

Open Space Action Plan



Adopted by Council: 25 June 2007

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Penrith City Council currently manages 1,206 hectares of open space. This includes –

- ~ 328 hectares of parks
- ~ 375 hectares of sporting fields
- ~ 199 hectares of community land for drainage and community uses
- ~ 153 hectares of natural areas, and
- ~ 151 hectares of land where Council has care, control and management

There are a total of 540 separate parks and reserves throughout the City and 141 of these parks contain playgrounds.

The PLANS (People's Lifestyle Aspirations and Needs Study) research identified the need to improve the quality of the City's open space and facilities. This requires a focus on –

- ~ quality (rather than just on the quantity) through larger open space areas that provide a range of experiences for different age groups and interests, and
- ~ incorporating the principles of social inclusion and universal (accessible and inclusive) design into the planning and design of open space areas, to better reflect and meet the needs and abilities of the City's communities.

While the City's population in general is ageing, there are also substantial numbers of younger families with children, particularly within the newer urban areas of the City. Quality passive recreation spaces are needed to meet the needs of the City's diverse communities, and also recognise the increasing accessibility needs of our ageing population.

The PLANS research indicated a current and future growth in the demand for quality passive recreational facilities and opportunities, including improvements to our natural areas, waterways, parks and playgrounds. Active open space is also needed, however, to encourage health through physical activity and to cater for the growth in identified sports.

Improving the quality of the City's open space areas and facilities will involve a review of smaller open space areas, particularly where there are a variety and choice of existing parks and open space to meet local community needs. Any subsequent savings will be directed to enhancing the quality of open space and facilities in the Parks Network. Improvements will also include the removal of older playground equipment that does not comply with current Australian standards.

The Open Space Action Plan has been developed in response to the research undertaken through the PLAN Study, and the adopted Recreation and Cultural Facilities Strategy. It specifies the works that are required to enhance the quality of the City's open space areas, sportsgrounds, and facilities.

With regards to infill development and the development contribution, the intention is to embellish existing local open space rather than acquiring additional local open space in order to cater for the increased demand. This represents a logical approach by Council by making the existing facilities work harder and a cost effective option for developers who do not incur costs to acquire local open space.

2. 'PLANS' RESEARCH AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The PLANS (People's Lifestyle Aspirations and Needs Study) aspirational research indicated clear community priorities regarding the relative importance of improvements to recreational facilities. The following table shows the top five priorities for improvement to the City's recreation facilities –

1.	Nature reserves and waterways	49%
2.	Playgrounds	43%
3.	Parks	43%
4.	Walking and cycle paths	41%
5.	Aquatic Centres / Pools	30%

The PLANS Recreation and Cultural Facilities Strategy recommends the development of high quality, multi-purpose recreational precincts that provide a range of active and passive recreational activities within popular, accessible and centralised areas of the City.

Demographic trends indicate an ageing population, both in Penrith and Australia wide. The PLANS Aspirational Research also indicated significant (and growing) community participation in informal passive recreation activities (such as walking, picnics, and socialising with friends). It is important to plan for the existing and predicted recreation and leisure needs of the community, by providing access to quality passive open space areas and facilities.

National physical activity guidelines for adult Australians¹ recommend thirty minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity on most or all days and some vigorous exercise for extra health and fitness. Sixty minutes or more of moderate to vigorous activity is recommended for children every day. For various reasons, the majority of adults and some children do not achieve these recommended levels of healthy exercise. There are social, physical and mental, environmental and economic benefits of participating in regular healthy exercise and maintaining a healthy lifestyle. Penrith City Council supports the development of a healthy and sustainable environment and a healthy and sustainable lifestyle for residents and visitors by planning for more inclusive environments and promoting access to a wide range of active and passive recreation pursuits for all people with diverse abilities.

The PLANS Report identified a shortage of quality active open space provision (sports fields), particularly in the more recently developed urban areas. Local access to outdoor sports facilities (specifically the growth sports, such as soccer and rugby) is an immediate need that must be addressed. Additional indoor recreation, cultural and sporting space is recommended with the co-location of sports and improvements to Council's existing swimming pools in order to make them more efficient and work harder to meet additional needs.

The adopted Recreation and Cultural Facilities Strategy, developed from the PLAN Study, makes recommendations regarding the provision, embellishment and management of the City's open space, sports grounds and facilities, and services and programs. The following Objectives and Strategies (drawn from the Recreation and Cultural Facilities Strategy) underpin the Open Space Action Plan.

¹ National Physical Activity Guidelines (2005) Department of Health and Ageing

- ❖ ***Objective 1 - Maximise use of existing cultural and recreation facilities***
 - ~ Provide high quality recreational open space for all members of the Penrith community (general, active and passive)
 - ~ Improve access to existing recreation and cultural facilities
 - ~ Encourage water-based recreation activities within the Penrith LGA
 - ~ Establish equitable, affordable fees and charges for recreational, cultural and community facilities
 - ~ Promote available recreation and cultural facilities and activities to all segments of the community

- ❖ ***Objective 2 - Rationalise recreation and cultural resources in the Penrith Local Government Area***
 - ~ Develop an integrated community facility network
 - ~ Provide quality open space areas

- ❖ ***Objective 3 - Provide new recreation and cultural facilities that are undersupplied in the Penrith Local Government Area***
 - ~ Establish and consolidate an appropriate number of district recreation precincts in the Penrith Local Government Area
 - ~ Progressively build upon the existing network of local/regional walking/cycling paths
 - ~ Undertake a detailed feasibility study of options for the enhancement of Council's aquatic facilities
 - ~ Provide outdoor entertainment spaces for community events, festivals, performances
 - ~ Provide adequate indoor recreation, cultural and sporting facilities within Penrith LGA
 - ~ Encourage water-based sports to operate within the Penrith LGA
 - ~ Provide quality sporting fields for growing sports, based on demonstrated need and growing membership numbers
 - ~ Provide appropriate recreation and cultural facilities for children and families
 - ~ Provide appropriate recreation and cultural facilities for young people

- ❖ ***Objective 4 - Encourage Community Involvement in Facility and Service Provision***
 - ~ Establish clear guidelines for sporting and recreation groups regarding their responsibilities in relation to facility development and management
 - ~ Ensure all stakeholders have regular opportunities to assist Council to plan, manage and develop cultural and recreation facilities / services
 - ~ Ensure sports and recreation clubs remain viable and responsibly manage respective facilities

