

AGENDA

Community and Culture Committee

Tuesday, 10 June 2025

6:00 PM

Dragon Room

Georges River Civic Centre

Hurstville



OATH OF OFFICE OR AFFIRMATION OF OFFICE

All Georges River Councillors are reminded of their Oath of Office or Affirmation of Office made at the time of their swearing into the role of Councillor.

All Councillors are to undertake the duties of the office of Councillor in the best interests of the people of the Georges River Council area and are to act faithfully and impartially carry out the functions, powers, authorities and discretions vested in them under the *Local Government Act 1993* or any other Act to the best of their ability and judgement.

DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

All Georges River Councillors are reminded of their obligation to declare any conflict of interest (perceived or otherwise) in a matter being considered by Council or at any meeting of Council.

COMMUNITY AND CULTURE COMMITTEE MEETING

ORDER OF BUSINESS

OPENING

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Council acknowledges the Bidjigal people of the Eora Nation, who are the Traditional Custodians of all lands, waters and sky in the Georges River area. I pay my respect to Elders past and present and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who live, work and meet on these lands.

APOLOGIES / LEAVE OF ABSENCE

REQUEST TO JOIN VIA AUDIO VISUAL LINK

NOTICE OF WEBCASTING

DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

PUBLIC FORUM

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CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

Item: COM016-25 Confirmation of the Minutes of the Community and Culture Committee Meeting held on 12 May 2025

Author: Executive Assistant to Director Community and Culture

Directorate: Community and Culture

Matter Type: Previous Minutes

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Minutes of the Community and Culture Committee Meeting held on 12 May 2025, be confirmed.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment [1](#) Minutes of the Community and Culture Committee Meeting held on 12 May 2025



COM016-25

MINUTES

Community and Culture Committee

Monday, 12 May 2025

6:00 PM

Dragon Room

Georges River Civic Centre
Hurstville



GEORGES RIVER COUNCIL

PRESENT

COUNCIL MEMBERS

Councillor Landsberry, (Chairperson), Deputy Mayor, Councillor Liu, Councillor Allison, Councillor Anzellotti, Councillor Arthur, Councillor Dimoski, Councillor Gao, Councillor Mort and Councillor Wang.

COUNCIL STAFF

General Manager – David Tuxford, Director Community and Culture - Kristie Dodd, Executive Manager City Futures – Kent Stroud, Manager Sport, Community Facilities and Events – Margaret Le, General Counsel – James Fan, Coordinator Communications and Engagement – Catherine James, Coordinator Community Capacity Building - Alexis Drevikovsky, Grants Officer – Ben Taylor, Manager Office of the General Manager - Vicki McKinley, Executive Services Officer – Marisa Severino, Technology Business Support Officer – Brendan Thorpe and Executive Assistant to the Director Community and Culture – Billie Johnson (Minutes).

OPENING

The Chairperson, Councillor Landsberry, opened the meeting at 6.01pm.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

The Chairperson, Councillor Landsberry acknowledged the Bidjigal people of the Eora Nation, who are the Traditional Custodians of all lands, waters and sky in the Georges River area. She paid her respect to Elders past and present and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who live, work and meet on these lands.

APOLOGIES/LEAVE OF ABSENCE

There were no apologies or requests for leave of absence.

REQUEST TO ATTEND VIA AUDIO VISUAL LINK

There were no requests to attend via Audio Visual Link.

NOTICE OF WEBCASTING

The Chairperson, Councillor Landsberry advised staff and the public that the meeting is being recorded for minute-taking purposes and is also webcast live on Council's website, in accordance with section 5 of Council's Code of Meeting Practice. This recording will be made available on Council's Website.

CODE OF MEETING PRACTICE

Council's Code of Meeting Practice prohibits the electronic recording of meetings without the express permission of Council.

DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

Councillor Landsberry disclosed a Non-Significant, Non-Pecuniary Interest in item COM014-25 Community Grants 2024-2025 Round 2 for the reason that Councillor Landsberry was invited to become the Patron of Kogarah Historical Society in 2023, which is a proposed recipient of a Community Grant in 2024-2025 Round 2.

PUBLIC FORUM

There were no registered speakers.

CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

COM013-25 Confirmation of the Minutes of the Community and Culture Committee Meeting held on 14 April 2025

(Report by Executive Services Officer)

RECOMMENDATION: Councillor Mort, Councillor Allison

That the Minutes of the Community and Culture Committee Meeting held on 14 April 2025, be confirmed.

Record of Voting

For the Motion: Councillor Landsberry, Councillor Allison, Councillor Anzellotti, Councillor Arthur, Councillor Dimoski, Councillor Gao, Deputy Mayor, Councillor Liu, Councillor Mort, Councillor Wang

On being PUT to the meeting, voting on this Motion was UNANIMOUS. The Motion was CARRIED.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

COM014-25 Community Grants 2024-2025 Round 2

(Report by Grants and Project Officer)

RECOMMENDATION: Councillor Mort, Deputy Mayor, Councillor Liu

That the funding recommendations resulting from Georges River Council Community Grants 2024-2025 Round 2, as detailed in Attachment 1 of this report, be adopted.

Record of Voting

For the Motion: Councillor Landsberry, Councillor Allison, Councillor Anzellotti, Councillor Arthur, Councillor Dimoski, Councillor Gao, Deputy Mayor, Councillor Liu, Councillor Mort, Councillor Wang

On being PUT to the meeting, voting on this Motion was UNANIMOUS. The Motion was CARRIED.

COM015-25 Customer Experience Strategy Progress Update and Draft Customer Feedback and Complaints Management Policy Review

(Report by Head of Customer Experience)

RECOMMENDATION: Deputy Mayor, Councillor Liu, Councillor Dimoski

- (a) That Council receive and note this update on the implementation of the Customer Experience Strategy 2022-2027 (CX Strategy).
- (b) That the draft Georges River Council Customer Feedback and Complaints Management Policy be placed on public exhibition for a period of no less than 28 days.
- (c) That a further report be submitted to Council on the feedback received during the exhibition period, together with any recommended changes for the draft policy prior to adoption.

Record of Voting

For the Motion: Councillor Landsberry, Councillor Allison, Councillor Anzellotti, Councillor Arthur, Councillor Dimoski, Councillor Gao, Deputy Mayor, Councillor Liu, Councillor Mort, Councillor Wang

On being PUT to the meeting, voting on this Motion was UNANIMOUS. The Motion was CARRIED.

CONCLUSION

The Meeting was closed at 6.25pm

Chairperson

UNCONFIRMED

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Item: **COM017-25 Report of the Georges River Council Sports Advisory Committee meeting held on 22 May 2025**

Author: Manager Office of the General Manager

Directorate: Office of the General Manager

Matter Type: Committee Reports

COM017-25

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Georges River Council Sports Advisory Committee recommendations for items SAC008-25 to SAC011-25 as detailed below, be adopted by Council.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The following Committee recommendations for items SAC008-25 to SAC011-25 are submitted to Council for determination.

The recommendations were made by the Georges River Council Sports Advisory Committee at its meeting on 22 May 2025.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

SAC008-25 SPORTING INFRASTRUCTURE CAPITAL WORKS UPDATE
(Report by Acting Manager City Technical Services)

That the Georges River Council Sports Advisory Committee receive and note the presentation from the Acting Manager City Technical Services providing an update on Sporting Infrastructure Projects within Council's 2024/25 Capital Works Program.

SAC009-25 CARSS PARK AQUATIC FACILITY UPDATE
(Report by Acting Manager City Technical Services)

RECOMMENDATION: Nick Smerdely, Mark Smith

That the Georges River Council Sports Advisory Committee receive and note the update within this report from Acting Manager City Technical Services on the Carss Park Aquatic Facility.

SAC010-25 LUX LIGHTING AT SPORTING FACILITIES
(Report by Manager Strategic Placemaking)

That the Georges River Council Sports Advisory Committee receive and note the update provided on the LUX lighting assessment.

SAC011-25 SPORT, COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND EVENTS UPDATE
(Report by Manager Sport, Community Facilities and Events)


That the Georges River Council Sports Advisory Committee receive and note the presentation from the Manager Sport, Community Facilities and Events and Acting Manager City Operational

Services, outlining an overview of Sport and Recreation facilities across the local government area.

FILE REFERENCE

D25/180127

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment [↓](#) 1  Minutes of the Georges River Council Sports Advisory Committee meeting held on 22 May 2025

COM017-25

MINUTES

Georges River Council Sports Advisory Committee

Thursday, 22 May 2025

6:00 PM

Georges River Civic Centre
Hurstville



GEORGES RIVER COUNCIL

ATTENDANCE

COUNCILLOR MEMBERSHIP

Councillor Sam Stratikopoulos (Chairperson),
Councillor Kathryn Landsberry (Alternate Chairperson),
Councillor Natalie Mort,

COMMUNITY MEMBERSHIP

Ray Barbi – St George Basketball Association,
Jeffrey Barrett – St George Cycling Club,
Ross Bernays – Oatley Rugby and Sporting Club,
Sean Brohier – Football de Brazil,
Julian Finch – Connells Point Netball,
Kevin Greene – Cricket NSW,
Nicholas Smerdely – Football St George,
Scott Henderson – St George Touch Association,
Scot Holmes - St George OZTAG
Jeff Killick – Southern Sydney Rugby League,
Darryl Lane – St George Little Athletics Club,
Warren Driscoll – St George Rugby League Football Club,
Mark Smith – Swimming Metro South East,
Tanya Smith – Golf NSW,
Dale Widders – St George Australian Football Club.

GEORGES RIVER COUNCIL STAFF

David Tuxford - General Manager,
Kristie Dodd - Director Community and Culture,
Andrew Latta Director Assets and Infrastructure,
Tom Heath – Acting Manager City Operational Services,
Hayley Barnes - Manager Strategic Placemaking,
Margaret Le - Manager Sports, Community Facilities and Events
Naomi Bryant – Head of Operations City Life
Luke Galle – Coordinator Sports and Recreation
Marisa Severino - Executive Services Officer,
Mark Tadros – Team Leader Technology Business Support,
Billie Johnson - Executive Assistant to the Director Community and Culture,
Aarti Cooper – Personal Assistant to Manager Sports, Community Facilities and Events

COUNCILLOR ATTENDANCE

Councillor Sam Stratikopoulos (Chairperson)
Councillor Natalie Mort
Mayor, Councillor Elise Borg

OPENING

The Chairperson, Councillor Stratikopoulos, opened the meeting at 6.03pm.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

The Chairperson, Councillor Stratikopoulos acknowledged the Bidjigal people of the Eora Nation, who are the Traditional Custodians of all lands, waters and sky in the Georges River area. He paid his respect to Elders past and present and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who live, work and meet on these lands.

MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

The Chair, Councillor Stratikopoulos advised the meeting that two committee member resignations have been received and accepted:

1. Gary Lockwood - St George District Rugby League Football
2. Irene Hatzipetros – Football St George

The Chair, Councillor Stratikopoulos advised the meeting that two new members have been appointed to the committee:

1. Nicholas Smerdely – Football St George
2. Warren Driscoll – St George Junior Rugby League Football

APOLOGIES/LEAVE OF ABSENCE

MOTION: Ross Bernays, The Mayor, Councillor Borg

That apologies on behalf of Councillor Kathryn Landsberry (Alternate Chairperson), Jeff Killick, Julian Finch, Sean Brohier, Scott Henderson, Scot Holmes and Tanya Smith be accepted and a leave of absence be granted.

Record of Voting

For the Motion: The Mayor, Councillor Borg , Councillor Stratikopoulos, Councillor Mort, Mr Ray Barbi, Jeffrey Barrett, Ross Bernays, Kevin Greene, Darryl Lane, Mark Smith, Dale Widders, Nick Smerdely, Warren Driscoll

On being PUT to the meeting, voting on this Motion was UNANIMOUS. The Motion was CARRIED.

ABSENCES

Councillor Kathryn Landsberry (Alternate Chairperson), Jeff Killick, Julian Finch, Sean Brohier, Scott Henderson, Scot Holmes and Tanya Smith.

NOTICE OF WEBCASTING

The Chairperson, Councillor Stratikopoulos advised staff and the public that the meeting is being recorded for minute-taking purposes and is also webcast live on Council's website, in accordance with section 5 of Council's Code of Meeting Practice. This recording will be made available on Council's Website.

CODE OF MEETING PRACTICE

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CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

SAC007-25 Confirmation of the Minutes of the Georges River Council Sports Advisory Committee Meeting held on 13 February 2025
(Report by Executive Assistant to Director Community and Culture)

RECOMMENDATION: Dale Widders, Councillor Mort

That the Minutes of the Georges River Council Sports Advisory Committee Meeting held on 13 February 2025, be confirmed.

Record of Voting

For the Motion: The Mayor, Councillor Borg , Councillor Stratikopoulos, Councillor Mort, Mr Ray Barbi, Jeffrey Barrett, Ross Bernays, Kevin Greene, Darryl Lane, Mark Smith, Dale Widders, Nick Smerdely, Warren Driscoll

On being PUT to the meeting, voting on this Motion was UNANIMOUS. The Motion was CARRIED.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

SAC008-25 Sporting Infrastructure Capital Works Update (Report by Acting Manager City Technical Services)

RECOMMENDATION: Councillor Mort, The Mayor, Councillor Borg

That the Georges River Council Sports Advisory Committee receive and note the presentation from the Acting Manager City Technical Services providing an update on Sporting Infrastructure Projects within Council's 2024/25 Capital Works Program.

Record of Voting

For the Motion: The Mayor, Councillor Borg , Councillor Stratikopoulos, Councillor Mort, Mr Ray Barbi, Jeffrey Barrett, Ross Bernays, Kevin Greene, Darryl Lane, Mark Smith, Dale Widders, Nick Smerdely, Warren Driscoll

On being PUT to the meeting, voting on this Motion was UNANIMOUS. The Motion was CARRIED.

SAC009-25 Carss Park Aquatic Facility Update (Report by Acting Manager City Technical Services)

RECOMMENDATION: Nick Smerdely, Mark Smith

That the Georges River Council Sports Advisory Committee receive and note the update within this report from Acting Manager City Technical Services on the Carss Park Aquatic Facility.

Record of Voting

For the Motion: The Mayor, Councillor Borg , Councillor Stratikopoulos, Councillor Mort, Mr Ray Barbi, Jeffrey Barrett, Ross Bernays, Kevin Greene, Darryl Lane, Mark Smith, Dale Widders, Nick Smerdely, Warren Driscoll

On being PUT to the meeting, voting on this Motion was UNANIMOUS. The Motion was CARRIED.

SAC010-25 LUX Lighting at Sporting Facilities (Report by Manager Strategic Placemaking)

RECOMMENDATION: Nick Smerdely, Councillor Mort

That the Georges River Council Sports Advisory Committee receive and note the update provided on the LUX lighting assessment.

Record of Voting

For the Motion: The Mayor, Councillor Borg , Councillor Stratikopoulos, Councillor Mort, Mr Ray Barbi, Jeffrey Barrett, Ross Bernays, Kevin Greene, Darryl Lane, Mark Smith, Dale Widders, Nick Smerdely, Warren Driscoll

On being PUT to the meeting, voting on this Motion was UNANIMOUS. The Motion was CARRIED.

SAC011-25 Sport, Community Facilities and Events Update (Report by Manager Sport, Community Facilities and Events)

RECOMMENDATION: Dale Widders, Councillor Mort

That the Georges River Council Sports Advisory Committee receive and note the presentation from the Manager Sport, Community Facilities and Events and Acting Manager City Operational Services, outlining an overview of Sport and Recreation facilities across the local government area.

Record of Voting

For the Motion: The Mayor, Councillor Borg , Councillor Stratikopoulos, Councillor Mort, Mr Ray Barbi, Jeffrey Barrett, Ross Bernays, Kevin Greene, Darryl Lane, Mark Smith, Dale Widders, Nick Smerdely, Warren Driscoll

On being PUT to the meeting, voting on this Motion was UNANIMOUS. The Motion was CARRIED.

CONCLUSION

The Meeting was closed at 6.59pm

Chairperson

UNCONFIRMED MINUTES

Item: **COM018-25 Report of the Beverley Park Steering Committee meeting held on 4 June 2025**

Author: Manager Office of the General Manager

Directorate: Office of the General Manager

Matter Type: Committee Reports

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Beverley Park Steering Committee recommendations for items BPSCC006-25 to BPSCC008-25 as detailed below, be adopted by Council.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The following Committee recommendations for items BPSCC006-25 to BPSCC008-25 are submitted to Council for determination.

The recommendations were made by the Beverley Park Steering Committee at its meeting on 4 June 2025.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS**BPSCC006-25 PUBLIC ROUNDS REPORT**

(Report by Manager Sport, Community Facilities and Events)

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Committee receive and note the public rounds report from May 2024 to April 2025.

BPSCC007-25 BEVERLEY PARK GOLF CLUB FINANCE REPORT

(Report by Manager Sport, Community Facilities and Events)

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Committee receive and note the finance report to April 2025 for Beverley Park Golf Club.

BPSCC008-25 BEVERLEY PARK GOLF COURSE PLAN OF MANAGEMENT UPDATE

(Report by Manager Sport, Community Facilities and Events)

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Committee receive and note the update on the progress and timeline for the Plan of Management for Beverley Park Golf Course.

FILE REFERENCE

D25/180129

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment [1](#) Minutes of the Beverley Park Steering Committee meeting held on 4 June 2025

**COM018-25**

MINUTES

Beverley Park Steering Committee

Wednesday, 04 June 2025

12:00PM

TEAMS Meeting

UNCONFIRMED



PRESENT

Members

Mayor, Councillor Elise Borg (Chair)
Councillor Thomas Gao (Apology)
Councillor Sam Stratikopoulos (Absent)
Andrew Latta – Director, Assets and Infrastructure
Kristie Dodd – Director, Community & Culture
Danielle Parker – Director Business and Corporate Services
Margaret Le – Manager Sport Community Facilities & Events
Shaun Smith BPGC – General Manager
Joe Bondin, BPGC - President
Dan Siely, BPGC – Treasurer (Apology)
Daniel Metcalfe, BPGC – Course Superintendent

GEORGES RIVER COUNCIL STAFF

David Tuxford – General Manager
Bernard Morabito – Head of Strategic Property
Catherine MacMahon, Manager Strategic Planning
Luke Galle – Head of Events and Operations
Luke Oste – Coordinator Strategic Planning
Arti Cooper – Personal Assistant Sport Community Facilities & Events
Sue Matthew – Executive Assistant to the General Manager
Rachelle McGrath – Executive Assistant to Director Assets and Infrastructure

OPENING

The Chairperson, Mayor, Councillor Borg, opened the meeting at 12.02pm.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

The Chairperson, Mayor, Councillor Borg acknowledged the Bidjigal people of the Eora Nation, who are the Traditional Custodians of all lands, waters and sky in the Georges River area. I pay my respect to Elders past and present and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who live, work and meet on these lands.

APOLOGIES/LEAVE OF ABSENCE

There was apologies from Councillor Gao and member of Beverley Park Golf Course, Dan Siely.

ATTENDANCE VIA AUDIO VISUAL LINK

This meeting is being held online by Teams Meeting and mobile phones must be turned to silent during the meeting.

CODE OF MEETING PRACTICE

The order of business is as shown in the agenda. Council's Code of Meeting Practice prohibits the electronic recording of meetings without the express permission of Council.

DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

Mayor, Councillor Borg disclosed a Non-Significant, Non-Pecuniary interest in all items **BPSCC005-25 to BPSCC008-25**, for the reason that she lives in Beverley Park nearby the Beverley Park Golf Course. Mayor, Councillor Borg will remain in the meeting and take part in the considerations on these items.

CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

BPSCC005-25 Confirmation of the Minutes of the Beverley Park Steering Committee Meeting held on 5 March 2025

(Report by Executive Assistant to Director Community and Culture)

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Minutes of the Beverley Park Steering Committee Meeting held on 5 March 2025, be confirmed.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

BPSCC006-25 Public Rounds Report

(Report by Manager Sport, Community Facilities and Events)

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Committee receive and note the public rounds report from May 2024 to April 2025.

BPSCC007-25 Beverley Park Golf Club Finance Report

(Report by Manager Sport, Community Facilities and Events)

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Committee receive and note the finance report to April 2025 for Beverley Park Golf Club.

BPSCC008-25 Beverley Park Golf Course Plan of Management Update

(Report by Manager Sport, Community Facilities and Events)

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Committee receive and note the update on the progress and timeline for the Plan of Management for Beverley Park Golf Course.

GENERAL BUSINESS

- Seniors Pro AM – being resumed in November 2025. 2 day event with 2 different venues, 1 day at Hurstville Golf Course and one at Beverley Park Golf Course.

- Teddy Bear Fundraiser for the Sydney Children's Hospital will be held at Beverley Park next week over 9 days, sponsored by Sydney City Lexus.

CONCLUSION

The Meeting was closed at 12.17pm.

Chairperson

UNCONFIRMED

Item: **COM019-25 Waste Management Subsidies for Council's Community Property portfolio**

Author: Manager Sport, Community Facilities and Events

Directorate: Community and Culture

Matter Type: Committee Reports

COM019-25

RECOMMENDATION:

- (a) That Council, as the owner of the properties, assumes responsibility for the waste management costs incurred by not-for-profit and NSW Health tenants within its Community Property Portfolio, up to the renewal date of the applicable Lease or Licence.
- (b) That Council includes clear provisions in all future Lease and Licence agreements, as well as future Expressions of Interest (EOIs), outlining tenants' responsibilities for waste management services. Council will ensure that waste management services form part of the overall tenant subsidy framework, with fees fully or partially subsidised based on the tenants' assessed eligibility.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. Council manages a Community Property portfolio of 63 community properties under a community lease or community licence agreement, divided into 70 separate tenancies.
2. The portfolio has 39 community facilities, including Scouts and Girl Guides halls, community centres, baby health centres, community sporting amenities, and community gardens. Of these, Council is already subsidising 37 facilities, with two facilities currently paying for their waste collection services.
3. Additionally, there are 27 community and sporting amenity buildings excluded from this report, as sporting organisations are responsible for arranging their own waste services and waste collection services.
4. The recent implementation of Council's new Waste Management Services Contract provided a valuable opportunity to review waste services for community properties. This assessment revealed areas where Council can further optimise and clarify how Council's waste service subsidies are applied. Noting that 37 of 39 properties already benefit from Council-subsidised waste collection, this is a positive step towards ensuring even greater transparency and support for our community organisations moving forward.
5. This report recommends that Council, as owners of these properties, assume responsibility for the waste management costs incurred by not-for-profit and NSW Health tenants within the Community Property Portfolio for the 2025/26 financial year.
6. Furthermore, this report recommends that at the renewal of the lease or licence, waste management fees will be incorporated into the overall tenant subsidy and reflected accordingly in all lease and licence agreements, as well as in future Expressions of Interest (EOIs). This approach ensures transparency with tenants and provides clarity regarding waste management costs at the outset of all agreements.
7. Adopting this approach will assist in managing community expectations, align with Council's available resources, and support the sustainable operation of not-for-profit organisations within the community whilst capturing the true value of the subsidy.

BACKGROUND

8. The vision for Council's Waste Strategy 2021 to 2040 is:

To continually improve on a reliable environmentally and economically sustainable waste management system for Georges River Council residents.

Specifically, three themes are envisioned:

(i.) *Improve amenity and environmental management.*

- To improve the community's experience of Council's waste services and foster pride in the local community through increased resource recovery rates and reduced occurrences of illegal dumping and littering.

(ii.) *Optimise waste management costs and foster adaptive waste management contracts.*

- To provide waste management services to the residents of Georges River Council at the lowest possible cost which is consistent with the reliability and environmental sustainability of those services.
- Develop contracts for waste management services which will allow Georges River Council to adapt to any changes in waste management technology and regulations.

(iii.) *Support and implement innovative waste management initiatives.*

- To deliver significant waste management outcomes through joint procurement of vital waste infrastructure and engagement in research projects in partnership with stakeholders such as SSROC and the waste management industry.

9. The bin replacement program implemented from 31 March 2025 to July 2025, seeks to remove all mobile bins (red, yellow, and green-lidded) and replace them with new bins. In conjunction with this initiative, bin collection days will increase from three to five days per week. This updated schedule is designed to optimise waste services across the local government area, enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of resource utilisation.
10. These waste service improvements are a result of Georges River Council commencing a new waste collection contract during the 2024/25 financial year. Bin collection services are managed by Council's waste contractor Veolia. As part of this contract, a new fleet of waste collection vehicles were rolled out in December 2024.
11. Waste services are provided based on a property's rating classification — non-rateable, residential, or business. Depending on this classification, properties are offered either a domestic or commercial waste service. Domestic waste services are assigned to residential-rated properties, while commercial waste services are applied to business or non-rateable properties. The type of waste service offered to a tenant will align with the rating classification or may be determined at Council's discretion. Most community properties fall under either exclusive leases or non-exclusive licences (typically where facilities are co-located with venues for hire). Properties under exclusive leases are generally categorised as business or non-rateable, while those under non-exclusive licences are classified as non-rateable.
12. Fees for waste services are calculated based on the number and size of bins allocated to a property, the type of service (domestic or commercial), and the frequency of collection (once or twice weekly), in line with Council's adopted Schedule of Fees and Charges. In the Georges River area, bin collection services are not automatically provided to commercial properties. Property owners must request the provision of new or additional bins or cancel existing Council waste services as needed.

Community Property Portfolio

13. The primary purpose of the portfolio is to provide subsidised properties for community providers to deliver tangible community benefits at a local level, rather than to generate revenue.

These recommendations align with Georges River Council's Community Strategic Plan 2022-2032:

- Pillar 1: Our community, *Goal 1.2 – Diverse, vibrant community hubs and facilities are connected, well maintained and have equitable access.*
 - Pillar 3: Our economy, *Goal 3.1 – Local jobs and local businesses are supported to grow.*
14. Council manages a portfolio of 63 community properties under a community lease or community licence, divided into 70 separate tenancies.
15. There are 27 community and sporting amenity buildings excluded from this report, as sporting organisations are responsible for arranging their own waste services and waste collection services.
16. The Community Property Portfolio has 39 community facilities, including Scouts and Girl Guides halls, community centres, baby health centres, community sporting amenities, and community gardens.
17. Council's 39 community facilities operate under different lease arrangements with a range of tenant groups, and there are inconsistencies in how waste services are charged and managed. As a result, waste services may have been incorrectly charged due to these inconsistencies.
18. A reconciliation of waste charges and payments further highlighted that only two facilities, were charged for waste services, and that Council has been subsidising waste services for the remaining 37 community facilities.

