



Manly Council Recreation Strategy (Unstructured Activities)



About this document

This document is a draft Recreation (Unstructured Activities) Strategy. It has been prepared by Civic & Urban Services Division, Manly Council.

This strategy outlines the key infrastructure in the LGA that is used for informal leisure activities, and not addressed in any Sports Facility Strategy.

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Executive Summary

This strategy was developed to provide a strategic direction for the management of unstructured recreation facilities that occur in the Manly LGA on public land. The selected activities that are dealt with in the document include:

- A range of unstructured sports undertaken for pleasure, away from the club competitive environment in social / family settings
- BMX or dirt tracks
- Walking for recreation
- Dog exercise areas
- Skate activities
- Bushwalking trails
- Playgrounds
- Passive recreational / exercise

In general, prior to the development of any new facilities, consideration will be given to the total life asset management costs and the financial implications for Council.

The following is a summary of the policy directions developed for this Strategy and considered to be of the highest priority:

- Provide suitable specialty/mixed recreation facilities where there is a cluster of facilities for social and unstructured recreation activities suitable for a range of ages. Typically, such facilities would include a play space, kick-to-kick area, an off leash dog exercise area, hard court for informal ball play as well as an accessible formed path circuit suitable for children's cycling and people with disabilities, and access to toilets (at key reserves).
- Promote existing opportunities in the LGA to play unstructured sports and activities
- Proceed with the improvements to existing facilities where these activities occur.
- Consider a range of locations for additional dog off-leash areas.
- Establish the following categories throughout the LGA to facilitate activities defined within this strategy:
 - Primary - the major areas with specialised facilities
 - Secondary - smaller with less facilities
 - Local the smaller local areas
- Provide an outline of tracks trails across Manly to suit a wide range of pedestrian and non-motorised wheeled activities: including urban footpaths and shared trails; bike trails in urban bushland, sealed circuit paths in larger parks.
- Determine BMX or dirt track facilities for a range of abilities and address the management of any existing unauthorised BMX areas.
- Develop an asset management approach to the improvement of playgrounds within the community strategic plan's 10 years plus strategy.
- Priority for playground development to be given to larger parks such as those with regional, LGA-wide or suburb-wide catchments; no expansion of the number of playgrounds in small neighbourhood parks; removal of playgrounds that are no longer safe or functional, replacement only where park is of suitable size and prominence or statistics dictate a need for expansion, and consultation has been carried out. (*Addressed in future 10 year playground strategy*)

PART 1 Introduction

1.1 Manly Context

Manly Council LGA is 15.14 square kilometres in area. It is located some 20 kilometres north of the Sydney Central Business District and is bounded by the Spit bridge to the south, the Wakehurst Parkway to the north west, and the Queenscliffe bridge to the north east. The Manly Lagoon, at Pittwater Road is located in the North West.

Manly is a relatively unique environment in that it is surrounded on 3 sides by National Park.

Approximately 47.66 % of the LGA is zoned and used for urban development, and 12 % for open space. The remainder is National Park or Nature Reserve, (such as Garigal National Park, North Head National Park, providing large areas of bushland (60 Hectares) in the LGA that protects native vegetation and animals, and provides a wide range of unstructured recreation opportunities.

What are unstructured recreational activities?

Unstructured recreational activities are defined as those activities undertaken on public land for leisure in parks and reserves, Council's sporting facilities, and independent community uses (i.e. a club, school, or organised program). Selective activities are dealt with in this document. These include:

- A range of unstructured sports undertaken for pleasure, away from the club competitive environment in social/ family settings
- BMX and dirt mountain biking
- Walking for recreation
- Dog socialising
- Skate boarding and inline skating
- Playgrounds
- Recreation fishing (variable in Manly)
- Hit up /kick/ graffiti walls
- Various exercise regimes
- Passive open area usage
- Water activities
- Ball courts

1.2 This Document

This document has been produced by Manly Council to further develop its future focus on unstructured recreational activities.

1.3 Key Directions from Manly Council Community Strategic Plan Beyond 2021

This strategy has been informed by the following:

- Manly Council's Community Strategic Plan Beyond 2021 including:
 - Community Strategic Plan
 - Resourcing Strategy
 - Four Year Delivery Program 2011-2015 and One Year Operational Plan 2011-2012

The overall vision and mission of Manly Council's Community Strategic Plan is:

"where natural environment and heritage sustain and complement a vibrant cosmopolitan and community lifestyle.

In addition, we will work in partnership to deliver enhanced safety, cleanliness, accessibility, connectedness and sustainability in Manly for current and future generations".

Through these strategies Council is committed to working with other partners in the community to deliver a range of outcomes in the future.

Within the context of the community's overall vision and mission, there are a number of strategic directions that support this strategy. These specifically include:

- Improve Manly's community safety and strategies to work with the community to ensure Manly is a safe place;
- A healthy and active community and strategies to work with local stakeholders to enhance healthy lifestyles and recreation, provide safe and age appropriate playgrounds;
- Liveable neighbourhoods, and strategies to provide well utilised, maintained and managed community, open space and sports facilities that meet community needs, keep Manly public spaces and gardens well managed, clean and sustainable;
- Improved amenities and physical infrastructure services in Manly and strategies to manage infrastructure and assets to ensure financial sustainability and meet community expectations, provide community facilities and assets and public parking that are accessible, clean, site and habitable, and
- Work with community stakeholder groups to better understand infrastructure improvements needed;

Council's Resourcing Strategy and Delivery Plan 2011-2015 also identify a range of key issues and strategic themes of relevance to the future planning and management of leisure facilities and services including the following:

- Closing the asset renewal gap.
- Increasing the income stream (including a user pay philosophy for sporting facilities).
- Preparing longer range budgets including asset management plans.
- Containing the growth in operating costs within budget constraints.
- An improved capacity to lead, predict and adapt to the changing needs in the community.
- The provision of responsive and relevant services reviewed to meet needs.

Additional research is required to plan for an appropriate suite of sport and recreation facilities to meet existing and future needs. Although, it is noted that Manly has a 'generous supply of high quality bushland' and a range of excellent facilities, there is a deficiency in some recreation facilities to meet the needs of the existing population. While, playgrounds in Manly are of high quality, funding is needed to maintain these standards. Funds are required for maintenance and improvement, rather than continual capital replacement. Also, there are a number of parks that are small and under-utilised.

There is also a need to improve the range of recreational facilities and opportunities in parks (including dog 'off leash' areas). A range of youth orientated play facilities including skate facilities and basketball rings are required within Manly to provide opportunities for youth and older children for 'unstructured' play. These are identified as 'playground equivalent' for children aged over nine or ten years to meet the demands of the community. Further consultation will be required in this regard.

PART 2 Demand for use of parks and recreation facilities for unstructured activities

2.1 Demand Issues

Available participation rates show that the proportion of the population that participate in physical exercise, as well as sporting and recreation pursuits is generally increasing.

Participation in sport and physical activity tends to peak at 15-24 years of age and decline steadily through to 65 years of age. However, participation rates in more recent years suggest that the older age groups are remaining more active.

Trends suggest that more people are seeking active pursuits that are outside a club environment and do not require ongoing routine commitment. More women, especially middle-aged women are participating in non-organised physical pursuits.

Recreational local participation:

- Visiting parks/gardens is one of the more popular 'away from home' leisure activity in Manly (after visiting friends and relatives and dining out).
- Other popular 'away from home' leisure activities that require the use of public facilities include walking/walking the dog, picnics/barbecues in public areas, bush walking, taking kids to parks/ playgrounds, swimming (non sport), informal games (e.g. kites) and jogging/running respectively are "without reasonable proximity to local open space".
- Further information is required to be undertaken to ascertain "Outdoor Informal Recreation" demand and uses in the Manly area, including surveys showing a need for park improvements such as accessible pathways, skate and bike facilities, basketball hoops, cycle tracks and play facilities for older children.
- Identifying a gap in "user friendliness" of sports fields and the need to locate playgrounds adjacent to them.
- The increasing size of the middle aged and older population requires 'improved access and amenity in parks and open spaces'.
- Non-organised walking has had the most participants and significant increase since 2001, however, this is noted as decreasing in recent years.
- Participation in non-organised cricket has seen large decline in recent years.
- The actual participation rates of non-organised activities are likely to be similar across Australia, however, local factors such as supply of facilities and demographic considerations have an impact on the level of participation.
- The key unstructured activities based on past national trends are likely to be Walking, Cycling, Running, Walking (bush), Basketball, Football (outdoor), and Australian Rules Football.

