

Community Facilities Network Supporting Plan Summary

2025-2035

Community Infrastructure Strategy

The Community Infrastructure Strategy (CIS) provides a pragmatic, feasible, achievable roadmap for the equitable long-term provision (20 years) of community infrastructure over which Council has primary responsibility, plays a role in delivering, or seeks to advocate for on behalf of the community.

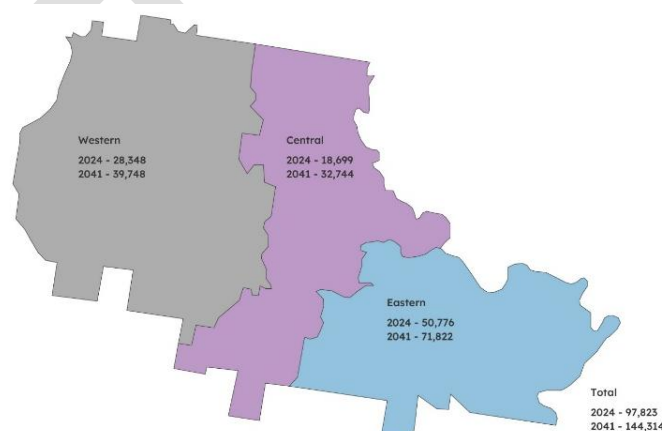
The CIS guides a holistic, integrated and evidence-based approach to the prioritisation, planning, design and provision of community infrastructure to meet the changing needs of a growing population efficiently, effectively and responsibly, without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

The five strategic priorities from the CIS are community identity, thriving communities, partnerships, shaping a shared future and delivering quality services.

Planning precincts

To plan and manage future growth within the city, three distinct local planning precincts have been identified and used across all supporting plans. These are the central, eastern and western precincts.

The local precinct approach will be guided by walkable neighbourhood principles where our residents can access most of their daily needs locally, without using a car. This approach aims to gradually shift away from a continuously expanding urban footprint to a focus on revitalising our existing centres and neighbourhoods.



Maitland population profile

PLANNING PRECINCT	2024	2041	DIFFERENCE	COMPOUNDING ANNUAL GROWTH RATE
Central	18,699	32,744	14,045	3.4%
Eastern	50,776	71,822	21,046	2.1%
Western	28,348	39,748	11,400	2.0%
TOTAL	97,823	144,314	46,491	2.3%

Provisioning hierarchy

Hierarchy based planning guides where and what type and scale of community infrastructure is most needed. The hierarchy includes Local, District, Citywide and Regional. It is used alongside industry standards and guidelines, as well as service catchment and demand analysis.