Next Steps

19. To enhance the management and transparency of waste services across community properties, the following improvements will be implemented:

(a) Current Process for Unallocated Facilities:

Council will consult all community tenants within the Community Property portfolio to assess their current and future waste service needs. Once the required number of bins is confirmed, Council officers will submit the necessary Waste Service Application on behalf of the organisation and calculate the associated waste management costs.

(b) Development of a Standard Bin Allocation Framework:

A Standard Bin Allocation Framework for waste and recycling bins at community properties will be developed. This is scheduled to commence in the 2025/26 financial year, following the completion of the new waste collection contract implementation project.

(c) Inclusion of Waste Service Charges in future Lease and Licence Agreements:

Council will standardise lease and licence terms to ensure a consistent approach to waste service charges, addressing current inconsistencies where some agreements include the charges and others do not. Waste service charges will be incorporated

into the overall level of subsidy provided to tenants and will be reflected in the EOI process, in addition to being clearly detailed in all renewed leases and licences.

20. The Standard Bin Allocation Framework will be informed by the expected volume of waste generated, based on the nature of each property's use and the tenant's operations. This will be aligned with state-based waste generation benchmarks and further supported by comparisons with the waste management needs of similar organisations or tenant groups.
21. These improvements aim to ensure that future agreements clearly define the waste service levels per property, along with the responsibilities and associated costs of waste management services. By incorporating these charges within lease and licence agreements, Council is committed to promoting transparency and consistency in the allocation of waste management costs across all community properties.
22. To ensure fairness and transparency, this report recommends that Council temporarily subsidise all waste services until new, standardised contracts are issued. Future contracts will incorporate waste fees based on a consistent Standard Bin Allocation Framework, enabling Council to determine the true cost of subsidising its Community Property portfolio and apply a uniform approach going forward.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

23. Table 1 shows the projected waste management service costs for Community Property tenants and for Council in the 2025/26 financial year if all waste management services within the Community Property portfolio are subsidised. This projected cost is based on the draft 2025/26 Schedule of Fees and Charges and current Lease and Licence agreements.

Table 1: Total Subsidies for Waste Management Services within the Community Property Portfolio

	FY2025/26 (inc. GST)
Cost to Community Property Tenants	\$0
Subsidy by Council	\$70,091.00

24. As existing Lease and Licence agreements expire, all new agreements will clearly state tenant responsibilities for waste management. Waste service charges will be included in the overall subsidy framework, with fees fully or partly subsidised based on each tenant's assessed eligibility.
25. As new agreements are put in place and subsidy assessments are completed, tenant contributions to waste services may change. While the 2025/26 cost above assumes no new agreements, some are already underway and may reduce the overall subsidy depending on assessment outcomes.

RISK IMPLICATIONS

26. Strategic Risk 1: Financial Sustainability.

If subsidies are not adequately provided, community non-profit organisations may encounter substantial financial strain. This could adversely affect their capacity to deliver essential services and support to the community, potentially resulting in negative social and economic outcomes.

27. Strategic Risk 6: Reputation.

- (a) There is a potential risk to the Council's reputation if the oversight of the subsidy is not effectively managed. Maintaining transparency and fairness in the allocation of subsidies is essential to preserving public trust and confidence.
- (b) Failure to implement these recommendations poses a strategic risk to the Council's reputation, potentially damaging its identity and brand. Should Council does not absorb waste management service costs for not-for-profit and NSW Health tenants in 2025/26, the resulting financial strain could threaten their ability to operate and sustain valuable services to the Georges River community.

28. Strategic Risk 7: Ineffective Governance

Failing to incorporate waste management service fees in future EOIs and lease agreements may result in financial inefficiencies and ambiguous tenant responsibilities. This could lead to operational challenges, tenant disputes, and perceptions of inequity, ultimately undermining Council's capacity to make informed decisions, take strategic action, and sustainably support the community.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

29. To address the issue regarding waste management service charges, the Community Property team will consult all community tenants within the Community Property portfolio to assess their current and future waste service needs. This consultation will help establish a Standard Bin Allocation Framework, with determined waste charges to be applied in accordance with the updated 2025/26 Schedule of Fees and Charges.

FILE REFERENCE

D25/108784

ATTACHMENTS

Nil

Item: **COM020-25 Outgoing Sponsorship Request - 2025 Beachside Dash St George and Sutherland Medical Research Foundation**

Author: Sponsorship Specialist

Directorate: Community and Culture

Matter Type: Committee Reports

COM020-25

RECOMMENDATION:

1. That Council approves the Outgoing Sponsorship request of \$8,500 for the purpose of becoming a sponsor of the St George and Sutherland Medical Research Foundation, Beachside Dash on Sunday 14 September 2025.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. On Monday 14 April 2025, Council received a sponsorship request from the St George and Sutherland Medical Research Foundation for \$8,500 to be a sponsor of the 2025 Beachside Dash, Sunday 14 September held at Depena Reserve, Dolls Point.
2. The Beachside Dash is a community fun run aimed at raising funds for medical research provided by the St George and Sutherland Medical Research Foundation.
3. This Outgoing Sponsorship request has been assessed and Council approval is recommended in accordance with Clause 2.4 of the Georges River Council Sponsorship Policy (2023).

BACKGROUND

4. Council provided Outgoing Sponsorship of \$8,500 towards the 2024 Beachside Dash. Funding for the event was from the 2024/2025 financial year budget and the event was held on Sunday 8 September 2024.
5. The St George and Sutherland Medical Research Foundation (SSMFR) funds facilities and the transformative work of medical researchers at St George and Sutherland Hospitals. This research supports the Georges River community and ultimately improves the overall healthcare offering for residence.
6. The Beachside Dash launched in 2008 and has been raising funds for medical research through competitor registration, sponsorship, and donations for over 16 years.
7. The Beachside Dash includes a race option for all abilities. 10km, 5km or 2km run/walk, School Cup Challenge where schools from the local area enter teams and compete against each other. In 2024 the School Cup Challenge attracted participation from 50 schools and more than 400 students. In 2024 a visually impaired running group with 3 service dogs was included. New to 2025 will be the Corporate Cup Challenge where local businesses, Councils, hospitals etc will compete against each other in a 2km fun run. 2025 will also see an increase in capacity for virtual participants, fostering accessibility and providing an opportunity for everyone to be involved in the Dash and support research.
8. Aligned to Council's Disability Inclusion Action Plan (2022-2026) and as previously mentioned, the 2024 Beachside Dash included a vision impaired group with 3 service dogs. The initiative will take place again in 2025 since enquiries to compete have been received.
9. In 2024 the event raised \$110,000 funds for research.

10. It is anticipated that approximately 1,950 community members will attend the event, being 950 race registrations, 500 spectators and 500 virtual participants.
11. The reciprocal benefits offered to Council will include:
 - a) Logo recognition on event marketing collateral;
 - b) Logo recognition on SSMRF website and social media platforms;
 - c) Acknowledgment in SSMFR monthly EDM, reach 6000 people;
 - d) Acknowledgment on the day from event MC;
 - e) Opportunity for Council to have a stall at the event;
 - f) Opportunity for Council representation at the trophy presentation; and
 - g) Opportunity for Council Mayor or representative to deliver a short speech.
12. An invitation to support the event and attend has been extended to Bayside Council and Sutherland Shire Council.
13. In accordance with the Sponsorship Policy (2023), Council officers reviewed the proposal to assess alignment to Council strategies and benefit to the local community.
14. It is recommended that Council sponsor the 2025 Beachside Dash to the value of \$8,500 given the reciprocal benefits offered to Council and the long-term benefit provided to the local community.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

15. The \$8,500 Outgoing Sponsorship will be allocated from the 2025/2026 Outgoing Community Event Sponsorship budget.

RISK IMPLICATIONS

16. Reputation risks are mitigated by:
 - (a) Through the assessment process, Council demonstrates good governance, fairness and support for local initiatives to ensure funded events deliver maximum community benefit.
 - (b) Council's financial assistance also builds community event management capacity, fosters positive publicity and reinforces trust in our commitment to supporting valued community events, strengthening community relations and encouraging future engagement.
17. Compliance risks are mitigated by:
 - (a) Assessment and recommendations of Outgoing Sponsorship are in line with the Outgoing Sponsorship Guidelines and the Georges River Council Sponsorship Policy (2023).
 - (b) Requirement of Outgoing Sponsorship recipients to adhere to the Outgoing Sponsorship Guidelines and the Georges River Council Sponsorship Policy (2023).

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

18. Community engagement was undertaken as part of the development of the Sponsorship Policy (2023).
19. On 24 July 2023, Council approved the revised draft Sponsorship Policy to be placed on public exhibition for a period of no less than 28 Days.
20. The Sponsorship Policy (2023) was adopted by Council on 23 October 2023 (CCL091-23).

FILE REFERENCE

D25/138827

ATTACHMENTS

Nil

COM020-25

Item: **COM021-25 Adoption of the Draft Grants and Donations Policy and the Draft Sports Grounds Access Policy**

Author: Manager Sport, Community Facilities and Events

Directorate: Community and Culture

Matter Type: Committee Reports

COM021-25

RECOMMENDATION:

- (a) That Council adopt:
 - (i) The Draft Grants and Donations Policy.
 - (ii) The Draft Sports Grounds Access Policy.
- (b) That the General Manager be delegated authority to:
 - (i) Update Appendix A of the Draft Sports Ground Access Policy, Tiering of Council's Sports Grounds, pending contractual changes to the grounds listed.
 - (ii) Make minor changes to the Policy, if required.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. Council amended the Grants and Donations Policy and developed the Draft Sports Grounds Access Policy, aiming to increase community use and access to sporting facilities.
2. Following Council's endorsement for public exhibition on 10 March 2025 (CCL018-25), both policies were exhibited from 26 March to 23 April 2025.
3. This report details the feedback received from the community and internal Council business units, the subsequent refinements made to both policies, and presents the final versions for Council approval.

BACKGROUND

Review of Grants and Donations Policy

4. To improve community access and increase the use of all hireable Council facilities, the Draft Grants and Donations Policy (Attachment 1) has been amended. Previously, the Grants and Donations Policy offered subsidised access to only a subset of Council venues for community groups. Now, all hireable facilities are eligible under both the Venue Hire Grants and the Event Grants programs.
5. The revised Draft Grants and Donations Policy clarified eligible and ineligible expenses across both the Event Grants and Venue Hire Grants programs by:
 - Including sporting events above normal operations, such as club milestone anniversaries or state cup competitions, under the Event Grants program;
 - Clarifying eligible expenses under the Venue Hire Grants program to align with Council's schedule of Fees and Charges. For example, venue hire at Marana Auditorium now includes associated mandatory costs such as technical production staff, which are reflected in the updated policy.
6. Changes informed by feedback from the Georges River community, received via Your Say, were incorporated into the final Draft Grants and Donations Policy. Those changes included:

- (a) The clarity of point 1.10, the clause requiring recipients of more than \$15,000 in Council funding to provide a set of Audited Financial Statements to Council, which was subsequently revised.
- 7. Feedback received from consultation with internal Council business units clarified and refined the Draft Grants and Donations Policy. Those changes included:
 - (a) Updated exclusion criteria to remove reference to 'significant' monetary prizes, to ensure sports events offering monetary prizes are excluded.
 - (b) Minor edits within the revised Draft Grants and Donations Policy to enhance readability of the policy for applicants, primarily through clearer wording.

The Development of the Draft Sports Grounds Access Policy

- 8. The Draft Sports Grounds Access Policy (Draft Policy) was developed to establish clear principles guiding Council's decision-making and management of sports fields. The Draft Policy (Attachment 2) seeks to ensure both transparency and appropriate community access and utilisation of all sports fields. The Draft Policy excludes Jubilee Stadium, which is classified as a stadium with a commercial focus. Increased community use of Jubilee Stadium is instead supported through the revised Grants and Donations Policy and the allowance for up to 10 days of community organisation access per year as part of Council's Optimise Community Access to Premium Facilities Plan.
- 9. The Draft Policy was developed in accordance with relevant Council strategies and initiatives that relate to community engagement, service delivery, and infrastructure planning. Together, these strategies and initiatives underpin the Draft Policy, providing a cohesive framework to meet the needs of our diverse community. These include:
 - (a) The Community Strategic Plan, which outlines our long-term vision for the community;
 - (b) The Social Justice Charter, ensuring fairness and inclusivity; and our commitment as a Child Safe Organisation;
 - (c) The Georges River Council Community Infrastructure Needs Assessment and Area Acquisition Strategy, which identifies that there is an existing insufficient supply of sports fields to support current or projected future use;
 - (d) The Customer Experience Strategy, which ensures a customer-focused approach to service delivery; and
 - (e) The Plans of Management for specific sites.
- 10. Changes informed by feedback from the Georges River community, received via Your Say, were incorporated into the final Draft Policy. Those changes included:
 - (a) Updating the policy's terminology from "grand final" to "finals series" to better reflect the full scope of end-of-season sporting events.
 - (b) Updating clause 3.6, requiring hirers to be subscribed to Council's wet weather notification, to clarify that coaches, players, parents/guardians, and nominated club representatives can also subscribe.
- 11. Feedback received from consultation with internal Council business units clarified and refined the Draft Policy. Key updates were:
 - (a) Clarification that seasonal hirers must book all required dates, including galas and end of year celebrations, in advance.
 - (b) Key requirements for hirer compliance are now detailed under a high-level framework for General Principles rather than a detailed Terms and Conditions section.

- (c) An additional provision noting that for Tier 1 and Tier 2 sports grounds, the level of competition will be considered when allocating access, reflecting both internal and community feedback.
- (d) Clarification of criteria for the reallocation of confirmed allocations.
- (e) Minor administrative changes and amendments to Council officer position titles.
- (f) Minor typographical changes were made to the Draft Policy to ensure correct formatting within the document.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

12. Table 1 below demonstrates that the Venue Hire Grants budget was underutilised last financial year and that this year's Event Grants budget was increased based on 2023/2024 expenditure. This presents an opportunity to reduce financial barriers to community access through these existing grant programs for Council facilities that were previously ineligible.

Table 1. Venue Hire Grants and Event Grants 2023/2024 and 2024/2025

Venue Hire Grants:

Financial Year	Budget (Full Year)	Actual
2024/2025	\$430,000	\$161,953 (YTD)
2023/2024	\$425,000	\$164,668

Event Grants:

Financial Year	Budget (Full Year)	Actual
2024/2025	\$142,700	\$83,685 (YTD)
2023/2024	\$90,000	\$87,732

RISK IMPLICATIONS

13. Strategic Risk 3: Assets and Infrastructure.

Without the implementation of the Sports Ground Access Policy, there is a heightened risk that Council's sports infrastructure will fall short of meeting the community's evolving needs and expectations — particularly in terms of capacity, quality, and equitable access. To mitigate this, the Draft Sports Ground Access Policy outlines clear principles to ensure that facilities are allocated, managed, and used efficiently, fairly, and sustainably, aligning with both current demand and future growth.

14. Strategic Risk 6: Reputation.

- (a) Failure to endorse amendments to the Grants and Donations Policy, and implement the Sports Grounds Policy, could pose significant risks to Council's reputation and its ability to foster positive community relations. Limiting subsidised access to only certain venues or lacking clear and fair allocation of sports grounds may appear inconsistent and inequitable. This can lead to community dissatisfaction and reduce trust in Council's commitment to fairness and inclusion. To address this, the revised Grants and Donations Policy expands eligibility across all hireable Council venues and clarifies eligible costs, ensuring more equitable access and better use of

available funding. The Sports Ground Access Policy introduces clear principles for allocating and managing sports facilities, helping meet evolving community needs in a fair and sustainable way. Together, these policies reinforce Council's commitment to fairness, inclusivity, and responsible community stewardship.

- (b) Moreover, failing to optimise the available funding for community access could lead to under-utilised resources, which would reflect poorly on Council's stewardship of public funds. The Venue Hire Grants budget was under-spent last year, and the Event Grants budget was increased for 2023/2024 based on prior trends, suggesting the increased need in funding to reduce financial barriers for community access. By extending eligibility for all venues under the revised Grants and Donations Policy, in addition to implementing the Sports Grounds Access Policy, Council can ensure that these resources are used efficiently, maximising opportunities for community participation while maintaining fiscal responsibility.

15. Strategic Risk 8: Social Cohesion.

Failure to endorse the Sports Grounds Access Policy risks exacerbating socio-economic divides, limiting opportunities for engagement, and contributing to social disconnection. This could erode social cohesion, particularly among underserved or marginalised groups, affecting individual well-being and community stability. To mitigate this, we are prioritising equitable access to these facilities, ensuring that all community members, regardless of socio-economic background, have increased opportunity to engage, connect, and benefit from these spaces.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Draft Grants and Donations Policy

- 16. Throughout the public exhibition period from 26 March 2025 to 23 April 2025, Council received a total of 43 visits to the Draft Sports Grounds Access Policy Your Say webpage. One submission was received via the Your Say survey, and two written submissions.
- 17. The Your Say submission proposed expanding grant eligibility to include individuals and organisations based outside of Georges River area, provided the event was being held within the LGA. This feedback was not adopted.
- 18. The first written submission raised concern about the clarity of point 1.10, the clause requiring recipients of more than \$15,000 in Council funding, which was subsequently revised. The second was a letter of support for the policy to be placed on public exhibition.

Draft Sports Grounds Access Policy

- 19. Targeted community engagement was undertaken with sporting organisations and clubs via the Georges River Council Sports Advisory Committee, in two workshops.
- 20. Throughout the public exhibition period from 26 March 2025 to 23 April 2025, Council received a total of 316 visits to the Draft Sports Grounds Access Policy Your Say webpage. Six submissions were received during the public exhibition period.
- 21. Community feedback emphasised the importance of protecting the long-term sustainability of playing surfaces. This concern is a central objective of the policy, which has been designed to balance access with responsible field management. The policy includes provisions that directly address this feedback to ensure the preservation of Council sportsgrounds.
- 22. Community feedback informed the expansion of the policy's terminology from "grand final" to "finals series" to better reflect the full scope of end-of-season sporting events.

23. Community feedback also indicated the need for a direct notification system to notify club representatives. In response, clause 3.6, requiring hirers to be subscribed to Council's wet weather notification, was updated to clarify that coaches, players, parents/guardians, and nominated club representatives can also subscribe.

FILE REFERENCE

D25/131345

ATTACHMENTSAttachment [↓1](#) Draft Grants and Donations PolicyAttachment [↓2](#) Draft Sports Grounds Access Policy



Draft Grants and Donations Policy

2025

Policy administration

Dates	Policy approved xx/xx/2025 (date to be added by Policy Specialist) This policy is effective upon its approval. Policy is due for review xx/2028 (3 years from the date the policy is approved which is the maximum review period)
Approved by	Council Meeting xxxx Council Resolution xxxx
Policy Type	<input type="checkbox"/> Executive Policy <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Council Policy
Exhibition Period	26 March 2025 – 23 April 2025
Policy Owner	Manager Community and Early Learning Services Community and Culture
Related Documents	Georges River Council Sponsorship Policy Georges River Council Individual Grant Program Guidelines Georges River Council Outgoing Sponsorship Guidelines Georges River Council Councillor Ward Discretionary Fund Policy Georges River Council Financial Assistance Guidelines 2020-2024 Georges River Council Community Lease and License Policy Georges River Council Code of Conduct Georges River Council Customer Feedback and Complaints Management Policy Georges River Council Collection Management and Conservation Policy Georges River Council Library Collection Development Policy Georges River Council Statement of Business Ethics Grants and Program Funding in the public sector (2018) – Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) Council Codes, Policies and Registers available here . This policy supersedes the Grants and Donations Policy (2023).
References & Legislation	<i>Local Government Act 1993</i> <i>Modern Slavery Act 2018 (Cth)</i>
Document Identifier	Policy #: Allocated by Senior Policy Specialist once policy is approved (includes the version number) Doc #: D25/54385
Breaches of Policy	Breaches of any policy will be dealt with and responded to in accordance with adopted codes and/or relevant legislation.
Record Keeping	All documents and information obtained in relation to the implementation of this policy will be kept in accordance with the

	<i>NSW State Records Act 1998</i> , Georges River Council's Corporate Records Policy and adopted internal procedures.
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Purpose

The Grants and Donations Policy guides the application and assessment process, allocation and evaluation of funding to address community needs under Section 356 of the Local Government Act 1993.

Georges River Council's Grants and Donations programs support initiatives and projects that build the social, cultural, environmental and economic life of the area. Through these programs, Council partners with the community and businesses to further the actions, strategic directions and vision of Council's Community Strategic Plan.

Council recognises and respects the vital contribution of community and business in developing and delivering projects that contribute to a vibrant and sustainable community. Through these programs, Council provides financial and in-kind support for a diverse range of projects.

This policy provides an overarching framework to manage grant and donation requests. It sets the parameters of support and highlights expected outcomes for each funding program. Details on program eligibility, assessment criteria and key dates can be found in Individual Grant Program Guidelines.

The associated programs are based on the following Policy Principles:

- a) **Priority** – Funding is allocated to priority areas to meet identified community needs. Priorities are identified through community consultation and Council's Community Strategic Plan.
- b) **Impact** – Funding is provided to programs and events that demonstrate the greatest ability to positively impact identified needs and value for money. Council actively encourages partnerships with a variety of community organisations to deliver on its objectives.
- c) **Community wellbeing** – Funding is provided to programs and events that will improve the general wellbeing of the local community as a whole.
- d) **Equity and inclusion** – Funding will be accessible to a diverse range of groups and people and will not support initiatives that discriminate or disadvantage groups within the community. Council acknowledges the range of capacity in community organisations to apply for funding and applications are encouraged from people of all abilities, ethnicities, cultures, ages and sexual orientations. All applications will be assessed on their individual merits.
- e) **Responsiveness** – Funding programs are responsive and may adapt to changing community needs.
- f) **Accountability** – Use and acquittal of funds should demonstrate measurable outcomes and accountability in the purpose, use, aims and objectives of the original application or request.
- g) **Governance** – Staff and Councillors administering this Policy are bound to act ethically, fairly and with transparency, abide by Council's Code of Conduct, policies and Corporate Mission and Values, and follow the application procedure.

Application forms and acquittal requirements will be proportionate to the size of the funds awarded and the expected outcomes of the relevant program. Grant recipients are accountable for ensuring that acquittals accurately reflect approved expenditure. Council will ensure there are systems and opportunities for feedback on grants and donations processes.

- h) **Eligibility and procedure** – Applicants must meet the defined eligibility criteria and follow the application procedure.

Council seeks to optimise the use of public funds through effective and efficient grant processes, and clear grant program objectives linked to the organisation's strategic goals.

This policy applies to all outgoing grants, donations and value-in-kind provisions to enhance social, cultural, economic and environmental outcomes.

Council may, by resolution of Council, approve grants and donations outside this policy as it sees fit, in accordance with relevant legislation. The policy does not prevent Council giving occasional small gifts to organisations, providing support for civic functions or one-off events in accordance with the relevant legislation.

Scope

This Policy applies to any individual, organisation, business or community group applying for a grant or donation. Sponsorship is dealt with separately in accordance with the Council's Sponsorship Policy.

This Policy applies for all Council officials as defined in Council's Code of Conduct.

This Policy provides a framework for distribution of funds under section 356 of the Local Government Act 1993, s356.

Section 356 of the Local Government Act 1993 (the "Act") states:

- 1) A council may, in accordance with a resolution of the council, contribute money or otherwise grant financial assistance to persons for the purpose of exercising its functions.
- 2) A proposed recipient who acts for private gain is not ineligible to be granted financial assistance, but must not receive any benefit under this section until at least 28 days' public notice of the council's proposal to pass the necessary resolution has been given.
- 3) However, public notice is not required if:
 - a) the financial assistance is part of a specific program, and
 - b) the program's details have been included in the council's draft management plan for the year in which the financial assistance is proposed to be given, and
 - c) the program's proposed budget for that year does not exceed 5 percent of the council's proposed income from the ordinary rates levied for that year, and
 - d) the program applies uniformly to all persons within the council's area or to a significant group of persons within the area.

- 4) Public notice is also not required if the financial assistance is part of a program of graffiti removal work.

Section 377 of the Act states:

- 1) A council may, by resolution, delegate to the general manager or any other person or body (not including another employee of the council) any of the functions of the council, other than the following:

- q) A decision under section 356 to contribute money or otherwise grant financial assistance to persons.

1A) Despite subsection (1), a council may delegate its functions relating to the granting of financial assistance if:

- a) the financial assistance is part of a specified program, and
- b) the program is included in the council's draft operational plan for the year in which the financial assistance is proposed to be given, and
- c) the program's proposed budget for that year does not exceed 5 per cent of the council's proposed income from the ordinary rates levied for that year, and
- d) the program applies uniformly to all persons within the council's area or to a significant proportion of all the persons within the council's area.

Definition of Terms

Term	Meaning
Acquittal	An acquittal is a written report submitted after the funded program or event is complete. It details how the grantee administered the grant funds and met the project outcomes in the funding agreement. An acquittal report includes promotional material including media reports, evidence of project activities and outcomes, data that may include employment numbers, attendances and audience/stakeholder satisfaction metrics and a detailed financial report that includes project income and expenditure. Project update reports may also include a summary of the above information at intervals throughout the life of the grant.
Auspice	An entity that applies on behalf of an organisation, group or individual without an ABN / Public Liability insurance / incorporation. The group or individual may be responsible for delivering the project but the auspice is responsible for entering into the funding agreement, obtaining Public Liability insurance, and receiving and acquitting the funding. Auspiced applications must include a letter or memorandum of understanding confirming the auspice arrangement.
Community	A term which encompasses both the entire body of constituents in the Council local government area, as well as individual groups (social, cultural, sporting or other) within the local government area.

Conflict of interest	<p>As per Council's Code of Conduct. A pecuniary interest is an interest that a person has in a matter because of a reasonable likelihood or expectation of appreciable financial gain or loss to the person.</p> <p>A person will also have a pecuniary interest in a matter if that person's spouse or de facto partner or a relative of the person or a partner or employer of the person, or a company or other body which the person, or a nominee, partner or employer of the person is a member, has a pecuniary interest in the matter.</p> <p>Non-pecuniary interests are private or personal interests the Council official has that do not amount to a pecuniary interest as defined in the Act. These commonly arise out of family, or personal relationships, or involvement in sporting, social or other cultural groups and associations and may include an interest of a financial nature.</p>
Council official	As defined in Part 2 of Council's Code of Conduct, a Council official includes councillors, members of staff of Council, contractors, administrators, community members of wholly advisory committees, members of the Audit Risk and Improvement Committee, members of reference panels, Council committee members and delegates of Council.
Donation	The provision of financial, in-kind or material contribution to an individual or organisation, with no expectation of any activity or benefit in return. It assumes a philanthropic motivation, and is voluntarily and freely given. Political Donations will not be accepted by Council.
Incoming Donation	A Donation from an individual or organisation to Council.
Outgoing Donation	A Donation by Council to an individual or organisation.
Event	Any organised gathering or function where people congregate for a unique purpose.
Gift	An item of value, for example a gift voucher, entertainment, hospitality, travel, commodity, property etc., which one person or organisation presents to another.
Grant	Funds (financial or in-kind) given to a recipient for a specified project or purpose as outlined in the funding guidelines, which result in community benefit.
In-kind support / funding	An arrangement whereby Council foregoes revenue (either in full, or a percentage) on goods or services that would normally incur a fee or charge.
Not-for-profit	A not-for-profit is an organisation that does not operate for the profit, personal gain or other benefit of particular people. Not-for-profits may include registered charities and incorporated associations.

