

BUSINESS PAPER



Penrith Mayor Todd Carney joined in thanking the many volunteers from Nepean Food Services (NFS) during National Volunteer Week at a special high-tea event.

86 people volunteer with NFS, which provides nutritious meals, social support and social outings to mainly over-65s living in the Nepean, Silverdale and Warragamba communities. It operates as a local service of Meals on Wheels and has had a place in the Nepean community since 1992.

Policy and Strategy Committee Meeting

1 June 2026

26 May 2026

Dear Councillor,

In pursuance of the provisions of the Local Government Act, 1993 and the Regulations thereunder, notice is hereby given that a **POLICY AND STRATEGY COMMITTEE MEETING** of Penrith City Council is to be held remotely using audio visual links, video streamed and in the Council Chambers, Civic Centre, 601 High Street, Penrith on Monday 1 June 2026 at 7:00 PM.

Attention is directed to the statement accompanying this notice of the business proposed to be transacted at the meeting.

Yours faithfully

Andrew Moore
General Manager

BUSINESS

1. LEAVE OF ABSENCE

2. APOLOGIES

3. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

Policy and Strategy Committee Meeting - 11 May 2026.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Pecuniary Interest *(The Act requires Councillors who declare a pecuniary interest in an item to leave the meeting during discussion of that item)*

Non-Pecuniary Conflict of Interest – Significant and Less than Significant
(The Code of Conduct requires Councillors who declare a significant non-pecuniary conflict of interest in an item to leave the meeting during discussion of that item)

5. DELIVERY PROGRAM REPORTS

6. GENERAL BUSINESS

7. NEXT MEETING

POLICY AND STRATEGY COMMITTEE MEETING

MONDAY 1 JUNE 2026

TABLE OF CONTENTS

MEETING CALENDAR

CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

DELIVERY PROGRAM REPORTS

WEBCASTING NOTICE

Please note that tonight's meeting other than the confidential sessions are being recorded and will be placed on Council's website. All in attendance should refrain from making defamatory statements. Council takes all care when maintaining privacy, however members of the public gallery and other invited participants should be aware that you may be recorded.



2026 MEETING CALENDAR

January 2026 - December 2026

(Adopted by Council – 2 February 2026)

	TIME	JAN	FEB	MAR	APRIL	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC
		Mon	Mon	Mon	Mon	Mon	Mon	Mon	Mon	Mon	Mon	Mon	Mon
Ordinary Council Meeting	7:00pm		2 23@	23	20 -	25 #	29*	27	24@	28^	26✓	30∞#+	14
Policy & Strategy Committee	7:00pm		9	9>	13	11	1	13	10	14	12	9	7

- Meeting at which the draft corporate planning documents (Delivery Program and Operational Plan) are endorsed for exhibition
- * Meeting at which the draft corporate planning documents (Delivery Program and Operational Plan) are adopted
- # Meetings at which the Operational Plan quarterly reviews (March and September) are presented
- @ Meetings at which the Delivery Program progress reports (including the Operational Plan quarterly reviews for December and June) are presented
- ^ Election of Mayor and/or Deputy Mayor
- ✓ Meeting at which the 2025-26 Financial Statements are signed and referred to auditors
- ∞ Meeting at which the 2025-26 Financial Statements are presented
- + Meeting at which the Annual Report is presented
- > To consider Budget, draft fees & charges and corporate document
- Δ

- Extraordinary Meetings are held as required.
- Members of the public are invited to observe meetings of the Council (Ordinary and Policy & Strategy Committee).
- Should you wish to address Council, please contact the Head of Governance, Adam Beggs on 4732 7597.

**UNCONFIRMED MINUTES
OF THE POLICY AND STRATEGY COMMITTEE MEETING OF PENRITH CITY COUNCIL
HELD REMOTELY USING AUDIO VISUAL LINKS, VIDEO STREAMED ON THE COUNCIL
WEBSITE AND IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS, PENRITH
ON MONDAY 11 MAY 2026 AT 7:00 PM**

WEBCASTING STATEMENT

His Worship the Mayor, Councillor Todd Carney read a statement advising that Council Meetings are recorded and webcast.

PRESENT

His Worship the Mayor, Councillor Todd Carney, Deputy Mayor, Councillor Garion Thain and Councillors Libby Austin, Kirstie Boerst, Robin Cook, Sue Day, Ross Fowler OAM, Glenn Gardiner, Sabbie Kaur, Hollie McLean, Reece Nuttall, Vanessa Pollak, Faithe Skinner and John Thain.

APOLOGIES

19 RESOLVED on the MOTION of Councillor Garion Thain seconded Councillor Sue Day that the apology from Councillor Edwin Mifsud be accepted and a leave of absence be approved.

CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES - Policy and Strategy Committee Meeting - 13 April 2026

20 RESOLVED on the MOTION of Councillor Reece Nuttall seconded Councillor Hollie McLean that the minutes of the Policy and Strategy Committee Meeting of 13 April 2026 be confirmed.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest.

DELIVERY PROGRAM REPORTS

STRATEGIC DIRECTION 3 - SHAPE OUR GROWING CITY

**4 Update on State-Led Rezoning - Orchard Hills South - 2026
Rezoning Proposal and Structure Plan - Public Exhibition**

21 RESOLVED on the MOTION of Councillor John Thain seconded Councillor Ross Fowler OAM

That:

1. The information contained in the report on Update on State-Led Rezoning - Orchard Hills South - 2026 Rezoning Proposal and Structure Plan - Public Exhibition be received.
2. Council call on the Department to provide clear direction to the city on flood planning and management.
3. Submissions be forwarded to Minister Scully and Local State Members.

5 Orchard Hills North Voluntary Planning Agreement Alternative Security Arrangement Request

22 RESOLVED on the MOTION of Councillor John Thain seconded Councillor Sue Day

That:

1. The information contained in the report on Orchard Hills North Voluntary Planning Agreement Alternative Security Arrangement Request be received.
2. Council endorse the proposed security arrangement detailed in Table 1 of the report for the Orchard Hills North precinct for future amendments to the Orchard Hills North Voluntary Planning Agreement between Legacy Property and Council.

STRATEGIC DIRECTION 2 - SUPPORT OUR WELLBEING

3 Draft Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan

23 RESOLVED on the MOTION of Councillor Reece Nuttall seconded Councillor Sue Day

That:

1. The information contained in the report on Draft Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan be received.
2. Council note the Draft Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan will be brought back to a future Ordinary Meeting for Council to consider placing it on public exhibition.

Councillor Ross Fowler OAM and Councillor John Thain left the meeting, the time being 8:44pm.

Councillor Ross Fowler OAM and Councillor John Thain returned to the meeting, the time being 8:46pm.

2 Consideration of Youth Advisory Committee

24 RESOLVED on the MOTION of Councillor Libby Austin seconded Councillor Garion Thain

That:

1. The information contained in the report on Consideration of Youth Advisory Committee be received.
2. A report be provided to a future Ordinary Meeting outlining:
 - a. a Youth Committee
 - b. a Youth Forum
 - c. a Youth Hybrid Model as outlined by Councillor Libby Austin.
 - d. all costings, including a Youth Officer, and
 - e. incorporating all feedback from Councillors from this meeting.

