RECREATION STRATEGY

Prepared for Baulkham Hills Shire Council

Volume 1 : Executive Summary
(Adopted by Council 28 August 2007)
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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Study Background

The Baulkham Hills Shire Council Website (www.baulkhamhills.nsw.gov.au) provides access to a comprehensive profile of the Shire, an extract from this is included below as an introduction to the Shire.

Baulkham Hills Shire is located in Sydney’s north-western suburbs – about 30 kilometres from the Sydney GPO. The Shire is bounded by Hawkesbury City in the north, Hornsby Shire in the east, Parramatta City in the south and Blacktown City in the west.

Baulkham Hills Shire includes the suburbs and localities of Annangrove, Baulkham Hills (part), Bella Vista, Box Hill, Carlingford (part), Castle Hill (part), Cattai (part), Dural (part), Glenhaven (part), Glenorie (part), Kellyville-Beaumont Hills, Kenthurst, Leets Vale (part), Lower Portland (part), Maraylya (part), Maroota (part), Middle Dural (part), Nelson, North Parramatta (part), North Rocks, Northmead (part), Oatlands (part), Rouse Hill (part), Sackville North, South Maroota, West Pennant Hills (part), Winston Hills (part) and Wisemans Ferry (part).

Baulkham Hills Shire is a predominantly rural and residential area, with some commercial and industrial land use. The Shire is one of the fastest growing Local Government areas in Sydney. The Shire encompasses a total land area of about 380 square kilometres. Most of the land in the northern section is rural, the southern section is residential and there are expanding residential areas in the central region. Rural land is used mainly for farming and other agricultural industries, including nurseries.

The original inhabitants of the Baulkham Hills area were the Dharug Aboriginal people. European settlement of the area dates from 1794 when the first land grant was made. Land was used mainly for sheep grazing, wheat farming and timber-getting. Settlement began in the southern section, with growth in the northern section from the 1830s. Development was minimal until the 1880s, aided by tourism, the construction of country retreats and the establishment of orchards. Growth continued in the early 1900s, aided by improvements in access and transport, reaching a population of about 3,500 in 1911. In the 1920s poultry and egg production replaced citrus and stone fruits as the main industry. The most significant development occurred in the post-war years, particularly from the 1960s. The population has increased steadily, from about 16,500 in 1956 to 52,000 in 1970 and 90,000 in 1980. Population growth has continued in the 1990s, increasing from about 114,000 in 1991 to 138,000 in 2001. Most of this growth was in the central region, in the suburbs of Bella Vista, Kellyville-Beaumont Hills, Rouse Hill and West Pennant Hills. Population growth is expected to continue, particularly in Kellyville and Rouse Hill.

Major features of the Shire include the Hawkesbury River, Cattai National Park, Cumberland State Forest, Maroota Nature Reserve, Bidjigal Reserve, Castle Towers Shopping Centre, TAFE NSW - Western Sydney Institute (Baulkham Hills College) and Norwest Business Park. The Shire is served by the Hills (M2) Motorway and the Carlingford railway line.
By 2005 the estimated population of the Shire was 161,068 people, which is expected to grow to between 213,000 and 235,000 people by 2024, an increase of between 52,000 to 74,000 people. The prolonged period of high population growth and future proposed residential expansion across the Shire has been identified as a key driver in recognising the need to develop a Recreation Strategy to guide future Council management and resource allocation.

The Baulkham Hills Shire Council (BHSC) takes a lead role in the planning and provision of open space, recreation facilities and programs within the Baulkham Hills Shire (BHS). In order to effectively support this leadership role, Council requires an up-to-date understanding of community recreation issues, an analysis of current recreation opportunities available in the Shire and identification of strategies to address potential service, facility or operational gaps in meeting current and future community needs.

As a result, Council commissioned the BHSC Recreation Strategy in August 2006 and appointed Stratcorp Consulting, a sports and recreation planning company, to undertake the study.

1.2. Study Scope

The scope of the study includes assessment of the community’s recreation needs, including both active (organised) sports participation and passive (informal/not organised) participation. The study will be cognisant of recreation opportunities provided by the private sector and/or other agencies within Baulkham Hills Shire, however the project has a primary focus on Council resources.

1.3. The Planning Process

The planning process used to undertake this project has included the following key tasks or phases:

- Analysis of current and likely future demographic profile of BHS and identification of possible recreation implications.
- Review of previous (Council) reports and relevant background information.
- Review of National, State, and local recreation participation trends.
- High level review of key open space, recreation facilities and services available across the Shire.
- Community and stakeholder consultation.
- Gap analysis and draft strategy development.
- Client review and finalisation of the draft strategy.
- Public exhibition of the draft strategy and assessment of submissions (to be completed).
- Council adoption of final report (to be completed).
1.4. **Report Structure**

The outcomes of the *Recreation Strategy* project have been presented in the following three volume report structure:

- **Volume 1: Executive Summary (this document).**
  
  Description: The Executive Summary provides a high level overview of the planning process and key findings, and establishes the strategic framework to guide Council’s current and future involvement in recreation provision.

- **Volume 2: Research and Reference Material.**
  
  Description: Volume 2 provides a detailed write up of the background research, reference material and consultation results that have informed development of the *Recreation Strategy*.

- **Volume 3: Implementation Plan.**
  
  Description: Volume 3 outlines a range of specific recommendations to address the identified community needs, consistent with the proposed strategic Vision and Key Objectives outlined in the *Recreation Strategy*. The *Implementation Plan* should be used to guide specific recreation initiatives and officer work plans. Recommendations have been grouped under seven Key Areas, these are:
  
  i. Needs of the Community,
  
  ii. Facility Management,
  
  iii. Promotion,
  
  iv. Health and Well Being,
  
  v. Strategic Advice,
  
  vi. Funding, and
  
  vii. Recreation and Community Organisation Support and Development.
  
  It is recommended that the *Implementation Plan* be reviewed annually by Council officers to monitor progress and ensure ongoing consistency with the strategic objectives and vision outlined in this report and consistency with Council’s broader priorities and financial capabilities.

  The overarching *Recreation Strategy* should be reviewed after five years to update community needs, particularly in light of anticipated population changes within the Shire.

