

**Maitland
Recreation & Open Space
Strategy**

February 2004

Maitland

Recreation & Open Space Strategy

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Summary

The Maitland Recreation and Open Space Strategy Review seeks to provide a clear vision and direction regarding the purpose, level of provision, development priorities and management of recreational open space areas in the Maitland local government area (LGA).

The recommendations in this report provide strategic direction regarding priority actions to achieve the vision over the next 5-10 years. The recommendations are based on a combination of community consultation, a survey distributed to all households in the Maitland LGA, review of national data and experience. Significantly, the survey found that:

- 70% of residents rate open spaces and recreation areas in Maitland City 'Fantastic/Very Good/Good', 24% rate them 'OK', and only 6% rate them 'Not Good/Terrible'.
- The most frequently mentioned projects wanted are: a heated pool for year-round use, more picnic and barbecue areas, better playgrounds, off-road cycling and walking tracks, better sports facilities, and an indoor leisure centre

The findings are consistent with what we know from national recreation participation data.

Council exhibited a draft of this report in November 2003. The report was advertised and the key recommendations were displayed on a poster. There were only two responses to the report, both supportive. In addition, the Regional Office of the NSW Department of Tourism Sport and Recreation reviewed and subsequently endorsed the report.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COUNCIL

Key recommendations relating to recreation facilities development and planning are presented below.

Recreation facilities development

- Investigate the feasibility of providing a venue for year-round swimming.
- Investigate the feasibility of building an indoor leisure centre, preferably as a complementary facility to the year-round swimming venue.
- Develop off-road multi-use trails for walking and cycling. Priority investigation areas are: East Maitland-Morpeth; Brooklyn Park-Murphy Circuit-Leinster Circuit; Gillieston Heights-Maitland; and Mt Vincent Waste Disposal site.
- Prepare a plan of management to help determine the future recreational purpose and development of No.1 Sportsground.
- Develop reserves plans of management, including review of existing plans of management to ensure they comply with legislative requirements.

- Identify suitable picnic and barbecue areas, ideally adjacent to natural settings (bushland, creeks, wetlands). They should also provide opportunities for short walks and casual ball games.
- Identify possible locations of future district level parks, in the East and West planning sectors.

Recreation management planning

- Streamline management of public recreation facilities, including Oval Boards and the Sports Advisory Board.
- Review existing plans of management to determine whether they comply with the *Local Government Act 1993*, as amended (1998). Where plans do not comply, update them so they do.
- Prepare a generic plan of management for local and neighbourhood parks with a key focus being to identify those parks that are surplus to requirements.
- Investigate and develop a pricing *and* funding policy for provision and support of recreation opportunities: facilities, programs and services.
- Prepare an interpretation plan for the LGA. The plan would probably need to be done in stages, updated as new walking trails, etc, are created.

Acknowledgment

Maitland City Council wishes to thank the following members of the Reference Group set up for this project, who lent their time and expertise to ensure this report reflects the needs and desires of the Maitland community.

- Cr Peter Garnham.
- Cr Brian Burke.
- Cr Victoria Woods.
- Cr Tony Keating.
- Beverley Surplice, Sports Advisory Board.
- Henry Meskauskas, Sports Advisory Board.
- Lloyd Davies, Maitland Bicycle Users' Group (BUG).
- Shelley Youman, NSW Sport & Recreation.
- Judy Jaeger, Manager Community and Recreation Services, Maitland City Council.
- Keith Longridge, Strategic Planner (Recreation), Maitland City Council.
- Stephen Sheldon, Manidis Roberts.

About this report

This report is intended to update the *Maitland Recreation And Open Space Strategy Plan (1992)*. The report provides a framework for providing and managing open space and recreation facilities so they meet the reasonable expectations of Maitland's community. It addresses publicly accessible indoor and outdoor recreation facilities, including parks, playing fields, courts and swimming pools. As a strategic document, it does not give detailed 'on-the-ground' recommendations. Rather, it provides a 'big picture' view of major initiatives that Council should undertake over the next five to ten years as part of its overall planning role.

The objectives of the report are to:

- Investigate current and future recreation desires and needs, based on local input and national trends.
- Investigate the supply of open space in Maitland and whether there are any types of facilities that are not provided but that should be, given current and future demands.
- Provide a framework for Council to improve recreation and open space provision in Maitland over a 10-year timeframe. This framework should provide 'big picture' strategic actions for Council to consider.

Terms used in this report

- Recreation. An activity, voluntarily undertaken primarily for pleasure and satisfaction during leisure time, either indoors or outdoors. The Australian Sports Commission labels these activities as 'exercise, recreation and sport'. As such, this report does not address activities relating to arts, crafts or culture.
- Local park or facility. Parks or facilities that service urban residents, usually within 500 metres, or easy walking distance, of their homes.
- Neighbourhood park. Moderate sized parks, typically up to two hectares, with larger play facilities located adjacent to a neighbourhood shopping centre or primary school. These often surround, or are located adjacent to, a neighbourhood sportsground.
- District. Used to describe areas or facilities that service residents usually within two kilometres of their homes.
- District park or facility. Large parks or facilities servicing several neighbourhoods with a user catchment radius of approximately two kilometres and catering for between 10,000 and 15,000 people. Park size is typically 6-8 hectares. This type of park can be accessed by foot, bicycle, motor vehicle and public transport, and caters for informal recreation and formal sports played at the local or district level.
- Region. An area in which the inhabitants are tied together in economic, social, and sometimes governmental relationships, many of which are determined or strongly influenced by history, tradition and the natural features of the area. In the case of Maitland, the 'region' is the Lower Hunter Valley.

- Regional. Areas or facilities that service residents usually within 25 kilometres of their homes.
- Regional park or facility. Very large parks or facilities usually of 200-1,000 hectares, that have natural values and provide nature-based recreation opportunities designed to service surrounding populations normally within a 25 kilometre radius.
- Planning sectors. For planning purposes, Council divides Maitland into three sectors: East, Central and West.
- Strategic. Pertaining to a plan of action to achieve a goal. In this report, the goal is to present a framework for providing and managing open space and recreation facilities so they meet the reasonable expectations of Maitland's community. (Strategies are presented in Chapter 6.)
- Universal design. The design of products and environments to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialised design.

Note: The above definitions relate to urban areas only. This assumes that most community demand for open space (recreation) in rural areas is accommodated within the larger private properties.

1 Overview

1.1 PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS

Regional context

Maitland is located centrally in the Hunter Region, on the New England Highway, between Newcastle and Singleton. A system of roads links Maitland to other major centres, including Sydney, Raymond Terrace and Gloucester. These are complemented by the Great Northern Railway and North Coast Railway, which both cross the City.

Maitland is recognised as a key urban growth corridor in the Lower Hunter in the *Shaping our Cities Strategy* (DUAP, 1995). Its proximity to the F3 Freeway to Sydney, New England Highway and rail lines provides significant locational advantages for development. Forecast population growth as well as changes in technology and transportation are expected to lead to an increasing role for Maitland as part of the Sydney-Newcastle-Illawarra greater metropolitan region.

Because of its location and road and rail links, Maitland has been called 'The Hub of the Hunter'. The links make it easier for people to visit Maitland and use its recreation facilities, and also for Maitland's residents to make use of recreation opportunities in nearby towns. These include natural attractions such as Barrington Tops National Park and Hexham Swamp Nature Reserve; the beaches of Newcastle and Port Stephens; sports facilities in Newcastle; and indoor swimming pools at Singleton, Kurri Kurri, Raymond Terrace and Newcastle. From anecdotal advice, Maitland citizens tend to travel east, towards Newcastle, for recreation opportunities not available in the LGA.

A town divided

Water is a significant feature of Maitland's landscape. Local waterways include the Paterson and Hunter rivers, several creeks and wetlands. Substantial areas of Maitland are prone to flooding. The potential for flooding has influenced the City's development pattern, with Maitland divided into a number of residential precincts separated by flood plains.

From a spatial viewpoint, this division of the City is accentuated by the rail lines and major roads, and influences the way people can move around and access recreation areas.

1.2 PLANNING CONCEPTS AND GUIDELINES

There are accepted rationales for open space and recreation strategies. These were used as a basis for the 1992 *Recreation & Open Space Strategy*, and continue to be valid. They are briefly discussed below.

Recreation opportunity spectrum

The concept of the recreation opportunity spectrum was developed as a way of classifying the opportunities for outdoor recreation, and has been adopted as the standard outdoor recreation planning tool in many countries, including in Australia.

The basis of the recreation opportunity spectrum is that the varied recreation needs, tastes and preferences of the community are most likely to be satisfied if a wide range of experiences are provided through a range of settings. By classifying recreation venues according to setting, an immediate analysis of the range of recreation opportunities available can be determined, and gaps in provision of these opportunities may be identified. A sufficiently broad spectrum of settings should be capable of handling changes in demographic characteristics and in recreation tastes.

Maitland has a wide range of recreation settings, outdoor and indoor, natural and built. This report looks at the gaps in these settings and the types of facilities desired by residents to round out the spectrum of opportunities. Community consultation and experience have been the main means to identify these gaps.



Recreation and open space guidelines

In 1992, the then Department of Planning published a set of guidelines to help councils prepare strategies for open space and outdoor recreation. The key concepts are:

- A reliance on needs-based planning rather than minimum standards of provision. This makes need the driving force in providing open space and recreation opportunities.
- A shift to an open space classification system based on what experiences users gain from a visit rather than what facilities are present.
- Classification of each open space area according to settings, which allows an assessment of the variety of open space provided.

1.3 PLANNING FRAMEWORK

Maitland City Council has prepared a suite of planning reports relevant to this strategy which relate to residential, environmental, social and recreation matters (refer **Appendix A**). The most relevant is the *Recreation & Open Space Strategy* (1992). A number of recommendations in this strategy have been implemented including: improved playing surface at No 1 Sportsground, new amenities building at Coronation Oval, plan of management for playgrounds, development of open space beside the river at Lorn and on the Maitland side of the Hunter River, Federation Centre Basketball Stadium, Rutherford Community Centre and Ashtonfield Multi-Purpose Centre.

Other relevant planning reports include:

- 16 plans of management, nine of which have been formally adopted by Council.
- *Youth Needs Studies* (1995 And 2000).
- *Maitland Linkages Study* (1996).
- *Maitland Urban Settlement Strategy* (2001).
- *Maitland Greening Plan* (2002).
- *Social Plan* (2000)

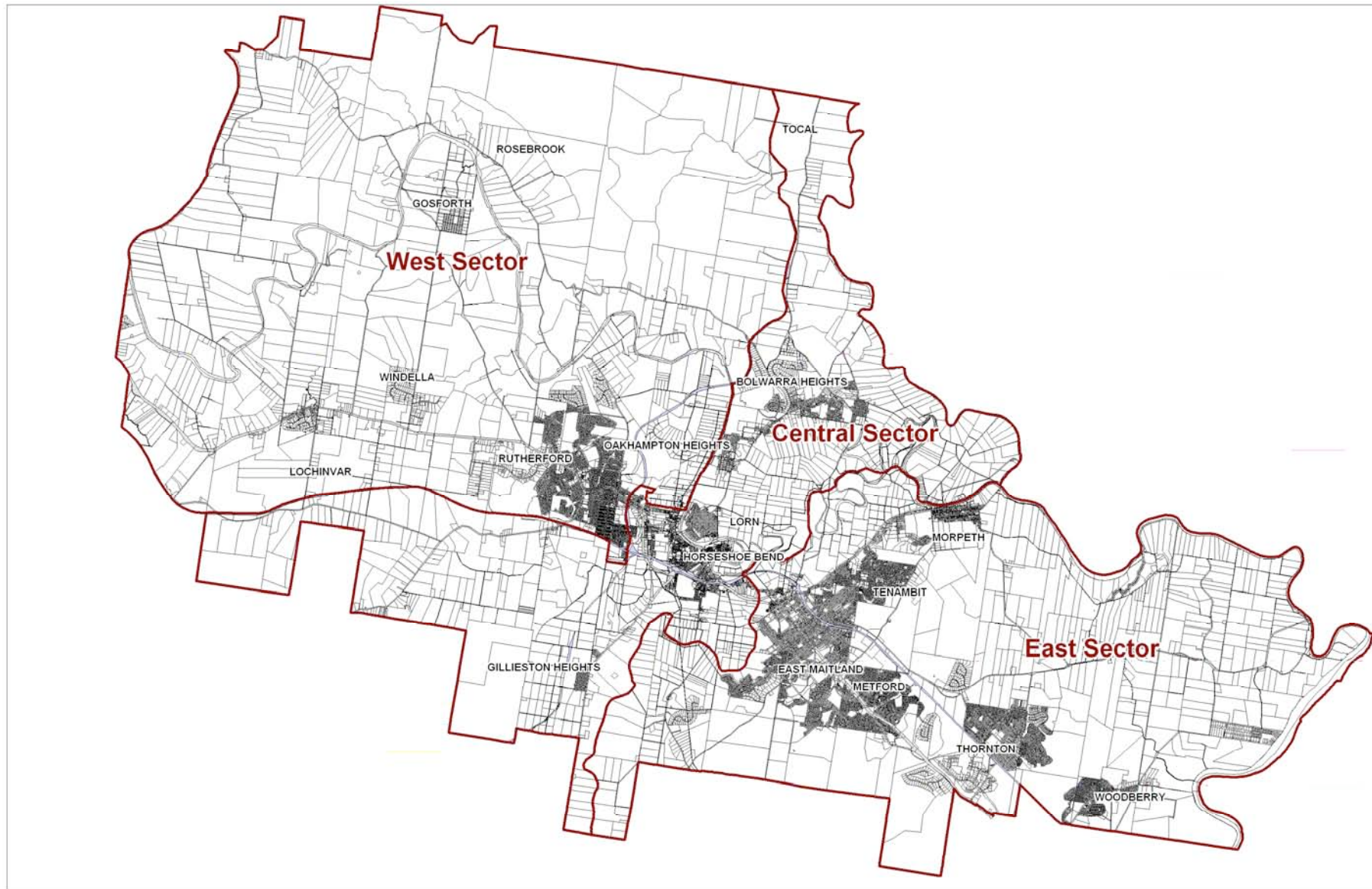


Figure 2: Section 94 Planning areas

1.4 PUBLIC LAND MANAGEMENT

The *Local Government Act 1993* ushered in a new regime for managing public land owned or controlled by councils. (The Act came into force after the *Maitland Recreation and Open Space Strategy* was prepared in 1992.) The Act emphasises a council's responsibility to actively manage land and involve the community in developing a strategy for management.

The main requirement of the Act relates to the **classification** of public land. That is, all public land must be classified by council as either 'community' or 'operational' land.

While 'operational' land has no special restrictions other than those applying to any piece of land, classification as 'community' land reflects the importance of the land to the community because of its use or special features. Community land is intended for public access and use. Significantly, community land:

- Cannot be sold.
- Cannot be leased, licensed or have any other estate granted over the land for more than 21 years.
- Must have a plan of management prepared for it.

Changes to the Act, made by the *Local Government Amendment (Community Land Management) Act 1998*, together with court decisions since 1993, have led to further requirements. The Act provides the common foundation for each council to apply specific management strategies to public land as seen fit.

The most important is that community land must be **categorised** according to a list of categories provided in the Act, and managed according to 'core objectives', also in the Act.

Therefore, Maitland Council needs to review its existing plans of management to determine whether they comply with the Act. As a result of the review, Council may need to alter some plans.

2 Strategic direction

This chapter proposes a strategic direction for the provision of open space and recreation facilities in Maitland. This direction is used to guide the preparation of this report. Future spending on recreation facilities should be consistent with this strategy.

2.1 COUNCIL'S VISION FOR COMMUNITY LIFESTYLE

Council's Corporate Plan, 2000-2003 contains the following long-term vision for community lifestyle which gives direction for this strategic report:

"Our vision for Maitland is that it will be a vibrant, healthy and informed community. Our City will be characterised by a sense of community and a feeling that it has unique qualities that make it an attractive and healthy place in which to live.... Recreation and leisure facilities will be widely available and accessible."

2.2 GUIDING STATEMENT FOR OPEN SPACE & RECREATION

Maitland will have an abundance of open space and recreation facilities.

Planning for these facilities will seek to firstly satisfy the community's most popular recreation pursuits before trying to satisfy the secondary and tertiary recreation needs.

Facilities will be developed to a standard appropriate to the area, and at a cost that is reasonable for the community to afford. Being close to Newcastle and other cities in the Lower Hunter, there will be less need to provide elite facilities, or facilities which are available nearby.

Facilities will be well designed, robust, enduring, with a flexibility of function that allows multiple uses. And they will be well maintained.

They will cater for all age groups and abilities, and offer a range of settings, from places for high intensity activity to quiet reflection.

These facilities will contribute to a 'whole of lifetime' approach to staying active. They will therefore meet the needs of an ageing population, enhance the quality of life of local people, and help make Maitland a desirable place in which to live.

They will also capitalise on major attributes, such as the abundance of space, the rivers, creeks and wetlands, and the history of the area.

And they will be highly regarded by the people of Maitland and those who come to visit.

3 Recreation demand

In this chapter, data on recreation are presented to enable a broad picture of the likely expectations and demands of the Maitland community. It includes an overview of national data as well as the outcome of consultation with the Maitland community.

3.1 NATIONAL CONTEXT

The most recent data on participation in recreation are contained in the Australian Sports Commission publications *Participation In Exercise, Recreation And Sport* (2002 and 2003). These give a snapshot of national recreation for all persons aged 15 years and over. To complete the picture, this report also draws on the Australian Bureau of Statistics' publication *Children's Participation In Cultural And Leisure Activities* (2000) that measures the most popular activities outside school hours for those aged 5-14 years. Key findings are presented below.

Persons aged 15 years and over

The Australian Sports Commission publications are based on surveys conducted throughout Australia in 2001, and repeated in 2002. (Follow-up surveys are being undertaken to capture 2003 data.) The Australian Sports Commission (pers. comm.) advises that:

- The data captured for 2001 were not greatly different in 2002. The most significant changes were a 25% growth in participation in outdoor soccer (possibly spurred by coverage of the World Cup), and a doubling in participation in yoga. (Interestingly, yoga has a higher participation rate than high-profile activities like rugby union, rugby league and Australian Rules football, and is on a par with outdoor cricket.)
- It is difficult to form an accurate picture of trends over time as previous studies have used changing data collection methods. Firm trends will only begin to emerge once data for *Participation In Exercise, Recreation And Sport* are collected over a number of years.
- Contrary to popular belief, traditional sport is 'holding up' across the board in terms of popularity, though there are increases and declines in individual activities.

Key findings of *Participation In Exercise, Recreation And Sport* are shown in **Table 1** and **2**.

Table 1 Top ten activities, Australia-wide, people aged 15+

2002		2001	
Activity and rank	'000	Activity and rank	'000
1 walking	4720	1 walking	4356
2 swimming	2278	2 swimming	2416
3 aerobics/fitness	2237	3 aerobics/fitness	1961
4 cycling	1419	4 cycling	1438
5 golf	1337	5 tennis	1240
6 tennis	1261	6 golf	1382
7 running	1162	7 running	1084
8 bushwalking	856	8 bushwalking	795
9 soccer (outdoor)	693	9 netball	551
10 netball	624	10 soccer (outdoor)	612

Source: *Participation in exercise, recreation and sport*, Australian Sports Commission 2002

Table 2 Participation in recreation, Australia-wide, people aged 15+

Aspect	Finding
Highest participatory age	Highest: 15-24 year age group, and those still at school. Participation declines with age after this point, with rates dropping to 60% for those aged 65 and over.
Highest participation activity	Walking has the highest participation rate for males and females, and across all age groups with the exception of the 15-24 age group, whose most popular activities are swimming and aerobics/fitness. In total terms, the top participatory activities in descending order are: walking (excluding bushwalking), swimming, aerobics/fitness, cycling, tennis, golf, running, bushwalking.
65+ age group, most popular activity	Walking and golf
Gender breakdown	Males are likely to use open space and participate more often in active pursuits than females Highest participation rate for males is in walking, swimming, golf, cycling, running Highest participation rate for females is in walking, swimming, aerobics/fitness, netball
Low participation groups	Women, middle aged men, parents and carers of young children, older adults, young people, indigenous people, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and those with disabilities and their carers, and socially disadvantaged people participate less in physical activities due to various obstacles.
Organisation	An estimated 3.1 million persons participated in activities that were organised by a 'sport or recreation club or association', and an estimated 2.9 million persons participated in activities that were organised by a 'fitness, leisure or indoor sports centre'.
Organised participation	The organised activity with the highest participation rate is aerobics/fitness, followed by golf, tennis, netball and soccer
Organised versus non-organised participation	Activities where participation is most often organised by a club, association or other organisation include lawn bowls, triathlon, netball, softball, baseball and touch football. Activities least likely to be organised include walking, cycling, surf sports, ice/snow sports, roller sports and running.

