after children in the home in preference to seeking work or lack of access to affordable childcare. The results could involve financial stress, lack of opportunities and cultural barriers to workforce participation.

## 5.10 In summary

The stability of living in an area, ties one has to a community, civic involvement and social engagement across the population are core elements in identifying the degree of social capital in a community. Social capital is what sustains the community.

If stability, feeling connected to a community, civic involvement and social engagement are indicators of a community with high social capital then it appears Strathfield LGA needs to address strategies to improve its social capital. Changes such as population mobility eg short-term residency in Strathfield, increases in the number of people who have poor proficiency in speaking English which means they are unable to engage widely in community, increasing diversity and significant changes to the urban landscape including population and multi-unit density growth can create instability and loss of social capital.

The strategies in this plan provide direction and give suggestions regarding proposed ways of addressing the issues raised above.

## 6. LITERATURE REVIEW

Building Strength in a Community -Literature Review and Applying Theory to Strathfield.

### 6.1 The Role of a Literature Review in the Social Plan

This section of the Social Plan contains research material sourced from overseas and Australia that is relevant to the issues raised in this plan. Research from others is termed 'secondary material' as distinct from 'primary research' ie information obtained directly from the residents of Strathfield LGA, stakeholders and others through surveys and interviews.

Secondary material is equally as important because it gives meaning to the data presented from the primary research and provides the framework or structure on which to build the Social Plan. As an example, secondary material gives meaning to the selection of the seven mandatory groups identified for inclusion in the Social Plan by DLG guidelines. It provides meaning to the selection of certain strategies over others to meet a need in the community and provides a framework for delivery of certain programs or strategies. None of these decisions occur in isolation. They are inextricably tied to their foundation found in the secondary material.

Strathfield Council is committed to initiatives and strategies that promote an increased sense of community, that build on strengths already existing in the community and the utilisation of these assets to further develop a stronger community. Therefore, the focus of the literature review is analysis of secondary material that recognises existing strengths in a community and the implementation of interventions and strategies that have contributed to further increasing community well being and safety.

Social planning emphasises collaborating with the community, stakeholders and other councils and government agencies when planning and implementing community strategies to address existing social issues. This section draws on material that provides an insight into strategies, which bring together the richness and culture found in Strathfield LGA with a capacity to further strengthen the community, thereby increasing its community capacity.

### 6.2 Approaches in Planning and Identifying Strategies

The review identifies five main approaches to planning and introducing strategies in the Strathfield Social Plan. These are as follows:

#### **Strengths based approach**

Strathfield LGA has a population where approximately 50% of its residents were born in countries other than Australia. Such a community is rich in its existing strengths. This plan recognises and builds upon those strengths to further improve community capacity.

#### **Integrated approach**

With a significant multicultural mix in its community, the plan recognises that there are complex issues which require complex responses. Such responses seek to foster an integrated approach where community partners are committed to working holistically across boundaries.

#### **Opportunity based approach**

The plan takes a long-term approach of continued development and growth recognising and taking up opportunities as they arise to enhance the social well-being of its residents.

### Whole of community approach

For this plan to be adopted by the community as its own, it needs to recognise the diversity and importance of the community members contributions along with those of government and non government agencies. The plan has sought to engage the community in determining its actions, in response to the identified needs, issues and aspirations.

### Safe community approach

A major focus of Strathfield Council in recent years has been putting in place various strategies and programs so that people can feel 'safe' in their community. This plan starts with a premise that health and safety is a fundamental right of all residents in the LGA whereby safety is a pre requisite to the maintenance and improvement of the health and welfare of any community.

Community safety has been given significant attention over recent decades which have evolved into an international framework for best practice and many communities are now aspiring to become safe communities by introducing a range of safety initiatives that have led to safer communities. There have been a reduction of the incidence and impact of violence and creative health education programs<sup>5</sup>. Such programs succeed when community members, local organisations and government agencies work in partnership with a shared vision and goal to establish safety as a priority in the community.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) has developed certain standards for a 'safe' community. The social plan has adopted the six indicators (with slight adjustments) as a framework when developing strategies. They are as follows:

- An infrastructure based on partnership and collaboration, governed by a cross-sectional group that is responsible for safety promotion in their community
- Long term sustainable programs covering both genders and all ages, environments and situations
- Programs that target high risk groups and environments and programs that promote health and safety for vulnerable groups
- Programs that address the frequency and causes of injuries e.g. domestic violence, assault, bullying
- Evaluation measures to assess programs, processes and the effects of change
- Ongoing participation with organisations promoting Safe Communities<sup>6</sup>.

## 6.3 Building Strength in a Community

Strathfield has one of the most ethnically diverse communities in Australia, with almost 50% of all residents born overseas. There is significant diversity within these communities such as socio-economic status, education and language skills, household sizes and community networks. Many people live in home units while a large number of older residents live alone in substantial sized homes they have owned for many years. There are people whose families are multi-generational while others have lived in Strathfield LGA less than one year. Some have difficulty communicating in English and others have difficulty moving around the area easily. Such diversity in a community raises complex issues in relation to social exclusion, residents well being, their feeling of connectedness to the area in which they live, their health, safety and ability to seek the help they need in times of need.

Complex issues require complex strategies to meet people's needs. This section of the social plan looks at the literature in relation to improving the strengths in a community.

5 Butchart A Seedat M (1998) *The Sixth International Conference on Safe Communities- Report* Karolinska Institute, Department of Public Health Sciences, Division of Social Medicine Sundbyberg

6 *ibid*



## 6.4 Current concepts and principles in community work practice

### Social Exclusion

The idea of social exclusion does not only refer to communities where there is much poverty, but relates more widely to the connectedness of social problems, which may include poverty.

Social exclusion has been used to broaden our understanding of how social problems are not simply the result of individual choices or abilities but may also be linked to the way in which other groups and institutions may actively exclude individuals and particular communities from mainstream social and economic life<sup>7</sup>.

The series of interrelated social problems can include physical isolation, poor health, criminal activity, inadequate provision of services, inadequate living space, low levels of education and welfare dependency.

Often such emerging interrelated social problems can be linked to housing conditions such as housing estates or cramped over populated unit complexes that in themselves are isolating and of poor quality and this leads to secondary problems.

However it may be argued that it is not only those who live in housing estates or cramped unit complexes that are isolated. Elderly people who are physically restricted to their homes, people with disabilities and those who have limited English may also suffer from social exclusion having very little contact with the outside world. They too present a problem for community workers seeking ways to improve community connectedness, the desire to boost the capacity of excluded and disadvantaged communities to help them tackle the problems. This brings us to social capital and capacity building.

### Social Capital

Social capital in simple terms can be defined as the glue that binds a community together. It is the kind of resources contained within our networks with those we know around us. An example of social capital may include the community helping out others affected by a natural disaster such as bushfires or storm damage in providing financial assistance, accommodation, gifts of goods such as clothing etc while others help rebuilding homes and services. These are all elements of social capital that can affect our ability to cope with problems and hardships and succeed in our personal lives.

In a community work-setting, social capital refers to the specific processes among people and organisations working collaboratively in an atmosphere of trust that leads to accomplishing a goal of mutual social benefit<sup>8</sup>. Such a definition describes the extent and nature of relationships people have with one another, their communities, various services, institutions and systems. There has been much interest in social capital in recent years by policy makers and others who are interested in the links between it and various other important outcomes. Research has suggested that people in communities with high social capital may be healthier, more politically engaged as well as experiencing greater personal safety and education.

For community workers, the role of addressing and boosting the ability of socially excluded groups to cope with their own problems and more effectively utilize community resources is an important means of dealing with these problems.

7 Atkinson R and Willis P (2006) *Community Capacity Building* Community research Unit University of Tasmania

8 Wood L (1999) *Healthy Communities: A Review of Relevant Projects and feasibility for a Healthy Way* Unpublished Report to Healthway Perth WA

There are four elements to be found in social capital trust, civic involvement, social engagement and reciprocity. They can be defined as follows:

- Trust: a belief that an individual, group or organization will act in a consistent, fair rational and expected manner
- Civic involvement: participation in activities that directly or indirectly contribute to a community's well being
- Social engagement: interactions that fosters connections among community members and organizations
- Reciprocity: the faith that a good deed will be returned in some form in the future<sup>9</sup>.

There is growing evidence that social capital contributes significantly to sustainable development.

## 6.5 Capacity Building

Since the mid-1990s, there has been a shift in community work practice away from the established practices falling under the term 'community development' to models that builds on the capacity of a community to deal with their own problems, called 'capacity building'.

The main difference between 'community development' and 'community capacity building' is that in community capacity building, the strategies are more often devised by organisations outside those communities, even if the philosophy is to try and build skills and coping abilities within the community. Community capacity building also differs from the community development model with a belief that all communities have inherent strengths, skills and abilities within them. Whereas the community development model can start from a premise of deficiency in the more disadvantaged communities where community development work occurred. The community capacity building model recognises the existence of skills and abilities already in these communities and aims to enhance them to improve people's lives.

Capacity building relates to a range of activities by which individuals, groups and organisations use their capabilities to improve their lifestyle, to meet their needs. They achieve this by building upon their existing resources or seeking out those who have the resources they need. The resources or capital needed to increase a community's capacity can be grouped under four headings financial, physical, human and social resources.

- Human capital refers to the skills, knowledge and abilities of people who live and work in a community
- Social capital refers to the level in which social networks, relationships and processes within a community support individuals to exercise their capabilities
- Physical capital refers to assets such as buildings, community meeting halls and places
- Financial capital refers to the monetary resources available to the community.

While there have been a wide range of perspectives when defining capacity building over the last decade there has been a central theme of common elements of community participation, acknowledgement and utilisation of resources and sustainability.

Skinner<sup>10</sup> defines capacity building as “...development work that strengthens the ability of community organisations and groups to build their structures, systems, people and skills so that they are better able to define and achieve their objectives and engage in consultation and planning, manage community projects and take part in partnerships and community enterprises”.

Howe, Brian and Cleary<sup>11</sup> identified five key factors that contribute to the success of capacity building in communities.

- Capacity Building’ with a focus on education, the development of human and social capital as well as increased connectedness
- A ‘Linked Approach’ that involves co-ordination across government portfolios, partnerships between local, state and commonwealth levels of government, and partnerships between government, business, and community and sectors
- An emphasis on ‘Local Democracy’, whereby bottom-up initiatives take priority over solutions imposed from outside, and the importance of local identity, leadership, knowledge and management are recognised as critical components
- ‘Flexible Approaches’ that take regard of the multifaceted nature of the problems that face particular communities and which emphasise the importance of continuous reflection and development
- An emphasis on ‘Sustainable Strategies’ as opposed to one-off projects or solutions, and (strategies) which recognise the ongoing interdependency of social, economic and environmental connectedness.

Capacity building is not without its challenges. It presents challenges for all three tiers of government and funded services with its cross sectional and ‘bottom-up and joined-up’ approach to solving multi faceted problems.

