City of Ryde

SOCIAL STRATEGY BACKGROUND REPORT

DRAFT FOR PUBLIC EXHIBITION 2025

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

The City of Ryde Council would like to acknowledge the Wallumedegal Aboriginal people, a clan of the Darug Nation, who are the Traditional Custodians of this Land. We would also like to pay respect to the Elders both past and present of the Darug Nation and extend that respect to all other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

We honour the protection of one of the longest continuous Indigenous cultures and beliefs and pay our respects to the history, culture, language, and contemporary developments of the Indigenous people.

The City of Ryde Council celebrates the inclusion of all people and honours their rights and contribution to Country.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The City of Ryde staff would like to thank the community and stakeholders for providing invaluable insights and perspectives to support the development of the *City of Ryde Social Strategy 2025-2030* and its Background Report.

Of note is also the contribution and support of our elected Councillors and popularly elected Mayor towards our important work on social and cultural planning and strategies .

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

The City of Ryde's Social Strategy Background Report 2025 (the Background Report) plays a pivotal role in guiding the development of the Social Strategy 2025-2030 (the Strategy). This Report provides a thorough overview of the current social landscape across the City of Ryde (our City), offering insights into Ryde's demographics, key social and cultural activities, and the state of our social and cultural infrastructure. It also presents a forward-looking estimate of what the future of our City and community might look like, based on current trends and projected developments. Through data collection, community engagement, and review and analysis of the strategic context, the Background Report identifies the issues and opportunities that shape the Social Strategy, ensuring it is aligned with the aspirations of the people who call Ryde home.

The Report lays the groundwork for vision of our City as:

"A place where our diverse community has accessible and inclusive services, programs and spaces that support a healthy, equitable and connected community".
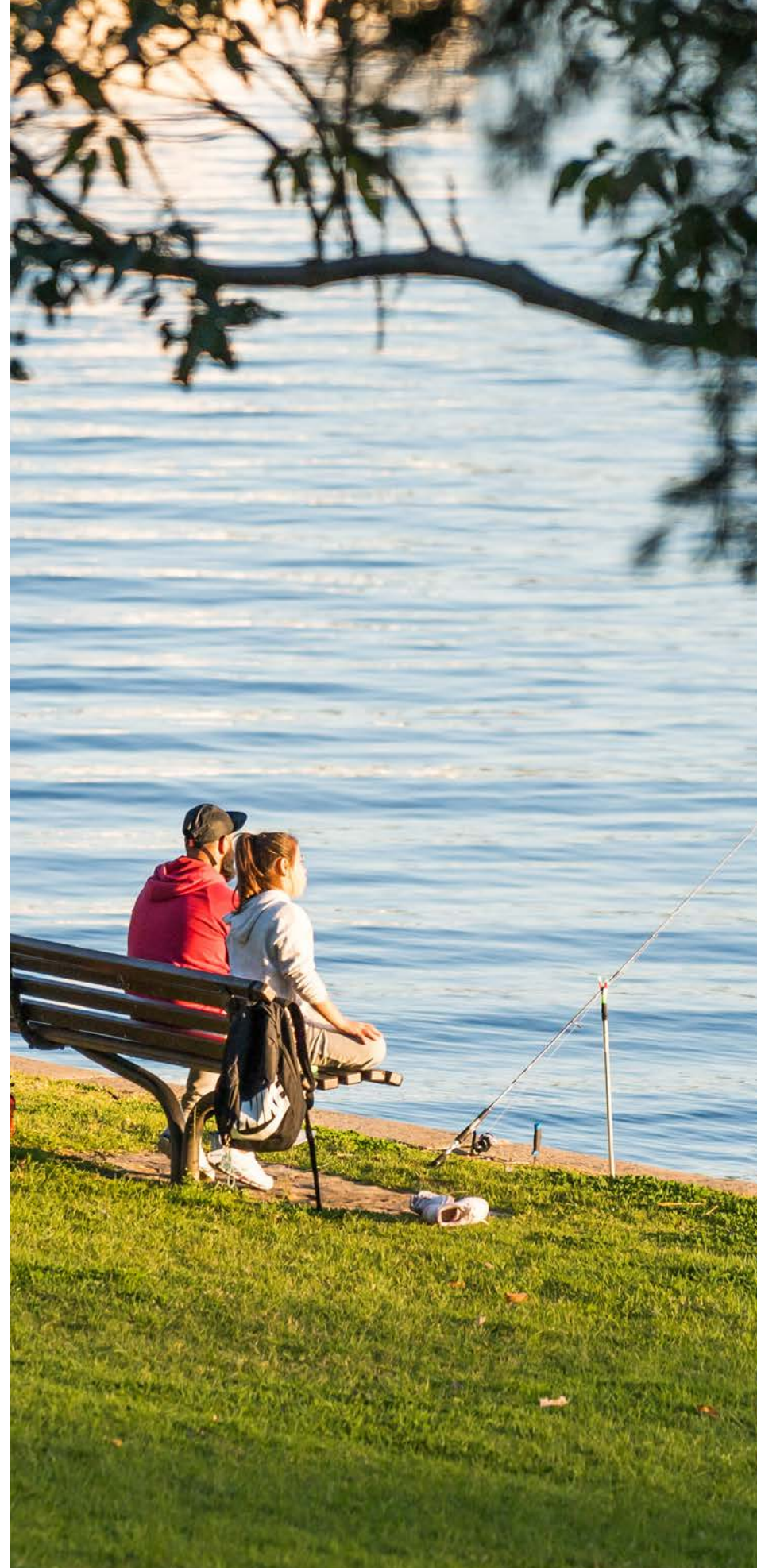
PURPOSE

The primary purpose of this Background Report is to provide the necessary context and foundational information to inform the development of the Social Strategy 2025-2030. This document offers a detailed snapshot of Ryde's social and cultural landscape, exploring the current state of our infrastructure, the community's demographics, and the key social and cultural activities that contribute to the vibrancy of our City. Additionally, the Report outlines potential future scenarios for Ryde and the challenges and opportunities that may arise in the coming years. By analysing these factors, the Background Report ensures that the Strategy is based on a solid understanding of local needs and is tailored to address emerging issues.

The Report also provides a summary of strategic targets and priorities, and highlights the stakeholder engagement process and findings, emphasising the importance of collaboration in shaping a strategy that reflects the collective vision of Ryde's diverse population.

HOW TO READ THIS DOCUMENT

This Background Report is structured to guide readers through the key elements that influence the Social Strategy 2025-2030. It is divided into three sections, each offering insights into different aspects of the City's social landscape:

① **STATE OF OUR CITY AND COMMUNITY**
This section provides a snapshot of Ryde's Social and Cultural Infrastructure that supports community cohesion and wellbeing. It presents an analysis of the community's demographics, highlighting key social and cultural activities that shape the City's identity and cohesion. The section also outlines a brief projection of the future of the community and the City.

② **STRATEGIC CONTEXT**
This section provides a summary of the strategic goals for fostering social connections, cohesion and wellbeing at international, national, state, regional, and local levels.

③ **STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT PROCESS AND OUTCOMES**
This section presents an overview of the consultation process, including the activities, principles, communication pathways, participant groups, and key findings from community and stakeholder engagement.

STATE OF OUR CITY AND COMMUNITY

(1)

OUR CITY

The City of Ryde Local Government Area (LGA) is located 12 kilometres from Sydney's CBD and covers an area of about 40 square kilometres. It is divided into three wards (East, Central and West), as shown in Figure 1, with some areas distributed across multiple wards.