1 Penrith International Friendship Committee

25 RESOLVED on the MOTION of Councillor Ross Fowler OAM seconded Councillor

Garion Thain

That:

1. The information contained in the report on Penrith International Friendship Committee be received.
2. Council dissolve the Penrith International Friendship Committee (Section 355).
3. Council authorise the General Manager (or delegate) to undertake all required governance, administrative and communications actions to finalise dissolution.
4. Council to request the return of all funds held in the Penrith International Friendship Committee's bank account in accordance with Section 12.2 of the Penrith international Friendship Committee Constitution.
5. Council close the existing PIFC reserve, transfer the remaining funds to the Financial Management Reserve and quarantine those funds until a further report on International Relations be brought back to a future Council Meeting.
6. The Mayor write to the former members of the PIFC and thank them for their ongoing support in the past.
7. Council invite the former members of the PIFC to an afternoon tea and a small gift from Council be provided.

Procedural Motion

26 RESOLVED on the MOTION of Councillor Glenn Gardiner seconded Councillor Faithe Skinner

That:

1. The General Manager provide advice on whether Council's insurance policies could assist a group of young volunteers holding a commemoration and fundraising event on 24 May supporting men's mental health.
2. The General Manager provide advice on whether Tench Reserve Carparks can be remained accessible until 9:30pm.
3. The Committee note the intention to move an urgency motion at the next Council meeting requesting voted works to support the charity, 'Grab Life by the Balls'.

There being no further business the Chairperson declared the meeting closed the time being 9:39pm.

DELIVERY PROGRAM REPORTS

Item		Page
STRATEGIC DIRECTION 2 - SUPPORT OUR WELLBEING		
1	Cemeteries Policy	1
2	Update on draft Your Voice, Your Future: Penrith Youth Strategy and Action Plan 2026 - 2030	3
STRATEGIC DIRECTION 3 - SHAPE OUR GROWING CITY		
3	Draft Our River Plan 2026-46	11



THIS PAGE HAS BEEN LEFT BLANK INTENTIONALLY

STRATEGIC DIRECTION 2 - SUPPORT OUR WELLBEING

Item		Page
1	Cemeteries Policy	1
2	Update on draft Your Voice, Your Future: Penrith Youth Strategy and Action Plan 2026 - 2030	3



1 Cemeteries Policy

Compiled by: Lynda Lowe, Cemeteries Supervisor
 Andrew Robinson, Head of Community Facilities and Recreation
 Virginia Tuckerman, Community Facilities and Recreation
 Planning and Projects Coordinator

Authorised by: Sandy Davies, Director Community Connection

Outcome	<i>Support our wellbeing</i>
Strategy	<i>Support equitable access to community services and facilities</i>
Principal Activity	<i>Provision and management of cemetery services and facilities</i>

Presentation: Andrew Robinson, Head of Community Facilities and Recreation

Executive Summary

The report provides detail regarding proposed amendments to Council's Cemeteries Policy which was previously adopted by Council in 2017.

The revised Cemeteries Policy incorporates the recommendations and findings of Council's Cemeteries Strategic Management Plan, adopted at the Ordinary Meeting held on 3 March 2025. Amendments have also been made to ensure compliance with the NSW Cemeteries and Crematoria Act 2013, 105, the Interment Industry Scheme and applicable Category 1 Licencing conditions.

While officers have provided a recommendation that the report be received and the Cemeteries Policy be adopted, it is open to Councillors to consider any other course of action.

Background

Council's Cemeteries Service is responsible for the management and maintenance of Council controlled cemeteries within the Penrith Local Government Area and the preservation and conservation of heritage elements within Penrith, St Marys, Emu Plains, St Stephen's and Castlereagh Anglican Cemeteries.

A Cemeteries Policy to assist in the administration, management, operations, maintenance and future development of the Penrith City Council managed cemeteries, was first adopted by Council in 2010, with an updated version subsequently being adopted by Council, along with a Cemeteries Strategy, in 2017.

In March 2025, Council adopted a Cemeteries Strategic Management Plan, replacing Council's existing Cemeteries Strategy. This Strategic Management Plan included actions to revise and contemporise a Cemeteries Policy.

Current Situation

A revised Cemeteries Policy has been developed and is attached to this report for Councillor consideration. Since the adoption of the Cemeteries Strategic Management Plan in March

2025, there have been a number of changes to legislation that need to be reflected in any updated Policy.

The Policy attached to this report reflects these changes. It provides effective guidelines that will assist in ensuring the objective functions of the cemeteries are carried out in accordance with statute and common law, regulation and national standards that guide the management and operation of cemeteries, particularly the NSW Cemeteries and Crematoria Act 2013, No.105.

The Policy also aims to provide safe, consistent and socially acceptable standards and practices, for the benefit of Council employees, funeral industry representatives, administrators, clients and members of the general public. It will also ensure the conduct of those entering the cemeteries is in accordance with reasonable and practical standards.

The following proposed amendments to the adopted 2017 Cemeteries Policy include

2.1.5 Interment Rights are governed by NSW Cemeteries and Crematoria Act 2013, No.105, with provisions set out in Section 4 of the Act. Accordingly, these matters are addressed through legislation and do not need to be replicated within the Cemeteries Policy.

2.1.7.5 Out of Area Surcharge/Non-resident fee previously applied based on the residency status of the interment right holder/owner of the burial site, or the deceased. This has been amended so that the out of area surcharge/non-resident fee will not apply where the deceased was a resident of the Penrith Local Government area, removing consideration of the interment right holder/owner of a burial site.

2.2.5.1 Burial of a Pet, In September 2025, legislative amendments were introduced to permit the burial of an animal or pet remains within a cemetery. While this legislation was enacted, no accompanying guidelines or recommendations were issued to cemetery operators. The existing Cemeteries Policy stated that pets could not be buried within Council managed cemeteries. The proposed amendment seeks to clarify Council's position in light of the legislative change.

Conclusion

The revised Cemeteries Policy ensures alignment with current legislation, strategic planning outcomes and operational requirements. Adoption of the Policy will support continuous improvement, regulatory compliance, and the effective management of Council's cemetery services.

RECOMMENDATION

That:

1. The information contained in the report on the Cemeteries Policy be received.
2. That Council adopt the revised Cemeteries Policy included in Attachment 1.



ATTACHMENTS/APPENDICES

1. Cemeteries Policy 14 Pages Attachments Included

2 Update on draft Your Voice, Your Future: Penrith Youth Strategy and Action Plan 2026 - 2030

Compiled by: Jacqueline Newsome, Community Resilience Program Manager
Marcela Hart, Community Capacity Lead

Authorised by: Marcella Kelshaw, Head of City Activation, Community and Place
Sandy Davies, Director Community Connection

Outcome	<i>Support our wellbeing</i>
Strategy	<i>Strengthen community resilience, support systems and networks</i>
Principal Activity	<i>Develop and implement effective strategies that respond to the impacts of growth, redevelopment and change in our community</i>

Presenters: Marcella Kelshaw - City Activation, Community and Place -
Draft Your Voice, Your Future: Penrith Youth Strategy and
Action Plan 2026-2030

Previous Items: Draft Your Voice, Your Future: Penrith Youth Strategy 2026 –
2031 - Policy and Strategy Committee - 09 Mar 2026
Consideration of Youth Advisory Committee - Policy and
Strategy Committee - 11 May 2026

Executive Summary

The purpose of this report is to provide Councillors with an update on the draft Your Voice, Your Future: Penrith Youth Strategy and Action Plan 2026 – 2030 (The PYSAP).