## 6.6 Corroboration, Sustainability and Resilience

*“The success of building a community’s capacity depends on the ability of a community to work together to maintain itself and have the flexibility to change”.*

At a community level an essential part of achieving goals is relying on the combined effort and resources of others to achieve meaningful outcomes. Creating corroborative networks “can be a key element for creating social networks that are sustainable beyond the duration of any project or intervention”<sup>12</sup>.

Sustainability of a community is achieved when participation and empowerment strengthens it and results in lasting change and the ability to develop new solutions to new issues and improves long lasting conditions.

Salvaris<sup>13</sup> states that sustainable communities empower people where there is shared responsibility, equal opportunity and access to expertise and knowledge; it offers tolerance creativity and a capacity to effect decisions that affect them.

10 Skinner (1997) *Building Community Strengths* Community Development Foundation Loudon

11 Howe, Brian and Cleary, (2001) *Community Building :Policy Issues and Strategies for the Victorian Government* Report commissioned by the Victorian Department of Premier and Cabinet, Victoria

12 Munt, Richard (2003) “Stronger Families Learning Exchange Bulletin No3 Winter (p.6-8)

13 Salvaris M (2001) *Social Benchmarks and Indicators for Victoria* Report commissioned by Department of Premier and Cabinet Victoria

Resilience can be developed and strengthened over time. For disadvantaged communities the strengthening of resilience can enhance the capacity of a community to respond to and influence social change.

Those communities that are able to adapt successfully to adverse situations have common characteristics<sup>14</sup> such as:

- committed leadership
- a strong commitment to civic engagement
- the ability to use a range of approaches when developing solutions
- asset based planning
- time to develop such communities
- a culture of active learning
- access to knowledge and skills.

## 6.7 Applying Capacity Building Concepts to Strengthen Strathfield

As capacity building involves improving the stock of capital in a community, a pre-requisite is the involvement of people in the community whose practices and access to capital are integral. Such people could include key residents and personnel from local government and other community organisations.

When key local community problems are addressed through the pooling of ideas, skills and resources with a coming together of agreed action there is greater opportunity for the development of more healthy and active communities.

When single parents, older people and those who have limited English, for example, are identified as experiencing isolation, community capacity building strategies could include: improving parks and play facilities, developing community gardens, providing cooperatively run coffee mornings and utilising the untapped knowledge of community residents with a range of talks and workshops through the local library. These are strategies which may counter the isolation of targeted members of a community. However, developing these strategies and programs is only the means to the end. More importantly, it is the linked outcomes of sharing of key skills, resources and knowledge, identifying people in the community with leadership capabilities, increasing community pride and the capacity of the community to become more supportive.

Using other strategies community capacity building strategies could be used to reduce local crime rates and address community health problems (such as stress).

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<sup>14</sup> Hall, J (2003) *The Phoenix Area Resilience Project: Some Definitions and Issues* Internal Document

Whatever the strategies community capacity building can be employed to:

- build levels of trust, connectedness, resilience and enterprise, including the ability to join together in common crisis.
- civic engagement, local and political participation.
- strengthen local networks.
- foster a pride of place and self worth.
- develop a role for community leaders.
- improve the use of public facilities.
- increase a willingness of those better off to assist those who are worse off or in crisis<sup>15</sup>.

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<sup>15</sup> Atkinson R and Willis P (2001) *Community Capacity Building A Practical Guide*: Paper No 6 Housing and Community Research Unit School of Sociology University of Tasmania

## 7. COMMUNITY FEEDBACK – FRAMEWORK

### 7.1 Providing the framework

This section will outline the findings from residents belonging to each of the mandatory groups:

- Children (those aged between 0-11)
- Young people (those aged between 12-24)
- Women
- Older people (people aged 55 years and over)
- People with disabilities (includes all types of disabilities)
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (those who are of Aboriginal or Islander descent, who identify as such and are accepted by the respective Aboriginal or TSI communities)
- People from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds (including racial, ethnic and ethno-religious minority groups)

and an emerging group identified from data collection and an area needing attention

- Unit dwellers with families.

Additionally, common issues of Strathfield residents have been included in the plan under the following:

- Making Strathfield safer
- Making Strathfield stronger
- Developing and improving community infrastructure.

Each grouping will include data from the census and other secondary material from a literature review relevant to each group followed by a summary of the issues, needs and recommended strategies. The strategies are divided into those needing attention by Council and those to be done in partnership with others or lobbying others, government departments, community groups and other stakeholders.

## 8. COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

Over 2,500 residents of Strathfield gave their views to Council on a wide range of issues and in doing so have highlighted Strathfield's strengths and gaps in services and programs.

Residents were asked to respond to questions about general aspects of living in Strathfield followed by questions that related to their specific mandatory group. From the extensive community feedback, the following issues were raised about Strathfield as a whole, as distinct from those concerns that relate particularly to the needs of individual mandatory groups.

### 8.1 Multiculturalism and Harmony

Strathfield has one of the most culturally diverse communities in Sydney with almost 50% of the population born overseas. People from many countries make Strathfield their home and co-exist in harmony with other sections of the community.

### 8.2 Library Use

Strathfield has a high number of people who use library facilities such as borrowing books, using study facilities and using on-line services both in the library and through the internet. The library is also a venue for social engagement. The Library is highly valued by all age groups in Strathfield LGA.

### 8.3 A Learning Community

Strathfield is known for its many private and government secondary schools. In addition, the area has a number of tertiary institutions. There are many families and overseas students who choose to settle in Strathfield because of the educational facilities.

### 8.4 Valuing Green Space

Urban development has had a significant impact on Strathfield LGA, where a growing number of people are now living in home units and rely on access public space for recreational, health and leisure use. Strathfield has significant numbers of parks and reserves located across the LGA, which are as much a part of the tradition and streetscape of Strathfield as they are environmentally important. Most residents are living in close proximity to a park, allowing access and viewing of green spaces, which is important to physical and physiological health.

### 8.5 Transport

Access to good and reliable transport systems (rail, road and bus) is one of the reasons residents live in Strathfield, however concerns were raised regarding increasing traffic congestion and lack of parking at railway stations, especially Strathfield as well the lack of bus services in some areas which limit access to services and social inclusion. Problems in accessing Homebush and Flemington Rail Stations by lift or ramp, especially for elderly and people with disabilities or parents with young children, were constantly raised.

## 8.6 Development and changes to urban streetscape

Concerns were raised about changes to the urban environment especially the rate of unit development and impact on open space as well as the condition of streetscapes generally eg rubbish dumping, littering etc. Issues regarding dog and need for additional 'off-leash' areas were raised.

## 8.7 Communicating with community

There were variety of views about how Council's communicates with the community and how various members of the community receive information. Though many residents were satisfied with current methods of communication, other people stated that communications could be improved.

## 8.8 Crime and Safety

Residents are concerned about crime and safety in Strathfield LGA and in Sydney generally, especially fear of theft (from person) and robbery (home and car). There is also growing concern about cyber safety, especially for children, youth and older persons. The primary responsibility for police and law enforcement is State Government and Council works closely with law enforcement agencies on crime prevention strategies.

## 8.9 Community Activities

There appears to be demand for cultural and educational activities in Strathfield LGA, especially for adult learning for women and older persons.



## 9. MAKING STRATHFIELD STRONGER

### 9.1 Addressing isolation

A strong community is one where individuals have a sense of belonging, where links between people are formed to decrease isolation and increase community involvement and social cohesion.

From community feedback and the Census there are numbers of people who live alone, have low or no ability to communicate in English and do not have the advantage of trusted family and close friendship networks. Additionally, from resident comments there are many whose lifestyle is severely curtailed and unable to participate in community activities and programs because of poor access to public transport or have a profound disability. In addition there are those who feel isolated as they have difficulty accessing information.

When people are isolated they are vulnerable. The effects of isolation are marginalisation and increased risk to health problems particularly depression and stress related illnesses.

Services and programs to meet the needs of these residents need to be coordinated to effectively and quickly respond to these individual needs.

### 9.2 Strathfield Shopping Area

Though Strathfield LGA has smaller shopping centres located in Homebush, Homebush West, Strathfield South, Enfield and Cave Road, Strathfield Town Centre is the largest shopping centre located at Strathfield Rail Station, a major transport interchange in NSW. Strathfield Town Centre is accessible by public transport to all parts of Strathfield LGA.

One of the places residents frequent most in their daily lives is a shopping centre. A local shopping centre becomes a meeting place, a place where people browse, network and connect with other residents and enjoy time off. It becomes one of the strengths to build upon to foster greater social cohesion. From community feedback residents believe the Strathfield Town Centre could be improved eg better parking and wider range of food and shops. They also wanted primary signage on shops in commonly understand languages. Relying on community feedback, many residents regularly shop in Burwood and other shopping centres outside Strathfield LGA. Strategies to address this drain of economic and social resources need urgent attention to capitalise on a potential hub of community life.

Strathfield Plaza and the Strathfield Town Centre is the most central place in Strathfield, therefore strategies for revitalisation of this area outlined in Council's Town Centre Project need to be progressed to develop Strathfield Town Centre into a vibrant central meeting area and one where community activities could be held.

### 9.3 Council Strategies

Review Council policies and strategies for communications between Council and residents

Review Council's community engagement policies and strategy

Encourage volunteer involvement in community based programs.

Encourage participation from broad cross section of community in developing consultative and participative networks.

Develop community garden project in Strathfield LGA

Establish community based access network to include people and issues of age and disability

Develop strategies for improving community understanding of public signage

Promote Council's online community directory (LINCS) and monitor and update contents.

Develop information and contact directories for specific community needs.

### 9.4 Strategies in Partnership or Lobbying Others

Identify isolated persons or groups in the local community and facilitate programs to address their needs

Lobby for improved access to public transport in Strathfield LGA

Lobby for improved bus transport links across Strathfield LGA

Support regional community transport services

Work with other agencies in distributing relevant contact details on sexual assault and domestic violence services.

## 10. MAKING STRATHFIELD SAFER

A community's sense of well-being and quality of life is a reflection of the community's perception about how safe they feel. Feeling unsafe can limit a person's lifestyle and make them isolated. Strathfield is not immune from the psychological impact of incidents of crime. When a community experiences everyday crimes such as robbery, break and enters and stealing its residents become frightened and fearful of venturing out and this in turn affects the overall community well being.

### 10.1 Crime in Strathfield

The high concern about safety from community feedback is not without cause as major crime offences for robbery, stealing from the person, break and enter, motor vehicle theft and theft from motor vehicles are very high in Strathfield when rated against other parts of Sydney.

Strathfield Council plays a pivotal role in the prevention of crime in the Strathfield Local Government Area because when the area experiences incidents of crime and the community has a fear about being unsafe when going about their daily business it impacts on the whole community both financially and psychologically.

Strathfield Council has undertaken a number of strategies to tackle crime in the area. The NSW Attorney General's Department endorsed Council's Crime Prevention Plan (2007). Council's application for funding has been successful to employ a Crime Prevention Officer to provide further strategies and programs to combat crime.

