

Metropolitan Greenspace

WOLLI CREEK CORRIDOR PLAN

Acknowledgement of Country

The City of Canterbury Bankstown acknowledges the traditional country of the Daruk (Darag, Dharug, Daruk, Dharuk) and the Eora People.

We recognise and respect their cultural heritage, beliefs and relationship with the land.

We acknowledge they are of continuing importance to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living today.

Photo: Turrella Reserve

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INTRODUCTION 1

INTRODUCTION

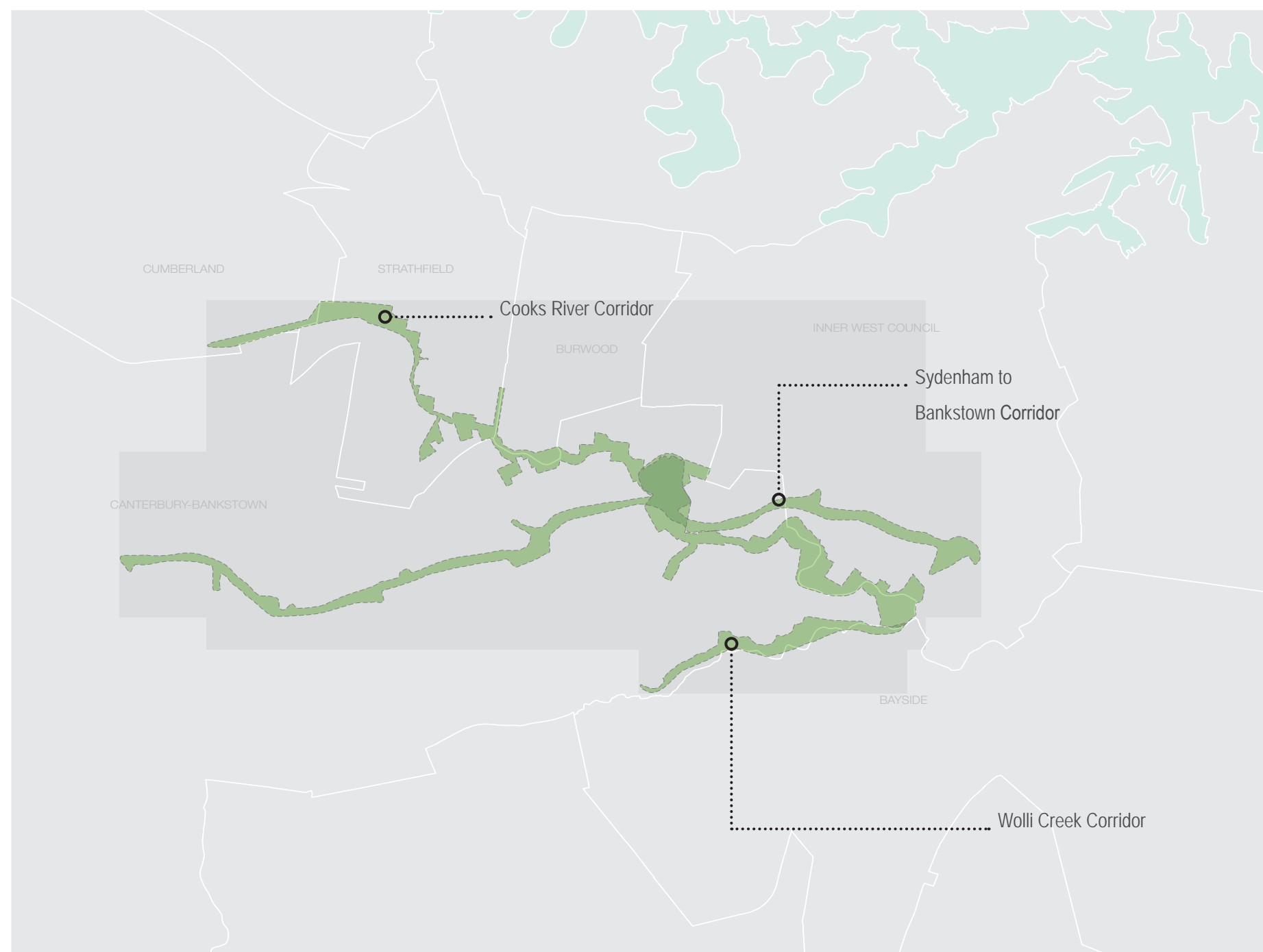
Open space is one of Sydney's greatest assets. The national parks, harbour, beaches, coastal walks, promenades, playgrounds and reserves are integral to character and liveability of the metropolitan region. As population density increases, the challenge to shape the built environment while promoting sustainable development and also maximising quality of life and well-being becomes more important. The COVID-19 pandemic has further emphasised the importance of open space in supporting the health and well-being of communities. In recognition of these challenges, the Government Architect New South Wales (GANSW) has identified a network of high-quality green spaces that connect town centres, public transport hubs and major residential areas. Known as the Sydney Green Grid, it is an integral part of the Greater Sydney Region and District Plans. The Greater Sydney Green Grid will keep the region cool, encourage healthy lifestyles, support walking and cycling, provide better access to open space, enhance bushland and support ecological resilience.

