

- Discussion Paper -  
*Community and Cultural Life*



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>1. Introduction.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>2. Celebrating Diversity and Community Spirit.....</b>	<b>4</b>
Cultural diversity .....	4
Arts and Culture.....	6
The Concourse .....	6
Performing Arts.....	6
Events .....	6
Public Art.....	7
Challenges.....	7
<b>3. Community Services and Facilities .....</b>	<b>8</b>
Provision of Community Facilities .....	8
Emerging Trends .....	8
Challenges.....	12
<b>4. Healthy Lifestyles and Lifelong Learning.....</b>	<b>13</b>
Health .....	13
Healthy Lifestyle .....	14
Public Space.....	16
Challenges.....	19

Sources:       Australian Bureau of Statistics 2011 Census  
                  ID Profile Willoughby Community Profile

## 1. Introduction

Sydney is growing rapidly with a current population of 4,391,674. This figure is estimated to grow by approximately 1.6 million by 2036 (Department of Planning).

Recently released 2011 Census figures demonstrate a Willoughby usual residence population of 67,355 – an increase of 5% since the 2006 Census population figure.

Initial results from the 2011 Census have found the mean age of people in Willoughby to be 37 years.

7.2% of the Willoughby population are 0 to 4 years old – a higher figure than that for Greater Sydney (6.38%) and NSW (6.6%).

Between the 2011 and 2001 Census, Willoughby's population has grown by approximately 15%. Between the 1996 and 2011 Census, the population has grown by approximately 5.9%. Urban consolidation through Council's residential strategies has encouraged growth in areas particularly close to public transport.

There has been an increase in high rise residential developments particularly in Chatswood and St Leonards with a subsequent increase in people moving into the area. Among these are newly arrived migrants and long settled residents, attracted by the convenient transport and apartment style living.

Population growth, major infrastructure projects such as the opening of the Chatswood – Epping rail link continue to place pressure on the existing community infrastructure.

The Willoughby Local Government Area is attractive because of its proximity to major employment zones and the Sydney CBD, the availability of public transport, its physical features – foreshore and bushland and its access to quality retail, education and health facilities.

The implications of the current demographic population and how it may change in the future are important in planning for our community.

The challenge for our City and Council is to maintain a sense of community, not just 67,355 individuals, encourage pride of place about our City while accommodating increased population, social change and cultural diversity; maintain equitable levels of social and cultural services and respecting the built and natural heritage of the City.

## 2. Celebrating Diversity and Community Spirit

### Cultural diversity

The 2011 Census shows that 52.8% of the population were born in Australia (a 0.9% decrease from 2006).

The most common overseas Country of birth being from China with 7% of the population being born there (an increase of 1.7% since 2006). This continues the trend of migration from China over the past 10 years.

The second most common overseas country of birth is from the United Kingdom (4.9%).

Country of birth by most common responses over the past 10 years has show a consistent pattern of people from the following countries:

2011

Country of birth	Willoughby %	NSW %
Australia	52.8	68.6
China (excl SARs† and Taiwan)	7	2.3
United Kingdom	4.9	3.3 *
Korea, Republic of (South)	3.3	0.6
Hong Kong (SAR of China)	3.3	0.6
New Zealand	2.2	1.7

\*(NSW figure of 3.3% is for England only which was the top response for NSW.)

† Special administrative region

2006

Country of birth	Willoughby %	NSW %
Australia	53.7	69
China (excl SARs and Taiwan)	5.3	1.7
United Kingdom	4.8	4.1
Korea, Republic of (South)	2.5	0.5
Hong Kong (SAR of China)	3.7	0.6
New Zealand	2.5	0.5

2001

Country of birth	Willoughby %	NSW %
Australia	57.1	70.5
China (excl SARs and Taiwan)	3.7	1.4
United Kingdom	5.2	4.4
Korea, Republic of (South)	1.6	0.4
Hong Kong (SAR of China)	3.4	0.6
New Zealand	2.9	1.7

In comparison, the highest country of birth figures for NSW for 2011 were

Australia 68.6% England 3.3, China (excluding SARS and Taiwan) 2.3% New Zealand 1.7%, India 1.4% and Vietnam 1%

The comparison highlights Willoughby as an area of cultural diversity with significantly higher number of migrants from China than the NSW average.