- ❖ ***Objective 5 - Facilitate Diverse Recreational & Cultural Program Development***
 - ~ Provide resources to co-ordinate and facilitate recreation and cultural activities to meet community needs
 - ~ Ensure that Council managed community, sport and recreation facilities offer a variety of relevant recreational and cultural activities and services
 - ~ Provide appropriate recreation and cultural facilities for the wide range of cultures within Penrith
 - ~ Facilitate participation in arts and cultural activities by community artists
 - ~ Encourage the programming of recreation and cultural activities that support and assist the tourism objectives of Council
 - ~ Encourage sports development activities

- ❖ ***Objective 6 - Provide Effective and Sustainable Management, Support and Resources***
 - ~ Strengthen the relationship between Council and sporting clubs in the area
 - ~ Maximise external funding opportunities to assist in the future provision of sport, recreation and cultural resources
 - ~ Investigate opportunities to equitably share access to Council and school sporting fields and recreation facilities
 - ~ Enhance the information gathered by Council regarding recreation and cultural usage, satisfaction and demand
 - ~ Encourage the development of recreation and cultural groups in the Penrith LGA
 - ~ Promote the wide range of recreation and cultural activities to the community, including community groups

3. SOCIAL INCLUSION AND UNIVERSAL DESIGN IN OPEN SPACE PLANNING

“Universal Design is the design of products and environments to be useable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialised design. It is a design philosophy that recognises, respects, values and attempts to accommodate the broadest possible spectrum of human ability in the design of all products, environments and information systems.”¹ It requires sensitivity to, and awareness of, people of all ages and abilities.

Sometimes referred to as ‘lifespan design’ or ‘trans-generational design’ universal design encompasses - and goes beyond - the accessible, adaptable and barrier-free design concepts of the past. It helps eliminate the need for special features and spaces which, for some people, can be stigmatising and different looking, and are often more expensive. Universal design represents a more sustainable and cost effective approach to planning outdoor and urban environments for all people with diverse abilities and as our abilities change over time.

Social inclusion is a philosophy that emphasises the need to accommodate and value people regardless of race, religion, ability, culture or gender within social structures and community functions.

Analysis of the 1998 ABS Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers (SDAC) data indicated that 3.6 million people had a disability, or 19.3 per cent of the population. A disability is defined by the ABS as an impairment, restriction or limitation that has lasted for at least six months.

The SDAC also indicated that 296,000 children were listed as having a disability, which represents 1 in 12 children less than 14 years of age. It is clearly important to promote socially inclusive play experiences for all children in designing and developing the City’s play areas.

Currently about 12% of the Australian population are over 65 years, and demographic analysis indicates that by 2031, 22% of the population will be over 65.² Over the last 5 years, the City’s population increased by 36.3% in the 50 - 59 age group, by 26.3% in the 60-64 age group, and by 39.4% in the 75+ age group.

As the City’s population grows older, there will be more people with mobility difficulties and disabling conditions, and the need for accessible services and facilities will increase. ‘Inclusive’ planning and design is more sustainable, and reduces the need for potential retrofitting costs.

Earlier approaches to open space and facilities planning involved designing ‘for the majority’ and adding adaptations and modifications to include a few more people. Universal design advocates argue that the entire spectrum of human ability should be considered in developing any design, to reach a more inclusive solution. This approach aims to avoid design responses that separate one user group from another.

¹ *The Centre for Universal Design, NC State University, USA 1997*

² *Our Ageing Population, Australian Social Trends 1999, Australian Bureau of Statistics*

4. PENRITH CITY OPEN SPACE NETWORK

The Open Space Network is based on criteria relating to size, catchment area, and primary function / use. The definitions for the City's Open Space Network were developed using the AUS-SPEC #6A Guidelines, and are outlined below. ³

4.1 District Park

A District Park is greater than 5 hectares. It provides a wide range of recreational experiences for individuals, groups, families and communities. It will also provide experiences and facilities for the City's visitors.

A District Park is accessible by public transport, and typically includes car parking, and toilet and change room facilities that may be associated with formal active sports facilities. District Parks will provide visitor facilities, such as BBQs and picnic furniture, lighting, attractive landscaped areas, shade structures where natural shade is not available, and universally designed playground systems (in prioritised locations in the City). Recreation areas and facilities that cater for a range of age groups will also be available, such as pedestrian and cycleway systems, and informal areas for sports and recreation.

4.2 Neighbourhood Park

A Neighbourhood Park will be up to 5 hectares in area, and typically serves a 'cluster' of suburbs. The Neighbourhood Park will generally be accessible to bus routes, include some (limited) parking areas, and have lighting, attractive landscaped areas, pedestrian and cycleways, playground structures, standard toilet facilities, natural shade, and picnic and visitor facilities. A Neighbourhood Park could include a sports field suitable for childrens' training and competition activities, and other formal or informal (non-competitive) recreation areas.

4.3 Local Park

A Local Park will be from 0.5 to 3 hectares in area, and primarily serves a suburb, or an area up to 2km in radius. The Local Park will typically have on street parking, landscaping, natural shade, park benches and seating, and a playground area (no toilet facilities).

4.4 Pocket Park

A Pocket Park will be between 0.25 and 1 hectare in area, and caters for the local area. It will be within a 5 minute walk from most households (500m – 600m radius). The Pocket Park will typically include natural surface and shade areas, sometimes seating, informal play and passive recreation areas, and may have some play equipment.

4.5 Linear Park / Drainage Reserves

The City's linear open space primarily serves a drainage function, but also provides for pathway and cycleway access. These reserves generally have grassed surface areas that form detention basins. They may have basic exercise equipment but do not generally have formal recreation structures.

Linear Parks and Drainage Reserves provide residents from the local area with opportunities for informal and passive play / recreation. They may be used by

³ Note - Other open space areas, that are not Council's direct responsibility (including National Parks, Regional Parks, Nature Reserves) have not been included in this network.

people from beyond the immediate area where a pathway and cycleway access is part of a broader network.

4.6 Natural Areas (Council owned)

Natural Areas are significant for their biodiversity, and sometimes also their landscape values. The Natural Areas may include, in certain areas, passive recreation infrastructure and facilities including pathways, basic picnic facilities (seating and shelters) and playgrounds.

The Natural Areas have been identified on their biodiversity values, and have no size criteria. The focus for these sites is on enhancing their biodiversity significance, protecting the environment, and encouraging community appreciation and awareness.