The PYSAP, originally titled the Penrith Youth Strategy, was initially brought to the Policy and Strategy Committee (PSC) meeting on 9 March 2026. At this meeting, Council resolved to receive a revised draft which incorporated the following:

- A clear implementation matrix outlining proposed actions, responsible agencies, timeframes and measurable outcomes to ensure accountability and transparency in delivery
- Refinement of the scope of the Strategy, including clearer definition of the target youth cohort and consideration of whether the current age range appropriately reflects the distinct needs of different youth groups
- Greater clarity around Council's role, responsibilities and priorities in supporting young people across the Penrith Local Government Area
- Identification of priority actions or initiatives that Council will seek to lead, support or advocate for during the life of the Strategy
- Consideration of a youth advisory committee.

The draft PYSAP attached has been revised and updated to incorporate the elements of this resolution (Attachment 1 - Your Voice, Your Future: Penrith Youth Strategy and Action Plan 2026-2023).

The draft PYSAP is being presented tonight for Councillor information with the intention that it will be brought back to a future Ordinary Meeting to be placed on public exhibition. However, it is open to Councillors to consider any other course of action.

Background

The Penrith LGA is home to one of the largest youth populations in Western Sydney, with approximately 22% of the population aged between 8-24 years. As the City grows, so does the need to understand and respond to the issues that shape young people's lives. Council plays an important role in creating a city where young people feel supported, included, and able to reach their potential.

The PYSAP was developed to respond to young people's evolving needs, particularly in the context of dynamic growth in the region, changing demographics and ongoing affordability pressures. The PYSAP is designed to guide Council and its community partners to work with young people, ensuring our City remains a place where local young people can live, work and fully participate in their community. Aligned to the CSP 2041+, the PYSAP is a strategy and action plan which guides how Council and its community sector partners respond to the needs and aspirations of young people in Penrith. It complements existing strategies including the Resilient Penrith Action Plan, Disability Inclusion Action Plan, Multicultural Action Plan and Community Safety Plan.

The PYSAP is a youth-driven plan that can be used right across the Local Government Area by Council, schools, community organisations and young people to guide collaborative action, directly inform service planning, and strengthen youth participation through collective action.

Development of the Penrith Youth Strategy and Action Plan 2026-2030

The PYSAP was developed through a collaborative process shaped by the voices, experiences and ideas of young people across Penrith. Council worked with schools, youth services and community organisations to ensure the PYSAP reflects a broad range of youth perspectives and experiences.

In 2025, Council established a Youth Leadership Team (YLT) to co-design the engagement tools and lead peer-based engagement. Between June and November 2025, more than 300 young people contributed to the development of the PYSAP through participation in workshops, online surveys and community pop-ups. This included targeted sessions with priority groups including First Nations, CALD, LGBTQIA+, young people with disability, and young people with lived experience of the justice system.

The process aimed to reach young people across different settings, ensuring participation was inclusive and accessible. Young people took part through workshops, surveys and creative engagement. They shared what matters most: feeling safe, having opportunities, and being included in decisions that affect them.

Young people who participated represented a wide range of experiences and identities, inclusive of:

- Children and teenagers aged 8-17 years participating through schools and youth programs
- Young adults aged 18-24 living, studying or working in Penrith
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people (26% of total participants)
- Young people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds (15% of total participants)
- Young people with disability or who access additional support (19% of total participants)

- LGBTQIA+ young people and peer advocates (31% of total participants)
- Young parents, students, workers and job seekers.

It is important to note that while demographic information was sought at each engagement activity throughout the process, providing this information was optional for participants. The data recorded is therefore only indicative of those who chose to respond to those specific questions and may not fully reflect the demographic intersectionality of all participants.

Structure of the PYSAP

The PYSAP is built on four key pillars. Each pillar reflects what young people said matters most to them, supported by local data, youth stories and community insights.

These pillars build on one another, together showing what young people value, the challenges they navigate, and how Council and partners can respond in ways that make a meaningful difference.

- **Pillar One: Health, Wellbeing & Safety** - Explores young people's views on mental health, access to support, safety in public spaces, and the importance of inclusion and belonging. It combines youth insights with data on health, safety and access to services.
- **Pillar Two: Affordable Living & Opportunities** - Captures what young people told us about cost of living, housing, jobs and access to education and training. It includes insights on how affordability affects participation and independence, supported by local economic and social data.
- **Pillar Three: Connection, Belonging & Culture** - Focuses on how young people connect with each other, their communities and culture. It explores belonging, representation, and how creative and cultural spaces can help young people express who they are and feel part of Penrith's story.
- **Pillar Four: Environment, Accessibility & Movement** - Explores access to transport, parks, recreation, and the natural environment. It includes young people's ideas on sustainability, accessibility and what makes Penrith's neighbourhoods feel safe and easy to move through.

Each pillar contains a first voice story of a Penrith young person persona, the findings from each of the engagement methods that address the pillar, data to support the feedback, and a consolidated overview of the engagement outcomes.

The draft PYSAP includes goals and actions that are aligned to the four pillars which Council and community sector partners will undertake to address the needs and aspirations of Penrith's young people over the life of the plan.

The action plan included in the PYSAP speaks to Council's role as connector, advocate and partner in the youth services space. It provides a clear implementation matrix that outlines the provision of specific, timely and measurable activities and programs that align with the needs and aspirations of local young people. The PYSAP details how success in delivery will be measured and reported to ensure accountability and transparency in the delivery of these actions.

Reporting to Council

Council has demonstrated a strong interest in understanding and strengthening the ways in which Council supports local young people.

The first draft of the PYSAP, originally titled the Penrith Youth Strategy, was brought to the PSC meeting on 9 March 2026 for consideration. At this meeting, Council resolved to receive a revised draft which incorporated the following:

- A clear implementation matrix outlining proposed actions, responsible agencies, timeframes and measurable outcomes to ensure accountability and transparency in delivery
- Refinement of the scope of the Strategy, including clearer definition of the target youth cohort and consideration of whether the current age range appropriately reflects the distinct needs of different youth groups
- Greater clarity around Council's role, responsibilities and priorities in supporting young people across the Penrith Local Government Area
- Identification of priority actions or initiatives that Council will seek to lead, support or advocate for during the life of the Strategy
- Consideration of a youth advisory committee.

The attached draft of the PYSAP has been revised and updated to incorporate the elements of this resolution and is being reported to Council tonight for further consideration.

The PYSAP now includes:

- Further clarity around Council's role, which is identified in the plan as Connector, Partner and Advocate, and clarification about how these roles align to the Penrith Community Strategic Plan 2041+.
- Identification of Council's responsibilities and priorities with the inclusion of an implementation matrix under each key strategic pillar that outlines goals, deliverable actions, key delivery partners and measures that identify priority actions and initiatives that Council will seek to lead, support and advocate for during the life of the plan.
- Further definition of the three distinct age groups targeted by the strategy, with each age group reflecting the unique opportunities and challenges that come with every stage of growing up in Penrith.

Next steps: consideration of a youth advisory committee

Council Officers presented a stand-alone report to the 11 May 2026 PSC meeting which provided some options for the delivery a youth advisory committee. At that meeting, Council resolved that:

A report be provided to a future Ordinary Meeting outlining:

- a. a Youth Committee
- b. a Youth Forum

- c. a Youth Hybrid Model as outlined by Councillor Libby Austin.
- d. all costings, including a Youth Officer, and
- e. incorporating all feedback from Councillors from this meeting.

To continue progressing the work on the PYSAP while Council Officers develop the response to this resolution, a draft action has been incorporated into the current draft PYSAP:

- *“Design and deliver a civic youth engagement program such as the Penrith Youth Forum and Penrith Youth Committee”.*

As with the approach taken in May, a further stand-alone report on the proposed youth engagement platform is anticipated to be brought to the 13 July Policy and Strategy Committee meeting. This report will specifically respond to the 11 May resolution and include:

- An overview of the design and delivery of a Youth Committee, including all associated costs
- An overview of the design and delivery of a Youth Forum, including all associated costs
- An overview of the design and delivery of a Youth Hybrid Model (combining both the forum and committee options), including all associated costs
- Costs associated with this work, including resourcing.