Recipient	A party who has successfully applied for a grant or donation. In the case of grants, also known as the grantee.
Unincorporated community group	A community group of people who have agreed to come together to pursue a common purpose. An unincorporated community group is not a formal organisation.

Policy Statement

1. General Principles

- 1.1. Council will provide or accept Grants or Donations only when the benefit to the community can be clearly defined.
- 1.2. Council will only provide or accept Grants or Donations to organisations whose values, identity and direction align with Council's strategic direction and image, and comply with Council's Statement of Business Ethics, policies and legislative requirements.
- 1.3. Council will not provide or accept Grants or Donations to an organisation if the arrangement could compromise, or be seen to compromise, Council's ability to exercise its regulatory and planning functions.
- 1.4. A Grants or Donations agreement must not impose or imply conditions that could limit, or appear to limit, Council's ability to carry out its functions fully, impartially or ethically.
- 1.5. Council will not award Grants or Donations to entities or individuals for projects that:
 - a) involve a political or politically motivated organisation or activity, program or event.
 - b) involve activities, programs or events for religious purposes, unless the applicant can demonstrate broader community benefit.
 - c) involve activities, programs, or events that could be perceived as divisive within the community.
 - d) will discriminate, or encourage discriminatory behaviour, including discrimination on the basis of age, disability, race, religion, sex and/or sexual orientation.
 - e) will contribute to the infringement of human rights, including operating contrary to Modern Slavery Legislation.
 - f) will demonstrate behaviour that does not align to Council's strategic direction.
 - g) may pollute land, air or water, or otherwise damage the natural environment.
 - h) may produce, promote or distribute products or services likely to be harmful to the community.
 - i) may exploit people through the payment of below-award wages or poor working conditions.
 - j) involve children or young people but do not comply with Council's expectations and obligations as a Child Safe Organisation.
 - k) may represent a reputational risk for Georges River Council to partner with or support or be seen to partner with or support.
- 1.6. Eligible applicants must abide by the principles within this policy and any published guidelines for individual funding programs.

- 1.7. All applications will be considered on their individual merits. All information pertaining to the assessment, prioritisation and decisions about applications will remain confidential.
- 1.8. Council may seek independent advice in regards to any Grants or Donations arrangement to ensure the potential recipient's values, identity and policies support Council's strategic direction and image.
- 1.9. Applicants who have received prior funding from Georges River Council under any Council Grants program must have submitted any outstanding reports or acquittals prior to submitting a new application. Failure to do so will render new applications ineligible.
- 1.10. Any organisation or entity receiving more than \$15,000 in funding per annum in any financial year from Council must provide a set of Audited Financial Statements to Council. Some organisations may be exempt in alignment with the auditing requirements of the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission. This applies to all organisations, individuals and entities that receive grant funding, including but not limited to Community Grants, Event Grants, Venue Hire Grants, Heritage Building Grants, Micro Grants, Councillor Ward Discretionary Funds, rental subsidies, sponsorship and/or donations in both cash and in-kind funding. Failure to do so will render new applications ineligible.
- 1.11. To measure the ongoing effectiveness of Council's financial assistance programs, the Community Capacity Building team will evaluate the program following each round, using continuous improvement principles of feedback, review and implementing changes. This will include:
 - a) Seeking feedback from applicants (successful and unsuccessful) on all aspects of the program and how it meets community needs;
 - b) Collating grant recipients' acquittal reports to measure the benefits the program has brought to the community;
 - c) Consulting with stakeholders including grant recipients and other community organisations on an annual basis to identify community needs;
 - d) Incorporating new findings and improvements into new grant guidelines;
 - e) Annual reporting to Council on the previous year's grants program/s.
- 1.12. Applicants will only use Council's intellectual property, imagery and material in accordance with the Guidelines and only as permitted in any contract entered into with Council.
- 1.13. Any feedback or complaints regarding the delivery of the programs in this Policy may be made as per Council's Customer Feedback and Complaints Management Policy.
- 1.14. Funding programs and maximum funding limits

Funding program	Maximum amount	Program frequency
Community Grants	\$25,000 – Major Projects \$10,000 – Small Projects	Two rounds of funding per financial year
Heritage Building Grants	Up to 50% of the cost of a project (up to a maximum value of \$10,000 per application)	Maximum one funding round per financial year
Event Grants	\$20,000 (total maximum for combined in-kind and financial funding)	Applications assessed throughout the financial year, pending availability of funds
Micro Grants	Up to \$1,000 per application	At least one funding round per financial year
Quick Response Donations	Up to \$2,000 per request (Up to \$200 for individuals, \$1,000 for teams or \$2,000 for strategic priorities or philanthropic ventures)	Requests assessed throughout the financial year, pending availability of funds
Venue Hire Grants	Up to \$40,000	Applications assessed throughout the financial year, pending availability of funds

2. Grants

- 2.1. Applicants applying for any Georges River Council grants program must submit an application form for that grant program.
- 2.2. Applicants must demonstrate that they provide, or have the capacity to provide, services, activities, events and/or programs that benefit the Georges River community.
- 2.3. Council's Grants programs will be implemented in the following way, guided by Council's Community Strategic Plan objectives:
 - a) Receiving and incorporating feedback from the community, and Council's reference groups and advisory committees;
 - b) Abiding by Council's robust Governance guidelines;
 - c) Following the principles and objectives of this Policy and the individual grant program Guidelines.
- 2.4. The allocation of grants will consider other Council subsidies given to that grant recipient in the current financial year.
- 2.5. All grant allocations made by Council are made on the assumption of honest and full disclosure of information contained in the application. Evidence of any breach will

render the grant null and void in which case any funds paid under the scheme must be returned to Council.

2.6. Grant funds will not be provided towards any unlawful, unethical or profit-making purposes, or towards any political or religious purposes.

2.7. Applicants must immediately advise Council of any proposed changes to the purpose or proposed use of grant funds from those detailed in the application, and of any significant changes in the aims and objectives or management structure of the applicant group or organisation. The decision to withdraw funding following notification of proposed changes shall be made at Council's discretion.

2.8. Unexpended funds must be returned to Council, unless negligible, as per Council Guidelines or as permitted in any agreement entered into with Council.

3. Donations

3.1. Council is not obliged to accept a Donation from any organisation. Council reserves the right to decline a Donation agreement where the potential Donor, their activities or their proposals are in conflict with Council's core values or could have a negative impact on the community.

3.2. Donors must provide evidence of the philanthropic motivation for their Donations.

3.3. Donations will not be sought from, accepted from or provided to political parties.

3.4. Potential Donation arrangements will be risk-assessed for the possibility of a real or perceived Conflict of Interest. Council has the discretion to decline offers of Donation where the Donor's involvement (including parent companies or subsidiaries) could compromise, or be seen to compromise, Council's role and public image.

3.5. Incoming Donations may be allocated to a particular event or activity to enable the event or activity to be undertaken or carried out, or to be enhanced or expanded, in Council's absolute discretion, having regard to the Donor's wishes in respect of the intended purpose of the Donation.

3.6. Incoming donations under this Policy are not a development contribution under the Environmental Planning & Assessment Act 1979 (the EPA Act). Donations under this Policy do not reduce any obligation to make development contributions required pursuant to a condition of development consent imposed under the Act or a planning agreement within the meaning of the Act. Donations made under this Policy are not be taken into consideration in determining any contribution under the Act, or in determining whether to grant development consent to any development application, or to progress any proposal to amend any planning instruments. Any identified conflict of interest that is outside Council's risk appetite will result in the application being declined.

- 3.7. Donations of public infrastructure will be assessed against Council's Strategic Plan and accepted if deemed to be of community benefit.
- 3.8. All organisations accepted for incoming Donations will be disclosed on Council's website.
- 3.9. Incoming Donations are only to be accepted if the time and resources used to obtain the Donation is proportionate to the value of the Donation.

4. Community Grants Program

4.1. Program Objectives

4.1.1. The objectives of Council's Community Grants program are to:

- a) Provide a structured and strategic program through which funding can be allocated to meet identified community needs;
- b) Harness the expertise, skills, research, contacts and networks of community organisations to deliver and facilitate specialised high quality services and programs in the community;
- c) Support and facilitate the development of a more liveable community and enrich community social capital through targeted and timely support to community organisations;
- d) Build and support the capacity of community organisations, groups and individuals to deliver ongoing benefits to the local community;
- e) Recognise the significant and valuable role that community organisations play across a wide range of key program areas, and the services they deliver in our community.

4.2. Eligibility

4.2.1. Applicants must be a registered not-for-profit organisation, and be able to provide evidence of their not-for-profit status. Organisations must also demonstrate that they provide or have the capacity to provide services, activities and/or programs that benefit the Georges River community.

4.2.2. Groups not registered as a not-for-profit organisation must be auspiced by a registered not-for-profit organisation to be able to apply for a Community Grant. Auspiced applications must include a letter or memorandum of understanding confirming the auspice arrangement.

4.2.3. Organisations are able to submit one (1) application only in each category of the Georges River Council Community Grants program. If an organisation is auspicing one or more groups, this will not impact the eligibility of the auspicing organisation to apply for a Community Grant.

4.2.4. Applicants must provide proof of current Public Liability insurance.

4.2.5. Partnership applications may be submitted, and are encouraged, and will not negatively impact an individual application submitted by any of the partnership organisations. Please note, where partnership applications are submitted, support letters from each eligible organisation outlining their role in the project are required for the partnership application to be considered.

4.2.6. When grant applications relate to modifications to Council's facilities, or the purchase of equipment to be stored in Council's facilities, the organisation must attach written Council approval for their application to be considered. Applications that do not meet this requirement will not be deemed eligible.

4.2.7. Applications will be deemed ineligible and not accepted for:

- a) Projects that have already commenced (retrospective programs);
- b) An organisation's operating and/or maintenance costs, including salaries unrelated to the delivery of this project;
- c) Commercial programs for personal profit;
- d) Uniforms, travel or subsistence costs;
- e) Funding for organisations whose main purpose is fundraising;
- f) Any unlawful or unethical purposes, or towards any political or religious purposes;
- g) Submissions from schools or Government agencies.

4.3. Assessment Process

4.3.1. A panel comprising Council officers will use the defined Assessment Criteria to assess and recommend applications for funding.

4.3.2. The recommendation of Council officers will be submitted in a report to the Community and Culture Committee.

4.3.3. The final recommendation will be endorsed at a Council meeting.

4.3.4. Applicants will be notified of the outcome of their application.

4.3.5. Successful applications will be registered on Council's website.

5. **Event Grants Program**

5.1. Program Objectives

5.1.1. Council recognises the valuable contribution that organisations provide in the initiation and running of events in the Georges River area, showcasing our rich cultural diversity and delivering social, cultural, economic, and environmental benefits. Council may seek to support and further develop partnerships with these community organisations. Council's support could include:

- a) Financial support

- b) In-kind support (e.g. waiving of park hire fees, electricity and water fee, amenities cleansing fee)

5.1.2. This program provides registered not-for-profit organisations with an opportunity to apply for grant funding to support the running of a community event, held on Georges River Council-owned land or land managed by Georges River Council.

5.1.3. Priority will be given to events that contribute to the Georges River Council Community Strategic Plan and deliver community benefit in the areas of:

- a) Social and cultural awareness and celebration
- b) Local area promotion
- c) Economic development

5.1.4. Council's Event Grants program objectives are to:

- a) Provide a consistent, equitable, transparent, and accountable process for the allocation of Council funds.
- b) Build and support the capacity of community organisations to deliver events that provide ongoing social, cultural and economic benefits to the local community.
- c) Provide a structured program through which Council Event Grant funding can be allocated in support of the Georges River Council Community Strategic Plan and development of community events.

5.2. Eligibility

5.2.1. Applicants must be a registered not-for-profit organisation and be able to provide evidence of their not-for-profit status.

5.2.2. Applicants to Council's Event Grants program may apply for a maximum combined total of \$20,000 of in-kind and financial funding per community organisation per financial year.

5.2.3. Applicants must provide proof of current Public Liability insurance.

5.2.4. Applications will be deemed ineligible and not accepted for:

- a) Hosting regular events that are part of the applicant's usual operations. This includes, but is not limited to, open days, end-of-year celebrations, and award ceremonies by sporting clubs or associations holding a current seasonal booking allocation, lease, licence, or management agreement for the use of Council sports grounds.
 - 5.2.4.a.1. Notwithstanding 5.2.4a), events that fall outside of usual operations, such as club milestone anniversaries or state cup competitions, may be eligible for an Event Grant.
- b) For-profit sporting events
- c) Sporting events which are ticketed and involve a cost for spectators
- d) Sporting events that offer monetary prizes

- e) Any type of private celebration including but not limited to street parties, birthday parties or Christmas parties
- f) Programs or events run for personal or company profit
- g) Weddings or wedding photography
- h) Private company open days or private company charity fundraisers
- i) Invitation-only events not open or accessible to the public
- j) Temporary stall structures, providing community information or selling food or beverages
- k) Food markets that are for-profit
- l) Submissions from schools, school Parents and Friends committees or Government agencies
- m) Requests for prize money

5.2.5. Council will consider the capacity and capability of all registered not-for-profit organisations applying for an Event Grant. This may include a request to demonstrate:

- a) Compliance with Council's Event Guidelines and other Council authority requirements, including Council event permits
- b) Sufficient lead time to plan the event
- c) Budget relevant to the event
- d) Impact on the environment, including implementing sustainable event practices
- e) Adherence to Work Health & Safety policies or practices as required under legislation
- f) Compliance with Council's Risk Management Policy and Procedures

5.3. Implementation

5.3.1. Council will offer a minimum of one single round of Event Grant applications per financial year. Applications will be assessed throughout the financial year as applications are received, pending availability of remaining funds.

5.3.2. Funding will be allocated based on the size and reach of the event and assessed against criteria outlined in the Event Grants Guidelines.

5.3.3. Applications will be assessed in accordance with Council staffing and available resources.

5.4. Assessment Process

5.4.1. A panel comprising Council officers will use the defined Assessment Criteria to assess and make recommendations for funding to the Director Community and Culture for determination.

5.4.2. The Director Community and Culture will approve Event Grant applications to the value of \$2,000.

5.4.3. Event Grant applications over \$2,000 will be submitted in a report to the Community and Culture Committee. The final recommendation will be endorsed at a Council meeting.

5.4.4. Applicants will be notified of the outcome of their application.

5.4.5. Successful applications will be registered on Council's website.

6. Heritage Building Grants Program

6.1. Program Objectives

6.1.1. The Heritage Building Grants Program provides financial support to help conserve heritage listed buildings or initiate a heritage project.

6.1.2. These works are generally limited to small conservation projects or extraordinary maintenance works. Where works are supported, Council will fund up to 50% of the cost of a project (up to a maximum value of \$10,000). The following are examples of the range of projects that may be supported under the Program:

- a) Removal of paintwork to reveal original sandstone;
- b) Repointing of brickwork;
- c) Restorative work to windows;
- d) Reconstruction of original elements;
- e) External painting of traditional colour schemes;
- f) Repair of tessellated floor tiles (where visually dominant);
- g) Reinstatement of traditional fencing.

6.2. Eligibility

6.2.1. In assessing applications priority will be given to those projects that:

- a) Result in sympathetic repairs to original fabric of the building, e.g. Repair of walls, verandahs, windows or roof plumbing etc.;
- b) Reinstatement of original architectural features, e.g. reconstruction of timber frame windows;
- c) Lead to streetscape improvements, e.g. reconstruction of front fences, appropriate for the architectural style of the building;
- d) Enhance public amenity and are highly visible to the public, e.g. the replacement of a front verandah;
- e) Are for projects which have high public accessibility, e.g. a local museum or church;
- f) Meet other major strategic objectives and complement broader conservation objectives, e.g. projects which implement key findings of heritage studies or projects;
- g) Will be undertaken by a non-profit organisation, e.g. community group or church.

6.3. Implementation

- 6.3.1. Owners need to ensure that they receive all appropriate approvals from Council in relation to changes and work to heritage items. A development application (DA) may be required.
- 6.3.2. For certain types of minor work, Council may give its approval without a DA being required. Examples include replacing roof guttering, a new fence or repainting a house in a new colour scheme. For this type of work, Council will need to be advised in writing of the proposal, and if it is acceptable, Council will write back giving approval for the work. The Development Consent Requirement Exemption Form is available on Council's website.
- 6.3.3. Minor maintenance work and most interior works that do not affect the structure of the building will generally not require consent. However, it is strongly recommended that applicants contact Council's Strategic Planning Team before commencing to clarify whether approval is required.
- 6.3.4. Applicants are directed to Council's [Heritage Building Grants Program Guidelines](#).

6.4. Assessment Process

- 6.4.1. Applications are initially assessed by Council officers in conjunction with Council's Heritage Advisor, who will undertake a site inspection and consider the completeness and clarity of information provided.
- 6.4.2. Applications will be prioritised to ensure that those with the most merit can be approved within a set budget. Applications that do not satisfy the criteria will not be approved.
- 6.4.3. The recommendations of the Heritage Advisor and Heritage Working Group are then submitted to the Environment and Planning Committee.
- 6.4.4. The final recommendation will be endorsed at a Council meeting.
- 6.4.5. Applicants will be notified of the outcome of their application.
- 6.4.6. Once the approved work is completed to Council's satisfaction, payment will be made to successful applicants.

7. **Micro Grants Program**

7.1. Program Objectives

- 7.1.1. The objective of the Micro Grants Program is to provide Council with a framework for equitable and transparent assessment and determination of applications under this program.

7.1.2. This program provides local residents and groups, organisations and businesses registered in or located in the Georges River Council local government area with an opportunity to apply for funding of up to \$1,000 to support community wellbeing, innovation and social change through grassroots initiatives.

7.1.3. Funding from the Micro Grants Program may be used to provide local solutions to improve community wellbeing including social enterprises or co-ops; small business development; training opportunities; healthy living; or social cohesion.

7.1.4. The program aims to encourage accessibility and community participation from all sectors of the community, increasing access and equity in the provision of community services.

7.2. Eligibility

7.2.1. Applicants must be a resident of the Georges River Council local government area, or a business, group or organisation registered or located in the Georges River Council local government area.

7.2.2. Ineligible activities

The following activities or uses are not eligible for funding:

- a) Events or activities that primarily benefit a single individual;
- b) Private functions;
- c) Retrospective funding of any project.

7.3. Implementation

7.3.1. Council will offer at least one round of Micro Grants per year.

7.3.2. Applicants are able to submit one (1) application only in each round of the Georges River Council Micro Grants program.

7.4. Assessment Process

7.4.1. A panel comprising Council officers will use the defined Assessment Criteria to assess and recommend applications for funding.

7.4.2. The recommendation of Council officers will be submitted to the Director Community and Culture for determination.

7.4.3. Applicants will be notified of the outcome of their application.

7.4.4. Successful applications will be registered on Council's website.

7.4.5. Council will be informed of all successful applications.

8. Venue Hire Grants Program

8.1. Program Objectives

- 8.1.1. The objective of the Venue Hire Grants program is to provide Council with a framework for equitable and transparent assessment and determination of applications under this program.
- 8.1.2. Through the Venue Hire Grants program, Georges River Council provides equitable access to Council facilities to enable community participation, neighbourhood activation and a sense of belonging in the local government area.
- 8.1.3. This program provides not-for-profit organisations and unincorporated community groups with an opportunity to apply for a grant to subsidise venue hire fees for Council managed facilities.
- 8.1.4. Grants are available to not-for-profit organisations and unincorporated community groups to hire community spaces to run programs or activities that deliver targeted community and cultural services, through a streamlined application process.
- 8.1.5. The program only covers the venue hire of Council's facilities that can be hired by the public, as outlined in Council's Schedule of Fees and Charges.

8.2. Eligibility

- 8.2.1. Applicants must be not-for-profit organisations or unincorporated community groups.
- 8.2.2. Grants are for venue hire use only and will not cover additional costs incurred from use of Council venues, such as equipment hire or staffing that are beyond the standard hire of each Council venue, as listed within Council's Schedule of Fees and Charges.
- 8.2.3. Applicants must have made a tentative booking for Council's facilities before submitting an application.
- 8.2.4. Applicants may be requested to submit a risk assessment for the event/activity they wish to hold in Council's venue/s.

8.3. Ineligible Activities

- 8.3.1. The following activities or uses are not eligible for funding:
 - a) Exclusive rights to ongoing use of the community facility;;
 - b) Events or activities by commercial organisations, businesses or for-profit organisations;

- c) Events or activities for political purposes, including party meetings, party fundraising or lobbying, or religious purposes;
- d) Events or activities that primarily benefit a single individual;
- e) Private or social functions;
- f) Seasonal park bookings for sporting associations or clubs;
- g) Retrospective funding of any event or activity;
- h) Venue bonds, equipment hire, staffing, catering, or technical costs that are beyond the standard hire of each Council venue, as listed within Council's Schedule of Fees and Charges.

8.4. Implementation

- 8.4.1. Grants of up to \$40,000 value per organisation per financial year are available, where approved.
- 8.4.2. Grants will be provided as in-kind support via a reduction in hiring charges for each venue per calendar year.
- 8.4.3. Council will offer a single round of grant applications per year. Applications will be assessed throughout the financial year as applications are received, pending availability of remaining funds.

8.5. Assessment Process

- 8.5.1. A panel comprising Council officers will use the defined Assessment Criteria to assess and recommend applications for funding.
- 8.5.2. The recommendation of Council officers will be submitted to the Director Community and Culture for determination.
 - a) Fully funded projects: 100% venue hire funding support;
 - b) Significantly funded projects: 75% venue hire funding support;
 - c) Partially funded projects: 50% venue hire funding support;
 - d) Projects not funded: 0% venue hire funding support.
- 8.5.3. Applicants will be notified of the outcome of their application.
- 8.5.4. Successful applications will be registered on Council's website.
- 8.5.5. Council will be informed of all successful applications.

9. **Quick Response Donations**

9.1. Program Objectives

- 9.1.1. The Quick Response Donations program supports small-scale projects and activities by community organisations and residents.
- 9.1.2. The program is open to not-for-profit organisations, unincorporated community groups and individuals.

9.1.3. Funding will be provided for:

- a) One-off support for individuals and teams that can demonstrate financial hardship that are selected to participate in cultural, academic or representative sporting events;
- b) Urgent support for unexpected or unplanned community, cultural or sustainability projects (e.g. disaster response initiatives);
- c) Funding for other strategic priorities identified through Council's policies and Community Strategic Plan, not identified or addressed in other funding programs.

9.1.4. Pending availability, funding will be made available in each area up to the following amounts:

- a) Representation in cultural, academic or sporting events, up to \$200 per year per individual or up to \$1,000 per year per team;
- b) Strategic priorities support up to \$2,000 per year;
- c) Philanthropic ventures funding support up to \$2,000 per year.

9.2. Eligibility

9.2.1. Council supports proposals for Donations that meet one or more of the following criteria:

- a) Provides opportunities to meet community needs;
- b) Improves inclusion, liveability, connectedness and engagement with Georges River's diverse communities;
- c) Promotes the cultural diversity of the local government area;
- d) Enhances positive social, cultural, sustainability outcomes for local communities related to Council's strategic priorities;
- e) Provides opportunities for education and information exchange, regional, national and/or international events and activities that enhance the image and reputation of the area;
- f) Increases the engagement of and opportunities for individuals and teams in cultural, academic or sporting arenas;
- g) Delivers economic benefits to the Georges River local government area;
- h) Benefits a local registered charity and/or the Georges River community;
- i) Donations will not be extended to third parties conducting or participating in a fundraising activity for charitable causes;
- j) Applying organisations arranging fundraiser dinner functions or events may be provided an appropriate Donation to the nominated charity in lieu of the purchase of group tables or individual seats at the event.

9.2.2. Retrospective funding is not eligible for any project or activity.

9.3. Assessment Process

- 9.3.1. Donation requests will be assessed by an internal panel in accordance with this Policy to determine whether it is in Council's best interests to provide that Donation.
- 9.3.2. The recommendation of Council officers will be submitted to the Director Community and Culture for determination.
- 9.3.3. Applicants will be notified of the outcome of their application.
- 9.3.4. Successful requests will be registered on Council's website.
- 9.3.5. Council will be informed of all successful donations.

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Responsibilities

Position	Responsibility
Council	Decision making on the allocation of Community Grants program and Event Grants program over \$2,000
Councillors	Participation in the governance of funding programs through the Community and Culture Committee and Council Meetings.
Director Community and Culture	Decision making on the allocation of Micro Grants, Venue Hire Grants, Event Grants up to \$2,000 and Quick Response Donations. Liaison with Community and Culture Committee.
Manager Community and Early Learning Services	Update the Grants and Donations Policy when necessary. Oversee the implementation of Grants and Donations programs unless otherwise stated, investigate and report breaches and enforce compliance.
Manager Sport Community Facilities & Events	Oversee the implementation of Event Grants, investigate and report breaches and enforce compliance.
Manager Strategic Planning	Oversee the implementation of Heritage Building Grants Program, investigate and report breaches and enforce compliance.
Coordinator Community Capacity Building	Update Grants Program Guidelines annually or as required with input from Community Strategic Planning objectives and in line with budget allocation.
Grants and Project Officer	Administer the Community Grants, Venue Hire Grants, Micro Grants, and other grants and donations programs as required.
Head of Events and Sponsorship	Update Event Grants Guidelines as required with input from Community Strategic Planning objectives and in line with budget allocation. Administer the Event Grants program.
Office of the General Manager	Share Community Strategic Planning objectives to incorporate into program guidelines.
Information Management Technology Team	Information management of program applications and recordkeeping.