5. OPEN SPACE REQUIREMENTS IN NEW RELEASE AREAS

Community aspirations regarding access to quality open space areas is documented in the PLANS Report as an identified priority for the community, in order to maintain the healthy outdoor lifestyle and quality of life experiences within the Penrith City. Historically, the standard of 2.83 hectares / 1,000 people has been used in NSW as a planning guide (Department of Planning) and comprises of both 'active' and 'passive' open space areas.

Council currently manages 1,206 hectares of open space. Based on June 2004 Census population data of 177,554, this equates to 6.8 hectares / 1,000 people. This overall calculation includes land that is classified as parks, sporting fields, community use, drainage, natural areas and open space where Council has care, control and management. To adequately serve the specific active and passive open space needs of the City's future populations, however, it is important to apply qualitative or needs based standards in conjunction with quantitative standards.

Active Areas

The City's 'classified' sportsgrounds currently covers 374.46 hectares, which equates to 2.11 hectares / 1,000 people for active open space. The PLANS Report identified a standard for active open space (sporting fields) provision within the range of 1.21 – 1.8 ha / 1,000 people, and highlighted that the provision of active open space in the City's more recently developed urban areas was considered inadequate.

The total of local active open space within the Penrith City (ie once the district active open space land is subtracted) equates to an estimated 248.415 hectares or 1.4 hectares / 1,000 population (based on 2004 Census data). Considering the recommendations in the PLANS Report for less constrained and a higher quality active open space, it is recommended that a minimum of 1.4 hectares of quality (less constrained) local active open space per 1,000 additional population should be provided within all new developments in order to sustain the existing local open space provision levels. This is within the recommended standard range and requires high quality embellishment of less constrained land as detailed in this Action Plan.

Given that the highest users of local active open space are children and youth for local sports training, if the projected population for a release area indicates a higher than average proportion of young families with children compared to the LGA average, then the area planned for active open space should be increased proportionally, in order to meet the projected higher demands for that active open space. This broad calculation, however, needs to be considered in the context of the specific interests and needs of the City's communities.

Passive Areas

The City's Council-owned parks currently cover 328.83 hectares, which equates to 1.85 hectares / 1,000 people for passive open space. This does not include other Council managed areas that are classified as natural areas or for community uses, nor does it include land required for drainage or designated biodiversity corridors.

The total of local passive open space (once the district passive open space is subtracted) equates to an estimated 291.53 hectares or 1.64 hectares / 1,000 population (based on 2004 Census data).

If there are passive recreation facilities (ie path or shared path) incorporated into the design of these drainage or biodiversity corridors, it is reasonable that the area used by the pathway be included in the passive open space contribution. It is recommended that passive open space areas ('parks') for new developments should be provided at a minimum of 1.64 hectares / 1,000 additional population.

Total Current Provision

The total current provision of local level sportsgrounds and parks is estimated at 3.04 hectares per 1,000 population. The total estimated current local active and passive open space within the Penrith City is 539.945 hectares.

Advice from Council's Property Development Department regarding the current value of local open space across the City (assuming a range of constrained to unconstrained land), is approximately \$2,000,000 per hectare. Therefore, the value of current local open space is estimated at \$1,079,890,000. For the 2004 Penrith City population, this equates to an estimated existing contribution of \$6,082,037 per 1,000 population or \$6,082 per person for local open space (*land value only and does not include facilities and improvements).

The existing population have provided approximately 218.23 hectares of land that has been classified as district open space and district facilities. For a population of 177,554 (June 2004 ABS) this equates to 1.23 hectares of district open space per 1,000 people. Council's approach is to predominantly embellish existing district open space to make these facilities work harder, in order to cope with the additional demands created by the estimated additional population. This approach will allow for a more efficient use of existing land and is also a more cost effective option for developers, compared with requiring the existing district open space land ratio to be maintained, calculated at current land values.

The PLANS Study identified the need to develop quality open space areas that meets the needs of the City's growing population. Council's requirements for new areas is based on its strategic research and planning, focussing on the anticipated needs of the new communities, and the type, proximity and capacity of existing sporting and active recreation facilities.

Requirements for New Release Areas

Quality and less constrained local active open space in new release areas shall be provided at a minimum of 1.4 hectares per 1,000 additional population. If there is an estimated higher than average demands for active open space (ie number of young families with children in a new release area with a corresponding higher than average needs for active open space), then the requirement for active open space will also increase proportionally.

To ensure that future generations enjoy access to quality open space, rather than focussing only on quantity, new urban developments are to be provided with a minimum of 3.04 hectares of local open space / 1,000 people (1.4 ha active open space + 1.64 ha of passive parkland / 1,000 population). This standard will maintain existing local open space provision levels and is consistent with the recommended standard in the adopted PLANS Report and the NSW Department of Planning guidelines for local open space provision. This does not include the requirements for open space that serves a drainage function, biodiversity

corridors, natural areas or land for other community uses. This must also be provided as required, in addition to the listed active and passive land provision.

The 3.04 hectares / 1,000 local open space standard does not include provision for district open space, which requires a separate contribution by all residential development within the City, as detailed in the draft District Open Space Development Contributions Plan. The provision of higher quality centralised and accessible local open space areas is recommended rather than the provision of smaller pockets of open space that are more difficult to maintain and are less sustainable.

As a general rule, each release area is to provide for the required local active and passive open space needs and are also required to pay financial contributions to the development of district open space and facilities.

At Council's discretion, the strategic embellishment or 'works in kind' contributions (ie the development of an identified sports facility within the release area in lieu of, or complementary with monetary contributions) may be negotiated and there will be an offset for the required financial contribution. However, the negotiated works or financial contribution must be equal in value to the provision of the required facilities within the development, including the cost to acquire the open space at current developed land costs, to ensure transparency and equity. Any shortfall in provision (land and / or facilities) must be provided as a financial development contribution at the contemporary rate.

Development of open space land will be in accordance with contemporary universal design principles and standards ⁴. The planning and design of open space (both passive and active open space areas, infrastructure and facilities) must provide, to the greatest extent possible, high quality and equitable access for people of all ages and ability levels according to universal design principles.

The development of high quality multi-purpose, co-located facilities is also encouraged, to maximise efficiency and enhance their sustainability.