Highest responses in the 2011 Census for languages spoken (other than English) were:

Language top responses (other than English)

<b>Willoughby</b>	<b>NSW</b>
Cantonese 7.5%	Arabic 2.7%
Mandarin 7.2%	Mandarin 2%
Korean 3.6%	Cantonese 2%
Japanese 2.3%	Vietnamese 1.3%
Armenian 1.3%	Greek 1.3%
English only spoken at home 60.4%	English only spoken at home 72.5%
Households where two or more languages spoken 40.4%	Households where two or more languages spoken 24.5%

The Census results shows a high diversity of language use in the Willoughby LGA and the multi-cultural nature of the LGA.

Council is committed to providing services for its multi cultural community eg the MOSAIC (Multicultural One-Stop Assistance Information Centre) which runs a wide range of programs and events.

The team of trained volunteers at MOSAIC speak a number of languages to assist staff in helping the community. They can provide information on services and activities for people in their home language.

MOSAIC is a multicultural service that seeks to celebrate the city's diversity and is dedicated to empowering and meeting the needs of its ethnic communities, and facilitating their participation in decision-making. Numbers of participants in MOSAIC run activities continue to grow forcing pressures on the existing venue.

Willoughby library has material in 12 different community languages. Council produces brochures in Chinese, Japanese and Korean languages, for property owners of heritage items and living in conservation areas. Another Council brochure provides information on environmentally friendly practices for the home in Korean and Chinese.

Council is currently undertaking a 5 Year Needs Analysis for the ethnic community to determine and prioritise what services are required to maintain and improve health and well being over the next 5 years.

## **Arts and Culture**

Culture is the way we live and interact with each other; our culture is a product of our values and attitudes and sharing those values gives us a sense of belonging to our community and society. Culture encompasses all aspects of daily life- the design of our cities, the values attached to land and natural environments, to trends in fashion and clothing, to language and customs, to heritage and ideas, our spiritual and religious beliefs.

Culture also encompasses the arts. The arts are commonly recognised as the tools through which each culture transmits meaning, belief, attitudes and identity. Through artists and artisans or through collective participation, the arts give form to our imagination, aspirations, dreams and potential. The arts include literature, performing arts (dance, music, theatre, opera), visual arts (painting, sculpture, craft, design), digital arts, film photography and architecture.

Willoughby Council has recognised the role of the arts in community cultural development and has invested in the provision of cultural facilities, cultural programs and events which provide opportunities to explore, express, share and celebrate the unique identity of the City of Willoughby.

## **The Concourse**

Construction of The Concourse was completed on 14 July 2011, the culmination of 10 years planning and extensive community consultation. The 11,000 square metre public site, located in the centre of Chatswood has been developed into a state-of-the-art entertainment and events precinct which incorporates a Concert Hall and Theatre, rehearsal and studio space as well as providing conferencing facilities and venues for hire. The opening of The Concourse has resulted in significant positive outcomes for the community in particular those associated with the Performing Arts. The quality of the venue has been acknowledged by external bodies as being exceptionally high. The Concourse also provided a new area of public open space surrounded by cafes and restaurants that contribute to the amenity.

## **Performing Arts**

The Willoughby Symphony Orchestra (WSO) and Choir (WSOC) has flourished in the past three years and continues to grow its subscription and the quality of its programs attracting prestigious local, national & international musicians. Most recently WSO accompanied the English National Ballet to outstanding reviews. The Chatswood Zenith Theatre and Convention Centre is finding its niche with the new facility. In the meantime community targeted programs such as the "Young Composers Award" have achieved ongoing success. This initiative highlighted the national interest of young composers throughout Australia with submissions received from NSW, Queensland, Victoria, Western Australia and South Australia. 2MBS FM and the WSOC are supporters of the program.

## **Events**

Council delivered more than 400 events annually ranging from small community workshops that have facilitated environmental initiatives at a grassroots level, to free public entertainment and large festivals. The management of the events program includes risk assessment, financial management, resource management and the development of sponsor relationships.

