

Fairfield City Plan Top 10 Priorities Issue Paper

Priority 10 - More Activities for Children and Youth

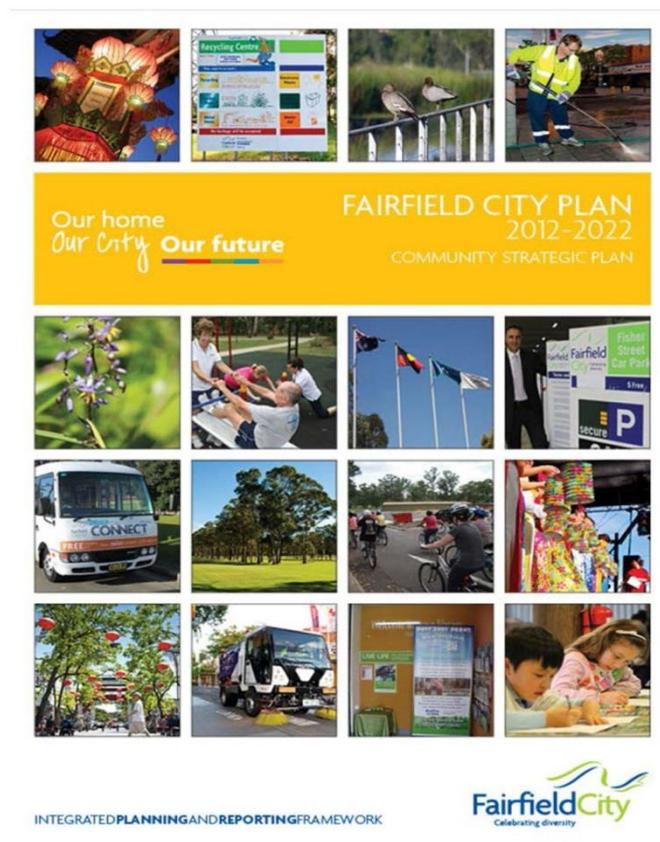


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INTRODUCTION

The Fairfield City Plan 2012-2022 is a compilation of the local community's vision, goals and priorities for Fairfield City over this 10 year period. 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". 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, including *more activities for children and young people*.

The City Plan is not structured according to age or other groupings of people, as this inevitably results in duplication because Goals will be relevant to more than one group. The Plan includes four goals for the general community that are relevant to providing activities for children and young people.

CITY PLAN GOALS & STRATEGIES

The City Plan defines the Goal of BEING HEALTHY AND ACTIVE (Goal 2 in Theme 1 – Community Wellbeing) as:

We enjoy good health (physical, psychological, social and environmental), have access to high quality facilities and services and contribute to our own wellbeing through a healthy lifestyle.

Outcomes include:

2.2 Opportunities to access active, creative leisure and recreational services

2.3 A healthy and safe environment

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

- Provide a range of parks, sporting fields and recreation facilities and programs
- Make available activities, information and facilities to enjoy hobbies and leisure pastimes

Establish standards, routine inspections and maintenance programs to ensure clean, healthy and safe public places, goods and services

The City Plan defines the Goal of INCREASED OPPORTUNITIES FOR OUR COMMUNITY (Goal 5 in Theme 1 – Community Wellbeing) as:

The future goals and dreams of our community are supported and encouraged. Outcomes include

5.1 Have access to community facilities and services that support growth and development

5.2 Be involved in the wider community and assist our neighbours

5.3 To support and encourage success and progress

5.4 Youth are supported in their endeavours

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

- Provide community facilities and services that are accessible and affordable
- Improve our community's future through our diverse cultural knowledge and skills

The City Plan defines the Goal BUILDINGS AND INFRASTRUCTURE MEET THE CHANGING STANDARDS, NEEDS AND GROWTH OF OUR COMMUNITY (Goal 2 in Theme 2 – Places and Infrastructure) as:

Our City has activities, buildings and infrastructure to an agreed standard that cater to our diverse needs and future growth. Outcomes include

