

Draft Community Safety Plan

2021 - 2026



northern
beaches
council





Acknowledgment of Country

Council acknowledges the traditional custodians of these lands and shows its respect to the Elders past and present.



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Message from the Mayor

Supporting our community, economy and environment to be strong and resilient



Council is committed to ensuring we continue to live, work and play in one of the safest communities in the country. We want people to be and feel safe, no matter where they are and what they're doing in our community.

Community safety and wellbeing is a complex issue and requires us all as part of this community to play a role.

It's more than just policing and security – it's about building a cohesive, resilient community where everyone feels safe and connected.

In working with the Police and other agencies, our responses must be multi-faceted, co-operative and collaborative. More importantly, they need to address the specific needs of different locations and vulnerable populations.

Council is committed to playing its role which includes developing projects, initiatives and education resources that assist our community.

The Community Safety Plan outlines the actions we will take to build on our responsiveness to community safety issues over the next five years.

The Plan builds on established partnerships that lead to developing effective strategies. We value the hard work and dedication of our partners, which includes government and non-government agencies, Police, businesses, residents and visitors.

Community safety is a high priority and the Community Safety Plan puts us in good stead to tackle the challenges of the future.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'Michael Regan'.

Michael Regan
Mayor

Northern Beaches Council's Community Safety Plan 2021-2026 (the Plan) is an important tool to help realise Council's vision of a safe, inclusive and connected community that lives in balance with our extraordinary coastal and bushland environment.

This Plan provides a five year roadmap for Council and the community to sustain and increase safety for all residents of the Northern Beaches. It outlines the actions that Council, service partners and the community will take to achieve the 'safe community' direction of Council's Better Together Social Sustainability Strategy 2040, and contribute toward Shape 2028's vision for a 'safe, inclusive and connected community'.

Extensive consultation has been undertaken with the community and stakeholder groups on the issue of safety over the past 18 months, through the development of the

Community Safety Plan, and the development of the broader Better Together Social Sustainability Strategy. The feedback from both of these processes has been integrated and considered, alongside crime data and research. Through this process, ten priority areas have been identified. Actions under these priority areas will focus attention on identified issues and on achieving our outcomes of Safe Places and Safe People.

The Plan looks at community safety from a range of perspectives:

- the safe design and planning of our community
- the prevention of crime and anti-social behaviour
- the connection and support of vulnerable community members
- providing accessible services
- building resilience to support against any adversity in the future.

The Plan values the role that community members, service providers, government agencies and Council all have to play in making our community a safe and vibrant place to live.

Although the Northern Beaches is a very safe place, there is always more we can be doing to sustain and enhance our attention to crime prevention. The Plan integrates key criteria required to apply for potential crime prevention grant funding in the coming years, to ensure that relevant and appropriate strategies can be implemented as required.

Strategic Overview - Part of the Better Together Strategy

The Plan contributes to the Northern Beaches Council Better Together Social Sustainability Strategy 2040.

The Better Together Social Sustainability Strategy 2040 has the vision to create a socially sustainable and inclusive community for all.

The Strategy's three strategic directions work towards achieving the vision in our Community Strategic Plan: Shape 2028 of 'a safe, inclusive and connected community'.

The Community Safety Plan serves to action the Safe pillar of the Better Together Social Sustainability Strategy 2040.

Imagining a safer Northern Beaches

The Northern Beaches is a safe and resilient place to live, work and visit, where there is an individual and collective feeling of comfort and security.

People in the community may experience and perceive safety differently. Regardless of individual circumstances, people on the Northern Beaches live in a safe environment where everyone's right to be free from harm and danger is respected by others.

Instances of harm are greatly minimised. Everyone can access information and safe agencies are available for those who experience physical or emotional harm. The community identifies keeping children safe as a priority and has a strong commitment to best practice child safeguarding.

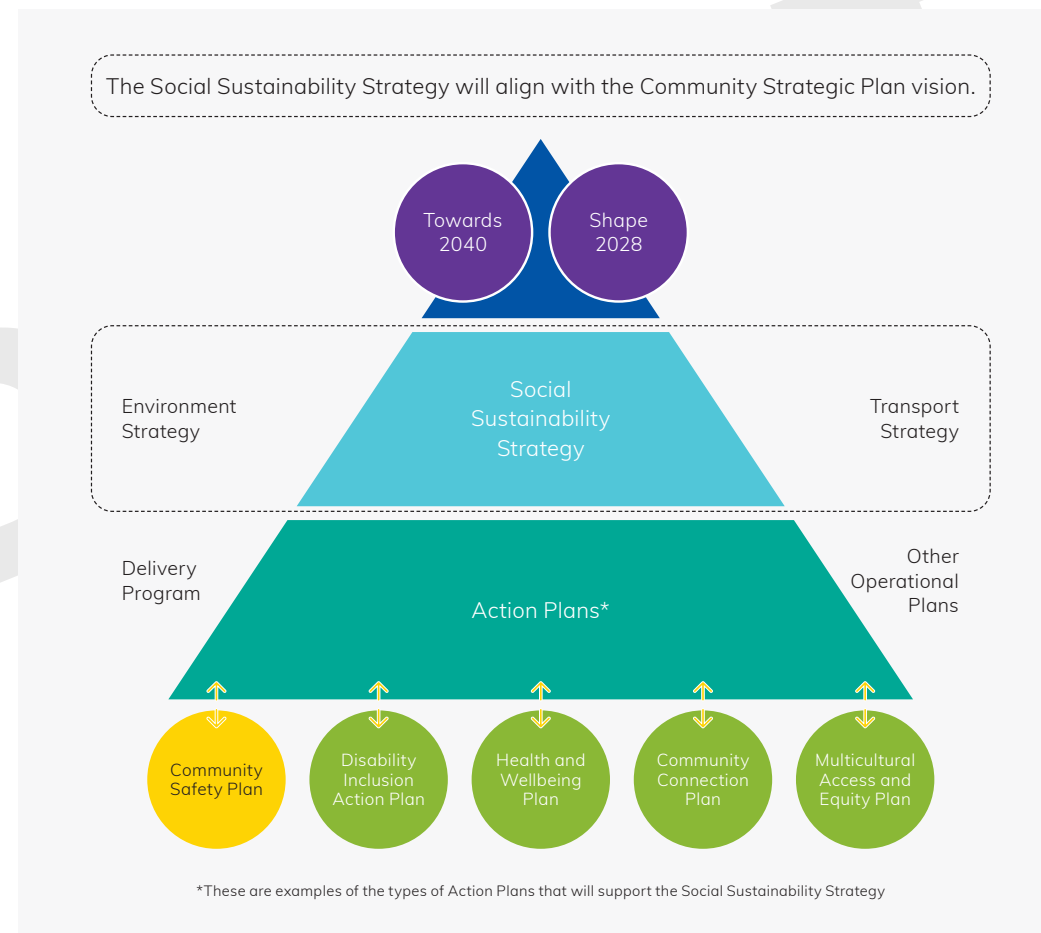
The community is resilient and has capacity to address difficult and complex personal safety issues including suicide and domestic and family violence. Everyone feels empowered to contribute and shares knowledge and information about available supports and systems.