The program of events offers diversity and attracts a broad audience. Major events included Australia Day, Chinese New Year, weekly markets, Harmony Day, Christmas Carols and the Willoughby Spring Festival featuring the key event, the Willoughby StreetFair. These events have achieved vibrant interaction, collaboration and participation and a sense of community.

Council also facilitated and supported local community organisations in realising their own events.

### **Public Art**

Restoration and adaptive re-use of the Willoughby Incinerator was completed in 2011 repairing structural damage to the state heritage listed, Walter Burley Griffin designed building. The restoration of the Incinerator has provided Willoughby with a unique public facility that not only satisfies a demand from the local community but provides an opportunity to make a significant heritage item accessible to all. The five year project cost \$4.5 million with assistance provided by the Federal Government and the Heritage Branch of the NSW Department of Planning.

Several major artworks were commissioned and installed at the Willoughby Incinerator, The Concourse and the refurbished Chatswood Mall. Council also curated exhibitions in the Foyer Exhibition Space and Willoughby Incinerator art space and hosted the Willoughby Artist Open Studio Weekend which supports more than 50 artists annually.

### **Challenges**

Council is currently undertaking 5 Year Needs Analysis surveys for Young People, The Ethnic Community, Older People, and People with Disabilities. All of these surveys include a specific section to establish what interests these communities have for Arts and Cultural Activities.

With The Concourse having only recently opened its doors to the public its overall success as a community venue cannot yet be fully ascertained. Council will continue to monitor its progress and seek formal community feedback once the venue has been operational for at least 18 months. One aim will be to reduce the operating subsidy from Council.

The Performing Arts unit is preparing to undertake a strategic business review incorporating the programs now offered at The Concourse with a focus on development opportunities for children and young artists. The review will also address the role of the Zenith Theatre and Convention Centre.

### **3. Community Services and Facilities**

#### **Provision of Community Facilities**

Community Learning facilities in Willoughby provide a broad range of learning opportunities. Creative, active, informative and intellectually stimulating programs for all age groups are held across the seven libraries and community learning facilities within the area. These facilities include the new 5000 square metre library at the Concourse in Chatswood which is set to be one of NSW's busiest libraries. Chatswood Library offers separate study areas, meeting rooms, training facilities, multilingual collections in more than 10 languages and is equipped with the latest technology including self-checkouts, a modern security system and an automated handling system.

In addition, there are libraries at Artarmon, Naremburn, Castle Cove, Northbridge and Chatswood West. Willoughby is a member of the Shorelink network which is a service that provides residents access to borrowing from five north shore council libraries (in conjunction with Lane Cove, Manly, Mosman and North Sydney Councils

The library and community learning centres offer modern and accessible services and resources for the local area. The new Artarmon Library was opened in September of 2012 and upgrades at Naremburn Library will commence later in 2012.

Other facilities provided by Council include:

- Chatswood Youth Centre;
- Dougherty Centre which operates Meals on Wheels and runs community programs and meeting rooms;
- Willoughby Park Centre which operates recreation activities;
- Naremburn Community Centre;
- (MOSAIC) Multicultural One Stop Assistance and Information Centre in Chatswood offers support and programs for ethnic groups within the community;
- Music rehearsal studio in Chatswood, a small area for local musical groups to rehearse;
- Zenith Centre, Chatswood - a convention centre and performing arts theatre.
- Home and Community Care (HACC) Service volunteer roles operate within the Willoughby community, and provide a comprehensive range of support services for frail aged and people with a disability, as well as their carers.

#### **Emerging Trends**

##### *Seniors*

2011 Census figures indicate a 26% increase in the 60 to 69 age group in Willoughby (the highest increase of all age groupings since 2006).

However, 17.7% of the total Willoughby population are 60+ which is smaller than the NSW average of 20.3% of the 60+

There is an increasing desire of elderly people to stay at home for as long as possible which will increase pressure on home support services. Access to support services, such as affordable home help, transport, health and aged care is a key issue. Access to affordable and suitable aged care accommodation including hostels and nursing homes is a key issue for older people if they are to stay in their familiar environment. .