Version Control and Change History

Version	Amendment Details	Policy Owner	Period Active
1.0	New Grants and Donations Policy – Policy partially supersedes the Grants, Donations and Sponsorship Policy (2020) (Council Resolution COM031-23)	Manager Community and Early Learning Services	23/10/2023 – 24/06/2025
2.0	Draft revision of the Grants and Donations Policy – Policy supersedes the Grants and Donations Policy (2023) (Amendments detailed in COM005-25)	Manager Community and Early Learning Services	24/06/2025 – 06/2028



Draft Sports Grounds Access Policy

2025

Policy administration

Dates	Policy approved xx/xx/xxxx (date to be added by Policy Specialist) This policy is effective upon its approval. Policy is due for review xx/xxxx (If a particular review date is required, please specify, otherwise the Senior Policy Specialist will set a review date at 3 years from the date the policy is approved which is the maximum review period)
Approved by	Council Meeting xx/xx/xxxx Council Resolution xxx
Policy Type	<input type="checkbox"/> Executive Policy <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Council Policy
Exhibition Period	26 March 2025 – 23 April 2025
Policy Owner	Manager Sports, Community Facilities and Events
Related Documents	Georges River Council Customer Feedback and Complaints Management Policy Georges River Council Community Lease and License Policy Georges River Council Enforcement Policy Georges River Council Event Application Form Georges River Council Field Closure Procedure Georges River Council Grants and Donations Policy Georges River Council Hurstville Oval and Timothy Reserve Plan of Management Georges River Council Oatley Park Plan of Management Georges River Council Peakhurst Park Plan of Management Georges River Council Schedule of Fees and Charges Georges River Council Sportsground Generic Plan of Management Georges River Council The Bookable User Guide – Expression of Interest – Seasonal Hurstville City Council Beverly Hills Park Plan of Management Kogarah City Council Carss Bush Park and Todd Park Plan of Management Kogarah City Council Claydon Reserve Plan of Management Kogarah City Council Kogarah Park Plan of Management Kogarah City Council Bell Park Plan of Management
Appendices	Appendix A - Tiering of Council Sports Grounds
References & Legislation	<i>Children's Guardian Act 2019</i> <i>Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012</i> <i>Child Protection (Working with Children) Regulation 2013</i>

Document Identifier	Policy #: Allocated by Senior Policy Specialist once policy is approved (includes the version number) Doc #: D25/46352
Breaches of Policy	Any policy breach will be dealt with and responded to in accordance with adopted codes and/or relevant legislation.
Record Keeping	All documents and information obtained in relation to the implementation of this policy will be kept in accordance with the NSW State Records Act 1998, Georges River Council's Corporate Records Policy and adopted internal procedures.

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Purpose

The purpose of this Policy is to establish a framework for Council to manage the utilisation of its sports in a way that maximises community access and participation, while safeguarding the long-term quality of the asset. It provides a consistent, transparent approach to decision-making that aligns with Georges River Council's broader strategic goals, including supporting the health, well-being, and social inclusion of all residents. The approach also recognises the pressures on natural turf fields and works to balance the needs of the community with the requirements for maintaining sustainable, safe, and fit-for-purpose playing surfaces. In doing so, the Policy ensures that access is fair, sports grounds are used responsibly, and the community's diverse needs are met equitably.

Therefore, this document is guided by the following Policy Principles.

- a) **Social Justice** - Council is committed to creating an inclusive environment that fosters participation, equity, empowerment, and respect.
- b) **Customer Experience** - that Council provides easy access to bookings management, effective customer service and efficient resolution of complaints.
- c) **Asset Management** - Council will protect the longevity, financial sustainability and quality of sports grounds to ensure the required level of service is provided for current and future users.
- d) **Governance** - Council will provide a framework to maintain transparency and accountability in decision-making.
- e) **Use and Demand** - Council considers the growing demand for open space and strives to balance the needs of various hirers while maximising the efficient use of available sports grounds.

Scope

This Policy applies to all sports grounds owned or managed by Georges River Council.

This Policy applies to any sports club, association, or organisation, community group, school, tertiary institution, not-for-profit, commercial provider or any other group or organisation seeking to utilise Council sports grounds.

Out of Scope

This policy does not apply to the following:

- Jubilee Stadium.
- Any sports fields, sports facilities, amenities, and storage facilities that are managed under a contract.

Definition of Terms

Term	Meaning
Amenities	Buildings that are adjacent to sports fields, including bathrooms, toilet facilities, change rooms, medical rooms and canteens.
Applicant	A sports club, association, or organisation, community group, school, tertiary institution, or not-for-profit, commercial provider or any other group or organisation Any sporting club, association, community group, school, tertiary organisation, commercial provider or any other group or organisation that submits a request to be allocated a Council sports field or facility..
Casual Hire	Irregular or one-off bookings of sports fields or facilities.
Commercial Hirer	An individual or organisation hiring for commercial purposes, such as a film shoot, a personal trainer, a clinic/academy, or an out-of-area/region sports club, association or organisation.
Community Hirer Organisations	A sports club, association, or organisation, community group, school, tertiary institution, or not-for-profit based in the Georges River Local Government Area that delivers dedicated sports programs for the local community. Community, sporting and other organisations are incorporated as not-for-profit organisations which prohibit private gain.
Complaint	<p>A form of feedback that expresses dissatisfaction towards Council, its policies, procedures, fees and charges, Council officers, Councillors, agents, or quality of service affecting an individual or group of customers.</p> <p>A complaint is not:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a Service Request • a request for Council to exercise a regulatory function • an appeal or objection regarding a statutory process, standard procedure, or policy (unless this is recorded as a complaint about the process of Council's decision-making) • a request for documentation, information or explanation of policies or procedures • a response provided in relation to specific requests for feedback about the standard or quality of Council service provision • an appeal against fines or penalties issued by Council Officers or agents • a claim for compensation, or about legal matters (i.e., appeals) • a report about a third party (e.g., a neighbour dispute). <p>Note: Service Requests must not be registered as a complaint unless Council has failed to respond appropriately the first time the service request was made, or if the customer specifically</p>

	complains about the process, Council officer or quality of service provided.
Expressions of Interest (EOI)	Where applicable seasonal allocations, leases or licences (and other types of commercial agreements) of sporting and recreational facilities sports grounds will be subject to an open and competitive public process such as tender or by way of an Expression of Interest (EOI) at the expiration of each lease or licence period prior to the commencement of each summer or winter sporting season. This is as per legislative requirements of the <i>Local Government Act 1993</i> .
Feedback	<p>Opinions, comments or expressions of interest or concern, made directly or indirectly to Council about our services, our staff, policies, or procedures, where a response by Council is required. Feedback will be accepted in person, in writing or via social media channels.</p> <p>Once feedback is received by Council, it will be assessed and categorised by the Customer Experience Advocate. Feedback can be categorised as either positive feedback, a complaint (meeting our complaints criteria) or general feedback. Feedback may be in the form of a compliment, suggestion, comment, or complaint.</p>
Hazard Score	The total Hazard Score is calculated by adding the hazard rating values for each observation in the Field Closure Procedure.
Hirer	A sports club, association, or organisation, community group, school, tertiary institution, or not-for-profit, a sporting club, association, community group, school, tertiary organisation, commercial provider or any other group or organisation that hires or applies to the hire a sports field or facility on a sports ground.
Lease	Includes leases for exclusive use.
License	Includes licences for non-exclusive use.
Online Booking System	Council's nominated platform for enquiries, bookings, and payments for sports grounds.
Pre-Season Allocation	A restricted allocation, subject to availability, to a hirer to utilise a Council sports field and facility at agreed times prior to the commencement of the competitive scheduled sporting season for the purpose of sports training.
Rest Period	A period of time allocated to a sporting field or facility for recovery or maintenance to ensure safe playing conditions and minimise long-term damage.
Seasonal Allocation	Allocation/booking for a sports field or facility made for a summer or winter period, and can relate to training or competition use by a

	hirer. An allocation allows hirers non-exclusive use at a specific agreed time.
Sports Facility	Includes premises such as golf courses, velodrome, bowling greens, outdoor hard court surfaces (i.e. tennis, netball and basketball courts), and public swimming pools.
Sports Fields	Individual sports fields, natural turf or synthetic playing surfaces.
Sports Ground	Encompassing sports fields, amenities, sports facilities, and storage facilities that are not under contract.
Storage Facility	Buildings or spaces designated for storage, located near or adjacent to sports fields, often used for equipment or maintenance.
Tier	The tiers are categorised based on the type and quality of playing surface.

Policy Statement

1. Allocation and Hire

- 1.1. For consistent use of the sports fields by organisations such as sporting clubs and schools, seasonal allocations are available. These bookings are managed through an Expression of Interest (EOI) process to ensure a fair, transparent allocation system for all applicants. Dates for the EOI process will be advised by Council.
- 1.2. Hirers are required to include dates for miscellaneous events such as gala days, end of year celebrations, presentation days and award ceremonies when submitting their seasonal EOI request.
- 1.3. Applications will be assessed based on how well they meet the relevant criteria. The final allocation decision will be made by the Council Officer overseeing the application review process. A permit to utilise Council's sports grounds is a confirmed allocation, and is advised by way of email and is accessible via Council's online booking system.
- 1.4. When an allocation is assigned through the EOI process, the hirer enters into a non-exclusive agreement with Council to utilise a Council sports field at a specific agreed time.
- 1.5. For one-off or infrequent uses, casual hire can be arranged. Casual or temporary hire of Council sports fields may be granted to individuals and groups for an agreed period of time, outside the times allocated to sporting clubs and schools.
- 1.6. To be eligible to be considered for a seasonal allocation or casual hire, applicants must:
 - 1.6.1. Obtain and supply Council with a copy of either their independent public liability insurance or proof of cover from their Governing Sports Association to the sum of \$20,000,000 for the duration of the permit
 - 1.6.2. Agree to comply with Council terms and conditions of hire, including demonstrating respectful behaviour and adherence to governing documents.
 - 1.6.3. Not have any outstanding debts or financial liabilities to the Council at the time of their application. This includes any unpaid fees, fines, or penalties associated with previous bookings, services, or agreements. Applicants are required to settle all overdue amounts before being considered for allocation or hire.
- 1.7. Where availability and practical capacity permits, seasonal allocations may be issued to more than one hirer at a sports field.
 - 1.7.1. If shared use is proposed, Council will not allocate sports fields beyond the hours of designed use.

- 1.7.2. In cases where the required allocation by multiple hirers is above hours of designed use, Council will, where possible, work with the hirers to reduce field allocations in a fair and equitable manner.
 - 1.7.3. Council will aim to ensure, in scheduling any shared sports fields allocations, that concurrent use will not disrupt the intended usage of the hirers.
 - 1.8. To promote fair and shared access to Council sports grounds for hire, Council generally follows the approach outlined below for the allocation of its sports fields on a non-exclusive, seasonal basis:
 - 1.8.1. Winter Season: Typically from the first weekend in April to the last weekend in August.
 - 1.8.2. Summer Season: Typically from the first weekend of September to the last weekend of March (inclusive of Christmas holiday period).
 - 1.8.3. Winter Pre-season: Typically from 1 March to the start of the Winter Season. Training cannot commence until such a time that the sporting code with the summer seasonal allocation has completed their training or competition on any particular day or night.
 - 1.8.4. Summer Pre-season: Typically from 1 August to the start of the Summer Season. Training cannot commence until such a time that the sporting code with the winter seasonal allocation has completed their training or competition on any particular day or night.
 - 1.8.5. Seasonal changeover and rest periods of fields occur within the respective pre-seasons and will take precedence over pre-season access requests determined by site specific requirements.
 - 1.9. Council acknowledges that all sporting codes are subject to an overlap of seasonal allocation dates.
 - 1.10. Final series that occur outside of their respective sport's seasonal allocation period will be given priority over all other bookings, including regular training sessions, events, and general use. Field allocation and associated fees will be determined at Council's discretion.
 - 1.11. All hirers in both seasons are asked to advise Council if a ground can be provided earlier for the seasonal sports field changeover. For example, goal posts out and cricket wicket preparation.
 - 1.12. It is the responsibility of the hirer to manage their bookings through Council's online booking system, including cancellations or amendments to dates and times no longer required or as fixtures change.

- 1.13. Open days, gala days, end-of-year celebrations, presentation days and award ceremonies are recognised as events at a sports ground. Hirers will be required to complete an Event at Sports Grounds Application 6 weeks prior to their event. For events outside of the hirer's seasonal booking dates, approval will be subject to field availability.
- 1.14. Depending on the proposed activities, risk and safety requirements for the Event at Sports Grounds Application, approval may be required through an Event Application 12 weeks prior to the event.
- 1.15. Where sports facilities, amenities, and storage facilities are managed under contract, and they are not automatically included in the seasonal allocation.
- 1.16. Where an asset within a sports ground has been upgraded, the current hirer does not assume automatic allocation. The allocation will be considered in accordance with the principles of this Policy and other applicable Policies or Council requirements for hire.
- 1.17. Where a sports ground upgrade to a synthetic or alternative surface allows for extended usage hours, additional hire hours will not be automatically allocated to the existing hirer. Additional available hours will be allocated through an Expressions of Interest (EOI) process.
- 1.18. Hirers are subject to the terms and conditions of sports field hire as per Council's online booking system, in an ongoing capacity.

2. Booking Request Conflict and Assessment

- 2.1. In the event that multiple hirers request access to the same field, an assessment will be undertaken to determine whether shared use of the sports field is feasible. If shared use is not possible, the following criteria will be applied to ensure a fair, transparent, and equitable allocation process:
- 2.1.1. The community impact and benefit of the sporting organisation as represented by the applicant. For example, an organisation that promotes health and well-being through sport, fosters a sense of belonging and strengthens social connections within the community.
- 2.1.2. The historical use and established relationships of the applicant as identified by Council. For example, an organisation with consistent, long-term bookings of a field may be preferred over a new applicant, ensuring established relationships are respected.
- 2.1.3. The responsible use of assets by sporting organisations as identified by Council. For example, applicants who have a history of adhering to booking conditions or caring for the assets.

- 2.1.4. The demand and participation levels of the sporting club as represented by the applicant, to ensure sports fields are being used effectively to optimise the use of the asset. For example, a club with a high participation rate may be preferred to ensure sports fields are optimally utilised.
- 2.1.5. The standard or level of competition being played as represented by the applicant for Tier 1 and Tier 2 sports grounds.
- 2.1.6. The purpose of the allocation, such as use for training versus competition, as represented by the applicant. For example, Council will generally prioritise competitions over training, in consideration of the standard of competition.
- 2.1.7. The available alternative sports fields as identified by Council. For example, the provision of an alternative field with similar field quality or amenities.
- 2.1.8. The compliance of the applicant to Council's policies, procedures, and terms and conditions as identified by Council. For example, preference may be given to hirers with a demonstrated record of respectful behaviour.
- 2.1.9. The support for underrepresented, diverse, vulnerable or minority groups as represented by the applicant. For example, organisations that focus on supporting women in sports, youth in disadvantaged areas, or that specifically cater to people with disabilities may be given preference.
- 2.1.10. The alignment of the sporting organisation with either Council's or, more broadly, the community's goals, as represented by the applicant. For example, an organisation that aligns with Council's sustainability goals or works with local schools to provide physical education programs could be given preference to support community development.
- 2.2. Council Officers will advise all parties of the booking request resolution at the completion of the assessment.
- 2.3. If the decision involves shared use of a sports field, the notification will outline how the arrangement will be managed, including schedules and responsibilities for each hirer.
- 2.4. Any feedback or complaints regarding the outcome of the booking request resolution may be made as per Georges River Council Customer Feedback and Complaints Management Policy.

3. Sports Ground Closure

- 3.1. Council recognises the impact of bookings on sports fields and the need to maintain playing surfaces. Sports fields may be rested for one full weekday per week. Hirers will be informed of designated rest days by Council at the time of the seasonal booking or allocation, or at a point where rest days are determined to be required for the longevity of a field.

- 3.2. Council may, at its discretion, make a field unavailable at any time for reactive maintenance and/or Council activities. Council will endeavour to provide as much advance notice as practical prior to any closure.
- 3.3. In the event of wet weather, to ensure the safety of all sporting participants and to preserve the condition of turf fields, Council may close sports grounds. Council's Field Closure Procedure outlines the steps to be taken when assessing and determining the closure of fields due to wet weather to prevent damage to the turf, avoid injuries to players, and minimise the need for costly repairs.
- 3.4. Based on the inspection findings and associated Hazard Score, the Council Officer will determine whether fields should be closed. The Hazard Score considers water present on the surface of the field, field firmness, risk of damage to the turf associated with the activity and weather conditions.
- 3.5. The hirer is responsible for regularly checking Council's website for updates to the Sports Status webpage to determine if Council's turf sports fields are open or closed.
- 3.6. The hirer must subscribe to wet weather notifications via Council's website:
<https://www.georgesriver.nsw.gov.au/Sportsfields-status>
 - 3.6.1. The wet weather notification can be subscribed to by anyone in a role that engages with management and/or organises training or competitions, and would need to be notified of sports field closures. For example, coaches, players, parents/guardians or nominated club representatives.
- 3.7. Any allocations on synthetic sports fields, the velodrome, or outdoor hard court surfaces must conduct a risk assessment to determine playability in wet weather.
- 3.8. Damage or unauthorised use of Council's assets may result in additional charges to the hirer as per the breaches of ground and facility use in Council's Schedule of Fees and Charges, plus the cost of any rectification works.

4. General Principles for Utilising Council Sports Grounds

- 4.1. Hirers are subject to the terms and conditions of sports field hire as per Council's online booking system, in an ongoing capacity.
- 4.2. Hirers of sports grounds are responsible for conducting their own risk assessments prior to each session of use.
- 4.3. Council reserves the right, for the temporary relocation or cancellation of a confirmed allocation. Reasons include to accommodate a mid-week competition due to sports field closures, Council maintenance, or to enable a high standard of competition which requires higher-quality playing surfaces due to their level of performance, visibility, or accreditation requirements.

- 4.4. Any decision to relocate hirers with existing allocations will be in consultation with the hirer and with due notice from Council.
- 4.5. The hirer has a responsibility to promote and give consideration to nearby residents by ensuring appropriate behaviour and reducing noise impacts by their participants who attend the approved booking or event.
- 4.6. Regardless of approved access rights to use sports grounds on Community Land, it is not permitted to make any alterations and/or additions to a building or any other structure without first obtaining Council's written consent, appropriate penalties to apply.
- 4.7. Fees and Charges
- 4.7.1. Council staff will notify applicants regarding assigned allocations and issue invoices for hire fees in accordance with Council's Schedule of Fees and Charges.
- 4.7.2. Fees and charges will vary according to the type of use, distinguishing by type of hirers, i.e. community hirer and commercial hirer, as well as tier of sports field.
- 4.7.3. Applicants seeking subsidies for hire fees may apply in accordance with the Grants and Donations Policy.
- 4.8. Unauthorised Use and Damage
- 4.8.1. Unauthorised use of Council's sports fields during times of closure may result in additional charges to the hirer as per the breaches of ground and facility use in Council's Schedule of Fees and Charges.
- 4.8.2. Council will inspect the fields for damage at any time. Damage to Council's sports fields may result in additional charges to the hirer as per the breaches of ground and facility use in Council's Schedule of Fees and Charges, plus the cost of any rectification works.
- 4.8.3. Non-compliance with Council policies, procedures, and terms and conditions, including unauthorised use and damage of Council assets, will result in the hirer having their right to utilise the asset reviewed by Council.
- 4.9. Child Protection Compliance
- 4.9.1. The hirer acknowledges and warrants that, where the permitted use of sports grounds and facilities involves children or young people under the age of 18, the hirer will comply with all applicable child protection laws and obligations, including but not limited to:

(a) The Children's Guardian Act 2019 (NSW), including the implementation of the Child Safe Standards.

(b) The Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012 (NSW) and associated Regulation 2013, including ensuring all required individuals hold valid Working with Children Checks (WWCC) where applicable.

4.9.2. The hirer must ensure that all staff, volunteers, or contractors engaged in child-related work have undergone appropriate screening, and that they understand their legislative obligations. This includes ensuring any required declarations or consents (for example: WWCC applications and verifications, risk assessments) are completed and records stored as required.

4.9.3. Where staff, volunteers, or contractors engaged in child-related roles are themselves under 18 years of age, the hirer must ensure appropriate supervision by an adult who holds a valid WWCC and is aware of their obligations to protect the safety and wellbeing of children and young people in their care.

4.10. Filming and Photography

4.10.1. The use of cameras and video cameras at sports grounds is conditional upon the following:

4.10.1.1. Hirers must have all relevant individuals' consent to use images.

4.10.1.2. Under no circumstances are cameras, video cameras, or mobile phones to be used in change room areas and toilet facilities.

Appendix A – Tiering of Council Sports Grounds

Tier	Sports Ground
Stadium (excluded from this policy)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jubilee Stadium
Facilities Under a Contract (excluded from this policy)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Beverley Park Golf Course Hurstville Aquatic Leisure Centre Hurstville Golf Course Ken Rosewall Tennis Centre Kyle Bay Bowling Greens Norm O'Neil Cricket Centre Parkside Drive Tennis Centre Sans Souci Leisure Centre
Tier 1 Turf	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Harold Fraser Oval Hurstville Oval Olds Park (Playing Field 1)
Tier 2 Synthetic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Poulton Park Penshurst Park Sporting Hub Peakhurst Park Vanessa Street Multi-Sport/Futsal Courts
Tier 3 Turf	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bell Park Beverly Hills Park Carss Park Flats Claydon Reserve Gannons Park Gifford Park H.V. Evatt Park Kogarah Park Oatley Park Olds Park Parkside Drive Reserve Peakhurst Park Poulton Park Quarry Reserve Renown Park Riverwood Park and Wetlands The Green Reserve Todd Park

Responsibilities

Position	Responsibility
Director of Community and Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide a point of contact for Councillor enquiries.
Manager Sports, Community Facilities and Events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update the policy when necessary. Oversee the implementation of the policy. Provide a point of contact about the meaning and application of the Policy.
Coordinator Sports and Recreation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide a point of contact about the meaning and application of the policy. Review and update the policy when required. Ensure compliance with the policy.
Senior Asset Engineer – Open Space Assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide asset management guidance and planning for the optimisation of sports grounds.
Senior Venue and Recreation Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conducts booking conflict assessment and implements the booking request resolution.
Venue and Recreation Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Point of contact to customers for booking management, including communication and facility maintenance.
Head of City Sport Maintenance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responsible for assessing field conditions and making the final decision on field closures. Field closure notification.
Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adhere to this policy. To file related documentation into Council's Electronic Document and Records Management System.

Version Control and Change History

Version	Amendment Details	Policy Owner	Period Active
1.0	New Georges River Council Sports Ground Access Policy	Manager Sports, Community Facilities and Events	Xx/xx/xxxx

Item: **COM022-25 Homelessness in Georges River**

Author: Coordinator Community Capacity Building and Research and Social Policy Officer

Directorate: Community and Culture

Matter Type: Committee Reports

COM022-25

RECOMMENDATION:

2. That Council:

- (a) Receive and note the 'Homelessness in Georges River Study'.
- (b) Endorse the action plan to address homelessness and housing security as outlined in this report.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. On 28 August 2023, Council resolved (NM046-23) in light of 2023's Homelessness Week theme "It's time to end homelessness" and to support Council to continue to work to address homelessness in the Georges River Council local government area (LGA), that:
 - (a) the General Manager prepare a report, in consultation with local stakeholders and lived experience advocates, which includes (but is not limited to) the following:
 - (i) Notable trends relating to people experiencing homelessness and at risk of homelessness, including key demographics, specific to the LGA;
 - (ii) Local organisations and their primary operational responses to addressing homelessness, such as temporary and transitional accommodation provision and casework to secure tenancies; and
 - (iii) Investigating the feasibility of Council adopting further initiatives that address homelessness and housing security, particularly in response to identified trends. This may include (but is not limited to) looking into establishing a Homeless Advisory Committee with the aim to develop a Homelessness Policy, as well as investigating the use of Council-owned and managed land/property for the purposes of directly supporting people experiencing homelessness in times of emergency, such as (but not limited to) people experiencing domestic violence, natural disasters, family breakdown etc.
 - (b) Council writes to the relevant State and Federal representatives to advocate for greater provision for organisations directly supporting people experiencing homelessness and operating refuge and transitional accommodation.
2. Council Officers have prepared a Homelessness in Georges River Study (the Study) exploring the drivers and impacts of homelessness and the service provision landscape in the local community. The Study (Attachment 1) will inform Council's evolving approach to homelessness by identifying key issues, vulnerable populations, and opportunities for improved local response and collaboration.
3. Notable trends relating to people experiencing homelessness and key demographics demonstrate a higher risk of homelessness for already vulnerable and marginalised people, and that significant numbers of people are approaching homelessness.
4. A review of local organisations and their primary operational responses to addressing homelessness revealed a wrap-around approach, which acknowledges the complex and

diverse needs of those experiencing homelessness. Support available includes housing, food and welfare checks; however, the gaps in available service provision further impact already vulnerable communities.

5. Homelessness support services and long-term housing solutions are State and Federal Government responsibilities, and the role of local government in ending homelessness is informal in nature, with no legislative requirements. However, it is in line with the Georges River Councils Social Justice Charter to support and empower vulnerable community members.
6. An action plan was developed outlining further initiatives to address homelessness in the LGA through capacity building initiatives, use of Council assets and facilities, and financial assistance programs in collaboration with key community organisations and services rather than direct service provision.

BACKGROUND

Strategic Context

7. Council demonstrates its commitment to supporting vulnerable and marginalised people, and the community organisations supporting them through the Georges River Council Community Strategic Plan 2022-2032, and the Georges River Council's Social Justice Charter 2022-2026.
8. This report aligns with the Georges River Council Community Strategic Plan 2022-2032, which highlights the value constituents place on stability and security for all members of Georges River. This report is consistent with:
 - Pillar 1 - Our Community, Goal 1.3 – Our community is safe and healthy.
 - *1.3.1 - Implement actions to maintain and promote the community safety of our area.*
 - *1.3.2 - Conduct regulatory functions in accordance with legislative requirements.*
 - Pillar 4 – Our Built Environment, Goal 4.2 – Affordable and quality housing options are available.
 - *4.2.1 - Develop policies that encourage a greater supply of housing diversity and choice.*
 - *4.2.2 - Ensure quality design and sustainability principles underpin the provision of all housing.*
9. This report also aligns with the Georges River Council's Social Justice Charter 2022-2026, which aims to drive social change and to improve the lives of the community by building a culture of access and participation, respect, connection and empowerment, and equity for everyone. This report is consistent with:

Focus 1 – Connected communities.

- Objective 2: Advocacy and opportunities are provided for social, economic, and cultural participation to foster social cohesion and belonging.
 - *Advocate for social and affordable housing initiatives;*
 - *Promote programs that contribute to better economic, health and education outcomes.*

Focus 2 – Safe places and spaces.

- Objective 1: People in the Georges River feel safe, accepted and included.

- *Amplify resources and provide training to increase physical and online safety.*

10. This report further aligns with Council's commitment to support the provision of affordable and inclusive housing in the LGA and is consistent with Council's:

- Local Housing Strategy;
- Inclusive Housing Strategy and Delivery Program; and
- Affordable Housing Policy.