A diverse network of public spaces enables everyone to be healthy, active and feel safe to participate in community life. There is cohesion and a culture of mutual caring, safe and free from bullying in the community, at home, and online.

The Safe pillar of Better Together aims to achieve two outcomes:

- Safe Places: our community is safe in public, at home and online
- Safe People: our community has access to people, organisations and information that can help when they need assistance.

Relationship to existing Council strategic directions



What is safety?
For the purposes of this Plan, safe is defined as being protected from harm and danger, both emotionally and physically.

Community safety involves reducing crime, controlling risk, preventing injury and supporting vulnerable community members. Community safety is about recognising the need for all sections of the community to work together to create a safer environment for people to live, work and travel.

tion of safety is just as important
experience of safety itself. When
safe they are more prepared
with others and participate in
life and together they can build
sive and resilient communities.



Safety is everyone's business

Community safety is a complex issue that requires a whole of community approach.

The safety of the Northern Beaches community is the responsibility of all who live, work and visit here as well as all agencies who deliver services to the area. The NSW Police Force has an essential role in preventing, responding to, detecting and investigating crime. Other State Government agencies such as the State Transit Authority and NSW Health deliver vital infrastructure to the area and manage a wide range of direct and funded services that impact community safety. Local service providers have an integral role in engagement with the community and in the direct delivery of information, education and support. The willingness of the broader community to engage in community safety is another vital part of the process.

None of these parts of the process can deliver a safe community alone – we must all make it our business to contribute and collaborate for a safer community.

One of the ways Council has facilitated a collaborative approach to community safety on the Northern Beaches is through the establishment of the Northern Beaches Community Safety Committee.

Community Safety Committee

The Community Safety Committee is an advisory committee to Northern Beaches Council. The Committee has been established to collaborate, consider and advise Council on ways to maintain, improve, resolve and progress issues that impact on community safety and crime prevention across the Northern Beaches.

Membership of the Committee includes the Mayor, Councillors, key Council staff, local State and Federal MPs, Northern Beaches Police Area Command, Chambers of Commerce, Northern Beaches Liquor Accord, Northern Sydney Local Health, Department of Communities and Justice, State Transit Authority and key representatives from local service providers and the community.

The role of Council in community safety

Local government plays an essential role in community safety through its responsibility for the design and management of public spaces, public events management, local community recreational services and its planning and regulatory functions.

While safety is a responsibility for all, Council has a role to play as a leader, advocate, infrastructure provider, facilitator, researcher, capacity builder, partner and promoter in addressing identified community safety challenges.

Council collaborates with a wide range of stakeholders to implement strategies for improving safety.

Council has a role in building partnerships between Police, government agencies, representative bodies, community organisations and individuals to promote community safety.

Feeling safe

The perception of safety impacts how well residents of the Northern Beaches engage with and feel connected to one another, and how active we are in the community.

Perceptions of safety often relate to perceptions of crime and social problems in the neighbourhood, media and social media attention, previous experience as a victim of crime, and the level of trust in the local community.

Living in communities that are clean, well maintained and serviced, with residents who are kept informed of crime, social issues and the actions being taken to address risks can positively impact feelings of safety.

What the Community Safety Plan will achieve

The Community Safety Plan sets the roadmap for Council's community safety activities with partner agencies over the next five years, split across two outcomes.

Safe Places will be achieved through the delivery and responsive management of well maintained, safely designed, connected and activated spaces. Our work with the community and businesses will raise crime and safety awareness and decrease the impact of alcohol related crime and antisocial behaviour on the community.

Safe People will be achieved through the support of local service providers to network on priority issues, increase their capacity to address community wellbeing and to minimise harm. We will work to increase awareness of the information and support services available to the community and will aim to provide better support, connections and outcomes for people in vulnerable circumstances. Our engagement with the community will ensure our actions address their needs and improve community perception of safety.

How the plan was developed

Northern Beaches Council consulted with residents and stakeholders in the development of the Community Safety Plan over a period of 18 months to March 2021 via stakeholder focus groups, telephone and online surveys. These activities allowed us to assess the community's sense of safety living on the Northern Beaches, their level of satisfaction with community safety and crime prevention, and to identify issues causing concern. Targeted interviews with stakeholders allowed us to explore those issues more deeply, and discuss potential strategies to address identified issues.

We were also able to benefit from extensive consultations undertaken as part of the Better Together Social Sustainability Strategy 2040 on the issue of safety.

Input from these consultation processes was considered alongside feedback from the Northern Beaches Council Customer Satisfaction Survey 2019, and the knowledge of Council staff who liaise with the community and stakeholders on an ongoing basis.

NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research (BOCSAR) Recorded Crime statistics to December 2020 and consultation with Northern Beaches Police Area Command, were able to illustrate the crime issues across the Northern Beaches and identify key areas for action.

We integrated research on population demographics and forecasts, evidence based approaches to crime prevention and harm minimisation, and considered the approaches being taken by other Councils.

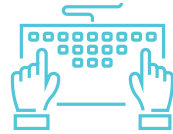
We have set ten priority areas and a series of actions which will serve to focus attention on the issues and opportunities identified during the development of the Plan.

In the development of this plan, Council has:



Engaged with 1,162 local community members and stakeholders via:

1. an online survey & a randomised phone survey
2. stakeholder focus groups
3. targeted interviews



Analysed crime statistics, community demographics and population forecasts



Ensured the Community Safety Plan is integrated with Northern Beaches Council's strategic direction and its action plans, State and Federal Strategic Plans and policy, and the NSW Premier's Priorities



Considered community issues raised with Council and through the media



Integrated the input of more than 1,000 additional stakeholders consulted in the development of the Better Together Strategy, under which safety is one of three strategic directions.



Researched evidence based approaches to crime prevention and harm minimisation for application in our approach to delivering services



Acted in accordance with Local Government Guiding Principles, as set out in Local Government Act 1993 No 30, ensuring that the process undertaken has been transparent and without bias and provides the best value possible to meet the diverse needs of the community now and into the future.



Researched what other Councils are doing in the area of community safety and crime prevention



Consulted with service providers, key stakeholder groups, Police and Council stakeholders to ensure integration with their service planning



Engaged with the Community Safety Committee throughout the development of the Plan

16 Our community: a demographic snapshot

The population is forecast to grow

273,499
residents in 2019

+39,004

312,503
residents in 2041



We are getting older

+3,421 **+3,594**

seniors 70-84
pre-retirees 50-59
from 2011 to 2016



Higher proportion of
retirees and mature adults
than Greater Sydney.