The aged are concerned with accessibility, safety and security and promoting safe spaces is important in reducing social isolation. There is a need to ensure safety of footpaths, pedestrian crossings and public spaces. Appropriate, affordable and accessible public transport is a priority for the older age group.

Council is currently undertaking a “5 Years Needs Analysis” in order to determine and prioritise what services will be required to maintain and improve the health and wellbeing for older people in the community.

However, an ageing population need not only be associated with the impacts on health provision. Population ageing is also creating social and economic opportunities and challenges. The growing number of healthy, active seniors is a powerful economic force. Older people are a source of knowledge and expertise and can assist social and economic development and there will be a significant demand for new products (NSW Ageing Strategy 2012). The strategy also identifies that 31% of people in NSW aged 65 and over are volunteers.

Council’s end of Term Report 2008-2012 identified that Council’s enthusiastic Volunteer Network contributed to the delivery of over 88,000 meals on wheels, 14,500 community aid services, and 31,824 hours of MOSAIC services while also assisting at many community events.

MOSIAC (Multicultural One-Stop Assistance Information Centre) is largely reliant on the services of volunteers.

### *Children*

2011 Census figures indicate that 7.2% of the population comprised of 0 to 4 year olds (an increase of 10% from the 2006 Census)

8.6% of the population was aged between 5 and 11 (a 13% increase of the 2006 Census)

In terms of family composition, 50.1% of the families in Willoughby were couple families with children – a higher average than that for NSW (45.5%)

<b>Family Composition</b>	Willoughby	Greater Sydney	NSW	Australia
Couple family without children	35.1	33.5	35.6	37.8
couple family with children	50.1	48.9	45.5	44.6
one parent family	12.2	15.7	16.3	15.9
other family	2.5	1.9	1.7	1.7
average children per family	1.8	1.9	1.9	1.9

Source 2011 Census

In 2010, Council undertook a Childcare Needs analysis of the Willoughby LGA to help guide future planning including pertinent population data as well as recommendations. The needs analysis addressed long day care; family day care, home based childcare, occasional care, before and after school care and pre-schools. A number of forecasting methodologies were used in determining future needs. A survey was also undertaken with services across the LGA. The outcome of the research provided a number of key findings

Key findings included:

- There is a surplus of long day care places in the Willoughby LGA, however the number of places varies considerably between suburbs.
- While supply of family day care and home based childcare services is below the benchmark for service provision, the shortage is counterbalanced by the over-supply of long day care places. When combined, the current supply of childcare places for the Willoughby LGA as a whole is slightly above the potential demand.
- There is a significant shortage of pre-school places for children aged 3-5 years. The supply of places is expected to come under increasing pressure with population growth.
- There are very few occasional care places within the LGA.
- There are shortages of out-of-school-hours Care services in some areas. However, it is difficult to determine the real extent of the shortages as the existing data does not include school-based services.

Council provides the following child care services:

- 2 Long Day Care centres Devonshire Street Children's Centre and Artarmon Children's Centre
- the Willoughby / Lane Cove Family Day care Scheme
- 3 Vacation Care Centres Artarmon Vacation Care  
Chatswood Vacation Care  
Bales Park Vacation Care
- 3 After School Care centres and 1 before School Care centre Artarmon Before and After School Care  
Chatswood After School Care  
Naremburn After School Care

Council's Children's Services also provides general information about child care for parents and service providers. The Willoughby Childcare Directory outlines many child related services in the local area, including Long Day Care centres, Pre-schools, playgroups and family support services.

Council's child care services continued to achieve high Quality Assurance ratings over the past 3 years. Up to 10 children/families with diagnosed additional needs were cared for and supported across all Council services annually. Council's Children's Services Directory including instructions on how to access interpreter services were delivered in 9 community languages.

Council also hosted the inaugural Child & Family Expo in 2011 as well as a further Expo in 2012. The Child and Family Expo aims to showcase local family support, parenting, family counselling, childcare, nutrition, education, health, leisure, disability, multi-cultural and the many other children's services dedicated to supporting children and their families in the area.

Given increasing numbers of school age children within the LGA, school capacities will continue to be an issue.

