



Living Spaces



Friendly Places

&



Quality Lifestyles

Camden Recreation & Leisure Strategy 2005



Contents:

The Camden Recreation Strategy:

Living Spaces Friendly Places & Quality Lifestyles

Page	
3	Foreword
4	Purpose
5	What is Recreation and Leisure?
7	A Vision for Camden's Provision of Recreation and Leisure Services
9	Provision of Recreation, Sporting and Leisure Facilities and Services within Camden
9	Active Sporting Recreation and Leisure Opportunities
11	Passive Recreation and Leisure Services
14	Opportunities for Participation in Recreation and Leisure
14	Criteria for the Location of District and Regional Level Recreation Facilities
15	Design Aspects
16	Our Community
19	Camden's Communities Voices
21	Community Expectations of Future Recreation and Leisure Services and Facilities
	General comments
	Sporting Facilities
	School Sport and Recreation
	Senior Citizens
	Barriers/Constraints Identified by the Community to Participation
	People with Disabilities
23	Themes Arising from Community Consultation
23	Living Spaces
	Accessibility
	Connectivity/Integration
	Community Safety
	Quality
	Sustainable Use
24	Friendly Spaces
	Building Social Capital
	Protection of Cultural, Historic and Environmental Values
	Diversity of landscape Settings and Recreational Opportunities



	Themes Arising from Community Consultation (cont)
24	Quality Lifestyles
	Reflecting Place and People
	Community Engagement
	Cooperation
	Information
25	Results of Camden Recreation Demand Survey
25	Formal Activities/Facilities
25	Informal; Activities/Facilities
26	Open Space
27	What this means for Recreation & Leisure in 2025
28	Summary of Major Strategic
28	Living Spaces
30	Friendly Spaces
31	Quality Lifestyles
34	How this will be Funded
35	Conclusion

Foreword

Recreation and leisure pursuits can be a way of making friendships, easing into a community and establishing “roots”, developing skills, capitalising on talent, an escape to something you enjoy doing above all else, or just a measure of family relationships and a chance to enjoy the sun and a day out.

To some recreation and leisure pursuits provide a focal point for their lives, to others a regular weekly chance to relieve frustration, and to others an outlet for their talent or a way of transferring their skills to others.

Recreation and leisure is also a personal commitment to your own healthy [lifestyle](#).



In preparing this strategy Council has endeavoured to take into account the personal nature of recreation and leisure and to reference it in the unique context of Camden.

The *Camden Recreation Strategy*:

Living Spaces Friendly Places & Quality Lifestyles

builds upon the foundations laid out in *Camden 2025 – A Strategic Plan for Camden* and the *Open Space Strategy 2002*. It is based on the *Camden Recreation Demand Study* conducted on behalf of Council in 2003 by the School of Leisure, Sport and Tourism, University of Technology, Sydney.

This Strategy endeavours to realise the outcome, from Camden 2025:

‘A Camden community that has access to and participates in a range of quality recreation and leisure experiences, realising a sense of well-being, inclusiveness and identity.’

Camden’s unique commercial position on the hub of greater Western Sydney has combined with its features of natural beauty and rich settlement history to create a wealth of lifestyle opportunities and resulted in Camden becoming the destination of choice for many new families through the current residential building boom.

In meeting the challenges posed by major population expansion and economic change, Camden Council has embarked upon a proactive strategic planning process to develop a recreation and leisure strategy which capitalises on the environmental and community assets of the area to develop *Living Spaces* and *Friendly Places* and produce many opportunities for *Quality Lifestyles* for all residents and visitors to the area.



Purpose

The purpose of this strategy is to provide broad guidelines for the development and management of recreation and leisure services/facilities/support within the Camden local government area. The strategy addresses the links to recreation and leisure sited within *Camden 2025* and the *Camden Open Space Strategy*, namely through:

- Environmental Preservation and Natural Systems
- Urban Development
- Rural Character
- Community Development and Recreation
- Accessibility
- Economic Development
- Governance

The strategy seeks to guide the delivery of recreation and leisure services to the community of Camden, supported by the two above noted documents and underpinned by the results of the *Camden Recreation Demand Study* undertaken by the School of Leisure, Sport and Tourism at the University of Technology, Sydney.

The document seeks to address the facets of recreation and leisure provision, such as accessibility, integration, sustainability and equity; which are pivotal to the provision of this service to address the needs of the current and future residents of Camden in the area of recreation and leisure.

The document develops strategies to complement our existing passive and active open spaces to create *Living Spaces* which are interconnected to the lives of our residents.

The intent is to establish *Friendly Places* which the community, in each neighbourhood and across the local government area, recognises the value the these spaces and how they benefit their lives and their community. The adoption of a healthy lifestyle is advocated for many reasons, this strategy aims to foster as many opportunities for recreation and leisure in all its forms to occur in an environment conducive to a safe, healthy and enviable *Quality Lifestyle*.

As well as addressing current 'community' issues this *Living Spaces Friendly Places & Quality Lifestyles* Strategy endeavours to anticipate opportunities and future trends. The Strategy allows the community to adopt alternate lifestyles and sporting approaches and to provide for these growing and fresh recreation and leisure pursuits.



What is Recreation and Leisure?

It is not easy to define the difference between the terms **recreation** and **leisure** as both terms are very subjective in nature

Recreation

By definition:

Recreation (noun) = *pastime, amusement, distraction, diversion, enjoyment, entertainment, exercise, fun, hobby, leisure activity, play, pleasure, refreshment, relaxation, relief, sport, an activity done for pleasure or relaxation.*

Recreation may be a basic human need, it is the use of leisure time for personal satisfaction and enjoyment and for physical and mental health. It may be undertaken individually or with others. It may be planned or spontaneous. It may be passive or active, may or may not require skills and training, and may or may not require a designated area. It includes such activities as music, games, swimming, picnicking, boating, hunting, and fishing. It is not a resource but a complex activity composed of people, their environments, and their actions.

Recreation is a diversion it is an activity that diverts or amuses or stimulates, refreshes and creates; "scuba diving is provided as a diversion for tourists"; or "for recreation he wrote poetry and solved crossword puzzles".