Lower proportion of young
adults than Greater Sydney

How we live



101,630 Dwellings

How we talk at home

15%
spoke a
language other
than English
at home



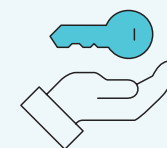
Some of us need a hand

9,273
need help in
their day-to-
day lives due
to disability



96%
agree with the statement "I feel safe"

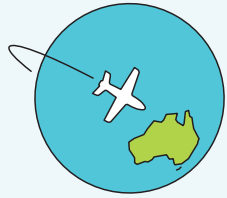
97%
indicate they are at least somewhat
satisfied with community safety/
crime prevention in the Northern
Beaches area



28.2%
of all households
are lone person
households

43.2%
households have
children under 15 and/
or dependent students

Where we come from



28.8%

Northern Beaches residents born overseas

36.7%

Greater Sydney residents born overseas

For those born overseas



three highest countries of birthplace are:

**United Kingdom,
New Zealand
and China**

Level of education

32.3%

Northern Beaches have gained a Bachelor or higher degree

28.3%

Greater Sydney have gained a Bachelor or higher degree

Let's talk money

\$2,173

Northern Beaches weekly median income

\$1,745

Greater Sydney weekly median income

\$895

Northern Beaches average rental cost

\$520

Greater Sydney average rental cost



\$1.51m
median house price

5.9%

Northern Beaches experiencing housing stress

11.8%

Greater Sydney experiencing housing stress

What we do - Top 5 professions



Managers



Professionals



Community and personal service workers



Technicians and trades workers



Clerical and administrative workers

Our labour force



3.5%

Unemployment rate



66.2%

Participation



54%

In-area employment self-containment

Commuting to work



1%
cycle



3.4%
walk



7.1%
work from home



17.6%
public transport



60%
drive

Recent Crime Trends

The Northern Beaches on the whole enjoys a high level of community safety.

The Recorded Crime Statistics for the Northern Beaches Local Government Area released in December 2020₁ show that we have performed well overall, with significant decreases in a number of major crime categories.

While it is noted that the Northern Beaches crime rates are lower, and continue to be lower than the NSW average, it must be remembered that these results are an anomaly and are heavily impacted by the pandemic and COVID-19 restrictions.

We must also remember that these offences are committed against members of our community and impact us all. There is no acceptable level of crime. Council will continue to support the community with strengthened collaboration and crime prevention strategies that aim to decrease crime and support victims and vulnerable community members.

To remain on the front foot, the Community Safety Plan will prioritise the categories of crime that are highest at the moment and ensure we are active in those areas to minimise opportunities for, and the impact of, future crime.

Sexual assault, indecent assault and other sexual offences have continued to rise and form part of a concerning trend throughout NSW₂.

Over the long term our highest crime areas are domestic violence, non-domestic violence related assault, fraud and malicious damage. Council, Police and partner agencies will continue to thoroughly examine these local issues and ensure strategies are in place to protect and strengthen our local community.

It must be noted that recorded crime statistics provide only part of the picture. Although this data shows domestic violence has decreased 28% in the 12 months to December 2020, local agencies are reporting a significant surge in demand for their services. We see a reduction in fraud, however we know that as our community moved online for work and social interaction, there was a 28.8% rise in the number of Australians falling victim to scams in 2020 compared to 2019₃.

It can also be reasonably assumed that crime categories such as retail theft and break and enter dwelling have decreased in line with decreased opportunity as COVID-19 restrictions closed shops and stay at home orders were imposed.

While restrictions have eased, uncertainty remains. As our community recovers from the pandemic, economic repercussions are likely to continue for some time and there is potential for this to adversely impact crime trends.

This Plan includes strategies to work with the community in the coming years to monitor and address these crime issues.

The NSW Police Commissioner has expressed concern that the economic hardship induced by the Coronavirus pandemic will unleash a crime wave in coming years, undermining long-term progress to curb illegal activity. SMH Nov 28 2020

Prof Don Weatherburn UNSW cautions that long-term unemployment could exacerbate other criminal activity. "When things go bad, whatever is going up at the time will go up faster." SMH Nov 28 2020

BOCSAR Executive Director said "the social upheaval of 2020 had delivered a significant interruption to crime patterns." "The continued increase in sexual assault reports remains concerning." BOCSAR Mar 2021

¹BOCSAR

²ACCC

This Plan has been developed during a unique period in our history and reflects issues impacting the Northern Beaches over the long term as well as those coming to the fore during the COVID-19 pandemic. In developing this plan, Council acknowledges:

- COVID-19 has impacted population projections and although data has not yet been included in official forecasts, it is assumed that the population will be older and smaller than previously forecast.
- COVID-19 has impacted reported crime statistics and it is assumed that as restrictions are relaxed and NSW residents resume regular activities, crime rates will return to normal levels.^{BOCSAR}
- Mental health, community and financial issues have risen in prevalence during COVID-19 restrictions and it is assumed they will continue to impact individuals over the long term and require sustained intervention.

Our community: A crime snapshot

Overall the Northern Beaches is a very safe place. Crime has decreased in most major crime categories over the past 12 months.

Major offence category BOCSAR	Incidents of crime recorded by NSW Police Force in Northern Beaches LGA					Rate per 100,000 population Jan - Dec 2020 [^]		Average annual % change ^{^^} Northern Beaches LGA	
	Jan - Dec 2016	Jan - Dec 2017	Jan - Dec 2018	Jan - Dec 2019	Jan - Dec 2020	Northern Beaches LGA	NSW	2 year trend (Jan 2019-Dec 2020)	5 year trend change ^{^^} (Jan 2016-Dec 2020)
Murder	4	1	1	0	0	nc	0.9	nc	nc
Domestic violence related assault	305	358	448	487	350	128	396.5	Down 28.1%	Stable
Non-domestic violence related assault	591	613	607	682	568	207.7	364	Stable	Stable
Sexual assault	99	99	107	131	137	50.1	86.4	Stable	Up 8.5%
Indecent assault, act of indecency and other sexual offences	114	127	153	148	173	63.3	99.2	Stable	Up 11.0%
Robbery without a weapon	24	21	25	33	27	9.9	14.2	Stable	Stable
Robbery with a firearm	0	1	2	2	0	nc	1.3	nc	nc
Robbery with a weapon not a firearm	3	9	10	15	7	2.6	10.7	nc	nc
Break and enter dwelling	473	449	391	317	247	90.3	243	Stable	Down 15.0%
Break and enter non-dwelling	245	206	157	174	121	44.2	91.1	Down 30.5%	Down 16.2%
Motor vehicle theft	172	242	211	204	184	67.3	144.7	Stable	Stable
Steal from motor vehicle	838	920	782	887	758	277.1	350.3	Stable	Stable
Steal from retail store	599	490	572	686	321	117.4	246.1	Down 53.2%	Down 14.4%
Steal from dwelling	453	417	422	353	339	123.9	207.8	Stable	Down 7.0%
Steal from person	100	86	64	74	53	19.4	26.6	Down 28.4%	Down 14.7%
Fraud	1,246	1,216	1,249	1,226	1,142	417.6	547.9	Stable	Stable
Malicious damage to property	1,170	1,134	1,196	1,349	1,044	381.7	658.3	Down 22.6%	Stable