Following this report, and in line with Council’s preferred youth engagement program, the action in the draft PYSAP will be refined to reflect the resolved direction.

Financial & Risk Implications

Actions in this plan will be delivered through existing Council programs and services, incorporated into future Operational and Delivery Plans, and funded within existing budget allocations across the organisation. In addition, Council will actively seek opportunities for external funding (i.e.; grants) to augment delivery. See “Attachment 2 – Funding Status PYSAP Actions” for the funding status of each action.

Potential risks relate primarily to ensuring ongoing engagement with young people and ensuring the programs and activities delivered as part of the PYSAP remain aligned with their needs and aspirations. This will be managed through the performance measures and reporting mechanisms outlined in the draft PYSAP.

Conclusion

The PYSAP provides a clear, youth-led strategy and action plan to guide how Council and its partners respond to the needs and aspirations of young people over the next four years. It will be used by Penrith City Council, schools, community organisations and partners to inform their work with young people, and by young people themselves to self-organise or partner with organisations to co-lead projects and activities.

RECOMMENDATION

That the information contained in the report on Update on draft Your Voice, Your Future: Penrith Youth Strategy and Action Plan 2026 - 2030 be received.



ATTACHMENTS/APPENDICES

- | | | |
|--|----------|----------------------|
| 1. Your Voice, Your Future: Penrith Youth Strategy and Action Plan 2026-2023 | 40 Pages | Attachments Included |
| 2. Funding Status of Penrith Youth Strategy and Action Plan Actions | 5 Pages | Attachments Included |

STRATEGIC DIRECTION 3 - SHAPE OUR GROWING CITY

Item

Page

3 [Draft Our River Plan 2026-46](#)

11



3 Draft Our River Plan 2026-46

Compiled by: Megan Whittaker, Strategic Advocacy Manager
Shravan Guntuka, Coordinator - Research and Policy
Nathan Reynolds, Research and Policy Officer

Authorised by: Carlie Ryan, Head of City Strategy
Kylie Powell, Director Futures and Strategy/Deputy General Manager

Outcome	<i>Shape our growing city</i>
Strategy	<i>Navigate balanced growth and plan strategically</i>
Principal Activity	<i>Ensure our strategic framework and vision are contemporary and guide land use planning to meet the needs of our community and growing population</i>

Presentation: Carlie Ryan, Head of City Strategy

Executive Summary

This report and the accompanying presentation to Councillors provides an update on the preparation of the draft Our River Plan 2026-46 (draft Plan).

The Nepean River (the river) is Penrith's greatest natural asset, an integral part of our City's identity and much loved by residents and visitors. Over the past decade, delivery of the Our River Master Plan 2013 has enabled significant progress and investment in and around the river corridor, with more than \$459 million of public investment and improvement, together with significant private investment valued at around \$1 billion. This has been possible through Council's vision and strategic approach, and with the support of the Australian and NSW Governments.

Building on this success, the Draft Our River Plan 2026-46 (Attachment 1) has been developed to guide actions to unlock further potential in and around the river over the next 20 years. This plan is a framework to encourage and guide future investment. It is currently unfunded and aspirational. It identifies priority opportunities and calls for collaboration with partners, ensuring our objectives are aligned and purposeful in our ongoing efforts to further enhance the Nepean River. Council will require support from others including further public and private investment for it to be realised.

The draft Plan has been informed by input from staff from across Council, as well as information reviewed from community and stakeholder feedback gathered from 2023 to 2025 as part of Our River Master Plan and the Community Strategic Plan 2041. Whilst extensive internal engagement has been carried out to inform the draft, engagement with external stakeholders on this specific draft Plan is yet to occur.

The draft Plan includes a vision, objectives, precinct opportunities and proposed projects. It is visionary, aspirational and the majority of projects and actions are currently unfunded, however work will be progressed should resources or funding opportunities become available over the next 20 years. It is intended to provide a strategic framework for Council to call for collaboration with partners (including government and external stakeholders), ensure objectives are aligned, and support purposeful efforts to attract investment, including through grant applications, to continue transforming the Nepean River corridor for the social and economic benefit of the community and Penrith City.

Achieving the vision and on ground outcomes will require commitments by Council, other levels of government and external stakeholders to realise over the long term. Implementation of the plan towards the vision is intended to occur initially though a focus on 14 priority projects and 6 priority council actions, progressed should resources become available. These prioritised projects and actions provide a way to focus implementation next steps, including future site-specific planning, development and investment attraction, advocacy and partnership opportunities, as well as grant seeking activities.

This report provides Council with visibility of the emerging direction of this work. Feedback received will assist in refining the draft Our River Plan 2026-46 ahead of it being presented to a future Ordinary Meeting of Council seeking endorsement for public exhibition. The next report to Council will include details on the engagement proposed during the public exhibition, including specific community and stakeholders to be engaged and communication channels.

Background

The Nepean River (the river) is Penrith's greatest natural asset, an integral part of our City's identity and much loved by residents and visitors. Running through one of Australia's fastest-growing regions, the Nepean River is an important connector to Country and a significant drawcard for Western Sydney.

As a proud river city, Penrith values and celebrates the river's environmental, social, recreational and cultural significance. The river improves local amenity and encourages active lifestyles. It offers a beautiful setting where people can gather and relax. It provides opportunities to escape the heat and connect with nature. It also boosts Penrith's recreation and tourism, which supports the City's growing economy.

Over the past decade, delivery of the Our River Master Plan 2013 has enabled significant progress and investment in and around the river. More than \$459 million of public investment and improvement in Penrith has been made, together with significant private investment valued at around \$1 billion. There has been an estimated \$50 million of investment in dining options alone, which has enhanced both sides of the river. This has been made possible through Council's vision, strategic planned approach and focused efforts and resources, and with support from the Australian and NSW Governments.

Major achievements to date include the multi-million-dollar Regatta Park upgrade, Yandhai Nepean Crossing pedestrian bridge, and the Police Cottage restoration. There has also been a new kayak launch deck at Leonay, the Nepean Avenue Pedestrian Pathway completing the bridge-to-bridge loop of the Great River Walk, and a major upgrade to Tench Reserve.

Our community has benefited from these improvements. The river has new and improved spaces for events and festivals. Council's 2025 Real Festival at Tench Reserve attracted 50,000 people, with 1 in 10 residents attending. Walking and cycling infrastructure along the river is highly valued and increasing in use. In the 3 years from 2022 – 25 there has been a 43% increase in people using the Yandhai Nepean Crossing. Visitation to the central precinct has also increased. The area attracts an average of 1,615 visits per day, generating just under \$180,000 in visitor spend each day.

Current Situation

Building on the success of Penrith's Our River Master Plan 2013, the Draft Our River Plan 2026-46 is being prepared to proactively plan and guide actions to unlock further potential in

and around the river over the next 20 years. It is the first time that Council will develop a plan that covers the entire length of the Nepean River in the Penrith Local Government Area. This work affirms Council's ongoing commitment to deliver positive outcomes for current and future generations, taking a strategic approach to prioritisation, decision making, advocacy and collaboration that will strengthen connections to the Nepean River, bringing community, nature and culture together.