Leisure

Again by definition:

Leisure (noun) = *spare time, breathing space, ease, freedom, free time, holiday, liberty, opportunity, pause, quiet, recreation, relaxation, respite, rest, retirement, spare moments, time off, vacation* **2 at leisure** = *free, time or opportunity for relaxation or hobbies, available, not booked up, on holiday, unengaged, unoccupied,* **3 at one's leisure** = *in one's own good time, at an unhurried pace, at one's convenience, deliberately, unhurriedly, when one has free time, when it suits one, when one gets around to it (informally), without hurry.*

Leisure is associated with spare or free time; freedom from working, freedom to choose a pastime or enjoyable activity; "he lacked the leisure for golf"

Leisure is very subjective in nature, making it even more difficult to establish a firm definition. For example, what is a fun leisure activity for one person, such as walking in the bush, might be considered work by another who is out of shape and does not share the same appreciation of the outdoors. The majority of society views leisure synonymously with play, as leisure in this sense brings a childlike happiness and freedom from stress and worry.



Despite all the possibilities, we have decided on this concise definition of leisure: leisure is when an individual is doing something that he or she wants to do as well as enjoys doing.



The interconnection and usage of each word is understandable given the close association of both recreation and leisure pursuits. For some people what is a recreation pursuit such as a sport, like golf, may equally be a leisure pastime activity. They may feel no competition or contest as a recreation and enjoy the this outdoor pastime purely for the fun and conversation with family, friends and acquaintances. For other people the recreation pursuit may be in bird watching or bushwalking and there leisure may be a family barbeque, reading the paper or a coffee with a friend.

There is however always a personal association of each word and individual connotation brought to the meaning and application to these words



A Vision for Camden's Provision of Recreation and Leisure Services:

This Strategy aims to provide a future direction for the development of recreation and leisure services in the unique context of this vibrant and developing community.

Living Spaces Friendly Places & Quality Lifestyles

This rural/urban community has the “best of both worlds” within our backyard. Council’s aim is to complement not only the greater Camden in developing services, facilities and support useful to both our residents, crafts people, and visitors; but also, more essentially, to enhance the local community and to develop the individual character of each community which forms Camden. This Strategy seeks to enhance community wellbeing through fostering and facilitating opportunities for recreation and leisure .

Council’s aim is to foster and advance social sustainability, or community wellbeing, in the Camden Local Government Area by developing and promoting the following interrelated principles that underpin Community Wellbeing, as defined within Council’s *Community Wellbeing Policy* (2003):

Social Justice – the achievement of equal access to power, resources, information, opportunities, participation, choices and outcomes

Social Capital – is “community connectedness”, the extent to which people are involved with other people in social networks and relationships that are characterised by norms of trust and reciprocity, and lead to mutual beneficial outcomes.

Democratic Governance – good local government exists where there is a strong democratically elected and pro-active council, dedicated to the interests and progress of the community.

Active Citizenship and Participation – active citizenship is about making contributions to the community. It is about being informed, participating, creating ownership of community issues, safety and security, and providing local solutions to local issues.

A sustainable community is a balanced one which seeks a better quality of life for everyone.

This strategy acknowledges that community wellbeing is vital for long term sustainability, ensuring quality of life both now and in the future for all citizens. Recreation and leisure is a major vehicle in promoting a strong, vital and healthy community within Camden



There is an individual history to each of the suburbs, areas and **Places** which form Camden beyond the greater historic context of John Macarthur and the merino sheep and the rural context of farming. History can be found in a range of locations and situations. Where Narellan had a relationship to the coal industry through the processing of the raw coal for the greater Macarthur area, Camden's airport played an essential role in training pilots during World War II; and the indigenous history of the area has been retained at the aboriginal archaeological site at Mount Annan. Each of these and the separate neighbourhoods of Camden are unique in their own way.



This strategy aims to recognise the nature of these *Living Spaces & Friendly Places* through capitalising on the unique aspects of each place in the form of buildings, sporting and leisure spaces to complement and develop their use both locally and across the Camden LGA.

The strategies developed by this document are to be implemented over a ten year period through the application of section 94 developer funds, grants and partnerships to provide improved facilities and services across the Camden local government area.

Provision of Recreation, Sporting and Leisure Facilities and Services within Camden

Active Sporting Recreation and Leisure Opportunities

The most appealing aspects of living in Camden lies within its country town charm and rural identity, which are reflected in the natural assets and environment of the area, and the people.

Camden is endowed with a number of significant features of natural and cultural heritage which includes the scenic hills, ridgelines, floodplains, Nepean River and tributaries, remnant native vegetation, as well as those landscapes and structures that demonstrate our cultural history.



Council recognises the community's interaction with these features, in 'daily living', is fundamental to the long-term conservation of these important environmental and cultural heritage resources.



Camden features prominently in the NSW State Government's Urban Development Program and is recognised as having one of the fastest population growth rates in Australia. This has greatly accelerated the construction and development of recreation and leisure facilities and placed significant pressure on Council's existing service capacities in key program areas.

Participation in recreation and leisure activities is fundamental to the development of an active healthy community. There is common recognition of the level of obesity within the community, from school children to mature residents. This strategy aims to offer opportunities for the community to improve their level of fitness and wellbeing.

Such participation also provides relief from the pressures of the working week and is seen as a valuable economic driver for the region, creating employment opportunities and attracting tourism.



Recreation and leisure pursuits are provided for a full range of age groups throughout the Camden LGA, from junior participation in sport, such as T-ball as an introduction to softball at Cowpasture Reserve and active indoor carpet bowls through the Camden Seniors Citizens Group; through to participation in a broad range of passive leisure opportunities.

Council provides a range of traditional sports such as football (in its various forms), cricket, swimming, softball, baseball, netball and tennis. In addition relatively newer

sports such as BMX bike riding, in addition skateboarding and equestrian events have been added to this spectrum of sports provided in the public realm. Council will encourage and support the introduction of current sports (not presently provided within Camden) and new sports and forms of recreation to be made available for participation.

Council holds a position of providing multi-purpose playing fields to maximise the use of these high maintenance fields. In any week our playing fields may be allocated to one sport for weekend competition sport but may also host two or more sports for training purposes, or further competition, for evening training throughout the week. Similarly these fields are frequently located abutting primary and secondary schools who use the fields during school hours for sports classes.

Council has two swimming venues the Camden Memorial Swimming Pool and the Mount Annan Leisure Centre, offering a range of water activities across the two centres.



Council has also assisted, where feasible, clubs in developing facilities on public land for their purposes such as the Camden Hockey Club and Macarthur Softball Association facilities on land at Millwood Avenue and Cowpasture Reserve respectively. Council's level of assistance to these clubs to provide expanded facilities has been based on their initiative to facilitate the project, the club's support of the project both in-kind and financial and the proportion of the community benefiting from the project.

Council will always encourage open participation in recreation and leisure by all citizens, ensuring all public and private buildings are accessible to all.

Similarly Council plays a role in the support of Sporting Associations to provide and promote their sport, recreation and leisure pursuits through allocation of reserve, sportsfields and facilities.