Northern Beaches LGA Recorded Crime Statistics January 2016-December 2020 Incidents of crime recorded by the NSW Police Force in Northern Beaches LGA: number, rates[^] and trends^{^^}

Source: BOCSAR ^{^^} Shows the results of a statistical test for a significant upward or downward trend in the monthly number of criminal incidents recorded. Where the trend is significant (i.e p<0.05) the average annual percentage change over the five and two year period is shown. Significant upward trends are highlighted in red; significant downward trends are highlighted in green. 'Stable' indicates there was no significant upward or downward trend and 'nc' indicates that the number of incidents recorded was too small for a reliable trend test to be performed.

What our community told us:

Consultation was undertaken with the community in the development of this plan over a period of 18 months to March 2021.

You said:

- the Northern Beaches is an area where you generally feel very safe, both at home and out in the community
- you love the lifestyle of living on the coast and want to enjoy open spaces and community based gatherings and activities.

You want:

- to feel safe
- to be heard
- to be aware and informed
- an inclusive plan that serves our diverse community and visitors coming to the area
- to support community members in vulnerable circumstances
- to return to community activities post COVID-19
- a stronger night time economy.

You are concerned about:

- our young people and their future
- alcohol related behaviour in community places
- personal safety when walking and using public transport at night
- members of the community with alcohol and other drug issues
- members of the community who are experiencing domestic and family violence
- members of the community with mental health issues
- members of the community who are experiencing homelessness
- members of the community who are feeling isolated
- the community's experiences with suicide.

You want Council to prioritise:

- safe futures for young people
- protection for seniors against elder abuse, fraud and scams
- developing a stronger night time economy
- improved lighting and pathways to ensure safety while travelling
- online safety for young people
- safe design of the area
- building resilient and connected communities to increase safety
- community preparedness for emergency situations.

Our priority areas

Community input was considered alongside current crime trend data, broader government and local strategic directions, and ongoing input from Council's interactions with community members and service providers.

From the data gathered 10 priority areas have been identified for the next five years.

Actions against each of these priority areas form the Community Safety Action Plan.

Safe Places



Open Spaces

Recreation Spaces:

- Parks
 - Beaches
 - Sportsfields
- Open community gathering spaces



Neighbourhood

Residential precincts
Compliance with safety regulations
Community facilities
School zones



Business

Community spaces in business precincts
Night time economy
Safe business
Compliance with safety regulations



Transport

Walkways
Cycleways
Transport hubs



Online

Online safety awareness:

- Frauds/scams
- child safety
- safe language

Safe People



Residents

Crime prevention
Perceived safety
Homelessness
Access to services
Child safety in homes



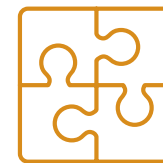
Visitors

Information
Safety awareness
Safe backpacker accommodation
Wayfinding



Relationships

Family and domestic violence
Sexual assault
Elder abuse
Parenting



Communities

Collaborate
Communicate
Seniors
Youth
Social isolation



Supports

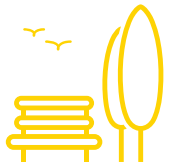
Alcohol and other drugs
Gambling
Suicide
Mental health
Resilience

Safe places

Outcome 1: Safe Places

Our community is safe in public, at home and online.

There are five priority areas to achieve our outcome of Safe Places.



Open Spaces

Recreation Spaces:

- Parks
 - Beaches
 - Sportsfields
- Open community gathering spaces



Neighbourhoods

Residential precincts
Compliance with safety regulations
Community facilities
School zones



Business

Community spaces in business precincts
Night time economy
Safe business
Compliance with safety regulations



Transport

Walkways
Cycleways
Transport hubs



Online

Online safety awareness:

- Frauds/scams
- child safety
- safe language

Other key Council strategies and plans supporting Safe Places:

- Shape 2028 Northern Beaches Community Strategic Plan 2018 – 2028
- Protect. Create. Live Northern Beaches Environment and Climate Change Strategy 2040
- Move Northern Beaches Transport Strategy 2038
- Northern Beaches Walking Plan
- Northern Beaches Council Road Safety Plan 2019-2024
- Economic Development Strategy
- Place Plans
- Northern Beaches Community Centres Strategy
- Sportsground Strategy
- Better Together Social Sustainability Strategy 2040 - under development
- Open Space and Recreation Strategy – under development

Priority Area 1: Safe Open Spaces

We are committed to ensuring that Council managed open spaces are high quality, safe, accessible and facilitate the healthy and active lifestyle that is important to the Northern Beaches community.



254

Playgrounds



22 km²

Zoned public recreation



15

Rockpools



80 km

Coastline



122

Sportsfields



17 km²

Council Bushland

Our open spaces

Our extensive public recreation areas, national parks and bushland, along with our beach and coastal environment, are major attractions for residents and visitors to the Northern Beaches. More than 78% of residents live within 400m of an open space.

Over the past year, the need to access public open spaces that are close to home and can be utilised and shared by all has become a heightened priority for the community.

The issues most important to you are:

- to feel safer in the community at night, with more lighting and CCTV
- reducing alcohol affected behaviour in open places
- safer parks
- well maintained public spaces
- better use of shared spaces
- safe outdoor events that cater to all members of the community
- addressing antisocial gatherings on beaches, headlands and bushland areas
- outdoor community gathering areas, well located and accessible to all, that are designed to encourage connection and to encourage a shared sense of ownership.

Designing out crime

Council incorporates the international standard of Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles into all council development and infrastructure projects, including the planning and design of open places and spaces.

The application of these principles increases the passive security of spaces, the difficulty of crime and antisocial behaviour occurring within those areas, and the feeling of safety in CPTED designed zones.

Safety Audits

Council and Police conduct a regular program of Safety Audits across the community to maximise safety in open spaces.

Safety Audits are also conducted where evidence indicates open spaces are being impacted in new ways by emerging trends.

Alcohol Restriction Zones

To improve public safety Council manages a program of alcohol restricted zoning in specific areas.

Alcohol Free Zones (public roads, footpaths and public carparks) and Alcohol Prohibited Areas (eg beaches, parks, public open spaces) may be established to reduce disruptive and anti-social behaviour as well as alcohol-related crime in our community.