In 2020, Canterbury-Bankstown Council commenced planning for the land included within the local government area which formed part of three broader open space corridors;

- The Cooks River;
- Sydenham to Bankstown; and
- Wolli Creek.

All corridors are located within the South District in the Greater Sydney Metropolitan Region, and have been identified as Priority Green Grid Corridors as part of the Sydney Green Grid.

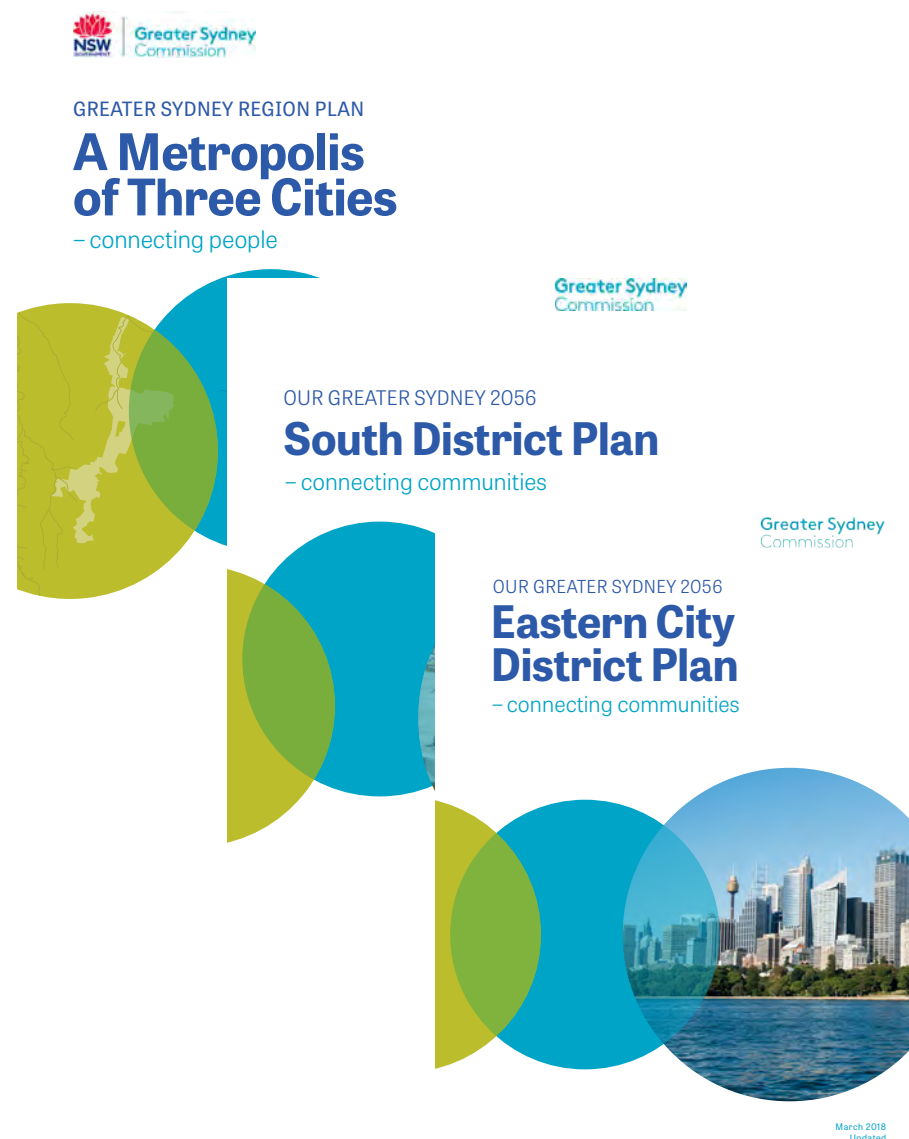
This area is one of the most culturally, socially and economically diverse communities in Sydney. It is also bound and intersected by ecological corridors and natural areas that are critical components of Greater Sydney's ecological and hydrological corridors as well as key contributors to the City's liveability and amenity. The corridors intersect many local government areas and central to this project has been the extensive involvement and collaboration from City of Canterbury Bankstown Council (CBCity), Strathfield Council, Sydney Water, Transport for New South Wales and many other stakeholders and community members.



PLANNING CONTEXT 2

STRATEGIC PLANNING CONTEXT

Region and District Plans



Greater Sydney Region Plan

The Greater Sydney Regional Plan, delivered by the Greater Sydney Commission (GSC), is a 40-year plan that sets out the vision for a “Metropolis of Three Cities” being the Eastern Harbour City (Sydney CBD), the Central River City (Parramatta) and the new Western Parkland City (Western Sydney Aerotropolis). The plan projects a population of 8 million people by 2056 and seeks to rebalance the growth, and benefits of growth, across Greater Sydney and support the 30-minute City, where residents can live within 30 minutes of their jobs, education and health facilities, services and great places.

As set out in this 40-year vision, green infrastructure such as urban tree canopy, green ground cover, bushland, waterways, parks and open spaces will be valued for its economic, social and environmental benefits and will help to establish the Greater Sydney Green Grid, a network of walking and cycling links that will become increasingly important in daily travel arrangements improving sustainability and the well-being of residents.