Council traditionally carries out the general maintenance of both playing fields, supporting parklands and facilities. Council is however open to the participation of these bodies in carrying out full or partial ongoing maintenance of these areas and facilities. Some clubs maintain their home grounds, or undertake additional field maintain to further improve the standard of play. Council is supportive of any proposal to carry out additional improvements to our parks and reserves.

Volunteer maintenance of our neighbourhood parks by individuals or groups is also supported through the provision of a mower and fuel to maintain these areas, provided these items of small plant are garaged for protection and regularly maintained. This maintenance may take the form of weeding and maintaining the garden beds or regular grass cutting of the open lawned areas. Such an arrangement has been fostered to improve the level of maintenance of our small "pocket parks".

This approach reinforces Council's role in supporting and fostering community spirit and volunteer aspects of life in Camden in improving *Quality Lifestyles* for all members of our community.. This may be through a diverse range of community oriented service clubs or in the form of improving our physical environment, through

maintenance of a neighbourhood park or through a Bushcare group, this work is of huge importance and priority to the role Council envisages in supporting and improving *Quality Lifestyles* for our community.

There are also many sports which are provided through other means, generally by Government involvement. Camden airport for instance has fostered the aeronautical flying and gliding industry. Similarly commercial ventures such as the ballooning industry operate as a recreational venture for profit.

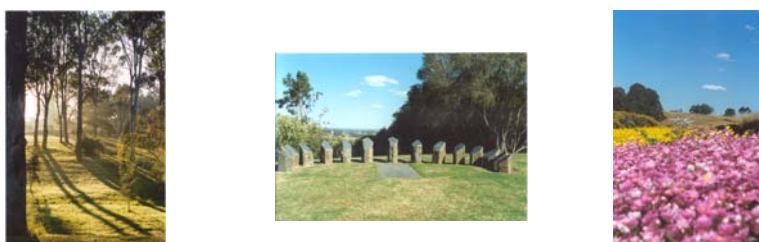


In addition to the provision of physical infrastructure Council also evaluates, supports and plans opportunities for healthy lifestyles for all residents. In order to effectively meet the challenges of fast growth and increasing aspirations of our community the area will require additional resources.

Our vision includes the role for Recreation/Leisure Planners who will support this position and foster the introduction of a diverse range of services and opportunities for all.

Passive Recreation and Leisure Services

There are increasing opportunities to meet friends and family members for park based events or gatherings in the many local parks, neighbourhood reserves, and district parklands and reserves (such as Mount Annan Botanic Garden).



Camden takes pride in the history and presentation of its formal park, known as Macarthur Park, named after the benefactor a descendant of John and Elizabeth Macarthur who pioneered the growth of the merino sheep industry in Australia from Belgenny Farm. This farm still operates today in South Camden, and is regularly open to the public.



One of the fastest growing sectors of the national market is cultural/environmental tourism, where visitors seek to experience first hand an area's natural wonders or to understand the way of life of a local area or region

Residents and visitors alike have been drawn to Camden to participate in the range of events, which form the calendar of events for the Camden Festival annually in October. This week-long festival involves cultural, gastronomical celebrations, craft and theatrical events

There is a wide choice of cultural tourism attractions in the Camden area, ranging over:

- Natural and built heritage sites and walks
- Historical re-enactments at heritage locations; such as the Rum Rebellion re-enactment at Belgenny Farm
- Traditional Civic events such as Australia Day celebrations and the ANZAC Day service
- Agricultural events: such as the sale of livestock at Camden saleyards; and the Annual Camden Show held at Onslow Park
- Community and Camden Council Calendar of events, ranging from the Camden Festival to the Annual Christmas Carols in the Park
- Art gallery exhibitions
- Annual exhibitions: including Camden's Annual Art Competition, Antique Fair; and the Annual Quilter's exhibition
- Cuisine and wineries
- Mount Annan Botanic Garden

Other opportunities to meet friends exist in the open café and restaurants which have developed in the main shopping centres of the city, at Camden and Narellan, and at Cobbitty. Many food outlets take advantage of Camden's climate offering outdoor eating opportunities, and a range of food styles to choose from.

Through Council's Cultural Mapping process the residents of Camden were given the opportunity to comment on their City, some quotes were:

I love shopping and eating in the main street of Camden. I love the old buildings

- female, 40 years, Harrington Park

We have just moved to the Camden area from another area of Sydney. It is a lovely area to bring up our children. We love walking and especially love all the lovely parks.

- female, 26 years, Currans Hill

There are a range of shopping opportunities available in these centres and other specialised shops, such as at Struggletown, where good food and art are offered together. Frequent country markets offer crafts, good food, and farm grown produce at a range of sites across the city.



Other leisure pursuits are offered by a range of walks; such as an historic walk around Camden, a walk along the Nepean River cycleway, a cycle or walk around and through many of the suburbs (such as a walk around Harrington Park Lake); or a trip to one of several wineries in the district.



Camden offers a choice of diverse high quality restaurants and cafes, some of which have been the recipients of Tourism Awards. The range of food culinary tastes can be satisfied with Italian, Chinese, Indian, Malaysian, Thai and Lebanese cookery. There is also a selection of contemporary Australian food, sited throughout the Camden LGA. Camden's mild climate from Spring to Autumn encourages the advantages of eating outdoors at various locations, especially along the main street of Camden.



There are a number of galleries in the Camden area which provide a never-ending range of art, and craft, to inspect and to purchase. Struggletown provides a small oasis in which to inspect a range of paintings, prints and leadlight art and to enjoy lunch, dinner or afternoon tea. Council also has an Art Gallery, displaying its collection of paintings, generally purchased as part of the Annual Camden Art Competition. This collection is on display in the gallery of the Camden Civic Centre. Antiques are on also display in a small number of outlets across the LGA.



...a gallery should enhance the life of the ordinary individual with things of great beauty

- Malcolm Boyd, Director of Boyd Fine Art Gallery, Struggletown

We need to encourage people to be viewing and buying art right in their own home town. What a pleasure it is to think that if they support the local galleries, then everyone else benefits long term from the point of view of their place.

- Nan Howard, Director, Camden Fine Art Gallery

Opportunities for Participation in Recreation and Leisure

Council naturally advocates the principles of Equal Opportunity for all and equally works towards the position of no-discrimination in fostering all aspects and opportunities for recreation and leisure

Naturally participation of both sexes is encouraged in all forms of recreation and leisure activities, from traditional mixed participation sports such as equestrian events through to open opportunities for participation in sports such as soccer which provides for every child.

