

Fairfield City Plan

Top 10 Priorities Issue Paper

Priority 8 - Access to Schools, Universities and TAFE

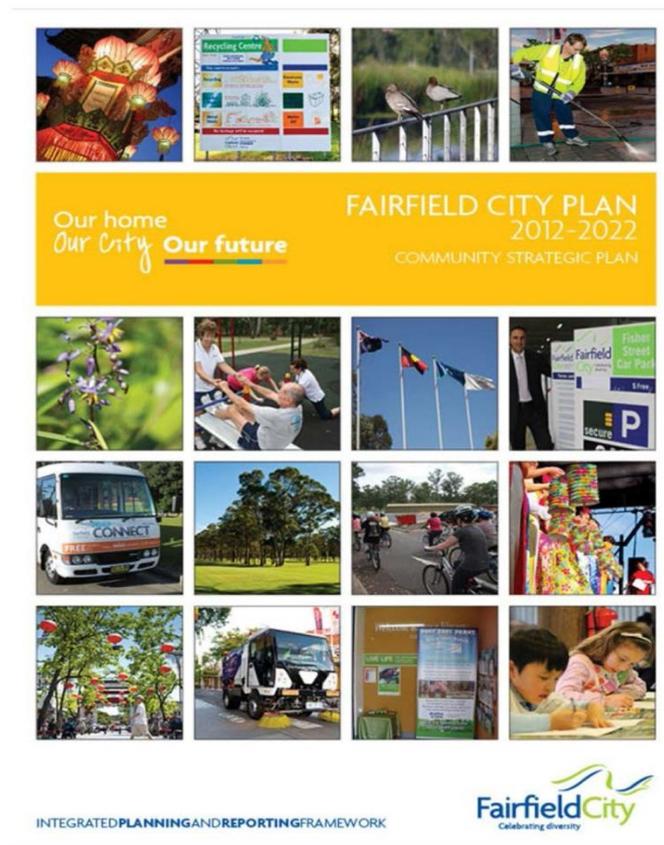


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INTRODUCTION

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, 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 8 on that list is [access to schools, universities and TAFE](#). The City Plan recognises the importance of the community having access to education and training, stating that “higher than average levels of unemployment, especially youth unemployment, place increased importance on access to education and training.”¹

CITY PLAN GOALS & STRATEGIES

The City Plan defines Goal 3 – Being Healthy and Active in Theme 1 Community Wellbeing as:

We can satisfy our needs to meet our changing life requirements and ambitions.

- 3.1 A good future for our children
- 3.2 Life long learning and training opportunities
- 3.3 A range of housing types that cater for different life stages, family needs and levels of affordability
- 3.4 Accessible care and support services
- 3.5 A range of employment opportunities, job satisfaction and income to support a good standard of living for residents
- 3.6 Reduce poverty
- 3.7 Social impacts are considered in all decisions which will affect the community's quality of life

¹ 2012-2022 Fairfield City Plan – Community Strategic Plan. pp. 37.

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

- Provide care and support services and facilities for all sectors of the community including children
- Provide information to enable informed decisions on quality of life issues such as education/skills, social networks, work/life balance
- Provide a mix of housing types for all sectors
- Develop a strong economy with a range of job opportunities
- Tailor education and training to meet the needs and interests of the community
- Provide care and support services for people with high risk needs i.e. homeless, migrants, refugees and people with disabilities
- Provide a diverse range of opportunities for people to be engaged in community life

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

OUTLINE OF PRIORITY (DEFINITION)

Education is a lifelong pursuit that begins early in life prior to school and extends throughout life into retirement. It includes both formal education and informal education.

Formal education is delivered through early learning centres, schools, TAFEs and universities. Both formal and informal education is supported by libraries and access to online resources.

Access to education requires people to have the ability to access physical sites like schools and universities but also to have virtual access via the Internet to education delivered online.

OVERVIEW OF PRIORITY IN FAIRFIELD

Education in Fairfield City is characterised by:

- Early learning centres provided by both the Council and private operators.
- Public and private schools.
- TAFE college located at Wetherill Park.
- There being no university so that people living in Fairfield need to travel outside of the area to attend courses offered by universities, such as those located in Sydney and Western Sydney. (Note the Western Sydney University has campuses located in neighbouring areas such as Parramatta, Westmead and Kingswood.
- Distance learning provided online by various tertiary institutions.
- Vocational training opportunities.
- Access to the University of the Third Age.
- Navitas English Fairfield College is an Adult Migrant English Program service provider.
- Public libraries provided by the Council.

People living in Fairfield City also have access to educational facilities in neighbouring local government areas and across Sydney.

