

Fairfield City Plan Top 10 Priorities Issue Paper

Priority 1 - Improved Community Safety

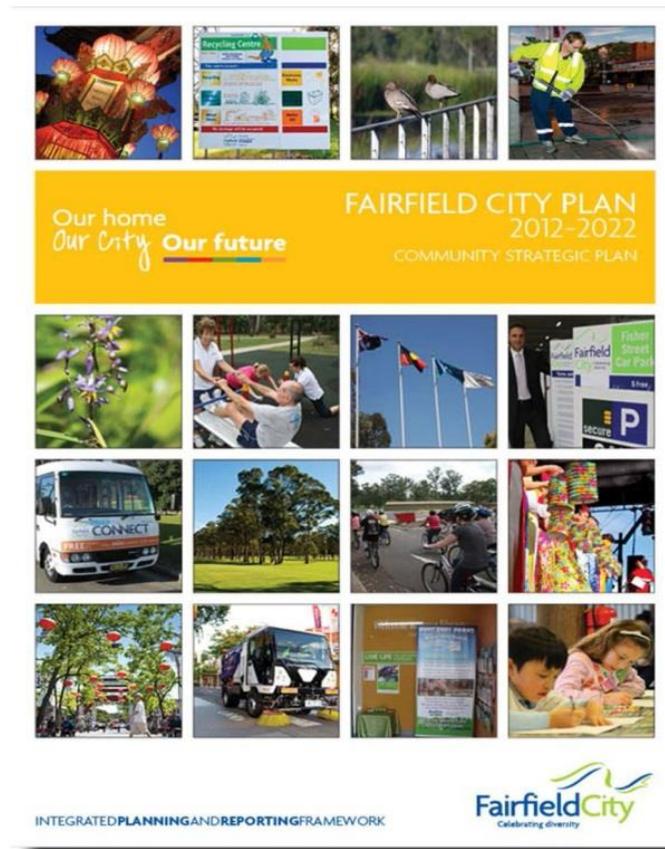


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INTRODUCTION

The Fairfield City Plan 2012-2022 is a compilation of the local community's vision, goals and priorities for Fairfield City over the next 10 years. It is important to stress that the City Plan is not the Council's plan – it belongs to the community and it summarises their views on what is important to them for the future of our City.

We all have an important role to play in delivering the future outcomes identified in the City Plan – all levels of government (Federal, State and Council), organisations, institutions, and agencies as well as every local resident and business operator.

The community came together in 2010 and again in 2012 to share their ideas about the future, and the City Plan includes a summary of that feedback in "The Top 10 Things We Would Like to See in Fairfield City by 2022". Priority number 1 on that list is Improved Community Safety.

CITY PLAN GOALS & STRATEGIES

Defines Goal 4– Being Safe and Law Abiding in Theme 1 Community Wellbeing as:

“We share core values about respect for individual rights and our responsibility to society and feel safe going about our daily lives, respecting and complying with laws and regulations supporting community order and social justice”.

- 4.1 *Reduced crime and violence*
- 4.2 *A safer and secure city*
- 4.3 *Improved public awareness of crime prevention and community safety*
- 4.4 *Effective laws and regulations*
- 4.5 *Less anti-social behaviour*
- 4.5 *Fewer accidents*

The City Plan identifies the following related strategies for achieving these goals –

- *Providing early intervention and prevention*
- *Providing community education on law and order*
- *Encouraging the reporting of crime*
- *Implementing better design to increase passive surveillance and reduce opportunities for crime/accidents to occur*
- *Ensuring fair and consistent enforcement*
- *Providing police, emergency service and other regulatory officers to meet the community's needs*
- *Identifying crime and accident hotspots*
- *Preventing vandalism and malicious damage*
- *Providing clear information about rules, regulations, processes and appropriate behaviours*
- *Providing education on road safety*

As we prepare to update the City Plan, it is timely to look back at what has changed with community safety over the last 4 years and to look forward and seek to clarify the community's future priorities.

OUTLINE OF PRIORITY (DEFINITION)

Community safety is more than just about the level of crime that exists in a community. It also embraces community attitude to providing assistance to people experiencing unsafe situations, safe environments that prevent accidents, the level, frequency and location of anti-social behaviour, and the feeling of safety by residents, workers and visitors. In many cases, the level of crime is much lower than is perceived. How safe people feel in a place is important and influences business, recreation, community participation and health.