Source: *Participation in exercise, recreation and sport*, Australian Sports Commission 2001 and 2002

Persons aged 5-14 years

The Australian Bureau of Statistics publication *Children's Participation In Cultural And Leisure Activities* (2000) measures the most popular activities outside school hours. Key findings are that:

- Traditional sports remain popular.
- 1.6 million children aged 5-14 years (50%) participated outside school hours in sport that had been organised by a school, club or an association.
- For both boys and girls, participation in organised sport peaked at the age of 11 years. However, across all ages boys were more likely to participate than girls (the total participation rate was 66% for boys and 52% for girls). A higher percentage of boys participate in more than one sport (32% of boys compared with 20% of girls).
- Of those who played organised sport outside school hours, boys played more often: 52% of the boys played an average of once a week or more over the year ending April 2000, compared with 45% of girls. Older children played organised sport more frequently, with 57% of those 12-14 year old children who had participated doing so an average of once a week or more over the year, compared with 36% of their 5-8 year old counterparts.
- Children living in capital cities had a lower participation rate in organised sport outside school hours than those living elsewhere in Australia (57% compared with 62%).
- The most popular boys' sports were outdoor soccer (20% participation rate), swimming (13%), Australian Rules football (13%) and outdoor cricket (10%).
- The most popular girls' sports were netball (18%), swimming (16%), tennis (8%) and basketball (6%).
- For some sports, there is a clear difference between the sexes in preferences. Most (97%) netball players were girls while boys made up 98% of Australian Rules footballers, 97% of Rugby League players and 95% of outdoor cricketers.
- In terms of leisure activities, skateboarding and inline skating were undertaken outside of school hours by 31% of children aged 5-14 years. During the same period 64% of children rode a bike outside of school hours. These activities were significantly more popular among boys than girls (36% of boys and 26% of girls rode skateboards or skated; 71% of boys and 56% of girls rode a bike).

Other ABS studies

The Australian Bureau of Statistics has also collected data on recreation for a number of years. These are presented in the publication *Participation in Sport and Physical Activities*. (As mentioned above, the Australian Sports Commission regards this data as less reliable for comparative purposes due to the use of changing data collection methods). Nevertheless, it is a useful resource and relevant findings over the years are presented below. The findings are very similar to those of the Australian Sports Commission.

1995-96: The most popular organised sport and physical recreation activity for Australians aged 15 years and over was aerobics, followed by golf, tennis, netball, lawn bowls and swimming. For those aged 5-14 years, the most popular organised activities were swimming, basketball, netball and soccer.

1996-97: The most popular organised sports among children were swimming, basketball, netball and soccer. Among adults, swimming was the most popular sporting activity. Swimming ranked among the most popular sports for all age groups, although aerobics/fitness was equally popular with those aged 18-34 and golf ranked as the most commonly played sport among adults aged 45 years and over, closely followed by swimming. Overall, aerobics/fitness was the second most popular sporting or physical activity with adults.

1998: The most popular organised sport and physical activities for Australians aged 15 and over were aerobics, golf, tennis and netball. The most popular social sport and physical activities were swimming, fishing, cycling and weight-lifting.

1999: More Australians aged 18 years and over participated in organised sport and physical activity. The two top participation activities were walking and swimming.

2000: For those aged 18 years and over, the sports and physical activities that attracted the most participants were walking, swimming, aerobics/fitness, golf and tennis. Walking was also the most popular non-organised activity. For organised activities, the five most popular were aerobics/fitness, golf, lawn bowls, tennis and netball.

2001: The most popular organised sport and physical recreation activity for Australians aged 18 years and over was aerobics/fitness, followed by golf, lawn bowls, tennis and netball. However, when non-organised participation is included, the activities which attracted the most participants were walking, swimming, aerobics/fitness, golf and tennis.

Conclusion

The published data highlight that by far the most popular activities for Australians are walking, swimming and aerobics/fitness. Golf, lawn bowls and tennis have also remained very popular. Among team sports, basketball, netball and soccer are the stand-out activities in terms of participation.

These findings provide an excellent overview of participation in recreation and are a good platform for predicting future trends. The following section investigates what these future trends might be, taking into account other factors.

3.2 FACTORS UNDERPINNING RECREATION DEMAND

The forces that drive recreation demand are complex and not that easy to predict. Clearly, it is important to look at current demands as well as population projections and demographics. However, demand is not linked solely to these aspects.

Other aspects need to be considered, including:

- Changes in lifestyle, workplace demands, family structure and commitments, expectations, technologies.
- Accessibility to facilities, and the range of options available. According to the Australian Sports Commission, one of the most important changes that has happened over time is that today people have a far greater range of options, and will tend to choose the ones that give the greatest 'reward for effort'.
- The exploits of leading Australian sports stars (Greg Norman's peak is widely regarded as having spurred a short-lived golf boom in the late 1980s to early 1990s).
- Income. The popularity of an activity can change radically when an area becomes more prosperous, as witnessed by the decline in popularity in lawn bowls and PCY clubs in areas that have become more prosperous.

Conclusion

If we can learn one thing from history, it is that recreation tastes and preferences change over time, and that tastes and preferences ten years out will be considerably different from those of the early 1990s when the previous recreation strategy was completed.

In certain cases, the demand for a popular activity will not rise, despite large increases in population (the decline in lawn bowls in many areas is an example), while other activities will rise beyond what would be expected given population growth (the rise of basketball, women's soccer, yoga and skateboarding are examples).

Therefore, in planning for recreation, it is necessary to make some assumptions about the future. Some key assumptions and their implications are listed in **Table 3**. These help form the principles for future open space provision outlined in **Chapter 6**.

Table 3 Assumptions and implications for recreation provision

Assumption	Implication
Maitland's population will continue to grow over the next 10 years (which is the 'life' of this strategy) and beyond.	Sufficiency. Sufficient open space will be required for a growing population. What looks like a surplus of open space today may not appear that way when the population doubles.
People will continue to want to use recreation areas, both indoor and outdoor, for both organised and 'unstructured' activities.	Range. A range of indoor and outdoor venues will be required.
Traditional activities that have an enduring quality, like swimming, walking, running, and ball sports, will continue to be popular, though the rules and facilities needed may change (as has occurred with touch football and indoor soccer, the growth of Informal 'pick-up' games; the emergence of 'aquatic centres' and urban walking tracks).	Multi-purpose/flexible. Recreation providers will need to stay responsive to these changing demands. They will need to provide venues that are multi-purpose and flexible, to cater for a range of activities, and for emerging tastes.
An increasing proportion of older people in the population (an 'ageing population') will produce an increase in demand for low-impact and lifestyle activities.	Low-impact. Venues for activities like walking, cycling, swimming, weights, cardio, stretch, yoga, pilates will be required; plus improved accessibility to them, and parking.
Transport mobility will increase, as will access to information, particularly via the internet. Maitland's links to nearby urban centres will strengthen.	Strategic provision. Council will not need to provide for all recreation expectations. Many will be catered for outside the local government area, and people will be able to find out about them and access them.
'Healthy' activity will be an increasingly important aspect of recreation.	Health. Contact sports with higher levels of danger may decline in popularity (eg rugby league may lose numbers to soccer). Body maintenance activities (walking, swimming, 'cardio' training, etc) will grow.
Safety and security will be increasingly important to people in their recreation.	Safety. Recreation facilities will require high levels of maintenance and visibility.
Perhaps as an antidote to safety obsessions, there will be an increasing trend for (mainly young) people to want to indulge in 'adventurous' recreation.	Adventure sports. There will be an increasing demand for safe places to practice 'extreme' sports (eg climbing walls, skate parks).
In a world with dwindling natural areas, and where people are feeling more trapped, nature-based recreation will grow in popularity.	Natural areas. Places to 'commune with nature' will need to be provided. These need not be large areas, but places where people can enter a 'different space'.
There is a strong and enduring preference for people to recreate in, on or beside the water, particularly where it is not difficult to access.	Water-based. Local recreation spaces on or beside local waterways should be identified and developed.
Recreation-based tourism will continue to grow.	Tourism. Recreation facilities will complement the area's historical attractions.
Working hours will continue to move away from the norm of 9am –5pm, Monday to Friday.	Flexible hours. Opportunities will need to be provided across a range of hours, days and seasons.

3.3 MAITLAND'S COMMUNITY PROFILE

Demographics are an important factor in determining recreation demand and supply (other factors, as listed above, include changing tastes, technologies and work patterns). The key aspects of Maitland's demographics which are relevant to recreation are presented below.

Population growth

According to the Hunter Valley Research Foundation (HVRF), Maitland has the second-fastest population growth in the Hunter Region (after Port Stephens). Between the 1996-2001 Census periods, population grew by 1.5% per annum, higher than for NSW as a whole (1.1%) and the Hunter (0.8%) (HVRF, pers. comm., 2003).

According to the HVRF, the 2001 population of 53,803 is projected to grow to 58,466 by 2006, 67,467 by 2016, and 76,237 by 2026, using medium projections.

Council forecasts most growth will occur in new urban areas, and in urban consolidation areas, such as East Maitland. The future urban areas may include:

- East: Thornton North, Thornton/Ashtonfield.
- West: Rutherford, Aberglasslyn, South Lochinvar.
- Central: Gillieston Heights, Bolwarra.

Characteristics

The key demographic characteristics of Maitland's community (from ABS *Census of Population and Housing*, 2001) with relevance to future recreation demand are:

- Relatively strong population growth, but at a decreasing rate.
- Comparatively young age structure.
- Recent changes in structure towards middle and elderly age groups, 40 years plus. In the 1991 Census the median age was 30 years. In 1996 it was 32. In 2001 it was 33 years. This shows the population profile is ageing.
- Dominant dwelling type is the separate house, indicating that a majority of residents have access to front and backyards (sometimes termed 'private open space') for some of their recreation needs. (In 2001, 89% were separate houses, 5% semi detached, row or terrace houses and townhouses, 5% flats, units or apartments, 1% other dwellings.)
- 70% of dwellings are owned or 'being purchased'.
- Reasonably affluent, mobile population.

Distribution

Population distribution by Section 94 planning sector, according to 2001 Census data is: Central: 8,886 (16.5%); East: 31,530 (58.5%); West: 13,400 (25%). That is, over half the population lives in the East planning sector.

3.4 IMPLICATIONS OF THE DATA

It is expected that recreation demands in Maitland will be broadly similar to those recorded Australia-wide. This is because Maitland's demographics — particularly in relation to age, gender, ethnicity and education — are similar to the national figures.

However, the lack of availability of such venues as beaches, a public indoor swimming pool, cycling and walking tracks would reduce the participation rate in these activities, and the desire to participate in these activities would, to some extent, be unsatisfied.

The following sections present information on Maitland's community and the results of community consultation undertaken for this project.

3.5 COMMUNITY CONSULTATION - SURVEY

To gain greater insight into community expectations, the Maitland community was canvassed for its opinions about recreation and open space facilities. This was undertaken through a household survey and a series of focus groups (refer **Section 3.7**).

In the survey, 19,000 self-completion questionnaires were distributed in June 2003 to all households in the local government area. By the closing date of 30 June, 2144 were returned, giving a high 12% response. To attain a high level of statistical certainty, 625 of these questionnaires were randomly selected from within each of the three planning areas within the LGA — namely, West, Central and East Maitland. These were processed by Taverner Research. Key findings are presented below. The report is provided in **Appendix B**.

Open spaces & recreation areas visited in past year

The most mentioned open space or recreation areas visited in the last twelve months are:

- Maitland Park (84%).
- Maitland Showground (76%). (This high ranking is possibly explained by the fact that a major event was held there just prior to the survey.)
- Maitland Pool (49%).
- East Maitland Pool (22%).

Three favorite open space or recreation areas in Maitland City

The three favourite open space or recreation areas amongst residents are:

- Maitland Park (68%).
- Maitland Pool (19%).
- Walka Water Works (18%).

Recreation activity participated in during past year

- 80% have participated in walking/running for fitness/pleasure during the last year.
- 68% have participated in picnicking or barbecues.
- 56% have participated in swimming.
- 34% have participated in team sports.
- 33% have participated in cycling for fitness/pleasure.

Frequency of use of open spaces and recreation areas

- 65% of residents report using the open spaces and recreation areas in Maitland City everyday or at least once a week.
- Three in ten of those aged 35 – 44 (29%), 45 – 55 (30%) and 65+ (29%) say they usually use the open spaces and recreation areas every day.

Overall rating of open spaces and recreation areas

- 70% of residents rate the open spaces and recreation areas in Maitland City as 'Fantastic/Very Good/Good'. (Residents aged 65+ year old residents are most likely to give a positive rating of 'Fantastic/Very Good/Good (77%).
- 24% of residents rate open spaces and recreation areas in Maitland City as 'OK'.
- 6% of residents rate open spaces and recreation areas in Maitland City as 'Not Good/Terrible'.

What residents say they want

Residents were asked which upgrading and new works projects should be undertaken as a priority.

The most frequently mentioned upgrading projects are: heated pool for year-round use (41%), picnic and barbecue areas (38%), walking tracks (36%), playgrounds (30%), off-road cycling tracks (24%), and sports facilities (22%).

The most frequently mentioned new projects are: walking tracks (52%), off-road cycling tracks (46%), picnic and barbecue areas (36%), heated pool for year-round use (34%), playgrounds (23%), indoor leisure centre (22%).

The findings reflect a strong desire for facilities for walking, swimming, cycling, and passive recreation (picnics, barbecues, playgrounds), which is consistent with what we know from the national participation data.

Variations between planning areas

While the survey did pick up variations in demands between planning areas, they are not sufficiently significant to warrant different treatment of the three areas in terms of strategic planning for new facilities.

3.6 COMMUNITY CONSULTATION – FOCUS GROUPS

A reference group representing a number of different interests was established to help guide the study. In addition, a series of focus groups was held in May 2003. Meetings were held with representatives of youth, seniors, Maitland Sports Advisory Board, Recreation Boards, and key Council staff. Key findings of these focus groups are presented according to theme, and reported below.

Table 4 Issues relating to young people

Issue	Comment
The big picture	About 6000 people in this category. Most issues relate to disadvantaged youth, who are typically less able to take advantage of services and facilities provided, due to cost, lack of awareness and transport options, etc.
Strengths	The PCYC and Maitland Youth Enterprises.
Issues	<p>Public spaces are often used as single uses. There is demand to broaden use to allow community fairs, film nights.</p> <p>As much as facilities, Maitland's youth (particularly (13 – 17 year olds) are seeking entertainment. Programs are needed, not just facilities. eg camps and trips away</p> <p>Main areas lacking facilities for youth are on the periphery, eg Woodberry, Gillieston Heights, Rutherford</p>
Facilities wanted	<p>Venues that are low cost or free, eg a BMX park</p> <p>Venues with facilities for fairs, film nights, and other outdoor events. There is a need to nominate outdoor events parks and equip them for the purpose. No. 1 Sportsground, for example, has potential as it has grandstands.</p> <p>The PCYC and Maitland Youth Enterprises venues are meeting a need but are situated close together in the town centre. There is nothing similar in the outlying areas.</p> <p>Community centre in a park with child care/holiday programs, after-school, play area.</p> <p>Multipurpose centre for sports, performance space, outdoor/indoor, active/passive, storage</p>

Table 5 Issues relating to seniors

Issue	Comment
The big picture	<p>Maitland has an ageing population profile, so there is a need to provide spaces catering for their needs — for both the active aged, and frail aged. (Based on 1998 data, in Australia, of people aged 65 years and over, 54% have a disability. Physical conditions, including musculoskeletal disorders such as arthritis, were the most common cause of disability. Refer also Table 6, below).</p> <p>In 1996, people aged over 55 years comprised 17.7% of Maitland's population. This grew to 19.9% in 2001. The represents a 2.2% growth rate, well above the 1.2% growth rate for the NSW average.</p>
Strengths	Maitland Park is very popular as it is flat, well maintained, feels safe, and easily accessible.
Issues	Not that many. Frail aged need pleasant places to be taken to within Maitland. Active aged generally able to drive to places they wish to visit, often outside the LGA.
Facilities wanted	<p>Casual spectator seating at sportsgrounds (ie, not grandstands).</p> <p>Walking tracks: preferably flat with safe access and benches and shade. Eg Maitland Park, Walka Water Works, ANZAC Park.</p> <p>Places to take dogs off leash.</p> <p>Australian native garden in a park</p> <p>Multi-use leisure centre.</p> <p>Heated pool is not a big desire, nor are more halls.</p>

Table 6 Facilities for people with disabilities

Issue	Comment
The big picture	19% of the Maitland community has a recognised disability, so accessible facilities need to be provided. It is widely accepted that facilities that use universal design features are useable by the whole community, including people with disabilities, the aged and families with young children.
Strengths	<p>Maitland is reasonably flat.</p> <p>Council has undertaken an access audit of its recreation facilities and is in the process of having access audits conducted on Council buildings and facilities as part of its Disability Action Plan. Council has a disability officer to advise Council on correct procedures and legislation.</p>
Issues	Many recreation facilities are inaccessible to people with disabilities, such as No. 1 Sportsground and PCYC.
Facilities wanted	Accessibility to a range of facilities that incorporate a universal design approach, in all areas of the LGA.

Table 7 Major facilities

Issue	Comment
The big picture	<p>Many people have called for the provision of elite facilities for sports so Maitland's premier athletes do not need to travel outside the LGA. However, it is not considered that Maitland's population is sufficiently large to warrant provision of these elite facilities.</p>
Issues	<p>No. 1 Sports Ground is under-used and poorly planned. There is a need to find new uses for it.</p> <p>Existing facilities cannot cater for big sports days and events.</p> <p>Venue management. It was raised that there is an issue with management of the venues by the Oval Boards. In particular:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The reliance on volunteers has meant that some boards have 'run out of puff' and are no longer functioning properly, or at all, with responsibility reverting to Council. ■ Many boards do not have requisite risk management expertise, leaving Council exposed to OH&S and public liability claims. ■ Many boards do not have requisite management expertise to manage what are, in some cases, major facilities. ■ The result has been facilities with widely divergent standards of construction and maintenance.
Strengths	<p>Maitland Park. However, the park is possibly at saturation point in terms of facilities and visitation, so there is a need to plan for new district multi-use parks, particularly on the periphery, eg Lorn Park in the north, Shamrock Hill in the east, Anambah Road (old tip site) in the west.</p> <p>Federation Centre. Maitland's only major specialist indoor centre.</p> <p>Walka Water Works.</p> <p>Morpeth and surrounds.</p> <p>Wetlands, rivers and creeks.</p>
Facilities wanted	<p>Develop a program for premier facilities with a higher level of maintenance. These would likely be 'district' rather than 'regional' facilities.</p> <p>Riverside walks, or at least access to riverside areas.</p> <p>Walking tracks / bicycle trails, with interpretations (history of Maitland), linking up interesting open space areas, such as wetlands and vegetation corridors as developed through the Greening Plan.</p> <p>Multi-use leisure centre.</p> <p>Year-round swimming venue.</p>

4 Open space & recreation supply

This chapter looks at the open space and recreation facilities available to Maitland's community. In keeping with the brief, and because of the lack of nature-based venues, there is a particular focus on wetlands and bushland reserves.

4.1 REGIONAL RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES

Because of its location and road and rail links, Maitland has been called 'The Hub of the Hunter'. The links make it easier for Maitland's residents to make use of recreation facilities in nearby towns. These include natural attractions such as Barrington Tops National Park; and beaches, regional sports facilities and indoor pools at Newcastle.

4.2 RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES IN MAITLAND

Maitland's residents have a wide range of recreation venues from which to choose. There are a wide variety of settings, and most have some form of recreation development, such as a playground, sporting facilities and amenities. From the survey (Chapter 3), these facilities satisfy most local needs.

An inventory of recreation facilities in the LGA is presented in the Council document, *Access Guide To Key Services And Facilities* (1998).

4.3 NATURAL AREAS

Wetlands

About 4.5% of Maitland LGA consists of wetlands. Recognising the recreation potential of these wetlands, Council has begun planning (through plans of management) and developing wetlands for recreational use. There is potential to continue this process, with a view to linking some of these wetlands with walking trails. Council-owned wetlands are listed in **Table 9**. As shown, the areas with greatest potential for wetland-based recreation are: Morpeth Common, Telarah Lagoon, Rathluba Lagoon and Tenambit Wetlands.