2.2 Manly's Demographic Influences on Demand

Summary

Some of the key demographic influences on leisure and unstructured sport and recreation activities in Manly include the following:

- The population of Manly is expected to grow by approximately 5.2% in the next 20 years. This equates to an additional 2,198 people are expected to be living in the area.

The impacts are expected to be that more people will be walking and cycling and undertaking a range of other unstructured recreation activities throughout the local area.

In 2006, the total population of Manly Council area was estimated at 39,263 people. It is expected to experience an increase of over 4,300 people to 43,571 by 2021, at an average annual growth rate of 0.70% per annum over 15 years. This is based on an increase of over 1,700 households during the period, with the average number of persons per household rising from 2.38 to 2.39 by 2021.

2.2.1 Implications of demographic profile for unstructured recreation facilities

Based on the projections provided for activities and likely changes in demographic profile it is likely that:

- The use of tracks and trails for walking, cycling and bushwalking will increase, and there will be a demand for tracks & trails to suit a wide range of pedestrian and non motorised wheeled activities.
- The demand for parks with opportunities to exercise pets will increase, however pet related exercise is not likely to be subject to significant variations due to age, income, or gender, although there may be some relationship between pet ownership and ethnicity.
- For older adults, social sports such as tennis, bowls and golf are likely to remain in high demand.
- The demand for unstructured recreation activities will be different for people in different life cycle stages and therefore a diversity of opportunities to participate in unstructured recreation needs to be available across Manly, in addition to specific places that serve specific target groups.
- Areas with a high proportion of young people will be the priority for skate and BMX facility provision. Local parks that provide a diversity of social opportunities for a wide range of lifecycle groups as well as activity choices will be well used and will not require major redevelopment of facilities when demographics change. Demand for children's playgrounds will not significantly increase.

2.2.2 Policy Directions: Council's role

- Provide facilities for unstructured recreation activities clustered together in one main specialty/mixed recreation park, or where this is not possible, in separate spaces.
- Council will aim to provide for a number of unstructured activities.
- Council will provide for these activities and facilities that: serve the local area (lower quality and less complex facilities within walking distance of home) as well as those of a higher quality and sphere of influence – for those who will travel some distance (district or regional catchment) serve a range of people in different lifecycle stages and with different abilities serve a range of people with different levels of proficiency in the activity, but in particular those people who are developing the foundation skills.
- Council will seek to provide for these activities (as a priority) in areas of high population and population density, and where there are a large number of children.

2.2.3 Council facilities and provision of unstructured recreation activities

Walking (other)

- Promotion of the key walking trails e.g.: The Manly Scenic Walkway and links to The Great North Walk track links Sydney and Newcastle.
- Provide trail circuits as satellite off the main trails, and along road reserve verges.
- Provide perimeter trails around large parks and provide sealed circuit paths in parks.

Cycling

- Provide on-road cycling routes as per Bike Plan, possible provision for BMX and mountain biking facilities where and if space is available.

Running

- Provide where possible perimeter trail around large parks or circuit paths in parks.

Walking (bush)

- Maintain existing track circuits through Bushland Parks.

Tennis

- No additional free access courts are envisaged outside leased facilities. Leased facilities will encourage community hire.

Basketball

- Provide free access ball courts in key parks; encourage schools to open space facilities to community use.

Football (outdoor)

- Maintain current status.
- Opportunities for kick to kick at key parks Australian Football.
- Opportunities for kick to kick at key parks and programs such as AusKick at leased reserves or schools.

Netball Possibility "if required"

- Facilities in selected specialty/mixed recreation parks.
- Encourage schools to open facilities to community use.

Children's playgrounds

- Council will continue to favour upgrading or replacement of existing playgrounds rather than creating new playgrounds.
- Shade provision will be through tree planting where ever possible, and landscaping will be used to introduce diversity into play experiences

General

- Council will provide a selection of facilities in key parks across Manly within budget constraints.
- Council will not provide any climbing walls other than as play equipment in playgrounds.
- Council will provide facilities that are planned and consulted with the funding that is available.

2.2.4 Targeting Different Life Cycles and Population Groups

There are considerable benefits for providing unstructured recreation activities and related personal benefits of social interaction and physical activity for all life cycle stages, as well as for population groups who are commonly marginalised from organised sports provision.

Consistent with Council policy, there are added benefits of providing for:

- Older people with opportunities to get out and about, stay active and feel connected to their local communities
- For adolescents to provide supportive local environments and enhance social and physical developmental outcomes.
- People with a disability
- For culturally and linguistically diverse populations who may have preferences for specific activities or like to participate within their own cultural groups.

Policy Directions: Target Groups

- Council will ensure facilities for unstructured recreation activities are made accessible and inclusive for people with a disability - who may not be able to participate in club or competition activities.
- Ensure specialty/mixed recreation parks have good accessible paths of travel through them, and to facilities and that they have seats and tables at regular intervals and access to toilets where possible (at key reserves).
- Provide robust durable facilities to support activity for adolescents in social settings and playing surfaces etc.
- Provide path circuits suitable to prams, wheel chairs and small wheeled toys in the vicinity of at least one main play equipment area for young children in each locality.
- Provide suitable access and support facilities to make key playgrounds accessible and enjoyable for older adults (grandparents and carers), paths, shelter etc.
- Review facilities that are no longer relevant or no longer provide for the purpose for which they were created.

2.2.5 Convenient Access to Unstructured Recreation Opportunities

Convenience is a large factor as to whether most people, especially young people and older adults will capitalise on opportunities for unstructured recreation.

Therefore, it is essential that there is a good distribution of low-level local opportunities to participate as well as opportunities to travel to higher quality local opportunities. This applies to trails, BMX, mountain bike and skate facilities as well playing fields, courts and dog exercising areas.

There is value in providing unstructured opportunities at sportsgrounds for two reasons - to enhance use when competition sport is not being played (i.e. during the day and after hours) and to enable people to learn foundation sport skills, provide opportunities for role modelling and connect with clubs to further develop interest skills and participation, and their potential club participation.

During the summer sports season there is less use of sportsgrounds for evening training that during winter and longer daylight hours provide an opportunity for unstructured recreation at sportsgrounds.

There is also value in ensuring that unstructured recreation activities are well promoted to ensure that residents have a good choice and know what is available.

Provide play spaces not just as single purpose playgrounds but that meet a range of different family members needs, and therefore include where possible toilets, free play, picnic tables, social sports facility, tracks, trails, and vegetation, fitness equipment, and opportunities to play with pets away from structured playground equipment.

Specialty/mixed recreation parks should generally:

- Cater for a range of age groups and contemplative as well as physical activity.
- Include an open grass area as well as area for trees, shrubs, and groundcover plantings.

Where possible include the following:

- Play spaces, hard court ball areas, wall or hit up or soccer practice, grass area for kick to kick and picnics, a formed path system, circuit walking path shade, furniture include bins, seats, tables and preference an dog exercising area.
- Local level facilities may also include skate and /or BMX facilities, toilets and shelters.
- Aim to provide one park for off-leash dog activity area in every planning district.
- Due to the potential impact on neighbours, Council will not provide additional lighting in parks unless absolutely necessary for safety reasons. But seek to enable access to lit sportsgrounds for use for unstructured activity after formal use, and around formal playing fields during times when they are lit (for example for walking, dog exercising and unstructured ball games) within guidelines of use or terms of entry in those sporting fields.