Community feedback made mention a number of times about sexual assault and rape incidences in the community, which is not indicated in the Bureau of Statistics Crime and Research (BOSCAR). Sexual assault is often unreported in Australia. It is estimated that most sexual assaults occurred in residential environments and by someone known to the victim. There are a number of barriers, such as fear of retaliation, concerns for privacy or stigma and mistrust of police, common to all social groups. However, CALD and Aboriginal people especially women may face additional barriers such as cultural and social specificities like language and lack of knowledge of the law and rights<sup>16</sup>.

Domestic violence and sexual assault are crimes that need urgent attention as it has a serious effect on the physical and mental health of its victims. A collaborative interagency approach across a wide range of services providers is needed to address these issues.

Along with the Crime Prevention Plan (2007), this Social Plan will integrate crime prevention into its strategies to guide crime prevention strategies in the area.

The internet is an integral part of our economic and social activities, and a vast resource of information, education and entertainment. The ability to use online tools effectively provides both a skill for life and the means to acquire new skills.

While the internet creates substantial benefits, it also exposes users to a number of dangers, including exposure to fraud, ID theft, illegal and prohibited content. Education about cyber safety is important for all users, but particularly children, youth and seniors who may be vulnerable and unaware of dangers posed by the internet.

16 Liveore, Denise (2003), Non-reporting and Hidden Recording of Sexual Assault: An International Literature Review

### **Increase the Level of Safety Measures in Public Places**

Council needs to continue with its strategies to reduce crime. Improvements in anti-social behaviour are critical to reduce the feeling of fear people have about crime. Positive outcomes from measures already introduced need to be conveyed to the community as knowledge that Council is tackling and reducing crime rates is critical to promoting community well being.

## **10.2 Council Strategies**

Continue to work with the community and police on crime prevention matters and community education

Reduce the incidence of graffiti in Strathfield LGA

Reduce risks of crime through improved design of public facilities and spaces

Council and other authorities to incorporate safe design principles for women when planning public facilities and places. This will ensure there is adequate lighting in public places, facilities and services are located near public transport and major thoroughfares, there is adequate space to ensure safe drop off points for young children, and other safety issues identified by local women are taken into consideration.

## **10.3 Strategies in Partnership or Lobbying Others**

Support and strengthen community networks in Strathfield LGA to increase community interaction and promote safe inclusive communities

Support campaigns that address the incidence of violence, assault (including sexual), elder abuse, robbery and domestic violence.

Promote availability of legal information and conduct community legal education programs

Work with relevant government bodies to promote the availability of community legal services and investigate options for an outreach legal service in the area.

Provide assistance and information to overseas students

Reduce the incidence of robbery and assault

Provide information on cyber safety and protecting personal data against ID theft and fraud to community especially children, youth and seniors

Conduct with Police safety audit around main transport modes in Strathfield

Improve awareness of Community Care Register

Develop support and information resources for newly arrived migrants.

# 11. DEVELOPING AND IMPROVING INFRASTRUCTURE

Facilities where people can meet and take part in community activities are essential for community activities and participation and promoting a sense of belonging.

The provision of accessible community neighbourhood services allows for the community to engage with one another and follow individual interests.

## 11.1 Planning for the Future

Section 94 of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979, enables local councils or other consent authorities to levy contributions for open space, recreation and community facilities required for future populations as a consequence of development.

Council's Section 94 contribution plan uses demographic and qualitative data to assess future population trends and needs in order to determine future community facilities and open space. These strategies are developed in combination with the Section 94 review of open space, community and recreational facilities (2009) and the new Council Recreation Plan.

Demand for existing facilities has increased since 2000, in response to population growth. With few exceptions Council's facilities, including sportsgrounds, are operating at sustainable capacity. Council will need to embellish existing parks and sportsgrounds and expand existing facilities such as the community centre as well as add facilities in high density areas to meet demand.

The following trends are anticipated in Strathfield LGA as a result of population growth:

- Most new development of the future will be home units, and to lesser extent townhouses, with restricted or no private open space. This will increase reliance on public spaces for recreation, community and social activities eg children's parties, social gatherings, group study spaces for students etc.
- The population of the future will require facilities and programs that promote community building, social interaction and community activities as the population will be more transient and socially fragmented (eg increased cultural diversity, increased rental dwellings etc). Projects such as community gardens and new indoor facilities and community halls will provide opportunities for social, recreational and educational activities for persons of all ages.
- There is increasing demand to local community spaces within walking distance of medium to high rise development, especially in town centres (Strathfield and Homebush) and isolated areas with increasing population eg Courallie Ave precinct. Community spaces can facilitate a range of activities including study spaces, meetings, cultural activities etc.
- National, state and local research indicates an increasing demand for unorganised and informal recreation eg walking, fitness training in parks etc. Informal participation is increasing across all demographic groups. It is anticipated that persons living in smaller spaces, particularly young people, are likely to require unorganised and informal recreational activities, especially close to their homes.
- Despite growing demands, Council's ability to add significant open space is limited due to lack of land availability and cost of land acquisition. Council will need to increase sustainable capacity of sportsgrounds eg additional lighting, irrigation and drainage etc to provide additional hours and day/night use.

- School aged children are the highest participants of organised sports in Australia. They mainly participate in sports and physical activities organised by their schools. Participation is high for both girls and boys. Local schools are high users of Strathfield Council facilities eg soccer, netball etc. Schools will continue to rely on Council facilities to augment school sports and recreation facilities particularly as schools expand and enrolment numbers increase. School use of Council parks, sportsgrounds and facilities is expected to increase.
- There is demand for an indoor recreation facility to accommodate activities either not currently available in local area (eg indoor sports – netball, basketball etc) or mainly held indoors eg dancing, gym, exercise classes etc. High users of indoor sporting facilities are young people aged 18-24 but there is an increasing number of older people participating in physical activities for health reasons and socialisation.

### **Council Strategies**

Review Council's Section 94 plan to levy for open space, community and recreation facilities to meet the needs of future population.

Provide community facilities in areas of high population growth eg Strathfield Town Centre, Homebush and Courallie Ave Precinct, in order to run a wide range of community programs

Upgrade and extend the Strathfield Community Centre to meet future needs of community

Maximise usage of community facilities and venues to meet changing needs of the community

Review access requirements for all public facilities

Build an indoor recreation centre including indoor courts, gym and activity rooms to meet a wide range of community and recreational needs

Support plans for redevelopment of Strathfield Town Centre.

## **11.2 Creating spaces for the participation of all present and future generations**

To ensure Council is meeting the needs of the community, new facilities need to be provided and present ones upgraded.

### **Council Strategies**

Identify need for additional open and green space in areas of anticipated population and dwelling growth

Review building and planning codes with view to ensuring that new unit developments have adequate access to gardens and green space

Plan for development of community gardens

Promote Strathfield parks and playgrounds including information on specific recreation, social and physical fitness features

Investigate additional off-leash areas especially in areas of high population and housing density

Eliminate smoking near children's play areas and dedicated playgrounds.

## 12. OLDER PEOPLE COMMUNITY FEEDBACK AND STRATEGIES

### 12.1 Overview

The category of 'older people' people includes those aged 55 years and over, which potentially spans over forty years. According to the 2006 Census, 21.4% of Strathfield LGA is aged 55 and over, which involves 6824 persons. The sub-groups include:

- 55-59 years – 1581 persons (4.9% of population)
- 60-64 years – 1238 persons (3.9% of population)
- 65-69 years – 1026 persons (3.3% of population)
- 70-74 years – 880 persons (2.7% of population)
- 75-79 years – 826 persons (2.6% of population)
- 80-84 years – 639 persons (1.9% of population)
- 85 years + - 634 persons (1.9% of population).

As a group their needs and concerns can be quite varied as the younger group are likely to still be in paid employment and may still have home mortgages and dependent children living at home. Alternatively, the older group is likely to be retired, living as a couple or on their own, more reliant on public transport and have less mobility.

For many older people, quality of life is determined by the strength of their family relationships, the links that they have with the broader community, and the extent to which they feel that they are valued and respected members of society. In the cases where links with communities are limited, they may experience isolation and may require higher levels of support than may otherwise be required.

One of the challenges is to address the needs of older people living in Strathfield LGA and provide alternatives to moving from the area when they seek more manageable housing or wish to downsize their homes. Older people contribute to the community in so many ways. Their knowledge and skills through art, history and many other areas of community life give a community its richness and vibrancy. Older people have the experience and wisdom to play a fundamental role in the transfer of cultural knowledge and skills in their communities. This is particularly so for Indigenous communities and those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

Australia is an ageing society. In 1911, 4% of people were aged 65 years and over. By 1996, this figure had risen to 12% in NSW, and is expected to be 14% by 2011. Australia has one of the highest rates of life expectancy in the world, 75 years for men and 81 years for women<sup>17</sup>.

## 12.2 Ageing in the New Millennium

Improved life expectancy means many older people are able to continue actively participating in many aspects of community life. This has resulted in a shift of traditional thinking about older age. The participation of some older people in healthy ageing activities can be limited by economic or social disadvantage experienced throughout their lives. Additionally, issues such as age discrimination, financial status, access to and ability to use public transport, negative attitudes and stereotyping, location of and access to venues and timing of activities, limited opportunities for education are contributing factors and are often barriers to the involvement and inclusion of older people.

Furthermore, older people with a disability, or those from culturally diverse backgrounds, particularly those who have recently arrived and refugees along with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds are often affected. Wesley Missions Strategic Planning Unit states<sup>18</sup> “The challenge is to improve opportunities for older people’s community participation, by reducing physical, social and economic barriers. Such awareness by communities and governments can ensure that older people are encouraged to participate in paid employment or volunteering, lifelong learning activities, as well as social and leisure pursuits.”

## 12.3 Lifelong Learning

Research demonstrates a very positive and measurable impact on physical and mental health for those who attend adult education classes or undertake self-paced learning<sup>19</sup>. The Commonwealth Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs have initiated a particularly significant project to promote awareness and use of internet services by older persons. The objectives of this project are to facilitate the use of online collaborative networks, electronic information and resources sharing, online course development, and other related activities.

A key objective in relation to lifelong learning is ensuring that Australians have the skills and flexibility needed to meet the challenges of continuing technological and structural change. In the context of an ageing workforce, ‘lifelong learning’ appears increasingly important in ensuring the adaptability of older workers. Individuals need to be able and motivated to learn throughout life so that they are equipped with up-to-date skills and competencies and have the choice to work in later life or remain actively involved in the community.

## 12.4 Older People and Health

The NSW Older People’s Health Survey<sup>20</sup> was the first of a proposed series of surveys focusing on specific population groups. The key findings were:

- Living Arrangements: Of the older people who participated in the survey on their own behalf, over one third (39.1%) lived alone, 54.9% lived with a spouse or partner and 9.3% lived with their children.
- Income: 6% of older people indicated they were employed full time or part-time, and 82.1% were receiving a pension or benefit. Over half (53.3%) of older people said they were financially comfortable, 43.7 % said they had just enough to get along and 2.1% said they could not make ends meet.