Increased options for quality after school care and school holiday programs will continue to be needed as will continued support for children with special needs such as those with disabilities.

The provision of safe and accessible play grounds, bikeways, libraries and sporting facilities will continue to play a role to keep children active.

Council is currently (August / September 2012) undertaking a Childcare Needs Survey for parents / guardians to estimate current demand and future requirements for childcare in the Willoughby Area.

### *Youth*

The 2011 Census indicates that, numerically, the youth (age 12-24 years) population of Willoughby has remained relatively stable at 14.8%.

Given the previously highlighted strong growth in younger age groups (0-11 years), there is likely to be significant demand for youth services in the future.

The youth are generally heavily reliant on active (walking, cycling) and public transport and having access to safe and affordable modes of transport is a high priority for them.

There is a need to provide indoor and outdoor sporting facilities, attractive parks, playgrounds and gyms for the youth who also require their own identifiable social space.

Willoughby City Council's Youth Services operate the Chatswood Youth Centres as well as providing recreational, personal and skill development opportunities for young people who live, work or go to school in the Willoughby area. Participation rates at Willoughby's Youth Services program remain on the increase with the Chatswood Youth Centre now the most well attended youth centre on Sydney's North Shore, averaging 110 young people per day (or over 7,500 per quarter).

Youth services organise events and run the Youth Centre, providing young people with a place and activities to enjoy themselves.

Council is undertaking in August / September 2012, a “5 Year Needs Analysis for Young People” to determine what services will need to be required over the next 5 years to improve the health and well being of young people.

## **Challenges**

Council is currently undertaking 5 Year Needs Analysis surveys for Young People, The Ethnic Community, Older People, and People with Disabilities to help identify future demands on service delivery. These surveys are underway and will need to be closely considered as part of the review of the Willoughby City Strategy.

It is anticipated that proposed Federal and State Government legislative changes (particularly in the areas of childcare and disability) will impact on existing service delivery and strategy.

Council’s Youth Centre and MOSAIC have both been identified as facilities that will possibly soon reach their capacity or be unable to meet demand.

## 4. Healthy Lifestyles and Lifelong Learning

### Health

The life expectancy of Australian residents continues to grow. According to ABS figures, life expectancy at birth in the decade to 2010 has, on average been higher for females than males. A baby boy born in 2008-2010 would expect to live, on average 79.5 years, while a baby girl born 2008-2010 could expect to live 84 years. However, over the decade to 2010, life expectancy at birth for males increased more quickly (up 2.5 years) than for females (up to 1.6 years).

48% of the Willoughby population are males and 52% female (2011 Census).

Life expectancy at birth is one of the most widely used and internationally recognised indicators of population health. It focuses on the length of life rather than the quality and provides a useful summary of the general health of the population.

The increases in life expectancy have been due to lower infant mortality, the promotion of healthier lifestyles, continued improvements in living standards, and ongoing medical advances leading to improvement in prevention, diagnosis and treatment of diseases.

The NSW Government identify that health will be the largest contribution to ageing related expense growth over the next 40 years. Regular physical exercise increases the chances of a healthy life expectancy and lowers the risk of falls and major health issues such as heart disease, diabetes, hip fractures, high blood pressure and obesity.

The health and lifestyle of “middle years” population ie (40s to 50s) need to be considered as they approach later life (NSW Ageing Strategy 2012).

The health and wellbeing of the community is closely allied to a combination of services and environments that support healthy lifestyles.

While Council funds and delivers some health services, the majority of services are provided by other key government and private agencies.

Northern Sydney Area Health District is the state agency in the Willoughby Local Government Area responsible for providing health related services such as public and community health, public hospitals, psychiatric hospitals, emergency transport, acute care, rehabilitation, counselling and many community support programs.

Royal North Shore Hospital is a major health provider to the North Shore and is located in the Willoughby Local Government area.

The NSW Government's redevelopment of Royal North Shore Hospital will help respond to the needs of an aging population, by creating dynamic, contemporary facilities to support high standards of health care. 53 buildings are being consolidated into purpose-built facilities, designed around the needs of the patient.