Community safety is a complex issue to address with a number of factors that influence actual and perceived perceptions around community safety. Improving community safety requires a wide range of stakeholders, visitors and residents to work together to create a safer environment. This includes effective partnerships between police, government agencies, Council, business, community organisations and individuals.

The NSW State Government is the primary agency responsible for law enforcement and emergency management. The Commonwealth is responsible for particular areas of enforcement, such as drug importation, intelligence gathering and taxation. Local government has roles in advocacy, education, public health and safety, road and pedestrian safety and emergency management.

Community safety covers a large and diverse range of issues including:

- Crime
- Antisocial behaviour
- Emergency response to natural disasters such as fire, flooding and storms
- Public health including food safety, water safety, immunisation, contamination
- Road safety
- Public infrastructure such as parks, footpaths and roads
- Safe buildings and construction
- Safe and affordable transport options

Community safety and crime reduction is supported by a range of infrastructure, activities and legislation. Key aspects that contribute to community safety include:

- Law enforcement
- Urban design
- Behaviour in public space
- Community attitudes & education
- Road design and maintenance, pedestrian use and driving
- Alcohol and other drug use and misuse
- Public spaces – inclusion, design and management of conflicting uses
- Community norms, particularly in relation to public space and domestic violence
- Vandalism and graffiti
- Understanding the legal system and responsibilities of individuals
- Victim support
- Emergency management
- Participation and inclusion in the community
- Food safety
- Transport options

OVERVIEW OF PRIORITY IN FAIRFIELD

Fairfield City Council is active in advocating to State and Federal governments for programs, funding and services to enhance community safety. Council also has a range of partnerships aimed at increasing support for community safety programs in the area. This work includes CCTV, the Mayor's Crime Prevention and Community Safety Reference Group, regional disaster planning, road safety, flood planning and supporting the Community Drug Action Team.

CRIME

Fairfield, like all areas, experience crime. The recorded rates of crime are often lower than people think. According to the Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research (BOSCAR), the rates of most crimes in Fairfield have been stable, or decreasing, over the past 5 years. Only fraud has increased over this period. The 5 most common crimes 2014/2015 are:

- Fraud
- Malicious Damage to property
- Steal from Motor Vehicle
- Domestic Violence Assault
- Break and Enter Dwelling

There have been increases in offences such as possession/ use of Cannabis (16.3%), possession/ use of amphetamines (27.2%) and dealing/trafficking in amphetamines (16.3%). Other crimes showing increased rates are prohibited and regulated weapons offences (8.2%), Liquor Offences (28.4%) and transport regulatory offences (22%).

Both Fairfield and Cabramatta Local Area Commands (LAC) of NSW Police target particular types of crime if statistics show an increase. Specific Police operations that target particular crimes can lead to an increase in reporting that results in a higher level of reported crime, rather than an increase in the actual incidence of crime.

FLOODING

In Fairfield, the floodplain is the low-lying land next to the Georges River and the City's creeks. Major flooding occurred along lower Prospect Creek and Cabramatta Creek in August 1986 and April-May 1988. The 1986 flood caused an estimated total damage of \$4.8 million. A smaller flood in January 2001 caused damage to the upper reach of Prospect Creek. While there has been no flooding recently, ongoing work is required due to the impact of flooding on properties and businesses when it does occur.

EMERGENCY AND DISASTER MANAGEMENT

Emergencies and disasters are usually the result of natural events such as storm damage. Industrial fires that impact on natural and residential environments also occur. These cannot be predicted and the response is determined by the scale and scope of the event.

ROAD SAFETY

According to the *Road traffic crashes in New South Wales 2014 report* by TransportNSW, there were a total of 21,274 road crashes in the Fairfield LGA. This represents 5% of all crashes in the Sydney metropolitan area. There were 5 fatalities representing 6.8% of all fatalities in the Sydney metropolitan area and 6.1% of all injuries.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Domestic and Family violence is a major issue in the Fairfield LGA and ranks as the 4th most common crime in the area. The level of domestic violence assaults has remained stable over the last 5 years. Work has gone into resources to address perceived under reporting from non-English speaking residents over the past 5 years.