Areas proposed as active open space shall not be constrained or affected by -

- Power line infrastructure corridors (ie policy of "prudent avoidance")
- Easements for other underground service infrastructure that could inhibit the development of supporting facilities (ie gas, water, sewer, electricity)
- Flood affected land - Active open space shall not be located in detention basins. Active open space shall not be located in areas below the 1% AEP flood event level, unless Council is satisfied that the design achieves quality outcomes, accessibility and ensures water is managed effectively during flood events. Buildings shall not be located within the 1 % AEP flood event zone, but these areas could include pathways and landscaping treatments that are not heavily affected by flood events.
- Steep gradients or slopes.

⁴ *Universal Access to Outdoor Recreation – A Design Guide by PLAE Inc. (1993) and Play for All Guidelines - Planning, Design and Management of Outdoor Play Settings for All Children, Second Edition by MIG Communications (1992)*

Locational and design criteria for new open space areas must also reflect –

- the nature of, and likely future changes to, the demographic and socio-economic profile of each new release area (based on contemporary population statistics, and other relevant social research)
- the social and cultural needs of different communities
- the condition and ‘useability’ of the open space based on the physical location, topography, opportunities, and existing other uses (eg drainage)
- access to local open space within a reasonable ‘walking’ distance (min. 500 metre radius), and the available access and transport options for neighbourhood, district and regional parks (including public transport, private vehicles, walking, cycling, and other mobility aided devices).

Required Process

In planning for open space in the City’s release areas, compliance must be demonstrated with the following requirements –

1. Proposed new open space areas have been planned, designed and provided in accordance with the planning principles and guidelines for open space, as adopted by Council in the PLANS Report (March 2004), and the subsequent requirements as set out in the Open Space Action Plan.
2. Initial planning for the proposed new open space areas is undertaken in consultation with Council staff, to ensure that plans are consistent with Council’s requirements. Further consultations are required at each key stage during the development of draft Open Space Plans to ensure continuing consistency.
3. Planning for open space in the release areas must be supported by information regarding proposed numbers and types of dwellings, and the likely demographic profile for the incoming release area population, to demonstrate that the open space areas and facilities provided meet the specific needs of those communities.
4. Planning for open space in the release areas must be supported by plans for ongoing management, including cost estimates for management and maintenance.

6. CITY WIDE CONTEXT

Regional Parks

6.1 Penrith Lakes Scheme

Background

Penrith Lakes is a major extractive industry site, of more than 2,000 hectares, that supplies sand and gravel for Sydney's building sites. The site is located north of the Penrith City Centre, and east of the Nepean River. When extraction is completed, this site will provide a significant water based recreational resource for Western Sydney. Rehabilitation of the quarried area will provide 2 main recreational lakes, a wildlife lake, a number of smaller water bodies, and an urban area.

The PLAN Study references the Penrith Lakes Scheme Parklands and Recreation Planning Study, which outlines the key elements for its future recreation development, including –

- The lake system to be managed for water quality outcomes with more intense human use located in the southern lakes
- areas for bushland, with wildlife corridor and habitat areas to complement surrounding bushland areas and encourage an increase in native flora and fauna
- land for informal recreation (including playing fields, picnic and BBQ areas, gardens, swimming areas, walking and cycle tracks)
- land to be developed for uses that may require built facilities (including golf courses, boat clubs, restaurants, cafes, accommodation).

Community Views

Consultations through the PLAN Study indicated that, of those surveyed, there was general support for –

- the scheme to include a Regional Park for use by the whole community, with cycle ways, picnic areas, aquatic activities, and fishing
- the construction of off-road cycleways, and provision of shuttle bus services from the Penrith City Centre to the Lakes
- active and passive recreation uses of the site
- use of part of the water bodies for sailing small craft
- the site's development to incorporate complementary cultural and public art structures, and
- opportunities for access to the Nepean River from the Penrith Lakes site.

Proposed Directions

The PLANS Report identifies some proposed directions for the site including -

- Regional water-based park for use by all sections of the community, both Penrith residents and visitors
- Provision of a range of 'soft' activities and services, such as cycleways, picnic areas, non-powered aquatic activities, and fishing
- Provision of a network of off-road cycleways connecting the various sub-precincts within Penrith Lakes, connections to the Penrith City Centre, adjoining bushland and other recreational precincts along the Nepean River
- Provision of commercial and community adventure type activities, such as an interactive water park and / or water adventure centre (subject to feasibility investigations)
- Provision of water bodies appropriate for sailing and recreational small craft (such as kayaks and canoes), and wetlands for nature-based experiences
- Continued development of international standard aquatic facilities to complement existing rowing course and white-water rafting facility, and
- Provision of a range of cultural experiences through public art and embellishments.

Other potential opportunities, identified since the completion of the PLANS Strategies, include –

- a National initiative / base for Universal Design in partnership with others
- a National Water Institute facility
- a multi-purpose sports and entertainment dome complex incorporating innovative energy efficiency, sustainability and universal design features. Provides for indoor tennis, soccer, touch football, hockey, beach volleyball, sports lounge and retractable seating to cater for special events
- facilitating partnerships to develop a Universally Designed playground / 'Sprayground' facility and an outdoor entertainment amphitheatre
- a range of aquatic activities including motorised boating in designated zones for recreation, tourism generation activities and for special events
- a regional water based universally designed sensory garden based on the model at Osaka's Oizumi Ryokuchi Park in Japan
- a regional sustainable City Garden based on the 'Australian Garden' model at the Cranbourne Botanic Gardens in Melbourne that displays local history
- a Centre of Excellence for Inclusive Action Learning, Adventure Challenge Education and Environmental Interpretation and Education based on the model at Bradford Woods, Indiana, USA
- a Centre of Excellence for Eco-Tourism education and training
- a range of eco tourism ventures based on the proposed Wildlife Lake
- a Scientific Research Facility specialising in water quality, fresh water aquatic ecosystems, aquaculture, water management and innovative water based recreation opportunities
- a Next Generation concept health and fitness facilities and a fitness circuit that caters for a range of ages and levels of ability, and
- opportunities for 'dog friendly' park spaces.

The PLAN Study has identified potential recreation and leisure activities on the site, and the views expressed above will contribute to the identification of appropriate Parklands activities in consultation with PLDC and other stakeholders.

6.2 St Marys Release Area

Background

This site (formerly known as the ADI site) is a large rectangular parcel of land with an area of 1,535 hectares, which is located adjacent to the suburbs of St Marys, Cambridge Gardens, Werrington Downs, Werrington County and Cranebrook, and also includes land within Blacktown. The Sydney Regional Environmental Plan No 30 – St Marys (REP 30) identifies broad land uses including urban, employment, Regional Park and Regional Open Space.