The centrepiece of the redevelopment project is a new Acute Services Building, scheduled to be open in October and fully commissioned by December 2012.

The new Clinical Services Building - planned to open in 2014 will contain the Burns unit, Women's and Children's Health and Mental Health.

Local Government plays a significant role in Public Health. Public Health has three components- health protection, promotion and prevention.

Health protection includes measures such as identifying and managing outbreaks of communicable diseases and minimising health risks arising from the built environment. Willoughby Council has a number of policies which address health protection such as food safety, requirements for skin penetration procedures, stormwater monitoring and transport planning for road safety. Health promotion is continually supported through community grants, facilitation of forums, education seminars, event management and co-ordinated campaigns with non-government organisations and other levels of government.

The Childhood immunisation program run by Council directly addresses disease prevention. This facility is also provided by General Practitioners with Medicare assistance.

In 2010 Council adopted a smoke free environment policy aimed for a cleaner, healthier community which was awarded winner of the “Alive and Well” Cancer Council Award at the Local Government and Shires Association Awards Night on August 2012.. Public areas where people tend to congregate in close proximity are now smoke free. Restricted areas include:

- Children’s facilities, playgrounds and surrounding 20 metres
- Bushland, parks and reserves
- All playing fields, sporting grounds and sporting facilities
- Council run events
- Alfresco dining areas
- Chatswood Mall
- Within 10 metres of Council buildings and car parks
- Bus stops and taxi ranks

## **Healthy Lifestyle**

### *Development controls*

While Council is involved in the provision and promotion of health services and facilities, it also has an important role in improving the health of the public by monitoring the quality of the built and natural environment and supporting and encouraging healthy lifestyle.

The Willoughby Development Control Plan and Building Regulations address quality of life and public health issues. There are numerous ways that Council’s planning controls impact healthy lifestyle and clean environment. Requirements such as the provision of minimum amounts of sunshine and open space for developments, cross ventilation, provision of disabled access and provision of waste facilities are just a few.

### *Air Quality*

Poor air quality can be associated with acute health problems such as asthma and angina or chronic health problems such as lung cancer, bronchitis and cardiovascular disease.

Emissions in the City are mainly from motor vehicles and while new cars produce less emissions, increased ownership and use of cars offset any improvements. Emissions from domestic heating also contributes to pollution particularly in winter.

Some of the measures Council has made to respond to metropolitan air quality include:

- Being part of the Lane Cove Tunnel Project Air Quality Community associated with the Lane Cove tunnel project;
- operation of an air monitoring station at Mowbray Public School (commenced 2005) with online data provision ;
- research and reinvesting of suitable locations for air monitoring.
- Support for community public transport and reduction of car parking / demand management to reduce car dependency.

### *Water Quality*

Good water quality is vital for human health however increased urban development results in pollution, altered river flow rates, sedimentation, introduction of exotic species and the loss of vegetation which all lead to reduced ecosystem function and decrease in water quality. A range of programs that aim to improve water quality have been completed and are currently underway in the Willoughby Council area and include:

- continue to undertake water quality monitoring of Northbridge baths;
- developing environmental education programs through e.restore that assist all members of the community to understand and improve water quality (eg streets to creeks campaigns, education programs including bushland walks for schools etc);
- working with State agencies and other local councils to develop and implement effective water quality monitoring and improvement strategies;
- Macroinvertebrate studies of creeks in the Council area and comparing the results other areas in the Lane Cove and Middle Harbour catchments, following trends over time and determining the effectiveness of actions;
- Ongoing operation and monitoring of performance of gross pollution traps;
- Cleaner Production Program for industrial activities;
- Monitor creeks for chemical and biological parameters
- Introduction of stormwater re-use tank at the Concourse (used for toilet flushing, cooling towers and irrigation) and other facilities. (See Discussion Paper on Infrastructure).

### *Noise*

Noise pollution is offensive or intrusive noise interfering with people's everyday activity and sometimes their health. Most noise pollution is associated with urban development such as transport noise (traffic, rail, aircraft), industrial and construction noise, neighbourhood and recreational noise. Noise from air conditioners, alarms and music remain a noise issue.