1.5. **Acknowledgements**

Stratcorp Consulting would like to acknowledge the contribution of the BHSC staff for their input into the *Recreation Strategy*, and to those residents, sporting and recreation club representatives, community groups and other stakeholder representatives who responded to the various opportunities for input, and who provided advice and information where required.
2. **RECREATION STRATEGY**

From the issues raised and research conducted, the *Recreation Strategy* has been formulated utilising the following planning elements:

- Proposed Vision (or “Policy Statement”),
- Core Values,
- Principles, and
- Key Objectives.

These elements provide the overarching strategic framework for Council to guide future initiatives and involvement in recreation provision in the Shire.

The *Recreation Strategy* is supported by a detailed *Implementation Plan (Volume 3)* which identifies specific recommendations to address community needs and to achieve the vision and objectives outlined below. The *Implementation Plan* should be used to guide priorities and work programs. The *Implementation Plan* should be reviewed annually to ensure consistency with Council’s ongoing objectives, strategic directions and resource capabilities.

2.1. **Proposed Vision (Policy Statement)**

The proposed *Vision* for the planning, management and delivery of recreation services in the Baulkham Hills Shire (BHS) is ……

“A healthy, vibrant and active community participating in a range of recreational opportunities”.

2.2. **Core Values**

The following *Core Values* for the *Recreation Strategy* will be fundamental to the delivery of recreation services in BHS. The Core Values are:

- **Community**  
  We are committed to ensuring the community participates in and values recreation activity.

- **Partnership**  
  We will work in partnership with the community to make decisions and deliver recreational services.

- **Planning**  
  Decisions will be supported and justified by sound planning based on clearly identified needs.

- **Integrity**  
  We will ensure that the highest ethical standards in decision-making and service delivery are maintained.

- **Management**  
  We will be as open as possible about all of the decisions and actions we take.

- **Quality Customer Service**  
  We will strive to continually improve our service standards.
Sustainability  We will treat economic, environmental and social issues together from the outset in all our decisions.

Leadership  We will promote and support these Values through leadership, and by example.

2.3. Principles

The following Principles underpin the Recreation Strategy:

1. Council will aim to provide a diverse range of accessible open space settings and recreation facilities and services across the Shire.

2. Council will implement a planned approach to the delivery of recreation services.

3. Council acknowledges that it has a responsibility for the provision of infrastructure at public sporting and recreation facilities that is of an appropriate standard to facilitate delivery of organised sports to service the needs of BHS residents (i.e. playing surfaces, change facilities, safe access and spectator infrastructure). Where possible provision of such facilities and infrastructure will also be designed to support broad community (informal) use and contribute to the overall amenity of the open space setting.

4. Council will aim to maintain playing surfaces to a level commensurate with the level of competition that the user group(s) participates in, and the level of use that the ground receives.

5. Where practicable, all new sporting and recreation facilities will provide access for people with a disability, and it shall be the aim of Council and user groups to have all existing facilities made accessible.

6. Council will support the provision of recreation facilities and services that cater for both regional (or Shire-wide) needs and local needs.

7. Council will provide recreation facilities and services, and allocate resources equitably, across a range of formal and informal sport and recreation participation opportunities.

8. In partnership with appropriate other agencies (e.g. health, community and sports sectors), Council will endeavour to encourage the community to participate in recreational activities for the health, well-being and social benefits they provide.

9. Open space settings, and recreation facilities and services, will provide safe and supportive environments for participants.

10. Council will provide recreation facilities which maximise shared usage and flexibility to meet changing community needs and aspirations.

11. A collaborative and partnership approach with community groups, government agencies, and the private sector will facilitate the provision of recreation facilities and services in the Shire.
2.4. **Key Objectives**

The Key Objectives of the *Recreation Strategy* that will support the delivery of the proposed Vision for recreation services in the BHS are:

A. Provide a range of open space settings, recreation facilities and participation opportunities.

B. Provide appropriate management and conservation of Council controlled nature based recreational opportunities and natural environments.

C. Provide well-used and relevant open space areas and recreation facilities.

D. Encourage and support club development and community involvement in recreational activities.

E. Encourage and support sustainable facility management.

F. Facilitate diverse recreation program development (either by Council or external providers).

G. Provide effective management, support and resources within Council for community recreation initiatives.

H. Facilitate and promote community health and well-being through active involvement in sport, recreation and leisure.

2.5. **Implementation Plan**

The *Implementation Plan* outlines a range of specific recommendations to address the identified community needs, consistent with the strategic vision and objectives outlined above. The *Implementation Plan* should be used to guide specific recreation initiatives and officer work plans.

Recommendations have been presented under the following seven Key Areas:

1. **Needs of the Community**
   Identify and respond to the sport and recreation needs of the community.

2. **Facility Management**
   Ensure that Council’s sport and recreation facilities are well maintained and managed to a high standard.

3. **Promotion**
   Identify opportunities to promote participation in sport and recreation activities. Encourage participation by local residents in a diverse range of sport and recreational activities.

4. **Health and Well Being**
   Recognise the health and well being benefits of an active community.
5. **Strategic Advice**  
Provide strategic advice in relation to issues affecting the provision of sport and recreation opportunities.

6. **Funding**  
Advocate and source funds for improved sport and recreation services, programs and facilities.

7. **Recreation and Community Organisation Support and Development**  
Build the capacity of sport and recreation clubs as well as other community organisations in the BHS with respect to administration, management, and fundraising functions.

It is recommended that the *Implementation Plan* be reviewed annually by Council officers to monitor progress and ensure ongoing consistency with the strategic objectives and vision outlined in this report and consistency with Council’s broader priorities and financial capabilities.

The overarching *Recreation Strategy* should be reviewed after five years to update community needs, particularly in light of anticipated population changes within the Shire.
3. **EXISTING SITUATION**

This section provides an overview of selected background material that helps inform the Recreation Strategy. More detailed information on each topic is included in Volume 2 - Background Research and Reference Material. Key information summarised in this section includes:

- Possible implications for recreation provision based on the demographic characteristics of Baulkham Hills Shire (BHS),
- Sports participation trends,
- Existing open space and sport and recreation facilities, and
- A high level assessment of the adequacy of existing facilities and services in meeting community needs.