Preparation of the Draft Our River Plan 2026-46 has drawn on information from community and stakeholder engagement undertaken during 2023 to 2025, as part of the Our River Master Plan and the Community Strategic Plan 2041. This information reflects that the Nepean River and nature are highly valued with priorities for the corridor that include improving access, active travel and everyday amenities, valuing nature, culture and First Nations custodianship, supporting the river as a community gathering place, and better management of parking and traffic congestion.

Draft Our River Plan 2026-46

The Draft Our River Plan 2026-46 is provided in full at Attachment 1. It establishes a long-term strategic framework for the Nepean River corridor and identifies the planning context, character and objectives, and place-specific opportunities for each precinct.

The draft Plan is intended to be:

- a strategic guide for Council, stakeholders and the community to ensure that collective efforts are aligned and purposeful
- a long-term high-level framework for planning and decision making that can be applied to design and management actions at precinct and site level over the short and medium term
- a prioritised list of potential projects that will guide investment and applications for grant funding as it becomes available
- a way of identifying and securing sustainable resourcing to achieve the Plan's vision
- a way to foster collaboration opportunities during the Plan's implementation to amplify the impact of joint efforts
- a way to promote the river as a cultural, recreational, tourism and economic resource to benefit Penrith's people and economy.

The draft Plan is not intended to be:

- a statutory plan or set of controls
- detailed design specification or advice for specific sites or projects
- a financial commitment to undertake every project or idea
- a way to specifically manage flooding, river health, or day-to-day operational river and river's edge management, including traffic and parking issues.

The draft Plan proposes a vision, objectives and guiding principles as well as precinct level opportunities for the river corridor, which are outlined in full in Attachment 1 and summarised below. This draft Plan will not change existing planning controls but rather it provides a strategic framework that guides future land use.

Proposed Vision

The draft vision is:

“The Nepean River is our drawcard and a much-loved living system bringing nature, community and culture together. It is the thriving heart of Penrith, vital for our wellbeing and local economy. Strong connections to the river add vibrancy and create opportunities for Penrith and the surrounding region.”

River Precincts

For planning purposes, the river corridor has been grouped into four precincts:

- Northern Precinct – an enduring rural landscape rich in stories
- Lakes Precinct – our aquatic playground
- Central Precinct – the heart of our river city
- Southern Precinct – place to pause, discover and connect.

Key opportunities are identified for each precinct to guide future collaboration, partnerships, development and investment over the long term in a balanced way and to spark interest and encourage progress that responds to a precinct’s specific character as well as community needs and preferences.

Proposed Priority Projects

The Draft Our River Plan 2026-46 identifies 14 priority projects across the four precincts. These projects, many of which are advocacy related, are intended to help unlock future connectivity to and around the river and provide more experiences for the community.

The projects will require collaboration with landowners, stakeholders and funding sources, including in some instances funding for further project scoping, testing and optioneering, design and concept development. Several of the proposed projects are not within the remit of Council to act on and deliver. In these cases, Council will continue to raise local community needs and preferences through advocacy efforts and work with and through others to realise the best outcomes for the river corridor.

Full details of the proposed priority projects are provided at Attachment 1, and summarised below:

Northern Precinct

- Enhanced river access - Agnes Banks

Lakes Precinct

- Penrith Lakes - comprehensive vision and master plan and expanded public access for nature-based recreation
- Penrith Beach - permanent opening for swimming and recreation

Central Precinct

- Weir Reserve- upgrades
- Jamison Road – gateway upgrade
- Peach Tree Creek- connections
- Great River Walk – extension
- Pedestrian river crossing at M4
- Emu Plains - connections

- Factory Road Reserve - upgrade
- Additional water play
- Improved public transport

Southern Precinct

- Enhanced river access – Wallacia
- Fernhill Estate - increase public access and activations for enjoyment as a cultural heritage and recreation destination.

These projects are considered to be of value to our community, aligned to their needs and preferences, and achievable over time with the focused determination of many.

Implementation Approach

The Draft Our River Plan 2026-46 is aspirational and the majority of work proposed is currently unfunded, however work will be progressed should resources or funding opportunities become available over the next 20 years. This document is important for identifying priority opportunities, actions and projects, and providing a strategic framework to make decisions and call for investment and collaboration with partners, ensuring our objectives are aligned and purposeful in ongoing efforts to further enhance the Nepean River. Council will require support from others including further public and private investment for it to be realised.

Whilst the draft Plan continues to encourage public and private investment, the below outlines priority projects which Council will continue to seek funding for, as well as priority actions for Council to lead as resourcing becomes available.

Proposed Priority Projects

Priority projects have been called out as a way to focus implementation next steps, including future site-specific planning, development and investment attraction, advocacy and partnership opportunities, as well as grant seeking activities.

There are 14 priority projects, as outlined above. They will require the support and resources of many to achieve over many years. 5 of these projects require advocacy from Council to the Australian and NSW Governments to progress as these projects are not within the remit of Council. These advocacy actions can be progressed within existing resourcing. There are 9 priority projects that are unfunded. The funding status of each proposed priority project is outlined further in Attachment 2.

Proposed Priority Council Actions

In addition to the above Priority Projects proposed, there are 6 priority actions that have been proposed for Council to lead, as resourcing becomes available. These actions respond to key issues that have been identified for the corridor, or are considered important for continuing momentum and supporting day to day experience for the current community, visitors and businesses.

These are described in full in the draft Our River Plan at Attachment 1 and summarised below:

- Fostering strategic partnerships and vision alignment
- Advocating for support and investment
- Reviewing and preparing river corridor planning requirements
- Preparing a movement and wayfinding plan

- Preparing a river marketing plan
- Supporting day to day amenity and experience within the corridor and progressing existing strategies and plans, including continued implementation of specific social, cultural, environmental, economic and flood management strategies and plans Council has under way.

Of the 6 actions, 3 can be progressed within existing Council resources, 2 are unfunded and 1 has a mix of funded and unfunded work. The funding status of the 6 proposed Council actions is detailed further in Attachment 2.

Overlaying these implementation approaches, it is intended that Council continue to scan for emerging external opportunities, including funding through grants and new partnerships, to unlock further potential along the river for the benefit of the community and Penrith City.

Financial Implications

The draft Our River Plan 2026-46 clearly specifies that it is visionary, aspirational and that many of the projects are unfunded and will be progressed should resourcing become available. The funding status of each proposed project and council action in the draft Plan are outlined at Attachment 2. Unfunded projects would be subject to further investigation and consideration of the financial implications and potential funding strategies through future planning work. Any potential capital works and delivery commitments would continue to be subject to Council's specific project management processes and approvals. The majority of projects and actions identified as funded through existing resources are advocacy related, and funded through the City Strategy staffing and advocacy program operational budgets

Risk Implications

There are no risks associated with this report which is for information and subject to future public engagement through a public exhibition period. An updated draft Our River Plan 2026-46 provides the strategic framework for Council to call for collaboration with partners (including government and stakeholders), ensure objectives are aligned, and support purposeful efforts to attract investment, including through grant applications, to continue transforming the Nepean River corridor for the social and economic benefit of the community and Penrith City.

Next Steps

The draft Our River Plan 2026-46 will be further refined with feedback received at this meeting, ahead of presenting to Council at an upcoming Ordinary Meeting seeking endorsement of the draft Our River Plan 2026-46 for public exhibition.

Whilst extensive internal engagement has been carried out to inform the draft, engagement with external stakeholders on this specific draft Plan is yet to occur. Councillors will be updated on the proposal for community and stakeholder engagement as part of the public exhibition period, when the matter is next reported to Council. The Real Festival which will be held in September 2026 is a key opportunity for targeted community engagement.