The District Plans contain the planning priorities and actions for implementing the Greater Sydney Region Plan, A Metropolis of Three Cities, at a district level and is a bridge between regional and local planning. All three corridors sit within both South and Eastern district and will help deliver priorities set in the Region Plan through both the District Plans.

South District Plan

The South District Plan is a 20-year plan to start implementing the 40-year vision for Greater Sydney in the Greater Sydney Region Plan and deliver places that are liveable, productive, and sustainable and supported by infrastructure. The plan reiterates the 10 Directions of the Greater Sydney Region Plan with planning priorities and actions for each district. The South District is expected to have a population of 945,350 people by 2036.

The South District Plan identifies three Green Grid priority projects, Bankstown to Sydenham Open Space Corridor, Cooks River Open Space Corridor, Wolli Creek Regional Park and Bardwell Valley Parklands.

Eastern District Plan

The Eastern City District Plan is a 20-year plan to manage growth in the context of economic, social and environmental matters to achieve the 40-year vision for Greater Sydney. It contains the planning priorities and actions for implementing the Greater Sydney Region Plan, A Metropolis of Three Cities, at a district level and is a bridge between regional and local planning.

The Eastern District Plan identifies three Green Grid priority projects; Iron Cove GreenWay and the Hawthorne Canal, Mill Stream and Botany Wetlands Open Space Corridor, and Cooks River Open Space Corridor.

Sydney Green Grid

A specific objective of both District Plans is to support delivery of the Sydney Green Grid to protect and provide open space and areas of biodiversity, particularly as housing density increases. GANSW proposed a network of high-quality green space that connects town centres, public transport hubs and major residential areas. Known as the Sydney Green Grid, it is an integral part of delivering the public benefit embedded in the Greater Sydney Region and Districts.

All three corridors investigated by Canterbury-Bankstown (Cooks River, Wolli Creek and Sydenham-Bankstown) can facilitate opportunities to increase tree canopy, improve accessibility, nurture habitat and enhance water quality within future projects. Specific opportunities identified for the corridors include:

- Planting trees to improve air quality and mitigate the urban heat island effect
- Creating and improving pedestrian and cyclist friendly environments
- Enhance the biodiversity and ecology through extending habitat areas and improving water quality

These opportunities associated with the ecological, hydrological and recreational grid can be realised through the Corridor Plans.



Sydney Green Grid

Green Infrastructure Policy

The Department of Planning and Environment and GANSW Greener Places draft policy sets an expectation for planning, design and delivery of green infrastructure in urban areas across NSW. The aim of the policy is to create a healthier, more liveable, more resilient and sustainable urban environment by improving community access to recreation and exercise, walking and cycling connections. It is about the creation of a networked urban ecosystem of green space that encompasses parks and open spaces including urban trees, streets, squares and waterways to help create a healthier, more liveable and resilient place to live.

The principles of integration, connectivity, multi-functionality and participation can be found embedded in the concepts for all three corridors, which further aligns the opportunity with Sydney's existing and developing urban policy framework.

CBCity 2028 Community Strategic Plan

A 10 year Community Strategic Plan that identifies seven Destinations for our future City. Goals relevant to improving open space relate to being 'Clean and Green; 'Moving and Integrated' and 'Healthy and Active'.



Green Infrastructure Policy



CBCity 2028 Community Strategic Plan

Pathways include:

- A clean and sustainable city with healthy waterways and natural areas
- Protect and promote local biodiversity
- Promote accessible parks and open spaces catering to all ages and cultures.

Connective City 2036 Local Strategic Planning Statement

A 20 year plan for land use and managing change into the future. Bankstown and Campsie are expected to grow as strategic centres. The plan identifies Cooks River Corridor as a part of City's Green Web to create an integrated network of ecological and green spaces between urban and suburban places.

Actions include -

- Advocate for an enhanced green corridor link along the Metro Corridor that connects wildlife habitats and ecological communities from the Cooks River
- Deliver the priorities of Council's existing policies in alignment with green web and active transport priorities
- Continue to identify and plan for new and improved public spaces to support residents, workers and visitors in priority growth areas
- Identify and promote local wildlife species



Connective City 2036 Local Strategic Planning Statement

STAKEHOLDER AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT 3

WHAT WE'VE HEARD - WOLLI CREEK

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

A Stakeholder workshop for the Wolli Creek Corridor was held online in April 2021. Various stakeholders attended including Inner West Council, NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service, Sydney Water, Transport for NSW, Sydney Metro and the Cooks River Alliance.