FOOD SAFETY

The cleanliness, health and safety of food offered are of great importance due to the impact on the health and reputation of the community that results from contaminated food. Since 2008, \$45,650 in fines have been issued to supermarkets, grocery shops and delicatessens in the Fairfield LGA. This represents over 10% of fines issued across NSW and is the highest level in the state. In addition, over 300 fines have been issued to food businesses in this period. Most fines are issued for pest infestation, unclean food preparation areas, dirty equipment and lack of accessible hand washing facilities.

PERCEPTION OF SAFETY

According to the Social Health Atlas of Australia, it was estimated in 2010 that 42.3% of the Fairfield population felt safe walking home by themselves after dark. This shows that the perception of safety in Fairfield in 2010 was slightly lower than in Sydney metropolitan area, where 47.8 % of people felt safe walking home after dark.

KEY STAKEHOLDERS

As mentioned above, community safety is a broad category of concerns and activities and there are a range of stakeholders who contribute to it.

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

The Federal Government provides many departments focus on key areas of crime such as the Australian Federal Police, National Crime Commission, Department of Social Services and the Australian Taxation Office.

NSW STATE GOVERNMENT

The NSW State Government's Police Service deal with crime and a number of other agencies are involved in activities including food safety, emergency and disaster relief, public health, construction standards and so on.

FAIRFIELD CITY COUNCIL

Fairfield City Council contributes to crime prevention, food safety, graffiti removal, enforcement of various regulations, asset maintenance and renewal, local emergency management and flood mitigation works.

NON-GOVERNMENT

Non-Government organisations have a role in education and support programs for things such as drugs and anti-bullying, social inclusion and victim support.

LOCAL BUSINESSES

Local businesses also have a duty of care to ensure the safety of their workers and customers. That they act ethically and do not undertake any form of fraud in their business practices.

MEDIA

The role of the media is particularly critical in the perception of safety.

INDIVIDUALS

Every individual has a role to play in ensuring the safety of their property, vehicle and personal safety. They also have a role to ensure that they do not partake in antisocial and/or criminal behaviour. They have a role in preventing and reporting crime and overall can assist in the perception of safety.

WHAT HAS BEEN IMPLEMENTED OVER PAST FOUR YEARS?

The NSW State Government's priorities were identified in *NSW 2021* and *South Western Sydney Regional Action Plan*. The priorities related to community safety are:

NSW 2021

Return Quality Services

*** Improve road safety**

- identify and upgrade black spots
- promote safety features in cars
- enforce speed limits and road rules
- encourage road users to drive responsibly

*** Prevent and reduce the level of crime**

- improve personal and public safety
- reduce opportunities to commit crime
- extend to communities more ways to be involved in local crime prevention

*** Prevent and reduce the level of re-offending**

- address the underlying causes of juvenile crime through early intervention & appropriate non-custodial approaches
- divert people with mental health problems away from the criminal justice system and towards the health services they need
- provide access to a range of programs to address the underlying causes of crime

*** Improve community confidence in the justice system**

- improve the efficiency of the court system
- have a transparent and robust judiciary
- provide professional & responsive support services to victims & the community

Strengthen Our Local Environment and Communities

*** Ensure NSW is ready to deal with major emergencies and natural disasters**

- defend against suburban and bushland fires
- increase hazard reduction
- increase the number of floodplain risk management plans available to support emergency management planning
- maintain preparedness to deal with biosecurity threats

South Western Sydney Regional Action Plan

Improve integrated regional transport

*** Improve road safety**

Deliver appropriate services to disadvantaged and vulnerable members of the community

*** Reduce homelessness**

The State Government has also released *NSW Making It Happen* which identifies State and Premier's priorities.

State Priorities

→ **Reducing violent crime**

LGAs to have stable or falling reported violent crime rates by 2019

Violent crime has significant impacts on individuals and communities, creating fear and reducing quality of life. The Government will work on reducing violent crime rates across the whole of NSW, not only in urban areas that tend to report higher incidences of some types of crime.

→ **Reducing adult re-offending**

Reduce adult re-offending by 5% by 2019

Re-offending rates in NSW are high, with the majority of prisoners in the state having offended before. In fact, a small group of persistent offenders is responsible for the majority of crime. The Government is working to reduce re-offending by adult offenders and improve community safety and confidence in the justice system.