Disabled access and participation opportunities are to be fostered through practical access and facility design and in the opportunity to be involved and engaged in a range of activities.

Participation in less active leisure pastimes are open to all, from the family picnic, a visit to the library, swimming for exercise, training or fun, shopping at a range of country style markets, participation in all forms of art, and open social events.

Criteria for the Location of District and Regional Level Recreation Facilities

Council's Open Space Strategy is accompanied by an Open Space Framework Plan that assists in the strategic planning of open space in Camden. The location of District and Regional level open space areas shall be generally consistent with this Plan and District and Regional recreation facilities shall be located to complement the Open Space Framework Plan.

Facilities of a formal nature such as playing fields, stadiums, indoor recreation facilities, etc, should generally be located in areas that are not subject to frequent flood inundation. Facilities of an informal or passive nature such as district and regional cycle tracks, horse trails, picnic grounds etc, may be appropriately located within flood prone areas.

District and Regional level recreation facilities should be directly and safely accessible from a collector or arterial road. All facilities shall be accessible by pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users. Locations for district and regional level recreation facilities shall be determined having regard to Council's Bike Plan and existing or proposed bus routes.

The topography of the land shall be appropriate to the nature of the recreational facility. For example, facilities requiring level playing fields, significant structures and/or large areas of car parking shall be located on relatively flat land, while facilities of an informal nature may be located on undulating land. Important scenic views and prominent ridge tops are not appropriate places for significant structures associated with district or regional level recreational facilities.

Existing stands of remnant vegetation shall not be cleared to provide space for district or regional level recreation facilities. Areas of significant remnant vegetation may be associated with informal or passive recreation facilities.



Additional work will be undertaken by Council to identify possible locations for different types of district and regional level recreation facilities, based upon the criteria noted above, to assist in forward planning exercises for the Camden LGA.

Design Aspects

The provision of all facilities is to consider the historic, environmental, and archaeological context and constraints of the site in the development of a practical design to address the functional needs of the facility.

Design is not only to blend the environment aspects of the particular site but is also to consider and address the architectural styles and its connection to the abutting neighbourhood or Place



This strategy aims to recognise the nature of these *Living Spaces Friendly Places & Quality Lifestyles* and to develop, build upon, complement and enhance the provision of these services and their use.

Our Community

For the last decade Camden has been growing and changing rapidly, moving from its rural background to become an urban community, yet still focussed around its rural heart.



Our community is growing and changing rapidly with increasing demands for services and rising expectations.

The majority of residential growth has centred around Narellan Vale, Mount Annan, Currans Hill and Harrington Park – these are areas north and east of Narellan.



The new communities consist mostly of two parent families with young or teenage children, who have no previous association with Camden Local Government Area. This means that they have limited networks and connections within the community.

Interestingly from the ABS 2001 census:

- Camden's population has reached 43,945, an increase of 11,836 or 37% over the 1996 census population figure
- Camden's population is made up of:
 - 21% under 11 years of age
 - Almost 40% of are under 25 years of age
 - 85% of the population is under 55 years of age
- approximately 80% of the population who are in paid employment have the need to commute outside the local government area each day to work
- Camden's average household size has decreased from 3.5 persons in 1981 to 2.2 persons in 2001, below the Sydney average of 2.6 persons per household
- There has been an increase in one parent families within Camden to 12.5% of our families



The region is rich in country lifestyle, which we still maintain and are immensely proud of

- female, community voice, Camden

- 51% of the population represent the total labour force of the community, with 68% in full time employment, 29% in part time employment and 4% unemployed
- 80% of Camden's population are Australian born which is high in comparison to the Sydney SD figure of 62%. 16% of Camden's population were born overseas far less than the average for the Sydney SD of 31%; similarly 8% of Camden's population were born overseas in non-English speaking countries as compared to 22% of for the Sydney SD. Indigenous people represent 1.2% of Camden's population
- Camden has a high percentage of professional, tradespersons, and clerical occupations within the LGA

Camden is home to a range of people who all have individual views of their home, lifestyle and neighbourhood:

I like Mount Annan because there is a leisure centre

- female, 9 years, Narellan Vale

My house and my family

- female, 11 years, Narellan Vale

Space, river and creek

- male, 9 years, Catherine Fields

- Car travel is the most heavily preferred mode of travel to work (higher than across Sydney), due to the geographical distance to a train station; and bus use and walking are less preferred modes of travel the across Sydney due to employment opportunities.
- Camden households have a much higher (45%) ownership of two or more vehicles than the Sydney statistical district (52%), reflecting the isolation from major public transport opportunities and also the higher incomes earned in the Camden area
- Camden is currently growing at a rate of 8% per annum.
- The percentage of housing ownership in Camden has decreased in comparison to the Sydney SD, which may reflect the higher rates of new housing being built. Similarly 88% of housing are currently separate housing, far in excess of the Sydney average of 59%
- Christianity remains the noted religious affiliation of the majority of the community at 80%



It is within this context that Council must ensure that recreation and leisure services and facilities are delivered, to serve, not only existing and current residents of Camden; but to also recognise and to include the changing needs and expectations of new residents of Camden to become an inclusive and engaging city.



Camden's Communities' Voices

In order to plan for our community's recreation and leisure needs it is important to not only understand the composition of the current community and the trends in the community's growth, but to also understand the communities opinions of their recreation and leisure environment, facilities and services.



Council's Cultural Mapping process was similarly invaluable in gauging the direct comments and position of many facets of our community on their family based, cultural recreation needs; and the opportunities which the community not only take up but also would like to be able to access.

The Cultural Map has been beneficial to cultural tourism, art related industries, public art policy, parks and recreation planning, strategic land use, leisure and sport facilities; and to ensure and maintain the community's sense of cultural wellbeing and community participation by its citizens.

Cultural tourism:

Camden Show has been going for 118 years and it is one of the great traditions of Camden. We take pride in that it is one of the local country shows that has all the exhibits you will ever see at an old-fashioned show. It has horses, cattle and poultry, hall events where people compete in cookery and handicrafts. Local businesses also exhibit their trades. The Camden Show is a fabulous event for the local area.

- David Head, Vice President, Camden Show Society, 2002

Council undertook a program of broad consultation and research through a consultant specialising in sport, leisure and tourism demand analysis. Surveys and focus group consultations were undertaken to understand the communities' views on the current standards of maintenance and provision of recreation and leisure services and facilities, and the need for additional and varied sports and leisure pursuits.