Since the preparation of SREP 30, an additional 250 hectares of bushland, listed by the Australian Heritage Commission (AHC) on the Register of the National Estate, will be conserved. Proposed development includes a Regional Park (900 hectares), employment land (73 hectares), and about 3,100 dwellings (approximately 9,000 people) in the Penrith section.

Community Views

Consultations through the PLAN Study indicated that, of those surveyed, there was general support for –

- the inclusion of regional and district facilities in the development, and
- a Regional Park to conserve the valuable environment of the site (flora and fauna habitat) with low-key passive recreation.

Proposed Directions

The PLAN Study identified proposed directions for this site, including –

- Establishing a new Regional Park to ensure appropriate flora and fauna habitat areas are preserved
- Establishing a large park that provides for a range of passive and active recreational and sporting facilities, and to accommodate the needs of future residents
- Investigating the feasibility of establishing a sports facility to service a catchment beyond the immediate residential base, and
- Investigating the feasibility of establishing an 'environmentally sustainable' centre for research and educational purposes (pending the outcome of any proposals planned for the Castlereagh site).

The proposed district facilities within the release area include -

- a senior AFL and cricket venue, local level playground, (St Marys Eastern Park Regional Open Space)
- a district level sports pavilion & field / outdoor entertainment venue
- provision of 6 full size playing fields, 4 mini fields, basketball / netball courts to serve local needs, lighting, car parking, spectator seating / shelter
- a district level universally designed playground facility, amenities, shared path circuit

The PLAN Study identified potential recreation and leisure activities on the site, and the views expressed above will contribute to the identification of appropriate Parklands activities. A Plan of Management is being prepared for the proposed Regional Park, and there will be opportunities for further consultation and discussion regarding its future.

6.3 Ropes and South Creek Corridors

Background

The Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources prepared a Strategic Regional Open Space Management Plan for the Ropes and South Creek Open Space Parkland. A series of workshops and community consultation sessions were held with a wide range of stakeholders in 2004.

Broadly, the major aims and proposed directions of the Plan are –

Vision for the Corridors

- To strengthen the perception of the parklands system as an integrated resource providing a diverse range of passive and active recreational opportunities
- To enhance, rehabilitate and maintain the biodiversity and natural systems of the parklands, focussed on the creeks as healthy and dynamic natural filters for the catchment
- To ensure that the parklands provide scenic and green parkland linked to their urban context by a highly accessible network of local and district pathways
- To conserve, care for and manage the cultural assets of the parklands and promote them as an educational, interpretive and tourism resource
- To secure critical infrastructure within the corridor at minimal loss of amenity
- To promote strategic and integrated planning and management of the parklands that recognises their local and regional values

Key Strategic Directions

Recreation Access and Circulation

- Develop a series of sport precincts and associated passive recreation facilities at regional and district levels
- Ensure all indoor and outdoor sports facilities close to the creeks address the creeks
- Upgrade and enhance all district level sports reserves and local reserves within the corridor
- Improve transport links, paths and cycleways within and around the parklands and major reserves

Environment, Conservation and Landscape Character

- Implement a range of actions in line with Catchment Management Boards policies and Stormwater Management Plans to improve water quality in Ropes and South Creek
- Continue bush regeneration and revegetation activities that are occurring along the creeks and their environs
- Develop and maintain a high quality scenic environment throughout the corridors

Heritage Interpretation and Education

- Promote both Aboriginal and Non Aboriginal cultural heritage of the site
- Establish a district heritage walking trail within the South Creek corridor to link the numerous Aboriginal and European heritage sites in this locality, use signage to interpret their difference
- Adapt and develop schools, tertiary and general community awareness and education programs for the locality using the corridors as a key resource
- Develop a parklands orientation and interpretive strategy that brings together the disparate array of park signs

Infrastructure, Planning and Management

- Convene a working group from within the new management body for the parklands to specifically address the security, integration and management of powerlines, substations and corridor easements
- Place the entire parkland under one parkland statutory document
- Develop a parklands wide coordinated Management Group to administer the implementation of this Plan.

The development of a Precinct Plan for the South Creek Corridor extending from the M4 to the railway line is currently underway with the assistance of Clouston Associates Consultants that will add further information about planning considerations and future opportunities within this precinct.

7. PENRITH CITY PLANNING CLUSTERS

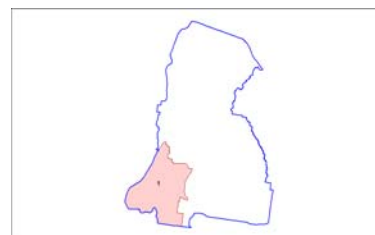
The PLANS Report recommended the identification of 'clusters' on which to base the detailed investigations to develop the City's Open Space Action Plan. Identification of each 'cluster' involved consideration of suburb and population characteristics, geographic barriers, and the major transport systems that can also create physical obstacles within suburbs.

Each of the clusters is described separately, with a summary of the open space assets in each cluster, and a general description of recommended open space and parks improvements.

Details of all proposed improvement works for parks and open space and estimated costs are listed in the Schedule of Works within the draft Open Space Development Contributions Plan.

CLUSTER 1 – Mulgoa, Wallacia

Parks Network	Number	Area (hectares)	Play - grounds
Cluster Area		6287	
District Parks	0	0	0
Neighbourhood Parks	4	48.5	1
Local Parks	2	5.75	0
Pocket Parks	2	0.4	1
Natural Areas	3	27.75	0
Linear Drainage	0	0	0
Totals	11	82.4	2



Mulgoa and Wallacia are located in the south-western corner of the City. The area is bounded to the west by the Blue Mountains National Park and the Nepean River. The two villages support communities focussed on rural activities, and larger residential homes on acreage. There is some potential for additional dwellings adjacent to the eastern side of Mulgoa Village.

Given the rural nature of the area, many recreational and leisure activities take place on private land. The identified Neighbourhood, Local and Pocket Parks in this cluster, however, provide local opportunities for play, recreation and leisure, and places to meet and socialise.

Demographic analysis of this cluster area (between 1991 and 2001) indicates a population that is generally ageing, with significant increases in the proportion of residents aged over 50 years. However, it is estimated that the Glenmore Park release area will have a higher proportion of children and young adults compared to the Penrith LGA.

There are improvements recommended for three of the Neighbourhood Parks, one Local Park and one Natural Area.