<sup>18</sup> Wesley Mission’s Strategic Planning & Development Report (Undated): <http://www.wesleymission.org.au/publicationsageing/participation.htm#homelessness>

<sup>19</sup> Bishop, The Hon B (September 2000) The National Strategy for an Ageing Australia: Attitude, Lifestyle & Community Support Discussion Paper

<sup>20</sup> Public Health Division, NSW Older People’s Health Survey (1999) Sydney NSW Health Department



- **Involvements:** The majority (68%) of older people reported being fairly or very socially active, 91.2% reported there were people to share joint activities, and 88% had someone to confide in. About one in five (22%) older people reported doing volunteer work for an organisation in the last six months, while 9.2% indicated they had the main responsibility in caring for someone who has a long-term illness, disability or other problem.
- **Safety:** About two-thirds (64.7%) of older people reported feeling safe at home all the time, 30% felt safe most of the time, and 4% felt safe some of the time. Over half (53.5%) felt safe in their neighbourhood all the time, 37% felt safe most of the time and 7.8% felt safe some of the time.
- **Older People as Carers:** Almost one in 10 (9.2%) older people indicated they had the main responsibility in caring for someone who has a long-term illness, disability or other problem. In the previous week a minority of carers had received services at home to help with their caring, including: services to help with household duties (13.0%), home nursing services (8.6%), home maintenance and gardening (6.9%), and help with personal care (6%). In the previous four weeks, 4.9% of carers received support through the services of a day care centre and 2.5% had received respite care services at home. About one in six (16.4%) carers said they needed more help with carer support, household duties, personal care, or other jobs around the house. The most commonly identified needs were help with household duties (8.7%), home maintenance and gardening (6.1%) and, personal care (2.8%).

## 12.5 Feedback from Older People

On the whole older people are satisfied with Strathfield Council and the environment in which they live. The issues raised include:

### Public Transport

While the majority believed the access to public transport was good, those who lived in the Homebush West and Homebush areas felt isolated because of poor access to public transport including infrequent bus and train services and difficulties accessing the rail stations due to lack of ramps and lifts. Additionally, there were general concerns about a lack of bus shelters and seats.

### Services and Programs

Activities and outings, home support, home visiting, and community transport need improvements in their delivery. While the majority rated the library facilities as good there were a substantial number of people who felt the library was not meeting their specific needs and were concerned about the noise from numbers of young people who use the library as a social meeting point disturbing other library users. Finally, the lack of stimulating educational and cultural programs in Strathfield LGA is a concern.

### Future Concerns

When asked about concerns when they get older the population was concerned about being cut off from their community, feeling socially isolated, and “at risk” e.g. dementia, sick or dying with no regular contact with other people, that there would be a lack of community services when needed and concerned about being unable to get around.

### Crime

Older people were concerned about safety issues in Strathfield and while most respondents felt safe inside their homes they did not feel safe when out.

## 12.6 Council Strategies

Develop Aging Strategy for Strathfield LGA

Review building and planning codes to ensure that new residential home units and townhouses are adaptable for older people and those with disabilities

Develop programs to support and promote “healthy aging” for older residents

Support events and programs for older persons eg seniors week, carers week etc

Assess the communications needs of older persons in Strathfield LGA.

## 12.7 Strategies in Partnership or Lobbying Others

Identify gaps in services for older people by undertaking an audit of programs and services

Liaise with community educational providers to develop and support educational opportunities for older people in Strathfield LGA

Continue to seek funding for home and community care (HACC) services in Strathfield LGA.

## 13. PEOPLE WITH A DISABILITY

### 13.1 Overview

The 2006 Census recorded 3.7% of the population of Strathfield LGA with a profound disability needing assistance with core living skills. The majority of those with a disability are older residents (46%) with 34% between the ages of 35-54 and 7% between 11-18 years. Additionally, there are those who have a lesser degree of disability that still limits their lifestyle, which significantly increases the size of this population.

44% of people with disabilities have lived in the Strathfield area for at least 10 years, while 56% have lived in Strathfield less than 10 years.

Disability is defined by the Australian Bureau of Statistics, and largely accepted by other government agencies, as referring to a wide range of conditions, with a minimum of six months' duration, that includes: loss of sight, hearing or speech, chronic/recurring pain, difficulty learning or understanding; incomplete use of hands, fingers, feet or legs, disfigurement, and head injury.

In a recent study<sup>21</sup> it was found that in December 2005 there were 499,000 disability support pensioners (DSP) in Australia and by 2007 this grew to 723,424. Just over 2% (16,894 people) were able to find paid employment and move from government pensions.

The study found a wide range of barriers that make it harder for people with physical disabilities and those with mental illnesses to gain and keep work, including difficulty with public transport, availability of carers to help with daily core activities to allow people to take up a place in the workforce, lack of workplaces having wheelchair access and employer and employee attitudes towards those with particular needs.

### 13.2 Feedback from those with a disability

#### Services and facilities

Overall the respondents felt that access around Strathfield LGA difficult to negotiate and more attention was needed to needs of people with disability in transport, pedestrian access and community facilities. Community tolerance is important for people with disabilities to feel part of the community. The majority of people with a disability felt that others in Strathfield LGA were not understanding of their difficulties in trying to negotiate their way around Strathfield.

While the majority is satisfied with public transport, those who live around Homebush West and Homebush are isolated through lack of services. The majority believed that more access via ramps, designated public toilets and public seating, employment opportunities, education/training programs and sporting opportunities need to be provided. Footpaths need to be safer to allow easier access. The home support services need expanding.

Use of other recreational facilities and the ability to take part in community activities is difficult because of access. While the library rated highly, it was difficult for people with poor mobility and sight impaired to access the lower shelf book titles.

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21 Department of Family, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs "Audit of Disability Support Pensions 2007"

### 13.3 Council Strategies

Review Council's Pedestrian Mobility Plan to improve pedestrian access throughout Strathfield LGA

Ensure that Council activities and programs are accessible to people with disabilities

Review access paths in parks and develop access walking and cycle maps

Review Council's vacation programs to ensure accessibility for young people with disabilities

Provide more targeted toilet facilities throughout the Strathfield LGA

Provide, upgrade and maintain public seating throughout the Strathfield LGA.

### 13.4 Strategies in Partnership or Lobbying Others

Improve availability and accessibility of public transport in Strathfield LGA for people with disabilities

Continue to network and participate with interagencies relevant to disability services

Work on a regional basis to secure funding from state and federal government departments for disability and carers services.

## 14. CULTURALLY AND LINGUISTICALLY DIVERSE PEOPLE

### 14.1 Overview

Strathfield has one of the most culturally diverse communities in Australia, with 49.9% of all residents born overseas. The most common overseas birthplaces were China, South Korea, India and Sri Lanka. 49.9% of the people stated that they were born overseas in Strathfield LGA, compared to 23.8% in NSW. China represents the larger percentage of people born overseas (7.8%) followed by South Korea (7.1%), India (5.3%) and Sri Lanka (4.4%). These four groups make up approximately 25% of the total population of Strathfield. With almost 50% of the population born overseas, Strathfield LGA is rich in cultural diversity. This cultural diversity has a profound impact on the lives of its residents as it defines the community. One of Strathfield's strengths is that the overwhelming majority of Strathfield residents believed that people lived in cultural harmony.

Isolation has been identified as one of the main problems faced by migrants and refugees. CALD members of our community feel particularly isolated because of the difficulty in getting information about the location of available services. The effects of isolation are exacerbated by the scarcity of affordable counselling, interpreting and multilingual information services.

Since 1945<sup>22</sup>, over six million people have come to Australia as new settlers. Their arrival has had a marked influence on all aspects of our society. Today, nearly one in four of Australia's almost 20 million people were born overseas. New Zealand and the United Kingdom are the largest source countries for migrants, but other regions such as Asia have become significant.

Issues impacting on migrants and refugees include:

- Family reunion
- Language and literacy barriers
- Cultural differences
- Housing difficulties.
- Employment difficulties (eg lack of local experience, overseas qualifications not recognised).
- Domestic Violence
- Loss of support structures (isolation)
- Lack of knowledge of services
- Overt and covert racism.

Settling in Australia can be very stressful on individuals and families. Young people arriving in a new country without family support to undertake tertiary studies feel isolated and stressed settling into Australian university life and having the added pressure of meeting family expectations by gaining good marks. Parents are struggling to settle into a new country and meet their family's basic needs. Young people are often required to interpret or translate important information relating to housing, employment, and education, for example, and accompany their parents to appointments, shopping and services. This new role that some young people are required to adopt leaves little time for them to participate in social activities and concentrate on their own education.

Strathfield's challenge is to provide services and activities that build on its natural and cultural heritage to promote a greater sense of social cohesion and socially inclusiveness.

The challenges ahead are that while just over half the population has lived in the area for 5 years or more nearly 50% have lived in Strathfield for less than 5 years (48%). Many of these people are students who are a very transient population and likely to leave once their studies are completed. Additionally the Census shows a sharp decline in those residents who have a proficiency in English compared to the years up to 1999 and through to 2001 and only 36% of residents speak English in their homes being significantly less than the Sydney average of 64%.

## 14.2 Feedback from CALD community

When asked to rate if activities in Strathfield were culturally inclusive the responses were more or less equal with half the population satisfied with the activities but the other half stating there needed to be improvements.

The majority of respondents stated that activities for socially isolated residents, family support program, and lack of affordable housing were of concern to them. English classes also needs to be urgently addressed.

## 14.3 Council Strategies

Encourage CALD volunteer involvement in community based programs

Encourage participation from broad cross section of community, including CALD, in developing consultative and participative networks

Develop program of CALD events to encourage inclusiveness and networking

Address potential language barriers by promoting information about facilities and services in Strathfield LGA to the CALD community.

## 14.4 Strategies in Partnership or Lobbying Others

Develop strategy to assist new CALD residents on adjusting to living in Australia and Strathfield LGA

Support programs to increase proficiency rate of spoken English amongst the CALD community, particularly recently arrived migrants

Develop new residents welcome kit

Promote education and awareness about sexual abuse and domestic violence.

# 15. WOMEN

## 15.1 Overview

According to the 2006 Census, there are 16080 women in Strathfield LGA, which is 50.4% of the population, down from 50.8% in 2001. There are more women aged 30 to 54 years and over 65 years. However, there are more males aged 0-29 years and 55 to 64 years.

Women's lives are beginning to be documented more accurately and fully, including the relationship between paid and unpaid work and well being and other influences such as social roles, social class, age and sexual discrimination and the impact they have on women's health. Issues such as social isolation, economic disadvantage, roles and responsibilities of women as carers and coping with paid employment is now well documented as having an adverse effect on the incidence of both physical and stress related illness, together with high incidence of depression.

Sole parents are reported to have significantly poorer health than either partnered women caring for children, or lone fathers.

Employment issues for women are significant and link with other areas of social and family life including childcare, economic independence and gender wage equity. Women make up just over half the population of Strathfield and just over half of those undertaking tertiary studies however they are underrepresented in paid employment, over represented in the low income brackets, as sole parents and full time carers of children.