Policy Directions: Convenient access

- Ensure all relevant clubs to encourage social / casual membership, and affordable hire of their facilities.
- Consider when planning for sport that opportunities to play socially and learn the basic foundation skills (in an unstructured setting) are accommodated at sportsgrounds and specialty/mixed recreation parks.
- Encourage clubs to provide better access to facilities for non club sport (i.e. tennis and other ball sports) and seek to ensure that cost is not a barrier to people who wish to play non structured sports socially.
- Ensure all (tennis) clubs identify courts can be hired for social use.
- Promote existing opportunities in Manly to play unstructured sports and activities.
- Where possible provide tracks and trails across Manly to suit a wide range of pedestrian and non motorised wheeled activities where access is possible.
- Attempt to provide where space allows, specialty/mixed recreation parks in each suburb or planning district, where there is a cluster of facilities for social and unstructured recreation activities suitable for a range of ages. Typically, this park would have a play space, kick-to-kick area, an off leash dog exercise area, hard court for informal ball play as well as a formed path circuit.
- Provide space for kick-to-kick, low level playing fields for social use and opportunities for Goal Kick and Aus kick, and other junior development programs to be run.

PART 3 Provision of Specific Facilities to Support Unstructured Recreation Activities

3.1 Dog Socialising and Exercising

Almost two thirds of Australian households currently own a pet. Dog ownership is increasing and as private space is becoming smaller the use of public space for dog socialisation and exercising is becoming increasingly important, as is the demand for off leash areas.

There are well-documented social, health and companionship benefits of pet ownership. Responsible dog owners know that exercise and socialisation is important. Lack of exercise and social activity is detrimental in terms of both the health and behaviour of a dog. While dog owners need to exercise their dogs, this activity must be balanced against environmental considerations and the rights and safety of others.

Council aims to promote responsible pet ownership and increase community awareness of companion animal issues.

3.1.1 Existing provision

Manly has a number of full time off-leash areas for exercising and training of dogs. These are documented on Council's website (www.manly.nsw.gov.au) and its various promotional literature.

Dogs are allowed on a leash in the following areas under the effective control of a competent person.

On leash areas include:

- Clontarf Reserve between the hours of 10am and 6pm (eastern standard time) and 10am and 8pm (eastern summer time) on weekends, school holidays and public holidays
- North and South Steyne Reserve between Shelly Beach and Queenscliff Surf Club including Marine Parade Reserve and Merrett Park
- Shelly Beach Headland and Shelly Beach Reserve above the access road
- Gilbert Park
- Little Manly Point Park
- Fairlight Beach
- West Esplanade Park

Off leash areas include:

- Seaforth Oval
- Tania Park
- North Harbour Reserve
- LM Graham Reserve
- Manly Cemetery
- Manly Lagoon Park

Dog Prohibition Zone includes:

Manly Council has declared that **dogs are prohibited**, whether or not they are leashed or otherwise controlled, in the following areas as shown in the below map.



Dogs are not permitted in the following areas:

- On any beaches or in swimming enclosures
- Manly Peace Park Wildlife Protection Area
- Federation Point Wildlife Protection Area
- Council's Reserve, Spring Cove
- Manly Oval
- Any national park

Current issues

Due to the increased demand for dog exercising areas and off-leash areas and the constraints of space in established areas, the impact on grass cover, as well as potential conflicts with other formal uses, there is a need for additional policy and provision associated with dog exercise areas.

There is an increased interest in providing fenced dog parks, agility areas, specialised animal play equipment, and cafes where pets are welcome. Council will investigate these options more in the future where the need arises.

Where new sites are desirable, the following criteria should be used as a general guide to site selection of dog off-leash parks:

- Away from vehicle traffic
- Relatively large open spaces where dogs can run
- Easements or drainage reserves without significant indigenous vegetation
- Some relatively flat space or can be accessed by an “accessible path of travel”
- Have access to a water supply
- Include a variation in landscape setting type across all sites.
- Some sites should have a good chance of meeting other dogs there (i.e. have dogs to play with).
- Possibly vegetation that is not just mown grass i.e. some shade and rough area

Policy directions: Dog parks

- Seek to maintain the status quo of designated off-leash areas - Primary - the major areas with specialised facilities.
- All off-leash areas within Manly should be made obvious to and identified on a map.
- Council will seek to establish additional off-leash areas if the need arises.
- Provide dog parks equitably and cost effectively within available funding.

Dogs are required to be:

- Outside playing surfaces when sports training or games are in progress.
- Outside all synthetic surfaced playing surfaces, and turf cricket wickets at all times unless signed otherwise all areas are on-leash under effective control.
- Dogs should be on-leash while on (and within 5m each side) all shared pathways, even if the pathway is within a designated off-leash area dogs are not permitted whether restrained or otherwise in Conservation Parkland/ Bushland areas, (endangered vegetation communities (Sydney turpentine / ironbark, playgrounds, public BBQs and skate/ BMX parks.
- Dog owners must carry a plastic bag with them at ALL times (even if they have cleaned up and disposed of faeces).
- Ensure there are park bins (not necessarily specialised dog bins) in off-leash areas.
- Maintain ongoing dialogue with dog activity groups about issues facing pet owners and in terms of dog parks and programs.

Requirements for Dog Parks

Primary:

- Prominent and accessible location.
- Frequent maintenance.
- Large open area for running.
- An area and outdoor furniture that is accessible for people with a disability.
- Likely co-location with other social / family recreation facilities such as BBQ, picnic, sport, or play areas.
- Potential co-location with dog obedience club, dog agility equipment.
- Signs at all entrances outlining that it is an off-lead area, and the park rules.
- Park bins in close proximity to the entrance for the correct disposal of dog droppings.
- Drinking fountains with fitted dog bowls at its base in close proximity to the entrance.
- A public toilet in close proximity.
- Off-street car parking should be in close proximity.
- Seating and shade.
- Future access by shared pathway.

Secondary

- Signs at all entrances outlining that it is an off-lead area and the park rules.
- Frequent maintenance.

- Large open area for running.
- Park bins in close proximity to the entrance for the correct disposal of dog droppings.
- Drinking fountains with fitted dog bowls at its base in close proximity to the entrance.
- Seating and shade.

Local

- Signs at all entrances outlining that it is an off-lead area and the park rules.
- Park bins in close proximity to the entrance for the correct disposal of dog droppings.

3.2 Ball Sports Courts, Hit-up/Kick and Graffiti Walls

Basketball and other ball courts and walls provide the major opportunities for young people for 'unstructured' play. Ball courts are the 'playground equivalent' for children over 9 years of age.

There are basketball half and full courts in Manly. Basketball half courts are provided in the following locations:

- LM Grahams Reserve (Possible relocation In Landscape Masterplan)
- North Harbour Reserve
- Seaforth oval

Policy Directions: Ball courts

- Where possible designate specialty/mixed recreation parks in each Precinct and where possible in each suburb, provide hard court areas and a hit-up wall where space allows.
- Where possible seek to ensure that the sealed court area provides for a number of different sports and is typical ½ courts to full court size.
- Council will not generally provide lighting of courts or walls unless required for competition and after consultation.
- Manage these facilities according to their catchment size.
- Ensure regular inspection and maintenance programs consider the items listed above.

Ensure regular inspections are undertaken of ball court areas. These should include:

- No loose earth abutting and migrating onto the playing surface.
- No cracking or uneven lifting of the slab evident.
- No glass, rubbish and debris present.
- No foreign substances such as paint or tacky / sticky substances present.
- Basketball towers (including hoop, backboard, support, netting): All elements are intact and as designed/constructed and in serviceable condition.
- All signs (including "No slam dunking/ or hanging from this hoop") are readable and not defaced.
- No graffiti requiring removal.
- Surface free from major pools of water.
- Drains operating and free of obstructions.
- All support furniture, bubblers, bins, seats and tables present and in a serviceable condition.
- Walls: no tagging, or inappropriate graffiti.
- No damage to walls that may impact on structural integrity.

- Council will not generally provide lighting of courts or walls unless required for competition.
- Ensure regular inspecting and maintenance programs.

3.3 Skate Facilities

Although demand may have flattened out in the last three or so years, the skateboard market is likely to increase. The mass appeal of the sport is growing, and the age of participants has widened. The demand for skate facilities is largely focused on street skating, although there is still demand for transitions and vertical (vert) ramps from older skaters. Most skate parks are now concrete (unless indoors) and “skate plaza” style facilities are popular, although they often don’t provide the diversity of opportunities needed to meet a range of skaters needs including younger skaters.