→ **Reducing road fatalities**

Reduce road fatalities by at least 30% from 2011 levels by 2021

The Government is committed to making NSW roads the safest in the country. While NSW has seen significant improvements in the level of road trauma over time, road crashes are still a leading cause of death for people under 44 years of age, costing the community around \$5.4 billion in 2011. Each year there are around 42,000 recorded road crashes in NSW, with more than 26,000 people injured. To reduce road fatalities by at least 30%, the Government is putting more money into roads and working with local government to deliver road safety improvements.

Premier's Priorities

⇒ **Reducing domestic violence**

Reduce the proportion of domestic violence perpetrators re-offending within 12 months by 5%

Domestic violence has significant immediate and long-term impacts on its victims, the majority of whom are women and children. It is a leading contributor of ill health and premature death for women under 45 years, outstripping any other health risks for women in this age group. Domestic violence has one of the highest re-offending rates so we will focus our efforts on repeat offenders to reduce the rate of re-offending. This will better protect victims by predicting and preventing violent behaviour.

⇒ **Protecting our kids**

Decrease the % of children and young people re-reported at risk of significant harm by 15%

Improving the welfare and wellbeing of children and young people not only leads to better life outcomes for them, but is also our moral responsibility. The child protection system should support children and families to keep children safe and reduce the risk of them being harmed again. Reducing levels of re-reporting of children and young people at risk will demonstrate that our child protection system is becoming increasingly effective. It will indicate that children are safer and in a more stable family and general environment.

⇒ **Reducing youth homelessness**

Increase the proportion of young people who successfully move from Specialist Homelessness Services to long-term accommodation by 10%

The rate of homelessness in NSW has been increasing, with young people among the most likely to experience, or be at risk of, homelessness. Homelessness, and particularly chronic long-term homelessness, has significant impacts on the ability of young people to fully participate in society, to access education and training, and to maintain physical and mental health. The Government will work with the non-government and not-for-profit sectors to support the most vulnerable young people to maintain stable accommodation and break the cycle of chronic homelessness.

FAIRFIELD CITY COUNCIL SERVICES AND PROJECTS

After the current Council was elected in September 2012, it adopted its Delivery Program 2013 -2017 with commitments on what it would deliver over its 4 year term in office. This included how it would contribute to the community's 'Top Ten' priorities for Improved Community Safety the following were identified to be delivered.

SERVICES

Service	What does it achieve?
CCTV program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cameras in public spaces provide evidence and/or information on incidents. Expanded to Canley Heights, Horsley Park, Villawood, Fairfield Heights and Fairfield business district. Deters crime and antisocial behaviour
Compliance Investigation & Enforcement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Enforcement Officers to promote safe parking, waste disposal and control of stray or dangerous animal to deliver safer places and minimise accidents and injury. Micro chipping of domestic animals to prevent stray animals
Community Safety and Crime Prevention Plan 2013-17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Domestic and Family Violence to educate on Australian norms, legislation and services Liaison with Cabramatta and Fairfield Local Area Commands of NSW Police Conducts programs to target identified areas of crime such as theft of car number plates and home security
Mayors Crime Prevention Reference Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brings together key stakeholders including community members, business, community groups, council, police, elected representatives and residents associated with groups such as Neighbourhood Watch.
Environmental & Public Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Food safety inspections and education Cooling tower inspections to monitor for disease Coordinate with community organisations and health department to manage squalor & hoarding Prevent and deter illegal dumping Stormwater Management Plan 30 free installations of child restraint Vouchers issued per month and checks that restraints are correctly fitted Investigation of illegal dumping, including asbestos dumping in public areas
Community Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Safety Audits of public places to identify ways of improving safety and preventing crime Education on safety, community expectations Minimising harm from alcohol, drugs and gambling Increasing accessibility to community facilities Youth programs to assist in early intervention for young people at risk and reduce anti-social behaviour Parenting seminars to build the capacity of parents T-Way Committee, bringing together stakeholders to prevent criminal and antisocial behaviour on the T-Way Strengthen community participation and connection to develop crime prevention resources, improve perception of safety, increase activity in public spaces and support for individuals through a number of activities including events Apply for funding for crime prevention and community safety