2.1 Infrastructure and community facilities are planned, managed, resourced and accessible

2.2 Cater for the growth and residents' desire for their children and grandchildren to live locally

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

- Provide fit for purpose buildings, infrastructure and facilities that are designed to meet community needs
- Develop effective stakeholder partnerships, advocacy and funding opportunities to respond to local needs

The City Plan defines the Goal of OUR CITY HAS QUALITY PUBLIC SPACES AS WELL AS ENTERTAINMENT, LEISURE AND RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES (Goal 4 in Theme 2 – Places & Infrastructure) as:

Our City has high quality and well used destinations that provide for a range of leisure and recreation opportunities. Outcomes include:

4.1 Town and neighbourhood centres are social meeting places as well as places for business

4.2 Open space, public spaces, shopping centres and streetscapes are accessible, well connected and well-designed places

4.3 Open space provides opportunities for passive and active opportunities and environmental uses

4.4 Local recreation, cultural, entertainment and leisure opportunities are enjoyed and promoted

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

- Facilitate and promote recreation, cultural and leisure opportunities
- Promote open and public spaces for active, formal and informal community and cultural celebrations and events

As we prepare to update the City Plan, it is timely to look back at what has changed in the provision of activities for children and young people over the last four years and to look forward and seek to clarify the community's future priorities.

OUTLINE OF PRIORITY (DEFINITION)

Some of the factors for consideration when providing activities for children and young people are:

- enough free or low fee activities
- ensuring that young people and children feel safe at, and travelling to, activities
- providing activities at times when young people will access them, such as on weekends, evenings and during school vacations
- providing enough activities for the large population of children and young people
- catering for the diversity of children and young people, and consulting with them distributing activities across the LGA so that young people can readily access them

OVERVIEW OF PRIORITY IN FAIRFIELD

The scope of “activities” for children and young people, and the number of agencies involved, is very large. This report has focused on activities that have been developed from local initiatives by local not-for-profit agencies and by Council itself.

Activities for children and young people are catered for at various facilities in Fairfield LGA, many of which are owned and managed by Council. These include community centres, halls, libraries, parks, reserves, Leisure Centres, Fairfield Museum and Gallery and the Fairfield showground. There are both 'organised' and 'unstructured' activities at these facilities.

ACTIVITIES FOR CHILDREN: 0 – 4 YEARS OLD AND 5 – 11 YEARS OLD

Activities for children, particularly in the younger age group and especially “unstructured” activities in parks and reserves, correspond to “family” activities, so many of the children's activities discussed here refer to families.

Health and physical activities for children are very important to both the state and local governments. Activities for children at Fairfield's facilities generally focus on active exercise, leisure and recreation activities, both outdoors and indoors. Organised sport provides a large component of activities in the 5 -11 year age group. Some cultural activities, environmental awareness events and special events and holidays, such as Christmas, Children's Week, library and museum activities and Cabramatta Moon Festival, are also organised in partnership with local agencies and community groups.

ACTIVITIES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE 12 – 17 AND 18 - 24

A large proportion of entertainment activities for the age group 18 – 24 are delivered by entertainment businesses, such as the cinemas and the clubs and hotels (that stage performances and bands) at a commercial price for the participants. Organised sport is also a significant activity in the 12 – 17 age group. This Issue Paper has focused on activities provided at no cost or nominal cost, rather than profit making ventures.

Many activities for this group focus on cultural events such as music and dance events, youth festivals, arts and performance. There are also opportunities for social interaction (“drop-in” centres, excursions), volunteering, and maintaining a healthy lifestyle (sports and recreation).