Police and Rangers are able to respond to drinking in these areas with the confiscation of alcohol.





Over the next 5 years, we will:

Actions	In partnership with	Year
Establish a 'hot spot' response capacity that implements timely crime prevention and safety measures at emerging locations.	Police	2
Conduct a full review of alcohol restricted zoning.	Police, Liquor and Gaming NSW, Northern Beaches Liquor Accord	1 & 5
Consult with the NSW 24 Hour Economy Commissioner to develop night time economy strategies to activate vibrant, inclusive and safe open spaces.	NSW 24 Hour Economy Commissioner, Chambers of Commerce, Northern Beaches Liquor Accord	3
Consider CCTV to deter anti-social and criminal behaviour in high risk locations.	Police	1

We will also continue to:

- deliver well designed open spaces that are planned with Crime Prevention through Environmental Design principles and well maintained
- provide responsive management of open places in the community by analysing local crime trends, conducting safety audits of identified risk areas, and determining appropriate strategies to address risks in collaboration with Police
- manage alcohol restricted zoning, utilise planning mechanisms and work with licensed premises to decrease the impact of alcohol related crime and antisocial behaviour on open community spaces
- enforce compliance with safety requirements in open spaces where required, for example outdoor alcohol restrictions and responsible management of companion animals
- activate open spaces through place planning, increased safe accessibility and facilitation of safe recreation options for the community.

Priority Area 2: Safe Neighbourhoods

We are committed to ensuring the community feels as safe as possible through design and maintenance of residential areas.



39

Community Centres



15

Council Child Care Sites



3

Theatres/Galleries and
4 Creative Spaces



6

Libraries



21

Surf Club Buildings



2

Aquatic Centres

Our neighbourhoods

We live in neighbourhoods that are generally safe, low in crime, well planned and maintained. A wide range of gathering spaces and services are readily accessible to the community.

Living in communities that are clean, well maintained and serviced can positively impact feelings of safety.

Over the past year everyone has spent more time than usual in our local communities. We are working and socialising from home more and are more focussed on the liveability of our homes and neighbourhoods.

There were 1044 incidents of malicious damage and 247 of Break and Enter Dwelling recorded in the Northern Beaches during 2020.

The issues most important to you are:

- to feel safer in your neighbourhoods, with better lighting and less graffiti
- improved use of community spaces in the evening
- equitable, affordable and accessible availability of community facilities and activities
- flexible gathering places in community facilities that provide a space for community activities across all generations
- a community designed to encourage community projects, such as community gardens.

Shared spaces

Council manages 39 community facilities, four creative spaces and six libraries for use by the community.

Council is committed to offering these diverse and accessible venues for meetings, cultural activities and events for the whole community.

Community centres enhance the quality of community life by encouraging participation and networking within the local community and by facilitating the development of a diverse range of activities and services, which recognise the distinct lifestyles and interests of residents.

Council is working to ensure these facilities are located in areas that are accessible via active and public transport.

Compliance

Council is responsible for building the community's awareness of safety regulations applying to homes and neighbourhoods including swimming pool fencing, chimney smoke, overgrown residential properties, vermin, hoarding and companion animals.

Our Rangers conduct inspections and enforce compliance where it becomes necessary to maintain property in a safe and healthy condition.





Over the next 5 years, we will:

Actions	In partnership with	Year
Ensure community facilities are accessible, flexible and functional shared spaces for the community.	Surf Lifesaving Sydney Northern Beaches, PCYC	5

We will also continue to:

- deliver well designed and maintained public spaces in residential precincts that are accessible, planned with Crime Prevention through Environmental Design principles
- provide responsive management of safety issues in residential precincts and enforce compliance with safety requirements including responsible ownership of companion animals, swimming pools, backpacker accommodation and boarding houses
- increase community awareness of identified safety issues
- provide affordable, flexible community based facilities to facilitate community gatherings and activities
- activate safe and accessible neighbourhood gathering spaces for the community, such as community gardens.

Priority Area 3: Safe Businesses

We are committed to ensuring the community feels as safe as possible through design and maintenance of public spaces in business and retail precincts, and by supporting safe business practices.



312,503

population forecast
by 2041



274,041

Population Now
(i.e. ERP 2020)



24.3

per 1000 are homeless
(ABS stats)



83,700

Jobs



32,700

Businesses



52%

Working residents
work locally

Our businesses

We have a significant number of small businesses established in the Northern Beaches, with retail being the second highest employer in the area. These businesses are staffed with a high proportion of local residents and provide services to our community and visitors.

Local businesses have been severely impacted during the pandemic. Social distancing restrictions combined with reduced demand for some goods and services have seen impacts across the business community.

In 2020, there were 321 incidents of Steal from Retail Store recorded in the Northern Beaches. This rate was approximately half the rate recorded in previous years due to the reduced opportunity to commit this crime during COVID restrictions.

The issues most important to you are:

- safe design of business and retail precincts
- accessibility of services, including co-location of services where possible
- supporting local business, particularly given their hardship during COVID-19
- attention to graffiti, alcohol and other drug affected behaviour, and the presentation of vacant premises

Supporting Business

To support local businesses during COVID-19, Council developed a business support plan in consultation with our local Chambers of Commerce. Our priority is to ensure the local business community feels supported, is well informed and knows where and how to access advice, financial support and practical resources during this difficult time.

The COVID-19 business support plan includes a package of measures, which include waivers for nine months on outdoor dining, food health on premises and fire safety fees as well as more flexible and pragmatic arrangements for supplier deliveries to supermarkets and parking for take-away pickups.

Compliance

A range of business compliance requirements are in place to ensure the safety of business owners, their staff and customers eg commercial pools, food safety, hairdressers, skin penetration businesses, beauty treatment salons, sex premises and fire safety.

Council promotes those standards with coordinated inspections, appropriate enforcement and continuing education.

Council provides information on a diverse range of business support available to local businesses and is able to assist businesses to navigate licences and permits.





Over the next 5 years, we will:

Actions	In partnership with	Year
Provide post COVID-19 support to local businesses.	Chamber of Commerce	1
Engage with the business community to build crime prevention capacity.	Police	2

We will also continue to:

- deliver well designed public areas in business precincts that are accessible, planned with Crime Prevention through Environmental Design principles and well maintained
- monitor local crime trends in business precincts, conduct safety audits of identified risk areas, and determine appropriate strategies to address risks, in collaboration with Police
- manage registration of local businesses and raise business awareness of compliance requirements
- enforce compliance with safety requirements in business precincts including fire safety, food safety, brothels, skin penetration services and beauty treatment salons.

Priority Area 4: Safe Travel

We are committed to the delivery of safe roadways, walkways and cycleways and a safe environment for community members and visitors to travel in.