Whilst there is still a strong individualistic, anti-establishment element in skateboarding, the skateboard market has broadened its appeal to the family market. As skaters mature and become parents there is evidence that they are visiting skate parks with their children, to teach, encourage and watch. There has also been a corresponding demand for programs involving skateboarding, particularly for young children, and an increased trend for community and youth groups embracing skate activities in association with outreach services.

Existing provision

There is currently only one skate facility in Manly, a concrete skate bowl at Keirle Park and a 1.8m high half pipe (half pipe replaced in February 2012). The concrete skate bowl will require further refurbishing because of the high volume usage of the area. This would need to be done in consultation with users.

Seaforth Precinct have requested from community consultation a second street skate facility at Seaforth Oval, which has some allocated funding for 2011/12 This will require extensive consultation prior to design phase.

Current issues

There has been expressed demand for improvements to the existing skate park at Keirle Park. It is assumed that all skate parks will become versatile areas into the future because of lack of available space. There will be the need for further consultation with local community and user groups with regard to the Keirle park facility. To ensure the continued provision for this facility meets the need of the community

Policy directions: skate facilities

The facility accords with the likely number of people each level of facility serves, the nature and complexity of the facility and suitability of the site to sustain such a facility. As a basic rule of thumb:

- a regional facility will normally cater for approximately 6-10,000 skaters
- a sub-regional skate park may cater for up 1000 skaters
- a local skate park could cater for approximately 250 skaters
- Continue to support sport development opportunities at skate parks such as
- clinics, demonstrations, school holiday programs and where appropriate occasional competitions of skate parks and the chances of skate parks being supported by the community

- Review the inspection checklist used to regularly assess the condition of skate parks and implement a routine maintenance and cleaning program for the skate parks
- Provision of skate parks with planning relevance and consultation to provide quality outcomes prior to installations.

3.4 Walking, Cycling

There is a high demand for a range of paths to suit a range of different cyclists needs in Manly:

- At the lowest level there is a need for small circuits in association with social / family park or playgrounds for the purpose of children learning the basic foundation skills and travelling on small bikes or wheeled toys along with family members on circuit paths (“trike tracks”). These circuits may be either sealed or unsealed, depending on the setting in which they are provided.
- The next level there is a demand for longer shared off road trails for recreational cycling away from traffic. These will largely be provided through fire trails and other land managers such as National Park and Wildlife Service.
- At the next level there is becoming the demand for more purpose-built single track and cross-country mountain bike / BMX trails. None of these facilities currently exist in Manly apart from one small dirt track at Koobilya Street known as The Grove Bike track.

Current issues

- Many worldwide studies show walking to be the most popular form of outdoor exercise.
- The Western Australian Adult Physical Activity Survey showed that 63% of surveyed females used streets and footpaths for recreation in the week of the survey, compared to 47% use of facilities at home and 18% use of parks.
- It has been estimated that encouraging a further 10% of the Australian population to engage in walking five days per week could save 330 deaths per year from cardiovascular diseases and diabetes and save a minimum of \$150 million in direct health costs.
- Another study concluded that functional features to be more important for walking for recreation near home than safety aesthetic or destination features. These functional items include the presence of a well-maintained, continuous footpath system; the design of the street system; and traffic volume, speed and traffic calming devices.

Policy directions: Walking, cycling

Prior to the development of any new trails, standards for costing and maintenance are to be reviewed or developed, and the decision as to whether to proceed with any such construction shall be made in consideration of the through-life asset management costs and the financial viability implications.

- Where possible Manly will include the following:
 - Look at ways to improve network of urban footpaths that perform a recreation as well as commuter function is promoted for that purpose and designed to promote ‘urban permeability’ and pedestrian safety.

- Perimeter paths around key reserves.
- Walking tracks in suitable bushland areas.
- Council will continue to develop local trail circuits in major parks to encourage people to walk, run and cycle.
- Consider providing a circuit path for small wheeled toys and children learning to ride at each social/family park. Address in future master plans and update of management plans. (Provide some as sealed and others unsealed tracks to provide choice.)

3.4.1 Bushland Tracks and Trails

Known walking trails within Manly

The Manly Scenic Walkway track has 2 main routes. The original track is approximately 10km in length linking Manly Wharf with the Spit Bridge and takes approximately 4 hours to complete. The track includes both Council and National Parks land and is rated easy to moderate in walking difficulty. A dog walking route is also provided to enable this user group to bi-pass the National Park section where dogs are prohibited.

The second route is a circuit track of North Head commencing and finishing at Manly Wharf. The track is approximately 10km in length takes approximately 4 hours to complete. The track includes Council, National Parks, Sydney Harbour Federation Trust, and Catholic Church land. This track is rated easy to moderate in walking difficulty.

Harbour to Hawkesbury - This walking track was a Manly Council initiative to create a regional walking track linking Manly to Berowra, where the track then joins the Great North Walk to Newcastle. The Harbour to Hawkesbury walking track is 53km long, and links 12 separate existing walking tracks together to form the one route. This track extends through Manly, Willoughby, Manly, and Ku-ring-gai Council areas, as well as Garigal and Ku-ring-gai National Park lands.



Travelling on foot lets visitors experience many unique aspects of the Manly area that remain hidden to most.

Manly Walking Tracks are designed for a variety of ages and fitness levels. Regardless of which one you choose, there are many things to see along the way.

- Wildlife
- Birds
- Aboriginal landmarks
- Natural bush
- Scenic views
- Animals

Walking Tracks

From short, scenic strolls to more strenuous walks, but also include walks for wheelchairs and prams.

- Cabbage Tree Bay Coastal Walk
- Manly Eastern Hill Heritage Walk
- Manly Heritages Plaques Walk
- Manly Scenic Walkway
- The Heart of Manly Heritage Walk

3.4.2 Off Road Cycling Facilities

Traditionally these facilities are primarily BMX and mountain bike facilities. There is some overlap between mountain bike and BMX needs. There is some use of mountain bike single track by BMX riders and use of BMX dirt jumps by mountain bike for example, The Grove Bike Track, both may use tracks for competition. Also both maybe seen using skate parks.

3.4.3 BMX

Bicycle motocross is a form of cycling that uses a small framed and wheeled bicycle. Types of BMX competition include flatland, racing, freestyle, and dirt jumping.

The term “Mountain Bike” refers to any bicycle designed for off-road riding. Mountain bikes originated as all-purpose machines, but as the sport grew, mountain bikers began to ride a variety of terrain and products developed to address needs that are more specific. Types of mountain bikes can now generally be divided into XC racing, XC Trail, All Mountain and Free ride.

Trails or runs

These refer to either a series of dirt jumps in a line or a designated trail. Dirt jumps consist of two parts (doubles) – a launch and landing jump, these are separated by a space that is jumped. Single track refers to trails that are only wide enough generally for one rider at a time. They are generally constructed by directing a line of use to a particular area that may include timber and stone obstacles, and in higher-level tracks timber ladders and stairs (rather than formal construction of an entire route).

Demand for BMX

Expressed demand for BMX freestyle in Manly is estimated to be of a similar size to the skateboarding and aggressive in-line skate market. Demand for BMX will include freestyle use of skate parks (street and vert facilities) as well as other disciplines in BMX including dirt

jumping, track racing and downhill/cross country trails. These facilities may be (and commonly are) shared with mountain bikes. BMX may have a greater growth potential than skateboarding, however this demand is dispersed across a number of different disciplines that require different facilities. BMX use is likely to continue to be strong at skate parks and in outlying areas, and use and construction of BMX dirt jumps for informal use is also likely to continue. There has been some growth in BMX racing, after it peaked in the late 1980's/early 1990's. However, competition tracks are now generally provided only a regional basis. Current growth may now reflect BMX becoming an Olympic sport. There may be demand for a competition track in Manly or region if not currently provided. The provision of BMX and mountain bike activities does warrant some further investigation. A hierarchy and range of facilities to suit different disciplines of BMX is warranted, however in the short term there does need to be a focus on addressing the existing use and the management of existing facilities to ensure they are not impacting on biodiversity values.