There are many barriers that impact the ability of people living in Fairfield City to access education. These include, but are not limited to, some of the following factors:

- the levels of socio-economic disadvantage
- high levels of unemployment and levels of income
- high unskilled workforce
- high non-English speaking community
- literacy and numeracy levels within the community
- knowledge within the community of educational opportunities
- poor Internet connectivity
- geographic location
- access to transport
- need to re-skill

Highest level of secondary schooling completed

Fairfield City - Total persons (Usual residence)	2011			2006			Change
	Number	%	Greater Sydney %	Number	%	Greater Sydney %	
Level of schooling							2006 to 2011
Year 8 or below	16,359	11	5	16,731	12	6	-372
Year 9 or equivalent	9,323	6	5	9,552	7	6	-229
Year 10 or equivalent	27,500	18	20	27,449	19	22	51
Year 11 or equivalent	8,413	6	5	8,037	6	5	376
Year 12 or equivalent	65,761	44	55	54,964	39	49	10,797
Did not go to school	9,510	6	1	9,408	7	1	102
Not stated	12,676	8	8	14,972	11	11	-2,296
Total persons aged 15+	149,542	100	100	141,113	100	100	8,429

Education institution attending

Fairfield City - 18 to 24 years	2011			2006			Change
Type of institution	Number	%	Greater Sydney	Number	%	Greater Sydney	2006 to 2011
Attending	9,193	47	48	7,304	39	42	1,889
Pre-school	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Primary school	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Secondary school	686	4	3	701	4	3	-15
TAFE	2,417	12	10	2,390	13	11	27
University	5,726	29	33	3,886	21	26	1,840
Other	364	2	2	327	2	2	37
Not attending	9,025	46	44	10,221	54	48	-1,196
Not stated	1,235	6	8	1,424	8	10	-189
Total people	19,453	100	100	18,949	100	100	504

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, [Census of Population and Housing](#) 2006 and 2011.

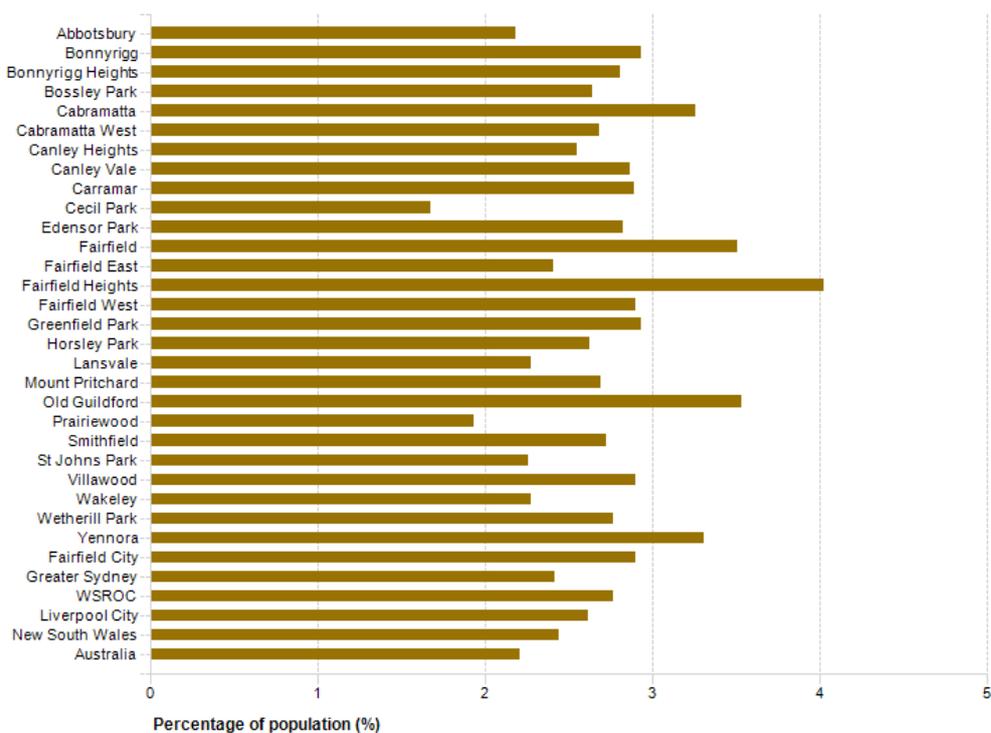
Highest qualification achieved

Fairfield City - 18 to 24 years	2011			2006			Change
Qualification level	Number	%	Greater Sydney	Number	%	Greater Sydney	2006 to 2011
Bachelor or Higher degree	1,840	9	13	1,483	8	12	357
Advanced Diploma or Diploma	1,422	7	7	1,291	7	6	131
Vocational	2,479	13	13	2,587	14	13	-108
No qualification	12,111	62	58	11,600	61	56	511
Not stated	1,605	8	9	1,995	11	12	-390
Total people	19,457	100	100	18,956	100	100	501

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, [Census of Population and Housing](#) 2006 and 2011.