The Protection of the Environment Operations (Noise Control) Regulation 2008 sets certain limits on noise emissions from motor vehicles, and domestic use of certain equipment.

Some of the ways that Council responds to noise issues include:

- During the development approval process, developers are required to assess potential noise impact on the existing environment and implement technologies within their development if a source of offensive noise is identified; construction is limited to set times of day.
- Council Officers assist in finding solutions to existing noise pollution problems when responding to community complaints about offensive noise;

### *Unsafe Building Materials*

Some building materials such as asbestos and lead paint have been found to provide risks to health if not handled in the appropriate way particularly during renovation or demolition. Council has a number of educational brochures that it distributes as well as on-line information to encourage awareness in the community. It also implements appropriate conditions on building consents, and has some powers of enforcement to require safe handling of these products. Work Cover has primary responsibility for regulating asbestos removal.

### *Contamination*

Contamination can affect human health and ecosystem health. It can be caused by past industrial and agricultural processes. It can even occur on residential properties from excessive pesticide and herbicide use and from flaking lead based paints. Since 2009, an amendment to the Contaminated Land Management Act 2007 requires Councils to supply a notation on planning certificates with regard to certain contaminated land issues.

### *Accessibility*

Community safety can be improved by easy access to destinations particularly for people with disabilities, young children and the aged.

The Willoughby Development Control Plan includes development standards for builders, developers and others in the provision of access in the built environment. Equitable access involves more than providing ramps and toilets for people who use wheelchairs. Also included is the provision of appropriate lighting and colour contrast for people with visual impairment, tactile surface indicators for people who are blind, visible outcomes for people who are hearing impaired or deaf, appropriate signage for people with visual impairment and those with an intellectual disability.

The Disability (Access to Premises- buildings) Standards 2010 commenced on 1 May 2011. Its introduction led to widespread and important improvements in the accessibility and safety of all new and upgraded public buildings in Australia.

In addition, within the public realm, Council continues to review and implement recommended actions according to the Disability Action Plan, including tactile signage and indicators in public areas. Council's draft Open Space and Recreation Plan includes specific actions to facilitate access for people with disabilities to Council's open spaces and recreational facilities.

## **Public Space**

### *Open Space and Recreation*

Council encourages and supports a healthy lifestyle through the provision and maintenance of parks, natural bushland areas, sports reserves, cultural facilities and streetscapes.

Access to quality public space both recreational and cultural is an important factor in developing a sense of community and a pride of place. Provision of spaces to relax, meet as a group, engage in sport and cultural activities fosters community well being and improves quality of life.



The City of Willoughby has a range of public spaces including passive and active open space areas.

Council manages over 400 hectares of open space including 242 hectares of bushland, foreshores and harbour beaches, 22 sportsgrounds, a range of community buildings, over 100 parks and reserves, 47 playgrounds, a series of tracks, paths and cycle-ways, the Willoughby Leisure Centre and a variety of developed assets, such as skate park, sports courts, harbour pool and BMX track.

Private providers on Council and / or private land run tennis, golf, squash, indoor fitness pools and sailing. In short there is a diverse range of recreation opportunities available of both land and water based activities. About 45% of open space in Willoughby City is classified as regional open space, 25% as district and 30% as local.

Council has recently undertaken research to produce a draft Open Space and Recreation Plan.

The plan is currently characterised by 6 key themes:

- Informal recreation
- Trails and Routes
- Sport
- Access to Water
- Aquatic Facilities
- Interaction with Nature

The draft Plan is currently being updated in the light of the results of the most recent census becoming available. The draft plan seeks to address the current and future needs of the community. A community engagement program on the draft plan is anticipated in early 2013.

Council has recently undertaken a review of its 2006 Bike Plan. The review addresses new priorities, guidelines, trends and best practice in designing cycling infrastructure in the Willoughby LGA and to respond to the needs of the community for a safer network of cycling facilities.

In addition, Willoughby has made concerted efforts to increase the wellbeing of our community by continuing to maintain and improve passive and active recreational facilities. The Willoughby Leisure Centre (WLC) has continued to grow in cliental and reputation. In August 2010 the Aquatic Strategy Report was adopted by Council. The Willoughby Leisure Centre Master Plan concept design proposal was developed soon after and placed on public exhibition for community feedback in June 2012. In the meantime the WLC has continued to offer a range of courses and facilities with numbers of participants significantly increasing over the past four years.