A new report on domestic and family violence released by the NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research (BOCSAR) has found that, between 1997 and 2004, the recorded rate of domestic assault in NSW increased by about 40% in the Sydney Statistical Division<sup>23</sup>.

In Strathfield LGA, women rated concern for their safety very highly and made mention in their feedback of incidents of sexual assault. As many women are isolated through their culture, financial dependence, lack of language skills and lack of family support it is possible that many fail to make notification to police.

Literature that focuses on safety of women and children and family/domestic violence highlight the following<sup>24</sup>:

- The causes of family and domestic violence are complex and dynamic and demand a range of responses
- Interventions must focus on children and young people and provide protection
- The diverse needs of specific community groups must be recognised and provided for when developing and implementing family violence prevention initiatives
- The local service system has a responsibility in the development of appropriate services that aim to prevent violence and to ensure coordinated planning, monitoring and evaluation of services
- Approaches to family violence prevention must be integrated, coordinated and collaborative
- Family and violence is an issue that affects the whole community requiring a whole of community response.

Council is committed to developing a response to the safety of women in their community by contributing to and developing local solutions to family violence prevention.

Council's vision for Strathfield is to make it a safe place for women and by removing all obstacles to women's active participation in a wide range of specific activities.

<sup>23</sup> Crime and Justice Bulletin No 89 October 2005 Trends and Patterns in Domestic Violence Assaults.

<sup>24</sup> Health Outcomes International (2004) Improving Women's Safety, Partnerships Against Domestic Violence

## 15.2 Feedback from Women

Half the respondents have lived in Strathfield for over five years and the other half have lived in Strathfield LGA for less than five years. Some are mothers with children, but others are students who have lived in Strathfield for less than two years.

Most women required improvements in facilities, services and programs to meet their needs in Strathfield LGA. These included women's health services, targeted employment services, entertainment, relationship/parenthood/partner services, interest group activities and educational opportunities.

The majority of women was concerned about their safety and felt the information and programs on safety were only average to poor. Violence against women is an issue of widespread and justifiable public concern.

Most respondents offered wide-ranging suggestions to foster social connectedness, facilitate economic and community participation and generally improve the lifestyle for women in Strathfield.

Their suggestions have been incorporated into the strategies below.

## 15.3 Council Strategies

Develop range of activities to meet needs of women in Strathfield including educational, leisure and recreation

Council to provide access to facilities for activities and programs to meet needs of women

Council to encourage participation by women in community leadership programs

Review communications strategies to promote information about women's activities, programs and achievements in Strathfield.

## 15.4 Strategies in Partnership or Lobbying Others

Consult with women representative advisory groups and state/federal agencies to inform, assist and facilitate women's programs in Strathfield

Facilitate external service and educational providers an expanded range of educational opportunities for women

Monitor incidences of crime against women including domestic violence and sexual assault on women

Work with government, NGOs and other councils in providing information on services for women in Strathfield LGA and surrounding districts.



## 16. PARENTS AND YOUNG CHILDREN 0-11

### 16.1 Overview

Young children form two groups; those aged 0-4 years (infants) and those 5-11 years (school age). 4.9% of Strathfield LGA's population or 1555 persons are aged 0-4 years and 8.7% or 2722 persons are aged 5 to 11 years. This was an increase of 253 persons from the 2001 Census.

Community consideration about the ongoing well being of the younger population and their parents is imperative in all social planning and development strategies. Research indicates the links between social and physical well being and education and its impact on future opportunities in adult life are one of the key elements in the development of learning and social skills both contributing to a healthy community of children. Participation in appropriate early child care and educational settings has been associated with enhanced cognitive and language development and with emerging literacy.

A 2002 study concluded that a child's health is determined on a number of social factors such as the degree of social supports and social capital the child may have, the ability of a family to relate in a functional manner, childhood activities and attending childcare, preschool or school attendance.<sup>25</sup> The study stated that such social determinants are critical to the overall well-being of children 0-11.

Further indicators and determinants of health in children include medical issues, sun protection, water safety and physical activity and inactivity.

One of the key social determinants children's well being, family functioning, is a priority for policy makers at local, state and federal Level. How well families function as a unit significantly affects the health and well being of children in a family. The degree to which a family unit pulls together and functions well is influenced by such things as the quality of the relationship, the health of the family members and the degree to which life stresses such as work and finances impact on the day to day ability to function appropriately.

Social support is a major factor in the health and well being of children in families. It includes the practical and social support provided to parents and carers and the degree to which a parent can call on the support of others can affect a range of health and social outcomes for children. It has been found that rates of child injury in families will directly relate to the degree of social support found in that family<sup>26</sup>. The reciprocal ties one has with another in the community increase significantly the ability to feel safe, participate in the local community and attain a sense of belonging all influencing the sense of well being experienced within families.

Parenting styles and messages they give, experiences at school, a child's social environment, early childcare and the fostering of learning and development in early childhood all have an influence on child health behaviors as children move to their older years.

Health including social behaviors in childhood affects health and the ability to function effectively in later life and into adulthood with many chronic diseases and anti social behaviors directly relating to childhood health.

25 Centre for Epidemiology and Research NSW Department of Health. New South Wales Child Health Survey 2001 *NSW Public Health Bulletin* 2002 13 (S-4)

26 *ibid*

In summary as a community consideration about the ongoing well-being of the younger population and their parents is imperative in all social planning and development strategies. Research indicates the links between social and physical well being and education and its impact on future opportunities in adult life are one of the key elements in the development of learning and social skills both contributing to a healthy community of children. Participation in appropriate early child care and educational settings has been associated with enhanced cognitive and language development and with emerging literacy.

Just over half the of families with young children have lived in the Strathfield area for 5 years or more while the other half have lived in Strathfield for less than 5 years. While a proportion would be a transient population who move in for children's schooling then move out again, there would be a number of families who have recently bought into the area.

## 16.2 Feedback from Parents of Children 0-11

### **Open Space**

The majority of parents were satisfied with the play areas in the parks around Strathfield; however there was some concern about the lack of play equipment and access to drinking water.

### **Childcare and other Children's Services**

Preschool services were considered to be expensive and having limited places.

Parents required improvements in services to support them in the caring of their children. Services must target the need of these women as caring for children on a daily basis can be stressful and isolating.

Playgroups are a means of parents meeting one another in an informal atmosphere and where children can socialise. Playgroups need to be accessible by transport and more support and promotion from Council is required.

There appears to be a need for additional out of school hours (OOSH) facilities in Strathfield.

### **Support and Parenting Services**

Parent Education Programs needed to be offered more frequently and flexible short term support is not available.

### **Sporting and Leisure Facilities**

While Homebush Olympic centre bordered Strathfield many found it difficult to access the swimming pool without a car and relying on infrequent bus services. Further bikeways and improved sporting facilities for younger people were issues that rated attention. Note that Strathfield's Recreation Plan addresses recreation and sporting facilities and programs.

The library was rated highly although there were some comments on improvements that have been incorporated below.

## 16.3 Council Strategies

Assess ongoing and long-term needs and facilities for additional out of school hours services (OOSH) in Strathfield

Investigate the provision of out of school hours care services (OOSH)

Provide access to community grants to provide financial assistance for local playgroups

Raise awareness of children's services including playgroups operating in Strathfield LGA

Provide wider range of play equipment for children in play areas and parks, especially in areas of high use or population/housing density

Review library collection and development policy for provision of lending and reference resources for young children

Investigate establishing a lending toy and sporting equipment library

Provide children's services at Strathfield Libraries such as storytime and baby bounce.

## 16.4 Strategies in Partnership or Lobbying Others

Make representations to Government improve financial assistance for preschool services to parents and for government preschool services in Strathfield

Lobby for increase in provision of family outreach service

Continue to provide vacation programs in partnership with other agencies.

## 17. ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLE

### 17.1 Overview

With 95 Aboriginal people recorded on the Census, the percentage of indigenous people in Strathfield is only 0.3% being lower than the Sydney average of 1.1%. 60% of the ATSI community has lived in Strathfield for at least 5 years. 20% are between the ages of 11-18 years, 20% are between 19-25 years, 20% are between 35-44 years and 40% are between 45-54 years.

Aboriginal people come from more than 600 different Aboriginal cultures across Australia and over 70 cultures in NSW alone. They have different cultures, different environmentally driven lifestyles, different countries, different customs, different lore and, significantly different languages. The Aboriginal population is 2.3% of the total Australian population.

In health terms Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are by far the most disadvantaged group on a national level. Indigenous Australians experience a higher burden of illness and die at a younger age than other Australians.

Death rates at all age groups for Indigenous females and males are higher than for non-Indigenous people. The differences were greatest for those in the 35-54 years age group with Indigenous death rates 6-8 times higher than those for non-Indigenous people.

Many Aboriginal people have mistrust and reservations about formal education because of past unsatisfactory experiences. The participation rate in education for Aboriginal people is lower than for other Australians with only 73.7% of Aboriginal people under the age of 15 in full time education compared to 91.5% of all 15 year olds . In addition, Aboriginal people had lower participation rates in tertiary education with 12% of all 29 year olds compared to 33% of all other Australians<sup>27</sup>.

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### 17.2 Feedback from the Indigenous Community

The Strathfield ATSI community is only 0.3% of the population. Council received 10 survey responses from this community and 40% of the responses were from persons aged 11-25 years.

The majority of respondents did not feel Strathfield was particularly neither inclusive nor tolerant towards them. Further the respondents rated the following services needing attention programs to foster reconciliation, targeted health services, drug and alcohol programs, employment and training programs and artistic programs.

27 NSW Department of Health Strategic Plan (1999)

28 ibid p131

29 ABS 2001 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians: A Statistical Profile

30 ibid

## 17.3 Council Strategies

Facilitate an audit of Aboriginal services in the Inner West region to identify gaps in services and opportunities to increase targeted services

Develop and improve interpretative signage about Aboriginal culture and heritage along the Cooks River

Encourage involvement of the Aboriginal community in consultations on Council strategies and plans

Commemorate significant Aboriginal achievements and events.

## 18. YOUTH BETWEEN 12 AND 24 YEARS

### 18.1 Overview

There are many variations on what constitutes 'young' and 'youth' but research is predominately defined as persons aged 12-24 years. In the 2006 Census, they cover two life stages being secondary school students (12-17) and young adults (18-24) and together make up 21.5% of the total population.

The 2006 Census recorded 2899 persons aged 12-17 years (9.1% of population) and 3981 persons aged 18-24 years (12.4% of population).

The wide age range, coupled with life experiences makes this subgroup as diverse as the broader population. Impacting on the responses from the young people of Strathfield was not only the significant differences in age but family circumstances, financial security, cultural identity and levels of dependence and independence.

Because of such significant and broad life experiences presenting the issues and profile of young people requires a clear definition of youth as a category that encapsulates a context of both age and social meaning. The single uniting feature of young people is physical age. However the capacity to distinguish young people from adults and children is important in order to accurately target interventions to the unique needs of young people.