Conclusion

The Nepean River is one of Penrith's most valued natural, cultural and recreational resources. The river improves local amenity and encourages active lifestyles. It offers a beautiful setting where people can gather and relax. It provides opportunities to escape the heat and connect with Country, nature and culture. It also boosts Penrith's recreation and tourism, which supports the City's growing economy.

Over the past decade, delivery of the Our River Master Plan 2013 has enabled significant progress and investment in and around the river. More than \$459 million of public investment and improvement in Penrith has been made, together with significant private investment valued at around \$1 billion.

Building on the success of Penrith's Our River Master Plan 2013, the Draft Our River Plan 2026 - 2046 is being prepared to proactively plan and guide actions to unlock further potential in and around the river over the next 20 years. It is the first time that Council will develop a plan that covers the entire length of the Nepean River in the Penrith Local Government Area.

The draft Our River Plan 2026-46 is intended to provide a strategic framework to encourage and guide both public and private investment for the continued transformation of the Nepean River corridor for the social and economic benefit of the community and Penrith City.

This report is presented for information. Feedback will be used to refine the draft Our River Plan 2026-46, ahead of being reported to a future Ordinary Meeting of Council seeking endorsement for public exhibition.

RECOMMENDATION

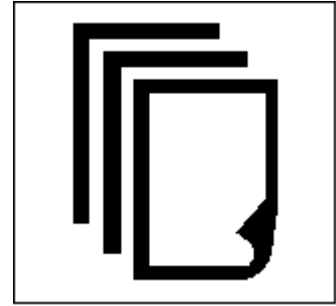
That the information contained in the report on Draft Our River Plan 2026-46 be received.



ATTACHMENTS/APPENDICES

- | | | |
|---|----------|----------------------|
| 1. Attachment 1 - Draft Our River Plan 2026-46 | 36 Pages | Attachments Included |
| 2. Attachment 2 - Funding Status of Proposed Priority Projects and Priority Council Actions | 3 Pages | Attachments Included |

ATTACHMENTS



Date of Meeting: Monday 1 June 2026

Report Title: Cemeteries Policy

Attachments: Cemeteries Policy



Policy Document

POLICY NAME

Penrith Cemeteries Policy

DATE ADOPTED

Click or tap here to enter text.

REVIEW DATE

Five Years

COUNCIL MINUTE NUMBER

Click or tap here to enter text.

POLICY TYPE

Council Policy

RESPONSIBLE DEPARTMENT

Community Facilities & Recreation

RELATED DOCUMENTS

Click or tap here to enter text.

Purpose

The Cemeteries Service is responsible for the management and maintenance of Council controlled cemeteries within the Penrith Local Government Area and the preservation and conservation of heritage elements within Penrith, St Marys, Emu Plains, St Stephen's and Castlereagh Anglican Cemeteries.

This Policy will assist in the administration, management, operations, maintenance and future development of the Penrith City Council cemeteries. It will provide effective guidelines that will assist in ensuring the objective functions of the cemeteries are carried out in accordance with statute and common law, regulation and national standards that guide the management and operation of cemeteries.

Policy statement

The policy aims to provide safe, consistent and socially acceptable standards and practices, for the benefit of Council workers, funeral industry representatives, administrators, clients and members of the general public. It will also ensure the conduct of those entering the cemeteries is in accordance with reasonable and practical standards.

Policy

1.1 Application

1.1.1 This Policy applies to all cemeteries, controlled, managed, administered, operated and maintained by Penrith City Council.

1.2 Definitions

1.2.1 **Applicant** means the person making an application;

- a. To obtain an Interment Right;
- b. To obtain a work permit or other Council consent; or
- c. To have the body of a deceased buried;
- d. To have the remains of a cremated body interred in the cemeteries;
- e. To have a deceased person commemorated in a cemetery; or
- f. For any other bereavement service provided by the Council and that is subject to an application process.

1.2.2 **At Need** is the purchase of a burial site/plot at time of death.

1.2.3 **AS-4204:2019** means the Australian Standards Association's Standard "AS4204- 1994 Headstones and Cemetery Monuments".

1.2.4 **Burial** means the act of burying, interring or immuring the remains of a deceased person.

1.2.5 **Burial Site/Plot** means a grave or plot, or other place for the disposition of human remains, whether cremated or not.

1.2.6 **Interment Right** means the grant by a reserve trust of an exclusive right to bury one or more (human) bodies in a burial place.

1.2.7 **Holder** in relation to a burial or niche reservation, means the person recorded, in the register kept by Council, as the holder of the burial or niche reservation.

1.2.8 **Casket/Coffin** is a general term to describe coffins and containers used to hold human remains.

1.2.9 **Cemetery or Cemeteries** mean an area containing one or more burial sites and in this case is administered and controlled by Penrith City Council.

1.2.10 **Council means** Penrith City Council.

1.3.11 **Crematorium** means the whole of the facility where cremation services are conducted, including the Chapel, crematory, vestry, and surrounding area.

1.3.12 **Crown Land** means land owned by government. In NSW the nominal owner is the Minister for Lands. In this context the lands are allocated to Trusts and Local Councils and are dedicated as cemeteries.

1.3.13 **Exhumation** means the removal of the remains of a dead person or stillborn child from a burial site.

- 1.3.14 **Funeral Director** means an individual or business carrying out funeral services.
- 1.3.15 **Lowering Device** is a mechanism used for lowering the casket/coffin into the grave/burial site.
- 1.3.16 **Monument** means any structure, plaque, headstone, masonry, metal work, casting or item placed over, in or around a burial site.
- 1.3.17 **Monumental Mason** is a tradesman, mason or person possessing the skills to carry out Monumental Masonry work.
- 1.3.18 **NSW Cemeteries & Crematoria Act 2013** – NSW Legislation
- 1.3.19 **Order for Interment** is the form used by council to book burial services.
- 1.3.20 **Public Health Regulation** means the “Public Health Regulation 2022 - Disposal of Bodies – Part 8”.
- 1.3.21 **Register** means Council’s formal data repository containing all the required details relating to burials, cremations, memorial sites, or Interment Right.
- 1.3.22 **Reservations** means a pre-need burial site/plot, ashes niche or ashes garden site.
- 1.3.23 **Wrapping** is a tapa cloth print wrapping that is placed around coffin or casket at time of burial.

2 Management of Cemeteries

2.1 Compliance with Crown Lands Act 1989 and By-Laws there under;

- 2.1.1 This policy is aligned with the Industry Interment Scheme, Category 1 Licencing Conditions – Licence No.L10013, NSW Cemeteries & Crematoria Act 2013 105, “Crown Lands (General Reserve) By-Law 2006” and the “Crown Lands (General Reserves) Amendment (Sustainable Burial) By-law 2011” to ensure that the Crown Land Cemeteries administered by Penrith City Council work within a recognised legal framework.

2.1.2 Planning, Conduct and Maintenance of Cemeteries

Council may make such provisions as it considers necessary for the following;

- 2.1.2.1 Provide future burial sites/plots in Penrith General Cemetery, all future burial sites/plots will be lawn only sections and allocated as Non- Denominational.
- 2.1.2.2 The size, multiple use and location of burial sites.

- 2.1.2.3 The carrying out of work by funeral directors in the cemeteries.
- 2.1.2.4 The carrying out of work by monumental masons and other contractors in the cemeteries
- 2.1.2.5 The establishment of standards of construction and design for monuments and structures.
- 2.1.2.6 The qualifications required by, and the application fees to be lodged by, monumental masons and other contractors;
- 2.1.2.7 The improvement and maintenance of all cemeteries;
- 2.1.2.8 The placing of vases, statuettes, jars, bottles or other items of embellishment on or near burial sites, monuments or wall and garden niches and the removal of same.
- 2.1.2.9 The supply of goods and services incidental to the conduct of burials and other matters relating to cemeteries;
- 2.1.2.10 The conduct of religious or other ceremonies of burial, disposition or commemoration;
- 2.1.2.11 The disposition and memorialisation of cremated human remains.