Table 8 Open space and recreation facilities – overview of key venues

Aspect	Description
Area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 479 parcels of Council land ■ 110 parcels of Crown Land (many are managed by Council) ■ 540 hectares of land maintained by Council
Major facilities by Section 94 planning sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ West. Westside Golf Course, Walka Water Works, NSW Equestrian Centre ■ Central. Maitland Park, No. 1 Sports Ground and surrounds, Lorn Park, Maitland Showground, Federation Centre, Police Citizens Youth Club, Marcellin Park, Maitland Youth Enterprises Multi-Use Centre ■ East. Tenambit Sports Centre, Stockade Hill Heritage Park, East Maitland Park and Pool, Morpeth Common / Ray Lawler Reserve, Thornton Tennis Courts, Maitland Golf Course
Nearby regional open space and recreation facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Nature-based: Lower Hunter National Park, Barrington Tops National Park, Hexham Swamp Nature Reserve ■ Waterside: Newcastle and Port Stephens beaches ■ Newcastle sports facilities (numerous) ■ Indoor pools: Singleton, Kurri Kurri, Raymond Terrace, Newcastle

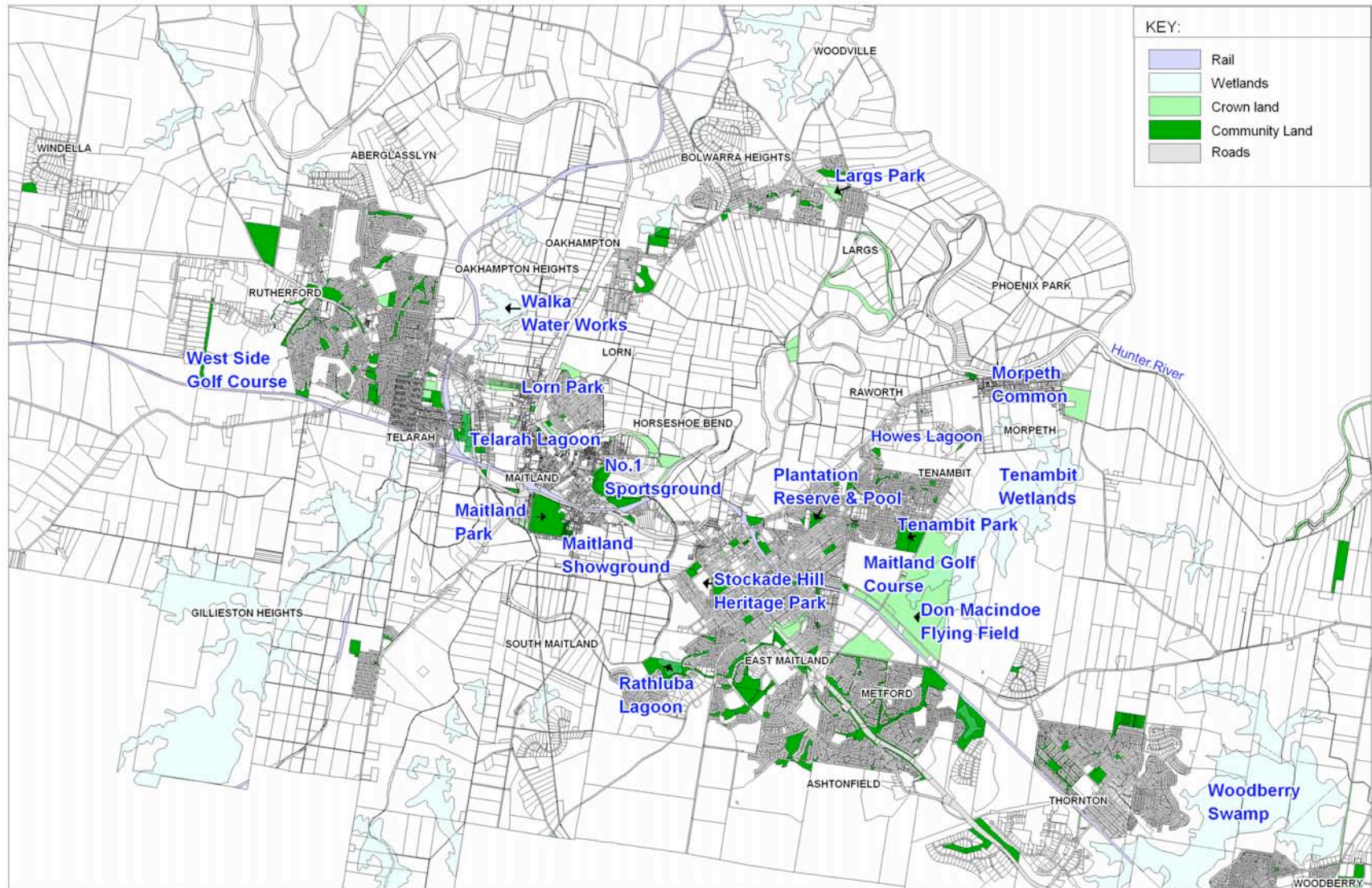


Figure 3: Major open spaces & wetlands

Table 9 Council-owned wetland properties

Name / address	Hectares	Recreation potential
Morpeth Common Wetland, Edward St, Morpeth	14.8	Very high. Council has prepared a plan of management with a view to increasing recreation opportunities. It includes a 3-stage development, with the first stage implemented. Includes paths, play area, barbecues.
Telarah Lagoon, Ledsam St, Telarah	7	High. Council has prepared a plan of management. The site is central and has a pleasant aspect. Council has built a walking track and barbecue facilities.
Rathluba Lagoon, Turnbull Dr, East Maitland	12.7	High. Already has walking trail around it, bridges and picnic areas. Council has prepared a plan of management.
Tenambit Wetlands, Raymond Terrace Rd, East Maitland	NA	High. Expansive area with revegetation and area for future Earthcare Park. Council has prepared a plan of management.
Four Mile Creek, Woodlands Dr, Thornton	18.6	Medium. Quite scenic, with reserved habitat.
Hands Lagoon, Bolwarra Rd, Bolwarra	11.7	Medium. Potential for walking track around the lagoon. Relatively scenic, with waterfowl.
Woodberry Swamp, Lawson Ave, Woodberry	4.9	Low-medium. Swampy, tidal area with some potential for rural recreation (eg pony club).
Bolwarra Rd, Bolwarra	39.6	No assessment made.

Bushland

Over 90% of Maitland's original bushland has been cleared. Most remnant bushland (3653 ha) is on private property. Of the remainder, 43 ha are on Council community land, 152 ha on Council operational land, and 22 ha on Crown Land. The bushland areas are fragmented and tend to be very small, irregularly shaped and surrounded by urban areas.

To address this issue and provide a strategic framework for management of vegetation in the LGA, Council has prepared a *Greening Plan* (2002). It focuses on remnant vegetation and has a strategy for revegetation, including land remediation, wildlife corridors and woodlot opportunities. These initiatives may lead to opportunities for recreation.

Table 10 Council-owned bushland properties

Name / address	Area ha	Recreation potential
Brooklyn Park (Chisholm Rd, Mitchell Dr, Stronach Ave, The Boulevard, East Maitland)	27	High. Plan of management completed. Some recreation infrastructure on site (eg trails). Potential for trail linking Brooklyn Park to Murphy Circuit and Leinster Street.
Nilands Lane, Woodberry	17.5	High. Wetlands. Pony club lease.
Mt Vincent Waste Disposal Site, East Maitland	127.5	High for active uses, such as trail bike and off-road bicycle riding. Low for other uses.
Murphy Cct, Ashtonfield	6	Low-medium. Walking trails. Local value.
Dunmore Rd, Largs	5.5	Low, but some environmental potential.
Leinster Cct, Ashtonfield	3.7	Some local value. Creek reserve surrounded by houses.
Kyle St, Rutherford	50	Low. Flat, relatively featureless land.
Evelyn Cr, Thornton	1.2	Low. Too small.
Holford Cr, Thornton	0.5	Low. Too small.
Lawes St, East Maitland	5.5	Low. Creek with weed-infested forest.
Liddell Ave, Rutherford	8	Low. Very little vegetation.
Martin Cl, East Maitland	0.5	Low. Too small
Mountvale St, Rutherford	14	Low.
Mt Vincent Rd, Ashtonfield	1	Low. Too small.
New England Hwy, Metford	3	Low. Roadside strip.
New England Hwy, Rutherford	19.6	Low. Roadside strip.
Regiment Rd, Rutherford	2	Low. Urban forest. Structured bushland buffer strip.
Springbok Cr, East Maitland	0.5	Low. Too small.
Weblands St, Aberglasslyn	28	Low. Old tip site.
Wollombi Rd, Rutherford	1.7	Low. Too small.
Woolley Cl, Thornton	2.1	Low. Too small.
Worcester Dr, East Maitland	0.7	Low. Too small.

4.4 URBAN SETTLEMENT STRATEGY

In its *Urban Settlement Strategy 2001-2020*, which is a strategy for urban growth, Council has identified areas to investigate for future residential development where population increases will occur. The following areas are highlighted for future investigation:

- East sector: Thornton North, Thornton/Beresfield.
- Central sector: Gillieston Heights, Bolwarra.
- West sector: Aberglasslyn, Rutherford, South Lochinvar.

Open space and recreation facilities, particularly at the neighbourhood level, will need to meet the needs of these growing areas.

5 Analysis of supply & demand

5.1 KEY RECREATION DEMANDS

Maitland has a substantial amount of open space given the size of its population. However, an assessment needs to be made as to whether there are 'gaps' in the suite of opportunities provided, and whether these can be provided locally. The following assessment regarding adequacy of provision is based on community consultation and national recreation trends.

- The national data indicate that the most popular activities are walking and swimming and aerobics/fitness, and that indoor activities, such as yoga, are growing in popularity.
- The focus groups highlighted a need for more walking tracks, an indoor swimming centre, and a multi-purpose recreation centre. There were no requests for increased outdoor sporting facilities.
- The questionnaire responses highlighted a need for facilities for walking, year-round swimming, off-road cycling and passive recreation (picnics, barbecues, playgrounds).

An overview of the likely adequacy, based on findings from the above processes, is given below.

5.2 SWOT ANALYSIS

Strengths

- Relatively **free of 'issues'**. Plentiful open space areas, and broad range of facilities generally in good condition, with adequate access and parking and low level of graffiti and litter relative to other urban areas. In Council surveys, residents give open space opportunities in Maitland an 'extremely high' satisfaction rating.
- **Key facilities**. Maitland Park and Walka Water Works (both are large, historic, multi-dimensional long-stay parks), Federation Centre.
- **Proximity** and easy access to other towns and cities with complementary facilities.
- **Mobility**. High car ownership level among residents and, therefore, a high level of mobility (ie ability to get to recreation facilities).
- **Active community** involved in managing and maintaining many ovals.
- **Rich soils**.
- **Cultural heritage**. Adds a qualitative dimension to the recreation experience.

Opportunities

- **Waterways.** The Hunter River and tributary creeks have largely been alienated from public use, with adjacent land mostly privately owned. There is potential to make strategic land acquisitions over time to enable access to these waterways or, better still, develop walking trails beside the watercourses.
- **Wetlands.** 4.5% of the LGA consists of wetlands and there is potential to continue providing nature-oriented recreation opportunities beside them, complementing initiatives at Rathluba Lagoon, Telarah lagoon, etc. Using the rivers and wetlands in this way would complement other natural features in the region.
- **Bushland.** While much of Maitland's bushland has been cleared, large structurally intact bushland areas to the south of Ashtonfield provide opportunities for passive, nature-based recreation.
- **Under-used facilities.** No.1 Sportsground is an under-used major venue with potential for high-intensity use. There is an opportunity to find new uses that complement existing ones.

Weaknesses

- **Linear trails.** There is a lack of cycle ways and walking tracks. This is a major weakness given the popularity of these two activities.
- **Natural areas:** over 90% of original bushland has been cleared and remnant bushland is very fragmented. This leaves limited recreation opportunities in natural areas.
- **Year-round swimming.** There is no indoor pool / aquatic centre to cater for year-round swimming, which is a very popular activity.
- **Barriers to access** created by Great Northern Railway Line, Hunter River, Wallis Creek, flood plains, and New England Highway (which cuts Maitland in half).
- **Flooding.** Many areas are flood-prone, constraining development opportunities.

Threats

- Large number of parks, and ever-increasing expectations, necessitate a large recreation budget. The more facilities Council provides, the more needs to be maintained.
- Further fragmentation of Maitland Park by user groups.
- Increasing risks posed by public liability litigation, and limited expertise on Oval Boards to manage risk.
- Provision of recreation facilities in nearby local government areas could make similar facilities in Maitland redundant (this implies a need to coordinate to avoid unnecessary and expensive duplication of facilities).

6 Action plan

The Maitland Recreation and Open Space Strategy Review seeks to provide a clear vision and direction regarding the purpose, level of provision, development priorities and management of recreational open space areas in the Maitland LGA.

This study suggests that most residents are satisfied with existing sporting facilities. From preceding analyses, the current level of provision of local recreation and district sporting facilities presently satisfies demand in the Maitland LGA. However, there appears to be an undersupply of district recreation areas. While demand for citywide multi-use indoor recreational and sporting facilities has been identified, there is no evidence to support the development of regional sporting facilities in the Maitland LGA.

Nonetheless, the analysis of the projected future population growth has highlighted the fact that while catering for the recreation needs of the *existing* population, Council must also plan for the leisure needs for future residents.

Population projections show that growth is expected across all age groups, in similar proportions to that which has recently been experienced. Monitoring will, however, be essential to ensure that the actual changes that do occur are understood and that the sport and recreation provision implications are identified.

So, given the growth of the region, Council must plan for the provision of each of *local*, *sub-regional* and *regional* recreation opportunities, as well as for users from adjacent local government areas.

Given the regional importance it already enjoys and the future growth it will experience, opportunities should also be explored within the Maitland LGA for the development of a number of regional outdoor sporting complexes.

The recommendations in this section provide strategic direction regarding priority actions necessary to achieve the vision over the next 5-10 years. They have been developed to:

- Provide a balance of open spaces for sporting and non-sporting activities to meet the needs of the community and visitors.
- Anticipate the need to provide a series of safe, linking, multi-use paths for pedestrians and cyclists beside roads and watercourses that will connect recreational facilities with residential areas.
- Provide a series of linking paths that connect to surrounding areas and attractions.
- Anticipate the need for a number of district level sports and recreation facilities in growth areas.
- Seize the opportunity to utilise publicly owned land for recreation, particularly along drainage lines, and sporting facilities.

- Recognise the need to review the management and operation of Council's recreation management and administrative systems.

Council has expressed its commitment to the equitable allocation of resources for use by residents and community groups. However, there is pressure on Council to resource an ever-increasing number of community groups and meet the demands that a rapidly growing economy makes on its resources. Successful management is at the heart of effective sport and recreation provision. Therefore Council must seek means by which both its own and other recreation facilities, programs and services are effectively managed.

In relation to the acquisition and management of regional open space areas, Council wishes to ensure that the prime responsibility for purchasing and managing regional open space areas rests with the State Government. Accordingly, Council will normally support the inclusion of Council-owned open space areas in regional open space areas designated by relevant State Government agencies. Council will do this by adopting the following approach:

- Council will liaise with relevant State Government agencies regarding the extent of proposed regional open space areas in the area with a view to identifying Council-owned open space areas that might be of regional significance.
- Council will review the purposes for which these areas were acquired and decide the conditions under which it would enter into co-operative agreements with the State for inclusion as part of a regional open space area.
- Council should give priority to the dedication and establishment of those components of the open space system that have the potential to act as major regional open space corridors.

SUMMARY OF DEMAND

Given the preceding consideration of demography and facility supply, it is anticipated that the greatest demand in the City of Maitland over the next 5-10 years will be for:

- Heated indoor swimming pool.
- Indoor leisure centre.
- Access to multi-purpose local and district outdoor sporting facilities via safe and convenient pedestrian and cycle networks.
- Improved provision of park amenity particularly in new subdivisions.
- Provision of facilities in selected local parks, particularly to cater for youth needs.
- Establishment of, and continued improvement to, amenity and access to natural areas.
- Establishment of new district sports complexes and recreation areas to service the requirements of growth areas.
- A trail network throughout the city.
- The provision of recreational trails in developing areas.

Programs within Council's strategic plans clearly do not exist in isolation and, where appropriate, it is necessary and desirable to ensure the outcomes achieved in one goal area contribute to progress against other goals. For example, developing natural areas such as wetlands can provide *environmental* benefits outlined in Council's Greening Plan. As well, those developments can also be developed as attractive passive recreation facilities and, thus, can provide *recreational* benefits to residents. Further *health* benefits can accrue to users of multi-use recreational trails, built to link such facilities with other sport and recreational facilities.

For guidance when funding allocations are being considered by Council, the recommended projects are classified in two broad categories, namely: recreation facilities development, and recreation management planning. While the various planning phases for facility development can necessarily extend over several years, the projects highlighted in the latter group may be undertaken concurrently.

Table 11 Classification of projects for funding allocations

Recreation facilities development	Recreation management planning
(a) Year-round swimming venue	(a) Review recreation management
(b) Indoor leisure centre	(b) Develop reserves plans of management
(c) Off-road multi-use trails	(c) Review local and neighbourhood parks
(d) No.1 Sportsground	(d) Recreation funding and pricing policies
(e) River access	(e) Recreation-based tourism
(f) Youth needs	
(g) New district-level parks	
(h) Passive recreation	

6.1 RECREATION FACILITIES DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

(A) YEAR-ROUND SWIMMING VENUE

This report is informed by Council's requirement that proposals need to be financially feasible. This is potentially at odds with a strong community desire for a year-round swimming venue. Very few indoor pools are financially sustainable — they are expensive to build and operate.

However, these venues provide enormous social, recreational and health benefits across all demographic groups. Given the strong desire, and possibly even 'need', and the likelihood that swimming will continue to be very popular (particularly as the population profile ages), and that swimming provides benefits for general health, it is strongly recommended that Council begin planning for a year-round swimming venue. If it were not built, then there will continue to be unsatisfied demand for Maitland's second biggest recreation activity. There would, of course, be opportunities for year-round swimming at existing pools outside the LGA (for example at Raymond Terrace) but convenience is a very important aspect in recreation choice, and these other pools would not satisfy the needs of most people.

Ideally, the venue would also have complementary facilities (such as those generally provided at indoor leisure centres) to extend the venue's low-impact focus, make it multi-use, and create a longer-stay attraction.

Detailed advice on an indoor swimming centre is beyond the scope of this study, and the potential to develop the facility would need to be scoped out in a feasibility study as a critical first step.

Project description

Feasibility study for year-round swimming centre.

Investigation and actions

Investigation to include, but not be limited to, the following aspects:

- Ability of existing pools outside the LGA to satisfy the demand of Maitland residents (this could involve a survey of pool users to ascertain how many patrons come from Maitland).
- Location. Should the venue be built at an existing facility (Maitland Park, or East Maitland) or at a new location? Choice of location would need to consider exposure to passing traffic, proximity to schools, population catchment, retail and commercial centres, and complementary recreation facilities.
- Access. Ease of access by car, bus, train and bicycle; and off-street parking capacity (at least 100 cars).

- Room to grow. Surrounding parkland would offer significant synergies with outdoor recreation uses.
- Scope. Should the pool be a permanent structure, or winter-only 'bubble' cover?
- Core facilities. 50-metre or 25-metre pool.
- Complementary facilities. These could include a play pool, sauna, spa, sports hall, gymnasium, aerobics/fitness studio, multi-purpose rooms, lounge, crèche, climbing wall, food and beverage outlet, skate park, and sports medicine, physiotherapy and massage rooms.
- Commercial opportunities. Many of the complementary facilities have potential to be leased.
- Layout. Once potential locations are identified, indicate possible layout.
- Staging. Based on demand and likely cost-benefit, should the indoor swimming venue precede the provision of an indoor leisure centre, or vice versa?
- Hours of operation. Ideally, the venue would be open 16 hours each day.
- Environmental impact in relation to nearby uses, particularly residents.
- Funding (capital and operational). Potential for joint venture partnerships with local organisations. It may be that Council provides the land for the centre and calls for expressions of interest from a private operator to build and operate on a long-term lease, or enters a partnership with local organisations (such as schools) to provide funding. Half the cost of development could come from Council's s.94 funds, as the pool would serve the whole LGA.
- Financial feasibility, including likely capital cost and ongoing cost-benefit to Council.

Investigations before project is undertaken

Liaise with relevant State and local government agencies to identify the most qualified specialists to undertake the work.

Cost

About \$50,000.