The northern section of this cluster also includes the site for the Glenmore Park expansion. The total site area is 225 hectares, which includes land designated by the Australian Heritage Commission on the Register of the National Estate as forming part of the Mulgoa Natural Area. The total developable urban area is 125 hectares. The proposed recreation facilities within the main active recreation precinct for this site include –

- A multi-purpose AFL and athletics track and field sports ground
- 2 rugby league fields with cricket in between
- Local netball and basketball courts
- Neighbourhood playground, shared amenities and storage facilities, seating, car parking, shared pathway circuit, shade structures and landscaping

CLUSTER 2 – Orchard Hills (south), Luddenham, Badgerys Creek, Kemps Creek, Mount Vernon

Parks Network	Number	Area (hectares)	Play - grounds
Cluster Area		10409	
District Parks	0	0	0
Neighbourhood Parks	3	35.2	1
Local Parks	0	0	0
Pocket Parks	0	0	0
Natural Areas	0	0	0
Linear Drainage	0	0	0
Totals	3	35.2	1



The area that includes Orchard Hills (south of the M4), Luddenham, Badgerys Creek, Kemps Creek and Mount Vernon is situated in the south- eastern corner of the City. It is bounded by the City of Liverpool to the south, and the City of Blacktown to the east. This cluster has a strong rural character, with limited potential for additional dwellings identified in Council's adopted Rural Strategy, to protect the area's rural nature and landscape values.

As in other rural areas of the City, many recreational and leisure activities take place on private land. The identified Neighbourhood Parks provide the public open space and meeting focal points for these communities.

This cluster is also served by open space areas just outside the southern boundary of the City (including Bill Anderson Park, Badgerys Creek Park and the baseball field south of Elizabeth Drive).

Demographic analysis of this cluster area (between 1991 and 2001) indicates a population that is generally ageing, with significant increases in the proportion of residents aged over 50 years.

There are improvements recommended for two of the Neighbourhood Parks within this cluster.

CLUSTER 3 - St Clair, Erskine Park

Parks Network	Number	Area (hectares)	Play - grounds
Cluster Area		1562	
District Parks	0	0	0
Neighbourhood Parks	2	12.6	1
Local Parks	6	25.3	1
Pocket Parks	42	19.3	10
Natural Areas	3	72.8	3
Linear Drainage	28	42.9	1
Totals	81	172.9	16



St Clair and Erskine Park are located along the south eastern border of the City, and is bounded to the east by the City of Blacktown. This cluster is an established urban area. There is limited potential for additional dwellings (as dual occupancies) in St Clair and Erskine Park.

There are many open space areas (from Pocket Parks to Neighbourhood Parks) dispersed throughout the cluster, with two major Neighbourhood Parks including the Mark Leece Sporting Complex and adjoining areas in St Clair, and the Peppertree Reserve in Erskine Park. There are significant areas of Drainage Reserves within St Clair, and Erskine Park has a higher concentration of smaller Pocket Parks.

Demographic analysis of this cluster indicates an ageing population with significant increases in the above 45 age groups, but also a considerable proportion of young people, with higher numbers of teenage youth in St Clair, and 0-14 year olds in Erskine Park.

There are improvements recommended for the two Neighbourhood Parks, two of the Local Parks, two of the Natural Areas, and nine of the Pocket Parks. Five of the Pocket Parks are recommended for review.

CLUSTER 4 - St Marys, North St Marys, Oxley Park, Colyton

Parks Network	Number	Area (hectares)	Play - grounds
Cluster Area		1733	
District Parks	1	15.2	0
Neighbourhood Parks	1	6.0	1
Local Parks	12	116.0	9
Pocket Parks	69	22.0	30
Natural Areas	1	51.9	0
Linear Drainage	12	9.8	0
Totals	96	220.9	40



The St Marys, North St Marys, Oxley Park and Colyton cluster is situated in the mid eastern section of the City. This is an established residential area, and is bounded to the east by the City of Blacktown.

Demographic analysis of this cluster indicates an ageing population with significant increases in the over 50 age groups, but still with significant numbers of young people. Trends have to date indicated a declining youth, teenage and young adult population (between 1991 and 2001).

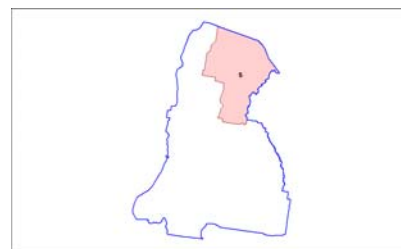
Oxley Park is an area of the City that has significant future potential for changes to the current form of housing, from single detached dwellings to medium density multi-unit development. Initial analysis of the potential future social profile for these areas suggests that there will be a minor shift towards more households on lower incomes, and also more private renters.

There is projected to be more younger persons (between 15 and 44 years), a decrease in the number of older persons, and an increase in lone person households and single parent families. These potential social changes have been considered in the development of the City's Open Space Network.

There are improvements recommended for the major District Park (South Creek Park), the Neighbourhood Park (Ridge Park), ten Local Parks, sixteen Pocket Parks, and one Linear / Drainage Reserve. Thirteen of the Pocket Parks are recommended for review.

CLUSTER 5 - Londonderry, Berkshire Park, Llandilo

Parks Network	Number	Area (hectares)	Play - grounds
Cluster Area		7715	
District Parks	0	0	0
Neighbourhood Parks	3	7.9	2
Local Parks	0	0	0
Pocket Parks	1	0.6	0
Natural Areas	0	0	0
Linear Drainage	0	0	0
Totals	4	8.5	2



The Londonderry, Berkshire Park and Llandilo cluster is located in the north eastern section of the City. This rural area is bounded by the City of Blacktown to the east, and the City of Hawkesbury to the north. This cluster includes the ADI site, with approximately 3,000 dwellings proposed for the Penrith section of the site.

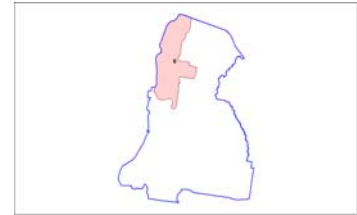
Similar to the other rural clusters, there are greater opportunities for recreational and leisure activities to take place on private land. The area includes three smaller Neighbourhood Parks which serve as a meeting point for a larger catchment area, but a more dispersed population.

Demographic analysis indicates an increasing young adult and elderly population in Berkshire Park, and an ageing population in Llandilo and Londonderry.