Current BMX issues

Some Council's have sought to restrict the number of BMX bikes using skate parks because in times of high use they are seen to conflict with skateboarders. Because of the number of larger bikes now using jump areas and skate parks, codes of conduct are advisable. There are few public BMX dirt facilities in Manly to meet the relatively high demand. There are jumps establishing in environmentally sensitive areas that need to be removed.

Several areas where jumps have been developed are in suitable locations, however riders have expanded the area beyond what is acceptable and some environmental degradation has occurred. Provision of space for young people to be able to design and construct their own BMX jumps with contributions and supervision from council would serve demand. Other Councils allow jump areas to be designed and constructed by riders at agreed sites and under guidance of Council. This is generally a satisfactory arrangement. Sometimes mountain bike trail designers or BMX event promoters are employed to design BMX jumps, and overlook the specific requirements of these in a public environment.

One of the major issues is "illegal" jumps – those jumps that have been developed on public land without the authority of the landowner or manager. The question of who is responsible when an accident occurs is a major issue. Recent law reforms encourage participants to take more responsibility for their actions and make it harder to sue Councils when accidents occur. However Council owes a duty of care to its residents and this would indicate that Council must manage its BMX facilities to ensure they remain in an acceptable condition, and use is consistent with the facilities provided. Council has an obligation in design, signage, maintenance, and overall management to protect users from foreseeable danger.

Off Road Cycling Facilities

There is one area in Manly where dirt track and jumps have developed. These require more specific management input and in some instance reconfiguration. Care needs to be taken to not over design such facilities for young riders and to ensure layout does not compromise young riders' safety. Common issues associated with the "illegal" BMX dirt track sites are:

- There is no water for riders to refine the lip of the launch jump.
- There is no soil provided to do this and holes are dug in inappropriate locations.
- Heights of jumps may be more than the recommended maximum of 1.2-1.5m in a public place (for proficient riders and less for beginners).
- Riders bring timber and other loose materials to the site to supplement jumps and to create additional challenge.
- Jumps may intrude on significant areas of bushland and contribute to environmental degradation.
- Riders may cut down trees adjacent to the jumps or trails.
- Riders may lay carpet to address drainage issues.

- Riders may not provide a range of jump heights to facilitate graded challenge and assist skill development.
- Riders may deviate from the main runs and cross lines that may cause conflict for other riders.
- All these issues must be addressed with riders at BMX dirt jump sites.

Policy directions: BMX facilities

- Prior to the development of any new facilities, standards for construction and maintenance are to be reviewed or developed, and the decision as to whether to proceed with any such construction shall be made in consideration of the through-life asset management costs and the financial viability implications safety and risk issues for Council.
- Manage existing skate or BMX facilities to ensure environmental and park values are protected, and to meet the needs of a broader range of users with different levels of proficiency
- Provide opportunities for BMX riders to have an agreed involvement in the development and maintenance of BMX dirt jumps, (and develop agreements and service levels with riders, based on the issues described above)
- Agree on management and maintenance regimes for all BMX facilities in order to manage the conditions of assets and their use, thus maximising their social and recreation benefits
- If introduced develop & implement a management regime for BMX facilities to include:
 - codes of conduct
 - a process for assessing illegal jumps
 - clear roles and responsibilities for all management tasks
 - planning expertise should assess the demand for sites and agree (with Bushland staff if a bushland) and determine, (with other relevant land managers) the strategic placement of any sites, and determine which sites are suitable and capable of sustaining public facilities
 - a cyclic maintenance and capital works program supported by an approved cost plan over the lifecycle of any facility be agreed for council constructed sites and in conjunction where possible with any relevant club or user group.
 - a regular cleaning and inspection program for BMX as well as skate sites should also be put in place
 - a system for organising and recording inspections
 - a system for checking and signing off maintenance and rectification work
 - training programs for personnel responsible for inspections, hazard reports, and rectification works
 - a system for monitoring demand and use
 - a system for recording accidents
 - regular communication with users
 - a signage system

BMX Dirt jumps criteria:

- High numbers of existing and projected 10 – 24 year olds.
- Located where young people want to be.
- Served by a shared / off road trail.
- Relatively easy access by train (if only a few sites are to be provided across the Shire.
- The catchment of the park (i.e. regional, district or neighbourhood) matches the proposed facility.

- Not in an area with high conservation values i.e. ground flora.

BMX Siting checklist:

- Suitable planning scheme zone.
- Relatively flat site.
- Suitably size for at least three runs of doubles i.e. beginners, intermediate and advance i.e. to provide graded challenge and opportunities for young riders to learn.
- A minimum area of approx 70m in length, by 25m will be required, depending on location of vegetation.
- Suitable soil, slope, drainage, & environment conditions (not wet). Note: soil may need to be brought in to enable it to: be packed, (not to friable or sandy) hold its shape in the damp, but not be too hard, so as it can be manipulated.
- Emergency and maintenance vehicle access possible (fire and ambulance), and for depositing additional soil.
- A sheltered (part treed or protected) site so as the jumps do not dry out too quickly
- Not too remote from residences.
- Preferably served by water supply (for jump construction and drinking water)
- Not in the main thoroughfare (where people will inadvertently walk across).
- Not too close to a busy road or transport corridor.
- Could be in association with skate park or other facility serving young people

PROCESS BMX/MTB FACILITIES IN UNAUTHORISED LOCATIONS

- Step 1 - Quickly determine the nature of risk to those other than professional riders.
- Step 2 - Quickly ascertain the level of environmental damage.
- Step 3 - Quickly determine the suitability of the site for this activity (i.e. to become a designated MTB or BMX area).
- Step 4 - Determine the appropriate action based on the following table.

LEVEL OF RISK DESCRIPTION LIKELY USERS LIKELY ACTIONS TIMING

Level 1

Elevated timber structures that are easily accessible to pedestrians or riders, or that may not be sound.

Older or professional riders

1. Erect a temporary sign with words to the effect: WARNING this is not a Council facility. Users must accept sole responsibility for injury or death incurred because of use.
2. Address users (or if the facility is unattended) leave a note addressing users. Congratulate them on their work, indicate that a council officer has inspected the facility, and report on the findings of Step 1.
3. Recommend the users contact the relevant council officer urgently to discuss options of accommodating this sport (elsewhere if the site is inappropriate) or in a more acceptable manor)
4. Demolish structures after seven days unless they are in an appropriate location and they can be made safe.
5. Distribute media release explaining the issue to the public - not necessarily identifying the location. If close to houses letter box adjacent residents i.e. within 400m
6. Meet with users to discuss options for use or development of similar facilities in a more suitable location, making the facility safe and future management etc. Rationale: Considerable effort and expertise is required to construct these facilities.
7. They provide considerable value to proficient riders. Riders should given the opportunity to discuss the issue with council and for council to explain issues

associated with risk, environmental damage, and possible appropriate site for development of similar facilities.

1. On the same day as identified
2. On the same day as identified
3. Within 7 days
4. After 7 days if no contact made, and if deemed necessary
5. Within 14 days

Level 2

Dirt jumps more than 1.5m high that may not be in orderly runs and may include dug holes, found materials etc, and jumps close to trees that could present trip hazards and hazards to unskilled riders older or professional riders

Same as for the above

1. On the same day as identified
2. On the same day as identified
3. Within 7 days
4. After 7 days if no contact made, and if deemed necessary
5. Within 14 days

Level 3

Homemade timber structures such as ramps brought onto flat ground / paths or existing skate parks, (these may not be sound, or may present trip hazards etc.) May include younger riders

1. Inspect for structural integrity and method of construction. If deemed not structural sound remove.
2. If deemed structurally sound, move off from the rideable surface and affix sign, with a WARNING this is not a Council facility. Users must accept sole responsibility for injury or death incurred because of use. This structure will be confiscated in 48 hours if not removed by its owners. Provide a contact number for council so that it may be retrieved.
3. Provide a press release indicting why this is not good practice.

To be determined

Level 4

Dirt jumps without graded challenges and not in orderly runs with adequate distances/ clearance from structures and/or with some holes found materials etc, or close to trees that could present trip hazards and hazards to unskilled riders

Younger riders

1. Erect temporary sign with a WARNING this is not a Council facility. Users must accept sole responsibility for injury or death incurred as a result of use.
2. If in suitable location letter box adjacent residents

To be determined

Level 5

Minor dirt mounds or tracks / berms circuits dug out of the ground.