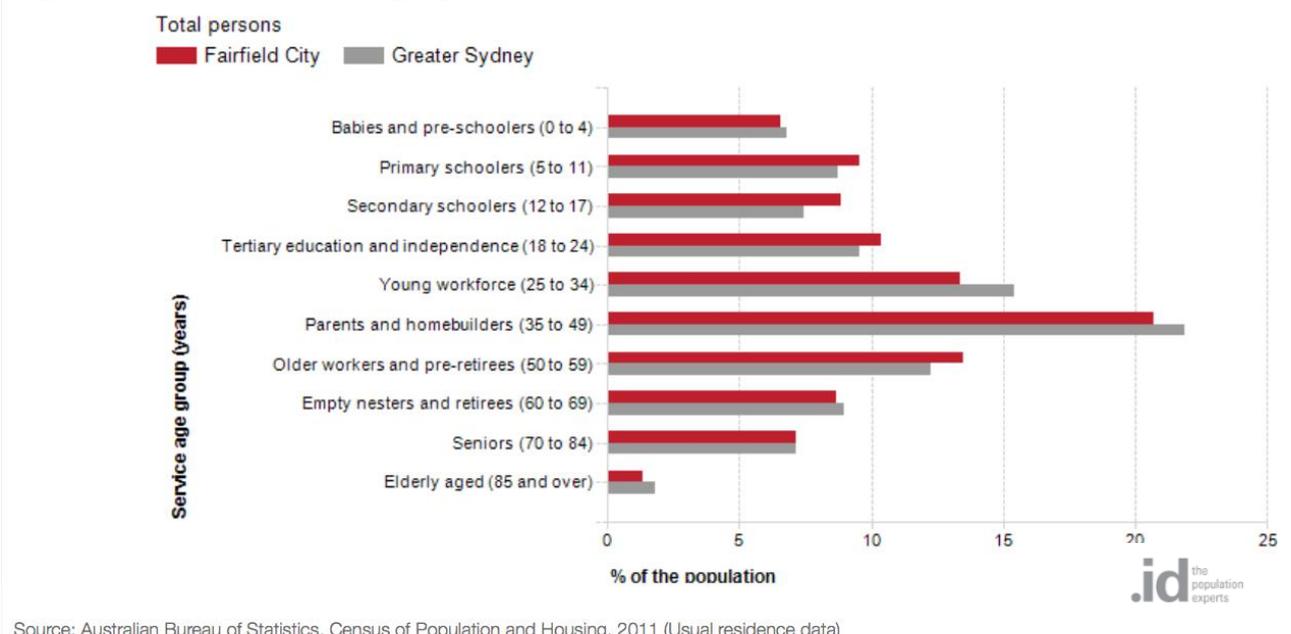
Youth activities are provided through partnerships between community agencies and council, often with funding contributions from State or Federal Governments, fundraising, and some fees paid by the young people. The Fairfield Youth Advisory Committee works with Council and community agencies to organise youth events, particularly Fairfield's "Bring It On" festival.

STATISTICS IN FAIRFIELD

At the 2011 census, the number of children in Fairfield LGA was 30,263, while the number of young people was 36,102. The proportion of children (0 - 11 years of age) and young people (12 - 24 years of age) in the Fairfield population is shown in the graph below, along with a comparison with the Greater Sydney region.

The proportion of children and young people above the age of 5 in the Fairfield LGA is higher than in Greater Sydney. Young people in the 12 – 24 age groups comprise 19% of the total population. This is the highest percentage age cohort in the Fairfield population.

Age structure - service age groups, 2011



The issues influencing the need for more activities for children and young people in Fairfield include: the high numbers in these age groups (66,300 people aged 0 – 25 in 2011), low incomes (and associated family stress), high youth unemployment, the need for diversionary strategies to steer young people into safe recreation, significant distances and transport barriers between centres in Fairfield, and the numbers of new arrivals to Australia who settle in Fairfield.

The most recent data identifies Fairfield as having the 5th highest number of juvenile offenders in LGAs in NSW (185)* and this indicates that diversion of young people from criminal activities should be occurring in Fairfield.