There are improvements recommended to each of the three Neighbourhood Parks. Planning continues on the proposed ADI Regional Park and Regional Open Space. The district level facilities currently being explored for their potential development within the ADI Regional Open Space are outlined on page 13.

CLUSTER 6 - Agnes Banks, Castlereagh, Cranebrook (north), Penrith (north, west of Castlereagh Rd)

Parks Network	Number	Area (hectares)	Play - grounds
Cluster Area		5398	
District Parks	1	7.9	0
Neighbourhood Parks	1	1.2	1
Local Parks	0	0	0
Pocket Parks	0	0	0
Natural Areas	3	2.3	0
Linear Drainage	0	0	0
Totals	5	11.4	1



The cluster of Agnes Banks, Castlereagh, Cranebrook (north), Penrith (north of the railway line and west of Castlereagh Rd) is situated in the north western section of the City. The Nepean River and the City of Blue Mountains provides the western edge of this rural area.

This cluster has a strong rural focus, and includes Penrith Lakes, with approximately 4,900 dwellings proposed for the site. The Nepean Raceway, adjacent to the Agnes Banks Nature Reserve, caters for motorised sports.

Demographic analysis indicates an ageing population, with a significant increase in the teenage age groups, and significant numbers of young people in the Cranebrook / North Cranebrook area.

There is significant potential for regional recreation and leisure activities and areas within the proposed parklands at Penrith Lakes. There are also improvements recommended in Smith Park in Castlereagh.

CLUSTER 7 - Emu Plains, Emu Heights and Leonay

Parks Network	Number	Area (hectares)	Play - grounds
Cluster Area		1362	
District Parks	2	7.0	1
Neighbourhood Parks	4	55.2	2
Local Parks	4	10.7	3
Pocket Parks	24	7.5	7
Natural Areas	3	18.4	0
Linear Drainage	7	7.8	0
Totals	44	106.6	13



The Emu Plains, Emu Heights and Leonay cluster is bounded to the west by the City of Blue Mountains, and to the east by the Nepean River. This is an established residential area, with limited potential for additional dwellings. The area is characterised by the recreational and leisure opportunities provided by the Nepean River, and major Neighbourhood Parks including Emu Park, Leonay Oval and Emu Green.

Demographic analysis indicates an ageing population with a significant increase in the over 50 age groups. There is a considerable decline in the 0-14 age groups, particularly in Emu Plains and Leonay.

There are improvements recommended to the District Park at Regatta Park (east and west), at each of the Neighbourhood Parks, three Local Parks, four Pocket Parks. Four Pocket Parks are recommended for review.

Riverlands

The parklands adjacent to the Nepean River are an attractive and popular destination for visitors. 'The Riverlands' precinct includes Tench and Weir Reserves, and Regatta Park East and West.

The precinct provides a focus for passive recreation, including picnics and 'day out' experiences, and aquatic activities including the Nepean Belle and Platypus floating restaurants, power boats, water and jet skiing, rowing and canoeing on designated sections of the River.

The proposed Great River Walk (planned to follow along the Hawkesbury Nepean River for 570km, from Broken Bay to the Southern Highlands) will improve access to and along the River. Pathways will also link the Great River Walk with the Penrith City Centre and the Lewers Gallery.

CLUSTER 8 - Cranebrook (south), Penrith (north, east of Castlereagh Rd)

Parks Network	Number	Area (hectares)	Play - grounds
Cluster Area		1248	
District Parks	0	0	0
Neighbourhood Parks	2	29.2	2
Local Parks	11	52.0	2
Pocket Parks	55	13.5	7
Natural Areas	0	0	0
Linear Drainage	22	38.8	1
Totals	90	133.5	12



The Cranebrook (south) and Penrith (north and east of Castlereagh Rd.) cluster is situated in the central area of the City. This is an established residential area, with higher density development in the south. This cluster includes the Lakes Environs (Waterside Green), with approximately 700 dwellings proposed for the site.

There are two Neighbourhood Parks, including Parker St Reserve and Greygums Reserve, that provide district athletics and AFL sports facilities.

Demographic analysis indicates an ageing population with significant numbers of youth in the Cranebrook area. The suburb of Penrith has lower than average numbers of people in the 0-19 age group.

There are improvements recommended for the two Neighbourhood Parks, five Local Parks, two Pocket Parks, and two Linear / Drainage Reserves. Five Pocket Parks are recommended for review.

CLUSTER 9 - Penrith (south), Jamisontown, South Penrith

Parks Network	Number	Area (hectares)	Play - grounds
Cluster Area		1361	
District Parks	2	54.1	2
Neighbourhood Parks	1	5.0	0
Local Parks	10	26.1	6
Pocket Parks	43	14.8	12
Natural Areas	1	0.2	0
Linear Drainage	30	35.9	1
Totals	87	136.1	21



The Penrith (south of the railway line), Jamisontown and South Penrith cluster is located in the central western area of the City. It is an established residential area, with limited dwelling growth potential. Demographic analysis indicates an ageing population, with significant increases in the over 50 age groups and significant (but declining) numbers in the 0-14 age group, particularly in South Penrith and Jamisontown.

South Penrith (from the City Centre to Jamison Road) is another area of the City that has significant future potential for changes to the current form of housing, from single detached dwellings to medium density multi-unit development. Initial analysis of the potential future social profile for these areas suggests that there will be a minor shift towards more households on lower incomes, and also more private renters.

There is projected to be increases in the number of persons aged 25 – 34, and those over 65 years. The greatest decrease is expected to be in persons aged 45 – 54 years. It is anticipated that there will also be an increase in lone person households and single parent families. These potential social changes have been considered in the development of the City's Open Space Network.

There are improvements recommended to the Jamison Park / Stadium precinct (*further information over page*) and the Neighbourhood Park at Southlands Oval. The development of an additional central Neighbourhood Park is proposed through the City Centres' Review. Improvements are also proposed for four Local Parks and seven Pocket Parks. Nine Pocket Parks are recommended for review.

Jamison Park / Stadium Precinct

The Jamison Park / Stadium Precinct is located south and west of the Penrith City Centre, and adjacent to higher density residential areas. It includes Jamison Park, Howell Oval, Penrith Stadium, the Showgrounds and the Penrith Swimming Centre. It is a major active recreation and sporting precinct with a wide variety of activities and user groups.