A shortage of sporting facilities exists across the North Shore of Sydney (in 2011 Council participated in the NSROC Regional Sports Strategy to address regional recreation issues). Willoughby City Council is seeking to address this shortage by increasing the use of existing sporting facilities. Over the past 4 years, major improvements were carried out at several locations including Willoughby Oval, Naremburn Oval, O.H. Reid Oval, Bicentennial Netball Courts, Artarmon Oval, Thomson Oval and Northbridge Oval.

In May 2011 Council opened the synthetic field at Northbridge Oval. The synthetic field has replaced a traditional grass field, drastically increasing the use of the field, particularly in wet weather conditions. The oval can accommodate up to 100 playing hours per week in all

conditions while other ovals are 'rested' due to rain or general wear and tear. Key partners of the project were the State Government, Northbridge Football Club, Sydney Water and Kur-ring-gai District Soccer Association.

Council undertook a coordinated approach to delivering health and wellbeing activities through several key partnerships. An example was the highly successful Falls Prevention Program – "Being Active, Staying Safe" a co-ordinated effort between Willoughby City and Lane Cove Council with support from the Local Government and Shires Association (LGSA). Volunteers were crucial to the delivery and assessment of the program. It attracted 82 participants from our LGA with the majority of people being between the ages of 75 and 90. Fit N' Fun for seniors (2012) was another collaborative effort involving local community volunteers, businesses and health professionals.

### *Road Safety*

The Willoughby area is growing and changing with an increase in the numbers of people entering the City, through increasing residents, employees and visitors, increasing traffic volumes and improved infrastructure. These social characteristics affect planning for road safety.

The responsibility for road safety programs in the Willoughby area is shared between Council and local stakeholders such as the Roads and Maritime Services, Police and Northern Sydney Area Health Service.

Council's Road Safety Officer is tasked with addressing road safety issues through public education campaigns as well as seeking engineering solutions to local road safety issues. Consideration is given to specific locations, particular road user groups (including drivers, pedestrians and motorcyclists) as well as various age groups (including children, teenagers and seniors). Campaigns are designed to target the highest risk locations and groups within the Willoughby local government area, as highlighted in police crash data and through community consultation.

Some of the road safety initiatives that Council has conducted (some in conjunction with neighbouring Councils) include:

- Free restraint checking days
- Senior road safety calendar
- Seniors road safety workshops
- Pedestrian safety
- Helping learner drivers become safer drivers workshops
- Safety outside schools
- Stepping out safely A guide to pedestrian refuges.

In the data available from the RMS, crashes are the events which lead to one or more fatalities, injuries or vehicles being towed away as discussed above. Table 1 identifies the total number of crashes in the Willoughby LGA by fatal/injury/non-casualty classification over a number of years. During 2010 there were 432 reported crashes in the Willoughby LGA, which is an increase of 42 crashes on the previous year but still below the five year average.

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	5 year Average
Fatal Crashes	3	3	1	1	0	1.6
Injury Crashes	173	162	146	133	161	155
Tow Away Crashes	334	324	266	255	271	290
Total Crashes	510	489	413	389	432	447

Table 1: Willoughby LGA number of crashes by fatal/injury/non-casualty classification. Note that the Non-casualty classification refers to crashes where one or more vehicles needed to be towed away.

In addition, the objectives of the 2011 / 2012 Road safety Action Plan include:

1. To raise awareness of road safety issues and priorities within the local and extended community.
2. To provide a framework for an integrated approach by key stakeholders to work together towards common road safety goals.
3. To identify the priority road safety issues, in keeping with Council's Strategic Plan and NSW Roads and Maritime Services priority issues, and to describe strategies by which we will address them.

## Challenges

Meeting the community's need for accessible and quality recreation opportunities in a thoughtful and considered manner will require significant and innovative approaches to funding including adopting a regional approach to ensuring all facilities can meet the needs of the widest possible number of people.