This number of offenders reflects that Fairfield also has the 5th largest LGA population in the State. There are also large numbers of reports of Risk Of Serious Harm (ROSH) to children. In 2012/13 these reports were within the band of 21–40 /1000 of the child population, which for Fairfield equates to between 600 and 1200 children across the LGA.#

KEY STAKEHOLDERS

Council is primarily responsible for developing and maintaining appropriate facilities, parks and public spaces for local activities. Council also directly provides a number of activities for children and young people.

Other agencies and community groups provide activities for children and young people in Fairfield including a number of community-based services, churches and religious groups and sporting clubs. These agencies often have access to, or may work out of, Council's facilities. Other key stakeholders include entertainment businesses, shopping centre developments and housing developments, both in terms of what they provide and the design and amenity of public and private spaces.

WHAT HAS BEEN IMPLEMENTED OVER PAST FOUR YEARS?

NSW STATE GOVERNMENT

The NSW State Government's Plan, NSW 2021, included some specific goals and actions aimed at addressing childhood obesity, and encouraging engagement by children and young people in their communities.

NSW 2021

Goal 11: Keep People Healthy and Out of Hospital

* Objective:

- Reduce overweight and obesity rates of children and young people (5–16 years) to 21% by 2015

* Priority Action

- Over the next four years, invest in child health promotion programs, such as Munch and Move®, a program to educate early childhood professionals and families about appropriate physical activity and foods for preschool-aged children.

Goal 24: Make it easier for people to be involved in their community

* Priority Action

- Increase opportunities for children and young people to contribute and connect with other groups in their communities

Goal 27: Enhance Cultural, Creative, Sporting and Recreation Opportunities

* Priority action

- increase opportunities for children and young people to connect with other groups in their communities through sport

In September 2015 the NSW State Government released *NSW Making It Happen* which identifies State and Premier's priorities. State Government support for activities for children and young people is now focused on reducing childhood obesity.

MAKING IT HAPPEN STATE PRIORITIES

Tackling Childhood Obesity

In 2014, more than one in five children were estimated to be overweight or obese. Children who are overweight or obese are more likely to have poor health and wellbeing outcomes, compared with healthy children. They are also more likely to carry their excess weight into adulthood, placing them at increased risk of developing chronic diseases later in life. Reducing the rate of overweight or obese children by 5% over the next 10 years will result in at least 62,000 fewer children being overweight or obese.

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.

There have been significant improvements in, and development of new, Council's facilities over the past four years including:

- Construction of Fairfield Youth and Community Centre, opened in October 2015, includes multi-sports courts, break out space, rock climbing wall, inbuilt trampolines, and program rooms. In partnership with Community First Step, the Centre provides supervised activities for children and young people, Monday to Thursday after school, and is available for hire at other times
- Construction of Fairfield Adventure Park, opened in April 2015 to provide a range of challenging and enjoyable exercise equipment (giant climbing net, sky bridge, flying fox)
- Construction of the Waterpark at Prairiewood Leisure Centre (to be completed mid 2016) to incorporate multiple water features for children of various ages
- Planning and design of an active play area that accommodates young people including an obstacle course, foosball court in Fairfield park adjacent to the Fairfield Youth and Community Centre, Fairfield Leisure Centre and Adventure Park. Elements of the obstacle course include a tree-top walk and flying fox, monkey bars, rope crossing, hurdles, mound and balance beam.
- Extension to the Prairiewood Youth and Community Centre to increase the capacity of the hall, allowing for internal and external spaces to be better utilized.
- Introduction of the 'Open Library' program with ongoing expansion of library services and opening hours at 5 locations within Fairfield City, with strong usage rates by children and young people, not just for school based activities, but also gaming, reading, craft, a place for social interaction and as a venue for special events.
- Opening a Parkour workout and training area, at in Emerson Street reserve in Wetherill Park
- Over the past 12 years the Fairfield Park Improvement program has updated 104 parks and reserves, including gym equipment and constructed 20 kilometres of cycleways linking facilities across the LGA

OTHER COUNCIL ACTIVITIES

One of the key actions taken by Council over the past four years was the preparation, in consultation with young people, of the *Strategy for Young People in Fairfield City 2013 – 2017*. This Strategy identified 5 priority areas, including the need for more activities.