Progress to Date

11. Part b) of the resolution was completed in November 2023. The former Mayor, Councillor Sam Elmir, sent letters to the following State and Federal representatives to advocate for greater support for service delivery organisations.
- The Honorary Rose Jackson MP, Minister for Housing and Homelessness;
 - The Honorary Natasha Maclaren-Jones MP, Shadow Minister for Homelessness;
 - The Honorary Michael Sukkar MP, Shadow Minister for Housing and Homelessness; and
 - The Honorary Julie Collins MP, Minister for Housing and Homelessness.
12. Responses were received from MPs Jackson, Maclaren-Jones, and Collins. Each acknowledged the correspondence and outlined their respective party's actions to address homelessness, including current funded and future initiatives. In the case of the Shadow Government, the response also detailed proposed measures they would implement if elected, as well as their current advocacy efforts to influence the Government on this issue.

Homelessness in Georges River

13. According to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, homelessness is categorised in three ways:
- Primary homelessness: individuals sleeping rough or living in makeshift dwellings without any conventional accommodation, such as tents or under bridges.
 - Secondary homelessness: individuals moving frequently between temporary accommodation such as emergency shelters, youth refuges, or staying with friends and family; frequently referred to as "couch surfing".
 - Tertiary homelessness: individuals who live in substandard or inadequate housing that does not meet acceptable community standards, including low-end boarding houses, caravan parks, or hostels with no security of tenure.
14. In addition to the definition of homeless, there are also estimates for people who might be living in marginal housing situations, meaning housing that is insecure, inadequate or unstable, but doesn't meet the official definition of homelessness. This may include people living in garages, facing eviction, or lacking long-term housing security.
15. According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics' most recent Census data (2021), homelessness in the Georges River area is reflected across three categories, including:
- 521 people experiencing homelessness; and
 - 939 people considered marginally housed.

Council Initiatives Addressing Homelessness and Housing Insecurity

16. Council's approach to community safety, including homelessness, is underpinned by Council's Community Safety Education Program (CSEP). On 18 December 2023, Council resolved (CCL112-23) the establishment of the CSEP. The CSEP aims to ensure that the Georges River community is safe and feels safe, and is delivered through a combination of resource amplification, online campaigns, and interactive sessions to maximise its impact and reach.
17. Council responds to incidents of homelessness in the LGA with a wraparound approach, which acknowledges the complex and diverse needs of those experiencing homelessness and seeks to provide assistance personalised to each person's circumstances, to ensure community safety. This may include:
 - Logging each notification related to those experiencing homelessness to identify repeated notifications and support coordinated responses over time.
 - Providing a referral, including any identifying information, background details and location, to Wesley Mission. In collaboration with the Department of Communities and Justice's (DCJ) Homelessness Outreach Support Team (HOST), Wesley Mission patrols on a fortnightly basis and undertakes welfare checks with rough sleepers.
 - Alerting other business units, including rangers, open spaces, community property or commercial property where relevant.
 - Completing a service request if there is any reported damage to Council assets, facilities or infrastructure.
 - Liaising with St George Police Area Command if there are concerns about antisocial or criminal activity.
18. Council works in close partnership with the following community and government organisations, committees and networks that play a key role in proactively supporting the homeless population:
 - **St George Police Area Command (PAC)** - Collaboration between Council and the St George PAC addresses safety issues, ensures continuous interagency collaboration and strengthens the relationship between Council, the St George PAC and the community. The partnership includes attendance at St George PAC's quarterly Community Safety Precinct Meeting for community and local organisations, which builds community capacity about current safety trends and strategies.
 - **St George Sutherland Homelessness Assertive Outreach Collaboration Meeting (SSHAC)** - Monthly interagency meeting including DCJ, Wesley Mission, Bayside Council, NSW Health, Orana, Hopefield, Vinnies and Project Youth. This committee flags and provides updates on homeless people identified within the region and applies a multi-disciplinary approach to addressing emerging hotspots and trends.
 - **St George Domestic Violence Committee Meeting (SGDVC)** - Monthly interagency meeting including Advance Diversity Services, The Family Co., NSW Health, Integricare, Georges River Life Care, CatholicCare, Interrelate, NSW Police, 2Connect, and other key community organisations supporting domestic violence and those experiencing homelessness as a result of domestic violence.
 - **Neighbouring councils** – Given that the homeless population moves between LGAs, it is essential that Council works in alignment with other local government organisations to discuss trends and compare strategic approaches to supporting people experiencing homelessness and organisations working in the sector.
 - **Community organisations and services** – Council works closely with community organisations and services to support people experiencing homelessness, including

Wesley Mission, Advance Diversity Services, Link2Home, Platform Nine, The Kogarah Storehouse and Project Youth.

19. Council is currently involved in a variety of initiatives to address homelessness and housing insecurity, including:

- Participation in the yearly NSW Street Count run by the Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ). The Count aims to gather accurate data on those sleeping rough and determine the best way to target resources to those who need the most support. However, it does not gather data on those living in temporary accommodation or overcrowded dwellings.
- Working with a local domestic violence organisation to provide a property for crisis accommodation at an undisclosed location.
- Designating evacuation facilities for use in times of emergency, as outlined in our Georges River Local Emergency Management Plan.
- Prioritising homelessness and housing insecurity as key issues or agenda items at interagencies, committees and networks.
- Committing to increase the range and supply of affordable housing in Georges River LGA, supporting very low-income households to moderate-income households, through Council's Affordable Housing Policy.

Homelessness in Georges River Study

Datasets

20. The Study analysed four datasets to understand the current notable trends relating to people experiencing homelessness in the community. This evidence-based approach supports a deeper understanding of the scale, nature, and drivers of homelessness in the area. By gathering and analysing diverse sources of data, the Study aims to inform more targeted, coordinated, and effective local responses. Findings of the Study are underpinned by the following datasets:

- **Academic Research** – A systematic review of secondary sources to identify key causes and contributing factors of homelessness.
- **Demographic Data** – Localised information sourced from the ABS Census and the NSW Street Count, providing insights into the populations most affected by homelessness.
- **The Role of Local Governments** – An analysis of how councils across Greater Sydney respond to homelessness, highlighting diverse models, strategies, and service delivery approaches.
- **Community Organisations** – A detailed review of local community organisations that provide outreach support, casework, food and hygiene assistance, crisis accommodation, transitional and/or affordable housing.

Findings

21. The Academic Research Findings:

- Domestic, family, and sexual violence is the leading cause of homelessness for women.
- Vulnerable communities, including youth, LGBTQIA+ individuals and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, face a significantly higher risk of homelessness.

- Rising housing costs, poverty, insecure work, and inadequate welfare systems are systemic causes of homelessness.
- Integrated, person-centred support that combines housing, health, and social services is key to long-term stability.
- Federal and state government strategies increasingly focus on long-term housing initiatives and funding.

22. The Estimating Homelessness Findings:

- 521 individuals are experiencing homelessness in the Georges River LGA, with an additional 939 people considered marginally housed.
- Severe overcrowding is the most common form of homelessness in the Georges River LGA, affecting 76% of these 521 individuals.
- The NSW Street Count recorded a rise in rough sleeping from 0 in 2024 to 6 in 2025, indicating a potential shift toward more visible homelessness.
- Young people aged 20-24 represent the largest age group experiencing homelessness (18.5%), signalling the need for targeted youth homelessness support.
- The most commonly spoken languages among the homeless population are Nepali, Mandarin, Cantonese, and Arabic, highlighting the need for multilingual and culturally responsive services.

23. The Role of Local Governments Findings:

- Councils are often the first point of contact when community members or businesses raise concerns about rough sleeping or vulnerable individuals in public spaces such as parks, streets, or transport hubs.
- The key role that local governments play is coordination and advocacy rather than direct service provision.
- Councils are equipped to support local outreach services and crisis providers through funding or in-kind support.
- Council's efforts to convene partners, support outreach services, and facilitate access to resources fill a critical gap in the homelessness support system.

24. The Community Organisations Findings:

- Community organisations play a vital role by using their funding and resources to meet the everyday needs of people experiencing homelessness, primarily providing short- and medium-term support.
- Due to the intersectionality between homelessness and issues such as gambling harm, domestic and family violence, mental health, and substance use, some homelessness services also address these areas to provide holistic and integrated care.
- Wesley Mission is the primary outreach provider in the Georges River LGA, offering support to individuals who are rough sleeping, couch surfing, or living in temporary accommodation.
- Community organisations face significant barriers, including limited funding, staffing shortages, and community perceptions, while the ongoing cost of living crisis is increasing pressure on individuals at risk of homelessness and driving up demand for already stretched services.

- Despite the area's cultural diversity, there are no CALD-specific homelessness services in Georges River, highlighting a critical service gap for non-English speaking and migrant communities.

Action Plan to Further Address Homelessness in Georges River LGA

25. Council holds a social responsibility to maintain a proportionate response to addressing homelessness in the LGA, strengthened by alignment to existing Council plans and strategies.
26. Informed by the findings of the Study, Council developed the *Action Plan – Homelessness in Georges River* as presented in Table 1 to:
 - Mitigate identified gaps in service delivery to people experiencing homelessness and the resourcing of the community organisations that support them.
 - Ensure that the multiple vulnerabilities of those experiencing homelessness, e.g. people facing addiction, domestic violence and gambling harm, are met with wrap-around support.
 - Proactively address issues impacting those approaching homelessness before they become homeless.
 - Remove barriers to support services faced by vulnerable and marginalised populations at greater risk of homelessness, including people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, LGBTQIA+ communities, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, young people and seniors.

Table 1: Action Plan - Homelessness in Georges River

Identified Need	Action
Donations to community organisations	Revitalise a donation collection program for a local organisation that supports people in temporary and crisis accommodation.
Interpretation services	Provide ad hoc support for the provision of outreach workers as needed to allow service delivery to culturally and linguistically diverse people.
Community services support directory	<p>Revitalise the directory of community organisations providing services to people experiencing homelessness and approaching homelessness, including accommodation, food and bill support, in accessible formats and languages.</p> <p>Collaborate with neighbouring councils to ensure borderless service coverage for those experiencing homelessness who move between LGAs.</p>
Resident capacity building resource	Develop a resource to inform residents about homelessness and the role they can play in responding to homelessness, as well as improve community attitudes towards homelessness,

	<p>in accessible formats and languages.</p> <p>Design and deliver a promotion plan for the resource.</p>
Financial assistance programs	<p>Provide targeted capacity building on Council's financial assistance programs to local organisations working to address homelessness, to encourage local projects that support people experiencing homelessness or approaching homelessness.</p> <p>Promote relevant grants to community organisations to fund projects addressing homelessness.</p> <p>Apply for grants available through the state and federal government or other sources to deliver actions that address homelessness.</p>
Council property crisis accommodation	Explore the provision of crisis accommodation for vulnerable and marginalised groups, pending the availability of suitable Council properties.
Temporary shelter for extreme weather and disasters	Explore the provision of temporary shelter in any available Council-managed community facility, co-delivered with community organisations, in the event of extreme weather events or other disasters.

27. Given the recent growth of homelessness in the LGA, Council will continue engagement with community organisations and neighbouring councils, and monitor trends and data. Council will evaluate the Action Plan and its impacts against data after pilot 12 months.
28. The findings of the Study and community consultation did not provide evidence of need for the following initiatives:
- **Advisory Committee** - Council's advisory committees rely on the inclusion of people with lived experience to represent priority populations. Given the vulnerability of people as they face homelessness, it is more appropriate for Council to work closely with community organisations and service providers through existing interagencies, committees and networks, and partnership projects. Other councils with similar rates of homelessness to Georges River do not have a homelessness advisory committee.
 - **Homelessness Policy** - According to benchmarking from the Study, councils with homelessness policies have a much larger number of rough sleepers and the subsequent demand to create and enact a policy, than Georges River.
29. On 27 May 2024, Council resolved (NM046-24) to prepare a report to address gender-based violence in the LGA. The General Manager is currently preparing a report investigating further initiatives Council could implement to provide greater support and awareness in this area. As most women experiencing homelessness are also affected by domestic violence, the report will include initiatives that address the intersection of domestic violence and homelessness. The report will be submitted to Council at a future meeting.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

30. A project plan outlining the delivery of the Action Plan will identify future operational funding required.
- Initiatives will be covered initially through the Community Capacity Building team and other business units' operational budgets.
 - Conversion of Council properties for crisis accommodation may rely on non-budgeted funds to ensure they are fit for purpose. In the case a property is identified for this purpose, financial implications will be addressed in a future report to Council.
 - Should additional non-budgeted funds be required to fund these initiatives, funds will be sought through partnerships, grant funding and operational budget bids.

RISK IMPLICATIONS

31. Strategic Risk 6: Reputation - *The risk of Council's identity, brand and standing being negatively impacted, reducing Council's ability to engage in sound decision-making and being able to take strategic action whilst maintaining essential services and support for the community.* Council's reputation is at risk if it does not work to address homelessness in the LGA. As outlined in the Social Justice Charter, Council is committed to supporting vulnerable and marginalised groups in the LGA, including those experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness. Further, through the CSEP, Council actively addresses these issues by promoting awareness, prevention, and community engagement. If Council does not approve this Action Plan to address homelessness, this may be perceived as not meeting Council's commitment.
32. Strategic Risk 8: Social Cohesion - *Failure to identify and/or respond to the changing socio-economic needs of our community. Social cohesion erosion and growing socio-economic gap negatively impacting social stability, individual well-being, and economic productivity.* Council faces social cohesion risks by not advocating for and supporting vulnerable and marginalised groups within the community. To mitigate the risk of social erosion, initiatives proposed in this report to address homelessness will support more vulnerable and marginalised community members to participate in the community. Further, by promoting proactive measures and education around homelessness, the Action Plan aims to empower residents to recognise potential safety risks and take steps to mitigate them, contributing to a safer living environment, as well as improving community attitudes to homelessness.
33. Strategic Risk 9: Housing Infrastructure - *The risk that Council may fail to facilitate housing and development that aligns with the community's growing needs and expectations, while also ensuring planning regulations and building practices are sufficient to address climate change impacts and severe weather events. This could lead to inadequate housing supply and environmental challenges.* To mitigate this risk, Council has the opportunity through the Action Plan to assess available resources to provide temporary, circumstantial solutions for this marginalised group in the community.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

34. Council undertook consultation with key external stakeholders to understand trends in homelessness, impacts of these changes on service provision in the LGA and across greater Sydney, and capacity to implement initiatives. Stakeholders included:
- Bayside Council and Sutherland Shire Council;
 - Community organisations working in the homelessness sector, including Wesley Mission;
 - Community organisations leasing Georges River Council community properties.

35. Should Council endorse the further initiatives proposed in this report, initiatives will be promoted to key stakeholders, partner organisations and members of the community through Council's and Council's partners' platforms and networks.
36. Council will conduct further consultation to inform the approach as actions are delivered.

FILE REFERENCE

D25/131346

ATTACHMENTSAttachment [↓](#)1 Homelessness in Georges River Study



Homelessness in Georges River Study

2025

Acknowledgement of country

Georges River Council acknowledges the Bidjigal people of the Eora Nation, who are the Traditional Custodians of all lands, waters and sky in the Georges River area. Council recognises Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as an integral part of the Georges River community and values their social and cultural contributions. We pay our respect to their Elders past and present, and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who live, work and meet on these lands.

Introduction

Project Scope

This project aims to build a shared understanding of homelessness within the Georges River local government area (LGA), including its local drivers, community impacts, and the current policy and service landscape. It seeks to inform Council's approach to homelessness by identifying key issues, vulnerable populations, and opportunities for improved local response and collaboration.

Background

Homelessness is a complex, multifaceted, and deeply entrenched social issue that affects not only individuals and families but entire communities. Sleeping rough in car parks, public buses, shopfronts, parks, train stations, tents and vehicles is the most visible form of homelessness. However, many people often overlook invisible types of homelessness, such as temporary or overcrowded accommodation, which can prevent homeless people from receiving the support they need. The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2011) classifies homelessness into three categories:

- Primary homelessness: This refers to individuals who are sleeping rough or living in makeshift dwellings without any conventional accommodation, such as tents or under bridges.
- Secondary homelessness: This category involves people who move frequently between temporary accommodations, such as emergency shelters, youth refuges, or staying with friends or family.
- Tertiary homelessness: This describes those who live in substandard or inadequate housing that does not meet acceptable community standards, including low-end boarding houses, caravan parks, or hostels with no security of tenure.

Georges River Council (GRC) works proactively with a range of partners experiencing homelessness. Council collaborates with St George Police Area Command (PAC) to address local safety concerns and maintain strong interagency coordination. Council participates in the St George Sutherland Homelessness Assertive Outreach Collaboration (SSHAC), a monthly forum involving key service providers such as the Department of Communities and Justice, Wesley Mission, NSW Health, and others who work together to share information and respond to emerging trends and hotspots. Council also participates in the annual NSW Street Count to gather data on rough sleeping, partners with a local domestic violence service to provide a Council-owned property for crisis accommodation, and designates emergency evacuation facilities for use during crises.

Strategic Context

The Georges River Council Community Strategic Plan 2022-2032 (The Plan) forms part of the Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) framework, which the *Local Government Act 1993* requires all councils to follow. The Plan highlights:

- Pillar 1 - Our Community, Goal 1.3 – Our community is safe and healthy.
 - 1.3.1 - Implement actions to maintain and promote the community safety of our area.
 - 1.3.2 - Conduct regulatory functions in accordance with legislative requirements.
- Pillar 4 – Our Built Environment, Goal 4.2 – Affordable and quality housing options are available.



- 4.2.1 - Develop policies that encourage a greater supply of housing diversity and choice.
- 4.2.2 - Ensure quality design and sustainability principles underpin the provision of all housing.

GRC commits to embedding the principles of social justice in Council's decision-making processes, as the Georges River Council Social Justice Charter (The Charter) outlines. The Charter sets a high-level direction to drive social change and to improve the lives of our community by building a culture of access and participation, respect, connection and empowerment, and equity for everyone. This document also ensures that Council meets its legislative obligations under the Australian Constitution, in Commonwealth and State legislation, including the Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986, in a genuine and impactful way.

- Focus 1 – Connected communities.
 - Objective 2: Advocacy and opportunities are provided for social, economic, and cultural participation to foster social cohesion and belonging.
 - Advocate for social and affordable housing initiatives.
 - Promote programs that contribute to better economic, health and education outcomes.
- Focus 2 – Safe places and spaces.
 - Objective 1: People in the Georges River feel safe, accepted and included.
 - Amplify resources and provide training to increase physical and online safety.

Objectives

- Develop a comprehensive understanding of homelessness in the Georges River LGA by capturing the complex social, economic, and cultural factors contributing to housing insecurity, including domestic violence, systemic poverty, and discrimination affecting vulnerable groups.
- Inform Council's planning, advocacy, and partnership efforts by providing evidence-based insights that recognise the need for integrated, person-centred support combining housing, health, and social services to promote long-term stability.
- Guide Council's role in coordinating local responses and advocating for resources, focusing on supporting outreach providers and community organisations to address immediate needs and service gaps.
- Highlight priority areas for targeted interventions, including youth homelessness, culturally and linguistically diverse populations, and the rise in visible rough sleeping, to ensure responsive and inclusive service delivery.
- Support Council in creating opportunities for social, economic, and cultural participation, recognising the critical influence of broader systemic issues such as housing affordability, welfare adequacy, and the cost of living crisis on homelessness.

Methodology

The study employs a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative and qualitative data to provide a comprehensive assessment. This dual approach unifies diverse data sources, thereby strengthening the overall reliability and applicability of the study's findings. By linking statistical trends with insights from academic research, the study highlights and explores the relationships between underlying factors, deepening the understanding of how individuals come to experience homelessness.

In dataset one (Academic Research), the qualitative component begins with a comprehensive review of existing research on homelessness. The analysis identifies structural and systemic drivers, outlines effective policy responses and service delivery models, forms the study's conceptual framework, and guides the development of evidence-based recommendations.

In dataset two (Estimating Homelessness), the study analyses demographic and accommodation data, including estimates of people experiencing various forms of homelessness within the GRC LGA. It examines



intersections with disadvantage and population subgroups at higher risk. Statistical analysis helps quantify local needs and identify where intervention is most urgent and potentially impactful. The study uses these insights to shape the strategic direction and operational design of proposed initiatives.

In dataset three (The Role of Local Government), the focus returns to qualitative data in a review of how other councils approach homelessness, including policies, programs, and partnerships. The study's benchmarking exercise reveals valuable insights into Council's potential role and highlights adaptable approaches for the local context.

The final dataset (Community Organisations) reviews existing homelessness service providers within GRC and the broader Greater Sydney region. The review identifies the types of available services, their target populations, and any existing service gaps. This information helps Council understand the current landscape, strengthen partnerships, and identify opportunities for coordinated local action.



Dataset One: Academic Research

The study builds its understanding of homelessness on a methodical analysis of relevant secondary resources. Council Officers used a detailed approach to gather research, ensuring the development of robust data that gives the study context and depth. This dataset aims to frame the broader structural and systemic issues by identifying key themes and patterns critical to understanding the nuances of homelessness and providing an evidence base for further localised analysis. Council Officers developed findings from academic sources to offer valuable insights and practical recommendations for improving the local response to homelessness.

Data Collection and Analysis

Key Drivers of Homelessness

Physical and Mental Health

Poor health and homelessness closely influence each other, often creating a cycle that is difficult to break. There are three key links between health and homelessness, including: that health problems contribute to homelessness, homelessness worsens health problems, and homelessness complicates treatment (Institute of Medicine (US) Committee on Health Care for Homeless People, 1988). Chronic health issues such as schizophrenia, alcoholism and drug dependence are the most common examples of health-related precursors to homelessness. These conditions can impair an individual's ability to work, maintain housing, or access necessary treatment, thereby increasing their vulnerability to homelessness (Institute of Medicine, 1988).

Once homeless, individuals face significantly higher risks of both physical and mental health issues. These include chronic illnesses, infectious diseases, untreated mental health conditions, and injuries. The absence of stable housing exposes people to harsh weather, unsafe environments, and a higher likelihood of experiencing violence, all of which contribute to worsening health outcomes over time (eClinicalMedicine, 2023). Additionally, "mortality rates have been shown to be substantially higher" for the homeless population when compared to the public (eClinicalMedicine, 2023, p. 1).

Accessing healthcare presents major challenges for people experiencing homelessness. Lack of a fixed address, Medicare card, or identification often delays or prevents treatment altogether (Flatau, et al., 2021). For those who can access healthcare, stigma and discrimination often result in substandard treatment, leading to a distrust of healthcare providers. Where early intervention and preventative care might have improved outcomes, delays often result in avoidable complications and increased emergency department use (eClinicalMedicine, 2023).

People experiencing homelessness and health issues are more likely to experience long-term homelessness, and specifically, those experiencing substance abuse are more likely to become involved in crime (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2011). For this reason, health and housing solutions must be delivered together, such as via wraparound support services - holistic, person-centred assistance that coordinates housing with healthcare, mental health, addiction, and social support to address the complex needs of individuals experiencing or at risk of homelessness. Improving health outcomes for people experiencing homelessness requires integrated services that combine healthcare, housing support, and social services. This highlights the importance of low-barrier health services, outreach and mobile clinics, sustained funding for integrated service models, and housing-first approaches that prioritise health stability as a foundation for long-term wellbeing.



Domestic and Family Violence

Domestic and family violence (DFV) is a leading cause of homelessness for women and their children, although men may also be impacted (Chamberlain & MacKenzie, 2006). DFV involves a pattern of unequal power and control, such as limiting access to bank accounts or preventing the victim/survivor from working, creating economic dependency between the abuser and the victim/survivor. For women aged 18 to 44, intimate partner violence is the leading cause of disability and death amongst all preventable risk factors (Webster, 2016; Domestic Violence New South Wales, 2022). It does not function as a broad structural driver of homelessness, but rather as an individual-level risk that significantly increases the likelihood of homelessness (Flatau, et al., 2021).

Researchers find it difficult to calculate accurate rates of DFV due to underreporting of incidents, varied definitions of DFV across states and legislation, lack of social awareness and acceptance of reporting, and cultural and system barriers that prevent disclosure (Webb, et al., 2021). Many victim/survivors considerably underreport incidents, creating a considerable issue, where women are more likely to seek assistance via social services than report through police (Birdsey & Snowball, 2013). Research determined that the increased reporting was evidenced by previous experiences of abuse from other offenders, increased severity of injury and the extent to which the woman experiencing DFV believes her life is in danger (Birdsey & Snowball, 2013). Furthermore, the quality and responsiveness of police can also influence whether women feel safe and supported in making a report (Douglas, 2019).

The nature of DFV often forces victims/survivors to leave their homes or take legal action to remove perpetrators, significantly contributing to their risk of homelessness. In the absence of stable housing options, women may turn to crisis accommodation such as refuges, rely on friends and family, or sleep in unsafe environments such as cars (Johnson, et al., 2008). Women frequently cycle in and out of support systems, sometimes returning to abusive partners when no viable housing alternatives exist (Chamberlain & MacKenzie, 2006).

Given its strong link to housing insecurity, policymakers identify DFV as a critical focus area for homelessness prevention and early intervention strategies (Our Watch, 2017). Current examples of programming include those that focus on addressing the housing instability caused by violence, or can directly target the abusive dynamics (Breckenridge, et al., 2022; Drabsch, 2019). Other examples of interventions that aim to reduce the incidence of family and domestic violence include men's behaviour change programs, respectful relationship education (usually targeted at adolescents), media campaigns that promote respect for women, and programs that build women's capacity and confidence for independence from their abusers (Helps, et al., 2025).

Structural Causes

People often misunderstand homelessness as the result of poor personal choices, however, it is driven largely by deep-rooted structural issues within society. Key drivers include poverty, rising housing costs, a shortage of affordable and social housing, unemployment or insecure work, and an inadequate welfare system that fails to meet the cost of living (Australian Human Rights Commission, 2023). These systemic factors create environments where people are more likely to experience housing instability, regardless of their efforts or intentions.

Housing costs continue to rise faster than wages and welfare payments, making it increasingly difficult for many people to afford private rentals. The current lack of affordable and social housing is especially challenging for low-income earners, who may spend a significant portion of their income on housing, leaving little for other essential needs such as food, transport, and healthcare. As rents increase or leases end, these conditions place individuals at higher risk of losing their homes, with no alternative housing options available (Launch Housing, 2018). Furthermore, people living in poverty often face multiple barriers to accessing education and employment, which reduces their ability to secure a stable income (Parliament of Australia,



2022). Without adequate financial resources, they become more vulnerable to housing stress and are less able to recover from unexpected costs or life events that may lead to homelessness.