(B) INDOOR LEISURE CENTRE

An indoor leisure centre is one of the more popular demands, and reflects the ranking of aerobics/fitness as the nation's third most popular recreational activity. Demand is likely to grow over time as the population ages, and demands for 'health and lifestyle' activities (like yoga, pilates, circuit classes and weight-training) grow. However, an indoor leisure centre should be considered only as a complementary facility to the indoor swimming venue and not as a stand-alone facility.

Project description

Feasibility study for indoor leisure centre.

Investigation and actions

Undertake feasibility study for indoor leisure centre as part of study for year-round swimming venue. Refer **Project 1**.

(C) OFF-ROAD MULTI-USE TRAILS

Project description

Walking is the number one recreational activity Australia-wide and cycling is ranked fourth. In Maitland, there is a strong demand for walking and off-road cycling tracks but none are currently available. Ideally, these tracks should be in Maitland's more scenic areas and offer the opportunity of 'escape'. They should be broad, shared walking/cycling tracks.

There is potential to create an attractive system of nature-based linear paths beside, or with views to, the wetlands, waterways and bushland. Because much of this land is privately owned, Council will need to consider acquiring strategic parcels of land. The best opportunities could be in new settlement areas where it is easier to provide new facilities.

Due to the cost, and Maitland's small population, one or two quality linear tracks should be sufficient to satisfy demand in the long term. Priority projects are listed below. It is recommended that Council focus on one high-value project over the next ten years (Morpeth to East Maitland), with a view to initiating and going some way towards developing it by the year 2013. The new facility would be a 'district' level facility which people would be willing to travel to from across the LGA. The other projects listed are district level projects.

Investigation and actions

East Maitland to Morpeth track

- Acquire publicly owned sections of the former railway line.
- Keep a watching brief of land sales in the corridor with a view to, over time, making strategic land purchases to create a track linking East Maitland to Morpeth, taking advantage of attractions like Howes Lagoon. Given that land will become relatively more expensive to acquire over time, it is recommended that Council purchase land as soon as possible, even if it does not build the track for some years.
- Work with Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources to identify vacant Crown Land beside waterways with potential for use for open space recreation.
- Create track in sections as land is acquired. A width of about three metres is deemed sufficient for the path. The trail does not need to be paved, but fenced and signposted. Subdivide land to provide trail; re-zone land for recreation use; and sell remaining land for rural uses.

Brooklyn Park

- Investigate potential for trail linking Brooklyn Park-Murphy Circuit-Leinster Circuit. If there is potential, progressively build track, including suitable sign-posting and publicity.

Gillieston Heights – Maitland

- Investigate potential for trail linking Gillieston Heights and Maitland. If there is potential, progressively build track, including suitable sign-posting and publicity.

Mt Vincent Waste Disposal Site, East Maitland

- Investigate potential to develop off-road bike track in adjacent bushland area. If there is potential, consult with bicycle groups regarding layout of track and main access routes.

Old tip site, Anambah Road, Rutherford

- Prepare plan of management for redevelopment of old tip site, at Rutherford, to ascertain potential for off-road bike track. If there is potential, consult with bicycle groups regarding layout of track and main access routes.

Remnant bushland

- Should Council acquire remnant bushland areas on private land, it should consider opportunities for walking and cycling tracks through or beside the bushland.

Maitland Bicycle Plan 1996

- Complete the review of the *Maitland Bicycle Plan 1996* with particular attention to developing safe and convenient pedestrian and cycle networks to outdoor sporting facilities.

Likely cost

Investigations to be undertaken in-house. Track development not able to be costed for this report.

Land acquisition cost will depend on land prices.

(D) NO. 1 SPORTSGROUND

It is difficult to resolve the future of No.1 Sportsground. On the one hand, it is centrally located, contains substantial park infrastructure, and has complementary parkland nearby. On the surface, it should be a venue with high-intensity use. However, it is, from all accounts, under-used and in danger of becoming a 'white elephant'.

It is recommended that no more investment be made at No.1 Sportsground until Council prepares a plan of management for No. 1 Sportsground.

Project description

Prepare a plan of management for No. 1 Sportsground and surrounding parklands.

Investigation and actions

The plan of management should assess:

- Original purpose of the venue, and whether this purpose has current and future relevance.
- Opportunities and constraints of the site. These would include flooding, traffic and parking, condition and useability of the main structures, synergies with surrounding parklands.
- The venue's best future use or uses. This should include the current use, the potential to make this area a major sporting precinct, and to relocate some sporting facilities from Maitland Park to the precinct. (This would free up some areas of Maitland Park for passive recreation.)
- The feasibility of providing opportunities for civic, cultural and entertainment events in the precinct, such as fairs and film nights.
- Likely cost of capital works required.

Likely cost

\$30,000 to \$50,000 depending on detail of master plan.

(E) RIVER ACCESS

It has been estimated that the majority of recreation occurs on, in or beside the water. However, in Maitland, despite the existence of local creeks and rivers, very little water is provided for recreation. Therefore, as well as the land acquisitions mentioned under 'Walking and off-road bike tracks' above, Council should consider acquiring land that provides access to rivers and streams for recreation, primarily for land-based recreation (eg walking and picnicking). Water quality would need to be assessed before recommendations could be made regarding the potential for water-based activities, such as swimming and canoeing.

A key objective would be to ensure minimal disruption and impact on the rural productivity of the land. Planning should consider that these areas are often susceptible to flooding.

Project description

Create a number of opportunities for access to rivers and creeks.

Investigation and actions

This could involve the following steps:

- Keep a watching brief on private land beside waterways and other desirable locations, with a view to purchase.
- Subdivide the land to provide an access path to the water, and a small open space area beside the water. Where there is potential to create a walking trail beside the river, subdivision will involve not only a pathway to the river but also along it.
- Rezone this land for recreation purposes.
- Sell the remainder of the land.
- Develop the path and open space area. A width of about three metres is deemed sufficient for the path. The trail does not need to be paved but fenced and signposted. Given that the land will generally be flood-prone, minimal, robust infrastructure is recommended.

Priority areas should be:

- Lorn and Riverbank at Maitland City, to complement work already underway.
- Howes Lagoon, as part of the proposed walking and off-road cycling track between Morpeth and East Maitland.
- Queen's Wharf, as recommended in Morpeth Management Plan.

Likely cost

Cost would depend on land acquisition costs. Development costs would be low.

(F) YOUTH NEEDS

A youth needs study has been prepared, and implementation of the study has begun (including construction of the Federation Centre and skate parks).

Many of the needs identified in community consultation relate more to services and programs than to facilities. The major facilities requested were for small multi-purpose venues, particularly in new development areas, and sites for events such as outdoor movies. As suggested above, some of these could be provided at No. 1 Sportsground.

Project description

Limited specific youth-oriented projects are recommended. Projects recommended above (indoor leisure centre, swimming venue, walking trail, off-road bike trail) would all appeal to young people.

Investigation and actions

A skate facility is proposed for Rutherford, with the location still to be decided. Planning for the facility should continue.

(G) NEW 'DISTRICT' LEVEL PARKS

Concern that Maitland Park may be reaching saturation point means it is timely to consider whether similar parks are needed elsewhere in Maitland (preferably close to major population growth areas). Ideally, a new district level park (similar to Maitland Park) should be developed in both the East and West planning sectors of Maitland LGA. Potential sites mentioned during consultation have included Shamrock Hill, Anambah Road, Morpeth Common and Brooklyn Park.

In providing these district level parks, there may be benefits in collocation with the following major facilities: the indoor swimming pool, leisure centre, walking and cycling trails, and waterfront reserves.

Project description

Identify possible locations of future district level parks, in the East and West planning sectors. As part of investigations, consider incorporating the proposed indoor swimming pool, leisure centre, walking and cycling trails, and waterfront reserves.

Investigation and actions

As discussed above, this project should be undertaken in conjunction with other projects recommended in this report and not as a stand-alone project.

(H) PASSIVE RECREATION

There is a strong demand for more or improved passive recreation areas, with playgrounds and picnic and barbecue areas, in keeping with findings in many other municipalities. There is scope to provide for this demand at some of Maitland's more environmentally interesting locations.

Project description

- **Playgrounds.** Continue to upgrade playground, with priority given to areas with higher numbers of children.
- **Picnic and barbecue areas.** Identify suitable areas, ideally adjacent to natural settings (bushland, creeks, wetlands), and, in keeping with the desire for multi-use facilities, they should also provide opportunities for short walks and casual ball games. Basic facilities only should be provided, such as low-key timber shelters and play equipment that complement the natural location. As these will satisfy a district catchment, it will not be necessary to have more than, say, two of these per planning area. Priority areas for investment in detailed planning and development are listed below.

Investigation and actions

- Continue to implement plan of management for playgrounds.
- Continue to invest in passive areas of Maitland Park, and safeguard the park from encroachment and fragmentation by active sporting uses.
- Implement plan of management for Morpeth Common.
- Implement plan of management for Heritage Park.
- Implement plan of management for Brooklyn Park.
- Prepare new plan of management for Walka Water Works. This is Maitland's second most popular recreation venue. The Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources (DIPNR) (formerly Department of Land and Water Conservation) advises that the plan of management for the site, prepared some years ago, needs to be revised. It is recommended that Council work with DIPNR to prepare the new plan of management. The plan would focus on maximising recreation potential, while safeguarding and interpreting the heritage significance of the site.

Likely cost

Implementation of plans of management costed in those reports.

Plan of management for Walka Water Works: about \$50,000.

6.2 RECREATION MANAGEMENT PLANNING

(A) REVIEW RECREATION MANAGEMENT

A number of concerns were raised at the focus group meetings about the functions, operation and viability of recreation boards. The recreation boards are community-based and rely heavily on volunteers in an environment where the number of people participating on a voluntary basis is decreasing. Also, the use of Council's recreation facilities is dependent on volunteer availability, particularly after hours. A holistic approach to recreation management is required to ensure that planning priorities are achieved and there is some equity across the local government area.

A separate issue is that Council needs to be alert to planned and current recreation projects in nearby council areas, so it does not unnecessarily duplicate facilities provided by these other councils.

Project description

Streamline management of public recreation facilities.

Investigation and actions

- **Oval Boards.** Review the current recreation management model. This should include reviewing the role and responsibilities of the Sports Advisory Board, with a view to considering expansion to develop a wider community-planning role such as a Leisure Planning Panel. An aim should be to continue harnessing local knowledge and enthusiasm while also improving service delivery.
- **Integrated local area planning.** To avoid unnecessarily duplicating facilities provided by adjacent councils, it is recommended that Council's Recreation Planning Officer meet annually with counterparts in adjacent council areas to discuss proposed capital works and potential avenues for joint ventures.

Likely cost

No capital costs involved.

(B) DEVELOP RESERVES PLANS OF MANAGEMENT

The *Local Government Act 1993*, as amended by the *Local Government Amendment (Community Land Management) Act 1998*, provides the common foundation for each council to apply specific management strategies to public land. The most important is that community land must be categorised according to a list of categories provided in the Act, and managed according to 'core objectives', also in the Act.

Therefore, Maitland Council needs to review its existing plans of management to determine whether they comply with the Act. As a result of the review, Council may need to alter some plans.

Project description

Review existing plans of management to determine whether they comply with the *Local Government Act 1993*, as amended (1998). Where plans do not comply, update them so they do.

Council should also ensure that plans of management are consistent with the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* — particularly in relation to the provisions of Section 94 — and the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Regulation 1980*.

Investigation and actions

- Ensure all Council land is categorised.
- For land categorised as community land, ensure the land is covered by a plan of management.

Likely cost

- Initial survey of Council land to verify if all land is categorised: \$10,000.
- Categorisation of uncategorised land: not costed.
- Survey of community land to ensure land is covered by a relevant plan of management that complies with the Act: \$5,000.
- Action plan to determine how to address parcels of land not covered by a plan of management that complies with the Act: \$5,000.
- Undertake plans of management, as required: not costed.

(C) REVIEW LOCAL AND NEIGHBOURHOOD PARKS

Maitland has a very high number of neighbourhood parks. While it is important to reserve sufficient land for a growing population, it is possible there are more parks than will be needed to satisfy the needs of the community — even once it reaches its final population size. In addition, some of these parks may have low recreation value.

However, it is beyond the scope of this study to identify which parks may be surplus to requirements, or to make qualitative judgments on which parks may have limited recreation potential. Because of this, it is recommended that Council prepare a generic plan of management for local and neighbourhood parks as outlined below, with a key focus being consideration of those parks that are surplus to requirements.

Project description

Prepare a generic plan of management for local and neighbourhood parks with a key focus being to identify those parks that are surplus to requirements.

Investigation and actions

The plan of management could include the following aspects:

- Community consultation through newspaper advertisements to inform residents of the study.
- Assessment of each park in relation to the key criteria — or performance targets — of level of use, potential demand, opportunities and constraints to embellishment, and population catchment. (For example, if there is a principle that all homes should be no more than about 400-500 metres from a park, if a catchment is served by more than one park consideration would be given to which park might be used for other purposes).
- Identification of parks with low recreation use and limited potential, but with opportunities for another use, and what these uses might be.
- In-depth community consultation with the surrounding community to ascertain public viewpoints regarding rationalisation of these parks with low recreation use and limited potential.
- Likely cost-benefit of implementing rationalisation strategy.
- Action plan for these parks, namely, reclassification (to operational land), rezoning and, possibly, sale; or lowered maintenance and capital investment regime.

Likely cost

Cost of plan of management: about \$70,000.

(D) RECREATION FUNDING AND PRICING POLICIES

Project description

Local government is under an obligation to manage and maintain the assets of the community as efficiently and effectively as possible. Council must serve all residents, not just some, and as such, it must ensure that the resources it manages for all residents are not squandered or misappropriated.

Issues such as fairness, equity and social justice will invariably arise. These are critical issues in contemporary society; therefore Council should establish a recreation funding and pricing policy, which gives equitable support to all recreation pursuits in the community in keeping with established policies.

Investigation and actions

- Investigate and develop a pricing *and* funding policy for provision and support of recreation opportunities: facilities, programs and services.
- Develop a clear philosophical basis for pricing and funding policies.
- Develop a policy of partnership between Council and the community in providing those recreation opportunities.
- Acknowledge and support the critical role of Oval Boards to the effective provision and operation of sport and recreation facilities.

Likely cost

No capital costs involved. Consultancy fees about \$20,000 to \$30,000; or project could be undertaken in-house.

(E) RECREATION-BASED TOURISM

Many of the projects proposed above would strengthen Maitland's tourism appeal.

In addition, there are opportunities to build on the cultural heritage of the city by creating walking/cycling links to and through historic areas and interesting open spaces (such as wetlands and vegetation corridors developed through the Greening Plan), and providing interpretation trails in these areas. Accordingly, this project could be undertaken in conjunction with project 6.1 (C) (walking and off-road bike access) and project 6.1 (E) (river access).

Project description

Prepare an interpretation plan for the LGA. The plan would probably need to be done in stages, updated as new walking trails, etc, are created.

Investigation and actions

Engage an interpretation planner to prepare an interpretation plan. The plan to consider and provide information on:

- Historic areas and interesting open spaces (such as wetlands and vegetation corridors developed through the Greening Plan) to be interpreted. It could also help interpret sites along the proposed walking trails.
- Location of information panels.
- Design and construction of panels.

Likely cost

About \$40,000 (depending on design input).

\$50,000 for information panels.

7 Monitoring performance

In past years, there was a demand for detailed monitoring programs to be included in recreation strategies, the aim being to provide a framework for assessing the organisation's performance in implementing the strategy, and the strategy itself. Over time, the demand for detailed monitoring programs has declined, with organisations preferring to evolve their own approaches, and not be 'locked in' to a framework with a 10-year timeframe.

Accordingly, this strategy does not propose a defined monitoring framework. Instead, it is recommended that Council consider one or more of the following options to monitor performance in delivering recreation and open space facilities and services:

- Household survey. This could be a telephone survey, or written survey based on the questionnaire distributed for this strategy. Frequency: every five years. Alternatively, questions about Council's performance in relation to recreation could be included in Council's annual community satisfaction survey.
- Survey of visitors to particular venues. Frequency: every one to two years.
- Check of this recreation strategy to ascertain if key recommendations are being included in annual capital works plans and, subsequently, implemented. Frequency: annual.
- Assessment by Maitland Sports Advisory Board, and other relevant bodies. Frequency: annual.

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A Appendix: Council reports

Recreation & open space strategy (1992)

One of the aims of this report is to review and update the *Recreation & Open Space Strategy* (1992). Key aspects of the 1992 Strategy are shown below, an assessment of whether or not the item is still relevant and projects undertaken are presented in the following tables.

Key aspects of 1992 *Recreation & open space strategy*

Chapter	Key aspects	Still relevant?
1 Background	Definitions of open space and recreation	Yes. Definitions have not changed
2 Planning background	Planning concepts, eg recreation opportunity spectrum, recreation and open space guidelines	Yes. Concepts remain current
3 Goals	Vision and goals for open space and recreation	Yes. In general, these goals remain current. However, a new set of guiding statements has been written for the current report
4 Recreation & open space supply	Maitland's community is well provided with open space and recreation facilities.	Yes. Since 1992, Council has increased its open space holdings and upgraded a number of facilities (eg Federation Centre)
5 Recreation & open space demand	National surveys indicate rising demand for informal and 'unstructured' use of open space for walking, barbecues, and picnics, and less for organised sport. Ageing population profile indicates higher participation in activities like golf, swimming and walking for fitness.	Yes. These findings are again borne out in the most recent national data and in a household survey of Maitland residents
6 & 7 Priority actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Provide multi-purpose linkage system consisting of a circular track around Maitland, and links radiating from this inner circle. Links between residential areas, natural features and community facilities ■ Provide year-round swimming facility ■ Increase range and quality of open space and recreation facilities, particularly natural settings, multi-use passive recreation facilities, riverbank settings ■ Build indoor basketball venue ■ Establish a hierarchy of playgrounds (city-wide, suburb, local) and build one new city-wide playground at Maitland Park. 	<p>An off-road walking circuit is still a strong request (as shown in the survey) but the location of the circuit has been amended in the current report</p> <p>Yes. This is a strong request in the household survey, supported by national data as a major activity</p> <p>Yes. The desire for these settings remains strong, but these settings are not well provided in the LGA</p> <p>Federation Centre built</p> <p>This has been undertaken</p>

Projects resulting from 1992 *Recreation & Open Space Strategy*

Section	Project initiated/undertaken since 1992
2.1 Access and linkages	Provide toilet for less physically able people at nine open space areas. To date, the only new facility is at Maitland Park
2.2 Year-round swimming facility	No action taken
2.3 Increase range and quality of open space and recreation facilities	<p>Improve quality of the playing surface at No 1 Sportsground and provide amenities building at Coronation Oval</p> <p>Proposal to provide open space beside river at Lorn being undertaken</p> <p>Proposal to provide open space on the Maitland side of the Hunter River now being undertaken</p> <p>Indoor basketball stadium built (Federation Centre)</p> <p>Liaison with Hunter Water to enable public use of wetlands on their land, especially Hands Lagoon</p> <p>Rutherford Community Centre and Ashtonfield multi-purpose centre developed</p> <p>Bush regeneration program established. Brooklyn Park Plan of Management being implemented.</p> <p>Maitland Linkages Study completed.</p> <p>Maitland Greening Plan completed.</p>
2.4 Scheduling and coordination	Council has prepared plan of management for Maitland Park, and for many other parks (see following table)
2.5 Children's playgrounds	<p>A plan of management for playgrounds is setting the agenda for playground provision. The following actions have been taken:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Play equipment has been provided in the developing Bolwarra-Largs area, then in West Metford, East Maitland, and East Rutherford/North Telarah; ■ Old and limited play equipment has been progressively removed from a number of parks; ■ A regional children's playground has been built at Maitland Park; ■ A district playground has been built at Rutherford, Aberglasslyn, Ashtonfield, Bolwarra and Thornton.
2.6 Rationalisation and future provision of open space	No major actions taken

Plans of Management

Maitland Council has a number of plans pertaining to open space and recreation. The most relevant reports are presented in the tables below. They include 16 plans of management, nine of which have been formally adopted by Council.

Plans of Management

Subject land	Status / date adopted
Morpeth Common / Ray Lawler Reserve	090496
Maitland Park	230894
King Edward Park	271098
Brooklyn Park	010895
Rathluba Lagoon	181094
Page Street Reserve	131294
Taree Avenue Reserve	260494
Public Reserve Lot 14 Sec 40 Victoria Street East Maitland	240299
Telarah Lagoon	260202
Greenhills Gardens	Not yet adopted and/or in draft form
Duckenfield Flood Refuge	Not yet adopted and/or in draft form
Somerset Park	Not yet adopted and/or in draft form
Sportsgrounds	Not yet adopted — in draft form
Rutherford Tennis Complex	Not yet adopted — in draft form
Playgrounds	Not yet adopted and/or in draft form
Thornton Tennis Complex	Not yet adopted — in draft form

B Appendix: Household survey



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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Maitland Council is reviewing its Recreation and Open Space Strategy. In order to ensure that future strategies provide the kind of recreation opportunities residents think are important, Maitland Council distributed 16,000 self completion questionnaires in May 2003 with a closing date of 30 June 2003. 2,000 questionnaires were returned by this date (12.5%).