Figure 1. The City of Ryde wards and suburbs (City of Ryde 2025)

EAST WARD

The East Ward includes the following areas:

• Chatswood West

• Macquarie Park

• Gladesville

• East Ryde

• North Ryde

• Putney

• Ryde

• Tennyson Point

CENTRAL WARD

The Central Ward includes the following areas:

• Denistone East

• Meadowbank

• Macquarie Park

• North Ryde

• Ryde

• West Ryde

WEST WARD

The West Ward includes the following areas:

• Denistone

• Denistone East

• Denistone West

• Eastwood

• Macquarie Park

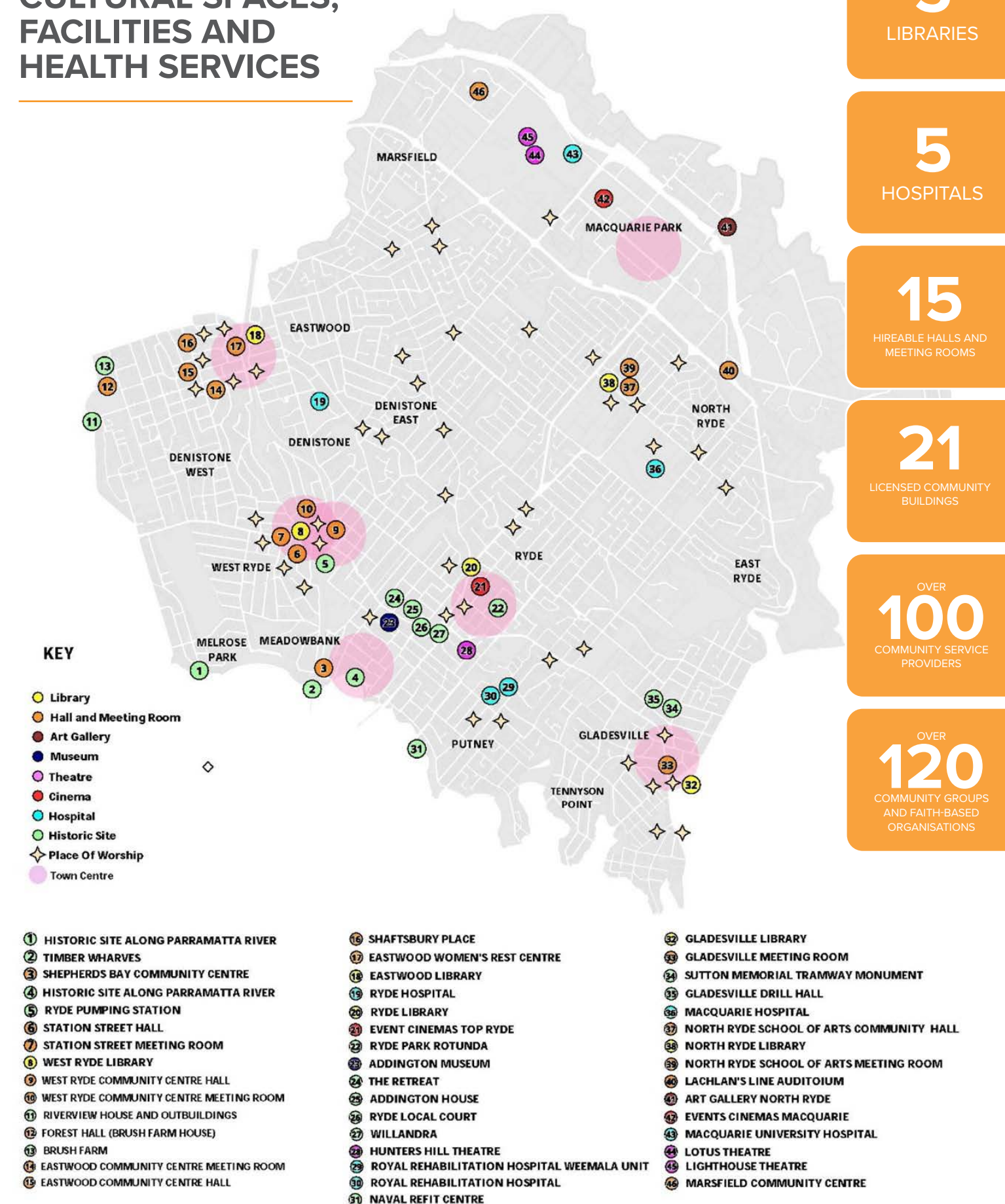• Marsfield

• Melrose Park

• West Ryde

OUR SOCIAL AND CULTURAL INFRASTRUCTURE

This section focuses on the social and cultural infrastructure within our City, highlighting key areas that contribute to the community's social life, wellbeing and vibrancy. Specifically, it examines social and cultural spaces, facilities, and health services, along with sports and recreational areas. The Report also looks at the educational institutions that contribute to our social fabric and support community development. These areas are essential in fostering a connected, healthy, and engaged community.

SOCIAL AND CULTURAL SPACES, FACILITIES AND HEALTH SERVICES

KEY

- ○ Library
- ○ Hall and Meeting Room
- ○ Art Gallery
- ● Museum
- ○ Theatre
- ● Cinema
- ○ Hospital
- ○ Historic Site
- ✧ Place Of Worship
- Town Centre

1. HISTORIC SITE ALONG PARRAMATTA RIVER
2. TIMBER WHARVES
3. SHEPHERDS BAY COMMUNITY CENTRE
4. HISTORIC SITE ALONG PARRAMATTA RIVER
5. RYDE PUMPING STATION
6. STATION STREET HALL
7. STATION STREET MEETING ROOM
8. WEST RYDE LIBRARY
9. WEST RYDE COMMUNITY CENTRE HALL
10. WEST RYDE COMMUNITY CENTRE MEETING ROOM
11. RIVERVIEW HOUSE AND OUTBUILDINGS
12. FOREST HALL (BRUSH FARM HOUSE)
13. BRUSH FARM
14. EASTWOOD COMMUNITY CENTRE MEETING ROOM
15. EASTWOOD COMMUNITY CENTRE HALL
16. SHAFTSBURY PLACE
17. EASTWOOD WOMEN'S REST CENTRE
18. EASTWOOD LIBRARY
19. RYDE HOSPITAL
20. RYDE LIBRARY
21. EVENT CINEMAS TOP RYDE
22. RYDE PARK ROTUNDA
23. ADDINGTON MUSEUM
24. THE RETREAT
25. ADDINGTON HOUSE
26. RYDE LOCAL COURT
27. WILLANDRA
28. HUNTERS HILL THEATRE
29. ROYAL REHABILITATION HOSPITAL WEEMALA UNIT
30. ROYAL REHABILITATION HOSPITAL
31. NAVAL REFIT CENTRE
32. GLADESVILLE LIBRARY
33. GLADESVILLE MEETING ROOM
34. SUTTON MEMORIAL TRAMWAY MONUMENT
35. GLADESVILLE DRILL HALL
36. MACQUARIE HOSPITAL
37. NORTH RYDE SCHOOL OF ARTS COMMUNITY HALL
38. NORTH RYDE LIBRARY
39. NORTH RYDE SCHOOL OF ARTS MEETING ROOM
40. LACHLAN'S LINE AUDITOIUM
41. ART GALLERY NORTH RYDE
42. EVENTS CINEMAS MACQUARIE
43. MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL
44. LOTUS THEATRE
45. LIGHTHOUSE THEATRE
46. MARSFIELD COMMUNITY CENTRE