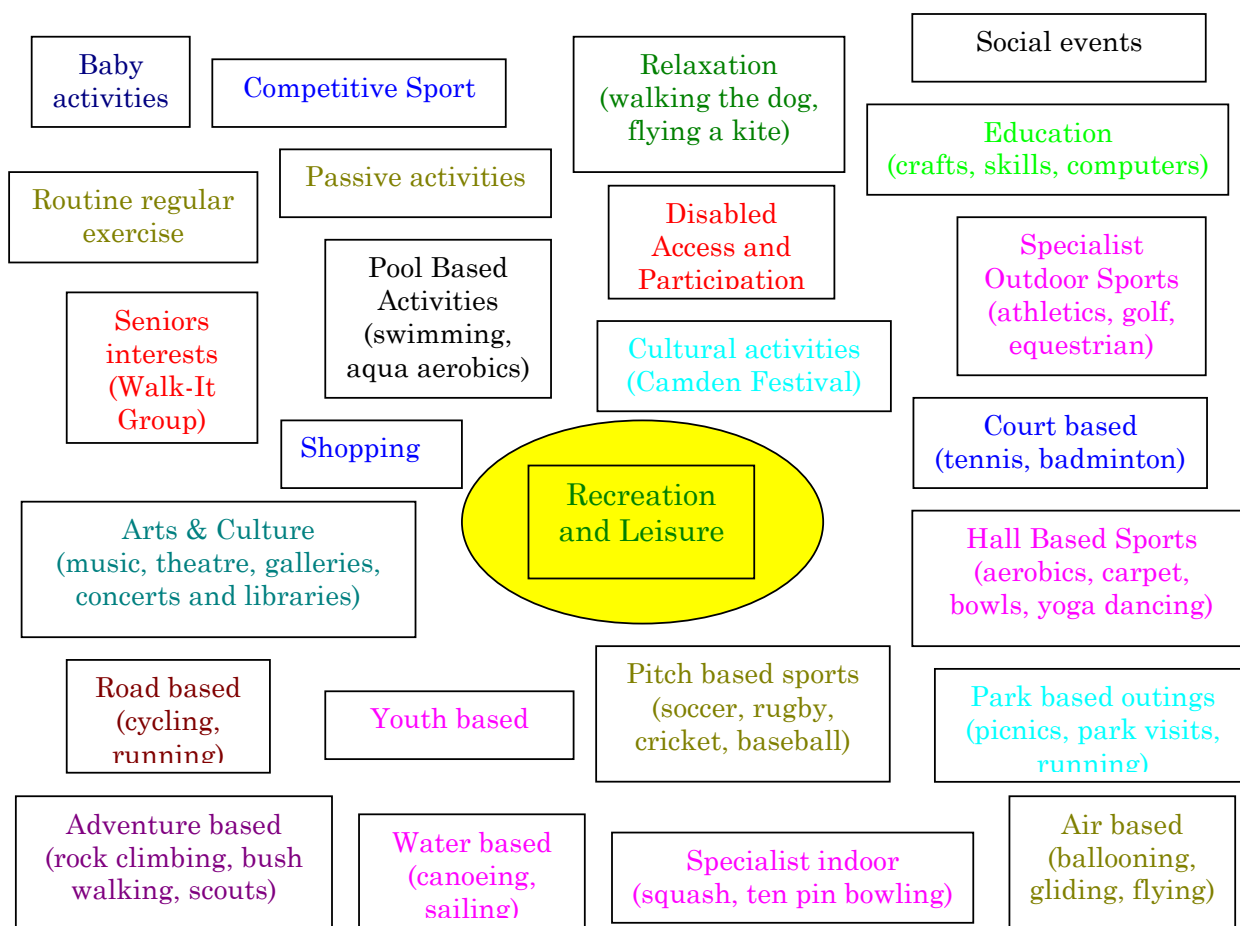


Focus Groups were arranged and participants were invited to attend to provide their opinions on a range of topics. The focus groups involved people from a cultural and linguistic diverse background, sporting clubs, older people, people with a disability and families with children.

The focus groups were designed to elicit and understand the needs of specific stakeholder groups whose voice might otherwise go unnoticed in the broader analysis of the communities' practices, current recreation needs and desires in this field.

A school survey and a general comments phone survey were also undertaken in order to sample the community's views in relation to recreation and leisure.

An overview was established on the spectrum of ideals and perspectives which make up what can frequently be the very personal topic of recreation and leisure for each group, portion of the community and sporting groups. The aspects of recreation and leisure that were identified through consultation included:



From these contacts, consultation and input an approach to enhance existing facilities and services and to develop *Living Spaces Friendly Places & Quality Lifestyles* has evolved.



Community expectations of future recreation and leisure services and facilities

Camden's community expectations of future participation in a broad range of recreation and leisure pursuits were sourced from a Resident Survey. The results of which were compared with Sydney metropolitan area rates, and then adjusted to reflect Camden's age-structure.

On the basis of this comparison, information on activities people would like to participate in, and the proportion of recreation and leisure activities taking place outside of the Camden area, were collated. The results produced 'consensus' participation rates, which can be seen as target participation rates, around which Camden's future recreation and leisure facilities and services can be based. These participation rates were translated into local facility and service standards of provision.

These provision standards were compared with current provision rates in the Camden local government area and any deficiencies were identified.

The survey revealed the following comments when reviewing *"levels of satisfaction with current recreation and leisure facilities and services"*:

General Comments



- There are generally high levels of satisfaction with the provision of facilities by Camden Council across the local government area (for the general provision of sportsgrounds and amenities in Council reserves)
- There are high levels of satisfaction with maintenance generally for playing fields
- However lower levels of satisfaction were noted for Council's open spaces
- Lower levels of satisfaction with the provision of information and services for particular community groups

Sporting Facilities



- Sporting groups value the commitment of Council to the provision and maintenance of facilities
- Council facilities are generally ranked as being satisfactory to very good
- Some problems with the provision of specific facilities for sport were seen as particularly problematic (such as for cricket)

School Sport & Recreation



- Schools are regular users of Council facilities
- All facilities were ranked satisfactory to very good with the exception of Onslow Park, ranked unsatisfactory for athletics

Barriers/Constraints Identified by the Community to Participation

- A lack of time was seen as the major constraint affecting participation
- A lack of information was also noted as a significant constraining factor

Senior Citizens



- A good range of recreation opportunities within the community (such as swimming groups, exercise groups, bowling clubs)
- Opportunities for informal recreation provided by Council managed open space, walking tracks, cycleways and parks are valued as a community resource
- Opportunities for less mobile and more home bound senior citizens were restricted

People with Disabilities



- Council was seen as generally supportive of residents with a disability
- The group does not require “special services” – typically these groups are able to access services generally available to the community

Comment received during the Disability Focus Group consultation:

What we need is family friendly areas rather than just disability friendly (facilities)
- Bob Lester, Community Development Coordinator, Families in Partnership



Themes Arising from Community Consultation

In developing the *Living Spaces Friendly Places & Quality Lifestyles Recreation Strategy*, the following principles and values were identified and observed, by the consultant during their consultation process, throughout the course of their study.