This report summarises the results of a survey of 625 Maitland LGA residents who were randomly selected from within each of 3 areas within the L.G.A.– West, Central or East Maitland.

The research methodology is detailed in Section 2 of this report and the survey questionnaire can be found in Appendix I. Cross tabulations are provided under separate cover. A brief summary of the findings follows, with more detailed results shown in Section 3.

Open Spaces and Recreational areas in Maitland City Council Visited in Past Year

- The most mentioned open space or recreational areas visited in the last twelve months are:
 - Maitland Park (84%)
 - Maitland Showground (76%)
 - Maitland Pool (49%)
- One in five (22%) have also visited East Maitland Pool in the last year.
- Over nine in ten (92%) of 25-44 year olds have visited Maitland Park in the last 12 months.
- 55-64 year olds (76%) were least likely to visit Maitland Park in the past year.
- Households in West Maitland were more likely to have visited Maitland Park (91%) and Maitland Showground (80%) than other Maitland residents in the past 12 months (Central – 86% & 73%, East – 76% & 75% respectively).

Recreational Activities Participated in During the Past Year

- Walking/running for fitness/pleasure is the recreational activity most residents (80%) have participated in during the last year.
- Residents of Central Maitland were slightly more likely to report participating in this activity (85%).
- Residents of West Maitland were least likely to have walked or run for fitness/pleasure (73%).
- 55 – 64 (85%) and 25 – 34 (82%) year olds are slightly more likely to report walking/running for fitness/pleasure than other age groups.

Frequency of Use of Open Spaces and Recreational Areas

- Over six in ten (65%) of residents report using the open spaces and recreation areas in Maitland City everyday or at least once a week.
- One in three (32%) of Central Maitland residents say they usually use these areas every day.
- Three in ten of those aged 35 – 44 (29%), 45 – 55 (30%) and 65+ (29%) say they usually use the open spaces and recreation areas every day.

Overall Rating of Open Spaces and Recreational Areas

- Seven in ten of residents (70%) rate the open spaces and recreation areas in Maitland City as 'Fantastic/Very Good/Good'.
- 65+ year old residents (33%) are most likely to rate the open spaces and recreation areas as 'Very Good'.
- Three in ten (29%) 25 -34 year old residents rate these areas as 'OK'.
- 65+ year old residents are most likely to give a positive rating of 'Fantastic/Very Good/Good' (77% against a total of 70%)
- 45 – 54 year old residents are most likely to give a negative rating of 'Not Good/Terrible' (12% against a total of 6%)

Three Favourite Open Spaces or Recreation Areas in Maitland City

The three, overall, favourite open spaces or recreation areas amongst residents of the area are:

- Maitland Park (68%)
- Maitland Pool (19%)
- Walka Water Works (18%)

Facilities that Need Upgrading as a Priority

- The main facilities that residents feel need upgrading are:
 - a heated pool for year-round use (41%)
 - picnic and barbecue areas (38%)
 - walking tracks (36%)
 - playgrounds (30%)
 - off road cycling tracks (24%)
 - sports facilities (22%)
- Almost half of families with most children over 12 years old (47%) and households with 4+ members (46%) feel that upgrading the pool to allow year-round use should be a priority.
- Residents of Central Maitland (42%) are more likely than other areas to request upgrading of picnic and barbecue areas.
- Over half (52%) of residents who have lived in the area for 0 – 2 years feel that the upgrade of walking tracks should be a priority issue for Council.

Facilities that Need to be Built as a Priority

- The main facilities that residents would like Maitland Council to build are:
 - walking tracks (52%)
 - off road cycling tracks (46%)
 - picnic and barbecue areas (36%)
 - a heated pool for year-round use (34%)
 - playgrounds (23%)
 - an indoor leisure centre (22%)
- Over half the residents of Central Maitland (56%), 55 – 64 year olds (58%), and those who have lived in the area for 2 – 5 years (57%) request more walking tracks.
- Over half the residents of Central Maitland (52%), 25 – 44 year olds (57%), households with 4+members (54%), young couples with no children (54%)and families with children mainly under 12 years (58%) request the building of more off-road cycling tracks.

Desired Recreational Programs or Services not Currently Available

- 70% had no suggestions of programs or services they would like that are currently not available.
- Suggestions included an Aquatic Centre (8%), BMX Tracks (5%), and walking/running paths (5%).

2. BACKGROUND & METHODOLOGY

Maitland Council is reviewing its Recreation and Open Space Strategy. In order to ensure that future strategies provide the kind of recreation opportunities residents think are important, Maitland Council distributed 16,000 self completion questionnaires to households in May 2003 with a closing date of 30 June 2003. 2,000 questionnaires were returned by this date (12.5%).

Returns were sorted into area of residence (Q11) after which 625 Maitland LGA residents were randomly selected from within the 3 areas that make up the L.G.A.– West, Central or East Maitland.

The survey sample is shown below.

Demographic Breakdown of Survey Sample

	#	%		#	%
AGE			GENDER		
14 or younger	-	-	Male	222	36
15 to 24	23	4	Female	376	60
25 to 34	101	16	Not Answered	27	4
35 to 44	154	25	NO. PEOPLE IN HOUSEHOLD		
45 to 54	139	22	One	54	9
55 to 64	105	17	Two	238	38
65 plus	99	16	Three	110	18
Not Answered	4	1	Four or more	215	34
AREA OF RESIDENCE			Not Answered	8	1
West Maitland	201	32	YEARS LIVED IN MAITLAND		
Central Maitland	223	36	0 to 2 years	64	10
East Maitland	201	32	2 to 5 years	69	11
HOUSEHOLD STRUCTURE			5 to 10 years	81	13
Single, living alone / with peers	16	3	10 or more years	408	65
Young couple, no children	28	4	Not Answered	3	-
Family, most children under 12	179	29			
Family most children over 12	148	24			
Mature couple/single, no children	234	37			
Not Answered	17	3			

3. COMPILATION OF FINDINGS

3.1. OPEN SPACES AND RECREATION AREAS VISITED IN THE LAST YEAR

Question: Please tick the open spaces and recreation areas in Maitland City Council that you or a member of your household has visited in the last year.

Maitland Park (84%) is the most mentioned open space or recreational area visited in the last twelve months, followed by Maitland Showground (76%) and Maitland Pool (49%). One in five (22%) have also visited East Maitland Pool in the last year.

- Those who have lived in the Maitland area for 5 – 10 years were more likely to have visited Maitland Park during the nominated period (89%).
- Households with four or more members were most likely to visit Maitland Park (92%) in the last year as were families with most children under the age of 12 years (96%). One person households were the least likely to have visited Maitland Park during the same period (76%)
- Over nine in ten (92%) of 25-44 year olds have visited Maitland Park in the last 12 months. 55-64 year olds (76%) were least likely to visit Maitland Park in the past year.
- Table 1, below, shows the distribution of responses by age of respondent.

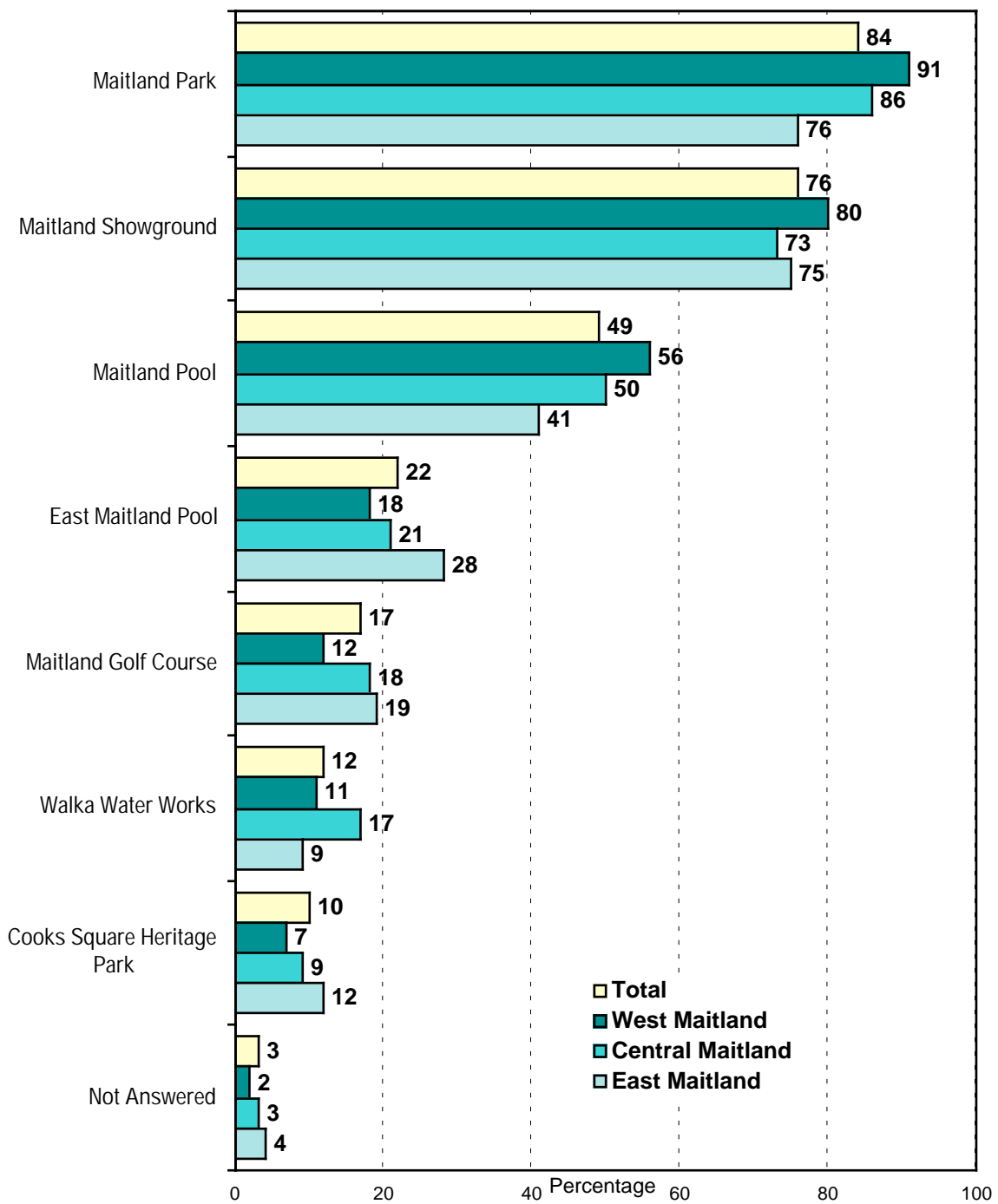
Table 1. Open Spaces & Recreation Areas Visited in the Last Year by Age Group

	Total (n=625) %	15-24 (n=23) %	25-34 (n=101) %	35-44 (n=154) %	45-54 (n=139) %	55-64 (n=105) %	65 + (n=99) %
Maitland Park	84	78	92	92	81	76	77
Maitland Showground	76	87	82	81	74	81	56
Maitland Pool	49	61	54	69	50	31	27
East Maitland Pool	22	30	21	34	22	17	10
Maitland Golf Course	17	17	19	16	22	16	8
Walka Water Works	12	4	13	14	17	10	6
Cooks Square Heritage Park	10	9	7	8	13	12	9

- Households in West Maitland were more likely to have visited Maitland Park (91%) and Maitland Showground (80%) than other Maitland residents in the past 12 months (Central – 86% & 73%, East – 76% & 75% respectively).

Figure 1, below, shows responses by area of residence.

Figure 1: Open Spaces & Recreation Areas Visited in the Last Year by Area of Residence

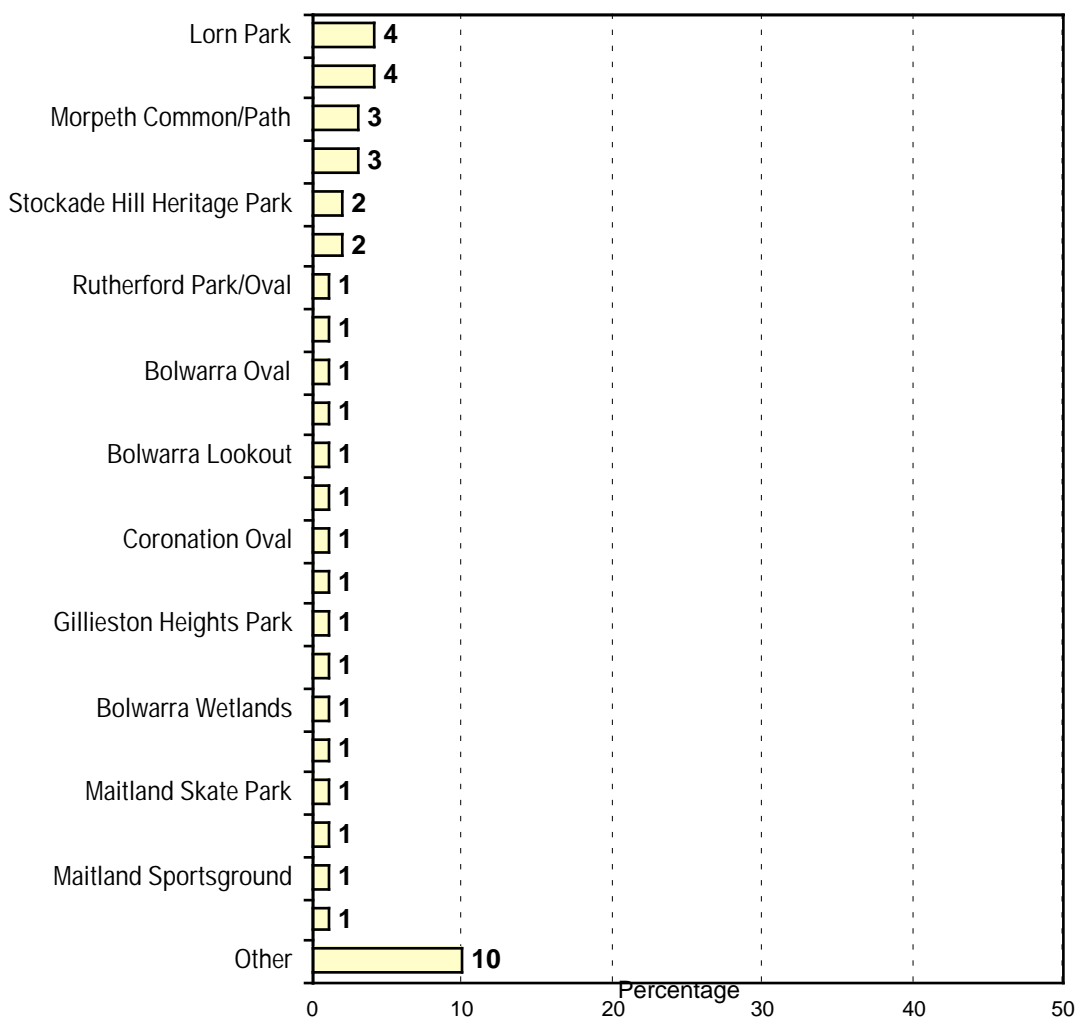


Base: n=625

Question: Please write in any others

- One in ten (11%) Central Maitland residents visited Lorn Park in the last year.
- Residents aged 35-44 were far more likely to visit Lorn Park (11%) than other age groups.
- Families with most children under the age of twelve were also the most likely (8%) to have visited Lorn Park than any other household type.
- Telarah Lagoon/Wetlands was most frequented by residents of West Maitland (9%), and those who have lived in the Maitland area for 2 – 5 years (9%).
- Figure 2, below, shows responses.

Figure 2: Open Spaces & Recreation Areas Visited in the Last Year – Other Mentions



Base: n=625

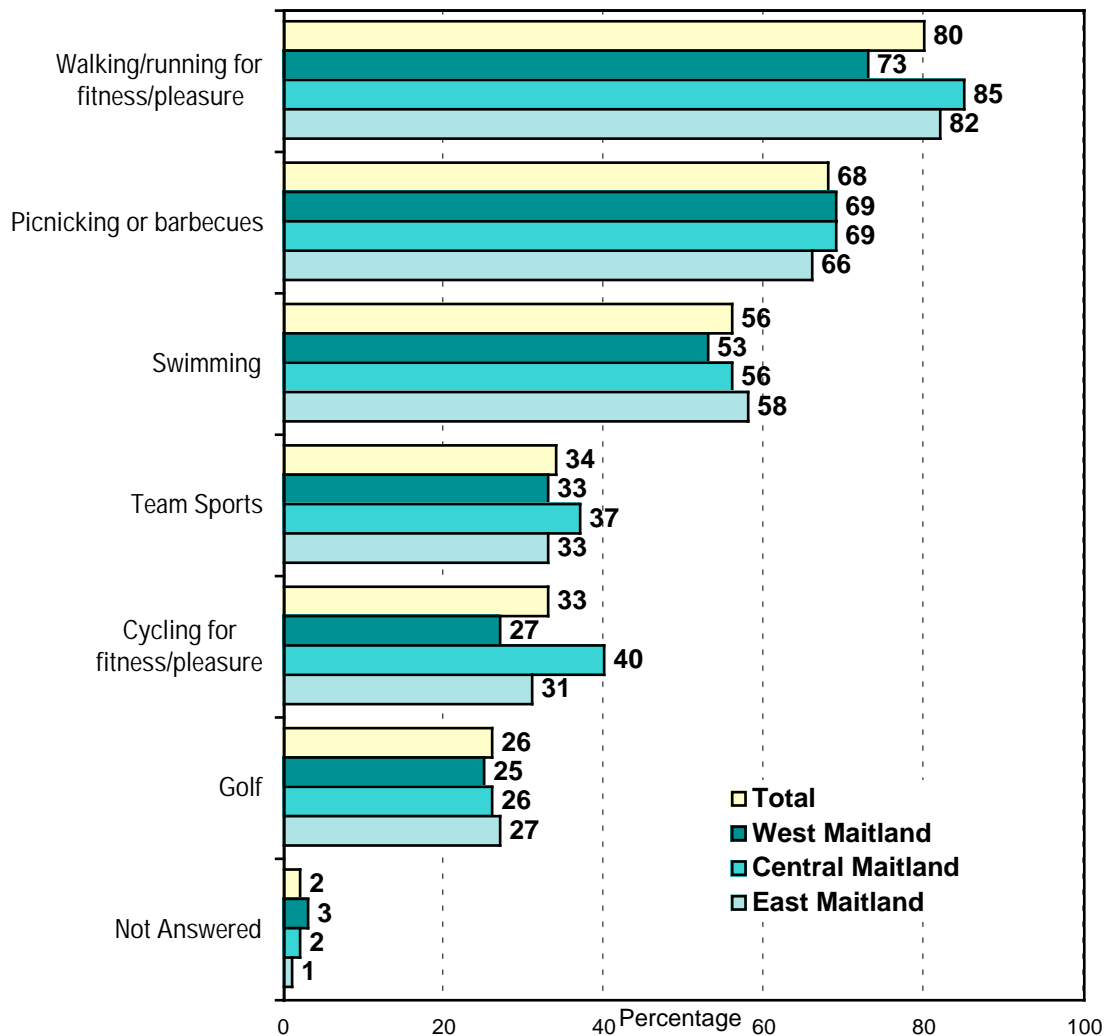
3.2. RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES PARTICIPATED IN DURING THE LAST YEAR

Question: Please tick the recreational activities that you or a member of your household has participated in during the last year.

Walking/running for fitness/pleasure is the recreational activity most residents (80%) have participated in during the last year.

- Residents of Central Maitland were slightly more likely to report participating in this activity (85%). Residents of West Maitland were least likely to have walked or run for fitness/pleasure (73%).
- Figure 3, below, shows recreational activities participated in by area of residence.

Figure 3: Recreational Activities Participated in During the Year by Area of Residence



Base: n=625

- 55 – 64 (85%) and 25 – 34 (82%) year olds are slightly more likely to report walking/running for fitness/pleasure than other age groups.
- Those who have lived in the area for 2 – 5 years (87%), and one person households (85%), are also most likely to report participating in this recreational activity.
- Table 2 below, shows response distribution by age of respondents.