5 LIBRARIES

5 HOSPITALS

15 HIREABLE HALLS AND MEETING ROOMS

21 LICENSED COMMUNITY BUILDINGS

OVER **100** COMMUNITY SERVICE PROVIDERS

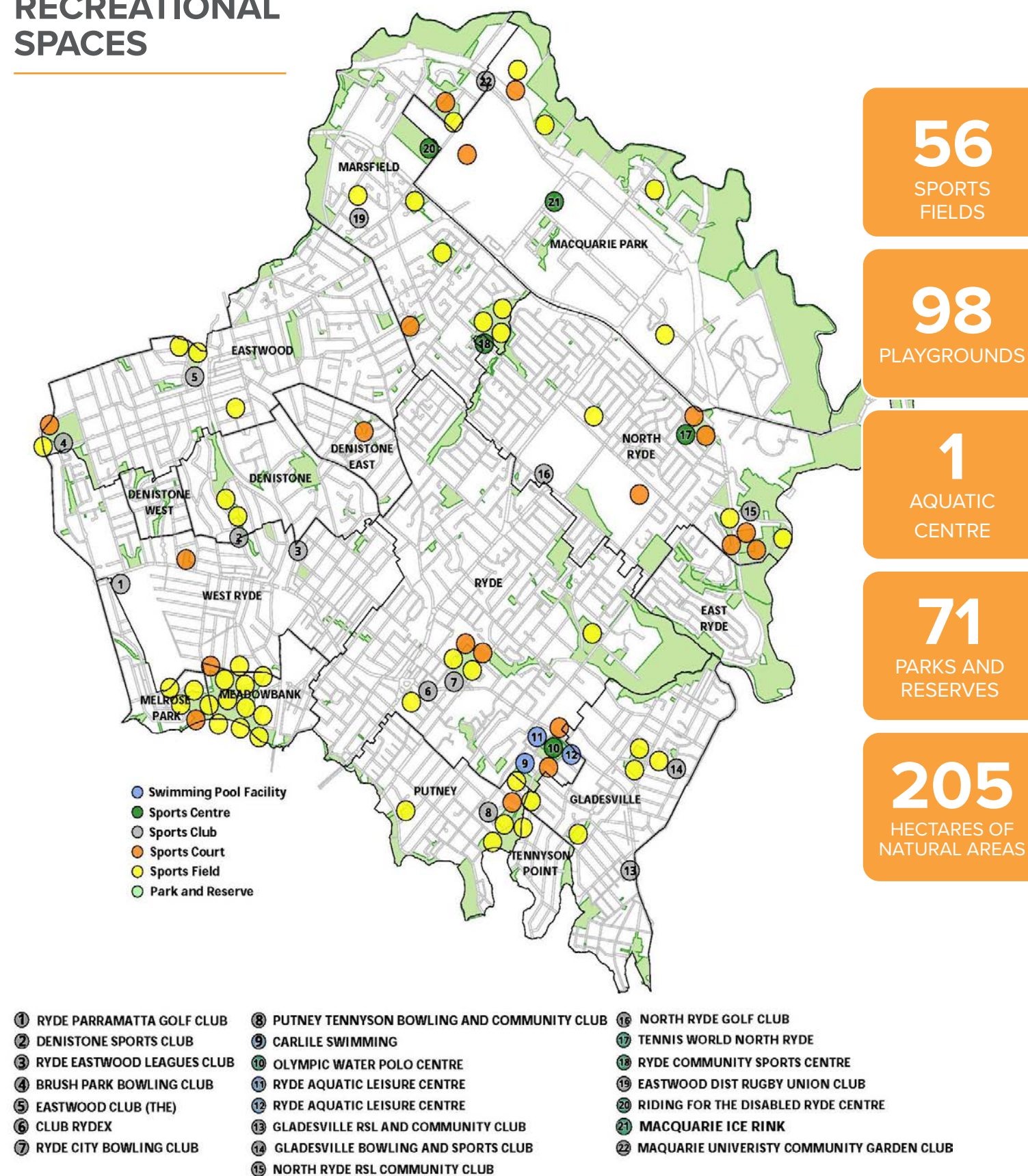OVER **120** COMMUNITY GROUPS AND FAITH-BASED ORGANISATIONS

Figure 2. Social and cultural spaces, facilities and health services (City of Ryde 2025)

SPORTS AND RECREATIONAL SPACES

56 SPORTS FIELDS

98 PLAYGROUNDS

1 AQUATIC CENTRE

71 PARKS AND RESERVES

205 HECTARES OF NATURAL AREAS

Legend:
- Swimming Pool Facility
- Sports Centre
- Sports Club
- Sports Court
- Sports Field
- Park and Reserve

1. RYDE PARRAMATTA GOLF CLUB
2. DENISTONE SPORTS CLUB
3. RYDE EASTWOOD LEAGUES CLUB
4. BRUSH PARK BOWLING CLUB
5. EASTWOOD CLUB (THE)
6. CLUB RYDEX
7. RYDE CITY BOWLING CLUB
8. PUTNEY TENNYSON BOWLING AND COMMUNITY CLUB
9. CARLILE SWIMMING
10. OLYMPIC WATER POLO CENTRE
11. RYDE AQUATIC LEISURE CENTRE
12. RYDE AQUATIC LEISURE CENTRE
13. GLADESVILLE RSL AND COMMUNITY CLUB
14. GLADESVILLE BOWLING AND SPORTS CLUB
15. NORTH RYDE RSL COMMUNITY CLUB
16. NORTH RYDE GOLF CLUB
17. TENNIS WORLD NORTH RYDE
18. RYDE COMMUNITY SPORTS CENTRE
19. EASTWOOD DIST RUGBY UNION CLUB
20. RIDING FOR THE DISABLED RYDE CENTRE
21. MACQUARIE ICE RINK
22. MAQUARIE UNIVERISTY COMMUNITY GARDEN CLUB

Figure 3.Sports and recreational spaces (City of Ryde 2025)

EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY
A GLOBALLY COMPETITIVE UNIVERSITY

2 TAFE CAMPUSES

THE INSTITUTE OF APPLIED TECHNOLOGY
DIGITAL

23 PRIMARY SCHOOLS

6 HIGH SCHOOLS

Legend:
- Primary School
- High School
- Special School & Academy
- Macquarie University
- TAFE

4 SPECIAL SCHOOLS AND ACADEMIES

THAT OFFER EDUCATION SERVICES AND SUPPORT TO STUDENTS WITH PHYSICAL OR MENTAL DISABILITIES, LEARNING DIFFICULTIES, BEHAVIOUR DISORDERS, OR PROVIDE SPECIAL SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING AND MATHEMATICS (STEM) EDUCATION.

Figure 4. Educational institutions (City of Ryde 2025)

OUR COMMUNITY[1]

OUR GROWING POPULATION

As shown in Figure 5, the population of our City was 129,123 in 2021 and has grown to 138,720 in 2024. The most populated suburbs are Ryde, Macquarie Park Innovation District, and Eastwood. Our population is expected to reach 156,964 by 2030 and 183,352 by 2041, which means an increase of 18,244 people by 2030 and 44,632 people by 2041, compared to 2024 population.
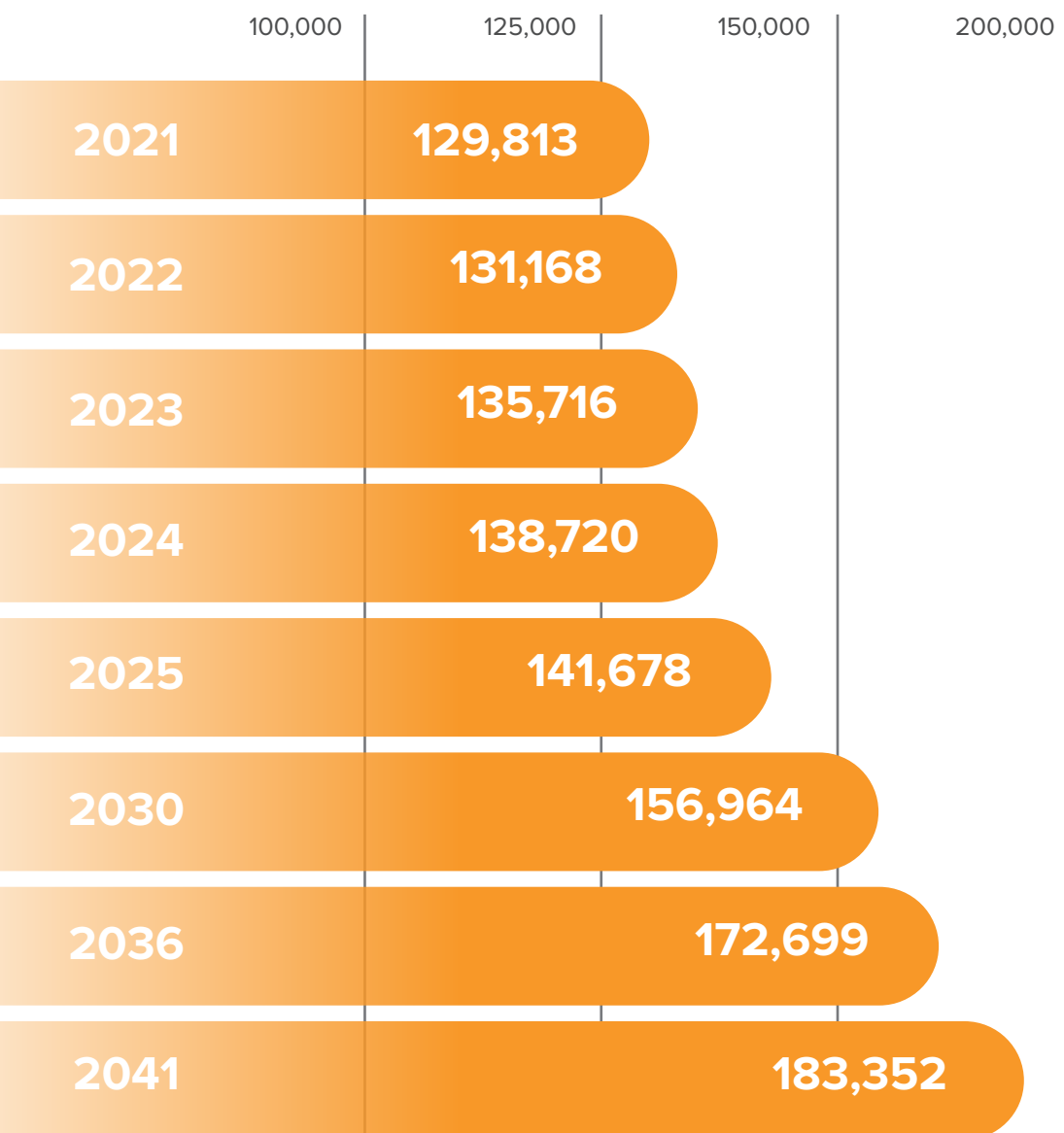
PROJECTED POPULATION

Year	Population
2021	129,813
2022	131,168
2023	135,716
2024	138,720
2025	141,678
2030	156,964
2036	172,699
2041	183,352

Figure 5.Projected population 2021 to 2041 (Data source: REMPLAN future population forecast)

[1] *All data presented in this section is sourced from REMPLAN and .id Community Profile based on Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Census of Population and Housing 2021, Retrieved from https://www.remplan.com.au/ and https://profile.id.com.au/. The population projection data is sourced from REMPLAN future population forecast.*

AGE AND GENDER DISTRIBUTION

The gender distribution in our City is nearly balanced, with males making up 49% and females 51% of the population. As shown in Figure 6, this balance is consistent across different age groups.