The PLAN Study identified the need to upgrade the Penrith Swimming Centre, and increase the use of the Penrith Stadium by other high grade sporting codes, including soccer, and for community events. Jamison Park provides for a wide variety of sports including netball, soccer, athletics, rugby league and cricket. There are also other recreation facilities, including a local playground and district skate park.

A Master Plan prepared in 1999 for Jamison Park proposed a variety of active sports field uses and the development of quality passive facilities, including a shared perimeter pathway and parking facilities on the northern central area. There is potential for this park to include a Universally Designed playground facility with associated accessible amenities (in the south-eastern section of the Park).

CLUSTER 10 - Glenmore Park, Regentville

Parks Network	Number	Area (hectares)	Play - grounds
Cluster Area		936	
District Parks	0	0	0
Neighbourhood Parks	1	7.5	0
Local Parks	8	50.6	3
Pocket Parks	9	3.3	5
Natural Areas	3	3.3	0
Linear Drainage	6	9.9	2
Totals	27	74.6	10



The Glenmore Park and Regentville cluster is located in the south western central area of the City. It is a recently developed urban area, with the potential for around 1,200 new dwellings in the Glenmore Park Expansion Area.

The area is characterised by fewer, but high quality, open space areas that are well embellished in comparison to some of the older areas of the City. The PLANS research identified a shortfall in the provision of quality active open space, which has resulted in the inadequate provision of local training facilities to cope with the sporting demands of the local community.

Demographic analysis indicates a higher than average proportion of young families, with significant numbers of young people in the 0-14 age group, and no age groups in decline. Glenmore Park is representative of the population groups moving into the new developing urban areas. Regentville has an ageing population, and also increasing numbers in the 0-14 age groups.

There are improvements recommended to the main Neighbourhood Park at Ched Towns Reserve and two Pocket Parks.

CLUSTER 11 - Cambridge Gardens, Werrington Downs, Werrington County, Cambridge Park, Kingswood (north), Werrington (north)

Parks Network	Number	Area (hectares)	Play - grounds
Cluster Area		951	
District Parks	1	33.2	1
Neighbourhood Parks	1	10.4	1
Local Parks	7	37.4	6
Pocket Parks	31	25.3	4
Natural Areas	1	4.9	0
Linear Drainage	7	17.6	0
Totals	48	128.8	12



The Cambridge Gardens, Werrington Downs, Werrington County, Cambridge Park, Kingswood (north), Werrington (north) cluster is located in the central eastern part of the City. This is an established residential area with limited opportunity for new dwellings, predominantly along the railway corridor.

Demographic analysis indicates an ageing population with significant (but declining) numbers in the 0-14 age groups.

Werrington also has some future potential for changes to the current form of housing, from single detached dwellings to medium density multi-unit development. Changes similar to the social profiles projected in the Oxley Park and South Penrith areas could be anticipated, and have been considered in the development of the City's Open Space Network.

There are improvements recommended for the District Park at Werrington Creek including the potential for this precinct to include a Universally Designed playground facility and to the Neighbourhood Park at Parkes Avenue Reserve. Improvements are also proposed for the Neighbourhood Park, four Local Parks, eight Pocket Parks and one Natural Area. Three Pocket Parks are recommended for review.

CLUSTER 12 - Kingswood (south), Werrington (south), Orchard Hills (north), Claremont Meadows

Parks Network	Number	Area (hectares)	Play – grounds
Cluster Area		1409	
District Parks	2	67.7	0
Neighbourhood Parks	1	17.3	1
Local Parks	4	3.1	3
Pocket Parks	21	6.7	6
Natural Areas	3	10.5	1
Linear Drainage	13	14.0	0
Totals	44	119.3	11



The Kingswood (south), Werrington (south), Orchard Hills (north), Claremont Meadows cluster is located in the central eastern section of the City. This is a combination of a recently developed area (Claremont Meadows), established residential area (Kingswood and Werrington) and an urbanised rural area of Orchard Hills, which is characterised by larger lot residential development. There is some potential for additional dwellings, with approximately 500 new dwellings planned in Claremont Meadows Stage 2, and 190 new dwellings proposed in the Werrington Mixed Use site.

The cluster includes the District Parks at the Kingsway playing fields and the Gipps St site, and the Neighbourhood Park at Chapman Gardens.

Demographic analysis indicates an ageing population, with significant increases in the over 50 age groups (between 1991 and 2001). There are also significant and increasing numbers of youth (0-14) for this period, particularly in the Kingswood and Claremont Meadows areas.

Improvements are recommended for the District Parks at the Kingsway playing fields and the Gipps St site (*further information over page*), and the Neighbourhood Park including Chapman Gardens and Kingswood Park. There are also improvements recommended for seven Pocket Parks, two Natural Areas and two Linear Park / Drainage Reserves.

Gipps St Landfill site

Background

The Gipps Street landfill site is located in Claremont Meadows. A Recreation Planning Study in 1998 found that the site was appropriate for informal parkland, structured park, bushland, sporting fields or a mixture of those uses. Its unique location adjacent to South Creek creates the potential for its inclusion in an open space corridor between St Clair and Werrington.

Community Views

Community consultation revealed the following views for this site:

- Many residents were not familiar with the site, or the possible recreational opportunities. Mixed support for the development of this site, with views ranging from complete revegetation to development of a district sporting venue.
- The site is considered a future valuable recreation resource for residents of Claremont Meadows, and surrounding suburbs.

Proposed Directions

1. Revegetate the site to establish a new open space area, with both passive open space opportunities (walking and cycling paths, picnic and playground areas) and sports fields.
2. Investigate the feasibility of establishing a regional sports facility.
3. Establish off-road connections and 'green' corridors to Kingsway Playing Fields and the South Creek linear bushland corridor.

Soccer was identified in the PLANS Report as one of the key growth sports in the City and the research supports the need to develop quality facilities to meet the growing demands of the community. The PLANS Report also identified the need to provide a district level athletics facility within the Penrith City. There is also the potential for this Precinct to include a Universally Designed playground facility.

The development of a Master Plan for this site is currently underway with the assistance of Clouston Associates Consultants that will consult with a range of stakeholders to determine a preferred plan for the delivery of facilities on this site.

Kingsway Playing Fields

The playing fields to the west of the existing touch football fields need to be extended to cater for the increased demands for rugby league training fields, and co-location of proposed facilities (rugby league and touch football) will be encouraged. Expansion of the fields will also generate the need for additional car parking and associated amenities, seating and shade.