Service	What does it achieve?
	initiatives
Building Control & compliance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensures that swimming pools are safely fenced to prevent drownings Ensure buildings are constructed to standard to prevent accident and injury to occupants
Asset Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintaining roads, footpaths and council buildings to ensure safety Design, management and maintenance of parks & sportsgrounds to prevent injuries and antisocial behaviour
Emergency Risk Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local Emergency Management Officer Supports State Emergency Services Coordinates with Regional and State emergencies as required
City Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Crime Prevention through Environmental Design principles incorporated into planning controls

MAJOR PROGRAMS

Major Programs	What does it achieve?
Disability Access Improvement Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure community facilities have safe access to facilities for people with impaired mobility
Footpath replacement Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Footpaths are in good repair to minimise injuries and ease of movement
New Footpath construction program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Footpaths installed to minimise conflict of use and provide safe pedestrian movement
Road rehabilitation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minimise road incidents due by ensuring good surfaces
Roads to Recovery Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design and construct roads to minimise accidents
RMS Repair Program for Regional Roads	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minimise road incidents due by ensuring good surfaces on regional roads
Blackspot Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Redesign and construction of roads that are prone to higher number of accidents
Pedestrian Access and Mobility Plan (PAMP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design and management of footpaths and road crossings to ensure safe pedestrian movement.
Local Area Traffic Management (LATM) Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design and management of roads to minimise accidents and improve traffic flow Reduce speed limit to 40kph in high pedestrian areas in Canley Heights to reduce accidents and improve pedestrian safety
Flood Mitigation Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minimise the amount of water escaping drainage and creeks as well as reducing objects that prevent the flow of water downstream to reduce flooding in residential and business areas Storm water levy provides funding for works that help prevent flooding

INITIATIVES

- Fairfield CBD - connecting footpaths
- Cabramatta footpath upgrades
- SWP Heavy vehicle access improvement
- Henty Creek Flood mitigation works – Bonnyrigg
- Fairfield Youth & Community Centre
- Drainage upgrades

QUESTIONS FOR FUTURE ENGAGEMENT

We all need more information about the community's priorities for Improved Community Safety to help advocate for the right improvements and implement the right projects/programs. Feedback from the community will be included in the next update of the Fairfield City Plan.

1. What suburb of Fairfield City do you live in?

2. How long have you lived in that suburb?

Less than 1 year

Between 1 – 5 years

More than 5 years

3. What do you think are the things that make up community safety?

4. What are your top 5 improvements for community safety?

5. Community Perceptions of safety. Please rate your agreement with the following statements.

Statement	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I feel part of my community					
I trust people in my neighbourhood					
I feel safe when I go out in my neighbourhood					
I feel safe when I'm at home					
I believe everything the media reports on crime					

REFERENCES

For more information on the issues raised in this paper -

NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research, September 2014, *New South Wales Recorded Crime Statistics: NSW Statistical Areas and Local Government Areas*.

From <http://www.bocsar.nsw.gov.au/> Bureau of Crimes Statistics and Research

List of recent penalty notices issued to Fairfield Council businesses for food safety issues:

<http://www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au/penaltynotices/default.aspx?template=results&query=fairfield>

Australian Institute of Food Safety <https://www.foodsafety.com.au/2014/06/where-not-to-eat-in-sydney-food-safety-fines-in-2013/>

http://www.fairfieldcity.nsw.gov.au/info/20008/health_and_safety- Fairfield Council website detailing health and safety initiatives of Council

Road traffic crashes in New South Wales 2014 – produced by Transport NSW at <http://roadsafety.transport.nsw.gov.au/downloads/crashstats2014.pdf>

<http://www.fairfieldcity.nsw.gov.au/info/20060/> flood plains on council website

Social Health Atlas of Australia <http://www.publichealth.gov.au/phidu//maps-data/data/#lga>

Our Home Our City Our Future –Fairfield City Plan 2010-2020 & 2012-2022 Community Strategic Plan – Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework - Fairfield City Council

Council's 2013-2017 Revised Delivery Program

<http://www.fairfieldcity.nsw.gov.au/default.asp?iDocID=10835&iNavCatID=47&iSubCatID=3478>

Council's 2013-2014, 2014-2015, 2015-2016 Operational Plan

http://www.fairfieldcity.nsw.gov.au/upload/file/2015-2016_Operational_Plan_FINAL.pdf