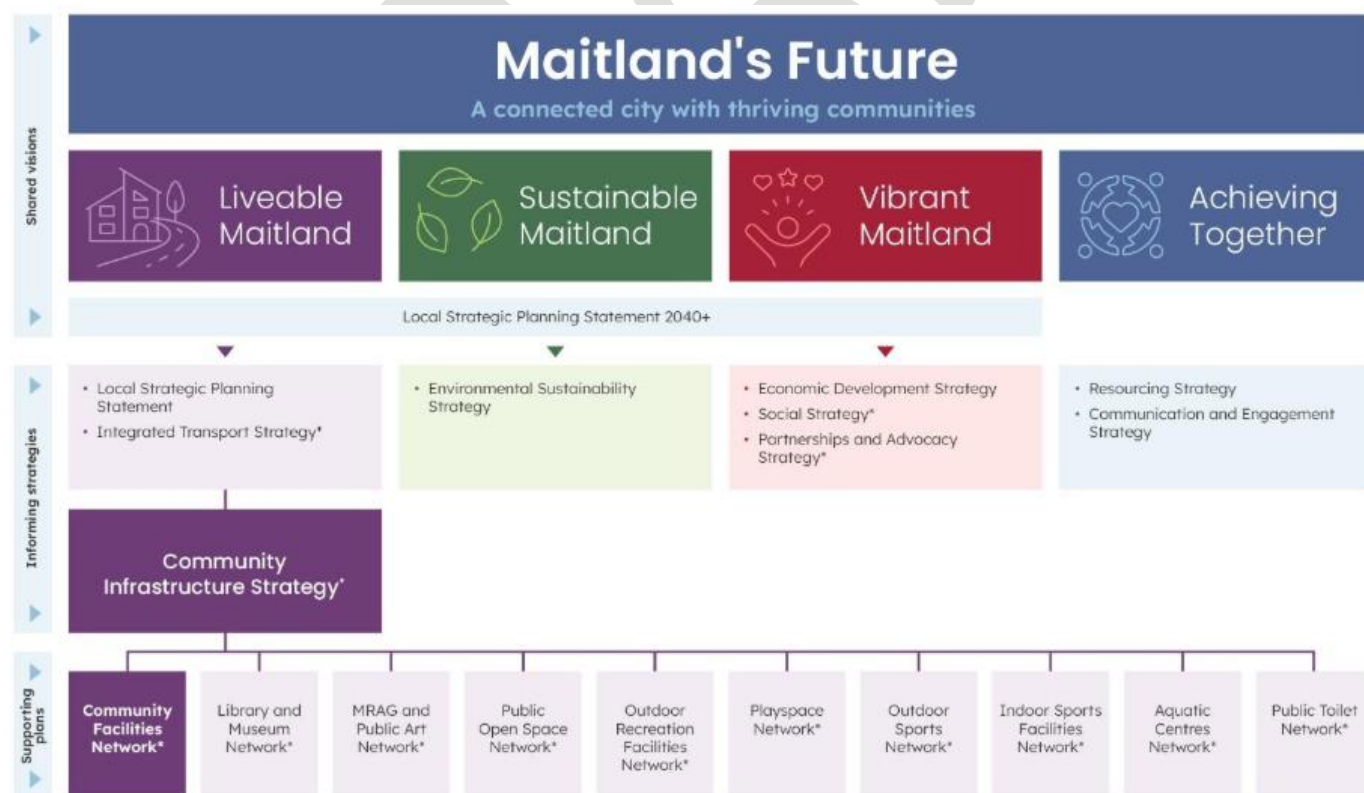
This approach ensures local facilities remain accessible whilst higher order facilities are strategically placed to meet evolving community needs. Most importantly, the hierarchy supports transparent and effective planning and serves our communities by:

- Distributing community infrastructure equitably
- Aligning provision with sound planning principles
- Meeting community expectations and demand
- Aligning current trends and guidelines
- Allowing consolidation and upgrades
- Reducing long-term asset maintenance by addressing oversupply
- Ensuring community infrastructure is sustainable and resilient long-term.

HIERARCHY LEVEL	DESCRIPTION
Local	• Located within a 5-15-minute walk of residences
District	• Located within a 3-kilometre radius or a 10-15-minute drive of most residences
Citywide	• Serves the whole Maitland Local Government Area and is a 30-45-minute drive of most residences
Regional	• Key destination spaces that serve our communities and attract visitors from outside the Maitland Local Government Area

Strategic alignment

The Community Facilities Network Supporting Plan underpins Council's Community Infrastructure Strategy. Its relationship within the Integrated Planning and Reporting (IPR) framework and with Maitland's Future, the Community Strategic Plan, is depicted below.



Community Facilities Network

Supporting Plan purpose

To provide an evidence-based approach to planning, prioritising, designing, delivering and managing Maitland City Council's network of community facilities to ensure it contributes to our shared vision of a connected city with thriving communities.

Community facilities play an important role in supporting a community to grow and prosper. They are inclusive spaces where people can connect with each other and to services, as well as participate in a wide range of recreation, cultural and social activities that support health and wellbeing. A well-planned approach ensures these spaces are accessible, sustainable, and meet the diverse needs of the community.



Community Facilities Network Supporting Plan inclusions

- Community centres
- Community halls
- Senior citizens centre
- Community meeting rooms.

Council's role

Council's role is to provide an accessible and inclusive network of community facilities that:

- Promotes health, wellbeing and quality of life for residents
- Is targeted to local needs and reflective of community priorities
- Promotes equitable access for all sections of the community
- Provides a range of community spaces, places, services, activities and programs.



Current state – where we are now

Council's community facilities network operates within a broader network distributed within and beyond the Maitland LGA. There are privately owned facilities, such as School of Arts, registered clubs, hotels, church halls, and schools, and others owned by other levels of government. The below table outlines community facilities currently owned or leased by Council.