Younger riders

1. Letter box residents to either a) suggest refinement if in appropriate location, or b to indicate that they will be removed in 48 hours and the reasons. Nominate a time for discussion about the future of the jumps or an alternative site close by.
2. If in an inappropriate location, install temporary sign explaining that they will be removed.
3. If in an appropriate location refinement may include to provide multiple runs for different levels of proficiency, protect vegetation and minimise the impact of the activity (i.e. number of tracks), address any holes, design issues i.e. corner too tight, berm not high enough, proximity to trees.

3.4.4 Mountain Bike Facilities (not necessarily suitable in Manly)

There are four main types of mountain bikes; XC (cross country) trail, XC racing, All-Mountain, and Free ride bikes. Disciplines of MTB include: downhill and XC racing, 4X, trials and orienteering. The sport generally uses single tracks and trails or constructed jump circuits/trails in natural areas or parks. 4X, one of the newest disciplines and where a larger proportion of the growth is, uses a constructed track, similar to a BMX racing track, running down a slope.

The sale of mountain bikes accounts for the majority of all bike sales, however there are a lack of formalised facilities, which has led to conflicts with other park users and land managers.

In the local area, trails have been formed in bushland reserves causing damage to sensitive flora and posing potential risks to other park users on narrow tracks. A number of other local councils and land management agencies in Queensland, South Australia, and Victoria have developed public mountain bike parks. There is a 4X track in Homebush that is also used by BMX riders.

Demand for mountain bikes

There are few statistics available concerning the demand for mountain bikes or the demographic profile of riders. However, anecdotal evidence suggests there is significant growth in the activity as a competitive sport, and as a non-competitive activity, especially by older adults.

Mountain Bike Australia membership has increased by almost 400% over the last 5 years. Only 5 – 10% of mountain bike owners actually belong to an organised group or club. NSW has the largest proportion of Mountain Bike Australia memberships with over 1,500 members from NSW.

Mountain biking has traditionally been undertaken predominantly by males however there has been an increase in female participation in cycling over the last five years that is likely to correspond to increasing demand in mountain biking for women. With the advancements in technology and rider skill there is an increased demand for more challenging trails to test rider skill and deter construction of trails in inappropriate locations.

The provision of mountain bike activities in the Manly Shire warrants some further investigation. Various studies such as "Assessing Recreation Demand and Opportunities Northern Sydney Region" study Feb 2004 by Parkland Environmental Planners for Department of Infrastructure, Planning, and Natural Resources, and the DIPNR regional trails findings 2005 by HASSELL have identified demand for off-road cycling opportunities in the Northern Sydney Region.

Key issues

The key issues associated with mountain bikes in Manly are similar to BMX issues:

- The significant demand for Mountain bike trails in Manly
- The absence of a formally designated public facility
- The construction of trails in inappropriate sites
- The need to assess existing sites and designate the nature of management- or remove
- The need to establish a process to liaise with other land managers (e.g. NPWS) clubs and user groups about facilities and ongoing demand.

There are opportunities to embrace and manage mountain bike use in selective areas as has been done in Tasmania and Victoria.

Policy directions: Mountain bike facilities

- Facilitate MTB activities on a similar basis to BMX.
- No new facilities to be built without prior consideration of through-life asset management costs and the financial viability implications.
- Give priority to providing foundation level skills development, not elite level facilities, or racing.
- Give priority for MTB facilities to:
 - negotiating consistent approach to provision of cross country trails with NPWS DECC and DOL.
 - addressing the management of existing trails in bushland, (e.g. Old Mans Valley).
 - managing select single track MTB sites or jumps areas on suitable flat areas for MTBs (rather than downhill trails).
 - developing new sites only in appropriate urban locations.
- Work closely with local clubs and seek funds from Sport and Recreation or other sources to plan, design, and manage one site.
- Where a jump areas or trail is provided; ensure beginner and intermediate runs are provided to ensure there are graded challenges for riders. This will encourage skill development, and enable riders to ride a level of facility suitable to their level of proficiency.
- Council should not provide for downhill MTB disciplines or provide sites suitable for competition unless a club manages the site and any competition.
- Address issues identified with user constructed tracks as identified under BMX facilities (in the previous chapter).

3.5 Children's Playgrounds

3.5.1 Current Playground Issues

Anecdotal evidence and some recorded history indicate that until the mid 20th century, children's play experiences were centred around opportunities in bushland and local watercourses or large private backyards. It was the world of Ginger Meggs. Since those days there has been an increasingly formulated approach to playgrounds. Design and spatial objectives received little consideration and playgrounds became centred on manufactured play objects.

Today there is considerable knowledge and research that highlights the need for spaces and places for children to play, imagine, and socialise rather than relying just on objects. Through play, children develop qualities necessary in adulthood, such as:

- Problem solving
- Socialising
- Independence
- Self awareness
- Body development such as balance and motor skills
- Creativity
- Resilience
- Spatial knowledge
- Flexibility and ability to deal with change
- Risk taking and judgement.

Today, backyards are shrinking, and security concerns, real or perceived, means that pre-teenage children are rarely allowed to explore the extensive bushland areas that permeate the entire Shire. Parents usually have an expectation that children will be supervised meaning that both adults and children need to be considered when developing playground spaces. This needs to be balanced with offering children a challenging experience in a space created and controlled by adults.

The design of playgrounds still centres around manufactured objects. There has been an increasing emphasis on the safety of children using playgrounds. Australian Standards for playground safety have been adopted, dictating the design of manufactured objects and the way that they are configured in the landscape. Potential fall heights must be limited and soft fall surfaces must be installed where fall heights are above limits. These standards, while reducing the potential for injuries, have tended to drive up the costs of replacing playgrounds that have reached the end of their asset life. Replacing a playground at 2007 prices would range from \$80,000 to \$100,000. In 2011 the cost of replacing medium to large playground mixed play is anywhere between \$180,000 to \$300,000.

Manly Council have catered for the needs of the community in this regard whilst meeting Australian standards for safety, over the last 12 years. There is the need to focus funds in the future to maintenance of the 32 existing playground sites to assure the compliance with Australian standards to the future, and longevity of those facilities.

3.5.2 Current Playground Assets

Manly has 32 playground sites ranging from large multi-use playgrounds to small pocket playgrounds that may only have a swing. Playgrounds are one of the most valued facilities in our community, providing a place for parents and children to have fun, relax, enjoy a chat, keep fit, and explore. They are often the first place a family becomes connected to their local community.

In 2001 Council adopted a recommendation to establish the Playground Management Committee to oversee the development of both existing playgrounds and plan for new works. The committee has representation from local parents, child development worker, Councillors and Council staff.

Playground Management Objectives:

- To provide Manly residents and visitors with safe age appropriate playgrounds, that meets or exceeds the relevant Australian Standards.
- To plan, design and develop both new and existing playgrounds to meet future needs of the community.
- To provide children with recreational facilities that will improve physical fitness and provide high play value.
- To provide parents and carers with amenities that will improve their leisure time spent at the playground.

Manly Council in the last 8 years has achieved significant results in playground management, and during this time 18 playgrounds have been refurbished or redeveloped. Maintenance programs have also resulted in reduced risk to users, resulting in Council having no claims during that time.

Every aspect of community need has been taken into consideration when planning these facilities. Manly has, over the last 8 years experienced an increase in the number of families settling in its higher density areas. Many families have young children who choose to use the many open space facilities on offer here.