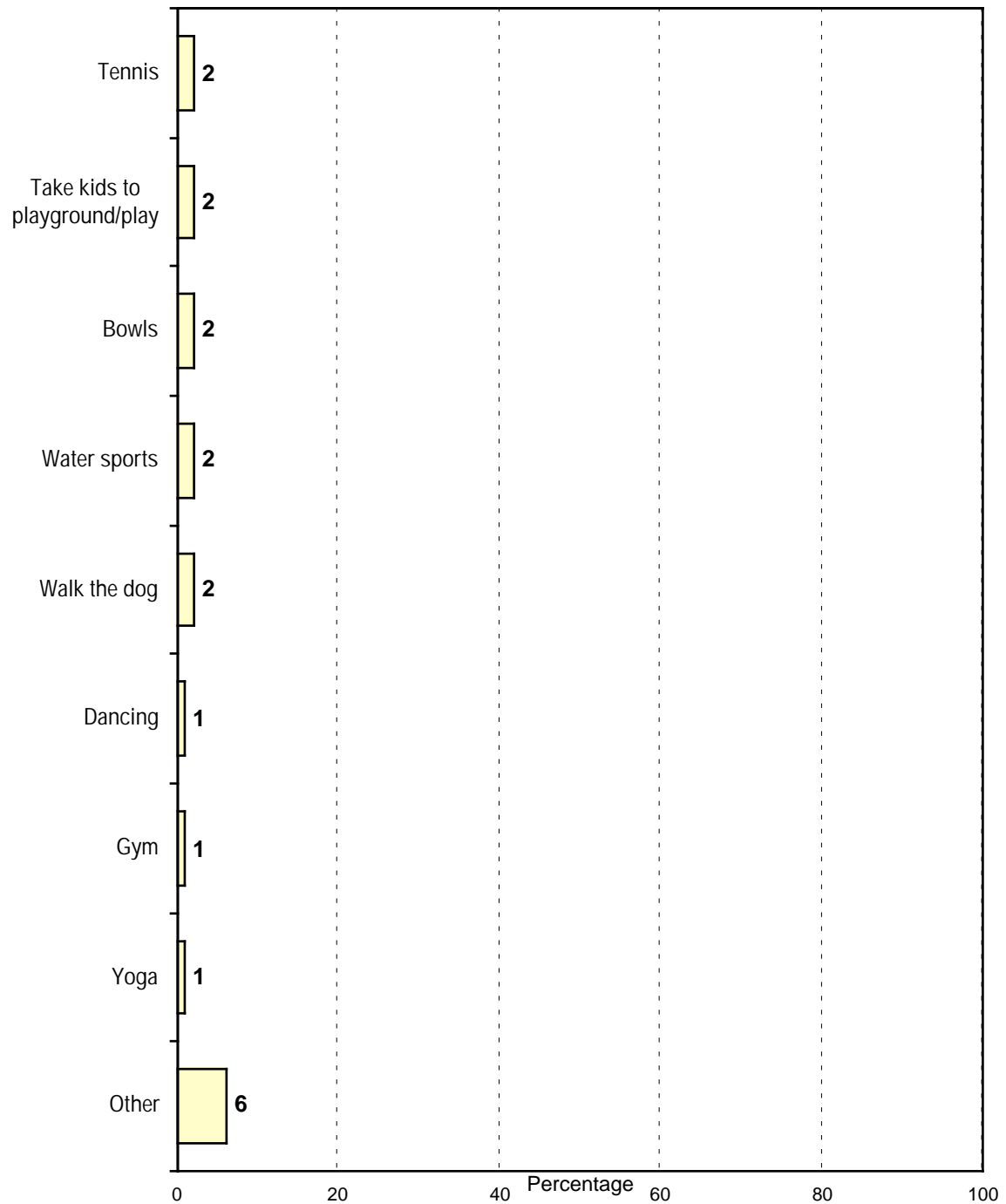
Table 2 Recreational Activities Participated in During Last Year by Age Group

	Total (n=625) %	15-24 (n=23) %	25-34 (n=101) %	35-44 (n=154) %	45-54 (n=139) %	55-64 (n=105) %	65 + (n=99) %
Walking/Running for fitness/pleasure	80	74	83	81	80	85	73
Picnicking or barbecues	68	52	85	80	62	67	44
Swimming	56	57	67	72	62	45	22
Team Sports	34	39	31	55	43	16	13
Cycling for fitness/pleasure	33	35	40	50	32	24	11
Golf	26	39	30	31	31	23	8

Question: Please write in any others

- Figure 4 below shows all other responses.

Figure 4: Recreational Activities Participated in During the Year – Other Mentions



Base: n=625

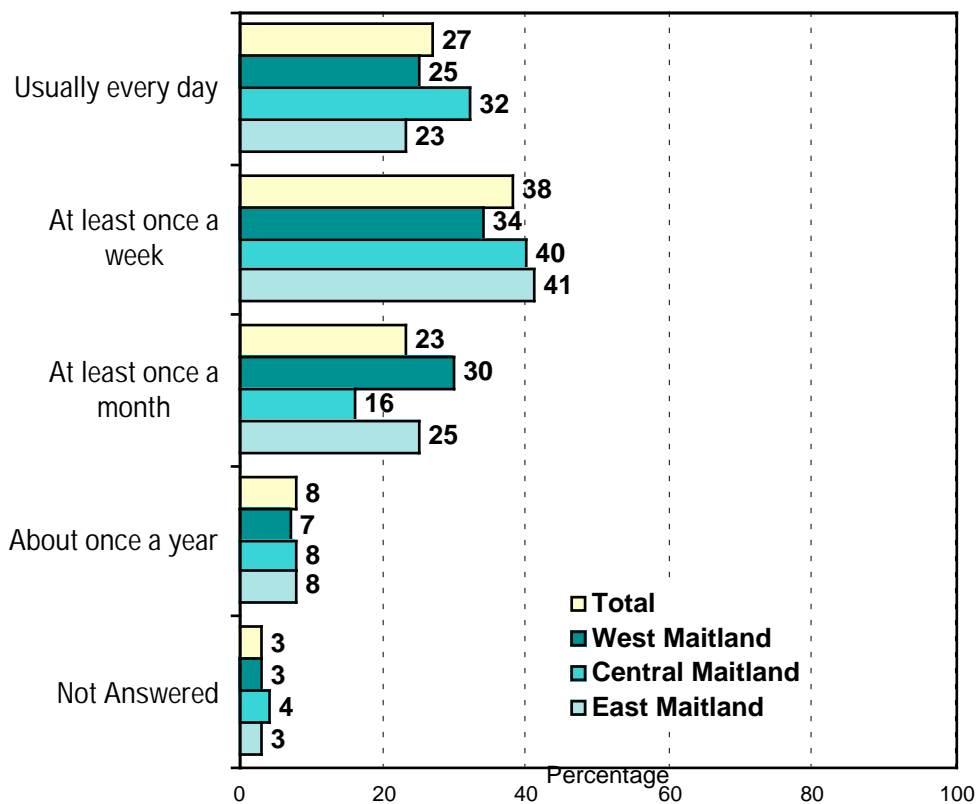
3.3. FREQUENCY OF USE OF OPEN SPACES & RECREATIONAL AREAS

Question: How often do people in your household use open spaces and recreation areas in Maitland City?

Over six in ten (65%) of residents report using the open spaces and recreation areas in Maitland City everyday or at least once a week.

- One in three (32%) of Central Maitland residents say they usually use these areas every day.
- Four in ten residents of Central Maitland (40%) and East Maitland (41%) use these areas at least once a week.
- One in three (30%) of West Maitland residents say they use these areas at least once a month.
- Figure 5, below shows responses by area of residence.

Figure 5: Frequency of Use of Open Spaces & Recreation Areas by Area of Residence



Base: n=625

- Three in ten of those aged 35 – 44 (29%), 45 – 55 (30%) and 65+ (29%) say they usually use the open spaces and recreation areas every day.
- A further 46% of 35 – 44 year olds use the areas at least once a week.
- Table 3 below shows frequency of use by age group.

Table 3. Frequency of Use of Open Spaces & Recreation Areas by Age Group

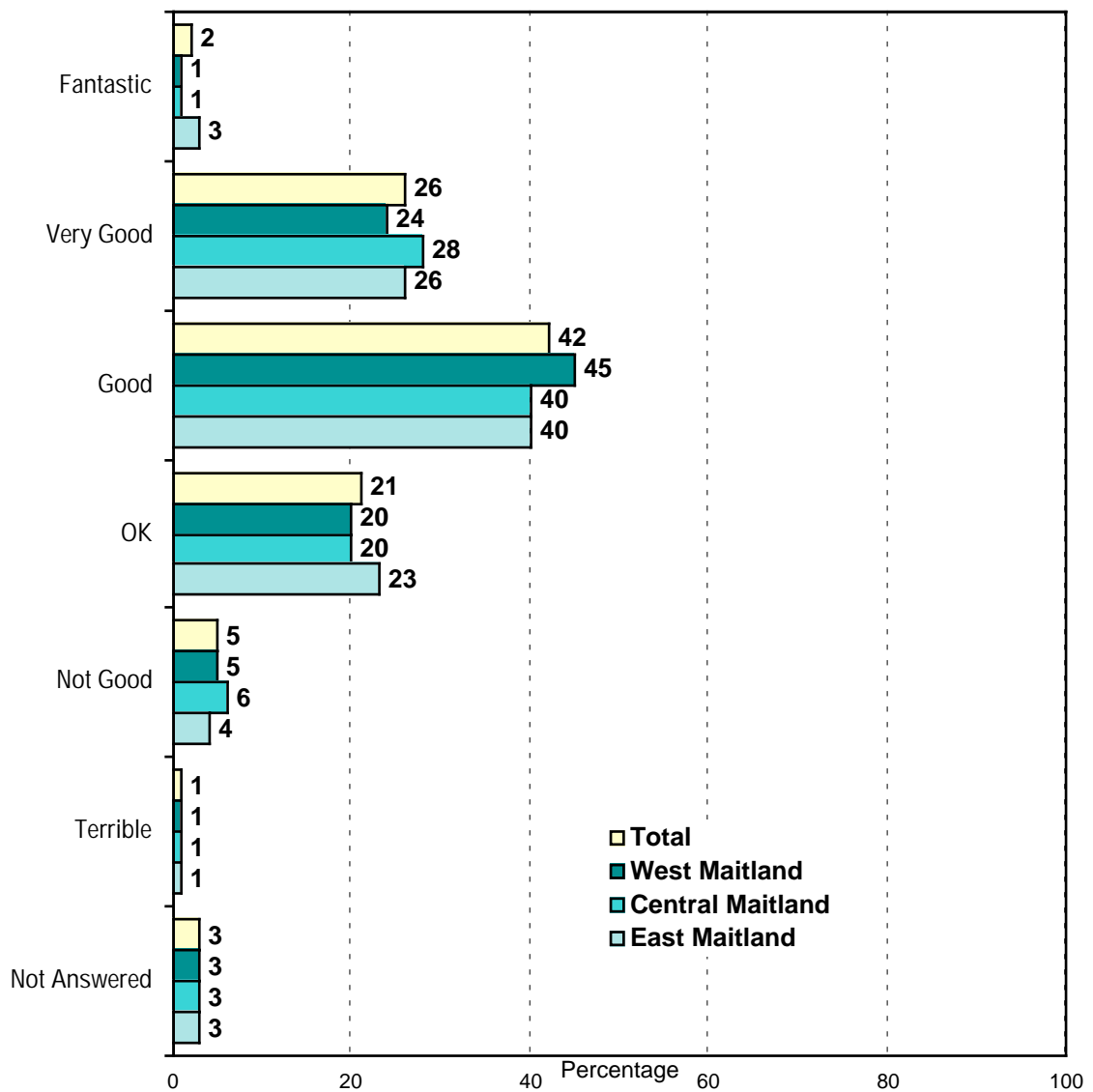
	Total (n=625) %	15-24 (n=23) %	25-34 (n=101) %	35-44 (n=154) %	45-54 (n=139) %	55-64 (n=105) %	65 + (n=99) %
Usually every day	27	22	22	29	30	24	29
At least once a week	38	35	43	46	40	35	24
At least once a month	23	26	28	22	19	27	22
About once a year	8	13	6	2	9	10	13
Not Answered	3	4	2	1	1	4	11
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

3.4. OVERALL RATING OF OPEN SPACES & RECREATION AREAS

Question: Overall, how do you rate the open spaces and recreation areas in Maitland City?

- Seven in ten of residents (70%) rate the open spaces and recreation areas in Maitland City as ‘Fantastic/Very Good/Good’.
- Figure 6 below shows ratings by area of residence.

Figure 6: Overall Rating of Open Spaces & Recreation Areas by Area of Residence



Base: n=625

- 65+ year old residents (33%) are most likely to rate the open spaces and recreation areas as 'Very Good'.
- Three in ten (29%) 25 -34 year old residents rate these areas as 'OK'.
- 65+ year old residents are most likely to give a positive rating (77% against a total of 70%) while 25 – 34 year old residents are least likely to give a positive rating (66% against a total of 70%).
- 45 – 54 year old residents are most likely to give a negative rating of 'Not Good/Terrible' (12% against a total of 6%)
- 15 – 24 & 25 - 34 year old residents are least likely to give a negative rating of 'Not Good/Terrible' (4% each against a total of 6%)
- Table 4 below shows all ratings by age group.

Table 4. Overall Rating of Open Spaces & Recreation Areas by Age Group

	Total (n=625) %	15-24 (n=23) %	25-34 (n=101) %	35-44 (n=154) %	45-54 (n=139) %	55-64 (n=105) %	65 + (n=99) %
Fantastic	2	-	4	1	1	2	2
Very Good	26	26	22	25	29	23	33
Good	42	48	41	44	37	47	41
OK	21	17	29	24	19	17	13
Not Good	5	4	2	4	9	7	4
Terrible	1	-	2	1	2	-	1
Not Answered	3	4	1	1	3	5	5
Total 'Good'	70	74	66	70	67	71	77
Total 'Bad'	6	4	4	6	12	7	5

3.5. THREE FAVOURITE OPEN SPACES OR RECREATION AREAS

Question: What are your three favourite open spaces or recreation areas in Maitland City?

The three, overall, favourite open spaces or recreation areas amongst residents of the area are Maitland Park (68%), Maitland Pool (19%) and Walka Water Works (18%).

First Mention

- Half (51%) of residents nominate Maitland Park first as their favourite open space or recreation area.
- Residents of West Maitland (56%) are slightly more likely to nominate Maitland Park as their favourite while East Maitland residents (46%) are least likely to feel the same way.

Second Mention

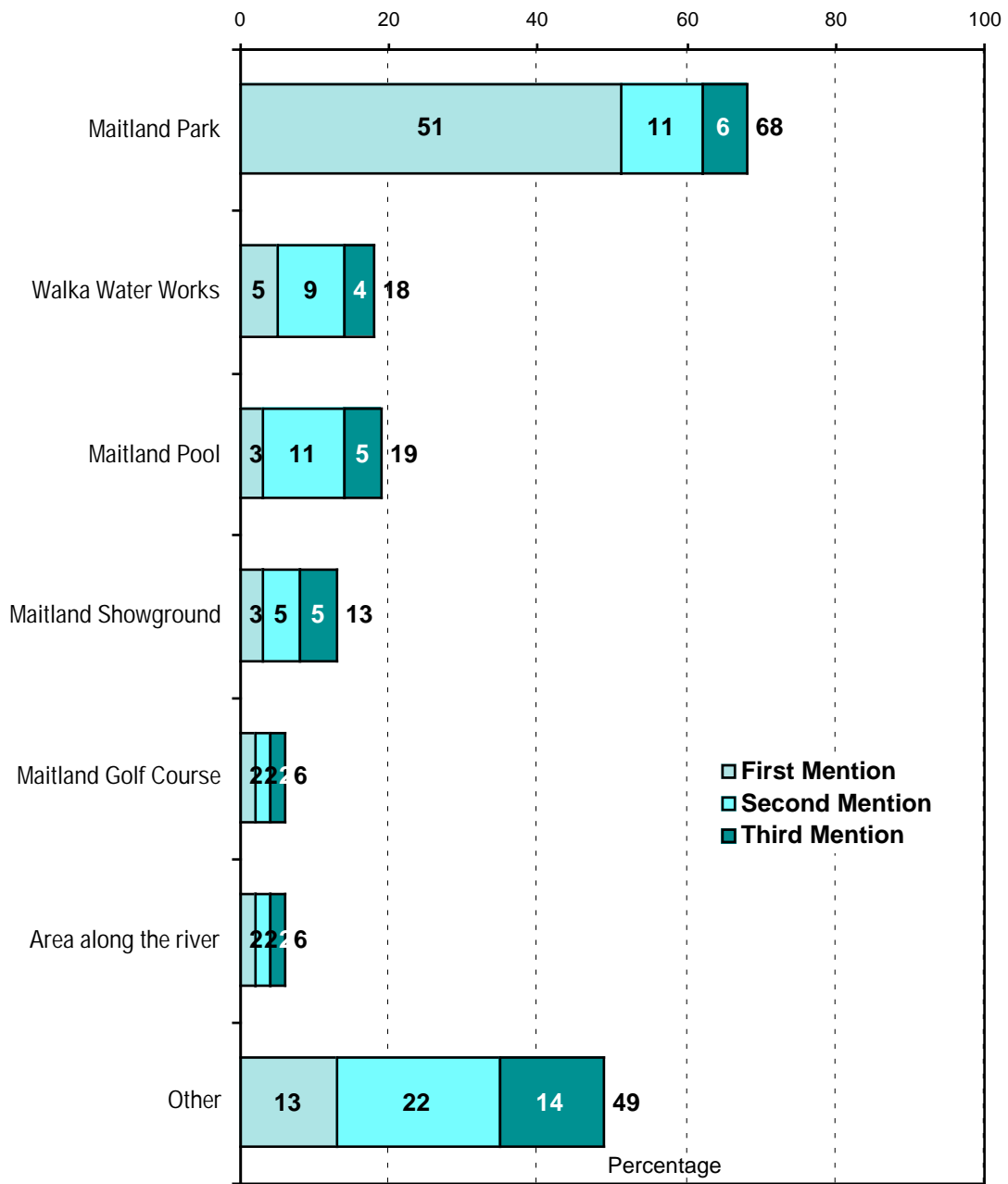
- A further one in ten (11%) nominate Maitland Park as their second most favourite open space or recreation area.
- One in five (19%) of those who have lived in the area for 2 – 5 years nominated Maitland Park as their second most favourite.
- One in ten (11%) residents nominate Maitland Pool as their second most favourite open space or recreation area.
- 35 44 year olds (21%) are more likely to nominate Maitland Pool as their second favourite.
- 33% of respondents did not nominate a second favourite

Third Mention

- Again, Maitland Park is mentioned most often as third favourite by 6% of respondents
- Maitland Showground (5%) and Maitland Pool (5%) are the next most commonly mentioned.
- Over half (56%) did not nominate a third favourite.

- Figure 7 below shows responses by type of mention.