- 2.1.3 Burial Sites**
- 2.1.3.1 Pre Purchase/Reservation of Burial Sites**
- 2.1.3.2 All remaining available burial sites at Penrith General Cemetery are to be allocated as "at need" only and next available.
- 2.1.3.3 The provision of pre-purchase of a burial plot at Penrith General Cemetery is only available to families of a deceased at time of burial. The family of a deceased can purchase (reserve) an adjoining plot, only if available.

- 2.1.4 Unpaid Reserved Sites**
- 2.1.4.1 Council reserves the right to rescind allocation if a site is unpaid for 6 months from the date of reservation. If the site is next to a family grave, the family will be contacted regarding whether or not they still want the site. Current burial site price applies at the time that payment is made.

- 2.1.5 Interment Rights**

Interment rights are granted and administered in accordance with the Cemeteries and Crematoria Act 2013 (NSW) No 105, Part 4, Division 2 – Interment Rights, which establishes the legal framework for the nature, types, duration, transfer, and administration of interment rights in New South Wales.

Council will ensure all interment rights are granted, recorded, managed, renewed, transferred, or revoked in compliance with the Act, associated regulations, applicable codes of practice, and Interment Industry Scheme.

2.1.6 Register of Interment Rights, Memorials, Cremated Remains and Interments

2.1.6.1 It is a requirement Under the Public Health (Disposal of Bodies) Regulation 2012 - Part 8 and the NSW Cemeteries and Crematoria Act 2013 No 105, for council to maintain a register of Interment Rights, Memorials, Cremated remains and Interments for all cemeteries under care and control of council.

2.1.6.2 A register of reserved Interment Rights will be maintained by Council but no details of the holder of an Interment Right shall be made public.

2.1.6.3 The register will contain the name and address of the holder of the Interment Right granted in relation to the burial site.

2.1.6.4 Council will, immediately after a burial in a burial site, or placement of cremated remains in an ashes site, ensure the details of the deceased are entered in the register for that burial site or ashes site. Such details as name, age, last address, the date of death and interment date of the deceased who was interred will be included.

2.1.6.5 Council will keep a register of memorials erected in respect of interments sites in the cemetery.

2.1.6.6 The register may be wholly or partly in the form of a computer database, in documentary form or in another form prescribed by NSW Cemeteries and Crematoria regulations and is to contain such particulars as are required by the regulations.

2.1.6.7 Council may amend its register from time to time so as to remove any inaccuracies contained in it and to record any changes to Interment Rights as a result of transfer, revocation or death of the holder of an Interment Right.

2.1.7 Fees and Charges

2.1.7.1 Fees and charges for core services, including plot and memorial reservations, interment and out of area charges are to be at cost recovery designed to match long term capital, operational and in perpetual maintenance liabilities and renewal financial needs.

2.1.7.2 An interment right transfer fee will apply upon application for each individual interment right transfer.

2.1.7.3 Memorialisation fees to be set at a level consistent with cost of service, associated infrastructure, and perpetual maintenance costs.

- 2.1.7.4 A 'concierge' fee will apply for Council staff assisting funeral directors with burials and ashes placements and will be at a cost recovery rate per hour.
- 2.1.7.5 An out of area surcharge/non-resident fee will apply to the purchase/reservation of new burial sites if the person/s reside outside the Penrith Local Government Area boundaries.
- 'Out of Area' is classified as outside the local government boundaries of the Penrith Local Government Area. The charge applies to residents outside of these boundaries wanting to purchase a burial site in Penrith City Council cemeteries.
 - The 'out of area' surcharge does not apply if the deceased is a resident of Penrith LGA at time of death. Proof of residency of the deceased may be requested.
 - The 'out of area' surcharge does not apply if the deceased was a resident of a nursing home outside the city but their last address is in the Penrith Local Government Area. Proof of residency will be required.
- 2.1.8 Requirements for Burial Sites**
- 2.1.8.1 The size of a burial site/plot in all operational cemeteries under care and control of Penrith City Council shall be surveyed as being 1100mm long x 240mm wide (3'6" by 8').
- 2.1.8.2 All burial sites/plots for the first interment of a coffin or casket shall be excavated to a depth of 1.8 metres/1800mm.
- 2.1.8.3 The second interment of a coffin or casket shall be placed so that it's upper surface is not less than 900mm below the natural service level of the soil where it is buried.
- 2.1.8.4 All burial sites/plots in the cemeteries will accommodate two coffins or caskets and up to four ashes containers. A separate fee shall apply for each burial interment or ashes placement.
- 2.1.8.5 The maximum permissible size of a coffin or casket for each burial site/plot shall be 762mm (30") wide, this includes any wrapping (Tapa cloth print wrapping). that is placed around the coffin or casket.
- 2.1.8.6 If the width of a coffin or casket exceeds 762mm (30") width, two burial plots must be purchased. Two interment fees will apply.
- 2.1.8.7 Funeral Directors must ensure sufficient staff are provided to lift and lower coffins or caskets.

2.1.8.8 A coffin/casket lowering device will be used in all Lawn Section burials in Penrith and St Marys Cemeteries.

2.1.9 Orders for Burials

2.1.9.1 Burials are not to take place except at such times as the Council may from time to time determine.

2.1.10 Restrictions on burial practices

2.1.10.1 The following practices are not permitted in any cemetery under council's care and control:-

- a. Lowering of coffins by people other than trained funeral directors or Council's cemetery staff.
- b. Entering an open burial site, except in the process of an exhumation and only by cemetery staff.

2.1.11 Hours of Burials and Exhumations

2.1.11.1 Burials and exhumations shall take place only during the hours approved by Council.

2.1.12 Booking a Burial Service

2.1.12.1 A booking for a burial service can only be accepted from a Funeral Director.

2.1.12.2 An Order for Interment form is to be completed by Council and emailed to the Funeral Director and Gravedigger.

2.1.12.3 Funeral Directors are required to;

- a. check details of burial service on the Order for Interment form are true and correct, indicate method of payment on the form,
- b. sign the confirmation form and email or fax back to Council Cemetery Operations.

2.1.12.4 An interment fee is payable upon each interment in the cemeteries.

2.1.12.5 An Interment Fee does not apply for the burial of a child or baby under fifteen years.

2.1.12.6 The General Manager has the authority to waive cemetery fees for burial sites in cases of extreme hardship or extraordinary circumstances by up to 50% at time of need only.

2.1.12.7 Bookings must be made 48 hours prior to the desired date and time of the burial service requested.

2.1.13 Exhumations

2.1.13.1 Exhumations are not to take place unless;

- a. Prior written consent has been obtained from the Director-General of the NSW Ministry of Health.
- b. Council has issued an order for exhumation.

2.1.13.2 This clause does not apply if an exhumation has been ordered by a Court.

2.1.13.3 An exhumation shall be performed under the direction of NSW Department of Health staff. Council representative shall also be in attendance.

2.1.13.4 All cost incurred in carrying out an exhumation shall be paid by the applicant.

2.2 Memorialisation

2.2.1 Columbarium Walls and Ashes Gardens

2.2.1.1 Reservation of a site in the columbarium walls and ashes gardens may be pre-purchased for the placement of ash remains at a later date.