People attending TAFE, 2011

Fairfield City



SOCIO-ECONOMIC INDEXES FOR AREAS (SEIFA)

It needs to be acknowledged that people’s ability to access education can have a direct bearing on the socio-economic environment of Fairfield City. It can impact such areas as economic status and levels of income. This impacts the levels of disadvantage within Fairfield City. In fact, Fairfield City is one of the most disadvantaged local government areas in NSW, with only Central Darling and Brewarrina ranked lower on the Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA). SEIFA, developed by the ABS from Census data, ranks areas according to socio-economic factors and provides a general view of the relative level of disadvantage in an area compared to other areas. The indexes are derived from attributes that reflect disadvantage such as low income, low educational attainment, high unemployment, and jobs in unskilled occupations. It is fair to say that if steps are taken to remove the barriers to people accessing education that the levels of disadvantage in Fairfield City will decrease.

The ABS in discussing socio-economic disadvantage states that “people living in the most disadvantaged areas may be vulnerable to risk factors for social exclusion, such as limited access to medical and transport services, potentially leading to isolation from the broader society. Families or individuals who are socio-economically disadvantaged will also be more challenged by the financial costs associated with post-compulsory education. Other issues such as cultural or family attitudes towards the value of education may also inhibit people from low socio-economic backgrounds from continuing their education.² Therefore any strategies that the Council can implement to address

² Perspectives on Education and Training: Social Inclusion, 2009. (4250.0.55.001). Available at: <http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/4250.0.55.001Main+Features32009>

socio-economic disadvantage in Fairfield City should have a positive impact on the ability of people to access education.

The need for socio-economic disadvantage in Fairfield City to be addressed is further highlighted by the ABS Survey of Education and Training, which found that “between 2001 and 2009, the proportion of all young people aged 20-24 years who had completed Year 12 rose from 70% to 75%. Over this period, however, there was no evidence of corresponding improvement for those who were most disadvantaged. Among 20-24 year olds living in the most disadvantaged areas (lowest quintile) as measured by the SEIFA Index of Relative Socio-economic Disadvantage, the proportion with Year 12 fluctuated between 50% and 60% over the period.³ Therefore, what can the Council do to address the levels of socioeconomic disadvantage in Fairfield City?

KEY STAKEHOLDERS

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

The Department of Education and Training is responsible for national policies and programmes that help Australians access quality and affordable early child care and childhood education, school education, higher education, vocational education and training, international education and research. The Australian Government supports higher education through policies, funding and programmes. The Department of Education and Training also has a number of policies in place which support access to early education and care including the provision of fee subsidies for families, and the universal access policy, which ensures that a quality, early childhood education programme is available for all children in the year before full-time school (often referred to as preschool or kindergarten).

NSW STATE GOVERNMENT

The NSW State Government has oversight of all primary and secondary public schools in NSW, and since 2012, the policy reform *‘Local Schools, Local Decisions’* has given public schools more authority to make local decisions about how to best meet the needs of their students, and giving schools greater freedom in decision making. A new ‘needs based’ resource allocation model for funding schools has also been introduced, consistent with the recommendations of the Gonski review.

The NSW Department of Education is the state regulatory authority for approved centre-based early education and care services in NSW, and is also responsible for funding for community based preschools. A new preschool funding model for preschools was implemented in 2014, designed to achieve universal access in NSW, targeting in particular children in the year before school and 3 year olds from low income and Aboriginal backgrounds.

Independent schools are delivered by a number of stakeholders in NSW, including the Catholic Education Office.

³ Ibid.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

While the Council does not have a direct educational role, the Council does endeavour to address some of the access issues that impede the community's ability to access educational services. Furthermore, the Council does provide a number of services that provide and support educational services, most notably the early learning centres, the libraries and the museum/gallery.

OTHER STAKEHOLDERS

The Catholic Education Office for the leadership, efficient operation and management of catholic schools within Fairfield City.

There are also private schools, including the St Hurmizd Assyrian Primary School and the Mar Narsai Assyrian College.

There are also community colleges such as the Navitas English Fairfield College.

WHAT HAS BEEN IMPLEMENTED OVER PAST FOUR YEARS?

NSW STATE GOVERNMENT

The NSW State Government's priorities are identified in NSW 2021 and South Western Sydney Regional Action Plan. The priorities related to education are stated below.

NSW 2021

Rebuild the Economy

Goal 6 – Strengthen the NSW skill base

It is critical that NSW has an educated and skilled workforce to drive a productive and growing economy. More than ever, it is important we find ways to work collaboratively across government, industry and tertiary sectors to develop a skill base that meets the current and future needs of NSW businesses. The delivery of high quality, accessible and relevant training will support workforce participation and the growth of industry and business.