The largest age group in our City is 30-34 years, making up 10% of the total population. This is followed by those aged 35-39 (9%) and 25-29 (8.5%). While the percentage share of the population decreases as age increases, particularly after retirement age (65), the number of residents over 65 has increased from 19,439 in 2021 to an estimated 20,596 in 2024, making up 15% of the total population.

Children aged 0 to 4 and 5 to 9 make up 5.63% and 5.74% of the population, respectively. The total population under 15 has also grown slightly from 20,966 in 2021 to an estimated 22,260 in 2024, making up 16% of our increasing population.
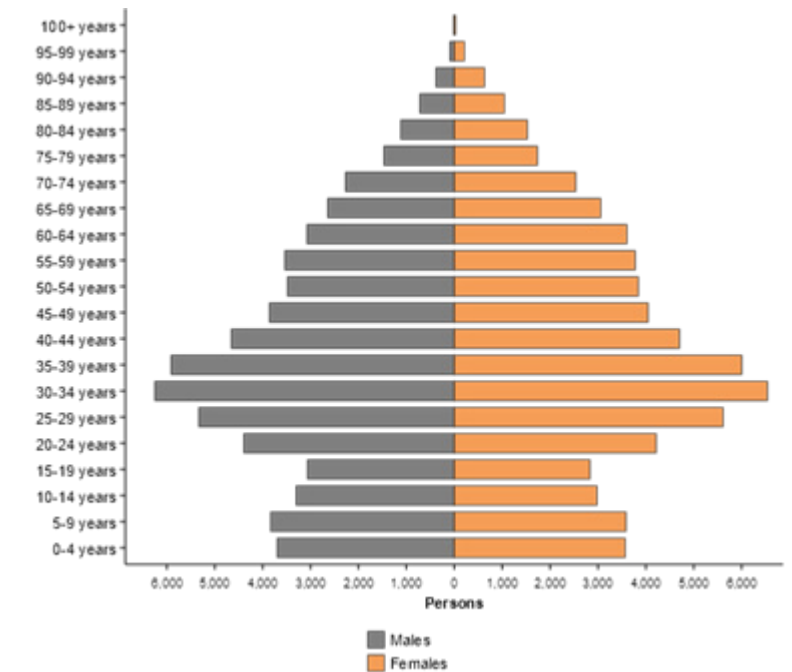
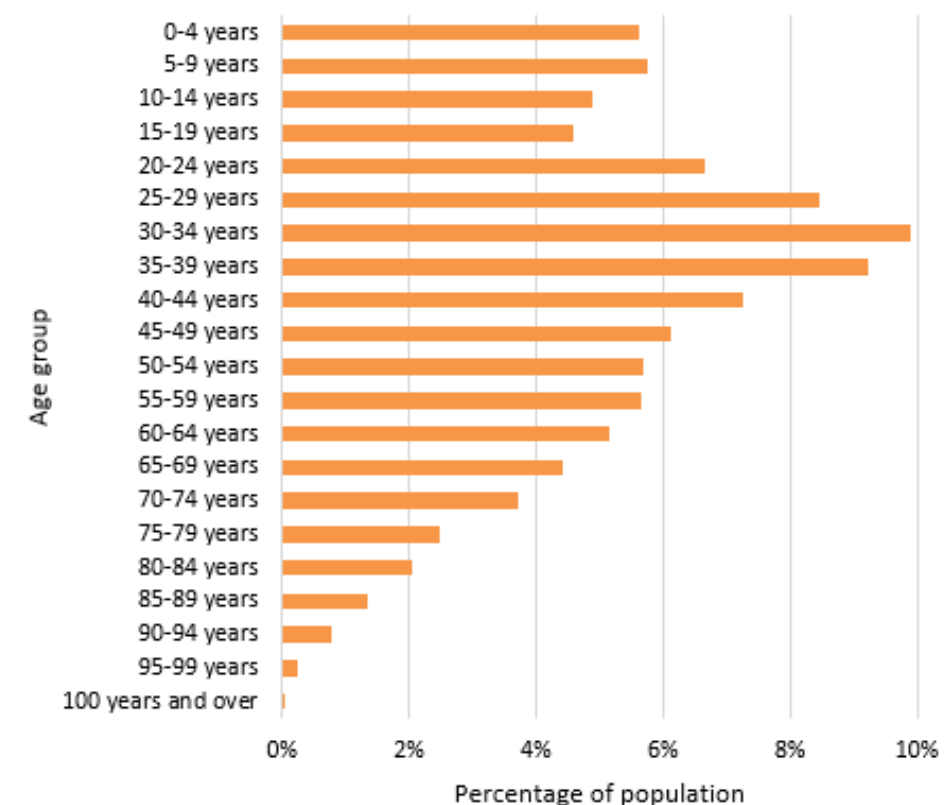*Figure 6. Age-gender pyramid distribution 2021 (Data source: REMPLAN based on ABS Census 2021)*

Figure 7. Age breakdown (Data source: REMPLAN based on ABS Census 2021)

HOUSEHOLDS AND FAMILIES

- In 2021, there were around **50,800** households in our City, with an average household size of **2.47**. Our City has a variety of household types, with the largest group being couples with children, making up **32%** of households in 2021, slightly lower than the Greater Sydney average of **34%**. Lone-person households counted for **26%**, which is higher than the Greater Sydney average of **23%**.

CULTURAL DIVERSITY

Our City has a rich cultural diversity, including:

- **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residents**, who made up **0.5%** of the population in 2021.
- **Culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities**, who were born overseas, made up **49%** of our population in 2021, compared to **39%** in Greater Sydney. The top three countries of birth are China, India, and South Korea. Of the overseas-born residents, **23%** arrived in Australia between 2016 and 2021.
- In 2021, **49%** of residents spoke a language other than English at home, compared to **37%** in Greater Sydney. The top three languages spoken at home are Mandarin, Cantonese, and Korean. Additionally, **8%** of the population reported having difficulty speaking English.
- While our community practises a range of religions, Christianity remained the largest religion, with **44.2%** of residents identifying as Christian in 2021.

HEATH, WELLBEING, AND SUPPORT WITH CORE ACTIVITIES

- In 2021, around **20%** of our population reported having one or more long-term health conditions, which is slightly lower than the Greater Sydney average of **23%.** The most common long-term health conditions reported in 2021 were mental health related, affecting **6%** of the population.
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in our City reported higher rates of long-term health conditions, with about **36%** experiencing at least one. In line with the overall community, mental health conditions were the most common, affecting **17%** of this group.
- In 2021, about **5%** of our population reported needing assistance with daily activities, due to disability.

EDUCATION

- Education is highly valued in our community. As shown in Figure 8, **60%** of our population had a Bachelor's degree or higher in 2021. However, **5%** of young people aged 15 to 24 were not engaged in education or employment.[2]
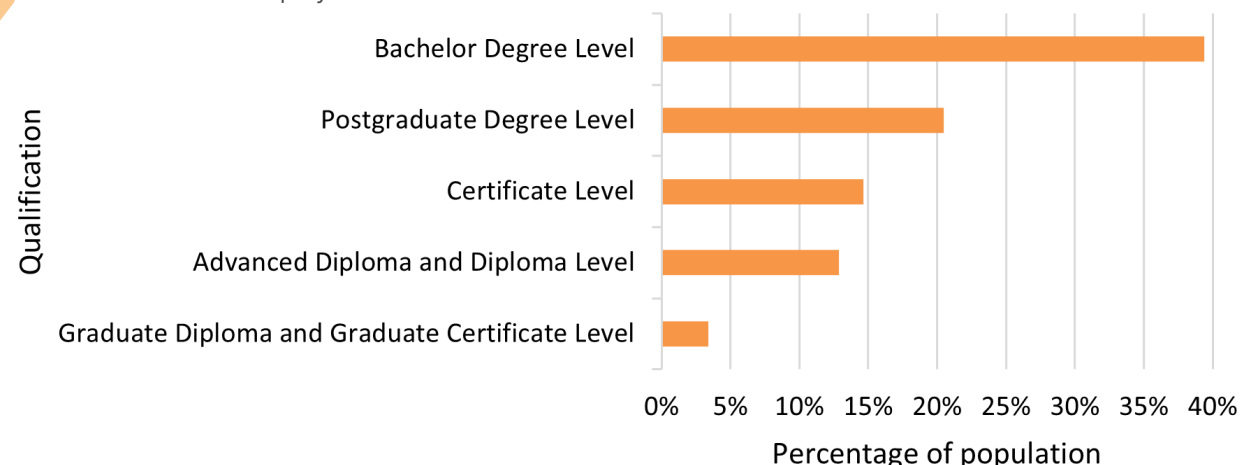
Figure 8. Highest qualification (Data source: REMPLAN based on ABS Census 2021)

[2] Engagement in employment and education looks at the level of participation by age and sex of the population in the labour market, or full or part-time education. A full time employed, or full-time student would be fully engaged, while part-time students may be fully engaged if they are also employed, or partly engaged if they are not working.