7.1%

work from home



17.6%

public transport



60%

drive



3.4%

walk



1%

cycle

2016 Census

How we travel

We live in an area that has access to an increasingly integrated transport system, and is being developed to assist residents to walk, cycle, drive or use public transport between work, school, recreation, home, communities, villages, town centres and beaches.

On Census Day 2016 in the Northern Beaches area, 58% of people travelled to work in a private car, 17.7% took public transport and 4.4% rode a bike or walked. Those who worked from home represented 7.1%.

During and post COVID-19 restrictions, the Northern Beaches has seen a substantial increase in residents working from home, walking and using local transport options.

The issues most important to you are:

- safe transport hubs, with adequate lighting and attention to anti-social behaviour
- safe walkable communities with well maintained footpaths
- an affordable transport system that is accessible to all community members
- facilities that support safe travel without cars
- safe cycling network
- safe transport for remote areas.

Traffic Committee

The Northern Beaches Council Road Safety Plan 2019- 2024 provides the framework for improving road safety across the Northern Beaches Council Local Government Area.

The overall goal of the Road Safety Plan is to put in place initiatives that will ultimately reduce fatalities and serious injury crashes on our local roads. This plan aims to raise awareness that road safety is everyone's responsibility and that it is up to each individual to make an effort to stay safe on our roads.

Representatives from Council, Police, NSW Roads and Maritime Services, State Transit Authority and Local Members of Parliament collaborate on local traffic safety issues and solutions along with other community representatives and persons with specialist knowledge as required.

Safe networks

The ability of residents and visitors to safely travel through the Northern Beaches is important to achieving a connected community.

Council continues to develop a network of paths that can be used by pedestrians, bicycle riders and anyone on wheels. Safety is a priority in the planning and maintenance of these networks.

This network provides a safe alternative to car travel for residents and is attractive to tourists.





Over the next 5 years, we will:

Actions	In partnership with	Year
Work with the State Transit Authority to address antisocial and intimidating behaviour by patrons on public transport.	STA, Police	1
Raise awareness about safety while travelling through the Northern Beaches.	STA	2
Identify opportunities to strengthen safe transport options for priority populations, in partnership with community organisations.	Local services	3

We will also continue to:

- deliver Council managed aspects of transport hubs, roads, pathways and cycleways that are accessible, well maintained and planned with Crime Prevention through Environmental Design principles
- consult with the State Transit Authority to provide responsive management of safety issues in transport hubs and determine an appropriate course of action to address risks
- collaborate with key stakeholders to raise awareness about safety while travelling through the Northern Beaches
- develop the Northern Beaches as a “Place for People” that is integrated with public transport and is well connected to strategic centres.

Priority Area 5: Safe Online

We are committed to raising awareness of online scams and cybercrime affecting our community and encouraging the use of safe language in our community.

1,142

Incidents of fraud

91.4%

Of households have internet access

1 in 5

Young people reported being socially excluded, threatened or abused.

44%

of teens had a negative online experience

67%

of adults had a negative online experience

Our online space

The internet increasingly connects us locally and globally to work, learn, shop, socialise and share. As we navigate new technologies and platforms, and our culture and circumstances change to heighten our use over short periods of time, community members can become vulnerable.

During the past year, COVID-19 related restrictions have changed the way we work and socialise and have increased our activity in the online space.

A 28.8% rise in online scams has been reported in Australia during 2020. ^{ACCC}

The issues most important to you are:

- the safety of our children and young people, and other vulnerable persons in the online community
- addressing vulnerability of individuals and businesses to online scams and fraud, with particular attention to seniors, people with a disability, and culturally and linguistically diverse communities
- online gambling and its impact on community members
- the use of unsafe language which has the potential to impact on community mental health and wellbeing.

Safe language

The Northern Beaches community has identified a need to manage unsafe language on social media due to the impact on those with vulnerable mental health, which can lead to increased community anxiety, reinforce stigma and reluctance to reach out for support.

Online safety

Council provides information to the community on e-safety, with information targeted at youth and business.

We regularly deliver information to high schools and the wider community to raise awareness of technology, gaming and online safety.





Over the next 5 years, we will:

Actions	In partnership with	Year
Promote the use of safe language in social media with a view to reducing bullying.	Northern Beaches Suicide Response Group	1
Investigate initiatives to deliver digital literacy and online safety programs to priority populations.	Police, eSafety Commissioner, Local services	2

We will also continue to:

- target impacted locations and vulnerable communities to raise awareness of how to recognise, avoid and report fraud and scams
- deliver information and education to children and young people about online safety.



Safe people

Outcome 2: Safe People

Our community has access to people, organisations and information that can help when they need assistance.

There are five priority areas to achieve our outcome of Safe Places.



Residents

Crime prevention
Perceived safety
Homelessness
Access to services
Child safety in homes



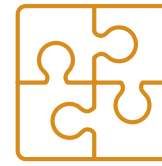
Visitors

Information
Safety awareness
Safe backpacker accommodation
Wayfinding



Relationships

Family and domestic violence
Sexual assault
Elder abuse
Parenting



Communities

Collaborate
Communicate
Seniors
Youth
Social isolation



Supports

Alcohol and other drugs
Gambling
Suicide
Mental health
Resilience

Other key Council strategies and plans supporting Safe People:

- Shape 2028 Northern Beaches Community Strategic Plan 2018 – 2028
- Better Together Social Sustainability Strategy 2040
- Gambling and Poker Machine Harm Management Policy and Plan
- Northern Beaches Destination Management Plan
- Homeless Persons Protocol
- Local Housing Strategy
- Resilience Strategy – under development

Priority Area 6: Safe Residents

We are committed to working with Police and service providers to maximise the safety of Northern Beaches residents.



24.3

per 1000 are homeless
(ABS stats)



96%

Residents who feel safe
at home



274,041

Population Now
(ERP 2020)



312,503

population forecast
by 2041

Our residents

We live in an area which is generally safe, however we may experience circumstances that make us feel unsafe or place us at risk.

Living in communities that are kept informed of crime and social issues and the actions being taken to address risks can positively impact feelings of safety.

In 2016, the Northern Beaches Local Government Area was home to:

- 1,397 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders
- 73,079 people born overseas
- 38,208 people who speak a language other than English at home
- 13,580 people who had arrived in Australia within five years.

Residents arriving in the last five years originated from 67 different countries, including the UK (27.1%), Brazil (7.2%), China (6.6%), New Zealand (5.5%), USA (4.9%), India (4.5%) and South Africa (4.5%).

The issues most important to you are:

- child safety in homes
- feeling safe in residential areas
- safe housing for Northern Beaches residents
- support for community members who are homeless
- access to essential services and community gathering areas
- a supportive Police presence.

