

Bushland

Community Assets – At the Core of Your Neighbourhood

What are the community assets?

The City of Willoughby boasts a large range of services which contribute to our quality of life. Most of these services rely on a pool of assets with a combined replacement value of more than \$760M.

Assets in Willoughby include all buildings, footpaths, roads, stormwater infrastructure, parks, bushland, sportsgrounds and playgrounds. Without these assets Council could not provide its present array of services. These assets are located on Council-owned land as well as land under Council's care and control.

Asset Management has been identified as a federal priority for local government across Australia, as all councils begin to face the issue of aging infrastructure.

Strategic management of these assets, guided by an asset management policy and plans, will ensure the needs of communities are being determined and met, and funding sources for asset renewal are secured for the future.

Managing our assets

Much of the city's infrastructure was built in the first half of the 20th century and an intense period of construction of community buildings took place in the 1970s and again in the 1990s. Many of these assets are already due for replacement, and Council has been undertaking a continual replacement and upgrade program to meet the needs of a growing city. Planning has now begun for the large number of these assets that will be due for replacement around the same time, particularly over the next two decades.

Willoughby City Council has collected the vast majority of data required to produce its Asset Management Plans. They can be accessed from Council's website. These 20 year strategic plans provide scenario-based expenditure projections for nine classes of assets.

The next step for Willoughby is to ascertain the community's priorities and determine the acceptable condition, capacity, functionality, location and quantity of our assets.

Have Your Say

Willoughby Council is seeking feedback from the community to determine the acceptable level of service provision.

We need to know how you use community assets, whether they meet your expectations and how we should prioritise future works so we can develop strategies for their management.

Consultation will seek your opinions about community assets in terms of physical condition and appearance, capacity, fitness for purpose and whether there are enough of them in the right places.

Visit www.haveyoursaywilloughby.com.au to be involved in the online forum and to receive project updates. Council will also hold community workshops, public meetings and information stalls through 2013.



Bushland

Replacement value: \$18.3M

- 290 ha Bushland
- 20 km of harbour foreshore
- Spread over 67 parks and reserves

Bushland areas support the wealth of locally indigenous species of plants and animals providing safe passageways with green corridors connecting street trees and gardens in the blend of natural and man-made landscapes.

Bushland provides an important filtration function, both of stormwater run-off and the air, contributing to water and air quality for the area. Bushland maintenance ensures the fire hazard associated with vegetated areas is minimised.

Bushland makes up 12 per cent of the local area in the City of Willoughby. Of all the parks and reserves that are home to bushland, 44 of these consist entirely of bushland. The remaining bushland sits side by side with passive recreation areas, sportsgrounds and playgrounds.

Asset data collection has not yet taken place within bushland, however the expenditure on the assets within bushland, which include walking tracks, picnic tables, benches, barbecues and signage, would be eclipsed by the expenditure on bushland regeneration. These assets are provided so the community has access to nature within their neighbourhood. The wealth of foreshore and bushland, particularly that found in Middle Harbour and along the Lane Cove River, is unique to a city so close to the centre of any state capital.

Physical condition

Council will assign condition ratings to physical assets such as walking tracks, signage and barbecues within bushland and collect other information about these in the near future.

Bushland is not assigned an overall condition rating, however various rating schemes do exist for specific purposes, such as:

- Weed clearing
- Bushfire hazard management

A methodology is currently being developed to combine these existing ratings with other factors concerning ecology and conservation needs, bush care groups, community partnerships and reserve action plans in order to better prioritise future work. This is particularly important given that the resources available are far out-done by the amount of weed infestation and ecology work that could be addressed.

Operations and maintenance

Walking track maintenance and development represents the largest amount of project expenditure for bushland.

Other tasks carried out in bushland include:

- Bush regeneration
- Habitat restoration
- Weed removal
- Feral animal control
- Bushfire hazard reduction
- Creek erosion stabilisation
- Stormwater remediation

In the 2011/12 financial year, approximately \$1.22M was spent on bushland maintenance.

Planning for the future

Bushland areas have been classified according to a three-level hierarchy for prioritisation purposes. This has been based on usage levels and is intended to assist in the prioritisation of provision and upkeep of assets such as walking tracks, seating and barbecues. These are:

- A. High visitation – 16 reserves, 246 ha
- B. Medium visitation – 25 reserves, 36 ha
- C. Low visitation – 26 reserves, 8 ha

Increases in the residential population and those walking for fitness and leisure may impact on the usage levels for existing tracks and demand for more access into bushland. Water quality issues may arise with increased development in the catchment.