EMPLOYMENT

- In 2021, **94%** of our labour force[3] was employed across various industries. The top three industries were 'Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services,' 'Health Care and Social Assistance,' and 'Education and Training.'
- Male workers made up **51%** of the employed labor force, slightly more than female workers at **49%**. The largest group of employed residents were those aged 35-39 (**14%**), followed by those aged 40-44 (**13%**).
- The overall participation rate[4] for residents in our City was **64%** in 2021, with an unemployment rate of around **5%**, which is similar to the Greater Sydney average.

Workforce movements

- **21%** of our local workers both live and work within the LGA, while **79%** live outside the area, mostly in Parramatta, Blacktown, and Hornsby.
- Of the residents who work, **68%** travel outside the City for their job. The top three areas where they work are Sydney, Parramatta, and Willoughby.

Employment status of people with disabilities

- In 2021, about **87%** of people in the City of Ryde who needed assistance and were part of the labor force were employed. Their unemployment rate was **13.3%**, slightly higher than the Greater Sydney average of **13.1%**. Their participation rate in the labor force was **9.3%**, also slightly higher than the Greater Sydney rate of **9.1%**.

Employment status of recently arrived migrants and CALD communities

- In 2021, **90%** of City of Ryde residents who recently arrived from overseas and were in the labour force were employed. The unemployment rate for this group was **9.5%**.
- Overall, **94%** of non-English speaking residents in Ryde who were in the labour force were employed, with an unemployment rate of **6%**.

Employment status of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people

- In 2021, **94%** of our residents who identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people were employed, with an unemployment rate of **6%**.

VOLUNTARY WORK

- In 2021, about **13%** of our population reported doing some form of voluntary work, which is higher than the Greater Sydney average of **12%**.

INCOME AND HOUSING STRESS

- In 2021, around **8%** of households in our City earned less than **$650** per week, while **41%** earned more than **$3,000** per week. Of low-income households, **11%** had a mortgage, **29%** rented privately, and **13%** lived in social housing.
- The median weekly household income in our City was **$2,189**, slightly higher than the Greater Sydney median of **$2,099**. The median weekly rent in our City was **$460**.
- An estimated **360 people** were homeless in the City of Ryde in 2021.

HOUSING

- Our City provides a range of housing options for residents. In 2021, **50%** of residents lived in separate houses, **16%** in medium-density housing, and **34%** in high-density housing.
- Among non-private dwellings, the two most common types were nursing homes **(26%)** and residential colleges or halls of residence **(25%)**.

[3] Persons aged 15+, who are classified as either employed or unemployed.
[4] Population in labour force

SNAPSHOT OF OUR SOCIAL AND CULTURAL ACTIVITIES

Our City offers a diverse range of events and programs aimed at fostering community engagement, social connection, cohesion, and wellbeing. This section provides a snapshot of the key initiatives organised between 2023-2024.

COUNCIL-ORGANISED EVENTS

In 2023-2024, the City of Ryde Council (Council) hosted **38** events, drawing approximately **160,000** annual attendees. These events were highly successful, with a **91%** customer satisfaction rate, based on surveys from event visitors. The events organised were of varying scales:

• Signature events, such as the Granny Smith Festival, attracted around **80,000** attendees, with more than **4,000** community members and **1,800** performers contributing to its success.

• Major events, including Australia Day Celebrations, Lunar New Year, Cork and Fork by the Riverside, and New Year's Eve Fireworks, drew over **5,000** participants each.

• Small events, such as Cinema in the Park and the Sustainability Festival, engaged up to **1,000** attendees.

• Civic events, including ANZAC Day and Remembrance Day services, as well as Citizenship Ceremonies, brought together up to **200** people each.

LIBRARY PROGRAMS AND COMMUNITY FACILITY ENGAGEMENT

Inclusive programs were offered to senior residents, youth, women, CALD communities, and First Nations people, ensuring that diverse groups had access to tailored activities. These activities were organised in partnership with Macquarie University, TAFE NSW, government agencies and not-for-profit service providers.

Over **657,169** visits were made to the five libraries across the City, including:

• **39,733** attendees at **1,708** in-person and online library programs and events

• **16,209** attendees at children's StoryTime and Baby RhymeTime sessions

Additionally, there were over **311,445** visits to Council's community halls and facilities, while the Ryde Aquatic Leisure Centre saw over **662,508** visitors.

SPORTS AND RECREATION

• Sport and recreation continue to be a major part of life in the City. Council's activity areas and open spaces hosted **1,508,917** participants in organised sports. This highlights the community's strong engagement in physical activities and the importance of these spaces in promoting health and social connection.

DIGITAL ENGAGEMENT

• Council's online presence saw significant interaction, with approximately **6 million** page views on the Council's website. This reflects the growing interest in virtual programming and online resources, providing easy access to information and community engagement.

COMMUNITY GRANTS AND FUNDING PROGRAMS

• The Council continued to support community development through various funding programs, including Community Wellbeing, Arts and Creativity, Community Facilities and Equipment, Sport and Recreation, Venue Hire, and other small grants. In 2023, **64** community grants were awarded, followed by **66** grants in 2024.

FUTURE STATE OF OUR COMMUNITY AND CITY

INCREASE OF
18,244
BY 2030

POPULATION GROWTH

- Our population is expected to reach 156,964 by 2030 and 183,352 by 2041, which means an increase of 18,244 people by 2030 and 44,632 people by 2041[5]. Since 2021, our community has seen demographic changes, and future trends suggest a growing number of senior residents, along with more young families, children, and teenagers.

- As our community continues to change, we will need to plan for higher demands on social infrastructure, such as schools, childcare, and community facilities. There will also be a greater need for public spaces, local services, inclusive activities for all groups, and improved access to services and places for senior residents and people with disabilities.

11,600
NEW HOMES BY 2029

HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

- Housing development is a key part of planning for our growing population. It is important to provide a variety of housing options to meet the needs of different household types, while also offering affordable living choices for key workers.

- The New South Wales (NSW) Government has committed to building 377,000 new homes across the state by 2029 as part of the National Housing Accord. Our City will contribute by completing 11,600 new homes within the LGA by 2029, to help address the housing crisis and meet the future needs of our community.[6]

- To maintain the high quality of life in our City, future planning should focus on creating diverse, well-located homes in areas with existing infrastructure, such as schools, community facilities, hospitals, open spaces, and transport. Additionally, developing and activating commercial centres like Macquarie Park will help create attractive local workplaces. It is also crucial to invest in additional infrastructure to support our growing population.

Macquarie University and two TAFE NSW campuses

LOCAL ECONOMIC GROWTH

- Our local economy is thriving, anchored by the business development activities occurring in Macquarie Park Innovation District, which offers diverse employment opportunities and contributes significantly to our economic output. The City of Ryde also benefits from its proximity to a wealth of talent, with Macquarie University and two TAFE NSW campuses, including the Institute of Applied Technology – Digital.

- The City of Ryde's Economic Development Strategy 2024-2028[7] and Night-time Economy Strategy 2024-2028[8] will guide future economic growth. Our vibrant town centres, including West Ryde-Meadowbank, Eastwood, and Gladesville, will be further activated through masterplans and place activation projects.

[5] REMPLAN future population forecast, Retrieved from https://www.remplan.com.au/
[6] https://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/policy-and-legislation/housing/housing-targets
[7] https://www.ryde.nsw.gov.au/files/assets/public/v/3/publications/economic-development/economic-development-strategy.pdf
[8] https://www.ryde.nsw.gov.au/files/assets/public/v/1/publications/economic-development/night-time-economy-strategy.pdf

② STRATEGIC CONTEXT

The Social Strategy 2025-2030 is designed to align with the development directions, objectives, and planning priorities outlined in key strategic documents at local, state, regional, national and international levels. This alignment ensures that the Strategy supports and contributes to broader goals.

This section highlights the key strategic directions that guide our City's development.

INTERNATIONAL PRIORITIES

UN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

The concept of 'social wellbeing' is a key part of the UN Sustainable Development Goals[9] (SDGs), which were first adopted in 2015. These goals provide a global roadmap for creating a more sustainable future for cities and communities.