The welfare system, which is intended to provide a safety net during times of crisis, is currently inadequate. Payments such as JobSeeker and Youth Allowance fall well below the poverty line and are not sufficient to cover basic living costs, let alone rent in many Australian cities (Parliament of Australia, 2020). This leaves many individuals and families at risk, especially those without other forms of support.

Ultimately, homelessness is a reflection of a society where housing is treated as a commodity rather than a basic human right (United Nations, 2023). Academic research recognises that addressing the key systemic drivers of homelessness requires systemic change that improves access to affordable housing, strengthens the welfare system, and ensures inclusive support for all people, regardless of background or circumstance. However, thi

Vulnerable Groups

LGBTQIA+

People who identify as LGBTQIA+ face significantly higher rates of homelessness compared to the general population. This overrepresentation is often linked to family rejection, discrimination, and violence related to their sexual orientation or gender identity (StreetSmart, 2023). LGBTQIA+ people are especially vulnerable, with studies estimating that they comprise between 20% to 40% of the homeless population, “whilst only comprising 5–10% of the wider population” (Brodie, et al., 2019; Ecker, 2016). Experiences of homophobia, transphobia, and systemic discrimination can make it difficult for LGBTQIA+ individuals to access safe and inclusive housing and support services. Transgender and gender-diverse individuals may face particular challenges, including the misalignment between their gender identity and gender-segregated services (Andrews & McNair, 2020). Effective interventions must focus on creating inclusive and affirming housing options, training staff in cultural competence and LGBTQIA+ awareness, and investing in targeted early intervention and support programs.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are disproportionately affected by homelessness, comprising approximately 20% of the national homeless population despite representing only 3.2% of the Australian population (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2023). Historical and ongoing effects of colonisation, intergenerational trauma, systemic racism, removal from land and kin, and over-policing contribute to these elevated rates of housing insecurity (Guthrie, et al., 2020). Homelessness among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people often intersects with poor health, limited access to culturally safe services, and barriers to employment and education. Addressing these challenges requires culturally appropriate housing policies, genuine partnerships with Aboriginal community-controlled organisations, and self-determined, place-based solutions (Guthrie, et al., 2020).

Youth Homelessness

Youth homelessness is most closely linked to youth unemployment, involvement in the youth justice system, or the child protection system. These young people often have less social and family support, resulting in disruptions to both education and employment, and difficulty finding accommodation, especially if they have a criminal record (Snyder, et al., 2016). Early intervention programs, youth-specific accommodation, and wraparound support are essential to preventing long-term cycles of homelessness among young people (MacKenzie, et al., 2022). Preventing entry into homelessness by supporting economic participation and education among young people in the general population is, therefore, critical.



Understanding the Landscape

Homelessness in Australia

National Strategies

The federal government is responsible for enacting models that improve the infrastructure to support those facing homelessness due to systemic issues. The National Housing and Homelessness Plan (NHHP) is a 10-year strategy being developed by the Australian Government to guide future housing and homelessness policy. Key goals include:

- Reducing homelessness and improving housing outcomes.
- Increasing access to affordable housing, including rental and home ownership.
- Supporting people experiencing housing insecurity with better services and coordination.
- Aligning efforts across all levels of government, the private sector, and community organisations.

The NHHP is part of a broader housing reform agenda that includes:

- A \$10 billion Housing Australia Future Fund to deliver 30,000 new social and affordable homes.
- The National Housing Accord aims to build 20,000 new homes over five years from July 2024.
- A \$2 billion Social Housing Accelerator to deliver around 4,000 new or refurbished homes.
- Increased Commonwealth Rent Assistance and expanded eligibility for the Home Guarantee Scheme 1.

The federal government demonstrates its commitment to addressing the structural issues that contribute to homelessness. Through significant investments in social and affordable housing, long-term strategic planning, and efforts to improve service coordination, the Commonwealth is playing a central role in tackling the systemic barriers that place individuals and families at risk. This national leadership sets the foundation for coordinated action across all levels of government.

Homelessness in New South Wales

New South Wales (NSW) has the highest number of people experiencing homelessness of any Australian state. The lack of affordable housing, particularly in metropolitan areas like Greater Sydney, has intensified pressure on individuals and families at risk. Housing market pressures have made it increasingly difficult for low-income individuals and families to secure and maintain a home. Without systemic reforms to address income inequality, rental affordability, and access to essential services, these structural barriers will continue to push people into homelessness and make exiting it even more challenging. Service providers across NSW report growing demand, especially among young people, women and children escaping violence, and older adults.

State Strategies

The NSW Government is finalising a new 10-year strategy with a vision to make homelessness in the state rare, brief, and non-repeating. The strategy is built on extensive consultation with stakeholders and people with lived experience of homelessness. Key features include:

- Whole-of-government action plans to coordinate efforts across departments.
- Targeted standalone action plans for children and young people, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
- A focus on prevention, early intervention, and tailored support to meet diverse needs.

Similarly, the state government is focused on long-term strategies to address the structural drivers of homelessness. By developing a 10-year strategy informed by extensive consultation and grounded in prevention, early intervention, and tailored support, the NSW Government is taking a coordinated, whole-of-government approach to reduce homelessness.



Discussion

The academic research dataset provides a comprehensive overview of the complex and interconnected drivers of homelessness in Australia, highlighting the interplay between personal vulnerabilities and structural disadvantage. It demonstrates that homelessness is not simply the result of personal failings or isolated events, but the outcome of systemic inequality, social exclusion, and long-term policy gaps that disproportionately impact certain groups in the community.

Health challenges, domestic and family violence, and systemic inequality, such as poverty, housing unaffordability, and inadequate welfare, are key contributors to the risk of homelessness. These factors disproportionately affect women, young people, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, and LGBTQIA+ individuals.

Key contributing factors highlight the urgent need for targeted, evidence-based responses. Intervention that is early, coordinated, and culturally appropriate emerges as a vital tool in both preventing homelessness and breaking the cycle for those already affected. As the federal and state government focuses on resolving long-term structural drivers of homelessness, this leaves service gaps that can be tackled by local councils.

This academic research provides the conceptual foundation for understanding the nuances of the following datasets. It frames the demographic patterns, service gaps, and local government responses explored in datasets two, three, and four. By identifying the root causes and vulnerable populations, it enables a more informed interpretation of local data and supports the development of targeted, place-based strategies.

Findings

- Domestic, family, and sexual violence is the leading cause of homelessness for women.
- Vulnerable communities, including youth, LGBTQIA+ individuals and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, face a significantly higher risk of homelessness.
- Rising housing costs, poverty, insecure work, and inadequate welfare systems are systemic causes of homelessness.
- Integrated, person-centred support that combines housing, health, and social services is key to long-term stability.
- Federal and state government strategies increasingly focus on long-term housing initiatives and funding.



Dataset Two: Estimating Homelessness

The demographic data provides essential insights into the characteristics of people experiencing homelessness within the Georges River LGA. By examining variables such as age, gender, cultural background, family composition, and living arrangements, this dataset helps to paint a clearer picture of who is most affected and how different groups experience homelessness. Understanding these patterns is critical for designing targeted and responsive interventions. By critiquing this data, the dataset aims to paint a comprehensive picture of the current landscape of homelessness. This ensures that the interventions implemented by Council are not only inclusive in principle but also effectively meet the diverse needs of the community they serve.

Data Collection

Data Sources

This research draws on two primary sources of quantitative data, including the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Census Data and the NSW Government Street Count Data (NSW Government, 2025). The ABS Census is conducted every five years and collects detailed information on Australia's population. It includes key demographic, social, and economic variables such as age, gender, employment status, housing, education, and geographic location. It aims to achieve full population coverage, offering a comprehensive dataset for demographic and homelessness analysis. Additionally, the NSW Government conducts annual street counts to provide point-in-time data on people sleeping rough. These counts are observational and record the number of people seen sleeping in public spaces on a given night. Information includes the number of individuals, their dwelling situation (e.g., tents, sleeping bags), and the presence of companion animals.

Methodology

The ABS uses six operational groups for presenting estimates of people experiencing homelessness on Census night. These groups are:

- People living in improvised dwellings, tents or sleeping out
- People living in supported accommodation for the homeless
- People staying temporarily with other households
- People living in boarding houses
- People in other temporary lodgings
- People living in 'severely' crowded dwellings.

The data is disaggregated by *Local Government Areas (2022 boundaries)* to ensure the most accurate and geographically relevant analysis.

In addition, the ABS identifies three supplementary groups considered to be marginally housed, but not officially classified as homeless:

- People living in other crowded dwellings
- People in other improvised dwellings
- People marginally housed in caravan parks.

These three categories are not included in the core homelessness analysis but are referenced in the Marginally Homeless section to acknowledge people at risk.

The street count methodology involves:

- Conducting visual, point-in-time headcounts during early morning hours



- Covering specific geographic zones defined by local councils and community services
- Counting only visible individuals in public or semi-public spaces
- No person is engaged with during the count, and the only data collected is the number of people counted in each location, their dwelling situation and whether they were accompanied by companion animals.

Limitations

While both the ABS Census and NSW Street Count provide valuable insights into homelessness, there are notable limitations associated with each data source. The ABS Census, although comprehensive and nationwide, relies on self-reporting and standard household forms, which may result in undercounts, particularly for individuals in unconventional or transient living arrangements such as couch surfing or staying temporarily with others. Furthermore, the complexity of defining homelessness means some experiences may not be accurately captured within the six operational groups. The NSW Street Count, while useful for tracking trends in street homelessness, is limited by its point-in-time, observational methodology. It captures only those visibly sleeping rough in public places on a single night, thereby excluding individuals who may be hidden, temporarily sheltered, or outside the designated count areas. Additionally, the absence of direct engagement means no demographic, health, or contextual data is collected, limiting the depth of analysis and understanding of the underlying causes of homelessness.

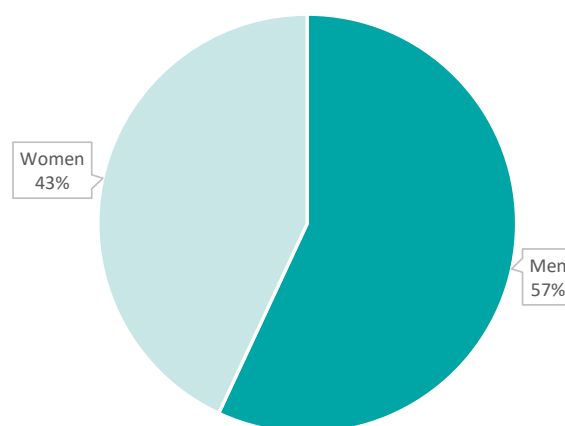
Analysis of Data

Demographic Data

Sex

Figure 1 shows that among the homeless population in the Georges River LGA, 295 are male and 223 are female, indicating that men make up a larger proportion of people experiencing homelessness. Specifically, males account for approximately 57% of the homeless population, while females represent about 43%.

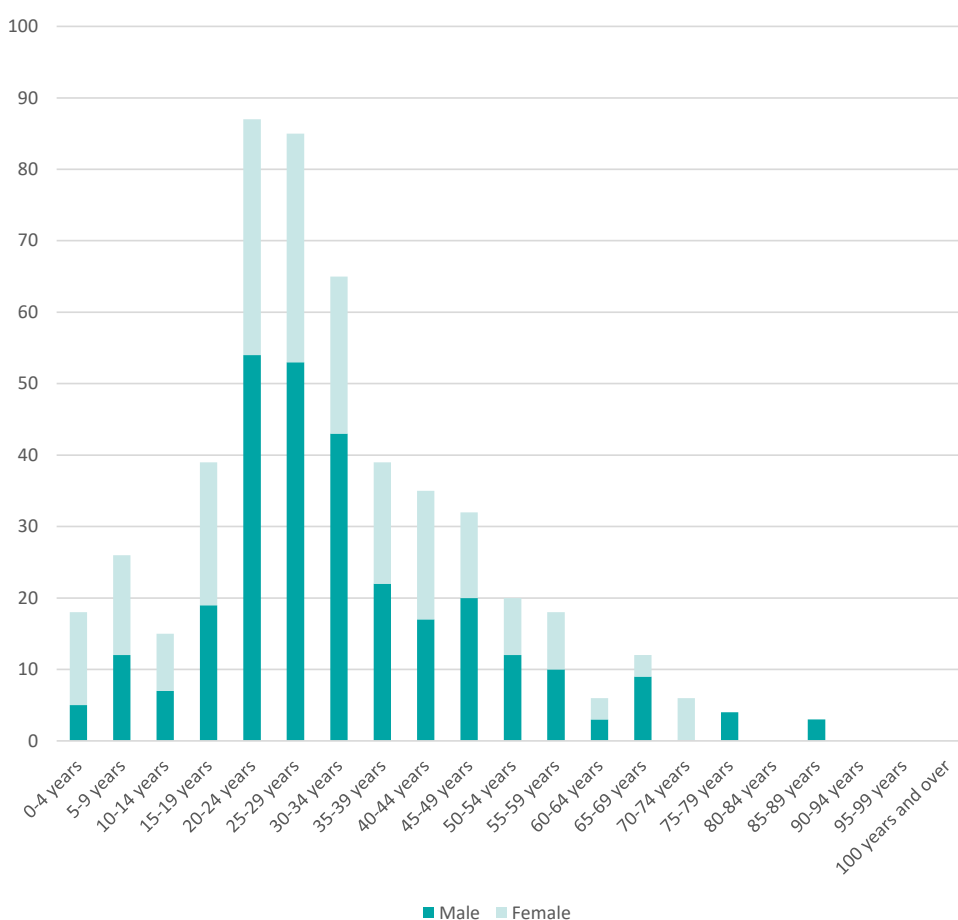
Figure 1: Sex of the Homeless Population



Age Range

Homelessness in the Georges River LGA is most prevalent among young adults, particularly those aged 20–34. The 20-24 age group represents the highest proportion of people experiencing homelessness at 18.4% (87 individuals), followed by 25-29 at 17.1% (85), and 30-34 at 13.4% (65). Together, these three age groups account for nearly half (48.9%) of the recorded homeless population. The proportion declines steadily from age 35 onwards, with those aged 60 and over making up just 5.3% (28) of the total. Children and adolescents aged 0-19 account for 17.4% combined, with the highest share in the 15-19 age bracket. Notably, there are no individuals recorded as homeless in the 80+ age groups. As shown in Figure 2, this reveals that homelessness disproportionately affects young adults, particularly those aged 20-24, 25-29 and 30-34.

Figure 2: Age Groups of the Homeless Population



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander

While the ABS Census data includes categories for individuals identified as Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander, and both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, the responses were too few to provide meaningful analysis for this minority group. Specifically, meaning that there was no identified count for any response option.

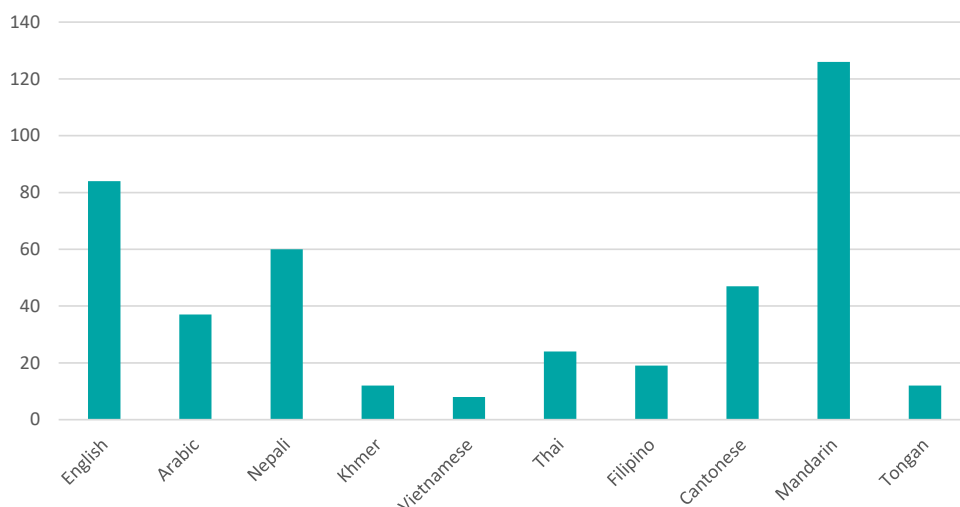


Cultural Diversity

Language

As presented in Figure 3, the top languages spoken other than English reflect the culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) nature of the LGA. Nepali is the most common language spoken at 25.9% (126 individuals), followed by Mandarin, Cantonese, and Arabic. Together, Mandarin and Cantonese account for over a quarter of the population, reflecting the area's strong Chinese demographic.

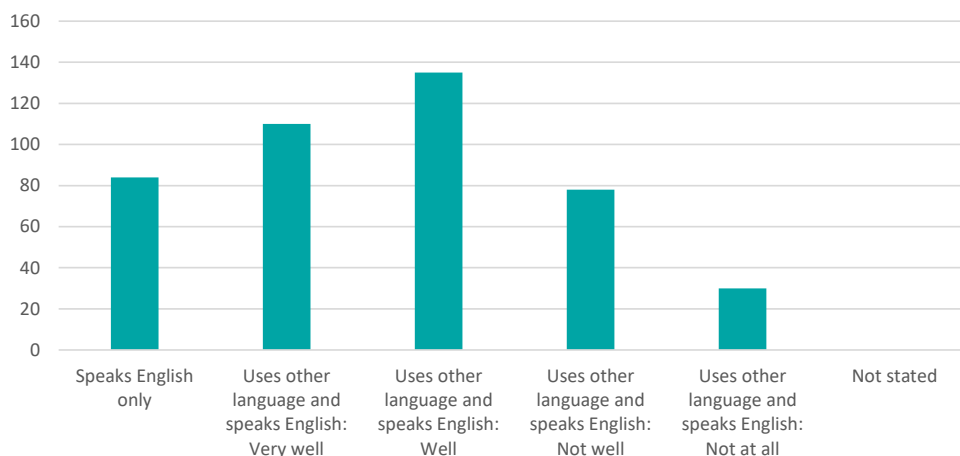
Figure 3: Top Languages Used by the Homeless Population



English Proficiency

Figure 4 shows English proficiency levels among individuals who speak a language other than English at home. While 44.0% report speaking English "very well" (110 people) or "well" (135), a combined 19.4% speak English "not well" (14.0% or 78 individuals) or "not at all" (5.4% or 30 people).

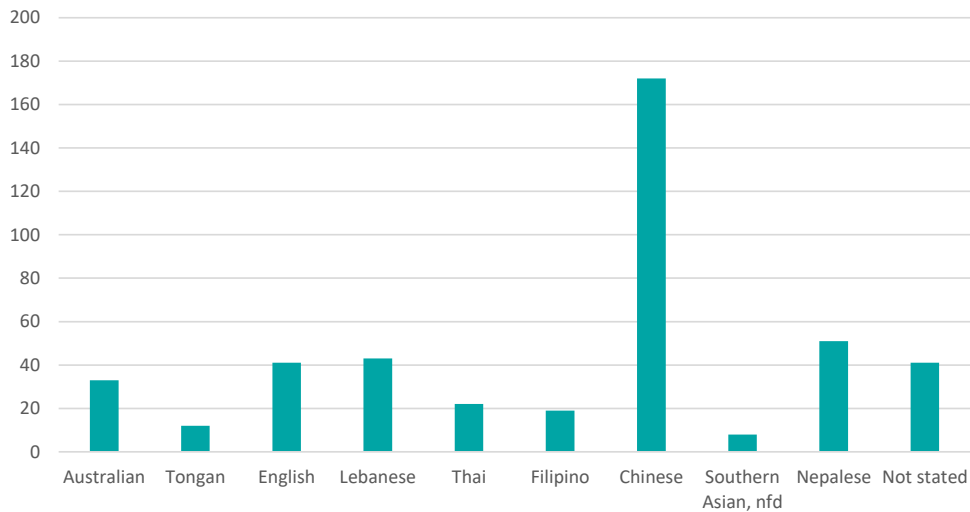
Figure 4: English Proficiency of the Homeless Population



Ancestry

Figure 5 further reflects the multicultural makeup of the local homeless population. Individuals identifying as Chinese make up the largest group at 30.9% (172 people), followed by Nepalese (9.2% or 51 people), Lebanese (7.7% or 43 people), and English (7.4% or 41 people). Other notable ancestries include Thai (4.0% or 22 people), Filipino (3.4% or 19 people), and Tongan (2.2% or 12 people).

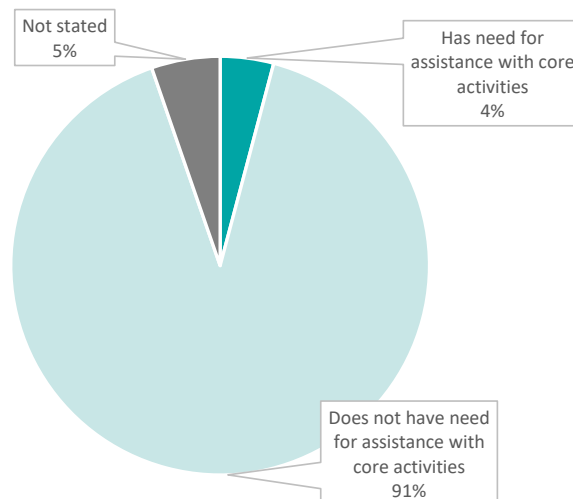
Figure 5: Ancestry of the Homeless Population



Disability and Need for Assistance

As presented in Figure 6, only 4% (21) of the total homeless population reported needing assistance with core activities.

Figure 6: Homeless Population in Georges River LGA Requiring Assistance with Core Activities (Disability)



Highest Level of Education Attainment

Figure 7 shows that the most common level of educational attainment among people experiencing homelessness is secondary education at Year 10 or above, with 34.8% (179) of the population in this category. This suggests that a large portion of the homeless population has completed at least part of their senior secondary schooling.

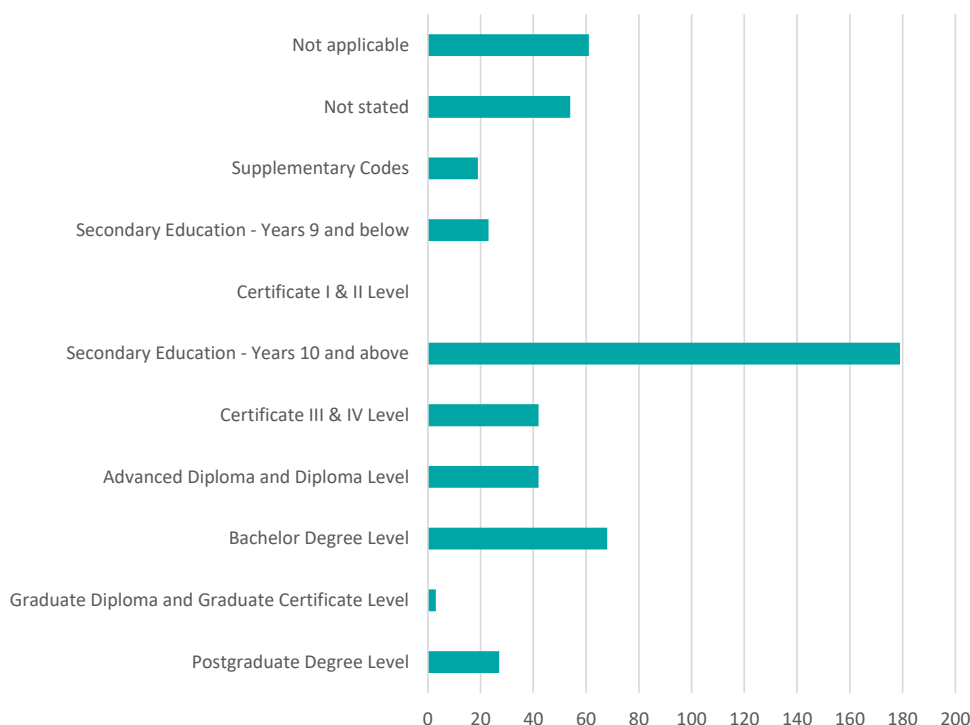
The second largest group includes those with a bachelor's degree, with 13.2% (68) of the population, followed by those holding vocational qualifications, such as Certificate III & IV qualifications (8.0% or 42 individuals) and an advanced diploma or diploma (8.8% or 42 individuals). Notably, 5.3% (27) of the population have attained a postgraduate degree.

At the lower end of the educational spectrum are those who have completed secondary education at Year 9 or below (4.5% or 23 individuals). Interestingly, no individuals were recorded with Certificate I & II qualifications, which may reflect either a reporting gap or a genuine absence in this group.

A significant proportion of the data falls under non-specific categories. These include 10.5% (54) whose education level was not stated, 11.9% (61) marked as not applicable and 3.7% (19) classified under supplementary codes, indicating unclassifiable responses.

The presence of individuals with postgraduate and bachelor-level qualifications highlights that homelessness is not limited to those with low educational attainment and can affect people across a variety of socioeconomic circumstances.

Figure 7: Highest Level of Education Among People Experiencing Homelessness

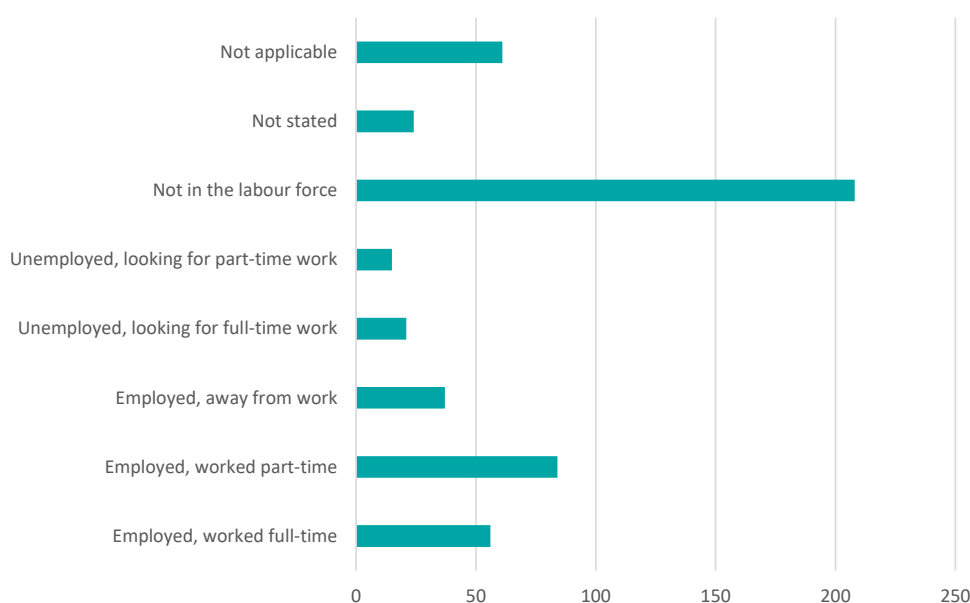


Employment Status

Of the total homeless population, 11% (56) reported being employed full-time, while 16.6% (84) were employed part-time. An additional 7.3% (37) were employed but away from work during the reference period. Despite this, a notable portion of the population remains unemployed and actively seeking work. 4.1% (21) were looking for full-time work, and 2.9% (15) were seeking part-time employment.