The themes observed support and develop the three elements of the Recreation Strategy:

Living Spaces

Accessibility

To plan and provide the inclusion and access to recreation and leisure facilities for all people.

To consider the needs of those members of the community who may not be in a position to adequately represent their various interests.

Connectivity/Integration

To provide connections and linkages between recreation and leisure facilities/community nodes, and develop safe pedestrian, pram and bicycle connections to encourage greater use of non-vehicular transport.

To encourage the co-location and sharing of recreation and leisure facilities between and within compatible uses.

To allow for flexibility and adaptability to suit changing community needs.

Community Safety

To ensure that public spaces and facilities are designed and maintained in accordance with the principles of community safety and environmental design (Crime Prevention through Environmental Design).

Quality

To ensure that all recreation and leisure facilities comply with 'intended use' performance requirements and Australian Design Standards.

Sustainable Use

To ensure the provision of facilities employ ecologically sustainable development and environmentally sensitive design principles; through the materials and energy sources used, ongoing maintenance considerations; and for the long-term maintenance opportunities for future generations.

Friendly Places

Building Social Capital

To ensure that the facilities and services provided for any place build upon the social capital of the area.

Protection of Cultural, Historical and Environmental Values

To provide recreation and leisure facilities which conserve and minimally impact upon recognised cultural, historical and environmental values.

Diversity of Landscape Settings and Recreational Opportunities

To encourage the development of diverse landscape settings that the nature and history of the Places being developed.

Quality Lifestyles

Reflecting Place and People

To develop facilities and services which reflect the community, neighbourhood and history of the place which it is serve.

Community Engagement

To support and encourage community involvement in the planning, design and management of recreation and leisure facilities reflecting the history and values of their Place.

To develop partnerships with the community which optimise the best use of resources.

Cooperation

To work in partnership with State Government Agencies and private landowners to ensure the effective provision and management of land and recreation and leisure opportunities.

Information

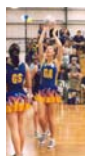
To promote information about recreation and leisure opportunities, the benefits of participation, and the importance of sustainable management.



Results of Camden Recreation Demand Survey

The Camden Recreation Demand Survey, commissioned from UTS, of current facilities and services compared to Australian based provision rates, produced the following results:

Formal Activities/Facilities



- Through a comparison of S94 provision rates
 - there is a current deficiency in large halls (two court or greater sports halls with carparking) and a surplus in small halls (community halls used for martial arts, dancing, etc)
 - there was an over provision of large pitch reserves or ovals (which accommodate say cricket and/or Australian Rules football) across the LGA for the provision of these sports in 2003
 - the current athletics facility satisfies the demand (by number)
 - there is a deficit of standard outdoor courts which will accommodate sports such as tennis
 - there is an under provision of “standard” pitches to accommodate sports such as hockey
- Netball/basketball is in balance with demand
- Squash courts in adequate provision
- Ten-pin bowling, as a regional recreation, is currently accommodated in Campbelltown
- Weight training/fitness centres vary in size, provided as commercial ventures – is in likely under supply
- Athletics is a popular activity, likely to grow as the population increases, there is a need for a designated athletics space or suitably adapted multi-use facility
- Camden is adequately supplied with golf courses, with many users coming from outside Camden

Informal Activities/Facilities



- Activities in this group are highly specialised and make use of a mixture of general and purpose built facilities
- Air based sports are highly a specialised recreation pursuit operating from Camden Airport – which currently provides a range of activities satisfying need
- Motor sports are a regional phenomenon and may warrant special considerations given the location of Oran Park Raceway (in the context of the development of Bringelly and abutting residential development)
- Jogging and running require no special facilities but generally takes place on public roads and open space

- Picnicking and barbecuing are important family activities in Camden – with implications for open space development
- Walking is the most popular of all physical activities in Camden – the road, footpath, and cycleway networks address the need for this activity
- Bushwalking/rock climbing areas are primarily a state concern
- Consideration of placement and development of sport spectating on a large scale is generally linked to regional facilities and sports and therefore needs collaboration with state bodies
- Cycling is amongst the most popular of all physical activities, involving considerations in the location and arrangement of cycleways and the road network, both local and state roads
- Dancing is a popular activity among children. Council has a role to play in fostering this activity within new and existing indoor facilities
- Roller sports including skateboarding is engaged in by some 30% of children aged 5 to 14 years – Council is facilitating the development of a skatepark facility

Open Space



- When Council's open space assets of 589ha, state owned open space of 390ha and private golf courses of 156ha are taken into account – Council provides over 1100ha of open space, or 28ha per 1000 population this is well above the standard of provision
- Dependant upon design and function (local, district and regional) the provision of open space is the responsibility of a variety of authorities
- In respect of strategic planning of regional open space, Council is involved with interaction with abutting Councils and state government authorities
- District open space is focussed in the Camden/South Camden areas
- At a suburb level, Harrington Park is over provided with open space through the developer's use of the Narellan Creek basin
- Mount Annan has less open space per capita, but has good access to regional open space



What this means for Recreation & Leisure Services in 2025

This Strategy endeavours to realise the outcome expressed in *Camden 2025*:

‘A Camden community that has access to and participates in a range of quality recreation and leisure experiences, realising a sense of well-being, inclusiveness and identity.’

The results of the commissioned Camden Recreation Demand Survey indicate that Council has currently achieved a high satisfaction level with the provision of open Space for the community.

Council established provision rates for a range of sports through its ***Open Space Strategy***, in 2002, these rates provide for both passive and active recreation. Community service needs for the communities are similarly provided.