Some of the key point to come out of the discussion were:

Flora and Fauna

- Wildlife species – there is a wide variety of wildlife species; need to control preying animals i.e. Foxes impact on the eggs of Long Neck turtles; need to reduce invasive species in waterways; need to manage the visitor numbers to the flying foxes (flying foxes are stressed by large numbers of people coming in close proximity along the trail); need to protect and enhance the existing ecological elements
- Significant wetlands – both salt water and fresh water wetlands; impacted by rising water
- Community education – there are bird trapping issues and educating different communities about protecting birds is needed
- Sensitive lighting – lighting can effect wildlife species; sensitive lighting is needed to address this issue

Hydrology

- Flooding – flood waters effects rail infrastructure
- Water quality – improve waterways and water quality; stormwater management is a big issue; waste water overflowing from illegal sewer connections is a significant issue; stormwater contains high levels of nutrients and waste; it's important to work with Sydney

Water to improve the waterways

- Recreation opportunities – kayaking is gaining popularity; need to investigate access points within Turrella Reserve; recreational water activities will help drive the water quality agenda
- Development setbacks – development along the corridor needs adequate to provide effective riparian zone

Connectivity

- Links to public transport – currently there is no immediate access from the train station to the regional park, opportunity to improve this access
- Accessibility – large extents of the walking paths are difficult to provide an accessible experience; opportunity to provide accessible paths in specific areas
- Wider cycle network – there is a missing link from the M5 cycleway to Wolli Creek that could utilise the rail corridor
- Safety– boggy areas along the walking paths provide a safety risk, raised walkways are often provided in these areas; erosion along path is causing a safety issue

Recreation

- Wayfinding – currently there is poor signage and wayfinding in the corridor, opportunity for improvement; poor signage from train stations to the creek; opportunity for interpretive and educational signage
- Amenity – lack of amenity facilities including toilets and shelters; facilities to support educational tours are greatly needed
- Water activities – need to investigate opportunities in Turrella Reserve for kayaking and fishing

- Destination – opportunity to become a destination for recreational activity (bush walking, kayaking, rock climbing, fishing, etc.)

Culture and Heritage

- Community - Community stewardship is a powerful aspect of this corridor; volunteer groups (i.e. Wolli Creek Preservation Society) help with signage and promote the walking routes; need to promote and highlight the significance of the creek and the corridor with the community
- Indigenous groups – engagement with local indigenous groups is recommended; understanding their stories and connection to Country; there are opportunities for indigenous employment, business and operators within the corridor
- Educational opportunities – this is a popular place for school trips but it lacks basic amenities, i.e. toilets
- Historic Jackson Place – currently owned by TfNSW but in the process of being handed over to the NPWS
- Heritage elements – located throughout the corridor; opportunity for enhancement and education

Key considerations from Sydney Water

Water quality and connectivity

- Consider recreational activity and development in relation to impacts on water quality
- Consideration for adequate setbacks from development with the riparian corridor
- Opportunities to work with Sydney Water to improve the water track and safety in Waterworth Park

Key considerations from TfNSW

Connectivity

- Consider reviewing past connectivity studies that give details about the area and undertaking a visibility study of the area

Recreation

- Consider extending the M5 Cycleway, which currently terminates. There is an opportunity to connect the cycleway at Bexley Road to Wolli Creek. It is important to consider if there are potential environmental impacts that the cycleway may have

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Key considerations from NPWS

Water Quality

- Stormwater management is one of the biggest challenges that impacts the water quality of the Creek. Water quality is important for local the local wildlife, particularly birds
- At Turrella Reserve brackish water condition (the mix of saltwater and freshwater) occurs and both freshwater and saltwater wetlands exist

Connectivity

- Consider improving access, signage and wayfinding to/from the train stations to the park including cycle paths and pedestrian crossings
- Consider improving walking trails to provide greater access and safety. There are opportunities to provide more accessible facilities at Girrahween Park, including paths and lighting
- Consider opportunities to improve connectivity and access to the creek for water recreation including kayaking and fishing

Culture and Heritage

- Community stewardship is a powerful aspect of the Corridor, evident through community led initiatives including biodiversity surveys undertaken by the Wolli Creek Preservation Society
- Explore and protect all aspects of heritage including natural heritage and European, non-European and Indigenous heritage
- Existing initiatives by NPWS provide employment opportunities and support to Indigenous businesses. Consider opportunities to promote these initiatives more
- Consider opportunities to provide amenity that supports educational activities in the park such interpretive signage, information boards and an outdoor classroom with seating and shelter

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

In collaboration with

JOCCONSULTING
creative urban planners

The Green Corridors Community Survey between April and May 2021. In total, 176 participants undertook the survey. Many participants were passionate in their responses and expressed that the corridors are a great asset for the area, creatively referring to the corridors as the “recreational lifeblood”, “lungs” and “life veins of the land”. Even though the survey covered all three corridors, the questions led participants to provide responses for individual corridors.

For the Wolli Creek Corridor, the top three priorities that resulted from the survey were:

- Restore natural river processes, aquatic habitats and improve water quality
- Conserve and enhance the natural environment
- Encourage sustainable transport connections and promote safe walking and cycling access

Figure 3.1 shows all the priorities from the survey.

Restoring natural river quality was paramount to participants. Participants considered waterways important for their value in:

- Providing “life affirming”, well-being qualities
- Offering opportunities to connect with nature and wildlife
- Supporting biodiversity and planetary health
- Maintaining vistas which are a key attraction of living and visiting the area
- Preserving the natural heritage of the area

“Very important to keep the Wolli Creek part very natural & to restore it’s natural beauty. It is a rare remnant of bushland in the inner west/south west. It should be pristine (ie no water towers etc). Future focus by protecting now rather than sorry in 20 years.”