Strategy for Young People in Fairfield City 2013 – 2017

Key Priority Area 2: THINGS TO DO & PLACES TO GO

“What we want to see”

- access to a range of affordable, creative, physical and leisure activities
- access safe spaces to initiate their own activities and groups
- opportunities to be positively engaged in community life.

“Young people in Fairfield LGA are telling us that their top priority is more affordable activities for young people and safe places they can meet up with friends”. p. 26

The 8 Goals identified for this Priority Area are:

- 2.1 “Bring It On” Festival continues to grow as a local festival that young people are proud of and keen to participate in
- 2.2 There is a range of free and low cost activities for young people in the Fairfield LGA
- 2.3 The Fairfield Youth and Community Centre is built, operates effectively, and is well used by young people
- 2.4 Existing youth and community spaces in Fairfield LGA are optimised
- 2.5 Strong partnerships between youth services, shopping centres and Council lead to innovative youth programs and spaces
- 2.6 Young people can access youth spaces and services when they need them
- 2.7 Parks and sports fields are accessible and shared by self-organised activity groups for evening activity, reflecting the interests and health needs of our whole community
- 2.8 More young people participate in creative arts programs because they are a fun, affordable, non-competitive recreation option, encouraging positive expression and self-improvement

Council directly organises, or supports, a number of activities for children and young people including:

- The award-winning Bring It On! Festival, organised with the Fairfield Youth Advisory Council. This is one of the biggest Youth Week events in Australia. Most local community services who work with young people, such as Parks Community Network are also involved in this Festival.
- Youth development and volunteering program, provides opportunities for young people to be involved in leadership development, volunteering through which they gain training and experience in media, photography and video and audio production in the lead up to the Bring it On! Festival
- Youth Week in April presents a range of activities, events and workshops for

young people. Local community organisations and schools present these activities during the week and are coordinated, promoted and supported by Council.

- Children's Week in November each year includes activities such as sports, craft, science and music.
- Children's Christmas Parties, carols and tree lighting in various areas, including Canley Heights, Horsley Park and Fairfield City Centre.
- Children's entertainment and youth components are included in Council events including Fairfield largest public event, Cabramatta Moon Festival. Includes opportunities for youth performers, volunteering and participation.
- Children's and youth-specific programs at Fairfield's Leisure Centres (youth gym, swim squads and sports programs). 'Active Kids' programs are held in each school holiday period.
- Council's libraries hold regular and themed story times for young children as well as a range of holiday programs and special events.
- Fairfield's Museum and Gallery provides regular programs of activities and classes, particularly for children – including regular art workshops and special events for children from 2 years of age to 12 year olds. Specialised workshops that accommodate young adults with disabilities are also offered.
- Another key role for Council is ensuring safety and accessibility of parks and reserves, public spaces and facilities for children and young people. Safety and accessibility of these facilities were highlighted in consultation with young people in the development of Fairfield's Strategy for youth. Works by Council include:
 - Improvements to Public Domain Infrastructure, particularly parks and reserves, outdoor sporting facilities (i.e. tennis courts) CBD areas of Fairfield and Cabramatta.
 - Installation of more lighting and Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) in public places and Council facilities across Fairfield City.
- Western Sydney Cycling Network recycles used bicycles that are loaned to residents at the cost of a helmet. This volunteer run organisation is housed and supported by Council and offer events to encourage particular target groups such as girls, to promote cycling in general and conduct regular community rides that accommodate families. Skills based workshops are also offered at various times through community organisations, special programs and schools.
- Nalawala Sustainability Hub runs 'Enviro Bootcamp Holiday Program' for children 5 to 12 years that includes arts and crafts workshops using recycled materials as well as propagation and planting of seeds.
- 'Illuminate' Council's New Year's Eve event is designed for families with children, and includes an event at Calmsley Hill City Farm and fireworks across the City.
- International Day of People with Disabilities celebrations include conducts a dance party for people with disabilities aged from 16 years and older.