Return Quality Services

Goal 6 – Reduce travel times

The NSW Government is committed to delivering an efficient and effective transport system that reduces the time it takes to travel around Sydney and across NSW. A better transport system saves people valuable time and provides significant benefits to business and industry. We are focusing on improving the efficiency of the road network during peak times and improving the frequency of public transport to minimise waiting times and ensure public transport is a more attractive transport option. We will help travellers make informed decisions about their travel plans by providing real-time information on travel times, incidents and congestion.

Goal 13 – Better protect the most vulnerable members of our community and break the cycle of disadvantage.

- ⇒ The NSW Government will improve and better integrate social services to support and protect our citizens at the right time. This includes giving children the best possible start to life, helping vulnerable young people and their families build resilience and plan for the future, ensuring that people who are at risk of becoming homeless are well supported, and that those who do become homeless spend as little time as possible without accommodation. With a focus on prevention and early intervention, we will work with non-government organisations to deliver community services, care, accommodation and other support services, preventing problems from escalating and becoming entrenched.

Goal 15 – Improve education and learning outcomes for all students

- ⇒ Access to and participation in high quality education provides the foundations for long-term social and economic success. We will support all students to reach their full potential at all stages of their education from early childhood to post-school learning and employment. To create an environment where students can continue to excel, and in turn lead productive lives and help build a strong NSW economy, we will ensure all children have access to quality early childhood education, recruit high quality teachers, and provide schools and their communities with a say in local decision making.

South Western Sydney Regional Action Plan

TAFE NSW South Western Sydney Institute – Strategy 2015

In 2015, the State Government released *NSW Making It Happen* which identifies State and Premier's priorities.

PREMIER'S PRIORITIES

⇒ **Improving Education Results**

Increase the proportion of NSW students in the top two NAPLAN bands by 8%. Students with strong literacy and numeracy skills are more likely to remain at school longer, complete their Higher School Certificate and continue on to tertiary education.

We have already put in place innovative reforms to improve the quality of teaching in schools and improve outcomes for all students across the state. These changes focus on enhanced professionalism, increased local authority and improved accountability, as well as additional Gonski funding distributed to schools.

Together, these reforms are giving every NSW school the tools they need to help our students achieve their best.

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.

The early learning childcare centres and the libraries play a key role in addressing levels of disadvantage, especially in terms of educating and skilling the community. For example, the Library currently provides a range of programs aimed at addressing areas of socio-economic disadvantage. For example, the Library provides homework help aimed at improving educational outcomes, as well as special programs, like the Job Ready Program, aimed at assisting the unemployed to be more competitive when seeking employment. Furthermore, the libraries, with free Wi-Fi, are increasingly being used as study centres by school and tertiary students. The libraries also support lifelong learning and re-skilling programs.

The Library has developed a partnership with the CISCO Training Academy to providing training through the Whitlam Library. The main program delivered by the CISCO Training Academy is providing Vocational Education and Training (VET) in Schools programs through the Whitlam Library. The ABS has identified some of the outcomes for VET in schools students. These include:

- Male Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students who do VET in Schools are more likely to complete Year 12.
- Students who do not go on to higher education have better engagement and employment outcomes if they do VET in Schools.
- Trade related fields of study lead to better employment outcomes for male VET in Schools students.
- VET in Schools students are less likely to go on to higher education but more likely to complete a Certificate III/IV level qualification.⁴

The following new initiatives are identified in the 2013-2017 Revised Delivery Program:

- Fairfield Library Expansion
- Community Buildings
- Fairfield Youth and Community Centre
- Whitlam Library Upgrade
- Extension to Fairfield ELC

⁴ Outcomes from Vocational Education and Training in Schools, experimental estimates, Australia, 2006-2011 (4260.0) Available at: <http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/4260.0>

QUESTIONS FOR FUTURE ENGAGEMENT

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

Questions about 'access to education -

- **How important is access to education to you?**

- Extremely important
- Very important
- Somewhat important
- Not important at all

Other/Comments

- **What do you believe are the access issues to education in Fairfield City?**

- Cost – too expensive
- Location – not enough providers in the area
- Transport – educational providers not located near public transport
- Work – I need to work and don't have time to get an education
- Knowledge – I don't have enough information about what education is available in Fairfield
- Language barriers – it is difficult to access education if you do not speak English

Other/Comments

- **What are 3 ways access to education could be improved in Fairfield City?**

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2

3

REFERENCES

2012-2022 Fairfield City Plan – Community Strategic Plan.

Fairfield City Council - 2013-2017 Revised Delivery Program

Australian Bureau of Statistics, [Census of Population and Housing](#) 2006 and 2011

Perspectives on Education and Training: Social Inclusion, 2009. (4250.0.55.001).

Available at:

<http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/4250.0.55.001Main+Features32009>

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