There is a reality for young people living in Australia today, which is vastly different to generations before them. Young people are moving into adulthood with attitudes and beliefs that shape their views and the actions they take. Changes within the economy and shifts in the labour market have impacted on the opportunities and choices young people are required to make as they reach independence.

#### Income

Income is a significant factor in the lives of many young people, with issues arising such as homelessness, poverty and other adverse lifestyle consequences resulting from lack of appropriate financial support and stability. The Census shows that 65% of males between 15-19 and 63.4% of females were not employed in 2006. As Strathfield has such a high retention rate of young people who continue on to Year 12, it is likely that most are students rather than workers. In the 20-24 age groups, 25.5% of males and 26.4% of females are not employed. As Strathfield has a high tertiary student population, it is likely most are students and not actively searching of paid employment. Some are supported financially by family impacting but it is likely that access to reasonable levels of income may be an issue for this group, especially without direct family support.

#### Family and Relationships

Young people are staying at home for much longer today often into their mid to late 20's, as living and housing costs impact on their financial independence. As Strathfield is known for its many schools and close to tertiary institutions many young people are students living at home and flatmates living away from their families.

Households that move regularly, often due to housing or employment issues, tend to lack broader social or family support networks that can ease the pressure during times of turmoil. Kilmartin<sup>31</sup> argues that leaving home before the age of 18 is a sign not only of the risk of homelessness, but of childhood disadvantage.

31 Kilmartin C (2000) 'Young Adult Moves' Leaving Home, returning home, relationships'. Family Matters n55 Autumn pp34-40

Young people generally are delaying their own family formation, through delayed child-bearing, changing attitudes to the expression of sexuality, and the increasing acceptance of de facto relationships over marriage, although the aspiration to marriage is still quite prevalent<sup>32</sup>. Socio-economic factors are also significant, and the burden of HECS debt, enforced saving through superannuation, and the privatisation of health and other services also figures in the changing patterns.

Just on 90% of respondents have lived in the area for less than 5 years. This indicates a portion of these respondents is a very transient population, supported by the 2006 Census findings.

As this age grouping covers those who have just entered high school up to those who could be parents of young children their needs are diverse. However the majority of the responses were older school students and young adults who have left school.

A large number of the respondents live in shared dwellings and as students possibly live in overcrowded conditions because of high rents.

## 18.2 Feedback from Young People

More green space and designated space in parks for young people

Increase in range of sporting facilities

Lack of services for young people in Homebush West.

Employment and training programs

Homelessness and family conflict support services

Homework help support

Personal safety programs and preventative programs such as drug and alcohol, bullying, stress, arts, music etc and youth health programs

Library hours extended, more designated books and space allocated for social engagement.

## 18.3 Council Strategies

Review library collection and development policies to ensure the collection meet the needs of young people

Work in partnership with Police to reduce graffiti, drug abuse and anti-social through visits to schools and other youth organisations

Promote positive images of young people and their contributions to the local area

Work in partnerships to offer young people referrals and relevant information

Review range of vacation, educational and recreational activities available in Strathfield LGA

Note issues concerning sports and recreation are included in Council's Recreation Plan.

32 Land C; Pitman, S (2003) 'Introduction-the context in Susan Pitman et al *Profile of Young Australians* Facts, Figures and Issues, The Foundation for Young Australians, Melbourne

## 18.4 Strategies in Partnership or Lobbying Others

Work with agencies to explore options for access to support programs for young people

Regularly review relevant statistical data on young people in Strathfield LGA and surrounding areas

Continue to support homework support services in Library

Promote programs on youth health and drug/alcohol issues

Explore opportunities to encourage participation in local community radio

Promote youth leadership programs and forums

Promote intergenerational activities and programs.



# 19. FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN LIVING IN UNITS

## 19.1 Overview

The 2006 Census recorded a total of 5427 medium to high density dwellings in Strathfield LGA, which involved an additional 1991 dwellings above the amount recorded in the 2001 Census. Many of the occupants of these dwellings are families with children.

Adoption of compact city policy by the NSW Government has focused on redevelopment of land for housing in centres close to Sydney, in particular the Inner Western Corridor, which includes Strathfield LGA. It is anticipated that the number of medium to high density dwellings and the resultant population will continue to increase.

While living in the Inner West provides a number of advantages such as close proximity to public transport, shopping centres and other facilities, unit living and restricted living and open spaces for play poses difficulties especially for parents with children. However for many, escalating house prices mean that access to separate houses is difficult and unit living is becoming a way of life rather than a stopgap until they can save the deposit for a home.

There are numbers of research studies that highlight major problems with raising children in estates of unit developments<sup>33</sup>. There is less tendency for children to play outside their home, play is bound to be inhibited if a major effort is needed to reach a suitable and permissible place to play and imaginative attempts to overcome this problem in a small unit is near impossible<sup>34</sup>.

Coupled with the difficulties of adequate play space in units are the social effects: the loss of privacy; the inflexibility of the dwelling to changes in the life cycle of the child; the difficulty of controlling children where there is no secure open space. In addition there is more intrusion from noisy neighbours living next door and above, traffic, lack of storage and if renting the difficulty in keeping children cool on hot summer days without air conditioners or an outside yard with shade and the many other features of medium-density accommodation that make it difficult for families with children.

A greater lack of support from neighbours in medium and high-rise developments is evident also from data relating to how likely you would be to ask a neighbour for help. For parents there is a weaker sense of being part of their neighbourhood than other parents, as measured by the 'sense of community scale'<sup>35</sup>. Using this scale, the researchers tested whether the observed differences are due to language (speaking a language other than English at home) or to type of housing. This analysis suggests that language was not the important factor and that differences between medium and high-rise residents and others persisted when language was taken into account.

Medium and high-rise advocates sometimes assume that sociability automatically goes with high or medium density housing and that isolation is the story of the detached suburban house. The data suggest otherwise<sup>36</sup>.

For primary school aged children in units, public space is often dedicated to car parking and driveways, which are off limits for play space. Therefore, finding a safe place for children to play outside unsupervised is impossible.

33 For example Brownlee, H. (1993), 'Who Needs Neighbours?: Views from the outer and inner suburbs', Family Matters, No.35, September, Australian Institute of Family Studies, Melbourne

34 Jones, M. (1972), Housing and Poverty in Australia, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne

35 Brownlee op cit

36 ibid

Unit dwellings also curtail the ability of families to provide social entertainment in their homes. Children's parties and social gatherings may require access to rooms or places which can be hired such as community centres or meeting rooms.

Census results reveal that a large percentage of units are rented. The transient nature of the occupancy can create stress and uncertainty of tenure and possibly exploitation, especially for persons with poor English language skills.

## 19.2 Council Strategies

Work with unit dwellers in the development, establishment and management of community gardens

Ensure that new community services or facilities are accessible by public transport and pedestrian access

Develop community facilities in close vicinity to population and dwelling development to facilitate meetings, playgroups, toy library, gym activities, social gatherings and children's parties etc

Review building and planning codes for future unit development to provide for green space and safe areas for children's play and lockable storage areas for bikes, prams and other equipment.

## 19.3 Strategies in Partnership or Lobbying Others

Request Centre Management Strathfield Plaza provides a children's play centre within the shopping complex.

Lobby for the provision of more effective bus transport links to community facilities and shopping areas in Strathfield LGA

Support the expansion of legal and tenancy advisory services for Strathfield LGA with focus on providing translation of community languages.

## 20. ACTION PLANS

### Social Planning Framework 2009-2014

This framework includes all the strategies from the needs and issues identified by respondents and listed in the Social Plan 2009-2014 within the following areas:

- Making Strathfield Stronger
- Making Strathfield Safer
- Developing and Improving Infrastructure
- Older People
- People with Disabilities
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders
- Women
- Young People
- Families and Young Children
- Culturally and Linguistically Diverse People
- Families living in Units.

### Social Justice Principles

The column headed Social Justice has the initial that refers to a relevant social justice principle relating to a particular project.

- R     Rights
- I     Inclusion
- SD   Service Delivery
- SC   Social Capital.

### Time Frame

The time frame has been listed under the following:

Ongoing (O) being those strategies in place but needing continued involvement

High Priority (HP) being those strategies to be addressed between  
November 2009-December 2010

Medium Time Frame (M) being those strategies to be addressed between  
January 2011–December 2012

Low Priority Time Frame (L) being those strategies to be addressed between  
January 2013–September 2014.

ACTION PLAN: Making Strathfield Stronger - Council Responsibility				
Strategy	Social Justice Principle	Responsibility	Specific Task	Time Frame
Review Council communications policies and strategy	I	Communications, Policy	Review Council's strategy for communicating with the local community, in particular address obstacles to communication eg disability, language issues, isolation etc. This should include consideration of social technologies.	OG & HP
Review community engagement policies and strategy	I	Communications, Community liaison, Policy	Review Council's policies and methods of encouraging wide cross sections of the community in consultative and decision making processes.	OG & HP
Encourage volunteer involvement in community based programs.	SC	Community Services	Identify and work with local volunteer programs and organisations to increase the number of residents interested in volunteering.	M
Encourage participation from broad cross section of community in developing consultative and participative networks.	SC	Community Liaison, Community Services	Identify active and interested participants from a broad-cross section of community to be involved with Council and community organisations on a wide range of projects and programs eg youth, CALD, seniors etc.	M
Develop community garden in Strathfield LGA	SD	Parks, Community Services	Explore and design appropriate spaces for community gardens and develop a management strategy involving local residents, volunteer gardening groups, schools and other community organisations.	HP
Establish community based access network to include people and issues of age and disability	I	Community Services	Establish community-based access network using formal and informal communication techniques (eg meetings, social networking etc) to identify and address issues affecting age and disability in Strathfield LGA.	M
Develop strategies for improving community understanding of public signage	I	Community Services, Parks	Develop strategies for improving communication of all public signage in Strathfield, both public and private by addressing language, disability and accessibility needs.	HP
Promote Council's online community directory (LINCS) and monitor and update contents.	SD	Community Services, LINCS	Review and continue to develop LINCS	OG
Develop information and contact directories for specific community needs		Community Services	Develop specific information directories eg children's services, aged and disability etc to assist local residents in locating available services	M

ACTION PLAN: Making Strathfield Stronger - In Partnership or Lobbying Others				
Strategy	Social Justice Principle	Responsibility	Specific Task	Time Frame
Identify isolated persons or groups in the local community and facilitate programs to address their needs	I	Community Services; Community groups and organisations	Consult with community groups and organisations and facilitate programs and services to assist with specific needs.	OG
Lobby for improved access to public transport in Strathfield LGA	R	Community Services; NSW Government (State Rail, Sydney Buses, Ministers and MPs)	Make representations to State Government for improvements in public transport services and accessibility across the Strathfield LGA especially provision of ramps and lifts at Homebush and Flemington Rail Stations.	HP
Lobby for improved bus transport links across Strathfield LGA	I	Community Services; NSW Government (Sydney Buses, Ministers and MPs)	Make representations to State Government for improvements in public transport services to ensure that all parts of Strathfield LGA are accessible to transport and shopping areas.	HP
Support regional community transport services	SD	Community Services; Community transport providers	Liaise with regional community transport services to provide services for local residents who require access to community transport in Strathfield LGA.	HP
Work in other agencies in distributing relevant contact details on sexual assault and domestic violence services	R	Community Services; Police and Domestic Violence Interagencies	In partnership with police and Greater Metro Domestic Violence Action Group, develop and distribute information on dealing with domestic violence and sexual assaults. Ensure relevant information in a range of languages is updated and easily accessible to community residents	OG