COMMUNITY AGENCIES AND CHARITABLE ORGANISATIONS

Some of the major community agencies that provide activities for children and young people, and who work in partnership with Fairfield Council and other stakeholders, are:

- **Community First Step:** operates in Fairfield City area and runs a variety of programs. Since November 2015 they have operated youth programs and a Drop-In service at the Fairfield Youth and Community Centre where young people are able to access all the sporting zones for free, Monday to Thursday as well as in vacation periods.
- **Youth Off The Streets:** began operating outreach at Bonnyrigg skate park and Villawood as well as Drop-In at Canley Vale in 2014. Each of these services operate one afternoon/evening a week and provides creative, flexible diversionary activities.
- **Parks Community Network:** operates in the Parks region of Fairfield and provides free activities at Council's Prairiewood Youth and Community Centre, including Bootcamp Fitness, Creative Cooking, Self Defence and an Events Management Course. The Parks Network supports the LOUD TR!BE project, where young people meet every week to organise events, and has a Drop-In on Thursday where young people can take part in informal activities.
- **Woodville Alliance:** operates in East Fairfield and provides programs on active, healthy lifestyles encouraging children and parents to be involved in recreation and sports; as well as a variety of social activities for “tweens and teens” (such as Drumbeat, a team drumming exercise).
- **CORE Community Services:** (previously Cabramatta Community Centre) provides children's and youth activities in Cabramatta and nearby areas, including camps, vacation activities, youth drop-in and various recreational programs with schools. CORE also operates a Multicultural Youth Support Project, providing educational and recreational programs for young refugees and newly arrived migrants.
- **Bonnyrigg Youth Council:** In 2012 the Bonnyrigg Youth Council was established to help organise activities for young people in the Bonnyrigg development.
- **Police Citizens Youth Centre:** (PCYC) in Cabramatta is a long standing and popular provider of youth activities. It has a range of sporting activities, including boxing, Kung Fu, table tennis, wrestling, gym, basketball and Tae Kwon Do. Activities are provided at the centre Monday to Friday and on weekends.
- **Bonnyrigg Youth Centre:** youth programs, including drop in services as well as structured activities in personal development, cooking, informal sport and arts have been run by CORE, Community First Step and Daystar Foundation.
- **STARTTS:** focuses on refugee children and young people to provide a range of activities in arts, sports and other activities for children between 5 and 24 years. A dedicated youth team runs camps to promote personal and social development.
- **Powerhouse Youth Theatre:** provides drama, writing and theatre workshops for young people between 12 to 24 years including experience in performing and production for live audiences.
- **Curious Creators** – work with teenagers to young adults to build technical and creative skills in film making.

QUESTIONS FOR FUTURE ENGAGEMENT

Why do you think more activities are needed for children and young people?

1. -----
2. -----
3. -----

What are your top 3 improvements for More Activities for Children and Young People?

1. -----
2. -----
3. -----

REFERENCES

For more information on the issues raised in this paper -

Fairfield City Council Youth Strategy

http://www.fairfieldcity.nsw.gov.au/info/20005/community_services/290/council_youth_strategy_2013-17

http://www.fairfieldcity.nsw.gov.au/info/20009/services_and_facilities/509/fairfield_youth_and_community_centre

http://www.fairfieldcity.nsw.gov.au/info/20001/events_festivals_and_things_to_do

<http://www.juvenile.justice.nsw.gov.au/Documents/YPICH%20survey%20factsheet%20-%20all%20young%20people%20FINAL.pdf>

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

Fairfield City Council 2013-2017 Delivery Program

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

Fairfield City Council's 2013-2014, 2014-2015, 2015-16 Operational Plan

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

* <http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Lookup/1338.1Main+Features13Dec+2010>

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http://www.keepthemsafe.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0011/166286/KTS_Annex_E_Spatial_Analysis_Final_Report.pdf