Graffiti

Council is committed to removing illegal graffiti. We remove graffiti from public areas and walls or fences joining public land.

Our Graffiti Rapid Removal Program involves scheduled cleaning from specified sites and Council buildings. We patrol and remove graffiti along major roads every week and throughout the rest of Northern Beaches every month.

Council is also committed to providing legal and legitimate opportunities for street artists.

Supporting residents

For a range of reasons, some members of our community find themselves in the position where they are unable to maintain their property.

Council engages with residents who appear to be experiencing difficulties to ensure they have appropriate supports in place and to offer referral to support services where required.

Addressing homelessness

A broad range of community service providers work to support people who are homeless or sleeping rough in open spaces across the Northern Beaches.

Through the Northern Beaches Homelessness Interagency and local service providers, Council engages with members of our community who are homeless or sleeping rough in open spaces and offers access to information, accommodation options and support for relevant services.





Over the next 5 years, we will:

Actions	In partnership with	Year
Address barriers for some members of the community in accessing and participating in sport and health and wellbeing programs in collaboration with key stakeholders.	Local services, PCYC, Community groups, Local businesses, Sporting and community organisations	3
Develop an Affordable Housing Action Plan to accommodate our developing community.	Community housing providers, Land and Housing Corporation	2

We will also continue to:

- improve the actual and perceived safety of residents by monitoring crime trends and collaborating with Police and key stakeholders in the development of crime prevention strategies to address risks, trends and emerging issues and to raise community awareness
- implement our Rapid Graffiti Removal Program and the use of public art to discourage graffiti and improve the community's feeling of safety
- increase community understanding of responsibilities in keeping children and young people safe
- advocate for the safety of people who are homeless or sleeping rough in open spaces and work with key stakeholders to facilitate safe housing and support services
- advocate for increased access to safe and affordable housing with wrap around support services.

Priority Area 7: Safe Visitors

We are committed to providing services that support visitor safety and their safe participation in events and local cultural experiences.



65%
Domestic visitors

Top 3 international visitors:



Our visitors

The Northern Beaches is a popular destination and attracts almost 3 million visitors each year, most of whom are day visitors.

The Northern Beaches is an attractive tourist destination in close proximity, and a short ferry ride, to the Sydney CBD. Vibrant villages reflect our contemporary coastal lifestyle. World-class beach and bushland areas offer experiences such as mountain biking, scuba diving, snorkelling, hiking and just relaxing by the beach.

Visitors are looking to find unique experiences and they want to connect with the local culture and people.

The past year has seen closures of local, state and international borders which have had a considerable impact on our tourist industry. Council is working with the community to develop the Northern Beaches as a destination for local tourism and to create sustainability in a changed industry

The issues most important to you are:

- visitors have easy access to information about the services and facilities available on the Northern Beaches
- visitor safety, including beach safety
- safe visitor behaviour
- safe design of open spaces and facilities that attract visitors including signage, lighting, transport and wayfinding
- safe management of events attracting visitors to the Northern Beaches.

Local economy

Council values the many visitors that travel to the Northern Beaches for work and leisure each day.

Prior to COVID-19, 14,000 jobs on the Northern Beaches were in the tourism and hospitality sector. This is the fifth largest employing sector and accounts for 13% of all jobs.

Backpackers

Boarding houses and backpacker hostels are inspected annually by Council's Environmental Health Officers.

Inspections and compliance enforcement focus on ensuring accommodation is operated and maintained in a clean, healthy and safe condition.





Over the next 5 years, we will:

Actions	In partnership with	Year
Ensure that night activation strategies and events that attract tourism are conducted safely.	Local businesses	2

We will also continue to:

- welcome visitors to the Northern Beaches with culturally inclusive information on available facilities and services
- enhance the visitor experience with wayfinding signage that communicates safety issues with international safety icons
- provide information to visitors on water safety and safe behaviour
- raise awareness and provide compliance services to ensure safe backpacker accommodation in the community.

Priority Area 8: Safe Relationships

We are committed to raising awareness of safe and inclusive relationships and supporting the delivery of support services to address unsafe behaviours in the community.

350

incidents of domestic violence related assault reported to police

568

incidents of non-domestic violence related assault reported

137

incidents of sexual assault reported

Our relationships

All residents of the Northern Beaches are entitled to be treated in a safe and respectful manner in their relationships with others.

We work with local service providers to engage with community members who find themselves in unsafe relationships and support them with referrals to services that can assist them with services and strategies to keep them safe.

Local service providers have reported a significant increase in demand for domestic violence service during COVID-19.

Research indicates that it is likely that between 2% and 14% of older Australians experience elder abuse in any given year.

The issues most important to you are:

- supporting community members experiencing domestic and family violence
- attention to adolescent violence toward parents
- supporting seniors, in particular raising awareness of elder abuse
- living in an inclusive community that values all community members
- supporting parents to keep children safe.

Keeping children safe

The Northern Beaches Child and Family Interagency is a local network of child and family services and government agencies that work together to build a community that is child safe, where looking after children is everybody's business.

The Interagency promotes and enhances interagency and community awareness of child protection and advocates in the child protection area.

Domestic and Family Violence

Police and community agencies are at the forefront of addressing domestic and family violence throughout the Northern Beaches.

Council collaborates with representatives from local domestic violence services, Police and other services in the Northern Beaches Domestic Violence Network. Together we work to raise awareness and address domestic and family abuse within our local area.





Over the next 5 years, we will:

Actions	In partnership with	Year
Promote awareness of elder abuse.	Northern Beaches Domestic Violence Network, Police, Seniors Groups, NSW Ageing & Disability Commission, Relationships Australia, Local services	1
Collaborate with key stakeholders to assess crime trends in sexual assault and advocate for appropriate community actions.	Police	1
Establish a working group to address family and domestic violence in culturally and linguistically diverse communities.	Multicultural NSW, Police, Relationships Australia, Northern Beaches Domestic Violence Network, Northern Beaches Multicultural Network	3
Examine the prevalence and causes of adolescent violence towards parents across the Northern Beaches.	Northern Beaches Domestic Violence Network, Police, Local services	2

We will also continue to:

- support key stakeholders to build the capacity of the Northern Beaches service sector to engage and support individuals impacted by family and domestic violence
- use advocacy to improve access to key referral services including mental health and domestic and family violence services
- collaborate with partner agencies in support of prevention strategies and community engagement activities (eg White Ribbon Day)
- advocate for the delivery of respectful relationships and violence prevention training programs as an early intervention tool
- encourage and enable the delivery of community and parent education and awareness raising activities to provide improved safety of children and young people in the community
- continue to be a White Ribbon accredited workplace.

Priority Area 9: Safe Communities

We are committed to building a cohesive community, and to rebuilding connections which have been impacted by periods of pandemic related isolation.