- Responses from the MGP Community survey

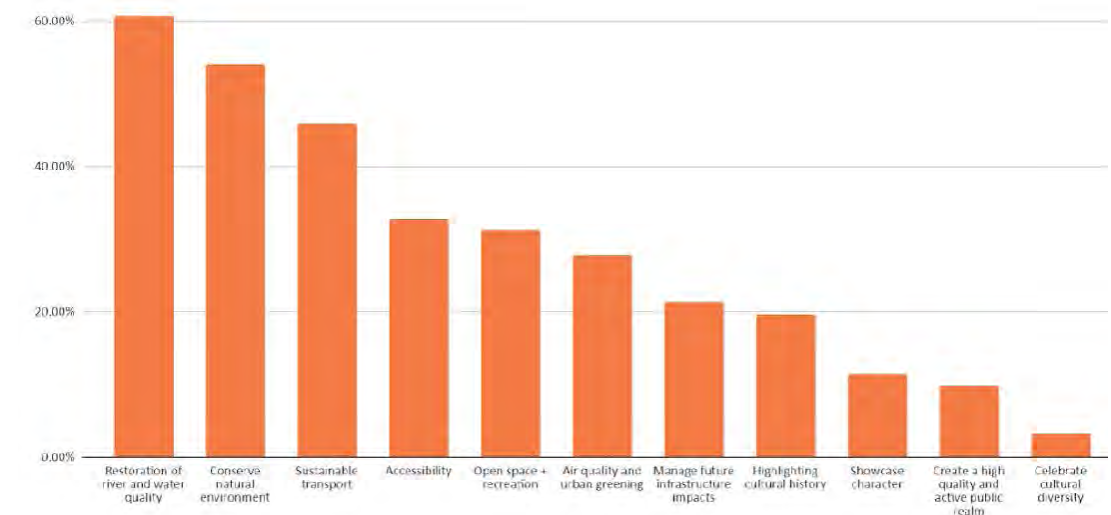


Figure 3.1 Priorities from the Community Engagement Survey

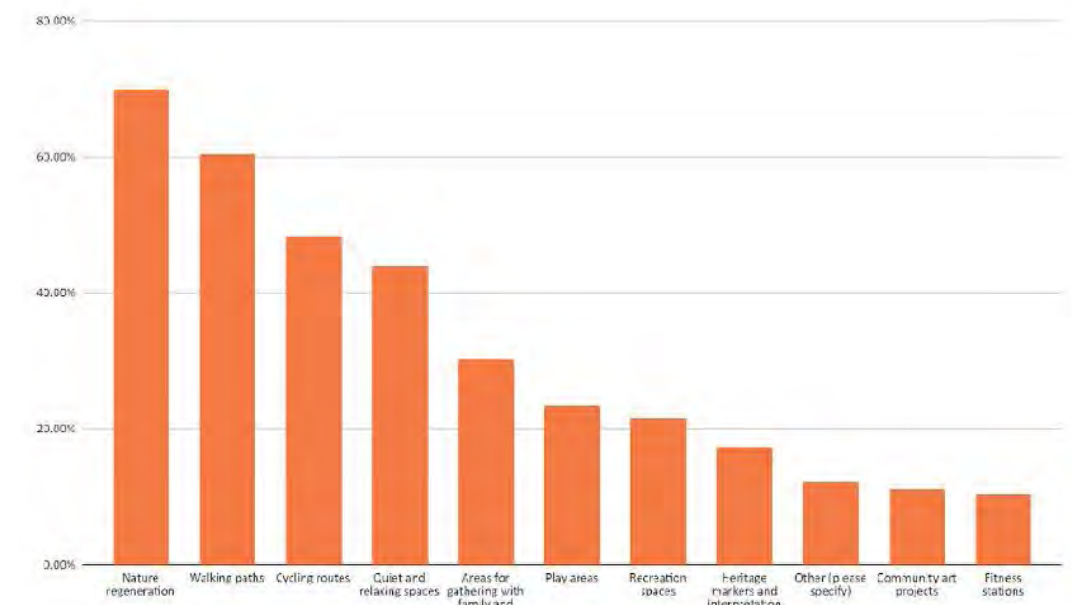


Figure 3.2 Activities and Uses findings from the Community Engagement Survey

Protecting the natural environment was valued highly by participants. They recognise that the green areas within the corridors will become increasingly important in providing natural heritage, local fauna habitats, and cooling properties to minimise urban heat. Wolli Creek participants also wished to see the corridor kept natural to restore its innate beauty as a remnant of bushland in the Inner South West of Sydney. Key ideas to maintain and restore the natural environment included:

- Increasing tree canopy and native plantings
- Maintaining natural walking paths (not to be replaced with concrete paths)
- Involving the community for bush regeneration projects
- Develop restoration initiatives
- Providing education opportunities to learn about nature, such as urban farms
- Integrating First Nation local knowledge

When asked what kinds of activities and uses did the participants want to see along the corridor, the top three answers were:

1. Nature regeneration
2. Walking paths
3. Cycling routes/Quiet and relaxing spaces

Figure 3.2 shows the Activities and Uses from the survey.

Enhancing active transport connections came through as a priority for Wolli Creek. Participants mentioned the need for improved transport links within Wolli Creek. One community submission and three survey responses raised the need for a safer cycling path from the M5 Linear Park Cycle path (Bexley Road) to Wolli Creek. This needs to be balanced against the feedback we received about preserving the natural walking paths and maintaining the beauty of the remnant bushland.