Figure 7: Three Favourite Open Spaces or Recreation Areas



Base: n=625

3.6. FACILITIES THAT NEED TO BE UPGRADED OR BUILT

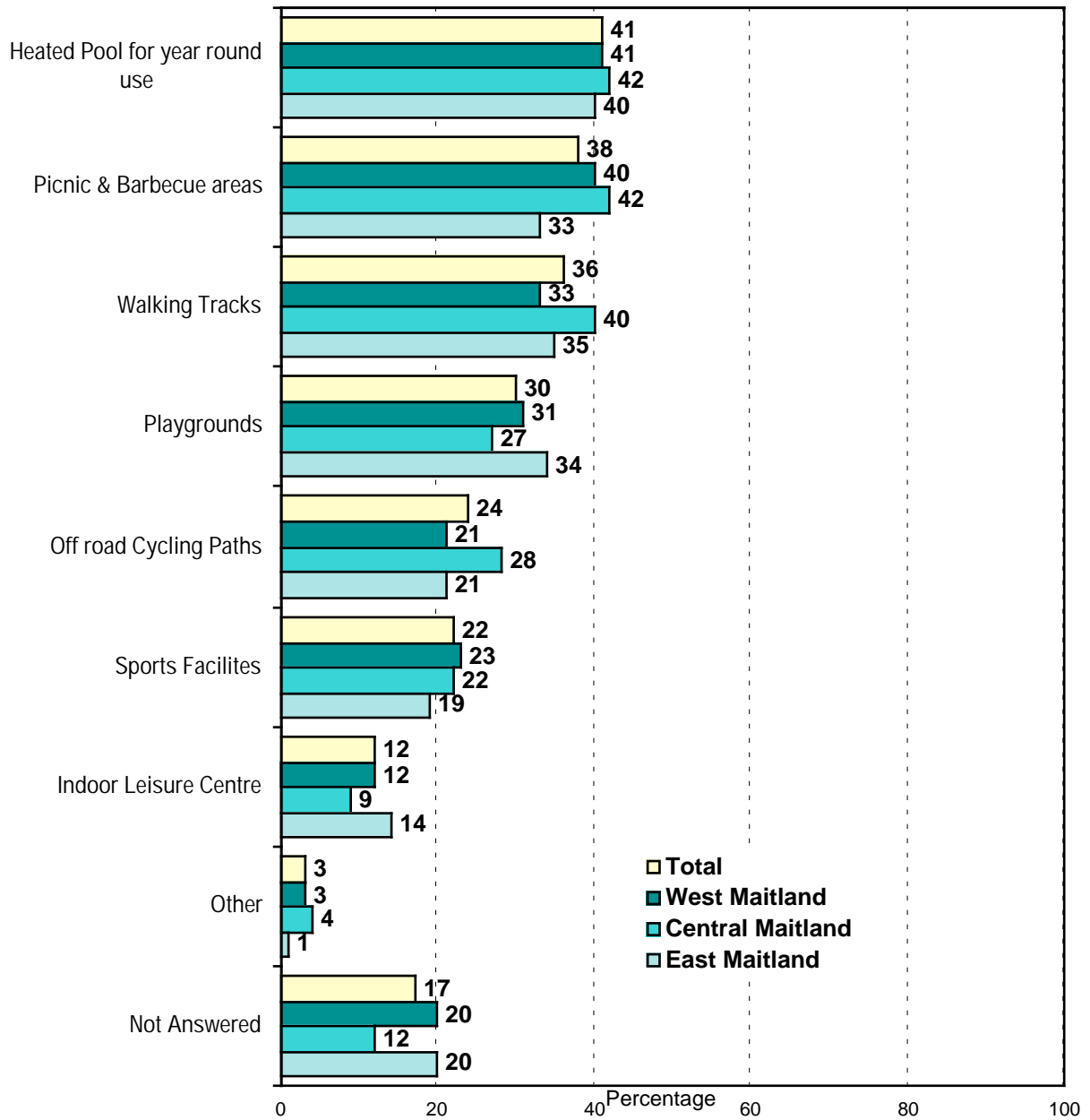
Question: Please tick the facilities that Maitland City Council should give priority to upgrading and / or building. Tick up to three in each column.

Upgrading Current Facilities

The main facilities that residents feel need upgrading are a heated pool for year-round use (41%), picnic and barbecue areas (38%), walking tracks (36%), playgrounds (30%), off road cycling tracks (24%) and sports facilities (22%).

- Almost half of families with most children over 12 years old (47%) and households with 4+ members (46%) feel that upgrading the pool to allow year-round use should be a priority.
- Residents of Central Maitland (42%) are more likely than other areas to request upgrading of picnic and barbecue areas.
- Over half (52%) of residents who have lived in the area for 0 – 2 years feel that the upgrade of walking tracks should be a priority issue for Council.
- Over four in ten (43%) of families with most children under 12 agree that playgrounds should be upgraded.
- Almost three in ten of Central Maitland residents (28%) would like to see off-road cycling tracks upgraded as a matter of priority.
- Three in ten families with most children over 12 years (30%) believe that sporting facilities should be upgraded as a matter of priority.
- Figure 8 over the page shows responses by area of residence.

Figure 8: Facilities that Should be Upgraded by Area of Residence



Base: n=625

- Over four in ten of 45 – 54 (43%), 55 – 64 (45%) and 65+ year olds (43%) nominate the upgrade of walking tracks as a priority issue for Maitland Council.
- Over four in ten (44%) of 25 – 34 year olds agree that playgrounds should be upgraded.
- Three in ten of 45 – 54 year olds (29%) would like to see off-road cycling tracks upgraded as a matter of priority.
- Table 4 below shows responses by age group

Table 4. Facilities that should be Upgraded by Age

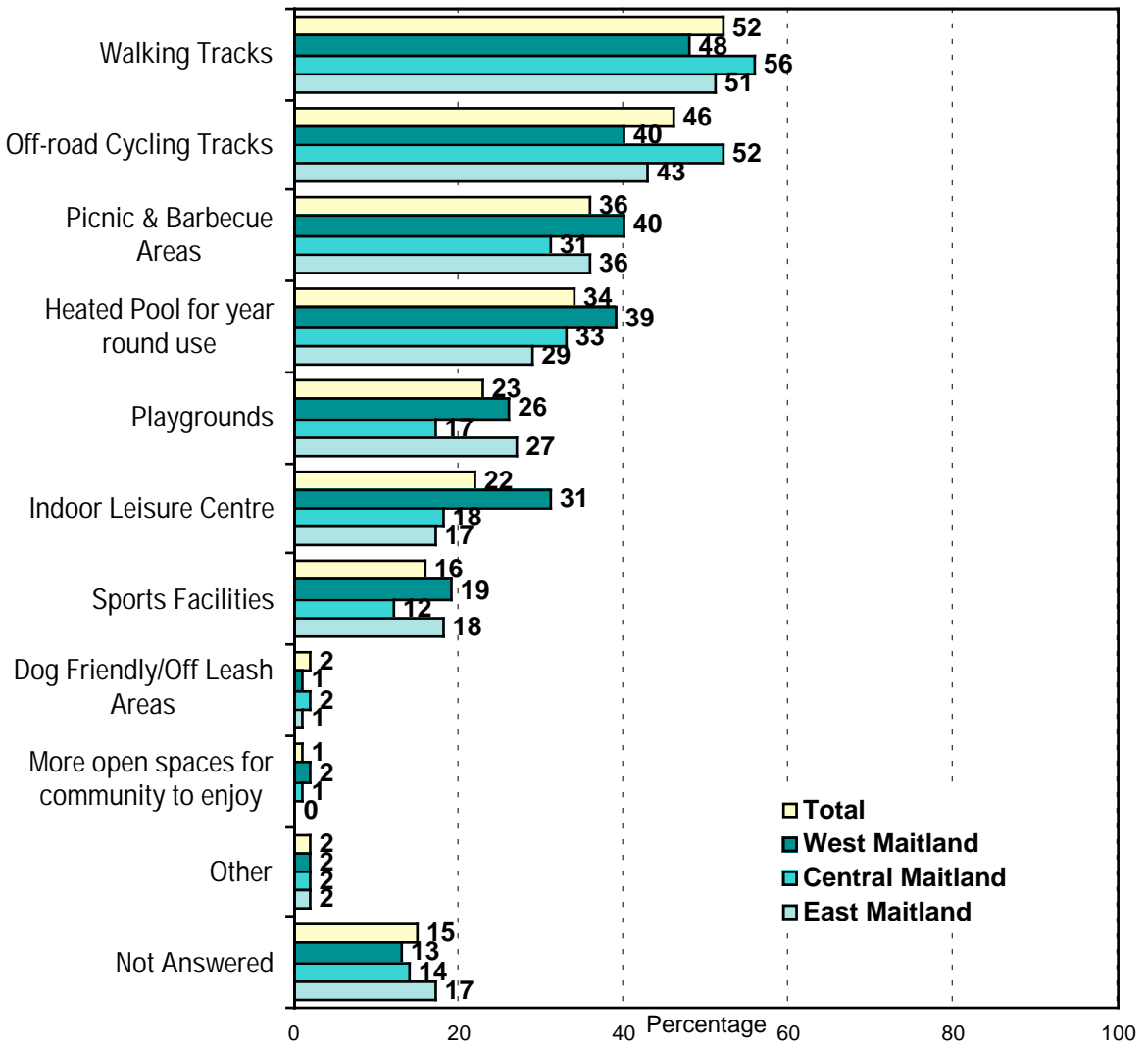
	Total (n=625) %	15-24 (n=23) %	25-34 (n=101) %	35-44 (n=154) %	45-54 (n=139) %	55-64 (n=105) %	65 + (n=99) %
Heated pool for year-round use	41	22	44	42	45	34	43
Picnic and barbecue areas	38	17	38	37	39	41	41
Walking tracks	36	26	27	27	43	45	43
Playgrounds	30	43	44	33	19	30	26
Off-road cycling tracks/paths	24	9	17	24	29	28	21
Sports facilities	22	39	23	24	19	20	18
Indoor leisure centre	12	22	10	12	12	11	11
Other	3	-	2	1	3	4	4
Not Answered	17	22	20	21	15	12	17

Building More Facilities

The main facilities that residents would like Maitland Council to build are walking tracks (52%), off road cycling tracks (46%), picnic and barbecue areas (36%), a heated pool for year-round use (34%), playgrounds (23%) and an indoor leisure centre (22%).

- Over half the residents of Central Maitland (56%), 55 – 64 year olds (58%), and those who have lived in the area for 2 – 5 years (57%) request more walking tracks.
- Over half the residents of Central Maitland (52%), 25 – 44 year olds (57%), households with 4+members (54%), young couples with no children (54%)and families with children mainly under 12 years (58%) request the building of more off-road cycling tracks.
- Four in ten (42%) of those who have lived in the area for 5 – 10 years would like Council to build more picnic and barbecue areas.
- Over four in ten of 25 – 44 year olds (44%) and young couples with no children (46%) would like to see a heated pool built for year-round use.
- Almost four in ten of 25 – 34 year olds (38%) and families with children mainly under the age of 12 (38%) would like more playgrounds built.
- Over three in ten of residents of West Maitland (31%), 25 – 34 year olds (31%) and families with most children under 12 years (31%) would like Council to build an indoor leisure centre.
- Figure 9, over the page, shows responses by area of residence.

Figure 9: Facilities that should be Built by Area of Residence



Base: n=625

	Total (n=625) %	15-24 (n=23) %	25-34 (n=101) %	35-44 (n=154) %	45-54 (n=139) %	55-64 (n=105) %	65 + (n=99) %
Walking tracks	52	52	51	56	53	58	37
Off-road cycling tracks/paths	46	57	54	59	41	40	26
Picnic and barbecue areas	36	43	37	36	33	42	29
Heated pool for year-round use	34	39	44	31	38	37	17
Playgrounds	23	17	38	25	17	24	16
Indoor leisure centre	22	26	31	28	22	16	9
Sports facilities	16	22	7	17	19	19	15
Dog friendly/off leash areas	2	4	3	1	-	5	-
More open spaces for community to enjoy	1	-	1	1	1	2	1
Other	2	4	2	2	-	2	4
Not Answered	15	4	3	9	14	15	37

Table 5. Facilities that should be Built by Age Group

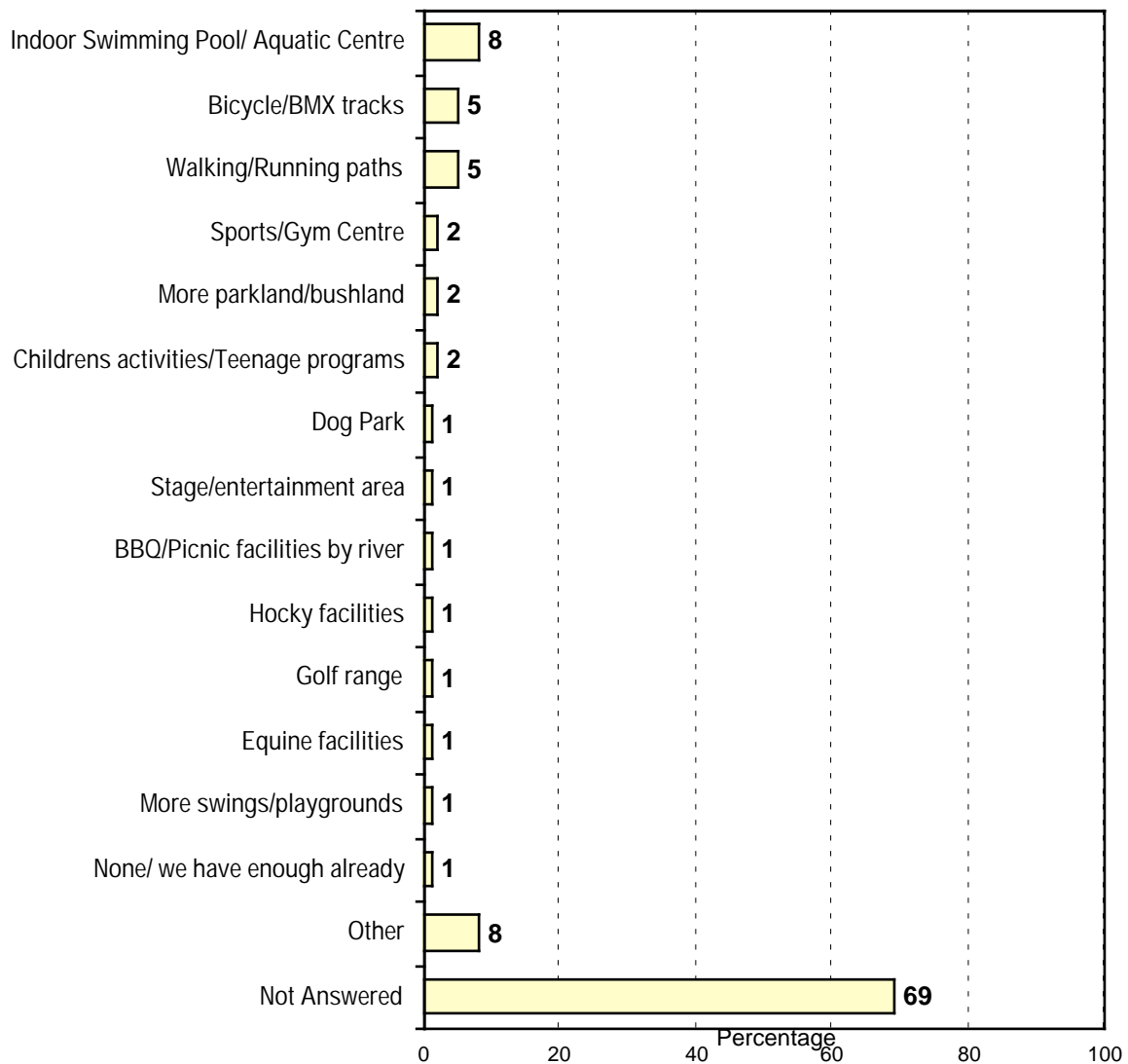
3.7. DESIRED RECREATIONAL PROGRAMS OR SERVICES

Question: Are there any recreational programs or services that are not currently available in the Maitland City area that you would like?

70% had no suggestions of programs or services they would like that are currently not available.

- Suggestions included an Aquatic Centre (8%), BMX Tracks (5%), and walking/running paths (5%).
- Figure 10 below shows the range of responses.

Figure 10: Desired Recreational Programs or Services



Base: n=625

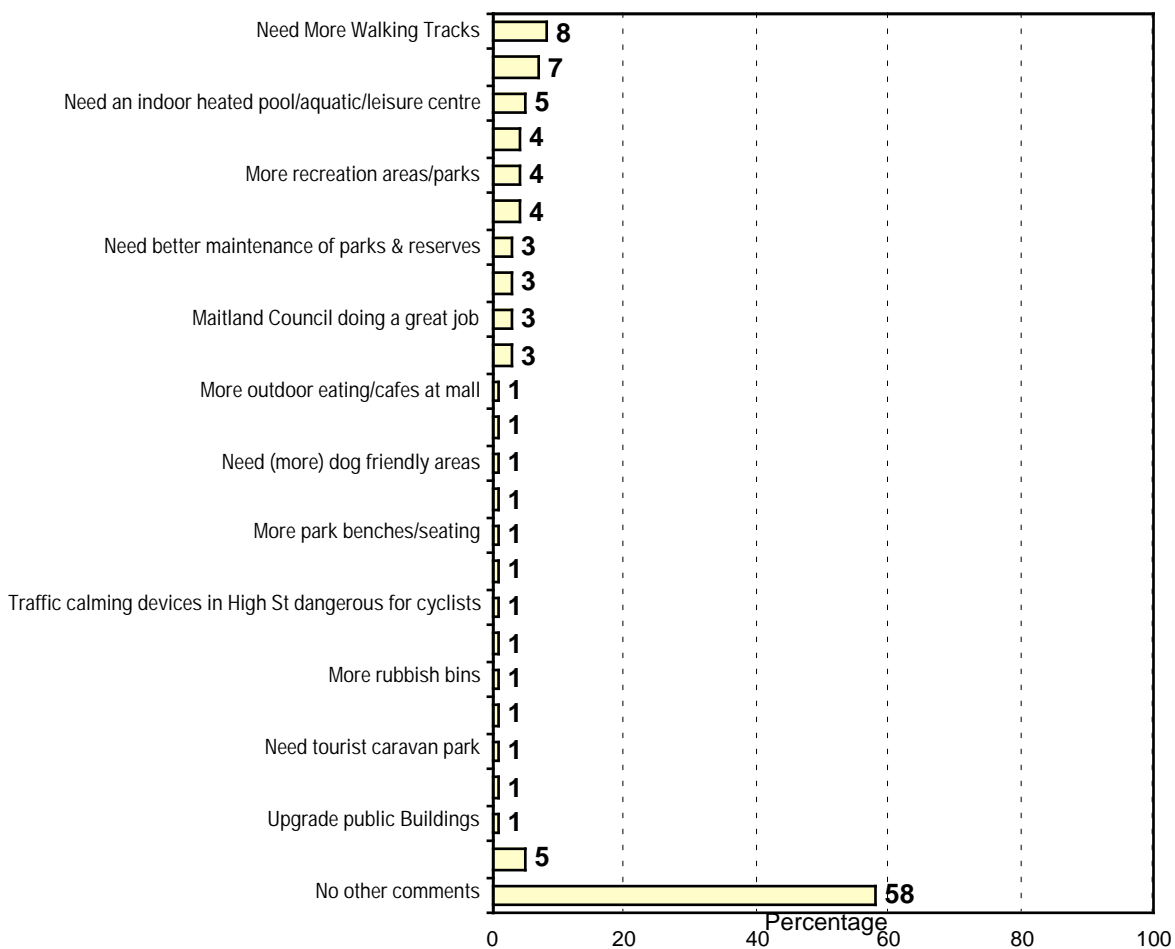
3.8. OTHER COMMENTS

Question: Other comments?

58% of residents had no further comments.

- Figure 11 below shows range of responses

Figure 11: Other Comments



Base: n=625

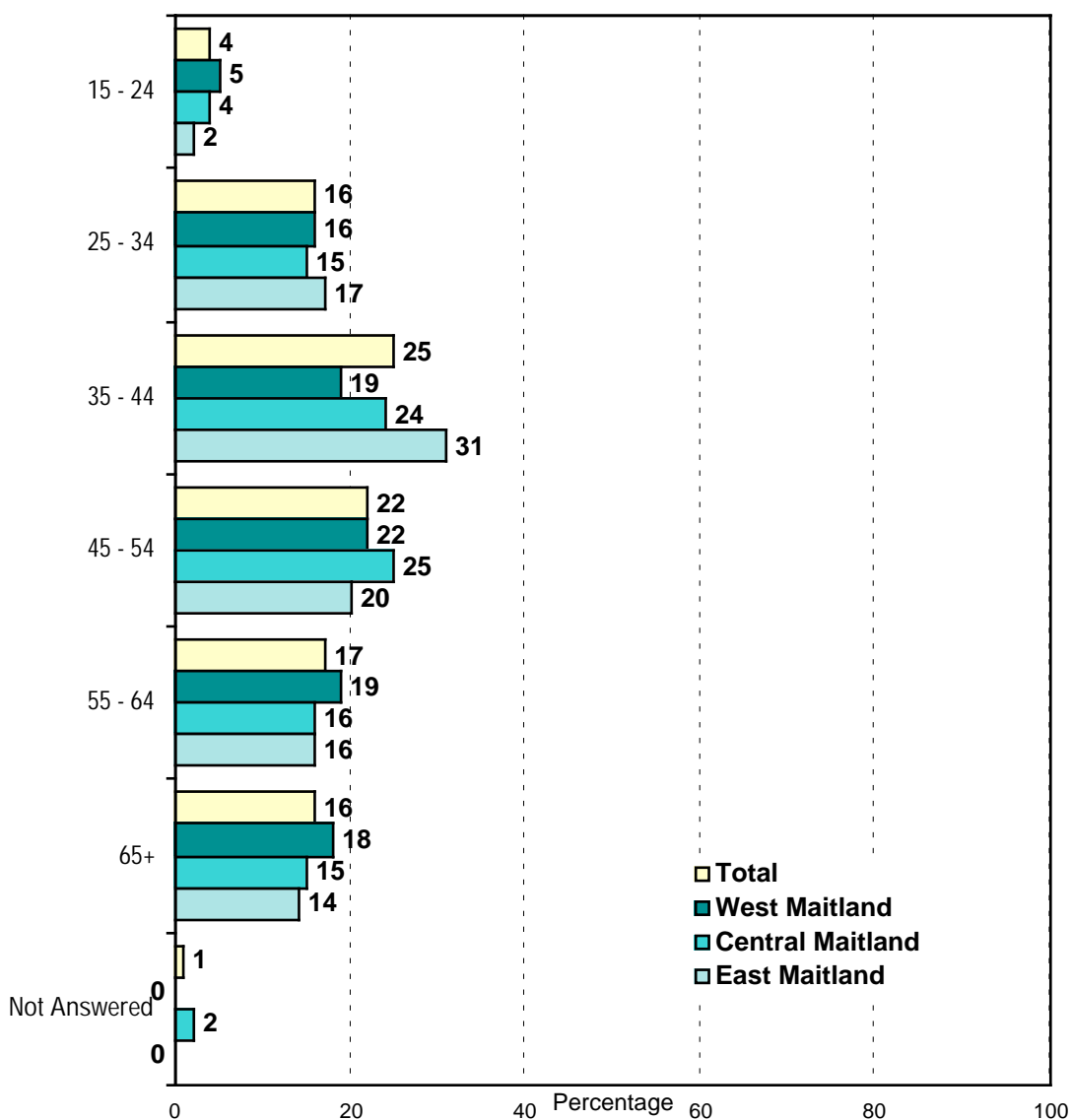
3.9. AGE

Question: Which age group do you belong to?