ACTION PLAN: Making Strathfield Safer - Council Responsibility				
Strategy	Social Justice Principle	Responsibility	Specific Task	Time Frame
Continue to work with the community and police on crime prevention matters and community education	R	Community Services	Continue to seek funding for specialist crime and safety Council officer to work with law enforcement agencies to implement crime prevention measures and support the local community	HP & OG
Reduce the incidence of graffiti in Strathfield LGA	SD	Parks	Review, monitor and implement actions in Council's Graffiti Management Strategy. Seek funding from State Government to resource graffiti strategies.	OG & HP
Reduce risks of crime through improved design of public facilities and spaces	SD	Development Assessment, Parks	Incorporate Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) in development of community facilities and open spaces.	HP

ACTION PLAN: Making Strathfield Safer - In Partnership or Lobbying Others				
Strategy	Social Justice Principle	Responsibility	Specific Task	Time Frame
Support and strengthen community networks in Strathfield LGA to increase community interaction and promote safe inclusive communities	SC	Community Services; community groups	Initiate discussion with community groups to identify and develop strategies to link groups and individuals in the community.	M
Support campaigns that address the incidence of violence, assault (including sexual), elder abuse, robbery and domestic violence.	SD	Community Services; relevant community groups	Council to continue to work with Police & community groups in promoting safety campaigns especially targeted at women, seniors, CALD and/or groups identified as 'isolated' or 'at-risk'.	OG
Promote availability of legal information and conduct community legal education programs	SD	Library; Community Services	Promote availability of legal information through library service and liaise with relevant community legal service to run a series of legal education workshops for community residents and community workers on a range of issues.	HP
Work with relevant government bodies to promote the availability of community legal services and investigate options for an outreach legal service in the area.	SD	Community Services; Community Legal Service	Liaise with relevant community legal service to operate an outreach legal advice service in Strathfield LGA	HP
Provide assistance and information to overseas students	SD	Community Services, Police, Educational Institutions, Government agencies	Work with other agencies and educational institutions in providing information and assistance to overseas students on issues such as contacts, personal safety, legal rights, crime prevention etc.	OG & HP
Reduce the incidence of robbery and assault	R	Police, Community services	Work with Police to reduce robbery and assault by monitoring incident reports and installing safety features such as strong street lighting in identified crime hotspots	OG
Provide information on cyber safety and protecting personal data against ID theft and fraud to community especially children, youth and seniors	SD	Community Services, Library, Police, Government Agencies	Work with Police and Government agencies in providing information on cyber safety to the community especially those vulnerable to online ID theft and fraud, threats to personal safety via social networking etc.	OG
Conduct with Police safety audit around main transport modes in Strathfield	SD	Community Services & Police Area Command	Continue to undertake regular audits	OG

ACTION PLAN: Making Strathfield Safer - In Partnership or Lobbying Others (continued)				
Strategy	Social Justice Principle	Responsibility	Specific Task	Time Frame
Improve awareness of Community Care Register	R	Community Services, Police Local Area Command	Work with Police Local Area Command in increasing awareness of the community care register for elderly or infirm people and regularly monitor the service.	OG
Develop support and information resources for newly arrived migrants	SD	Community Services, Councils, Government agencies	In partnership with other Councils and government agencies, develop support and information resources for newly arrived migrants	HP



ACTION PLAN: Developing and Improving Infrastructure - Council Responsibility				
Strategy	Social Justice Principle	Responsibility	Specific Task	Time Frame
Review Council's Section 94 plan.	SD	Strategic Planning	Review Council's Section 94 plan to levy for open space, community and recreation facilities to meet the needs of future population.	HP
Provide community facilities in areas of high population growth eg Strathfield Town Centre, Homebush and Courallie Ave Precinct, in order to run a wide range of community programs.	SD	Community Services, Parks, Strategic Planning	Identify anticipated populations and locations for proposed community facilities to meet needs for future populations in Section 94 developer contribution plan.	HP
Upgrade and extend the Strathfield Community Centre to meet future needs of community	SD	Community Services, Strategic Planning	Extend the community centre building in order to expand the range of services facilitated by the centre for future population. Include in s.94 developer contribution plan.	HP
Maximise usage of community facilities and venues to meet the changing needs of the community	SD	Community Services, Policy, Parks, Governance	Review policies of usage of facilities including policies for hiring and licence agreements to ensure that facilities are accessible and meet the social, recreational and cultural needs of local community.	M
Review access requirements for all public facilities	R	Community Services, Parks, Development Assessment	Review access to public facilities and develop plans to upgrade where required.	HP
Provide indoor sporting and recreational facilities near areas of anticipated population and housing growth in north Strathfield LGA.	SD	Parks & Recreation, Community Services	Build an indoor recreation centre including courts, gym and activity rooms to meet recreational and community needs of future populations. Include in s.94 developer contribution plan.	HP
Support plans for redevelopment of Strathfield Town Centre	SD	Strategic Planning	Support plans for redevelopment of Strathfield Town Centre to upgrade and improve transport, traffic, community and shopping facilities.	HP L

ACTION PLAN: Creating Spaces for the Enjoyment and Participation of all Present and Future Generations - Council responsibility				
Strategy	Social Justice Principle	Responsibility	Specific Task	Time Frame
Identify need for additional open and green space in areas of anticipated population and dwelling growth	SC	Parks, Strategic Planning, Community Services	Identify open space requirements of areas of proposed population and dwelling growth to ensure that future populations have reasonable access to open space.	M
Review building and planning codes with view to ensuring that new unit developments have adequate access to gardens and green space	SC	Strategic Planning	Review building codes and establish requirements for adequate gardens and green space based on number of potential occupants.	HP
Plan for development of community gardens	SC	Strategic Planning	Identify suitable spaces for development of community gardens with consideration given to locations near high population and housing densities.	M
Promote Strathfield parks and playgrounds including information on specific recreation, social and physical fitness features.	I	Parks	Review current strategies and continue to put in place facilities to target the needs of all residents.	HP
Investigate additional off-leash areas especially in areas of high population and housing density.	SC	Parks	Identify additional areas for dog 'off-leash' areas especially in walking distance to unit developments. Consider fencing of areas where conflict arises between dog use and other recreational/leisure uses of park or open space.	HP
Eliminate smoking near children's play areas and dedicated playgrounds.	R	Parks, Policy	Establish and enforce smoke free policy especially near children's play areas and dedicated playgrounds.	HP

ACTION PLAN: Older People - Council responsibility				
Strategy	Social Justice Principle	Responsibility	Specific Task	Time Frame
Develop Aging Strategy for Strathfield LGA	SD	Community Services	Seek funding or other options to undertake a research project into aging of population of Strathfield LGA and inner west region and the needs of older people in the community.	M
Review building and planning codes to ensure that new residential home units and townhouses are adaptable for older people and those with disabilities.	R	Strategic Planning: Development Assessment	In reviewing building and planning codes, consider need for adaptable housing such as inclusion of ramps, handrails, lift and ramp access from underground car parking as well as adaptable design in residential floor plans eg entrances and exits, kitchens, bathrooms etc.	HP
Develop programs to support and promote "healthy aging" for older residents	SC	Community Services, Recreation, Events	Develop range of structured and unstructured recreational and leisure opportunities for older residents to promote 'healthy aging' programs	M
Support events and programs for older persons eg seniors week, carers week etc	SD	Community Services, Library, Events	Continue programs which promote seniors activities and encourage participation of older persons eg seniors week, carers week etc	HP
Assess the communications needs of older persons in Strathfield LGA	I	Community Services, Communications	Identify existing communications networks and whether gaps exist in providing information to older persons in Strathfield LGA	HP

ACTION PLAN: Older People - In Partnership or Lobbying Others				
Strategy	Social Justice Principle	Responsibility	Specific Task	Time Frame
Identify gaps in services for older people	SD	Community Services and relevant agencies	Working with local older persons networks and interagency undertake an audit of programs and services by service providers in Strathfield LGA to target opportunities for funding of increased provision of services.	OG & HP
Liaise with community educational providers to develop and support educational opportunities for older people in Strathfield LGA	SC	Community Services; TAFE, community colleges, U3A and relevant agencies	Explore options to offer a range of educational programs for older people in Strathfield LGA.	HP
Continue to seek funding for home and community care (HACC) services in Strathfield LGA	SD	Interagency, HAAC forum, Community Services	Continue to provide HACC services in Strathfield LGA eg daycare programs etc	M

ACTION PLAN: People with a Disability - Council Responsibility				
Strategy	Social Justice Principle	Responsibility	Specific Task	Time Frame
Review Council's Pedestrian Mobility Plan to improve pedestrian access throughout Strathfield LGA	R	Community Services, Works and Services	Review Council's Pedestrian Mobility Plan to improve pedestrian access throughout Strathfield LGA to implement and improve pedestrian access on footpaths, roads and cyclepaths.	OG
Ensure that Council activities and programs are accessible to people with disabilities	R	Community Services, Events	Develop a checklist of essential elements to be present for all council activities and programs	M
Review access paths in parks and develop access walking and cycle maps	I	Parks, Community Services, Engineering Services and Works, Strategic Planning	Review paths in parks including cyclepaths to ensure accessibility to persons with disabilities and develop maps of path and cyclepaths which are fully accessible for people with disabilities.	M
Review Council's vacation programs to ensure accessibility for young people with disabilities	SD	Community Services	Undertake an ongoing review of all mainstream services to identify vacancies to meet needs of those young people with disabilities. Explore feasibility of providing a supported vacation care program	M
Provide more targeted toilet facilities throughout the Strathfield LGA	SD	Community Services, Parks	Undertake an audit of accessible toilet facilities in Strathfield and ensure information on locations of accessible toilets is available to the public. In provision of new toilet facilities, ensure that where possible, toilets are fully accessible.	M
Provide, upgrade and maintain public seating throughout the Strathfield LGA	SD	Community Services, Parks, Works	Undertake an audit of public seating throughout Strathfield LGA including bus stops, shopping centres and community facilities to ensure that seating is available and maintained in good condition.	M