### 3.1.1. Demographic Implications

A summary of possible implications for recreation program, service and facility provision that can be drawn from an analysis of the demographic characteristics of the Shire include:

- Strong and sustained population growth will drive demand for access to additional parks, reserves, recreation facilities and services.
- The majority of the population are within their most active years in terms of their potential use of sport, leisure and recreation facilities or services (average age of residents in BHS is 35 years).
- The high proportion of 0-11 year olds, and forecast continued growth in this age group, is expected to drive demand for access to age appropriate recreation facilities and services, for example playgrounds and junior sports development and participation opportunities.
- The proportion of young people (12-24 years) remains high, approximately one fifth of the population. This age cohort tends to have one of the highest rates of participation in organised sports and activities. Demand for formal sporting opportunities will therefore remain high despite a slight decline in the overall proportion of the population in this age group from 1996 to 2001.
- Demand for participation in formal sports and activities is expected to decline with age, consistent with industry trends and the age profile of the community.
- The 35-49 year age group has a lower participation rate in formal organised sport compared to younger age groups, therefore facilities and services will need to provide a range of flexible, casual participation opportunities. There is likely to be high demand for walking paths and trails from this age group.
- Facilities and services will need to be capable of adapting to the needs of an aging population, for example, demand for participation in formal organised sports and vigorous physical activities is expected to decline.
• Facilities and services will need to be responsive to the needs of older adults (65+ years), including:
  o Demand for unstructured (informal) leisure facilities, activities and open space (parks) is likely to increase, including activities such as walking, golf and low impact physical activity related social activities.
  o Facilities will need to be accessible for older adults (mobility and transport access).
  o Demand for low impact leisure activities and recreation programs are likely to increase, including walking trails and non-sporting recreation pursuits.
  o Perceptions of public safety can also be a major concern for older adults, therefore the need for safe/accessible (sealed and well lit) paths and facilities will be important.

• Recreation facilities and services will need to be culturally relevant and sensitive, including greater consideration of Asian influences.

• Ensure recreation facility and service information is accessible and culturally appropriate.

• Community access to recreation facilities and services is not likely to be heavily influenced by socio-economic considerations in the Shire, such as low income, low educational attainment, high unemployment or jobs in relatively unskilled occupations. Therefore, the capacity of the community to access recreation opportunities on a ‘user pays’ basis is likely to be relatively high and there is likely to be relatively high demand for participation in informal, passive recreation opportunities (people from low socio-economic backgrounds tend to have a higher rate of participation in formal, organised team sports than those from higher socio economic backgrounds).

• The central and western areas of the Shire will continue to experience population growth, particularly Kellyville, Baulkham Hills, Castle Hill, Rouse Hill and Annangrove. Demand for services and facilities are likely to be greatest in these areas.

• Recreation clubs and groups contribute to the social fabric of the community, particularly rural areas. Appropriate facilities and services may need to be maintained even in declining residential areas.

3.1.2. Recreation and Sport Participation Trends

Key recreation and sports participation trends identified during the project are summarised below. Factors regarded as the catalysts for change in recreation participation include the following:

• Change in the size and structure of a population.
• Increased recognition of the strong links between involvement in recreational activities and good health, and the development of appropriate activities and services which cater for this.
• Demand by people for a greater diversity of recreational activities.
• Increased expectation of people/groups for higher standards in facility provision, and of quality programming, servicing and management.
• Greater reliance on locally accessed and lower cost opportunities by those without the resources to travel or pay for more expensive pursuits.

• Greater emphasis on non-competitive, unstructured recreation opportunities at the expense of participation and involvement in organised sport.

• Improved promotion, provision, and management of introductory sports programs by most State Sporting Associations, which are designed for children to “come ’n try”.

• More flexible opening hours of facilities, including weekday, evening and weekend time-slots.

• An increasing demand for indoor facilities to facilitate this programming and to provide protection from poor weather and exposure to the sun.

The ABS released the results of a national survey undertaken in 2003 titled “Children’s Participation in Cultural and Leisure Activities” for children aged 5-14 years. Key results from the survey are highlighted below.

• Of children aged 5-14 years, 62% participated in sport outside of school hours, which had been organised by a school, club or association (up from 59% in 2000).

• Across all age groups, boys had a higher participation rate (68.6%) in organised sport than girls (54.2%). Both rates of participation in 2003 were up from 2000 levels (boys at 66.1% and girls at 52.3%).

• The most popular sport for all children was swimming, with a participation rate of 16.6%, followed by soccer (13.4%). The 2003 rates of participation were up for both sports from year 2000 levels (14.4% and 11.4%, respectively).

• Just as netball is still the undisputed favourite sport played by girls, the popularity of soccer over Australian football and cricket is widening for boys.

Comparative Analysis of Participation Rates in Popular Activities

The table on the following page compares the 2005 participation rates for the NSW top 20 most popular activities with the participation rates for the same activities in BHS in 2006 and in 1995. The 2006 participation rates were collected from the household telephone survey conducted as part of the consultation process for this project, whilst the 1995 participation rates were collected from a similar survey conducted during the research for Council’s Open Space and Recreation Needs Survey (1995) conducted by Manidis Roberts Consultants. Notwithstanding the differences in survey techniques and specific questions between the two surveys, the comparison nevertheless provides a useful snap-shot in tracking changes in resident’s preferences for participation in various recreation activities.

The table highlights that participation rates in BHS (2006) for walking, cycling, running, soccer, netball and cricket are higher than the NSW averages. Conversely, participation in BHS for the main activities of aerobics/fitness, swimming, tennis, golf, yoga, surf sports and basketball are below the corresponding NSW rates.

1 The 2005 participation rates are the most up-to-date data available from the Australian Sport Commission’s annual Exercise, Recreation and Sport Survey (ERASS).
Aside from the actual rates of participation, there is reasonable similarity between the top 10 most popular activities in NSW and those for BHS (2006). The main exceptions are netball and cricket which are included in the BHS top 10 activities, but which fall just outside the NSW top 10 activities.