Almost half (47%) are aged 35 – 54 years.

- 3 in ten (31%) 35 – 44 year olds live in East Maitland.
- Figure 12 below shows age distribution by area of residence.

Figure 12: Age Distribution by Area of Residence



Base: n=625

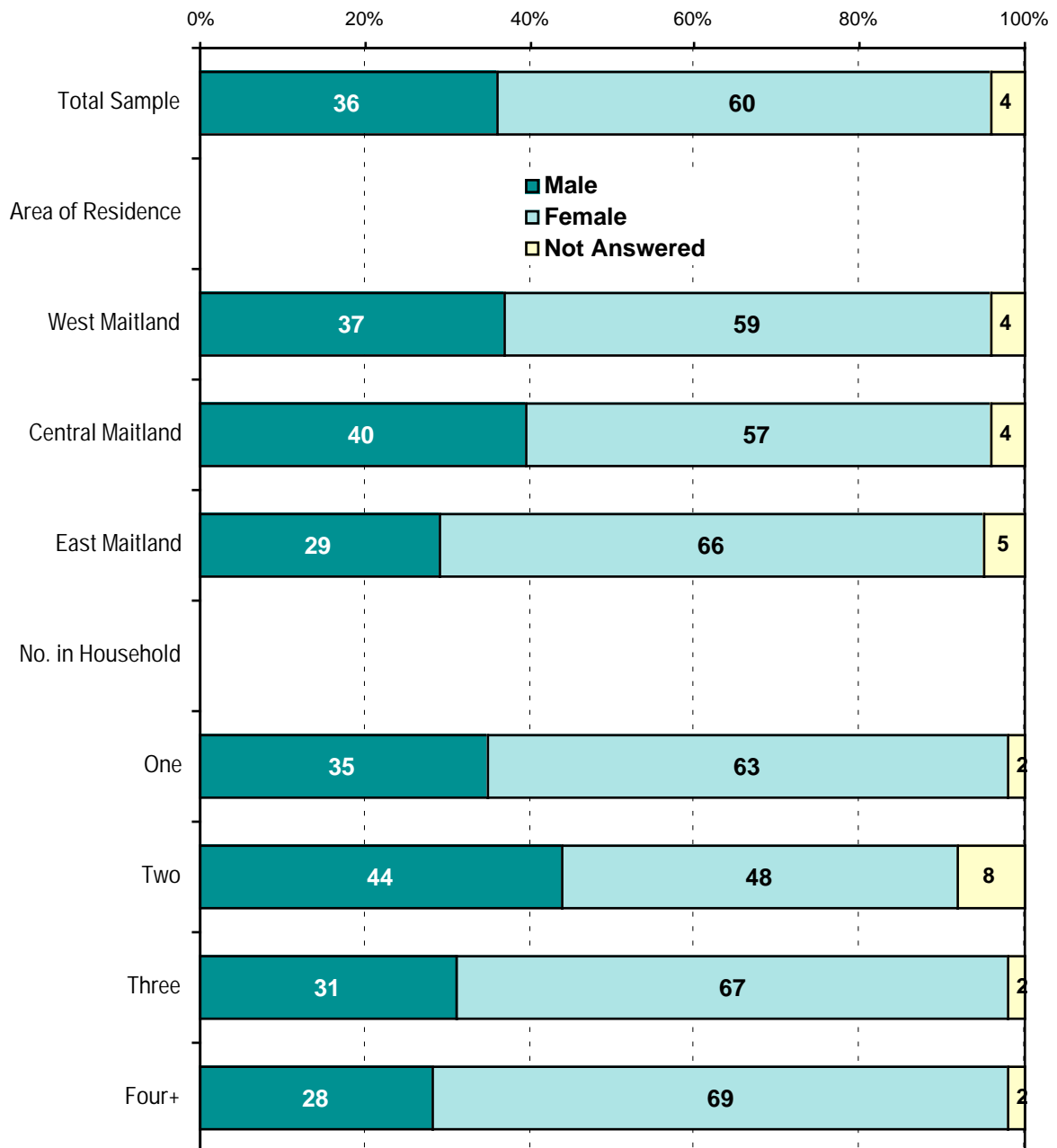
3.10. GENDER

Question: Please tick your gender

Females (60%) made up the majority of respondents.

- Figure 13 below shows gender distribution crossed by area of residence and number of people in household.

Figure 13: Gender Distribution by Residence and Number of People in Household



Base: n=625

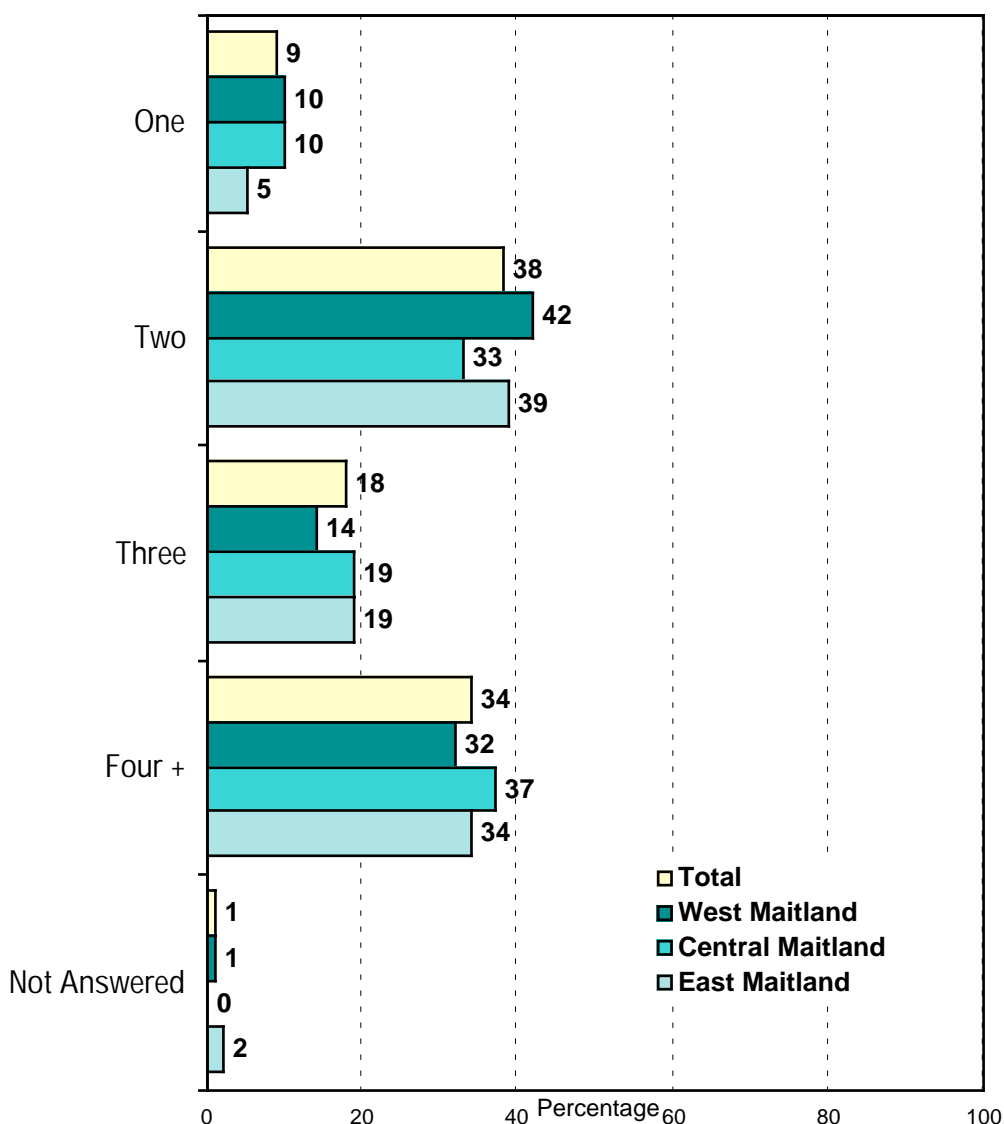
3.11. NUMBER OF PEOPLE LIVING IN HOUSEHOLD

Question: How many people live in your household?

Four in ten households (38%) contain two people.

- Seven in ten (70%) of 55 – 64 year olds live in 2 person households.
- West Maitland residents are more likely to report living in a 2 person household.
- Figure 14 below shows responses by area of residence.

Figure 14: Number of People in Household by Area of Residence



Base: n=625

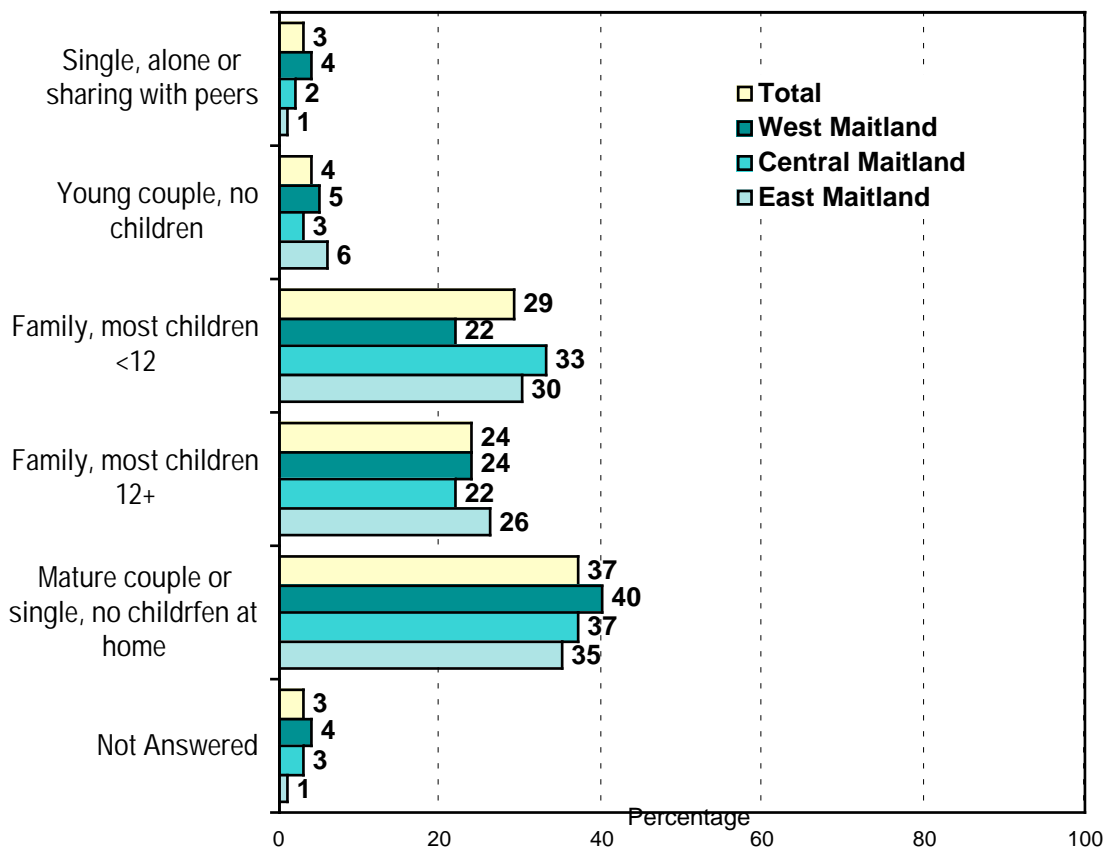
3.12. HOUSEHOLD TYPE

Question: Describe your household

The main household types that emerge are mature couples or singles with no children at home (38%), families with the majority of children under 12 years (29%) and families with the majority of children over 12 years (24%).

- Mature couples or singles are more likely to have lived in the area for 10+ years (41%) however over one in three moved into the area 0 – 2 years ago (36%) and 2 – 5 years ago (35%).
- Over half (56%) of families with the majority of children under 12 years live in households of 4+ people.
- Figure 15 below shows distribution by area of residence.

Figure 15: Household Structure by Area of Residence



Base: n=625

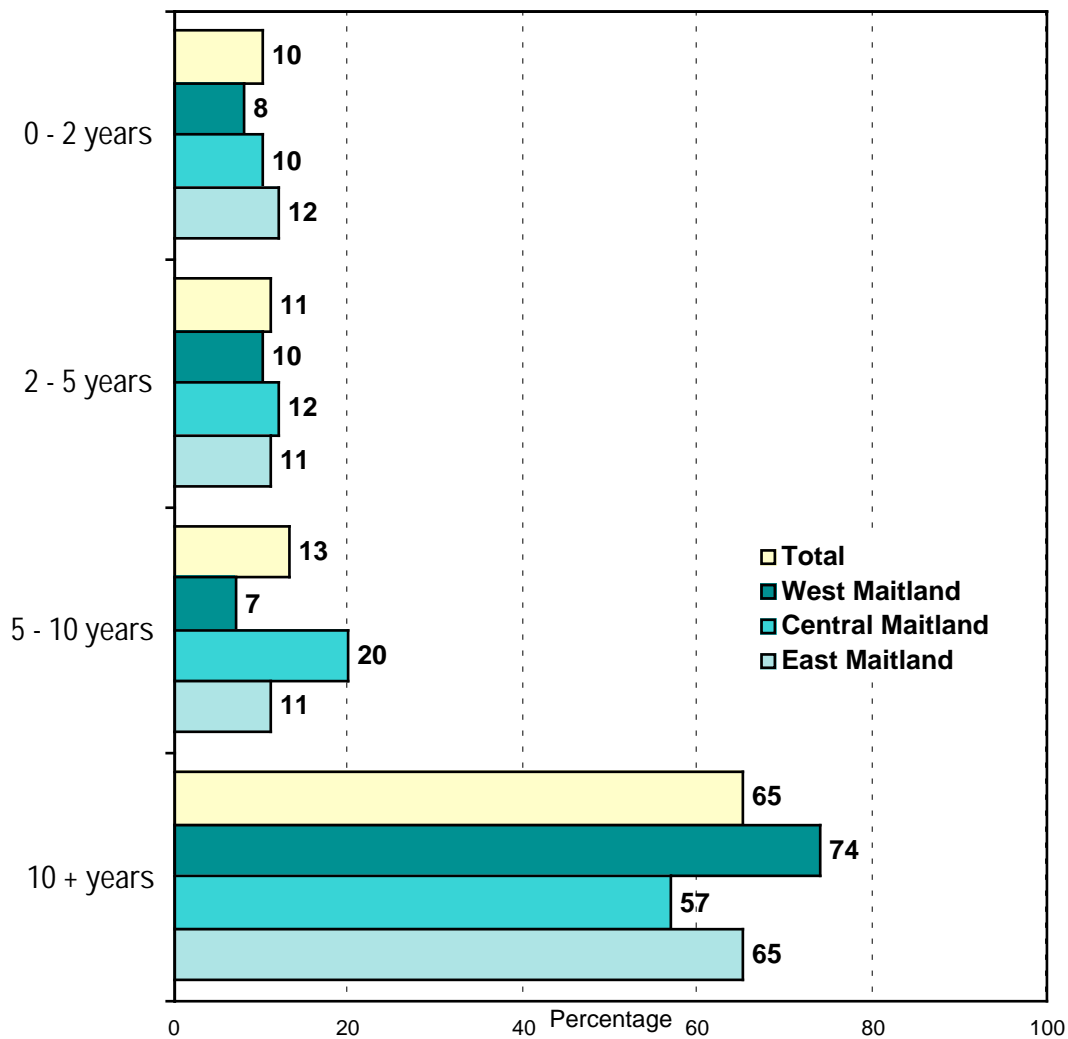
3.13. NUMBER OF YEARS LIVED IN MAITLAND

Question: How long have you lived in the Maitland City Council Area?

Most (65%) have lived in the Maitland City Council Area for 10+ years.

- Three quarters (74%) of West Maitland residents have lived in the area for 10+ years.
- One in five (20%) Central Maitland residents have lived in the area for 5 – 10 years.
- Figure 16 below shows responses by area of residence.

Figure 16: Number of Years Lived in Maitland City Council Area by Residence



Base: n=625

C Appendix: Universal Design

The following information is provided by Maitland City Council.

The intent of universal design is to simplify life for everyone by making products, communications, and the built environment more usable by as many people as possible at little or no extra cost. Universal design benefits people of all ages and abilities.

By incorporating the characteristics necessary for people with physical limitations into the design of common products and building spaces, it is easier and safer for everyone to use and more widely marketable and profitable. A universal design approach goes beyond the minimum requirements and limitations of the Building Code of Australia, an Australian Standard or even a local development control plan.

SEVEN PRINCIPLES OF UNIVERSAL DESIGN

(Note: all guidelines may not be relevant to all designs.)

PRINCIPLE ONE: Equitable Use

Design for everyone and every ability. The design should be useful and marketable to people with diverse abilities and should avoid stigmatising users. The design should:

- Provide the same means of use for everyone.
- Avoid segregating or stigmatising any users.
- Provide privacy, security, and safety should be equally available for everyone.
- Make the design appealing to people who use it.

PRINCIPLE TWO: Flexibility in Use

Flexible design and choices. The design accommodates a wide range of individual preferences and abilities. The design should:

- Provide choice in methods of use.
- Accommodate right- or left-handed access and use.
- Facilitate people's accuracy and precision.
- Be adaptable to people's pace.

PRINCIPLE THREE: Simple and Intuitive Use

Design that's simple and easy to use. The design should be easy to understand, regardless of the person's experience, knowledge, language skills, or current concentration level. The design should:

- Eliminate unnecessary complexity.
- Be consistent with user expectations and intuition.
- Accommodate a wide range of literacy and language skills.
- Arrange information consistent with its importance.
- Provide effective prompting and feedback during and after task completion.

PRINCIPLE FOUR: Perceptible Information

Design that naturally makes sense. The design communicates necessary information effectively to the person regardless of ambient conditions or the person's sensory abilities. The design should:

- Use different modes (pictorial, verbal, tactile) for redundant presentation of essential information.
- Provide adequate contrast between essential information and its surroundings.
- Maximize "legibility" of essential information.
- Differentiate elements in ways that can be described (i.e., make it easy to give instructions or directions).
- Provide compatibility with a variety of techniques or devices used by people with sensory limitations.

PRINCIPLE FIVE: Tolerance for Error

Design that protects users. The design minimizes hazards and the adverse consequences of accidental or unintended actions. The design should:

- Arrange elements to minimize hazards and errors: most used elements, most accessible; hazardous elements eliminated, isolated, or shielded.
- Provide warnings of hazards and errors.
- Provide fail safe features.
- Discourage unconscious action in tasks that require vigilance.

PRINCIPLE SIX: Low Physical Effort

Design that requires minimal exertion. The design can be used efficiently and comfortably and with a minimum of fatigue. The design should:

- Allow user to maintain a neutral body position.
- Use reasonable operating forces.
- Minimise repetitive actions.
- Minimise sustained physical effort.

PRINCIPLE SEVEN: Size and Space for Approach and Use

Design that works for all shapes and sizes. Appropriate size and spacing should be provided for approach, reach, manipulation, and use regardless of person's body size, posture, or mobility. The design should:

- Provide a clear line of sight to important elements for any seated or standing user.
- Make reach to all components comfortable for any seated or standing user.
- Accommodate variations in hand and grip size.
- Provide adequate space for the use of assistive devices or personal assistance.

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