Improving amenities and social spaces came through strongly. Participants wished to see improved amenities and social spaces in the Wolli Creek corridor. They envisioned a range of active and passive recreation areas that accommodate play and social infrastructure which are inclusive for all ages. It was expressed that facilities such as water stations and bike pump tracks would encourage further cycling and walking patronage.

Key ideas to improve amenities and social spaces include;

- Frequent water stations
- Well-lit walking paths such as solar lighting
- Accessible, unlocked public toilets
- Bike pump tracks
- Comfortable seating for rest
- Off-leash dog exercise areas
- Better signage and wayfinding
- Shade cloths/sails over playgrounds
- Additional rubbish bins

When asked if you could improve just one thing along the corridor, what would that be, the top three answers were:

1. Protecting the natural environment
2. Cleaner and well maintained areas
3. Improvements to active transport connections



VISION 4

VISION + OBJECTIVES

The themes from the Green Grid have been used to shape the vision and objectives for the corridor along with community consultation.

To sensitively celebrate the ecology and culture of Wolli Creek

Objectives



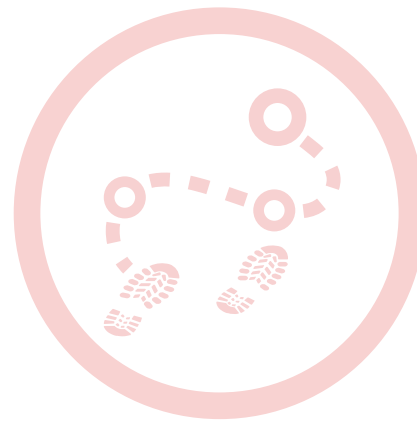
ENHANCE WATER QUALITY AND PROTECT THE CREEK

- Protect the erosion and clearance of the water edge from recreational activities
- Provide opportunities to access the water for recreational uses such as kayaking
- Capture litter and filtering stormwater run off to improve water quality



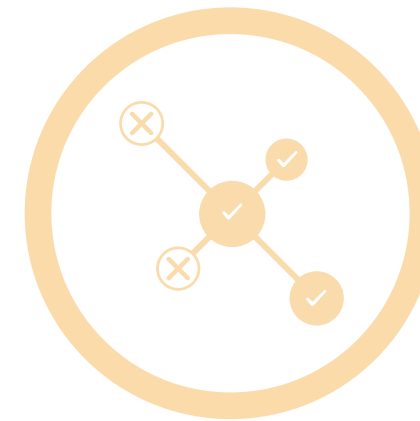
CELEBRATE THE NATIVE BUSH

- Protect the existing patches of flora and fauna from increased popularity and invasive species
- Enhance the biodiversity and ecology of the corridor through extending habitat areas and improving water quality
- Engage with the local community to develop awareness around the flora and fauna of the corridor and potential human impacts



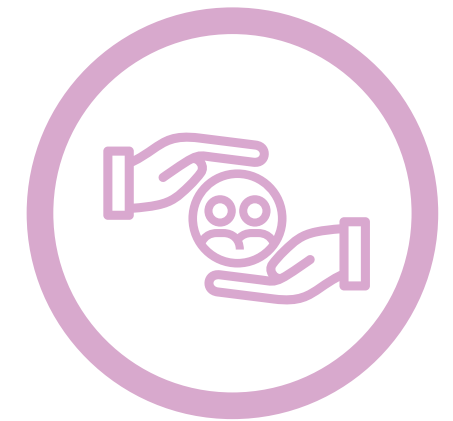
EXPERIENCE THE WOLLI CREEK WILDERNESS

- Promote access to circular trails from rail stations with improved footpaths, wayfinding and signage
- Retain informal gravel track character and create specific areas for rock climbing, wildlife watching, kayaking or fishing
- Provide greater opportunities to view the water
- Create an educational trail that mimics the lives and lifecycle of native fauna and flora in the corridor



IMPROVE ACCESSIBILITY WITH LOW IMPACT INTERVENTIONS

- Identify linkages to and through the corridor that have minimal to no impact on the ecological nature of the corridor
- Identify key routes to improve CPTED and lighting that are sensitive to flora and fauna



SUPPORT COMMUNITY STEWARDSHIP OF THE RICH ECOLOGY AND CULTURAL HERITAGE

- Engage with traditional Aboriginal groups to identify sites of significance and highlight local narratives
- Highlight sites of early European settlement through interpretive signage and spaces
- Implement facilities to support community restoration projects and support education and up-skilling of future members

CORRIDOR PLAN 5

PROJECTS OVERVIEW

To achieve the Wolli Creek vision and objectives a list of interventions have been identified across the corridor. Clustering of these interventions have then formed the priority list of potential projects. The project objectives that apply to each intervention have been identified with the corresponding coloured dot. Each project is described in more detail in the following pages.