The City of Ryde's social planning aligns with the UN SDGs, focusing on specific areas, such as:

- Good Health and Wellbeing (SDG 3)
- Quality Education (SDG 4)
- Gender Equality (SDG 5)
- Reduced Inequalities (SDG 10)
- Sustainable Cities and Communities (SDG 11)
- Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions (SDG 16), and
- Partnerships for the Goals (SDG 17).

Our Social Strategy builds on the City's strengths and opportunities to improve social wellbeing, celebrate diversity, and promote equity and inclusion for all residents. It aligns with the UN Goals and contributes to the global 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
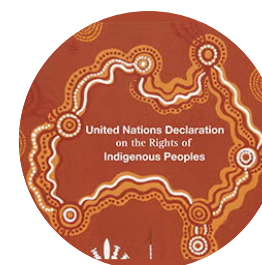
UN DECLARATION ON THE RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

The UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples[10], adopted in 2007, sets out global standards to support the survival, dignity, and wellbeing of Indigenous people. Our City's social planning aligns with these standards, recognising and respecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, as well as their spiritual connection to the land, waters, cultures, and beliefs.

Our Social Strategy reflects our commitment to fostering vibrant communities and achieving meaningful outcomes that honour the people and cultures that define who we are and guide us towards a united future.

[9] https://sdgs.un.org/goals
[10] https://social.desa.un.org/issues/indigenous-peoples/united-nations-declaration-on-the-rights-of-indigenous-peoples

NATIONAL PRIORITIES

NATIONAL MULTICULTURAL FRAMEWORK

The Multicultural Framework Review 2024, Towards Fairness - A Multicultural Australia for All[11], is the first major assessment of our nation's approach to multiculturalism. It emphasises the importance of a whole-of-government and community effort to fully realise the potential of our diverse, multicultural society. The review outlines key components of the Multicultural Framework, including:

Connection: Establishing the foundations of social cohesion, cultural identity, and equality of opportunity.

Identity and belonging: Creating a welcoming Australia by celebrating multiculturalism, investing in programs that drive social change through arts and sport, and deepening the understanding of First Nations history.

Inclusion: Ensuring culturally responsive services across sectors like health, disability, education, aged care, and housing, while promoting cultural capability within the Australian Public Service. It also addresses the digital divide and the unique needs of diverse cultural and demographic groups.

Our Social Strategy outlines actions that continue to strengthen community connection within our multicultural and diverse population, ensuring inclusivity and a shared sense of belonging.

NATIONAL WELLBEING FRAMEWORK

Australia's Wellbeing Framework 2023[12], identifies key factors—such as health, security, sustainability, cohesion, and prosperity—that significantly contribute to both individual and collective wellbeing. Inclusion, equity, and fairness are central to this Framework, emphasising the importance of ensuring that wellbeing outcomes are shared fairly among all community members and groups. The Framework outlines key indicators to track progress and measure the effectiveness of efforts aimed at achieving the best outcomes for the community.

This Wellbeing Framework informs our Social Strategy by highlighting the wellbeing aspects that should be prioritised and providing guidance on the indicators that will be used to monitor and evaluate future outcomes.

NATIONAL DISABILITY STRATEGY

The National Disability Strategy 2021-2031[13] drives action across all levels of government to improve the lives of people with disabilities, ensuring their rights are protected, promoted, and fully realised. The Disability Strategy outlines ways to improve inclusion, enable people with disabilities to reach their potential, and ensure they are integrated into the community. It also focuses on enhancing mainstream services and systems to improve outcomes for people with disabilities.

Our Social Strategy highlights several key areas, including safety, health and wellbeing, and access to support and services. These areas inform our City's social planning, ensuring that relevant considerations are made to support people with disabilities in our community.

ENGAGE! A STRATEGY TO INCLUDE YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE DECISIONS WE MAKE

Engage 2024[14] presents a new vision for how the government can collaborate with young people. This national strategy focuses on three priority areas for youth engagement, including listening to and acknowledging young people, empowering them to advocate and engage with the government, and supporting the government in effectively working with young people.

Our Social Strategy focuses on supporting and empowering young people to strengthen their connection to the community and services, improving their health and wellbeing, and creating employment opportunities.

NATIONAL CULTURAL POLICY

The National Cultural Policy 2023, Revive: A Place for Every Story, A Story for Every Place[15], aims to position arts, culture, and heritage as central values in shaping Australia's future. The Policy guides creative workers, organisations, and audiences to thrive and grow.

The Cultural Policy is built around five pillars, including:

• Recognising and respecting First Nations stories, arts, and cultures

• Including everyone's story in the creation of culture

• Supporting artists

• Providing cultural infrastructure, and

• Enhancing community connection through arts, culture, and creativity.

These pillars guide the actions needed for the future growth and development of arts, culture, and creativity. Our Social Strategy aligns with these directions to deliver social and cultural outcomes in our community.

NSW GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES

NSW AGEING STRATEGY

The NSW Ageing Strategy[16] outlines a vision that embraces the benefits of an ageing population and acknowledges their valuable contributions to the community. It empowers senior community members and encourages proactive planning for their future.

Our Social Strategy highlights the needs of our City's ageing population and provides actions to ensure we create a community that supports its residents in their later years.

NSW DISABILITY INCLUSION PLAN

The NSW Disability Inclusion Plan 2021-2025[17] offers a framework for building a more inclusive society by addressing systemic and attitudinal barriers.

The Plan outlines four key areas the NSW Government can focus on to improve the lives of people with disabilities. The relevant actions for our Social Strategy include promoting positive community attitudes and behaviours, creating more liveable places, and improving access to mainstream services through better systems and processes.

[11] https://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/multicultural-framework-review/Documents/report-summary/multicultural-framework-review-report-english.pdf
[12] https://treasury.gov.au/sites/default/files/2023-07/measuring-what-matters-statement020230721_0.pdf
[13] https://www.disabilitygateway.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/2025-01/5831-dss3513-ads-strategy-2021.pdf
[14] https://www.youth.gov.au/download/53/engage-strategy-include-young-people-decisions-we-make/185/document/pdf
[15] https://www.arts.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/national-culturalpolicy-8february2023.pdf
[16] https://dcj.nsw.gov.au/documents/community-inclusion/seniors/nsw-ageing-strategy.pdf
[17] https://dcj.nsw.gov.au/documents/community-inclusion/disability-inclusion/nsw-disability-inclusion-plan/nsw-disability-inclusion-plan.pdf

NSW CLOSING THE GAP PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

The NSW Closing the Gap Partnership Agreement 2024[18] builds on the National Partnership Agreement signed in 2020. It aims to strengthen the relationship between the government and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and organisations. The goal is to work towards shared objectives for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities, while ensuring they have a say in the development and implementation of policies and programs that affect their lives.

The Agreement outlines key reforms for this partnership, including formal partnerships, shared decision-making, building the community-controlled sector, transforming government organisations to work more effectively with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, improving access to regional data and information, and growing the Aboriginal business sector through collaboration.

Our Social Strategy supports Council's partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and organisations, in line with the priorities set out in this Partnership Agreement.

NSW CONNECTING WITH COUNTRY FRAMEWORK

The NSW Connecting with Country Framework 2023[19] promotes the building of strong connections with Country to guide the delivery of built environment projects across the state. The Framework advocates for a collaborative approach, centred on Country, and guided by Aboriginal people, their knowledge, and values. Through this Framework, the NSW Government aims to minimise the impacts of natural events, honour and respect Aboriginal cultural knowledge, and ensure the care and protection of Country.

The City of Ryde Social Strategy supports the recognition of First Nations communities' history, cultures, and values, and advocates for a deeper connection with Country.

NSW HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY

The NSW Homelessness Strategy 2025-2035[20] outlines plans and actions to prevent and address homelessness in NSW. It focuses on a person-centred approach, with coordinated and localised service planning, design, and delivery, informed by the lived experiences of people who have experienced homelessness.

Advocating for increased affordable housing is a key priority in our Social Strategy.

NSW VOLUNTEERING STRATEGY

The NSW Volunteering Strategy 2020-2030[21] presents an inclusive and aspirational vision to grow, value, and invest in volunteers. It aims to attract volunteers from all demographic groups, including people of diverse ages and all genders, people with disabilities, and those from various cultural backgrounds.

Volunteering activities are highlighted and supported in our Social Strategy as key opportunities for fostering community connection and resilience, contributing significantly to health and wellbeing outcomes.

REGIONAL PRIORITIES

GREATER SYDNEY REGION PLAN – A METROPOLIS OF THREE CITIES

The Greater Sydney Region Plan, A Metropolis of Three Cities 2018[22], envisions three cities – the Western Parkland City, the Central River City, and the Eastern Harbour City – to meet the needs of a growing and evolving population. Its goal is to enhance liveability, productivity, and sustainability by spreading the benefits of growth, allowing residents to live within 30 minutes of jobs, education, healthcare, services, and vibrant places.