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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Walking</td>
<td>36.6%</td>
<td>41.7%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>32.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Aerobics/Fitness</td>
<td>18.5%</td>
<td>12.9%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Swimming</td>
<td>16.4%</td>
<td>12.3%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>20.4%</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Tennis</td>
<td>9.1%</td>
<td>6.6%</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>15.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Cycling</td>
<td>8.9%</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Golf</td>
<td>7.6%</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Running</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Walking (bush)</td>
<td>7.0%</td>
<td>NA^2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>17.7%</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Soccer (outdoor)</td>
<td>5.7%</td>
<td>6.9%</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Yoga</td>
<td>3.9%</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
<td>Eq 12</td>
<td>NA^3</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Surf Sports</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
<td>Eq 27</td>
<td>NA^4</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>Netball</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
<td>5.7%</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4.9%</td>
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<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Touch Football</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
<td>Eq 15</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Basketball</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
<td>Eq 15</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Dancing</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
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<td>16</td>
<td>Lawn Bowls</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
<td>Eq 15</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
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<td>17</td>
<td>Cricket (outdoor)</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
<td>3.1%</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
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<td>18</td>
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<td>19</td>
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<td>20</td>
<td>Fishing</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
<td>Eq 31</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comparison of Activity Participation Between NSW (2005) and BHS (1995 & 2006)

Please note that the following three activities were included in the 1995 top 10 activities, but were not identified in the 2006 top 20 activities: bushwalking (3rd in 1995), picnic/BBQs (5th) and squash (9th).

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2 Unfortunately the Household Telephone Survey did not differentiate between general walking and bushwalking, however, this may have contributed to the high percentage participation in walking in BHS when compared to the NSW and National averages.
3 The 1995 Survey did not include Yoga as optional response.
4 The 1995 Survey did not include Surf Sports as optional response.
In relation to the comparison of the top 20 most popular activities in BHS between 1995 and 2006, some interesting shifts in preferences have occurred. However, the most popular activities have generally remained similar over the last ten years, with the exception of the three activities of bushwalking, picnics/BBQ’s and squash which did appear in the 2006 survey. (The different techniques/formats adopted for each survey are the likely explanations for the anomaly between the two survey results in relation to the first two activities). Conversely, the only two activities that appear in the 2006 survey that were not present in 1995 survey were running/jogging and cricket.

Key information that can be drawn from the comparison between the 1995 and 2006 surveys include:

- Walking remained the number one choice for physical activity for BHS residents, although participation is potentially less in 2006 (41.7%) compared to 1995 (Walking 32.8% + Bushwalking 17.7% = 50.5%).

- Participation has declined in the following activities since 1995:
  - Tennis (down by 8.8%),
  - Swimming (down by 8.1%),
  - Golf (down by 7.0%), and
  - Squash (down by 5.0%).

- Participation has increased in the following activities since 1995:
  - Running (up by 6.2%),
  - Aerobics/Gym/Fitness (up by 2.3%),
  - Cycling (up by 1.6%), and
  - Soccer (up by 1.5%).

Interestingly, the total rate of participation by residents in the 1995 survey was 76%, which is almost identical to the rate identified in the 2006 survey (75%).

**Comparison of LGA Participation Rates**

Stratcorp Consulting is able to draw on similar research recently conducted with other municipalities across the Sydney metropolitan area to provide a comparison of the total participation rate in BHS to other areas. This provides a useful baseline for future comparisons and monitoring improvements.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NSW Local Government Area</th>
<th>Year of Survey</th>
<th>Total Participation Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Baulkham Hills Shire</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Randwick City</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strathfield City</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woollahra City</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parramatta City</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leichhardt LGA</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comparison of Total Participation Rates Between LGA’s
Household Telephone Survey Organised Participation

The Household Telephone Survey asked respondents if their participation in sport or physical activities were generally organised by sports clubs, groups or associations. The results indicated that there is a preference by BHS residents to participate in activities that are not organised by a club or group (59%) compared to 39% who indicated that their physical activity participation is ‘organised’ or ‘mostly organised’ by clubs/groups.

Although the survey questions differ slightly between the ERASS\(^5\) and the Household Telephone Survey for this particular question, therefore making direct comparisons difficult, the results suggest that the average participation rate in organised activities in BHS (39%) is slightly lower than the state average of 41.7%. Similarly the overall participation rate in sport, recreation or fitness activities in BHS (75%) is lower than the State average of 83.5%.

Organised Sport Participation in Baulkham Hills Shire - Based on the information gathered from the Club Survey

The table in Volume 2, Appendix 2 shows membership trends for the Shire-based sports clubs and associations that responded to the written survey. The survey was distributed to 61 clubs and associations, however only 17 completed surveys were returned, representing a modest response rate of approximately 28%. The information below specifically relates to organised participation trends based on the club membership data provided in the returned surveys. The membership numbers reflect “active” members only, not “social/associate” members.

Although only reflective of the 17 clubs and associations who returned the survey, Information that can be drawn from the data gathered includes

- An estimated 6,268 people were active members of the 17 clubs in 2006, this represents an average of 368 members per club. If this figure is applied to all 61 clubs/association in the Shire, this would represent approximately 22,448 active sports members.

- The overall increase in active membership from 2004 to 2006 was 1,172 people (or approximately 23%).

- Based on the completed surveys, the most popular activities by membership in 2006 were:
  - Soccer (3,818).
  - Cricket (1,000).
  - Netball (607).
  - Baseball (436).
  - Athletics (160).
  - Dog Training (132).
  - Rugby League (80).
  - Radio Controlled Car Club (35).

\(^5\) ABS annual Exercise Recreation and Sport Survey
In relation to individual clubs with more than 50 members, the greatest variance in membership (> 20%) in the past 3 years was recorded for:

- North Rocks Soccer Club (+49%).
- Paws 4 Fun Dog Training Club (+43%).
- Hills Barbarians Cricket Club (+23%).
- Baulkham Hills Soccer Club (+20%).
- Maroota Cricket Club (-36%).