9,273

Need help in their lives
due to disability



+3,421

Seniors 70-84
between 2011-2016



+3,594

Pre-retirees 50-59
between 2011-2016



24,678

Primary
school children



18,675

Secondary
school children

Our communities

It is important that everyone feels welcome and safe in the Northern Beaches community. Strong, diverse and informed networks in the community are important to provide a sense of belonging and security. When people have strong ties with family, friends and the community they are happier and feel more supported, safe and secure.

The Northern Beaches is a diverse community. Everyone should be treated as a valued member of the community.

COVID-19 significantly impacted our ability to connect with neighbours, friends and family. Council has been working to ensure our community stays connected and has access to the services they need.

The issues most important to you are:

- ability to engage meaningfully with Council
- accessibility of information and services to all residents and availability through a variety of forums
- attention to engagement of priority groups such as seniors and youth
- social cohesion through a sense of belonging and an inclusive community
- opportunities to connect with other members of the community, including intergenerational interactions.

Youth

The Northern Beaches Youth Interagency supports advocacy, professional development and connectivity within the youth services sector supporting young people aged 12 to 25 years.

Council has dedicated Youth Development Officers committed to empowering and building the capacity of our youth. Our youth brand Keep A Look Out For (KALOF) aims to connect young people and families to opportunities on the Northern Beaches including services, events and school engagement.

Seniors

Local community groups and services across the Northern Beaches work towards the empowerment and wellbeing of our seniors.

Council assists by facilitating access to services, activities and support networks across the Northern Beaches that improve the quality of life for seniors.

Every year Council co-ordinates the Northern Beaches Seniors Festival. The program aims to encourage over 60s to connect with the community and develop new skills and interests. Activities focus on health and mental stimulation, food and nutrition, multicultural and intergenerational relationships, technology, accommodation options and local services.





Over the next 5 years, we will:

Actions	In partnership with	Year
Identify partnerships and investigate ways the community can work together to reduce social isolation.	Local services, Community	1
Develop and implement a Dementia Friendly Organisation Action Plan and work with the local Northern Beaches Dementia Alliance on a Dementia Friendly Community Action Plan.	Sydney North Health Network, Dementia Alliance, Seniors Groups, Local services, Local businesses	2
Explore opportunities to extend youth outreach activities throughout the Northern Beaches.	Northern Beaches Youth Interagency, Northern Beaches Council Youth Advisory Group	1
Develop a working group to explore safety issues relating to LGBTIQ+ community, with a focus on younger people	Local services	2

We will also continue to:

- identify safety initiatives and deliver positive messaging campaigns
- advocate for and provide improved and integrated services to the community
- collaborate with and listen to the community and service providers in the development of support, services and facilities
- provide information to the community and local services sector on local issues and services via a variety of communication platforms
- work with service providers to improve the engagement of seniors in the Northern Beaches community by ensuring information, programs and support services are diverse and accessible
- improve youth engagement in the Northern Beaches community by ensuring that youth programs are diverse and accessible
- increase community understanding of responsibilities in keeping children and young people safe
- engage with and support diverse groups in the community to improve safety through strong connections and inclusivity.

Priority Area 10: Safe Supports

We are committed to supporting the Northern Beaches community in addressing community health issues and supporting those in high risk and vulnerable circumstances.



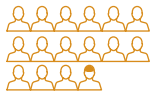
2,728

per 100,000
mental health related
hospitalisations
NSW: 1,961



16.6

per 100 (18+ years)
engaging in high risk
drinking
NSW: 15.5



15.7

per 100 (15+ years) report
mental and behavioural
problems
NSW: 18.8



8.9

per 100 (18+ years)
report high or very high
psychological distress
NSW: 12.4

Our supports

A community that is well supported with information and integrated support services is able to respond to individual and community issues.

Our community is supported by a vast network of services that work tirelessly to engage with and provide support to community members experiencing difficult circumstances.

These agencies provide direct services to community members and help them to navigate the vast network of health and social services available.

The issues most important to you are:

- alcohol and other drugs
- gambling
- mental health and suicide prevention
- support of the community through change
- feeling safe and resilient in emergency circumstances.

Mental health

A wide range of local service providers provide mental health services to meet the needs of the Northern Beaches community.

Council provides information on crisis hotlines and local services to reach out to for support, as well as useful resources and tips to help look after your mental health and wellbeing.

Council also provides a free counselling service for adolescents and families living on the Northern Beaches.

Alcohol and other drugs

The Northern Beaches Local Drug Action Team and Community Drug Action Team work to identify risk factors and work to build protective factors into the community through a range of innovative projects.

These groups of community partners collaborate on alcohol and other drugs issues affecting the Northern Beaches.

Suicide prevention

Council collaborates with key stakeholder groups to consider all aspects of prevention, intervention and postvention and to provide a coordinated response to suicide on the Northern Beaches.





Over the next 5 years, we will:

Actions	In partnership with	Year
Collaborate with mental health services to improve the response to suicide and to implement suicide first aid skills training and other suicide awareness activities.	Northern Beaches Suicide Response Steering Group, Mental Health services	1
Prepare & strengthen our community and enable us to withstand, adapt and transform in the face of adversity.	Resilience NSW, Local services	3
Develop a Wellbeing Outcomes Framework for strengthening individual and collective wellbeing for everyone living in the community.	Local services, Community	2
Develop a Mental Health Issues paper to understand the current state of service availability and demand on the Northern Beaches and identify challenges and opportunities.	Mental Health Services	2
Collaborate with local services to reduce the impact of alcohol and other drug use on the community.	Northern Sydney Local Health Services, Local service providers	2

We will also continue to:

- collaborate with local service providers to minimise harm associated with alcohol and other drug use, to identify gaps in the response to problematic drug and alcohol use, and to increase community awareness of drug and alcohol support services
- partner with service providers, young people, parents and schools to address problematic alcohol and other drug use amongst youth and its impact on mental health, including the potential risk of self harm
- implement gambling harm management strategies and collaborate with support services to explore the impact of gambling
- collaborate with mental health services to achieve better outcomes for people experiencing mental ill health by addressing the stigma of mental health, improving service coordination, normalising help seeking behaviour and promoting local services
- work with key services to identify gaps to support those living in squalor and with a hoarding disorder.

Monitoring and evaluation

The Community Safety Plan outlines actions to be implemented by Council over the next five years to address community safety across the Northern Beaches.

Implementation of the Community Safety Action Plan will be monitored by Council and the Community Safety Committee. Council will deliver actions identified in this Plan in partnership with local stakeholders.

The longer term social impact of this Plan will be measured through the Better Together Social Sustainability Strategy 2040.

It is intended that this Plan be a living document, reviewed annually to accommodate any emerging issues.

The Plan will be formally evaluated every five years to retain its relevance and alignment with Council strategies including Better Together 2040.

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