The application of *Living Spaces Friendly Places & Quality Lifestyles* strategy will endeavour to work towards providing a high standard of facility delivery, within the public realm addressing the stakeholders needs for the practical usage, as well as the presentation, of these community building:

- the **Space** in which all facilities are sited, through the design and function of the facility, and particularly the needs it is to address
- deliver facilities which have a high recognition of **Place**. The individual character of the neighbourhood will be recognised and utilised within the physical design of structures and facilities, to confirm the neighbourhood's history and individual character
- through design, provide for a broad range of **Lifestyle** choices for the residents of Camden to provide a sense of community which is inclusive all groups within the community

Living Spaces Friendly Places & Quality Lifestyles endeavours to create a unified approach to recreation and leisure for the benefit of the community

Summary of Major Strategic Directions





This Recreation Strategy leads to the development and support of the following key strategic directions:

Living Spaces

This Strategy aims to complement our existing passive and active open spaces and to use these assets to create *Living Spaces* which are accessible to all residents through:

- Camden Council will provide and maintain a broad range of
 - sportsfields (generally multipurpose playing fields allowing for both summer and winter seasonal sports),
 - passive recreation areas both formal and natural reserves (such as Macarthur Park and Gundungurra Reserve),
 - cycleways (such as the much used Nepean River Cycleway); and
 - neighbourhood parks (generally as a means of connection local areas but also providing a range of playground equipment)
- Sporting fields shall be located, where feasible, within walking distance of the majority of residents in the urban areas.
- Locations for District and Regional Open Space shall be determined having regard to:
 - the Open Space Framework Plan contained within Council's Open Space Strategy 2002
 - flooding issues as they relate to the proposed use of the site
 - accessibility and connectivity
 - topography
 - natural capital and scenic qualities of the site
- Council shall undertake further spatial analysis of possible locations for a range of different types of District and Regional recreation facilities
- Cycleways shall be networked within the urban areas to provide practical off street pedestrian and cycle access to transport, schools, shopping, and community and sporting facilities
- Council maintains a position of providing multi-purpose playing fields to maximise the use of these high maintenance fields. This position allows for the development of grounds which provide not only for summer and winter competitions, but also promotes the use of a single playing field for a range of uses within any week. Our playing fields may be allocated to one sport for weekend competition sport but may also host two or more sports for training purposes, for evening training or further competition throughout the week. The aim of this policy is to provide a diverse range of open spaces which can be used in many ways, and to ensure that the majority of sports enthusiasts are catered for within the public realm.
- Council encourages the use of the fields, located abutting primary and secondary schools, during school hours for sports classes, athletic events and for Public Schools Sports Association competitions.



- The cross usage of school facilities and playing fields for sport and other community pursuits, outside of school hours, is to be encouraged and to be developed through negotiations with the Department of Education and Training.
- 
- Council continues to examine diverse means of providing practical open space to suit the requirements of our residents; such as land purchase for specific purposes, provision by developers (in cash or through a works in kind agreement, provided to Council's standards) and by government assistance.
 - Creation of a range of parks maintenance standards, such as
 - A - quality grassed sportsfields, used weekly for competition sport (maintained fortnightly to a standard suited to the sport being played)
 - B - playgrounds and high profile areas, such as Macarthur Park (weekly maintenance)
 - C - general reserve maintenance (maintained on four week cycle)
 - D - passive reserves
 - E - road side verges (quarterly maintenance)
 - F - natural areas (half yearly maintenance).
 - Plans of Management will be prepared both on a neighbourhood basis (addressing say the urban reserves in Mount Annan, Narellan Vale and Currans Hill) and for specific purposes (such as the particular character and needs of Kingsbush Reserve or Macarthur Park, Camden or the natural reserves such as Gundungurra Reserve, Narellan Vale).
 - Environmental sustainability will be integral to the design and development of our Parks. This component of planning for the future of Camden's environment shall cover appropriate planting of landscape areas to reduce the need for intensive hand watering, practical solar and energy efficient designs for our sporting and community facilities in Camden's open space reserves, the use of water harvesting to recycle stormwater to irrigate our playing fields; and to provide the appropriate shade for our buildings and carpark.
- 
- Camden's community buildings and parklands will be developed using "safer by design" principles to plan for the safety of all users.
 - Park lighting will progressively be provided to areas of intense usage of an evening and in winter; such as around sporting reserves used for training purposes.
- 
- Tennis court lighting will be provided to fully illuminate the courts to ensure that play is both safe and practical throughout the year.
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- All sportsfields are provided with training lights from inception, to ensure that the field is adequately illuminated for winter training for competitive sports for all ages and grades of play
- All lighting provided to all forms of sporting facilities will be operated on a cut off timing basis to ensure properties abutting these facilities are not unduly affected by the use of the playing fields outside strict time limits.
- Basic facilities are to be provided for all sportsfields, providing toilet facilities and amenities for young players, ranging to full changerooms for more intensely used youth and adult sports grounds.
- Existing planting within new reserves retain dominant and natural plantings. New planting will be endemic to the area, ensuring only hardy trees and shrubs which enhance the natural environment are planted to complement these parks. Plantings on new reserves will similarly be chosen to complement the facilities on the new reserves, but will be restricted in quantity for reasons of impacts upon on-going maintenance.



- Ensure there are opportunities to engage with the natural environment, through the extension of pedestrian/bicycle/walkways along the Nepean River, and through the natural reserves of the Camden area are utilised.
- Maintenance of natural areas by Bushcare groups will be fostered and developed as new areas are taken over by Council.
- Volunteer maintenance of Council's small "pocket" and neighbourhood parks by abutting and nearby residents is encouraged to develop local community spirit.
- Develop picnic areas at points of interest to visitors and residents.
- Cycle and canoe/kayak hire on the Nepean River opportunities are investigated taking into account the maintenance of the environmental balance on the river.
- Provide a range of spaces for youth services that reflect youth culture through the design and interior layout of the facility or service.

Friendly Places

The following strategies aim to complement the existing ambience of Camden and to enhance the feeling of **Place** within each neighbourhood to produce *Friendly Places* which are safe and welcoming to all residents.

- To acknowledge the sense of **Place**, each area possesses, by developing playgrounds and park furniture which will enhance the feel and the history of the area. Yet to use a common signage profile to distinctively reinforce the separate identity of each suburb or **Place**.



- Take a **Place** based focus to the design of Parks and community facilities to encourage innovative and creative approaches; utilising public/urban art to highlight **Place** making.

- Public Art will be incorporated, where feasible, into the design of major parks to accentuate the sense of **Place** in this neighbourhood. It is envisaged these pieces will be placed in the larger passive and active parks and reserves.



- All major facilities to be built to serve the community will be designed to include a facet of public art within the fabric of the building or landscaping. In many instances this will highlight the history, natural environment or importance of the area; again reinforcing the feeling of **Place**.

- Develop a program that captures the historic significance and the contribution of cultural groups to the fabric of the Camden Community, and to the distinction of each **Place** within greater Camden.

- Connectivity, both within the suburbs and beyond, will be developed through the bike and pedestrian paths constructed between community nodes of interest. Safe open paths constructed through the interconnecting open space and drainage easements will foster the accessibility of the area.