Between 2004 and 2006 all soccer clubs experienced membership growth, except the Carlingford Redbacks who lost three members in total. Conversely, each of the two netball clubs that returned the survey experienced a decline in membership.

Based on the data provided, males made up approximately 78% of the total club membership, whilst females comprised approximately 22% of the membership. This difference in participation is significantly greater than the average “organised” physical activity participation rates for all NSW males (43.7%) and females (39.7%).

Juniors (U/18 years) made up approximately 64% of the total club membership, whilst adults (over 18 years) comprised approximately 36% of the membership.

### 3.1.3. Existing Open Space Provision

The Recreation Strategy is intended to be strategic level document providing long-term policy guidance and direction for Council. As such, a comprehensive open space audit was not undertaken as part of this study. However, a review of Council’s existing planning documents, including the 1995 Open Space Strategy, 2004 Open Space Strategy, Baulkham Hills Youth Recreation Facilities and Service Strategy (2000) and existing Council databases has been used to help inform the following analysis of overall open space provision across the Shire.

Baulkham Hills Shire has approximately 416 open space reserves with a total combined area of around 1500 hectares. This total comprises:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Area (hectares)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bushland</td>
<td>333 (22%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crown Land</td>
<td>754 (50%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community use</td>
<td>27 (2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Significant Areas</td>
<td>35 (2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parks</td>
<td>177 (12%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sportsgrounds</td>
<td>174 (12%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

*Source: Participation in Exercise Recreation and Sport Survey (ERASS), Australian Sports Commission, 2005.*
An analysis of the distribution of open space for each suburb was undertaken (refer to Volume 2). Key points that can be drawn from the analysis include:

- There is not an even distribution of open space across the Shire, however, this is also reflective of the occurrence of geographic features (i.e. bush reserves) across the municipality and variances in population distribution. Notwithstanding this, there is not an even distribution of parks and sportsgrounds across the populated areas of the Shire.

- There may be a lack of variety in open space provision in specific suburbs, for example, whilst there are 85 reserves in Castle Hill, 61% are Bushland, 8% Park and 23% Sportsgrounds. Conversely, Northmead contains 6 reserves in total, however, 73% are Sportsgrounds and 27% Parks, with no Bushland reserves.

- Castle Hill (25%), Kellyville (12%), Baulkham Hills (11%) and Wisemans Ferry (9%) have the highest levels of open space provision in the Shire. Whereas Box Hill, Cattai, Dural, Maraylya, Maroota, North Maroota, North Parramatta, Northmead, Oatlands and Sackville have the lowest level of open space provision.

- Lower Portland (48.48 hectares) and Wisemans Ferry (35.46 hectares) have the largest average reserve size, however both these suburbs are dominated by Bushland with little other open space provision.

- Other areas, specifically Box Hill, Dural, North Parramatta and Sackville North, have a low number of reserves and a small average size (less than 1 hectare each). (NB: This may be consistent with the limited population in a number of these areas).

Open space planning in Baulkham Hills Shire, particularly in new release areas such as Kellyville, Rouse Hill and Balmoral Road Release Area is now being based on a needs analysis as opposed to the historical standard of 2.83 hectares per 1,000 people. This is in recognition of the fact that pure application of ratios can be deficient in that standards do not necessarily reflect the different needs of different communities, or the diversity or quality and accessibility of open space. It does, however, provide one indicator towards the adequacy of open space, albeit in a simplistic form, and is also one means by which a comparative analysis can be made between different areas.

Based on the estimated resident population (2006) of 167,238 people the current provision of open space translates to approximately 8.82 hectares per 1,000 people in BHS. At first glance this is significantly higher than the historical standard for NSW (2.83 ha), however, BHS is blessed with access to significant Bushland reserves, approximately 5.43 hectares of Bushland per 1,000 residents, which therefore boosts the overall provision ratio. The NSW historic standard of 2.83 hectares per 1,000 people includes areas for active recreation (i.e. Sportsgrounds) and passive use (i.e. Parks). Therefore, excluding Bushland reserves - however not discounting their recreational value/importance to the community - the BHS ratio drops to approximately 3.39 hectares per 1,000 people, which is still higher than the NSW historic benchmark, however is lower than ratios historically applied in the ACT and Victoria.
Council’s 2004 Open Space Strategy recognises the need to strategically plan for future open space needs and provides Council with a sound basis for the future management and acquisition of open space in the Shire. The Strategy, which is supported by specific Action Plans, identifies five key objectives for the future management of open space, which remain relevant today, these are:

- Having the right mix and planning for future generations,
- Making the most of open space and filling the gaps,
- Linking the network and better access for all,
- Making places for nature and creating a sense of place, and
- Excellent and innovative financial and whole of asset management.

Other issues relating to the provision and quality of open space observed from the site visits and desk top analysis include:

- Council will need to continually identify opportunities for acquiring suitable new open space areas and/or negotiate shared access rights with schools and/or other agencies for community benefit, particularly in Northmead, Oatlands and North Parramatta.
- Open space will become the “new backyard” for many people as medium to high density residential development continues across the Shire.
- Open space distribution is variable across the Shire, with large discrepancies exacerbated by the location of natural Bushland areas. In some instances variances may also relate to differences in population distribution across the Shire, that is, low-density rural areas require a lower rate of open space provision than high-density urban areas.
- The Bushland reserves are highly valued by the community, many of which could be improved to better address contemporary community recreation needs through walking trails, picnic areas and off-road bicycle trails. Improved promotion, signage and information about existing opportunities should also be considered.
- The Shire has a high number of “pocket parks” and small reserves, which whilst being valued by the community, provide limited options in their flexibility of use.
- The provision and distribution of outdoor recreational areas/facilities for informal use by young people (14 – 24 years) is relatively poor, and appears largely confined to 5 skate park/facility locations (three of which are in Baulkham Hills). There appears to be limited provision of informal basketball courts (half and full courts) or other similar facilities.
- Physical barriers, such as main roads, create limitations for some residents to access parks. The extent of limitation is determined by the nature of the facility i.e. People are willing to drive or cross major roads to access particular facilities. It is important that Council work in partnership with the State Government, land developers, schools, and other open space managers to provide better access opportunities to and within open space.
• Competition is high for access to sporting facilities, and will continue to increase as the population grows.