The largest group by far is recorded as not being in the labour force (41.1% or 208 individuals), which may include people who are studying, caring for others, have a disability or health issue, or are otherwise not seeking employment. Additionally, 4.7% (24) did not state their employment status, and 12% (61) were categorised as not applicable, potentially including children or others for whom employment data is not relevant. This distribution, as shown in Figure 8, illustrates the complex intersection between homelessness and labour force engagement, where employment is not a guaranteed safeguard against homelessness.

Figure 8: Employment Status of the Homeless Population



Accommodation Types

In total, these accommodation types account for 521 individuals experiencing homelessness in the Georges River area. As presented in Figure 9, overcrowding is the most prevalent form of homelessness, with the majority of people recorded as *persons living in severely crowded dwellings* (76% or 399 individuals).

Severe crowding conditions are operationalised in the Census as living in a dwelling that requires four or more bedrooms to accommodate the people who usually live there, as defined by the Canadian National Occupancy Standard (CNOS). The CNOS assesses the bedroom requirements of a household based on the following criteria (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2017):

- There should be no more than 2 persons per bedroom;
- Children less than 5 years of age of different sexes may reasonably share a bedroom;
- Children 5 years of age or older of opposite sex should have separate bedrooms;
- Children less than 18 years of age and of the same sex may reasonably share a bedroom; and



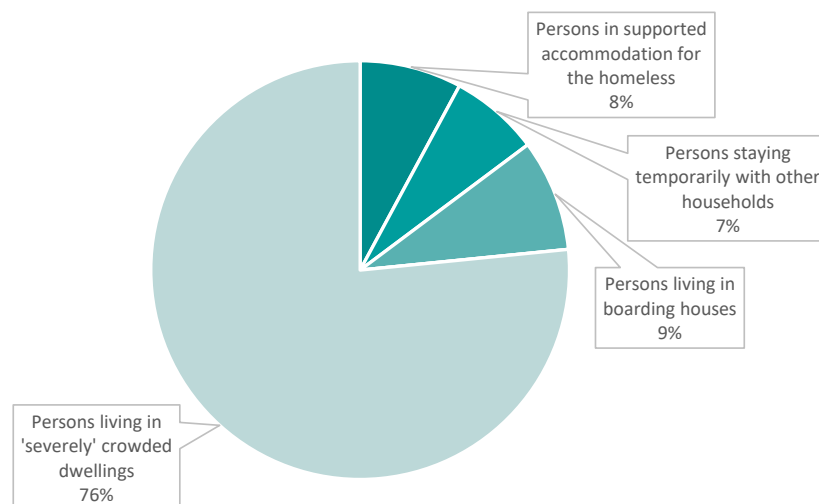
- Single household members 18 years or older should have a separate bedroom, as should parents or couples.

For example, a household with 2 adults and 5 children (4 month 4-month-old boy, 1 year 1-year-old girl, 3 year 3-year-old boy, 7 year 7-year-old boy and 9 year 9-year-old girl) living in a 3-bedroom house. In this example, the family ideally needs 4 bedrooms to meet the standards.

Other notable categories include persons living in boarding houses (9% or 45 individuals), which accounts for a smaller but still significant number of people experiencing homelessness, persons in supported accommodation for the homeless (8% or 41 individuals), and persons temporarily with other households (7% or 36 individuals), which indicates a temporary but precarious living situation for some. Places such as boarding houses and supported accommodation for the homeless are short- to medium-term solutions that lack privacy, security and support services.

No individuals were recorded as living in improvised dwellings, tents, or sleeping out, or in other temporary lodgings, which may suggest a low incidence of rough sleeping or potential underreporting in these categories.

Figure 9: Accommodation Type of the Homeless Population



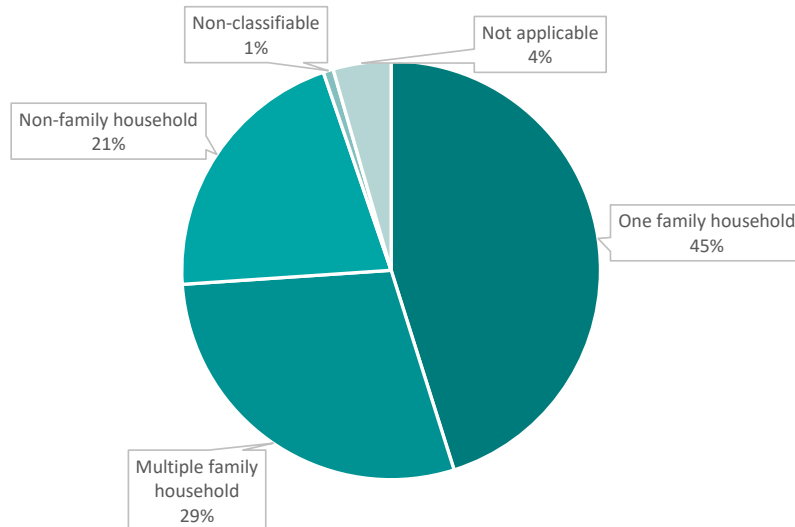
Family Composition

As presented in Figure 10, single-family households are the most common type, with 45.2% (232) falling into this category. Multiple-family households account for 28.8% (148), indicating situations where extended or unrelated families share living arrangements.

Non-family households, which may include individuals living alone or with unrelated housemates, make up 20.9% (107). A small number of people (0.8% or 4 individuals) were recorded in non-classifiable household types, and 4.5% (23) were marked as not applicable, likely reflecting individuals in supported accommodation, institutions, or circumstances where household composition is not easily defined.



Figure 10: Family Composition of the Homeless Population



At Risk of Homelessness

Marginally Homeless

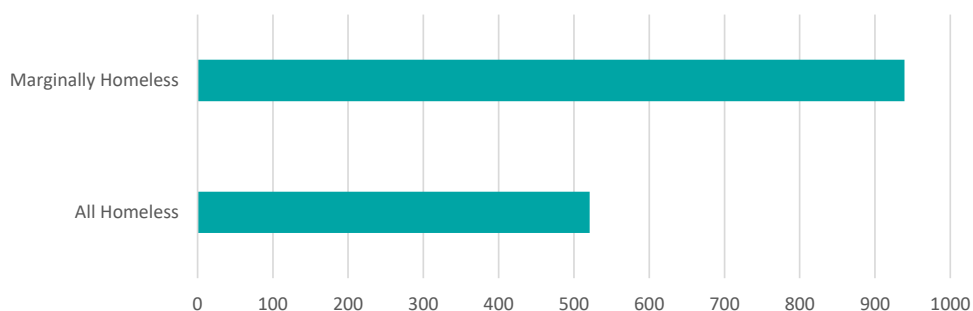
In addition to those who are experiencing homelessness, there is a broader group of people living in marginal housing that is insecure, inadequate, or unstable. While these individuals do not meet the official definition of homelessness, they face housing vulnerability, and their living situations place them at significant risk.

Marginal housing can include:

- Insecure housing, where people have no legal tenure or are at risk of eviction.
- Inadequate housing, such as dwellings that are not safe, structurally sound, or designed for long-term living.
- Unstable housing, where people move frequently or do not know where they will live in the near future.

As presented in Figure 11, 521 people are experiencing homelessness, while a larger number, 939 people, are considered to be approaching homelessness. This suggests that for every person currently homeless, there are nearly two people (1.8) at significant risk of becoming homeless.

Figure 11: Count of Homeless and Marginally Homeless



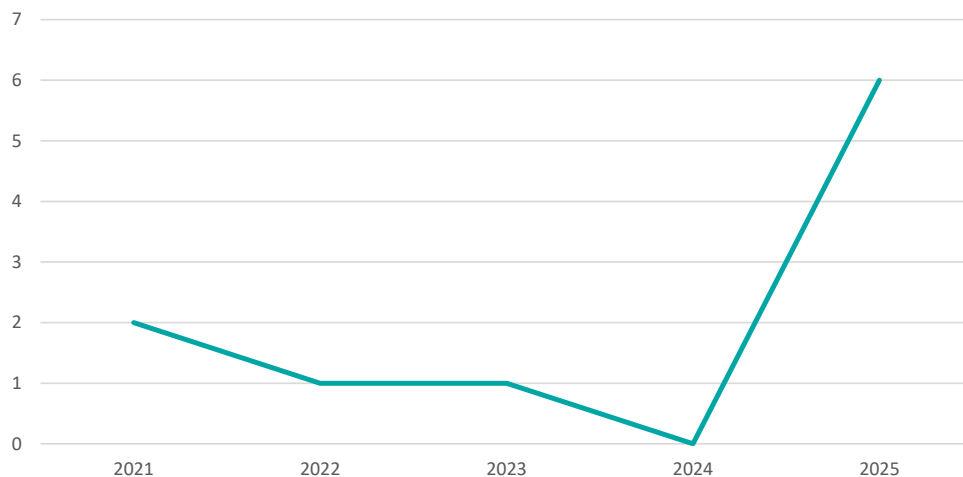
Key Trends Compared to Homeless

- Many marginally homeless individuals are employed, sometimes full-time, but still cannot afford stable housing due to high rents or insecure jobs. In contrast, people who are sleeping rough tend to have lower employment rates due to more severe barriers (e.g. mental health, addiction, lack of address).
- Marginal homelessness often includes families, particularly single mothers with children, living in overcrowded dwellings or couch-surfing. The rough sleeping population is more likely to be composed of single adults, often male, without dependents.
- People are often in a cycle of moving between insecure housing situations, experiencing housing stress and eviction threats. Those who are defined as homeless are more likely to be disconnected from the housing system entirely.
- Marginally homeless individuals may not seek help until they face an imminent crisis, due to stigma or the perception that they are "coping." People who are visibly homeless are more likely to engage earlier with housing or emergency services.

Sleeping Rough

The 2025 NSW Street Count, the sixth annual count of people sleeping rough conducted by the NSW Government (NSW Government, 2025), was completed between 4 February and 26 February 2025. Figure 12 presents data specific to GRC, showing consistently low numbers of people sleeping rough from 2021 to 2024. However, there is a significant increase in 2025, with the count rising sharply from 0 in 2024 to 6 in 2025. This jump highlights a notable escalation in the number of individuals observed sleeping rough compared to previous years.

Figure 12: NSW Sleep Count in the Georges River LGA



Discussion

The demographic data reveals that homelessness in Georges River is a complex and multifaceted issue, shaped by a variety of intersecting social and economic factors. The data reveals that for every person experiencing homelessness, nearly two more are at significant risk, underscoring the importance of early intervention and systemic prevention strategies.

One of the most notable trends is the gender disparity within the homeless population. While men make up a larger proportion (58%), the relatively high representation of women (42%) underscores the importance of addressing gender-specific vulnerabilities, such as domestic and family violence, economic insecurity, and the unique challenges faced by single mothers.

Age is another significant factor, with young adults (20–34 years) being disproportionately affected. Nearly half (49.2%) of those experiencing homelessness fall into this age group, highlighting the acute pressures faced by younger people in securing stable and affordable housing. Therefore, youth-specific homelessness services are essential, including transitional housing, education and employment support tailored to younger people.

The cultural and linguistic diversity of the homeless population is evident in the high number of Mandarin, Cantonese, Nepali and Arabic speakers, alongside strong representations of Chinese, Nepalese and Lebanese ancestry. As a result, language barriers may prevent individuals from accessing services, understanding their rights, or navigating housing systems. Therefore, local homelessness services must be equipped with multilingual support, particularly in Nepali, Mandarin, Cantonese, and Arabic, to ensure effective communication and access to support. Ultimately, this reflects the need for culturally sensitive and language-accessible homelessness services in the Georges River area.

Education and employment data challenge common stereotypes about homelessness. While many homeless individuals have low to moderate education levels, a significant number hold tertiary qualifications, showing that even educated individuals are not immune to housing insecurity.

Severe overcrowding accounts for the majority of homelessness in the area, indicating that many are not without shelter but are living in environments that are unsafe or unsuitable for long-term habitation. However, the rise in rough sleeping, from zero in 2024 to six individuals in 2025, signals a potential shift toward more visible forms of homelessness and highlights the fragility of current housing supports.

Furthermore, the high number of people approaching homelessness highlights the importance of early intervention and prevention strategies. Individuals in this group may be living in unstable, overcrowded, or marginal housing situations, such as caravan parks or improvised dwellings not captured in the core homelessness categories. Without targeted support, many of these individuals could transition into homelessness.

Limitations are prevalent throughout this dataset, such as limited census data regarding the LGBTQIA+ or the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander homeless population, likely due to the small sample size of the data. This presents a limitation in understanding the unique challenges faced by LGBTQIA+ and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the area.

Overall, the dataset highlights that homelessness in the Georges River area is not limited to rough sleeping but is primarily driven by overcrowding and unstable living arrangements. It affects a diverse population in terms of age, gender, culture, education, and employment status.



Findings

- 521 individuals are experiencing homelessness in the Georges River LGA, with an additional 939 people considered marginally housed.
- Severe overcrowding is the most common form of homelessness in the Georges River LGA, affecting 76% of the these 521 individuals.
- The NSW Street Count recorded a rise in rough sleeping from 0 in 2024 to 6 in 2025, indicating a potential shift toward more visible homelessness.
- Young people aged 20-24 represent the largest age group experiencing homelessness (18.5%), signalling the need for targeted youth homelessness support.
- The most commonly spoken languages among the homeless population are Nepali, Mandarin, Cantonese, and Arabic, highlighting the need for multilingual and culturally responsive services.



Dataset Three: The Role of Local Government

This dataset explores how local government councils across the Greater Sydney area respond to homelessness within their communities. The dataset builds on the foundation of the first dataset by aligning with the national and state-level frameworks and priorities around homelessness. It focuses specifically on the unique role that local governments play on the ground, particularly in the areas of cross-sector coordination, advocacy, and coordination of service delivery with local community organisations.

Data Collection and Analysis

Responses and Approaches

Local governments often face the challenge of responding to homelessness without a direct service delivery role or dedicated housing portfolio. Despite this, councils adopt innovative and collaborative approaches to support vulnerable residents, prevent homelessness, and reduce rough sleeping. These approaches range from establishing internal homelessness response plans and protocols to creating specialised roles or teams focused on community wellbeing or housing support.

Bayside Council

As shown in Figure 13, the 2021 ABS Census recorded 863 individuals experiencing homelessness in Bayside. However, none were identified as sleeping rough, highlighting the limitations of Census methodology in capturing people without shelter. Due to these constraints, the NSW Street Count offers a more accurate reflection of rough sleeping in the area.

According to Figure 14, Bayside recorded its highest number of rough sleepers in 2020, with 12 individuals identified. This number dropped to zero in 2022, but rose again to four in 2025. While the numbers may appear small, even minor fluctuations underscore the persistent and dynamic nature of homelessness, reinforcing the need for ongoing monitoring and targeted intervention.

Despite these trends, Bayside Council adopts a conservative approach to homelessness. It does not provide temporary accommodation, lacks a formal homelessness policy, and does not engage in community education on the issue. When incidents of rough sleeping are reported, Bayside Council staff refer cases to the St George Sutherland Homelessness Assertive Outreach Collaboration, which partners with NSW Health, Housing, and Wesley Mission. These policy gaps may hinder the Bayside Council's ability to address the root causes of homelessness or offer timely support. As a result, vulnerable individuals may receive inconsistent assistance, and opportunities for preventative action and community engagement may be missed.

Canterbury-Bankstown Council

As illustrated in Figure 13, the 2021 ABS Census recorded 2,706 individuals experiencing homelessness in the Canterbury-Bankstown LGA, with zero identified as sleeping rough. This figure reflects the methodological limitations of the Census in accurately capturing people without shelter, particularly those sleeping in public spaces or transient locations. Consequently, the NSW Street Count is used as a more reliable source for understanding the prevalence of rough sleeping in the area.

Figure 14 presents the NSW Street Count figure for the area. In 2020, Canterbury-Bankstown recorded 9 rough sleepers, which decreased to 7 in 2021. However, in 2022, the count increased to 12, marking a significant increase. This was followed by a decrease to 7 in 2023, which decreased again to 4 in 2024. By 2025, the



number increased slightly to 7, but remained lower than the peak in 2022. In comparison, Georges River LGA has consistently reported fewer rough sleepers, but over time, the gap between the LGAs is narrowing.

Canterbury-Bankstown Council adopts a proactive, coordinated approach to addressing homelessness in the region. Canterbury-Bankstown Council closely monitors the number of rough sleepers and identifies hotspot locations within the LGA. This monitoring enables targeted, timely intervention and ensures that individuals experiencing homelessness are supported appropriately. Canterbury-Bankstown Council collaborates closely with outreach teams and encourages rough sleepers to access Link2Home, the 24-hour housing support helpline that helps individuals connect with temporary accommodation options.

In addition to these service partnerships, Canterbury-Bankstown Council also collaborates with the South Western Sydney and Sydney districts of the Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ). These partnerships play a vital role in addressing homelessness by coordinating access to resources and services and working on long-term solutions to reduce homelessness in the region.

Overall, Canterbury-Bankstown's approach demonstrates the value of local leadership, data-informed decision-making, and strong partnerships in addressing homelessness. However, the ongoing fluctuations in rough sleeping numbers reinforce the need for continued vigilance, innovation, and community engagement.

Sutherland Shire

As shown in Figure 13, the 2021 ABS Census recorded 247 individuals experiencing homelessness in the Sutherland Shire LGA, with zero identified as sleeping rough. This absence is not necessarily reflective of reality but rather highlights the limitations of Census data collection methods, which often fail to capture individuals without fixed shelter, particularly those in transient or hidden locations.

To gain a more accurate understanding of rough sleeping in the area, we turn to the NSW Street Count, which provides annual data on individuals sleeping rough. Over the past six years, the Sutherland Shire has experienced notable fluctuations in rough sleeping numbers. In 2020, the count peaked at 33 individuals, followed by a steady decline to a low of 8 in 2024. However, in 2025, the number rose sharply back to 33, matching the 2020 high.

Sutherland Shire Council's approach is to reduce stigma, protect rights, and ensure people in crisis are connected to help. While Sutherland Shire Council does not directly deliver homelessness services, it plays a facilitating and connecting role, working with local providers like Wesley Mission and Orana NSW to ensure that individuals sleeping rough are linked to appropriate support.

Sutherland Shire's Homelessness Policy is guided by several key principles:

- All people, including those experiencing homelessness, have the right to use public spaces.
- The safety and well-being of all community members is a shared responsibility between Sutherland Shire Council and other agencies.
- People must be treated with respect and without discrimination or judgment.
- Individuals experiencing homelessness are part of the community and should be included and heard.
- Sutherland Shire Council officers are not service providers and cannot deliver ongoing care, including transport or case management.

Therefore, while Sutherland Shire Council doesn't run homelessness services itself, it plays an important role by working with local support groups to facilitate necessary programming. The sharp rise in rough sleeping in 2025 shows that homelessness is still a serious and changing issue, one that Sutherland Shire must continue to focus on.



Inner West Council

As shown in Figure 13, the 2021 ABS Census recorded 2,545 people experiencing homelessness in the Inner West LGA, with only 4 individuals counted as sleeping rough. This low number is likely due to the limitations of Census data collection, which often misses people sleeping in public places or temporary, informal arrangements. To better understand the scale of rough sleeping, the NSW Street Count will provide further insights into up-to-date figures.

According to the Street Count, the Inner West LGA has consistently reported higher numbers of rough sleepers than neighbouring LGAs such as Georges River, Canterbury-Bankstown, Bayside, and Sutherland Shire. From 2020 to 2023, the number of rough sleepers dropped from 25 to 7, a 72% decrease. This decline may reflect the success of pandemic-related housing programs, increased outreach, or changes in how homelessness is reported or recorded. However, the number of rough sleepers increased from 7 in 2023 to 33 in 2024, and then to 37 in 2025. This 429% increase over two years signals a growing local crisis and highlights the urgent need for sustained and expanded support.

Inner West Council adopts a holistic, proactive, and partnership-based model in its approach to addressing homelessness. Central to this model is a strong emphasis on community education, cross-agency collaboration, and targeted outreach to those experiencing or at risk of homelessness.

The foundation of the Inner West Council's strategy is the Inner West Homelessness Outreach Collaboration, a coordinated multi-agency initiative aimed at engaging with people sleeping rough and providing immediate and ongoing support. This collaboration includes representatives from Inner West Council, Department of Communities and Justice, Sydney Local Health District, Newtown Neighbourhood Centre, Missionbeat, Wesley Mission, NEAMI Way to Home and the Bill Crews Foundation. Teams from these organisations patrol the streets regularly, directly engaging with rough sleepers. They provide on-the-spot support, including temporary accommodation placements, health and welfare referrals, and follow-up case management. This active, street-based outreach model enhances visibility, builds trust with individuals sleeping rough, and provides rapid access to essential services.

In addition to service coordination, Inner West Council prioritises community awareness and education. It offers a 15-minute interactive online course designed to inform residents about homelessness in the local area and how they can effectively respond. The course covers how to recognise signs of homelessness and how to report instances of rough sleeping.

The Inner West Council's Homelessness Policy provides a clear and structured framework for responding to homelessness, particularly primary homelessness (rough sleeping) in public spaces. The policy is grounded in the NSW Government's Protocol for Homeless People in Public Places and affirms the rights of people experiencing homelessness to access public spaces, participate in community life, and be treated with dignity and respect.

At its core, the policy recognises that while homelessness is primarily the responsibility of state and federal governments, local councils have a critical role to play, especially as custodians of public spaces and facilitators of community wellbeing. The policy is supported by a Homelessness Protocol, which guides Inner West Council staff in responding to people sleeping rough. This includes referring individuals to specialist services, conducting welfare checks, and working with NSW Police when safety concerns arise. The Inner West Council also maintains a Homeless Incident Spreadsheet and conducts annual street counts to monitor the extent and location of rough sleeping.

The policy is underpinned by three main objectives:

- Improve the wellbeing of people experiencing homelessness by promoting inclusion and identifying service gaps.



- Reduce the number of people sleeping rough by connecting individuals to support services and advocating for affordable housing.
- Minimise negative impacts on public space users by managing access and ensuring peaceful use of shared areas.

This comprehensive policy framework reflects the Inner West Council's commitment to a compassionate, coordinated, and evidence-based approach to homelessness. However, as recent data shows a sharp rise in rough sleeping, the policy's implementation must remain dynamic and responsive to emerging challenges such as housing affordability, mental health needs, and service capacity.

City of Sydney

As shown in Figure 13, the 2021 ABS Census recorded 3,589 people experiencing homelessness in the City of Sydney, including 64 individuals sleeping rough. This figure likely underrepresents the true scale of rough sleeping due to the limitations of Census data collection methods. In contrast, the NSW Street Count consistently shows that the City of Sydney reports significantly higher numbers of rough sleepers than neighbouring LGAs such as Georges River, Canterbury-Bankstown, Bayside, Burwood, Inner West, and Sutherland Shire.

As shown in Figure 14, between 2020 and 2022, the number of rough sleepers dropped from 334 to 225, a 33% reduction that may reflect the impact of pandemic-era housing initiatives, targeted outreach, and temporary accommodation programs. However, this trend reversed in subsequent years, with the count rising to 277 in 2023, 280 in 2024, and sharply increasing to 346 in 2025, the highest figure in the dataset. This 54% increase over three years signals growing pressures on housing and support systems, and a deepening homelessness crisis in the Sydney CBD.

The City of Sydney adopts a comprehensive and compassionate approach to addressing homelessness, guided by its strategic framework known as the Homelessness Action Plan: A City for All. This plan is structured around three strategic priorities:

- Increase access to safe and sustainable housing and support
- Support people sleeping rough and manage public spaces
- Work smarter together to have a greater impact

This plan aims to achieve functional zero homelessness, where the number of people sleeping rough does not exceed the community's capacity to house them. It reflects a commitment to social justice, inclusion, and resilience, and aligns with the City's broader Sustainable Sydney 2030 vision.

A key feature of City of Sydney's approach is its dedicated Specialist Homelessness Unit. It is the first of its kind established by a local government in Australia. Operating seven days a week, this team works directly with people experiencing homelessness, helping them connect with housing, health care, and social support services. The unit collaborates closely with non-governmental organisations, health providers, and state agencies to deliver coordinated and effective support.

The City of Sydney also leads or supports several multi-agency collaborations, including:

- Homelessness Assertive Response Team (HART) - coordinates housing and health support for rough sleepers.
- WISH (Woolloomooloo Integrated Service Hub) – a monthly one-stop service hub hosted at the Wayside Chapel.
- HOST (Homelessness Outreach Support Team) – delivers on-street housing and support services.
- Act to End Street Sleeping Collaboration – a joint initiative aiming to halve rough sleeping by 2025 and end it entirely by 2030.



The City of Sydney has invested heavily in affordable and supported housing, including:

- Over \$4.5 million in grants through the Supported Accommodation, Affordable and Diverse Housing Fund.
- Support for HomeGround Sydney, a not-for-profit real estate agency increasing affordable rental supply.
- Planning mechanisms such as affordable housing contribution schemes and preferential zoning to encourage development of affordable dwellings.
- The City of Sydney also funds early intervention services, such as the Inner City Sydney Homelessness Prevention and Support Service for Young People, which has prevented over 1,600 young people from becoming homeless since 2015.

Finally, the City of Sydney balances the rights of people experiencing homelessness with the need to maintain safe and accessible public spaces. It employs Public Space Liaison Officers who engage with rough sleepers and local residents, manage hotspots, and coordinate responses during extreme weather events.

The City of Sydney's homelessness response is comprehensive, compassionate, and evidence-based. Its Homelessness Action Plan demonstrates a strong commitment to collaboration, innovation, and accountability. However, the recent rise in rough sleeping highlights the need for continued investment, stronger intergovernmental coordination, and expanded housing solutions to meet growing demand and achieve lasting change.