ACTION PLAN: People with Disabilities - In Partnership or Lobbying Others				
Strategy	Social Justice Principle	Responsibility	Specific Task	Time Frame
Improve availability and accessibility of public transport in Strathfield LGA for people with disabilities	SD	Community Services; Engineering Works and Services, State Government agencies	Liaise and consult with relevant state government departments to implement strategies to enhance availability and accessibility of public transport	M
Continue to network and participate with interagencies relevant to disability services.	I	Community Services and appropriate services agencies	Participate in local and regional forums and discussions on disability issues	OG
Work on a regional basis to secure funding from state and federal government departments for disability and carers services	SD	Community Services; other councils, local service providers	Work with other Councils and service providers on a regional basis to secure funding from state and federal government departments for disability and carers services	HP

ACTION PLAN: CALD - Council Responsibility				
Strategy	Social Justice Principle	Responsibility	Specific Task	Time Frame
Encourage CALD volunteer involvement in community based programs.	SC	Community Services	Identify and work with local volunteer programs and organisations to increase the number of CALD residents interested in volunteering.	M
Encourage participation from broad cross section of community, including CALD, in developing consultative and participative networks.	SC	Community Liaison,	Identify active and interested participants from a broad-cross section of community, including CALD to be involved with Council and community organisations on a wide range of projects and programs.	M
Develop program of CALD events to encourage inclusiveness and networking	I	Manager Community Services	Implement range of different types of activities for CALD residents	OG
Address potential language barriers by promoting information about facilities and services in Strathfield LGA to the CALD community	I	Community Services, Communications	Continually update range of translated information on services and facilities in hard copy directory, website and through telephone translation services	OG

ACTION PLAN: CALD - In Partnership or Lobbying Others				
Strategy	Social Justice Principle	Responsibility	Specific Task	Time Frame
Develop strategy to assist new CALD residents on adjusting to living in Australia and Strathfield LGA.	R	Community Services, other Councils, service providers, migrant resources, Department of Immigration, existing CALD groups	Develop strategy in partnership with other Councils and agencies to assist new CALD residents on living in Australia and Strathfield LGA, forming networks and assisting with communication issues	L
Support programs to increase proficiency rate of spoken English amongst the CALD community, particularly recently arrived migrants.	I	Community Services, Government agencies, Service Providers	Work with appropriate agencies to promote and increase accessible English language courses for CALD residents	HP
Develop new residents welcome kit	I	Communications, Community Liaison, Community Services and Government Agencies	Work with other Government agencies to develop a new residents welcome kit especially for recently arrived migrants	HP
Promote awareness on sexual abuse and domestic violence	R	Community Services, CALD groups, Police, Community Legal Service	Organise for community legal service to provide regular workshops, advice and translated material on sexual abuse and domestic violence	HP



ACTION PLAN: Women - Council Responsibility				
Strategy	Social Justice Principle	Responsibility	Specific Task	Time Frame
Develop range of activities to meet needs of women in Strathfield including educational, leisure and recreation.	SD	Events, Community Services	Council to develop event programs appropriate to needs of women of all age groups.	M
Council to provide access to facilities for activities and programs to meet needs of women.	I	Community Services, Strategic Planning	Council to facilitate access to community programs to meet needs of women.	M
Council to encourage participation by women in community leadership program.	SC	Community Services	Facilitate and work in partnership with providers of community leadership programs and actively encourage a wide range of women to participate	L
Review communications strategies to promote information about women's activities, programs and achievements in Strathfield	I	Community Services, Communications	Ensure regular inclusion of articles on women and activities through newspaper articles and features and notice boards	L

ACTION PLAN: Women- In Partnership or Lobbying Others				
Strategy	Social Justice Principle	Responsibility	Specific Task	Time Frame
Consult with women representative advisory groups and state/federal agencies to inform, assist and facilitate women's programs in Strathfield	SC	Community Services, Government Agencies	Establish contacts and co-ordinate programs in association with groups and agencies.	M
Facilitate external service and educational providers an expanded range of educational opportunities for women.	SC	Economic Development, TAFE Outreach, U3A, Community Colleges	Explore available and existing services and facilitate partnerships to deliver services	M
Monitor incidences of crime against women including domestic violence and sexual assault on women	R	Manager Community Services, CALD groups, Police & Community Legal Centres	Liaise and support relevant organisations in the development of a range of strategies and programs	L
Work with government, NGOs and other councils in providing information on services for women in Strathfield LGA and surrounding districts.	SD	Manager Community Services	To have available in hard copy and electronically translated in main languages and English a compilation of women's doctors, dentists, and other paraprofessionals in the area	L

ACTION PLAN: Parents with Young Children - Council Responsibility				
Strategy	Social Justice Principle	Responsibility	Specific Task	Time Frame
Assess ongoing and long-term needs and facilities for additional out of school hours services in Strathfield	SD	Community Services	Assess ongoing and long-term needs and facilities to support additional out of school hours services in Strathfield including co-locations with schools.	HP
Provide access to community grants to provide financial assistance for local playgroups	SD	Community Services	Expand range of services and funds eligible for community grants to include playgroups operating in Strathfield LGA.	HP
Raise awareness of children's services including playgroups operating in Strathfield LGA	SC	Community Services, Communications	Promote children's services including playgroups operating in Strathfield LGA. Ensure information is available in various community languages.	M
Provide wider range of play equipment for children in playareas and parks, especially in areas of high use or population/housing density.	SD	Parks	Review play facilities for children in parks and identify areas of high demand	M
Review library collection and development policy for provision of lending and reference resources for young children	SD	Library	Review and monitor library collection policy	M
Investigate establishing a lending toy and sporting equipment library	SD	Community Services, Parks & Recreation, Library	Review provision of children's lending resources	M
Provide children's services at Strathfield Libraries such as storytime and baby bounce	I	Manager Library	Monitor demand and provision of children's library services	OG

ACTION PLAN: Parents with Young Children - In Partnership or Lobbying Others				
Strategy	Social Justice Principle	Responsibility	Specific Task	Time Frame
Lobby for increase in provision of family outreach service	R	Community Services, relevant organisations	Where appropriate make representation to relevant government bodies and Minister	M
Continue to provide vacation programs in partnership with other agencies.	R	Community Services, local community groups	Work with wide range of providers to have broad activities offered to children	M
Make representations to Government improve preschool services and financial assistance	R	Community Services, Government Agencies	Make representations to Government to improve financial assistance for preschool services to parents and to lobby for government preschool services in Strathfield LGA	

ACTION PLAN: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders - Council Responsibility				
Strategy	Social Justice Principle	Responsibility	Specific Task	Time Frame
Facilitate an audit of Aboriginal services in the Inner West region to identify gaps in services and opportunities to increase targeted services	SD	Community Services	Participate in regional review of services	L
Develop and improve interpretative signage about Aboriginal culture and heritage along the Cooks River	I	Community Services, Parks & Cooks River Project	Work with Aboriginal community to develop appropriate signage	L
Encourage involvement of the Aboriginal community in consultations on Council strategies and plans.	SC	Community Services	Encourage participation by Aboriginal people in Council's community consultation plans	L
Commemorate significant Aboriginal achievements and events	I	Community Services, Communications	Review policies relating to events of Aboriginal significance	OG

ACTION PLAN: Young People - Council Responsibility				
Strategy	Social Justice Principle	Responsibility	Specific Task	Time Frame
Review library collection and development policies to ensure the collection meet the needs of young people	SD	Library	Review and monitor library development and collection policy	OG
Work in partnership with Police to reduce graffiti, drug abuse and anti-social through visits to schools and other youth organisations.	SD	Community Services, Police, other agencies	Facilitate programs with other Councils, agencies and police.	HP M
Promote positive images of young people and their contributions to the local area	I	Community Services, Communications	Include features on youth in Strathfield in Council's communications and continue to support Youth Achievement Awards	HP M
Work in partnerships to offer young people referrals and relevant information.	I	Community Services	Council support referral and information service for young people	HP M
Review range of vacation, educational and recreational activities available in Strathfield LGA	I	Community Services	Review programs available.	OG HP

ACTION PLAN: Young People - In Partnership or Lobbying Others				
Strategy	Social Justice Principle	Responsibility	Specific Task	Time Frame
Work with agencies to explore options for access to support programs for young people.	SD	Community Services, key youth agencies	Explore options for introduction of support programs	M-L
Regularly review relevant statistical data on young people in Strathfield LGA and surrounding areas.	SD	Community Services, Youth Interagency	Consider relevant statistical data relevant to youth and youth services and monitor trends in services for young people.	M-L
Continue to support homework support services in Library	SC	Library	Review and monitor homework support services	M-L
Promote programs on youth health and drug/alcohol issues	SC	Community Services, Community Health Personnel	Continue working with key health personnel to expand range of health programs for youth	OG
Explore opportunities to encourage participation in local community radio.	SD	Community Radio, Community Services	Liaise with local community radio stations to support recording and community radio activities for young people	M-L
Promote youth leadership programs and forums	SC	Youth services personnel, Community Services	In partnership with personnel from relevant services investigate the possibility of offering a range of programs such as bike camps, outward-bound camps and other leadership programs.	L
Promote intergenerational activities and programs.	SC	Youth services personnel, Community Services, Library	Identify activities and programs and facilitate community involvement in intergenerational activities	M-L

ACTION PLAN: Families in Units – Council responsibility				
Strategy	Social Justice Principle	Responsibility	Specific Task	Time Frame
Work with unit dwellers in the development, establishment and management of community gardens	SD	Community Services, Parks and Recreation, Strategic Planning	Include people living in units as a stakeholder in developing plans, establishing and management community gardens.	M-L
Ensure that new community services or facilities are accessible by public transport and pedestrian access	SD	Community Services, Engineering Services and Works, Development Assessment, Strategic Planning	Include consideration of public and pedestrian transport access in assessment of new facilities and services.	M-L
Develop community facilities in close vicinity to population and dwelling development to facilitate meetings, playgroups, toy library, gym activities, social gatherings and children's parties etc	SC	Community Services, Parks and Recreation, Strategic Planning	Ensure that new community facilities are easily accessible to increasing populations especially those living in medium-to-high density development.	M-L
Review building and planning codes for future unit development to provide for green space and safe areas for children's play and lockable storage areas for bikes, prams and other equipment	SC	Strategic Planning	Review building and planning codes to include facilities for children and their families within future medium to high density development.	OG



ACTION PLAN: Families in Units - In Partnership or Lobbying Others				
Strategy	Social Justice Principle	Responsibility	Specific Task	Time Frame
Request Centre Management Strathfield Plaza provides a children's play centre within the shopping complex.	SD	Community Services, Strathfield Plaza Centre Management	Make representations to Strathfield Plaza management to provide a children's play area in the shopping centre.	M-L
Lobby for the provision of more effective bus transport links to community facilities, transport and shopping areas in Strathfield LGA	SD	Community Services, Government agencies	Make representations to Government agencies for more effective bus transport links across Strathfield LGA to community facilities, transport and shopping areas.	M-L
Support the establishment of legal and tenancy advisory services for Strathfield LGA with focus on providing translation of community languages	SC	Community Services, Legal and Tenancy Advisory Services	Liaise with legal and tenancy advisory services to establish an outreach in Strathfield LGA to assist people living in units with legal or tenancy advice.	M-L

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