The Plan emphasises the need for infrastructure that aligns with projected growth and the future needs of communities. It highlights the importance of collaboration between government, businesses, and communities to achieve the best outcomes and realise the benefits of growth.

The Greater Sydney Region Plan serves as a guide for the implementation of the vision across the five districts of the metropolitan area, including the North District Plan, which encompasses the City of Ryde LGA.

GREATER SYDNEY 2056 - NORTH DISTRICT PLAN

Our City is part of the North District, and as such, its strategic planning – including social and cultural planning – is guided by the Greater Sydney 2056 - North District Plan[23]. We focus on growth and delivering place-based outcomes for our community, based on several key planning priorities outlined in the North District Plan, including:

• Planning for a City supported by robust infrastructure

• Encouraging collaboration across all sectors

• Providing services and social infrastructure that meet the evolving needs of residents

• Fostering healthy, creative, culturally rich, and socially connected communities

• Ensuring the provision of housing that offers choice, affordability, and access to jobs, services, and public transport

• Revitalising and renewing local centres, and

• Creating great places for everyone, while respecting the District's heritage.

The vision of the North District Plan is to enhance our community's quality of life by providing quicker and easier access to a broader range of jobs, housing options, and activities.

RESILIENT SYDNEY: A STRATEGY FOR CITY RESILIENCE

The Resilient Sydney Strategy 2018[24] outlines a five-year action plan, aimed at enhancing the City's ability to survive, adapt, and thrive amid global and local challenges. It focuses on key directions and priority actions, developed through an unprecedented collaboration among all 33 metropolitan councils, the NSW Government, businesses, and communities. The Strategy's vision is to create a connected, inclusive, and resilient Sydney, with a mission to improve understanding and manage resilience challenges.

As a partner in developing the Resilient Sydney Strategy, the City of Ryde is committed to adopting a people-centred approach that fosters community connections, ensuring resilience and preparedness to maintain quality of life. Our Social Strategy supports this goal by fostering collective effort.

[18] https://www.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/noindex/2024-05/NSW-Closing-the-Gap-Partnership-Agreement.pdf
[19] https://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/2023-10/connecting-with-country.pdf
[20] https://www.nsw.gov.au/departments-and-agencies/homes-nsw/nsw-government-response-to-homelessness/nsw-homelessness-strategy-2025-2035
[21] https://www.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/2023-06/NSW-Volunteering-Strategy-2020-2030.pdf

[22] https://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/plans-for-your-area/a-metropolis-of-three-cities
[23] https://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/2024-04/north-district-plan.pdf
[24] https://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/governance-decision-making/resilient-sydney

CITY OF RYDE PRIORITIES

Community Strategic Plan

Council's Community Strategic Plan 2028[25] (CSP) is a 10-year roadmap that reflects the community's insights and needs. It breaks down both current and future requirements into seven key strategic directions for the development of our City. These directions and delivery indicators are detailed in the four-year Delivery Plan, with specific actions outlined in the one-year Operational Plan.

The key directions guiding the Plan include establishing:

• A vibrant and liveable City

• An active and healthy City

• A natural and sustainable City

• A smart and innovative City

• A connected and accessible City

• A diverse and inclusive City

• An open and progressive City

Our Social Strategy aligns with the CSP and supports the delivery of social and cultural outcomes that contribute to these strategic directions.

LOCAL STRATEGIC PLANNING STATEMENT

The Local Strategic Planning Statement 2020[26] (LSPS) is a 20-year vision for our City, aligned with regional plans, such as the North District Plan, A Metropolis of Three Cities and the NSW state policy settings. At the local level, the LSPS reflects community sentiment and strategic directions, as outlined in the CSP for meeting community needs.

The LSPS sets the framework for land use planning and guides all planning decisions to shape the community's vision. It defines development targets, planning priorities, and key actions. Relevant priorities to our Social Strategy include:

• Providing multi-purpose community facilities

• Delivering safe events for the community

• Protecting and enhancing the cultural heritage of our City, including historic buildings, landscapes, and places of natural significance

The City of Ryde Social Strategy contributes to this long-term vision by advocating and planning for the delivery of social and cultural outcomes.

OTHER COUNCIL STRATEGIES AND POLICIES

Our Social Strategy aligns with and supports other key Council strategies and plans, all contributing to the delivery of social and cultural outcomes for our community. These include[27]:

• City of Ryde Integrated Open Spaces Plan

• City of Ryde Integrated Transport Strategy

• City of Ryde Resilience Plan

• City of Ryde Sport and Recreation Strategy

• City of Ryde Disability Inclusion Action Plan

• City of Ryde Reconciliation Action Plan

• City of Ryde Economic Development Strategy

• City of Ryde Night-time Economy Strategy

• City of Ryde Affordable Housing Policy

• City of Ryde Social and Cultural Infrastructure Framework

• City of Ryde Local Infrastructure Strategy

• City of Ryde Halls and Facilities Strategy

• City of Ryde Library Service Strategic Plan

• City of Ryde Creativity Strategy

• City of Ryde Events Plan, and

• City of Ryde Live Music Plan.

[25] https://www.ryde.nsw.gov.au/files/assets/public/v1/publications/corporate-services/city-of-ryde-2028-community-strategic-plan.pdf
[26] https://www.ryde.nsw.gov.au/files/assets/public/v1/publications/planning/lsps/planning-ryde-local-strategic-planning-statement-march-2020.pdf

[27] For further information see https://www.ryde.nsw.gov.au/Council/Plans-and-Publications

3 STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT PROCESS AND OUTCOMES

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT PHASES AND ACTIVITIES

The City of Ryde aimed to gain a deeper understanding of the current and future needs of its community and identify the priorities and outcomes that will shape the Social Strategy 2025-2030. The goal was to strengthen social and cultural planning, ensuring the development of a plan that delivers the best outcomes for the community.

As shown in Figure 9, a variety of engagement activities were conducted in 2024 and 2025 to gather feedback from the community and stakeholders on the current and future social and cultural landscape in the City of Ryde.

ENGAGEMENT PHASE 1

STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION

Survey:
- Online community survey
- Online service providers survey
- Online interactive map to gather the community's place-based comments
- Community consultation boards at Council events and festivals

Drop-in sessions:
- Community drop-in sessions

Focus groups:
- Focus groups with service providers and government agencies, including agencies responsible for delivering and supporting social and cultural outcomes as well as agencies responsible for delivering essential infrastructure (social, cultural, economic)

ENGAGEMENT PHASE 2

Council internal consultation:
- Workshops with Council staff
- Workshops with Councillors

ENGAGEMENT PHASE 3

Validation and final consultation:
- Community and stakeholder consultation through public exhibition

Figure 9. Stakeholders' engagement phases and activities

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY AND PRINCIPLES

The stakeholder engagement strategy was guided by Council's principles of timely, informative, and transparent communication, promoting inclusive and purpose-driven engagement, and encouraging participation from all. It emphasised two-way dialogue with stakeholders while safeguarding participants' privacy.

Key risks were identified and addressed, including the use of anonymous data collection, diverse and accessible consultation methods, multilingual materials, clear communication of objectives, and validation of stakeholder input. Additionally, Council offered in-language assistance through translated materials and access to interpreters.

COMMUNICATION PATHWAYS

A variety of communication channels were used to promote the new Social Strategy, raise awareness of the engagement phases and activities, and encourage feedback. These included:

- A Have Your Say page and events webpage offering background information on the Strategy and details on how to get involved.
- eNewsletters and The Weekly Times, with links to engagement opportunities.
- Flyers distributed at key community facilities, events, and festivals, along with downloadable posters for service providers to share with their clients.
- A storyboard at in-person engagement sessions to display project details.
- Regular posts on the City of Ryde's social media platforms (Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram) to encourage feedback.
- Direct emails and phone calls to targeted networks and service providers to promote engagement opportunities.

WHO WE ENGAGED WITH

We engaged with over 600 stakeholders, identified through comprehensive stakeholder mapping, to ensure diverse representation. Key stakeholder groups included:

- Local residents
- Service providers across healthcare, disability care and support, education, housing, employment, and recreation, as well as support services for First Nations and CALD communities, children, families, and senior residents
- NSW Government agencies responsible for delivering social and cultural outcomes and essential infrastructure
- Peak bodies delivering social and cultural outcomes
- Representative from First Nations communities, and
- City of Ryde staff and Councillors.

KEY ENGAGEMENT FINDINGS

The feedback gathered through various engagement methods and consultations with the community and stakeholders was analysed to identify common themes and recurring insights. This feedback covers current challenges and opportunities, as well as future priorities and visions for enhancing the social and cultural landscape of the City of Ryde. This section highlights the key points raised by the community and stakeholders.