- As family grow there will be a range of playgrounds within an acceptable walking distance to challenge the young user's growing skills and for their pleasure and enjoyment; and ensuring that each suburb contains a range of playgrounds for children and youths. The playgrounds will be planned for a selection of age groups and will be spaced across the neighbourhood so that a selection of playgrounds are in close walking distance for children to enjoy.

- Park lighting is progressively provided to areas of intense usage to raise and foster community safety.

- Ensure the facilities and services provided for any **Place** build upon the social capital of the area

- Protect and conserve the historic context of each **Place** and the greater Camden area

- Provide recreation and leisure facilities which conserve and minimally impact upon the recognised cultural, historic and environmental values of each **Place**

- Encourage the development of diverse landscape settings to support a range of recreation and sporting activities that reflect the values and interests of residents and for visitors

Quality Lifestyles

Through the development of these vital *Living Spaces* these inviting open space will complement and play their role in the development of the *Friendly Places* which surround them. The following strategies will support and encourage the development friendly and safe neighbourhoods which is the basis of providing *Quality Lifestyles* for the community:

- To foster as many opportunities for recreation and leisure in all its forms recognised by the community to occur in an environment conducive to a fine and enviable lifestyle.
- endeavour to provide a range of opportunities for the community to become involved in and to adopt. These endeavours will support and foster the arts, cultural activities, education, social events, relaxation in its many forms, volunteer organisations and community based social groups.
- Develop facilities and services which reflect the community, neighbourhood and history of the *Places* which they serve and respond to.
- To support and encourage community involvement in the planning, design and management of recreation and leisure facilities.
- To develop partnerships with the community which optimise the best use of resources.
- To work in partnership with the State Government Agencies and private landowners to ensure the effective provision and management of land and recreation and leisure opportunities.
- To promote to residents and visitors information about available recreation and leisure opportunities, the benefits of participation, and the importance of sustainable management.
- Foster the celebration of ethnic diversity and multi-cultural nature of the Camden community and the Macarthur region. Supporting the celebration of social and ethnic traditions through expansion of the Camden Festival over time.
- Foster, through education programs, the values of daily exercise and a healthy lifestyle and their contribution towards *Quality Lifestyles* for all residents.
- Continue to promote the establishment of a range of passive parks and reserves and a network of paths/cycleways throughout the newer release areas for a variety of distinct uses; such as picnics, family gatherings, flying a kite, reading, or teaching children to ride a bicycle.
- To develop the profile and history implicit in the historic Macarthur Park, recognising its values to the community.



- Recognise the aesthetic values of the presence of public art to the development of culture to enhancing the lifestyle for the residents of Camden.
- Provision of accessibility opportunities to all residents for recreation and leisure pursuits
- Continue the delivery of planned developments reflective of the natural assets of the area
- Appreciate the diversity of the population which makes up Camden as it develops, accepting and recognising the possibilities for new cultures and traditions being garnered through this community
- Recognise and foster the diversity of the community and its contribution to the community; reflected as an instance in the diverse range of new restaurants, cafes and dining opportunities across the Camden area.
- Recognise the opportunities for new forms of recreation which may be introduced through world trends or community preferences.
- Recognise the need to assist the development of regional art and cultural facilities (crafts, arts, theatre, galleries, concerts and music groups) supporting the participants and the growth of these Arts in Camden and across the region
- Understanding that certain recreation and leisure opportunities may also need to be provided on a regional scale, such as theatre opportunities, large scale shopping opportunities and certain recreation facilities such as ten pin bowling/badminton/sailing/rock climbing options
- Foster the development of regional recreation and leisure opportunities within Camden, as appropriate, such as Bicentennial Equestrian Park
- Foster a full range of family based activities, reflective of the community profile and needs



Living Spaces Friendly Places & Quality Lifestyles



How will this be funded

There are a number of opportunities for funding the strategic directions noted within this *Living Spaces Friendly Places & Quality Lifestyles* strategy:

Predominantly works to create new reserves and parks in release areas and within new subdivision developments are financed through the provisions of Section 94 of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979. This funding avenue can be used to fund the provision of planned sportsfields, passive recreation parks, walkways/cycleways, playgrounds, amenities and clubrooms; and in addition the provision of public art within our parks and buildings. The Master planning of new large-scale developments will ensure that the Section 94 funding mechanism addresses the needs of our new communities before they arrive.

Grants will be sourced towards the provision of facilities and the addition of Art components and pieces to complement planned buildings, facilities and parks.



Further opportunities for donations of complementary art works in keeping with the nature of the locale and neighbourhood it is to be set, in particular the [Place](#) and community it is to enhance will be sought from time to time for large scale projects; provided they address criteria set for the context of the site in which it is to be placed.

Specific government support and funding for the development of local artists will similarly be fostered, where practical, towards their unique contribution to the evolution of public art within Camden: in particular into passive reserves and children's playgrounds.

Services and programs which contribute to our healthy life style will be supported by Council and through funding sourced from associated or complementary Federal and State Funding.

The development of joint partnerships with Federal and State government bodies, such as the Department of Sport Recreation and Tourism, will assist to expand the scope and standard of facilities and services which Council can provide. Such partnerships will foster the development of regional facilities within the Camden local government area.

Similarly Council is keen to meet with local, regional and state sporting bodies to discuss the possibility of joint partnerships to promote and develop their sport within Camden, to foster participation and recognition of these sports within the community.



Conclusion

The way you spend and invest in your recreation and leisure time and how you develop and enjoy this time is a personal commitment to your own healthy [lifestyle](#).

In preparing this strategy Council has endeavoured to take into account the personal nature of recreation and leisure and referenced it within and to the unique context of Camden.

Camden is developing and growing at one of the fastest rates within the Sydney basin, and developed from a strong history of development from the settlement by John Macarthur to create an enviable lifestyle offering a broad range of recreation and leisure pursuits and services. It is understandably the destination of many under the current residential housing boom.

In meeting the challenges posed by major population expansion and economic change, Camden Council has developed this recreation and leisure strategy which capitalises on the environmental and community assets of the area.

The broad strategic directions detailed within this document are to be implemented over a ten-year period to assist in achieving and implementing the goals of Camden 2005.

The *Camden Recreation Strategy* lays out Council's approach to providing services and facilities to support and promote all forms of recreation and leisure within Camden in the future and has endeavoured to realise as noted:

'A Camden community that has access to and participates in a range of quality recreation and leisure experiences, realising a sense of well-being, inclusiveness and identity.'

to develop *Living Spaces* and *Friendly Places* which produces many opportunities for *Quality Lifestyles* for all residents and visitors to the area.

Living Spaces Friendly Places & Quality Lifestyles