Many playgrounds have been improved through the following treatment:

- Painting
- New softfall (ground surface material)
- Shade structure installation
- New or rejuvenated fencing
- New / additional equipment added to increase play value
- New picnic seating / table for parents and carers needs
- Bubblers installed
- Bike racks installed

Playground Upgrades 2001-2012

- Manly Lagoon-New and refurbished equipment and components
- North Steyne Playground-New Structure/equipment
- Clontarf Reserve- New Structure/equipment
- Weeroona Playground- New Structure/equipment
- Little Manly Point-Refurbished equipment and components
- Tania Park- Refurbished equipment and components
- North Harbour Reserve-New and refurbished equipment and components
- Ivanhoe Park-Refurbished equipment and components
- Ross Street-New and refurbished equipment and components
- Cross Street-New and refurbished equipment and components
- Corso – New playground replacing old
- *Bower Street – New playground*
- *Dally Park–New equipment and or ground treatment*
- *East Esplanade -New equipment and or ground treatment*
- *Griffiths Street-New equipment and or ground treatment Little Manly*
- *Cove-new*
- *Nanbaree swing only – New equipment and or ground treatment Little*
- *Manly Cove-new*

New Playgrounds

- JAF Fenwick
- Baranbali
- Seaforth Oval
- Corso Playground
- Lagoon Park Playground

3.5.3 Playground Asset Management Issues

Asset management and associated financial sustainability has become one of the most important issues facing local government in recent times. The increased replacement cost and reduced life cycle of modern playground equipment has increased the asset management costs of playgrounds. This raises concerns about the future financial sustainability of maintaining Council's portfolio of playgrounds at the current level at the same time as attempting to expand the range of facilities for unstructured recreation as set out in this Strategy. It is likely that future management of playgrounds will include the need for hard decisions about playground replacements and the cost/benefits of retaining playgrounds as against competing recreation projects.

Along with the trend in safety design of manufactured playground objects, there has been an Australia-wide trend towards providing artificial shade structures to moderate temperature

and UV radiation. These structures are costly to erect, prone to vandalism and have a limited life before becoming dilapidated in appearance.

Fencing is provided in some playgrounds especially where the playground is situated near a busy road or some other hazard. In a general sense, fencing a playground off from the larger park area is not desirable as children should be free to explore and play in the largest possible space. The major cause of playground injuries is children falling from play equipment onto a hard surface. Reducing the height of equipment and providing under surfacing should help reduce the severity of injuries (Kidsafe 1998). Certified under surfacing under and around playground equipment should be installed in accordance with Australian Standard AS/NZS 4422.1996 Playground Surfacing. The standard relates to impact attenuation and fall zones and requires that under surfacing is placed under and around play equipment in order to reduce the risk of falls and their impact.

Wet-pour recycled rubber compounds, pine bark, sand and synthetic grass surfacing can all give satisfactory fall absorption when newly absorbed, many of these types of surface require continual maintenance to maintain these properties. The least maintenance is required by wet pour rubber but it is also the most expensive at between \$20,000 - \$40,000 per site. Through life costs and effectiveness make this type of surface the preferred treatment.

Priority for playground development to be given to specialty/mixed recreation parks as they have regional, shire-wide or suburb-wide catchment Continuation of the establishment of a hierarchy of parks as regional parks, specialty/social/family parks, and local parks, with playground dimensions and settings commensurate with the position of the park within the hierarchy continue to improve diversity of playground appearance and play experience Priority for playground development to be given to larger parks such as those with regional, LGA wide or suburb-wide.

Design specialty/mixed recreation parks and sportsgrounds to cater for unstructured recreation for a range of age groups including adolescents varying the play experience at each park, particularly at specialty/mixed recreation parks and sportsgrounds. Investigate ways to increase accessibility into parks and to play areas Play units should provide for swinging, sliding, climbing, spinning, rocking, balancing.

Playgrounds for 2-5 year olds could include:

- Areas to crawl; low platforms with multiple access such as ramps and ladders; ramps with pieces attached for grasping; low tables for sand, water and manipulation of materials; tricycle paths with various textures; flexible spring rockers; sand areas (may require covers); and shorter slides.
- Playgrounds for 5-12 year olds could include: rope or chain climbers on angles; climbing pieces; horizontal bars; cooperative pieces such as tyre swings, merry go rounds, see saws; slides and sliding poles; open spaces to run and play ball; and semi-enclosed structures to promote fantasy play and socialising.
- Ensure appropriate levels of carer comfort through seating, tables, and shelters positioned for good viewing over play areas and which also facilitate adults engaging with children's play.
- Plant semi-mature native trees to establish small groupings with a view to creating long term landscape settings
- Specialty/mixed recreation parks and sportsgrounds could include areas that support activities such as ball games, crawling, running, made-up games, and role playing. These areas also often appeal to older children and teenagers.
- Remove playgrounds that are no longer functionally appropriate or safe.
- Replacement of removed playgrounds to occur only at parks that are large enough and accessible enough to support a playground with a variety of elements, with evidence of good past visitation levels and public support.

- For asset management and financial viability reasons, no expansion of the number of playgrounds should occur without sustainable statistics to support the need. It is more relevant to sustain and improve the existing number of playgrounds in the LGA with the allocated budgets available.

Policy direction: Playgrounds

Given the restraints on available funding it is envisaged that the current existing playgrounds will be maintained under the guidelines of the Australian standards. Major new playgrounds would only be installed with the support of statistical information and public consultation every 3-5 years. Funding would have to be sourced in terms of these new capital constructions.

Where larger new playgrounds need to be installed review of current status and need will be required.

During the course of the formulation of the 10year Playground strategy review of all playgrounds will be carried out and in particular the need for smaller playgrounds that do not support usage by more than a few users.

Available funding will be allocated to the maintenance and improvement of existing playground, not capital expenditure.

Playground Strategy 2009-2014 **Corporate Planning & Strategy Adopted 1st December 2008**, Document reference: CPS3912

In summary Council will look at unstructured recreation with strategic direction for the management of unstructured recreation facilities and processes in the Manly LGA.

In general, prior to the development of any new facilities, the decision as to whether to proceed with any such construction shall be made in consideration of the total life asset management costs and the financial implications for Council.

Funds have not been identified for the implementation of the Strategies/ policies discussed here. However, any future projects would be subject to Councils budget bid process and affordability regards to funding.

Manly is home to rare and natural beauty, this includes parkland and reserves that contain creeks, native birds and animals and a variety of local flora. Despite appearances, nearly 70% of Manly's natural environment has been degraded to some extent over time due to human activities.

APPENDIX

Skate Park Location: Checklist

The following checklist is provided as a guide to selecting a location and site for future skate facilities.

1. Identify the location (suburb/vicinity)

- Where there is a gap in the available facilities.
- Where the existing and projected age of the population is largest for 8-24 year olds.
- Where there is a site (most likely a sports ground or adjacent to a shopping centre where noise and lighting are not likely to cause conflict) relatively close to public transport.
- Where there is any existing services or facilities where a skate facility could benefit from collocation.
- Where a mayor community hub or central area with undeveloped land (either Council-owned or Crown land) is available, is being recycled, or has low value for other users (e.g. under freeway flyovers).
- Where planning approval from other responsible authorities may not be necessary.
- What sites in this location might be suitable for a skate development.
- Not too close to existing structures, houses, sandy or wet areas, environmentally sensitive areas.
- Where the skate facility is likely to consistent with the zoning and ownership of the land located
- Where young people want to be, or adjacent to where they congregate.
- The catchments (regional or local) match the proposed facility.
- Co-location or partnerships with existing shopping centres, sport or recreation facilities or interested schools may be possible.

Skate Park Siting Checklist

2. Identify a suitable site

- Site planning scheme zone.
- Suitably sized (allow for expansion, and space for parking if a sub-regional skate park).
- Suitable soil, slope, and environmental conditions (desirably relatively flat).
- Emergency vehicle access (fire and ambulance).
- Visually prominent, pleasant site with good public surveillance for safety and high marketability (e.g. for obtaining sponsorship).
- Associated amenities, such as a telephone, toilets, water, shelter, and shade are available or cost effective to provide.
- Adequate distance from residential dwellings and incompatible land uses (i.e. site in conjunction with sport to avoid noise and light intrusions).
- Where there will be minimal conflict with other users (e.g. pedestrians) other sports (female dominated sports such as netball), or one other age group (toddlers playground).
- Suitable to fence if required (e.g. where a skate bowl is sited or where it is desirable to restrict access at night).
- Served by an off-road shared bicycle path network or route.
- Not too close to a busy road.
- Restricted access to vehicles to prevent skating at night by car lights.
- Free access to users and spectators.
- Close to shops selling food and drink.
- On a local circulation route.

- Not within walking distance from a hotel or night club.