WE WANT MORE COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS
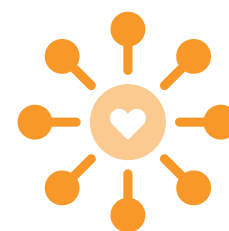
The community of Ryde expressed a strong sense of belonging and connection to their City. However, specific groups raised concerns about feeling disconnected from the wider community. The analysis revealed that residents who recently arrived in Australia were particularly vocal about these feelings of isolation. Cultural and linguistic diversity emerged as a challenge for effective community interaction and cohesion, with participants pointing out that language barriers and cultural gaps hinder access to information and connection among residents.

Additionally, senior residents and people with disabilities, who may require additional support, highlighted the challenges they face in staying connected with the community.

One key issue highlighted in the feedback was the impact of high-rise residential buildings on community lifestyle and social cohesion. Many community members discussed how these developments may contribute to a sense of disconnection and isolation. There were suggestions for addressing this challenge, such as exploring the role of Strata committees in organising small-scale events and facilitating community gatherings. According to them, these efforts could help strengthen social ties and encourage interaction among residents, contributing to a more cohesive community.

> *"We need to talk more. There needs to be more interaction with each other and our neighbours."*
>
> *~ Community workshop participant*

> *"To bring people together, we need a central community space."*
>
> *~ Service providers workshop participant*

The top priority identified by participants in the workshops and consultations was fostering greater connection among community members and building a stronger attachment to local places. To achieve this, it was suggested that both large and small-scale events and activities should be organised to bridge geographical silos created by busy roads and the physical layout of the area.

Service providers emphasised the importance of social inclusion, particularly for new community members, such as migrants and refugees, who may experience isolation and homesickness. They discussed that these efforts are crucial, not only for fostering a sense of belonging but also for preventing deeper social issues from developing, such as domestic and family violence, which can stem from social isolation.

WE WANT TO CELEBRATE AND SHOWCASE CULTURAL DIVERSITY

Celebrating diversity and promoting inclusion were central themes in the community feedback. Participants emphasised the importance of actively embracing and showcasing the rich array of cultures within the community, through events, festivals, and activities that not only reflect the diversity of our community but also provide opportunities for cultural exchange. These initiatives were seen as key to fostering social inclusion, through the creation of spaces where people from different backgrounds can connect, share their traditions, and build mutual understanding.

"Multiculturalism is very strong in this community."

~ Service providers workshop participant

Furthermore, participants noted that by ensuring diverse voices are involved in decision-making processes, we can better address the needs of all residents and create a cultural environment that truly reflects the community's diversity. The feedback indicated a strong desire to create an ongoing dialogue that not only celebrates cultural diversity but also actively works to break down barriers that hinder full participation in the community.

WE WANT RYDE TO HAVE A UNIFYING IDENTITY

A key priority for the City of Ryde is developing a distinct identity that fosters a sense of community and pride among its residents. Feedback emphasised the importance of creating a unifying identity, based on shared values and cultural initiatives. This sense of pride and attachment to Ryde can be nurtured by celebrating the area's cultural diversity and heritage, rebranding community spaces, and hosting gatherings and events that bring people together. Additionally, participants believed that promoting Ryde as a place with high-quality education, healthcare, employment opportunities, and vibrant cultural celebrations can strengthen residents' connection to their local identity.

Establishing a social and cultural hub was also highlighted as an important step towards building a cohesive community. Such a hub would provide the necessary infrastructure for community activities, social interactions, and cultural expression, reinforcing a shared sense of belonging and identity for all residents of Ryde.

WE WANT TO FEEL SAFE IN OUR COMMUNITY

The majority of community participants reported feeling safe during both the day and night across the LGA. However, a notable share of responses, particularly from women and individuals with disabilities, expressed feeling unsafe during the night.

Some participants also raised concerns about not knowing their neighbours or people in their building or street, especially in the case of an emergency or when requiring assistance. This feedback aligns with earlier concerns about the lack of community connections, which was identified as a top priority for future improvement. Strengthening community bonds and fostering a greater sense of familiarity and support among residents emerged as key areas to address in order to enhance overall safety and wellbeing.

WE WANT BETTER ACCESS TO SERVICES AND FACILITIES

Accessibility of services, facilities, and open spaces emerged as a significant topic of discussion in the community feedback. There was a clear call for more inclusive services and places that better address the needs of all community groups.

"Accessibility is the biggest challenge and that's why people are not using the services."

~ An agency participated in focus group

"Proximity is not accessibility."

~ Community workshop participant

While many participants expressed satisfaction with existing public spaces, facilities, and services, senior residents and individuals with disabilities highlighted challenges accessing these resources. The key barriers identified were distance from services and facilities, service unavailability, costs of services, or insufficient physical accessibility for people with disabilities. Stakeholders emphasised that the user experience must be considered, focusing on how easily residents can access the services. Participants suggested enhancing the distribution of services across the LGA and improving collaboration among service providers. Increasing awareness and improving information sharing about available services were also recommended.

The accessibility of services for culturally and linguistically diverse communities was another key concern. Service providers discussed that migrants and refugees, particularly those on temporary visas, face significant barriers in accessing services, largely due to language issues and limited eligibility for support. It was recommended to aim for targeted promotional efforts and collaboration with cultural and faith-based groups to ensure these communities are informed about available resources. Additionally, programs like the Multicultural Ambassadors Program were highlighted as effective tools for reaching diverse groups and strengthening community connections.

OUR COMMUNITY VALUES SOCIAL AND CULTURAL ACTIVITIES

Community feedback highlighted that local events, festivals, and activity programs are a significant strength of Ryde's social and cultural landscape. Many respondents expressed satisfaction with the frequency and quality of these events, particularly festivals, markets, and sporting activities. However, challenges such as distance from events and activities, limited availability of events in certain areas, parking difficulties, and a lack of awareness about the events taking place were noted. Some residents even mentioned attending events outside of the City of Ryde because of these barriers, emphasising the need for improved accessibility to local activities.

"I think there should be more community programs targeted towards young people, utilising the spaces available."

~ Community survey respondent

To better serve our diverse community, stakeholders recommended tailoring events to meet the specific needs and preferences of various cultural and demographic groups, ensuring inclusivity across age groups. Additionally, combining virtual and physical events was suggested to accommodate different participation preferences.

Providing access to affordable community facilities and encouraging community-led activities were also highlighted as effective ways to boost social interaction and community cohesion.

WE WANT A HEALTHY LIFESTYLE AND LIVEABLE CITY

There is general satisfaction with the quality of life in the City of Ryde, however, improving parks, green spaces, and public amenities was seen as a priority for enhancing physical and mental health. Participants also highlighted the need to upgrade community facilities, such as halls, sports venues, and community centres to better serve diverse groups, such as children, senior residents, and people with disabilities.

Affordable housing and enhanced transport infrastructure, including active transport options, were highlighted as essential components of a liveable City.

WE NEED GREATER SUPPORT FOR SERVICE PROVISIONS
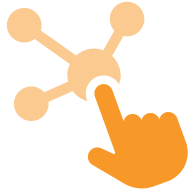
Service providers highlighted the need for business skills, such as marketing, communications, and grant writing to enhance service delivery, alongside improvements in strategic planning, risk management, and staff training. They also emphasised the importance of ongoing Council support through grants and programs, such as the Small Grants and Community Wellbeing Grants, which have been beneficial in expanding services post-COVID. To further assist service providers, it was recommended that Council continue offering these resources and establish a user-friendly booking system for accessing community facilities, while upgrading and maintaining infrastructure to meet the needs of a growing population.

"Council needs to look after the needs of everyone. They need to listen to the needs of all our different community groups."

~ Community workshop participant

"If you plan for vulnerable users of spaces, you allow everyone access to those spaces."

~ An agency participated in focus group

Participants also identified communication and public awareness as key areas for improvement. Service providers rely on platforms, such as websites, social media, and word of mouth to connect with the community, but there is a need to enhance information sharing through multiple channels. This includes addressing language barriers and promoting inclusivity for culturally and linguistically diverse groups.

Additionally, fostering collaboration among service providers, state government agencies, and local organisations was seen as crucial, with suggestions for Council to play a more active role in facilitating partnerships. The issue of volunteer shortages was also raised, with calls for more volunteer opportunities.

GLOSSARY

ACRONYM	DESCRIPTION
ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
CALD	Culturally and Linguistically Diverse
CBD	Central Business District
CSP	Community Strategic Plan
LGA	Local Government Area
LSPS	Local Strategic Planning Statement
NSW	New South Wales
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
TAFE	Technical and Further Education
UN	United Nations

City of Ryde

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