The scope of the study did not allow a comprehensive analysis of the provision and distribution of the 1177 existing playground locations located throughout the Shire, however, a high level review based on a sample of visited sites, background research and consultation outcomes indicated that:

• There appears to be a relatively even distribution of playgrounds throughout the Shire.

• There is little diversity in the range of play equipment, that is, most offer similar experiences and cater for a limited age group, such as pre-primary (2 – 4 years) and young primary aged children (4 - 7 years).

• Play opportunities are generally not well provided for older primary (7 – 12 years) and teenagers.

• Council’s 2004 Open Space Strategy establishes a hierarchy for playground provision that (when implemented) will provide for the local, district and regional needs of the community. It is understood that Council has already forecast a capital commitment to establishing 3 ‘central’ playgrounds over the next four years.

• The general quality and maintenance of playgrounds appears satisfactory.

• A local government area of the size of the BHS warrants consideration for the provision of at least one major “all abilities” playground. These playgrounds are of a large-scale and offer a range of play spaces and experiences for children of all ages and abilities, and are specifically designed to cater for people with poor mobility, such as people with a disability (wheelchair bound) and older adults who might have mobility constraints but wish to supervise children on playgrounds.

3.1.4. Existing Provision of Sport and Recreation Facilities

The Baulkham Hills Shire offers an extensive range of recreation facilities for residents and visitors, including active sports reserves that cater for a variety of formal sports, indoor recreation centres, community facilities and private health and fitness venues. These are supported by over 60 community sporting clubs and groups which utilise grounds and facilities directly managed by Council, other not-for-profit organisations, or the private sector.

This section provides an overview of the key sport and recreation facilities available within the Shire.

7 Excludes playgrounds located on non-Council areas, such as schools, which might also be available for general community use.
Council Facilities

Council provides a range of sport and recreation facilities across the Shire, a summary of the main facilities is outlined below.

- Council directly provides 42 active sports reserves across the Shire. Collectively these cater for a range of sports and activities as summarised below:
  
  - 3 Athletics (grass tracks)  
    (Only 2 are dedicated for athletics)  
  - 2 Australian Rules ovals  
    (including 1 under construction)  
  - 20 Baseball/Softball diamonds in 7 locations  
  - 46 Cricket ovals  
    (including 4 turf, plus 40 practice nets)  
  - 1 Hockey field  
  - 58 Netball courts  
  - 47 Soccer fields  
  - 7 Rugby League fields  
  - 5 Rugby Union fields  
  - 44 Tennis courts  
  - 10 Touch fields  
  - 5 Skate parks

It should be noted that many of these reserves are multi-purpose, therefore the provision outlined above does not imply separate facilities or venues for each particular code or activity. The quantity refers to the number of available playing fields or courts for each particular activity. These facilities are supported by 40 amenity/change room facilities of varying standard across the Shire.

In addition to active sportgrounds, Council provides access to five separate multi-purpose indoor recreation facilities. Collectively, these cater for a range of sporting activities including basketball, netball, badminton, table tennis and volleyball as well as heath, fitness and wellness programs (including gymnasium).

The facilities are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Facility/Reserve Name</th>
<th>Suburb</th>
<th>No. of Courts</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hills Sports Stadium, Fred Caterson Reserve</td>
<td>Castle Hill</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Managed by the NSW Basketball Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bernie Mullane Sports Complex</td>
<td>Kellyville</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Managed by the YMCA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kellyville Park</td>
<td>Kellyville</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Managed by Vis-Tech Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dural Recreation Centre</td>
<td>Dural</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Ellerman Park</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Council currently provides one public aquatic facility, the Baulkham Hills Swimming Centre, comprising a 50m outdoor heated pool, ‘indoor’ learners pool and gymnasium. The learners pool used to be an outdoor facility and has been converted to an indoor pool through construction of a basic portal frame structure over the existing pool. The gymnasium is housed in temporary (relocatable) buildings. Whilst the complex is relatively popular, overall, the facilities are very basic, dated and in need of significant upgrade and capital investment.

Council commissioned a ‘Feasibility Study’ in 1998 to investigate the possible development of a multi-purpose swimming and fitness centre, the outcomes of this study recommended redevelopment of the existing facilities plus the longer-term development of a new modern indoor aquatic facility as part of a broader multi-purpose community leisure precinct at the Mungerie Park Sub-regional Centre.

Council has recently (January 2007) released a tender inviting submissions for the “Provision of financial and commercial advice, and project management services relating to the procurement of new aquatic facilities for the BHS.” The tender follows on from the 1998 Feasibility Study and relates to implementation of the proposed upgrade of the existing facility and development of a new aquatic centre in the Shire.

BHS has an extensive range of on-road and off-road walking tracks, trails and cycle network.

According to the 2005-2006 BHSC State of the Environment Report, at present a total of approximately 102 kilometres of off-road bicycle tracks has been constructed. Additional paths and trails are planned, including The Greenway. The majority of these appear concentrated in the Baulkham Hills and Kellyville areas within major recreation and bushland reserves.

Council established a Bikeplan in 1994, which proposed a hierarchy of bicycle routes. Specifically, the Plan identified 13 regional routes consistent with the Roads and Traffic Authority plan, 17 local routes predominantly on the local road network and 6 recreational routes utilising a combination of on and off-road locations. As identified above, 14 off-road trails have subsequently been developed. Furthermore, Council’s planning for new land release areas also includes consideration of walking and cycle trails.