- 1 Canopy Cover** ●●

Increase mature tree canopy cover to provide shade and cooling benefits along with strengthening biodiversity to achieve the premiers priority in planting 5 million trees by 2030.
- 2 Naturalisation** ●●

In collaboration with Sydney Water explore naturalise the River and tributaries to contribute to waterway health, flood mitigation, biodiversity and improving the character of the corridor.
- 3 Water Recreation** ●●●

Develop spaces for recreational fishermen to avoid informal access to the waters edge that impact on vegetation health and erosion of the creek edge.
- 4 Extend The Day For Play** ●●

Improve lighting at reserves to increase safety and security and encouraging twilight and night activity.
- 5 Access For All** ●●

Identify location where the bush can be accessible for all users and ages including people with mobility challenges. e.g. At Turrella Reserve increase hardscape areas and recreate a bushland environment around these areas.
- 6 Outdoor Classroom** ●●●

Provide facilities to support community stewardship and awareness of community groups, this could include shaded seating areas for groups and storage facilities
- 7 Education Trail** ●●●

Increase awareness of local heritage and the ecological significance of the Wolli Creek through installations that mimic the lifecycle of flora and fauna, interpretive signage and public art installations.
- 8 Way finding and Entrance Points** ●●

Improve wayfinding and enhance entrances to the corridor and to parks - this can be achieved through integrated signage, lighting, identifiable markers such as installation art and planting e.g. at Bexley Road (beginning of Wolli Walking Track), Girrahween Park entrance (Hartill-Law Avenue), Unwin Street (beginning of Jackson Track).
- 9 Pedestrian Links** ●●

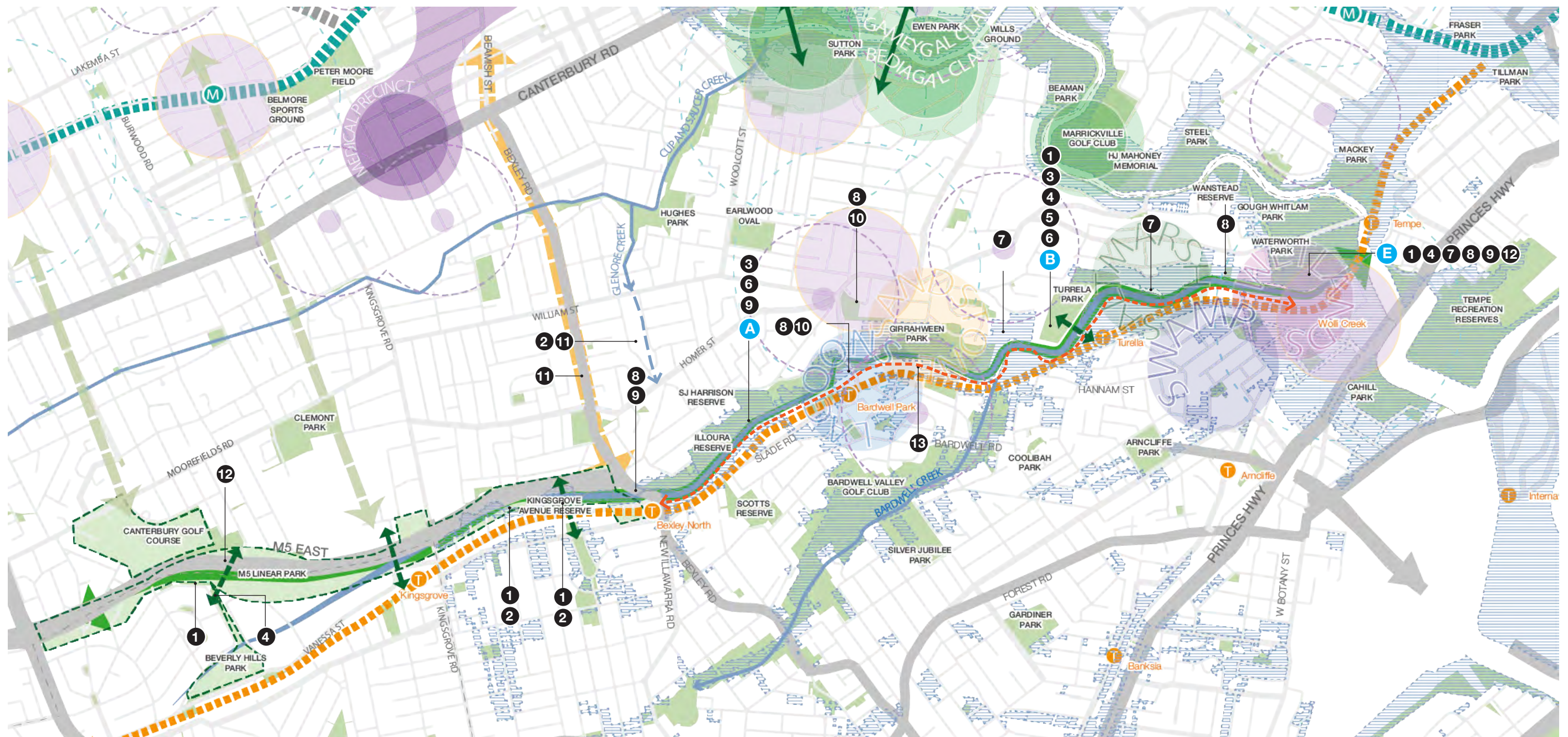
Provide more formal and safe walking paths through reserves and grassed open spaces.
- 10 Pedestrian and Cycle Crossing** ●●

Create continuous access along full length of corridor, identifying missing links. e.g. from stations,
- 11 Strategic Linkages** ●●

Consider whole of journey experience to/from Public Transport to promote. This could include improving wayfinding and signage at near by bus stops and train stations, bike storage, pedestrian crossings to improve access e.g. at Bardwell Park Station and Hartill-Law Avenue.
- 12 Enhance the Cycling Experience** ●●

Promote an inclusive, safe and improved cycling experience through lighting, wayfinding, provision of cycling amenity, shade and public art along the M5 Linear Park.
- 13 New Cycle Routes** ●●

In collaboration with TfNSW investigate opportunities to extend the cycle network along the rail corridor.