Skate Park Pre-design Checklist

3. Questions to consider during the planning stage and before design include:

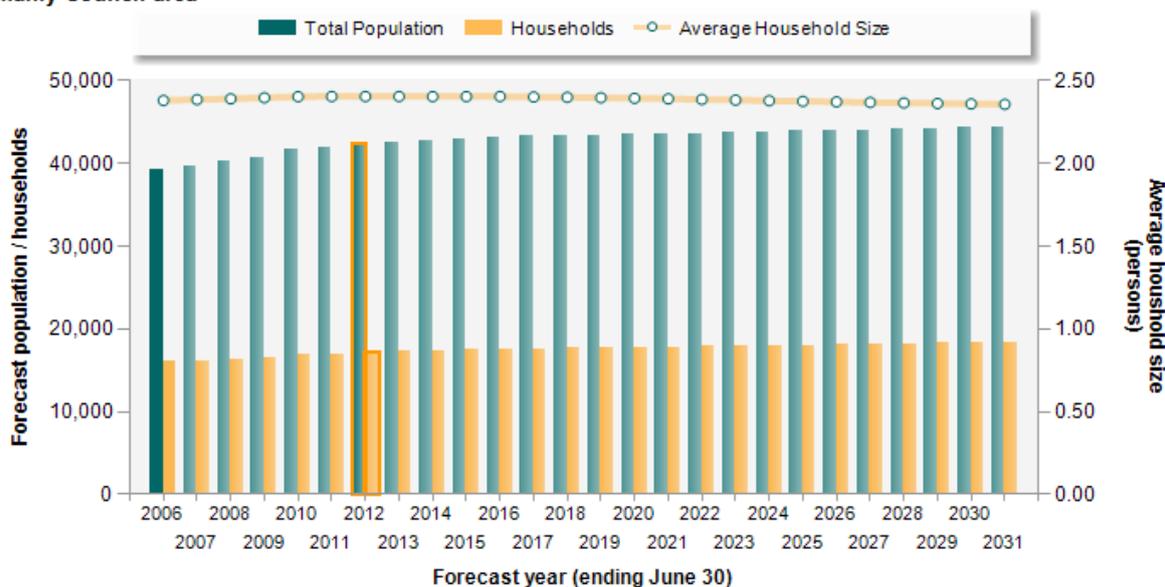
- Funding and Allocation: Are there sufficient funds allocated for a skate/BMX facility that is adequately supported by ancillary elements?
- Community Consultation: Have the community been consulted on what type of space they would like?
- Target Users: Have all target users been considered (BMX riders, Inline-skaters, Skateboarders, parents and female participants)? Have the needs of spectators been considered in the planning and design?
- Image and Public Perception: Have the community been informed on the positives and potential negative impact of skate/BMX parks?
- Alternatives sites: Have other sites been considered in the site selection process?
- Accessibility: Is the potential site accessible for users by public transport, foot, bicycle, car etc?
- Community Hubs: Is the chosen site well situated to local food and beverage outlets: community facilities, a main road, other recreational facilities (i.e. sports fields)?
- Community Input: Have adjoining residents, business owners, users of the park, school, etc. been consulted during the site selection stage?
- Visibility: Is the site clearly visible from main roads, local businesses, and residential dwellings?
- Existing skate/BMX Facilities: Is the site likely to complement rather than duplicate of well other facilities for the case code?
- Skate/BMX Parks Elements: Are elements challenging for a variety of skill levels?
- Mix of Elements: What are the elements of the facility and do they reflect the potential users' ideal and skill levels?
- Landscape Amenity: Does the design include ancillary facilities such as rubbish bins, seating, drinking fountain, paths, landscaping, shade structures, (and car parks, and toilets if a subregional facility)?
- Safer by Design: Has the design considered safety of users, spectators and nearby/ adjoining land uses?
- Signage: Has signage been located in a highly visible area of the park?
- Lighting: Will the facility be lit at night? If so until what time?
- Risk Assessment: Has a risk assessment of design been undertaken before construction and acceptable standards and guidelines been considered?
- Management: Has a management plan been prepared (addressing all the items above), and agreed with all stakeholders?
- To ensure the facility remains a safe, enjoyable environment for users and spectators?
- Who will be managing the facility (private – user pays, Council – free to access, etc?)
- Skate Committee: Has a committee been formed to manage, report and notify Council of issues and concerns associated with the facility?
- Skate/BMX Facility Officer: Has an officer being appointed?
- Marketing and Programming Initiatives: Have skate demos and regular competitions events and carnivals been considered at the park?

2.2 Related table

The Australian Bureau of Statistics publishes statistics on the participation of children (aged 5 – 14 years) in cultural and leisure activities. Participation of children in organised sporting activities has been increasing since 2000 especially girls and in the younger age categories (6 – 10 years). However, there is limited available data about unstructured recreation activity use by children.

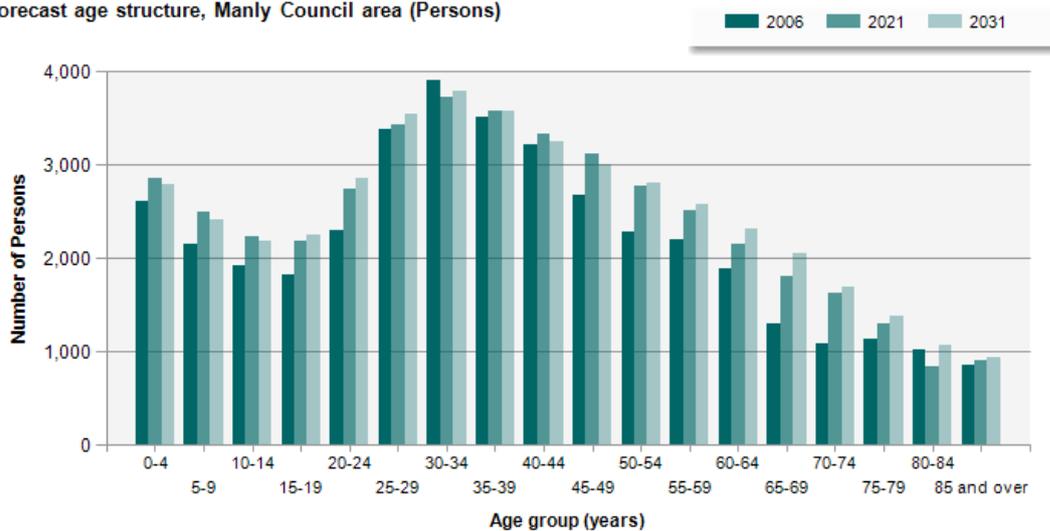
There is anecdotal evidence of an increased demand for mountain biking and BMX type recreational activities.

Forecast population, households and average household size, Manly Council area



- In 2006, the most populous age group in Manly Council area was 30-34 year olds, with 3,908 persons. In 2021 the most populous forecast age group will continue to be 30-34 year olds, with 3,726 persons.
- The number of people aged under 15 is forecast to increase by 895 (13.4%), representing a rise in the proportion of the population to 17.4%. The number of people aged over 65 is expected to increase by 1,078 (20.0%), and represent 14.8% of the population by 2021.
- The age group which is forecast to have the largest proportional increase (relative to its population size) by 2021 is 70-74 year olds, who are forecast to increase by 50.9% to 1,630 persons.
- Housing trends suggest there may be an increase in demand for local streetscapes and parks to accommodate incidental and unstructured play and physical activities

Forecast age structure, Manly Council area (Persons)



The 2005 Exercise, Recreation, and Sports Statistics for NSW indicate the following:

- The total non-organised participation is greatest among persons in the 25 to 34 year and 35 to 44 year age groups (73.3% and 73.6% respectively).
- Whilst organised participation is greater in males, total non-organised participation is greater among females (males 67.8%, females 70.8%).
- A greater percentage of people participate in non-organised activities than in organised activities (69.3% compared with 41.8%)
- In 2005, 41.5% of Australian people only participated in non-organised exercise, recreation and sports activities. Since 2001 the greatest increase in participation has been identified in female participation in non-organised activities increasing by 13.8%. Organised participation has increased 4.8% while non-organised participation increased 9.3%
- Non-organised participation remains high for age groups up to 64 years after which it drops off dramatically.