The 1994 Bikeplan is now out of date and requires a comprehensive review to ensure ongoing relevance and identification of new trail opportunities across the Shire. It is therefore recommended that a comprehensive Walking and Cycle Trails Strategy be developed for the Shire. Such a strategy should identify a comprehensive network of walking trails, including bushwalks, on-road cycle routes and off-road cycle tracks. Opportunities for shared paths and trails should be explored. Consideration should also be given to appropriate support infrastructure needs along all main trails within parklands, including signage, rest stops, drinking water and shelter areas.
According to the Baulkham Hills Shire Council’s “Community Facilities Masterplan”, Council currently has 22 venues that are available for hire and service a range of formal and informal recreation and leisure needs of the community. The facilities can be broken down into the following categories:

- Community Centres/Halls managed by Council: 13
- Senior Citizens Centres managed by Council: 2
- Community Centres/Halls managed by 355 Committees: 4
- Community Centres/Halls managed by Leases/Licensees: 3

**Non-Council Recreation Facilities (Private Sector Facilities)**

In addition to Council owned facilities, there are a range of venues provided by the private sector within the Baulkham Hills Shire that cater for the recreation needs of the community. Key private sector facilities include:

- **7 Aquatic facilities**
  - (Caste Hill RSL, Castle Hill Fitness Club, Carlisle (Norwest), Hills Swimming (Kenhurst), Hills District SCUBA Centre (Annangrove), Winram Swim School (Dural) and Murray McDonald Swimming Squad (North Rocks)).
- **4 Basketball** (Baptist Church, Dural).
- **3 Bowling Clubs**
  - (Castle Hill, Hills District, West Pennant Hills Men’s and Women’s Bowling Clubs).
- **Castle Hill Indoor Sports** (synthetic surface sports).
- **4 Equestrian**
  - (Sportsworld Equestrian Centre (Maraylya), St Albert’s Equestrian Centre, Kenhurst, plus 2 private instructors).
- **4 Golf Courses**
  - (Riverside Oaks, Kellyville Golf Course (scheduled for closure), Castle Hill Country Club, Muirfield plus 7 others in surrounding areas).
- **1 Golf Driving Range**
  - (Baulkham Hills Day/Night Golf Driving Range).
- **1 Gymnastics**
  - (Castle Hill RSL/C2K Centre – purpose built).
- **36 (approximately) Health and Fitness Facilities** (including gyms and martial arts centres)
- **1 Ice Skating**
  - (Sydney Ice arena, Baulkham Hills).
- **2 Indoor playgrounds**
  - (Ready Steady Go, Castle Hill and Lollipops Play Centre, Castle Hill).
- **1 Rock Climbing**
  - (The Edge, Indoor Rock Climbing Centre, Castle Hill).
- **4 Shopping Centres**
  - (Castle Towers, Stocklands Mall, Westfield - North Rocks and Winston Hills Mall).
• 1 Skate (“The Edge”)  
  (Roller skating, Castle Hill).
• 2 Squash facilities  
  (Squash Academy, Annangrove and Northmead Aquatic & Fitness Centre).
• 1 Ten Pin Bowling  
  (AMF Bowling Centre, Castle Hill).

**Education Department Facilities**

Stratcorp consulted with 46 Primary Schools, 12 Secondary Schools and five P-12 Schools as part of this project. Volume 2, Appendix 3 provides an overview of the key consultation outcomes, in addition, the table on the following page summarises the scope of facilities that are provided by these institutions.

Overall, the table highlights a modest level of facility provision, in particular it is evident that the majority of schools do not provide their own playing fields, which is likely to increase the reliance on Council facilities. This is supported by Volume 2, Appendix 3, which highlights a high level of use of ‘external’ (non-school) facilities by those interviewed.

However, despite the heavy reliance on external facilities, in particular Council facilities, only one third (21 schools or 33%) indicated that their facilities are currently available for community use. This represents an underutilised resource which could potentially be used to help address community needs, in particular indoor courts, tennis courts, cricket nets and to a lesser extent playing fields. The following table highlight the extent of facility provision at schools, the number in brackets identifies the respective number of facilities that are reportedly available for community use.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Facility</th>
<th>Primary</th>
<th>Secondary</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Multi-purpose outdoor court</td>
<td>41 (12)</td>
<td>25 (14)</td>
<td>66 (26)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25m pool</td>
<td>1 (Indoor)</td>
<td>3 (2 outdoor, 1 indoor)</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indoor multi-purpose court.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>11 (8)</td>
<td>11 (8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outdoor Volleyball</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outdoor Basketball</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4 (3)</td>
<td>6 (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outdoor Netball</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tennis</td>
<td>10 (3)</td>
<td>2 (2)</td>
<td>12 (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Playing Fields</td>
<td>1 (1)</td>
<td>7 (2)</td>
<td>8 (3 - Soccer)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cricket Nets</td>
<td>8 (5)</td>
<td>4 (4)</td>
<td>12 (9)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.1.5. Adequacy of Organised Sports Facility Provision

Stratcorp Consulting undertook an initial assessment of the adequacy of the current number of sports facilities available in the BHS, inclusive of Council facilities, relevant school facilities reportedly available for community use, and relevant facilities available through the private sector or other agencies. The assessment was undertaken for the main organised sports that residents regularly participate in according to the Household Telephone survey results. Results from the assessment include:

- There appears to be an under-supply of rugby fields for League, Union and Touch for the current population, a potential deficiency of 11 fields.
- There appears to be a modest under-supply of soccer fields for the current population, a potential deficiency of at least three fields. It is worth noting that at least three of the fields included in the above level of provision (53 fields) are school facilities, which may not be developed or maintained to an appropriate standard, thereby increasing the potential demand for additional fields.
- The ratios suggest that there may be a modest over-supply of cricket ovals (4) and outdoor netball courts (2). However, these facilities are likely to be required as the population grows.
- The ratios also suggest that there may be an over-supply of indoor courts, however, two of the Council facilities are single-courts, reducing their usage and programming flexibility. Furthermore, 8 courts are provided by schools which may not be fully accessible to the community, particularly for competition use. A further 4 courts are provided by the Baptist Church, which also double as a congregation venue which may limit their availability for formal sports use. Therefore, there are only two Council provided facilities, 1x2-courts (Bernie Mullane) and 1x4-courts (Fred Caterson), that are provided primarily to service the competitive sporting needs of the community, this represents a potential deficiency of 11 courts.

3.1.6. Assessment of Recreational Programs and Services

There is currently a variety of recreational and sports program options available for residents to chose from which are suitable for various target groups and individuals.

Council’s current involvement in the delivery of centre-based programs is largely as “facility provider”, “funder” (through subsidies and grants), “advocate” and “promoter”. These roles and levels of involvement by Council are generally appropriate however there may be scope to expand the level of support available in order to increase the overall participation, particularly by targeted sectors of the community.