Figure 13: Comparison of Homeless Data for Local Councils

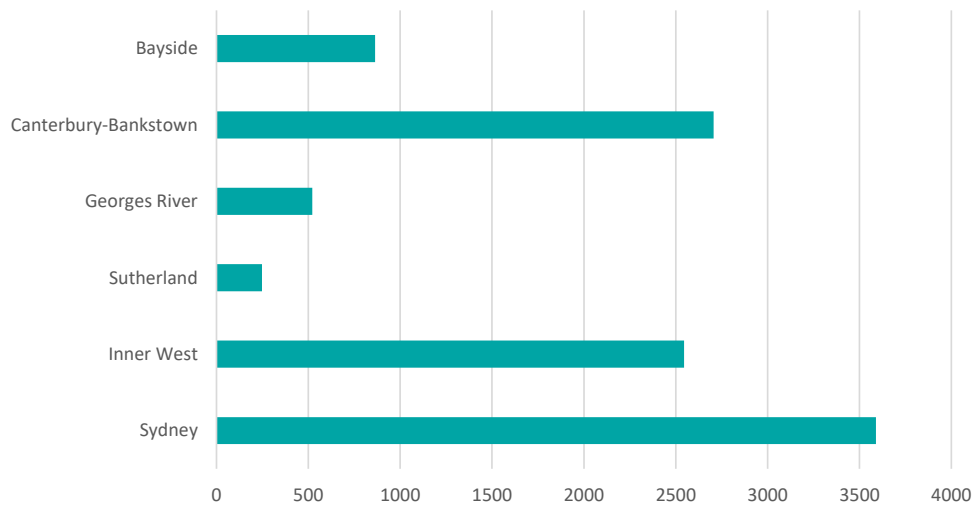
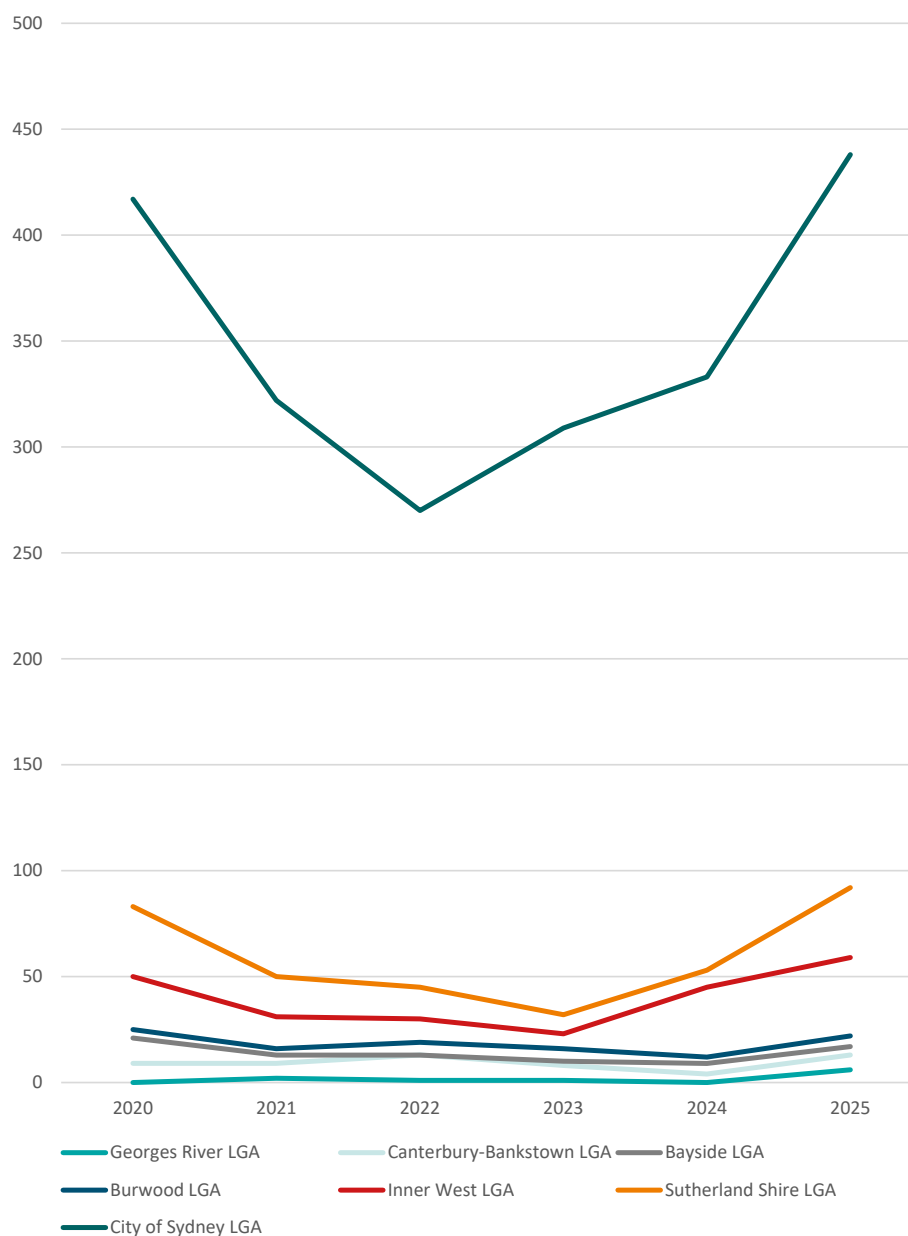


Figure 14: Comparison of NSW Sleep Count for Local Councils



Discussion

Local governments across Greater Sydney have no formal responsibility for housing delivery or homelessness services, which are traditionally led by state and federal governments. Despite this, the dataset reveals that many councils have taken on informal leadership roles in response to visible and persistent homelessness within their communities. This reflects a growing recognition that homelessness is not just a housing issue, but a complex social challenge that intersects with health, justice, and community wellbeing.

Many councils provide either funding, in-kind support, or logistical assistance to organisations delivering frontline services such as emergency accommodation, health and welfare referrals, and street outreach teams. This support enhances service capacity without requiring councils to manage service delivery directly.

Councils act as important connectors and facilitators, linking people experiencing homelessness with the appropriate local agencies and community organisations. This role ensures that individuals do not fall through the cracks due to fragmented service landscapes and assists in the more efficient use of existing resources.

Local governments actively advocate to state and federal governments for increased funding, affordable housing, and expanded support services. This advocacy role reflects their frontline experience and local knowledge, strengthening the case for systemic reform and resource allocation aligned with local needs.

Councils with formal policies and partnerships (e.g., Inner West, Canterbury-Bankstown) report a much higher proportion of people sleeping rough than Georges River Council, possibly due to urban density.

The noticeable dip in rough sleeping across councils in 2022 and 2023 can be evidenced by COVID-19 pandemic recovery programs that may have provided short-term housing or support. Several LGAs, notably Georges River, Inner West, and Sutherland Shire, show a sharp increase in 2024–2025. This suggests that earlier interventions may not have been sustainable, or that housing pressures have intensified and that this is a consistent issue across Greater Sydney. If it's just rough sleeping comparison I think we need to make that explicit and put commentary around as mentioned rough sleeping is only one element of homelessness.

Findings

- Councils are often the first point of contact when community members or businesses raise concerns about rough sleeping or vulnerable individuals in public spaces such as parks, streets, or transport hubs.
- The key role that local governments play is coordination and advocacy rather than direct service provision.
- Councils are equipped to support local outreach services and crisis providers through funding or in-kind support.
- Council's efforts to convene partners, support outreach services, and facilitate access to resources fill a critical gap in the homelessness support system.



Dataset Four: Community Organisations

This dataset examines the outreach support, casework, food and hygiene assistance, crisis accommodation, transitional, and/or affordable housing services provided by community organisations within the Georges River LGA and neighbouring councils to homeless individuals and families in their communities. It provides an overview of organisations by LGA and details the operational responses each organisation is undertaking to address homelessness, as well as their current capacity to deliver services where relevant.

Data Collection and Analysis

Community Organisations in Georges River

Wesley Mission is the primary outreach provider in the Georges River LGA, offering support to individuals who are rough sleeping, couch surfing, or living in temporary accommodation. Services are funded by the Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ), but limited funding restricts outreach to fortnightly street patrols and one-off check-ins. Wesley Mission also assists with welfare checks and short-term brokerage, but lacks capacity for ongoing casework. A range of other organisations support individuals at risk or experiencing homelessness in Georges River, each with unique contributions, detailed in Table 1.

Table 1: Organisations providing services to the homeless population in the Georges River LGA

Organisation	Operational Responses to Homelessness	Limitations
Wesley Mission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conducts welfare checks during fortnightly street patrols for individuals identified as homeless or in need of support. Offers financial assistance through brokerage support. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides initial engagement but cannot offer ongoing case management.
Advance Diversity Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interpretation services for non-English speaking people. 	
Link2Home	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NSW statewide homelessness information and referral telephone service. Available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. 	
Integricare	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides food hampers to individuals and families in need. 	
Kingsway Community Care trading as Platform Nine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Offers temporary and crisis accommodation for women aged 18 and over with children, and men aged 18 and over. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Service is currently not accepting new referrals.
St George Community Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delivers social, supported, and affordable housing options. 	
The Kogarah Storehouse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides emergency food parcels. Offers bill payment assistance and no-interest loan schemes for individuals at risk of homelessness. 	
1800 Respect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides information, counselling, and support for individuals affected by domestic, family, and sexual violence. 	



Open Door Youth Housing Support Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Sustainable Tenancy Program supports young people aged 16-25 to secure supported housing, community housing, or private rentals. 	
2Connect Youth & Community – St George and Sutherland Homeless Help (SASHH)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintains a website collating organisations and resources specific to St George and Sutherland Shire areas that support people experiencing homelessness. 	
Project Youth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Operates two refuges in St George and Sutherland Shire, providing crisis accommodation for up to ten young people aged 14–19 for stays of up to three months. Offers transitional and affordable housing for young people aged 16–24. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Turned away 958 children and young people in 2024 from housing, as there were not enough beds.
Share the Dignity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Distributes menstruation products to those in need. 	
Georges River Lifecare	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides pantry hampers and fresh food hampers. 	
Allawah Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supplies food and clothing to people in need. 	
St Vincent de Paul Society, Hurstville	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Offers food parcels, groceries, and clothing. Provides fuel cards and bill assistance. Runs no-interest loan schemes. Delivers advocacy and referral services. Manages transitional housing properties. 	
Sans Souci Anglican Church	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Operates a mobile pantry, supplying low-cost groceries. 	

Stakeholder Consultation

Council engaged with local organisations and stakeholders, including Wesley Mission and domestic violence services, to better understand trends and challenges. Key insights include:

- Language barriers hinder support for culturally and linguistically diverse communities.
- There is a shortage of shelters for vulnerable residents in Georges River.
- Community organisations expressed interest in partnering with Council to expand services via lease agreements for community spaces.

Many organisations also support broader social needs beyond homelessness:

- Wesley Mission: Gambling harm prevention and outreach.
- Integricare: Domestic violence support.
- 2Connect: Youth support including alcohol and drugs, employment, and casework.
- Project Youth: Education, mental health, and employment training.
- Advance Diversity Services: Settlement support, health navigation, aged care.



Community Organisations in Neighbouring LGAs

Table 2: Additional organisations providing services to the homeless population in neighbouring LGAs

Organisation	Operational Responses to Homelessness
Bayside LGA	
Bayside Women's Shelter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refuge for women and children
Sutherland Shire LGA	
Hopefield	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Housing support for people experiencing family and domestic violence. In collaboration with One Meal, a free hot meal weekly on a Thursday from 5 pm at their Cronulla location. Groceries and non-perishable food support.
Orana	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Food assistance, including morning tea on a Tuesday from 10 am, and lunch on a Friday from noon.
Father of Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supports Wesley Mission in street patrols of people experiencing homelessness. Grocery support to vulnerable members of the community and run a food kitchen.
Canterbury-Bankstown LGA	
Youth Off the Streets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supports children and young people who are at risk of being homeless Crisis accommodation and casework.
Biyani House: Revesby Women's Shelter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emergency accommodation and support for women and children escaping domestic and family violence.
Mission Australia Canterbury-Bankstown Youth Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Targeted at young people aged 16-25 years old and young families who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. Supports such as social and affordable housing.
St Jude's Bankstown	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Crisis accommodation for single males aged 25 years and older for up to 3 months, with case management.
City of Sydney LGA	
Neami National: Way2Home	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assists individuals aged 25 years and older. Assertive outreach service, offering assistance to find long-term housing.
The Haymarket Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Crisis accommodation and support service for people experiencing homelessness while living with mental health, alcohol and other drug comorbidities. 24 beds for women, men and transgender people over the age of 18. Food, shower, and laundry services are available.
Servicing Various LGAs	
St Vincent De Paul Society	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Services various LGAs across NSW, offering crisis accommodation, transitional housing, and case management, primarily targeted at women and children.
Women's Community Shelter's	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Works with communities to establish new shelters, providing short-term emergency accommodation and support for women.



Barriers faced by community organisations:

- The cost of living crisis is increasing pressure for people approaching homelessness, increasing demand on services.
- Funding sources;
- Staffing is under-resourced;
- Community perception and attitudes;
- Education of the homelessness definition, some people may not be aware they are classified as homeless and can access support; and
- Services are opt-in; engagement can be difficult to maintain if the person is not interested in support.

In reviewing community organisations operating in Georges River LGA and neighbouring LGAs, there is a notable gap in service delivery providing:

- Temporary or crisis accommodation for LGBTQIA+, males 18 years old and above, as well as young people from 14 years old;
- Support to access healthcare for those experiencing homelessness;
- Roaming soup kitchen, and opportunities for hot meals;
- Grocery provisions;
- Support for people approaching homelessness; and
- Accommodation options for crisis, short-term term and temporary housing are limited in Georges River LGA.



Discussion

Dataset four highlights the crucial role community organisations play in responding to homelessness within the Georges River LGA and surrounding areas. These organisations provide a diverse range of services, including outreach support, food and hygiene assistance, emergency accommodation, and transitional housing. However, more could be done in terms of mobile food support (e.g. roaming soup kitchens), grocery relief, and proactive assistance for those at risk of homelessness.

Wesley Mission is the primary outreach provider in Georges River, yet its capacity is limited to fortnightly patrols and one-off engagements due to funding constraints. Other local organisations contribute in varied ways, such as food relief (Integricare, The Kogarah Storehouse), accommodation (Platform Nine, St Vincent de Paul), and support for young people (Project Youth, Open Door).

Consultation with service providers identified key challenges, including limited shelter options, particularly for men, LGBTQIA+ individuals, and young people, language barriers, and insufficient funding. These issues are compounded by increasing cost-of-living pressures and a growing number of residents approaching homelessness. Additionally, many services are opt-in, making engagement difficult for those unaware of their eligibility or hesitant to seek support.

Comparatively, neighbouring LGAs offer broader crisis accommodation and outreach models, such as Neami National's assertive outreach in the City of Sydney and Youth Off the Streets in Canterbury-Bankstown. Despite this, gaps persist across the region, especially in healthcare access, mobile food support, and early intervention for at-risk individuals.

Overall, community organisations are delivering vital, frontline responses with limited resources. Their work would be strengthened through greater collaboration, increased funding, and targeted support to address service gaps, particularly in accommodation and culturally appropriate care for diverse and vulnerable populations.

Findings

- Community organisations play a vital role by using their funding and resources to meet the everyday needs of people experiencing homelessness, primarily providing short- and medium-term support.
- Due to the intersectionality between homelessness and issues such as gambling harm, domestic and family violence, mental health, and substance use, some homelessness services also address these areas to provide holistic and integrated care.
- Wesley Mission is the primary outreach provider in the Georges River LGA, offering support to individuals who are rough sleeping, couch surfing, or living in temporary accommodation.
- Community organisations face significant barriers, including limited funding, staffing shortages, and community perceptions, while the ongoing cost of living crisis is increasing pressure on individuals at risk of homelessness and driving up demand for already stretched services.
- Despite the area's cultural diversity, there are no CALD-specific homelessness services in Georges River, highlighting a critical service gap for non-English speaking and migrant communities.



Key Findings

Dataset One

- Domestic, family, and sexual violence is the leading cause of homelessness for women.
- Vulnerable communities, including youth, LGBTQIA+ individuals and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, face a significantly higher risk of homelessness.
- Rising housing costs, poverty, insecure work, and inadequate welfare systems are systemic causes of homelessness.
- Integrated, person-centred support that combines housing, health, and social services is key to long-term stability.
- Federal and state government strategies increasingly focus on long-term housing initiatives and funding.

Dataset Two

- 521 individuals are experiencing homelessness in the Georges River LGA, with an additional 939 people considered marginally housed.
- Severe overcrowding is the most common form of homelessness in the Georges River LGA, affecting 76% of the these 521 individuals.
- The NSW Street Count recorded a rise in rough sleeping from 0 in 2024 to 6 in 2025, indicating a potential shift toward more visible homelessness.
- Young people aged 20-24 represent the largest age group experiencing homelessness (18.5%), signalling the need for targeted youth homelessness support.
- The most commonly spoken languages among the homeless population are Nepali, Mandarin, Cantonese, and Arabic, highlighting the need for multilingual and culturally responsive services.

Dataset Three

- Councils are often the first point of contact when community members or businesses raise concerns about rough sleeping or vulnerable individuals in public spaces such as parks, streets, or transport hubs.
- The key role that local governments play is coordination and advocacy rather than direct service provision.
- Councils are equipped to support local outreach services and crisis providers through funding or in-kind support.
- Council's efforts to convene partners, support outreach services, and facilitate access to resources fill a critical gap in the homelessness support system.

Dataset Four

- Community organisations play a vital role by using their funding and resources to meet the everyday needs of people experiencing homelessness, primarily providing short- and medium-term support.
- Due to the intersectionality between homelessness and issues such as gambling harm, domestic and family violence, mental health, and substance use, some homelessness services also address these areas to provide holistic and integrated care.
- Wesley Mission is the primary outreach provider in the Georges River LGA, offering support to individuals who are rough sleeping, couch surfing, or living in temporary accommodation.
- Community organisations face significant barriers, including limited funding, staffing shortages, and community perceptions, while the ongoing cost of living crisis is increasing pressure on individuals at risk of homelessness and driving up demand for already stretched services.
- Despite the area's cultural diversity, there are no CALD-specific homelessness services in Georges River, highlighting a critical service gap for non-English speaking and migrant communities.



Conclusion

The comparison of all four datasets in this study reveals a deeply layered and systemic picture of homelessness in the Georges River LGA, shaped by structural inequality, service fragmentation, and policy limitations. While each dataset offers distinct insights, together they expose critical gaps in service provision and underscore the need for a more inclusive, coordinated, and place-based response.

A particularly noticeable finding across the datasets is the absence of homelessness services exclusively designed for CALD communities, despite the fact that Georges River is one of the most culturally diverse LGAs in Greater Sydney. Dataset two shows that a large proportion of the homeless population speaks languages other than English, most notably Nepali, Mandarin, Cantonese, and Arabic, with one-fifth of these people speaking English not well or not at all. Yet, as Dataset four confirms, no dedicated CALD-specific homelessness services are operating in the area. While some organisations offer interpretation or general support, this is not sufficient to meet the needs of individuals who face language barriers, cultural stigma, or unfamiliarity with Australian service systems. The lack of culturally tailored services represents a critical gap in the local homelessness response and risks further marginalising already vulnerable populations.

In contrast, dataset four highlights that many organisations are actively working to address youth homelessness in the area. However, the number of young people experiencing homelessness remains high. Factors such as transitioning out of care systems, youth unemployment, and involvement in the youth justice or child protection systems continue to place young people at significant risk. These challenges require sustained, targeted programming to ensure access to safe and stable housing. Addressing youth homelessness is not only a matter of immediate crisis response but also a strategic investment in the long-term wellbeing and resilience of the community.

Dataset three clarifies the role of local government in this context. While Georges River Council is not responsible for directly addressing homelessness through service provision, it does have a vital role to play in supporting local responses. Council's strength lies in its ability to fund and facilitate the work of community organisations, advocate for local needs, and prioritise homelessness as a key issue across interagency networks, committees, and strategic planning forums. This advocacy role is particularly important in ensuring that service gaps, such as the lack of CALD-specific support, are recognised and addressed through collaborative, cross-sectoral efforts.

The data also reveals the complexity of vulnerabilities experienced by people facing homelessness in Georges River. Many individuals and families are navigating overlapping challenges, including domestic violence, mental health issues, insecure employment, and housing instability. These intersecting needs require wraparound, person-centred support models that integrate housing, health, legal, and social services. Moreover, the presence of children within the homeless population, which can be seen as those accompanying mothers escaping DFV, highlights the need for services that address the relationship between DFV and family homelessness. Council can play a key advocacy role in supporting local homelessness services to expand to incorporate targeted interventions for victims/survivors of domestic and family violence. The design and delivery of these services should be informed by further context-specific research to ensure they are responsive to the complex nature of family homelessness in the local context.

While Georges River Council cannot resolve the structural drivers of homelessness alone, it is uniquely positioned to lead a place-based, equity-focused response. By prioritising supporting community-led initiatives and advocating for systemic change, Council can play a pivotal role in ensuring that all members of its diverse community have access to safe, stable, and dignified housing.

The findings from this study will inform Council's recommendations in the Homelessness in Georges River Council report.



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Item: COM023-25 Place Naming Proposal for Caledonia Crescent Reserve

Author: Manager, Cultural Engagement and Library Services

Directorate: Community and Culture

Matter Type: Committee Reports

RECOMMENDATION:

- (a) That Council endorse the proposed name 'Caledonia Crescent Reserve' for the reserve located on Caledonia Crescent, Peakhurst in Lot 32 DP202901 and Lot 9 section 2 DP23646.
- (b) That the proposed name 'Caledonia Crescent Reserve' be placed on public exhibition for a period of no less than 28 days to allow the community to provide feedback.
- (c) That Council receive a further report to present the results of the community feedback.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The reserve located on Caledonia Crescent, Peakhurst, which is commonly known as 'Caledonia Crescent Reserve', is not formally named. This report outlines the proposal to confirm the common name of the reserve and undertake community consultation, in accordance with the Georges River Place Naming Policy, before the proposed name is submitted to the NSW Geographical Names Board (GNB) for gazettal.

BACKGROUND

2. The reserve located in Caledonia Crescent, Peakhurst occupies two lots: Lot 32 DP202901 and Lot 9 Section 2 DP23646. It contains a small playground, park benches and numerous trees. The reserve does not have a sign. The reserve is identified as Caledonia Crescent Reserve in Council's Generic Plan of Management for Parks and is labelled as such in Council's mapping software 'Intramaps'.



Figure 1: Reserve as labelled on Council's Mapping Software. Source: Intramaps

3. A review of the NSW Spatial Services map database confirmed that the name 'Caledonia Crescent Reserve' is included in the state database. During the review, Council officers also identified that the name was only assigned to one of the two required lots; Lot 9 Section 2 DP23646. The NSW Spatial Services map showing the label 'Caledonia Crescent Reserve' on Lot 9 Section 2 DP23646 is in the following image.



Figure 2: Reserve as labelled on NSW State Database. Source: NSW Spatial Services

4. On 1 May 2025 the GNB confirmed that the name 'Caledonia Crescent Reserve' has not been formally gazetted and that a place naming proposal for the reserve is required. The completion of a formal place naming process will also allow Council to correct the actual extent of the reserve across two lots (Lot 32 DP202901 and Lot 9 Section 2 DP23646).

Place Naming Requirements

5. The Georges River Place Naming Policy (the Council Policy) provides a consistent naming convention for all Council assets including reserves. The Council Policy is also aligned with the established naming conventions and gazettal requirements of the NSW Geographical Names Board Place Naming Policy (the GNB Policy). The consistent naming conventions ensure clear wayfinding for members of the community and efficient emergency services response across the Georges River local government area and the state.
6. The GNB is the designated naming authority for reserves and is responsible for gazettal of reserve names. Council's role in naming reserves as the landowner, is to identify appropriate names determine community support and make recommendations to the GNB. Accordingly, the respective place naming requirements of the Council Policy and the GNB Policy both apply.
7. Clause 5.1 of the Council Policy outlines the requirement to maintain existing names as well as the limited conditions where a re-naming proposal will be considered. In accordance with Clause 5.1.2 a renaming proposal must show that the current name:
 - (a) Does not meet addressing standards;

- (b) Causes a safety issue;
 - (c) Causes confusion due to duplication;
 - (d) Has a spelling error; or
 - (e) Is offensive
8. Clause 9.2 of the GNB Policy outlines the requirements for the selection of place names which include a rule against changing long established names except where necessary, to avoid ambiguity or duplication. Clause 9.3 confirms the preference to maintain well established names which are in local usage even if a different original name is identified.

The History of 'Caledonia Crescent Reserve'

- 9. The land where the current reserve is located was granted to William Hebblewhite on 30 March 1838. It was later sold as part of the Peakhurst Park Estate in October 1919. At the time of that 1919 subdivision, Caledonia Crescent did not exist.
- 10. The land was first marked on the certificate of title by the Registrar General as 'public garden and recreation space' on 14 November 1951 (Volume 2847, Folio 67). In August 1961, the construction of Caledonia Crescent was completed by South Pacific Developers Pty. Ltd. South Pacific Developers were responsible for numerous land developments across Sydney and the name 'Caledonia Crescent' is aligned with the theme of their business name.
- 11. The name 'Caledonia Crescent Reserve' has long established use by both Georges River Council and the former Hurstville Council. Reference to the name is consistently found in administrative Council documents, correspondence, land valuations and plans of management. In 2004, the original 1961 Certificate of Title for the reserve lots was first digitised into Council's record keeping system and labelled 'Caledonia Cres Reserve'.
- 12. The name 'Caledonia Crescent Reserve' is commonly found on consumer wayfinding software including Apple Maps, Microsoft Bing Maps, Whereis and the OpenStreetMap software used by the National Library Australia. Google Maps displays a user-generated label 'Caledonia Crescent Playground'.
- 13. Recognising the long-standing use of the name 'Caledonia Crescent Reserve', it is recommended as the appropriate place name for the existing reserve located in Caledonia Crescent, Peakhurst (Lot 32 DP202901 and Lot 9 Section 2 DP23646) in accordance with the Council Policy and the GNB Policy.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 14. No budget impact for this report.

RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 15. The recommendations in this report are within Council's risk appetite and will control risks in two of Council's strategic risk categories: Reputation and Compliance. As landowner of the reserve, Council has a responsibility to develop place names that are aligned with Council Policy, GNB Policy and suitable for gazettal.
- 16. Unnamed reserves can cause confusion in the community and disrupt the efficient response of emergency services, creating an increased risk to Council's reputation and compliance.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- 17. Should Council endorse the recommended name for the reserve located in Caledonia Crescent, Peakhurst (Lot 32 DP202901 and Lot 9 Section 2 DP23646), the proposal will

be put on public exhibition on Council's Your Say platform for a period of 28 days in accordance with the Georges River Council Place Naming Policy.

18. Residents living in the vicinity of the reserve will be issued with letters informing them about the proposal and the opportunity to provide feedback.
19. The results of the community engagement will be reported at a future Council meeting.

FILE REFERENCE

D25/131353

ATTACHMENTS

Nil