PLANNING PRECINCT	FACILITY NAME
Central	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• St Ethel's Building• 73 Elgin Street, Maitland (Leased)• Gillieston Heights Community Hub• Maitland Senior Citizens Centre• Maitland Visitor Information Centre
Eastern	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• East Maitland Community Centre• Shamrock Hill Multipurpose Centre• Bruce Street Community Hall (Leased by Council from Homes NSW)• Tenambit Community Hall• Metford Community Hall• Morpeth School of Arts• Pat Hughes Community Centre• Woodberry Family Centre (Leased)• Noel Unicomb Community Hall (Leased)
Western	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Rutherford Community Centre (Partially leased)

Maitland City Council's current provision rate of one community facility per 9,782 residents is comparable to the Hunter-wide provision rate of one community facility per 9,981 residents. The NSW Growth Centres Commission community infrastructure standards recommend one local community facility to 6,000 residents and one district community facility to 20,000 residents.

Community engagement – what we heard

In March 2025, Council engaged 64 of our regular hirers, including through facility-specific meetings, to obtain feedback on what is working well and what requires improvement for our hireable spaces. Our regular hirers told us that they would value:

- Improved asset maintenance
- Furniture and equipment upgrades
- Improved technology in the facilities

Between May and July 2025, Council also engaged with over 670 community members, generating more than 1,100 contributions across surveys, mapping tools, and face-to-face pop-ups. Key insights included:

- Multi-use and co-located hubs were a priority for the community, combining libraries, community facilities and playspaces.
- There is a desire for sustainable, smart design. This includes features such as solar, rainwater storage and contemporary technology.
- There is a strong call for more spaces for community connection and socialising.

Industry standards and trends – what we know

The NSW Growth Centres Commission recommend one local facility for every 6,000 residents and one district facility for every 20,000 residents. These rates of provision can be used as a guide, but other community spaces need to be considered and factored into the calculation, for example, library spaces, sports fields, meeting spaces and art gallery spaces.

There are no specific community facilities guidelines in NSW. However, Landcom has prepared community centre guidelines in consultation with local government to encourage and support those involved in the planning, design and operation of community centres. Community facilities are also influenced and informed by the NSW Government's draft Cooler Places Guidelines released in 2025.

Emerging trends show that community facilities have shifted focus from being stand-alone facilities to providing more flexible spaces. Key emerging trends include:

- **Size and scale:** Smaller stand-alone facilities are no longer meeting community needs. There is a move towards larger facilities that provide a higher quality and wider range of spaces, services and activities.
- **Location, co-location and multipurpose:** Leading practice favours the clustering of community facilities in centres and co-locating them with other community infrastructure. This allows enhancement of both coordination among services and convenience for community who can access multiple services from a single location.
- **Place-making, community identity and capacity:** Community facilities that offer a diverse range of well-organised and well-attended services, programs and activities are successful. To achieve this, a variety of flexible spaces and amenities capable of being multifunctional and accessible are required.
- **Sustainability and smart design:** Community infrastructure including community facilities are now being designed with a stronger focus on sustainability and smart design. This is evident through the draft Cooler Places guidelines.
- **Resourcing and Partnerships:** Community facilities need to be well-resourced through staffing and funding. Building on the concepts of multipurpose, multifunction and sustainability, community facilities are increasingly dependent on the development of partnerships to ensure their success.

Future state – where we want to be

The future facility requirements for community centre provision are closely linked to the libraries and museum network. A feasibility analysis needs to be undertaken to investigate larger, co-located facilities. It is proposed that planning for future facility requirements will be in line with community feedback and community facility trends. This includes designing facilities that are co-located, multi-purpose and allow for flexible spaces that can be used to meet a variety of community needs.

Indicative costs and land requirements

Cost estimates, excluding escalation, contained within this supporting plan are based on staff expertise and experience.

Key points relating to costs include:

- estimated investment required over 10+ years: \$15,000,000
- average annual investment required: \$1,500,000 per year
- a range of external funding programs provided by NSW and Australian Government agencies are likely to be required.

Funding

Funding for the delivery of future Maitland community facilities will include:

- council revenue
- development contributions
- voluntary planning agreements
- Australian Government grants
- NSW Government grants
- sale of surplus council land or assets
- establishment of a Community Infrastructure Reserve Fund.

How we get there

To achieve the planning objectives in the supporting plan, a staged approach will be applied over a 10-year period. An indicative schedule of works for the short (one to four years), medium (five to eight years) and long-term (nine to ten years) will be developed. It is anticipated that a number of actions or activities will be simultaneously undertaken, subject to resourcing.



The planned actions will be published in our [Delivery Program and Operational Plan](#) each year. The timeframe of actions being completed will depend on resourcing and funding availability.