There appears to be a sufficient range of community service groups, clubs and venues offering a range of physical activity participation opportunities across the Shire, however a lack of ‘seed’ funding is often identified as a potential barrier in establishing new programs, activities or expanding existing opportunities. Therefore, an opportunity may exist for Council to consider the establishment of a new funding program which offers ‘seed’ funding for new initiatives delivered by
existing (or new) groups which could help expand the range of programs and participation opportunities available to residents. Such a program could be advertised, including defined criteria and expressions of interest sought from applicants before funding being made available.

In order for such a program to be successful, Council will need to work in close collaboration and partnership with the selected groups to facilitate and promote the establishment of new programs. Once established, ongoing funding assistance should not be required.
4. COMMUNITY & STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION

Stratcorp Consulting and Baulkham Hills Shire Council organised and facilitated a series of consultation processes with residents, sporting clubs, community groups, relevant Council staff and other stakeholders, primarily during September and October 2006.

The consultation was designed to ensure that a wide cross section of people and interested parties were given an opportunity to provide input into the future planning and development of recreation services for the Baulkham Hills Shire (BHS). The consultation phase incorporated a number of different techniques including written surveys, telephone surveys, workshops, meetings and telephone interviews.

The consultation process is summarised in the following table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Target Group</th>
<th>Consultative Technique</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Responses/Attendees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Residents</td>
<td>Telephone Survey</td>
<td>Sept 2006</td>
<td>350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Community Forums (x 2)</td>
<td>Oct 2006</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Infield Surveys</td>
<td>Sept 2006</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Community Submissions</td>
<td>Aug-Dec 2006</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sports Clubs</td>
<td>Written Survey (61 sent)</td>
<td>Aug-Sept 2006</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sports Club Workshop</td>
<td>Oct 2006</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Target Group Workshops</td>
<td>Youth Forum/School Students</td>
<td>July 2006</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hills Youth Services Network</td>
<td>Nov 2006</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Older Adults Service Groups</td>
<td>Nov 2006</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CALD Service Groups</td>
<td>Nov 2006</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Disability Service Providers</td>
<td>Nov 2006</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighbouring Councils</td>
<td>Telephone Interviews</td>
<td>Jan 2007</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary and Secondary Schools</td>
<td>Telephone Interviews</td>
<td>Nov-Dec 2006</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Council Personnel</td>
<td>Integrated Workshop</td>
<td>Oct 2006</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residents and all stakeholders</td>
<td>Public Exhibition of draft report – submissions received</td>
<td>May – June 2007</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Key outcomes from the consultation processes have been considered in identifying the summary of issues presented in the following section.
5. SUMMARY OF ISSUES

This section provides a summary of the key issues that have been identified during the research and consultation undertaken as part of this project. The key issues have been grouped under the seven Key Areas of the Recreation Strategy:

5.1. Needs of the Community

1. Strong population growth.
2. The popularity of walking grows as the No. 1 physical activity of choice in the Shire.
3. Participation in informal (un-organised) sport and recreation activities is significantly more popular than organised sports.
4. Demand for improved aquatic facilities.
5. High level of community satisfaction with existing recreation facilities, services and open space.
6. There are opportunities to better address the informal recreation needs of the community.
7. High level of participation in sport and recreation activities.
8. A number of sports/activities have specific needs for new facilities.

5.2. Facility Management

9. The provision of sportsground lighting needs to improve.
10. Overuse of playing fields.
11. Sports Clubs are less than satisfied with Council’s performance in a number of key result areas. (Has implications for Key Area 7 also).
12. Many existing reserve buildings require substantial upgrade and improvement in order to meet contemporary community and sport user needs.
13. There are deficiencies in Council’s recreation policy framework.
14. There is a potential capacity to utilise playing fields within public and private schools.

5.3. Promotion

15. There is poor community awareness and promotion of existing sport and recreation opportunities available across the Shire.
16. There is a need to encourage a sense of place through appropriate expression of local space.
17. Establish an active and vibrant community.

5.4. Health and Well Being

18. General community health issues such as obesity, heart disease, skin cancer, etc.

19. Anti-social behaviour in open space is impacting upon the health and well being of the community.

5.5. Strategic Advice

20. Increased housing densities are placing additional demands upon the existing open space and recreational facilities.

21. Improvements are required to the diversity of playgrounds and play experiences provided across the Shire.

22. Limited capacity to cater for new or emerging sports.

23. Uncertainty regarding the future development of the Castle Hills Showground site.

24. Sustainable use of water.

25. Development of large multi-purpose sporting zones/precincts is preferred over single use venues.

26. Concern regarding the time lag commonly experienced in developing reserves that have been acquired via Developer contributions.

27. Council’s organisational structure may inhibit efficient delivery of desired outcomes for sports clubs/groups and park users.

28. Council needs to plan for the recreation needs of new and emerging growth areas.

29. Council needs to clearly articulate its role in sport and recreation provision.

5.6. Funding

30. Opportunities to improve partnerships and collaboration in recreation service delivery.

31. There is a perception in the community that capital investment on infrastructure has been low and infrastructure is now aging and requires replacing.

5.7. Recreation and Community Organisation Support and Development

32. Clubs and groups require support to enhance management and services. This includes sporting clubs as well as non sporting recreational and leisure groups.
6. CONCLUSION

This recreation planning study has identified a range of issues, opportunities and subsequent strategies and recommendations for the future provision of sport and recreation facilities and services across the Baulkham Hills Shire for the next 10 years, and beyond.

The Recreation Strategy provides Council and other stakeholders with the necessary strategic planning direction to build upon the existing range of sport and recreation facilities and opportunities in the Shire. The progressive implementation of the Plan, supported by more detailed specific planning where appropriate, will enable Council to continue to meet the changing needs and aspirations of residents and community groups.

The Recreation Strategy will ensure a continuation of the focussed approach taken by Council in relation to the provision and management of recreational resources across the Shire, and will contribute to the effective delivery of appropriate infrastructure, facilities and services to increase participation by residents in recreation activity.