Note: Corridor wide projects C and D not marked on the map as they extend along the entire length of the corridor.

PROJECT DESCRIPTIONS



A. Connection/formal access from M5 linear park into Wolli Creek (Illoura Reserve via Bexley Rd) along with Illoura Reserve

Policy Alignment: Creative City Strategic Plan (CBC)

- In collaboration with National Parks investigate opportunity to construct rocky creek banks, board-walks and platforms for water activities and recreational fishing.
- Improve access and connection between Wolli Creek and M5/ Bexley Road.
- Provide more formal pedestrian routes such as crushed gravel to improve wayfinding and accessibility.
- Develop new open spaces with provision of shade structures, seating, lighting, picnic facilities to facilitate outdoor learning and other community activities.
- Provide interpretative signage or information boards on the ecological values, culture and history of Wolli Creek.



B. Turrella Reserve

Policy Alignment: Turrella Park Recreational Facilities Concept Plan (NPWS)*, Playgrounds and Play Spaces Strategic Plan (CBC)

- In collaboration with NPSW investigate opportunities to increase tree canopy coverage to provide shade.
- In collaboration with NPSW upgrade existing picnic and playground area, and develop more active open spaces with provision of amenities such as shade, seating, (children, school students, seniors).
- In collaboration with NPSW improve opportunities to engage with the creek by providing formalised fishing points and viewing and canoe launch platforms at the waters edge.
- In collaboration with NPSW investigate opportunity to construct a freshwater wetland with additional indigenous riparian planting at the confluence near Turrella to assist in waterway health.
- In collaboration with NPSW construct inclusive surfaced paths and hardscape areas catered for people with mobility challenges. Bring the bush land character to these areas providing opportunities for nature play for all.



C. Education Trail (corridor wide)

Policy Alignment: Creative City Strategic Plan (CBC), Canterbury Open Space Strategy (CBC)

- In collaboration with National Parks and the local Aboriginal community, investigate opportunities to create spaces that celebrate heritage and connection to country. These could be outdoor learning areas (group seating and shade).
- Provide more formal walking links and trails through grassed reserves through the use of crushed gravel, planting or change in ground markings along Unwin St and Jackson Place.
- Provide interpretative signage and art installations along the route to increase awareness of local heritage items, environmental and ecological values of Wolli Creek

D. Wayfinding and Entrance Points (corridor wide)

Policy Alignment: Active Transport Action Plan (CBC), Wolli Creek Park Plan of Management (NPWS), Playground and Play Spaces Strategic Plan (CBC), Creative City Strategic Plan (CBC)

- Provide integrated signage, wayfinding, lighting and identifiable markers such as art installation at key entrance points and walking tracks through Wolli Creek Regional Park. Key entrance points include beginning of Wolli Walking Track entrance on Bexley Road, Girrahween Park entrance on Hartill-Law Avenue, and Jackson Track entrance on Unwin Street.
- Provide a new pedestrian crossing on Hartill-Law Avenue.
- Create links between walking trails such as using crushed gravel to provide more formal walking routes through grassed reserves and planting or change in ground markings along Unwin St and Jackson Place.





E. Waterworth Park

Policy Alignment: Creative City Strategic Plan (CBC), CBC Community Strategic Plan 2028, Creative City Strategic Plan 2019-2029 (CBC), Gough Whitlam and Waterworth Parks Draft Masterplan 2017 (CBC)*

- In collaboration with Sydney Water formalise fishing points and viewing platforms at the water's edge.
- Improve pedestrian and cycle access through the site and provide amenity such as seating, shelter, water filling stations and bike racks.
- Provide ecological linkages by increasing multi-storey vegetation and canopy cover, particularly along the river and creek banks.
- Provide information boards on the importance of wetlands, mangroves and salt marshes for water management and habitat creation.
- Improve Bayview Avenue entrance to the park and wayfinding to/from Tempe Station (approximately 200m away).
- Improve access and signage to Wolli Creek's Lower Track and Jackson Track along Unwin Street.
- Advocate to enable renewable energy capture to power lighting and park facilities.
- Integrate WSUD initiative such as rain gardens, wetlands and strategic planting of vegetation, particularly west of the park at the bottom of the steep terrain up to Unwin Street. Landscaping could also contribute to wayfinding and providing a visual link/continuation between Waterworth Park and the Regional Park.

Note: * Denotes project is directly referenced in policy/strategy report. Aerials are not to scale (adapted from sixmaps.nsw.gov).



Photo: Turrella Reserve