2.2.1.2 Upon payment, a "niche/garden site reservation certificate" will be forwarded to the niche/garden site holder.

2.2.1.3 Where payment for the reservation of a niche or garden site has previously been made, the amount payable at the times of ashes placement shall be the current fees and charges for the plaque, installation and permit.

2.2.1.4 Either family or funeral director retain ashes until time of placement.

2.2.1.5 Standard ash container given to the family from crematoriums are to be placed in the walls and garden sites. Wooden boxes and ceramic urns will not fit in niches or gardens sites.

2.2.1.6 Ashes are placed by Council staff. Families and loved ones can be present at the time of placement.

- 2.2.1.7 Ashes may be removed from the walls or gardens after prior approval from the Interment Right Holder, Council and by Council staff only.
- 2.2.1.8 All columbaria and ashes garden plaques are supplied by Penrith City Council.
- 2.2.1.9 Two persons can be memorialised on each plaque but only one ashes container can be placed in each niche or garden site.
- 2.2.1.10 Memorialisation can also occur when there are no ashes to be placed.
- 2.2.1.11 No vases, glass jars or objects are to be placed at the base of the memorial walls. Items are not to be glued to the plaques or memorial walls.
- 2.2.1.12 Spiked vases are to be used in the ashes gardens. No plants or objects are to be placed on the garden sites.
- 2.2.2 Monuments, Structures or landscaping**
- 2.2.2.1 Monumental and memorial work in Penrith City Council cemeteries must conform to certain standards, is constructed from materials and erected in a manner that:
1. Does not present a risk to members of the public and staff;
 2. Is acceptable to the environment; and
 3. Maintains appropriate aesthetic standards.
- 2.2.2.2 A Monument means any structure, plaque, headstone, masonry, metal work, casting or item placed over, in or around a burial site.
- 2.2.2.3 An application form to erect a headstone, monument or kerb is to be completed and submitted to Council, for approval to do works in the cemetery. The current fee payable for monument/headstone payments must be provided with the application form.
- 2.2.2.4 The applicant must adhere to all the conditions set out in the application form.
- 2.2.2.5 The application form must be signed by the Interment Right Holder.
- 2.2.2.6 A Monumental Permit will be issued by Council on approval of application to erect a headstone, monument or kerb. Issue of the permit is at the discretion of Council.

- 2.2.2.7 Work must not commence until confirmation/approval by letter (work permit) from Council is received by the applicant.
- 2.2.2.8 The monumental permit must be carried by the monumental mason at all times whilst in the cemeteries.
- 2.2.2.9 The applicant must contact Council, giving 36 hours notice for suitable appointment for a site visit. This visit will confirm the site and the nature of the work to be carried out.
- 2.2.2.10 Monuments are to be no longer the 2440mm and 1100mm wide.
- 2.2.2.11 Monumental Lawn Section headstone monuments must be no higher than one metre in height (measured from ground level), one metre in length and a maximum of 400mm in width.
- 2.2.2.12 The ownership right of monuments or other structures is deemed to be with the person or persons of the interment right who authorised the monument, structure or plant to be constructed.
- 2.2.2.13 Council shall not be responsible for the upkeep, maintenance, repair etc. of any monument, structure or landscaping on burial sites/plots.
- 2.2.2.14 The owner of the interment right is responsible for the upkeep, maintenance and repair of any monument, structure or landscaping on the burial site.
- 2.2.2.15 Council shall not be held liable for any damage to headstones or monuments that may be caused by normal wear and tear or other parties.
- 2.2.3 Plaques**
- 2.2.3.1 Memorial plaques for lawn sections, columbarium walls and memorial gardens will be ordered through council.
- 2.2.3.2 All plaques for lawn sections, columbarium walls, memorial gardens and other memorialisation options must be of the size, design and approved type as specified by Council.
- 2.2.4 Permitted Works in Council Cemeteries**
- 2.2.4.1 All persons wanting to carry out work on a grave/burial site in a cemetery under care and control of Penrith City Council must have written approval prior to commencement of any works.
- 2.2.4.2 Council reserves the right to remove, demolish or alter, or require the removal, demolition or alteration of any structure that is not approved.

- 2.2.4.3 All temporary structure requests for gravesites need to be submitted in writing to Council for approval. No work is to commence on a gravesite without prior approval by council.
- 2.2.4.4 Only appropriately insured and approved organisations/individuals can undertake work in Council cemeteries, including Funeral Directors, Monumental Masons and other contractors.
- 2.2.4.5 The level of public liability insurance and professional indemnity insurance required be that recommended by Council's WH&S Officer from time to time.
- 2.2.4.6 When working in council cemeteries, providers are not considered to be employees of Council. Works undertaken must be completed with adherence to the NSW Work, Health & Safety Act 2011 which protects the health, safety and welfare of all workers and others in relation to NSW workplaces and work activities.
- 2.2.4.7 All monuments/headstones are to be conducted to Australian Standards 4204:2019, Monuments and Headstones in Cemeteries. Footings and piers as per AS4204:2019 are required on each monument (if an individual cannot construct a permanent monument to this standard, then that individual will not be permitted to do so). All work must be conducted in a professional, safe and tradesperson like manner.
- 2.2.5 Miscellaneous**
- 2.2.5.1 A person must not do any of the following within cemeteries under care and control of Penrith City Council;
- a. Damage, deface, interfere with or alter burial places;
 - b. Damage, deface, interfere with or alter monuments;
 - c. Bury, inter or exhume any human remains, whether cremated or not;
 - d. Use the cemetery for recreational use or recreational activities including any ball games, riding of bicycles, skate boards, rollerblades, use of frisbees, picnics or BBQ's;
 - e. Playing of loud music;
 - f. All gatherings in the cemeteries other than a burial service; must obtain approval from Council Cemetery Operations,
 - g. Bring any animals into the cemetery;
 - h. Enter or remain in the Cemetery at night, between the hours of sunset and 6.00am;
 - i. Possess or drink an alcoholic or intoxicating beverage;
 - j. Drive a vehicle at a speed or more than 10 kms per hour;

- k. Distribute any circulars, advertisements, paper drawn or photographic material without prior Council consent;
- l. Bring or leave any rubbish, refuse, scrap metal (including remains of vehicles), rock, soil, sand, or any other substance;
- m. Engage in trade or commerce without Council's written consent;
- n. Plant any tree, shrub, herbage or any other plant without prior council approval;
- o. Camp or reside on any Cemetery land;
- p. The burial of pets or other animals (including cremated remains of pets placed directly into a grave) is not permitted in cemeteries managed by Penrith City Council
- q. The placement of pet cremated remains (ashes) inside a human coffin is permitted only when:
 - The ashes are securely contained (e.g., sealed urn or pouch) and placed inside the coffin of the deceased human at the time of interment.
 - The practice is disclosed to the funeral director and/or Council prior to the interment so operational staff can record it appropriately.
 - The co-placement does not contravene any applicable public health, biosecurity, or workplace safety requirements.

2.2.6 Removal of Trespassers

- 2.2.6.1 Council may remove any person trespassing or causing annoyance, interference or nuisance or otherwise committing a breach of this policy.

Table 1
Percentage of current Purchase Price to be offered
for re-purchase of an interment right (grave site)

	Easily accessible grave dug by machine	Somewhat accessible grave dug possibly by machine	Not easily accessible Grave dug by hand
High Demand Primary burial area	70%	60%	50%
High Demand Secondary burial area	60%	50%	40%
Low demand primary burial area	50%	40%	30%
Low demand secondary burial area	40%	30%	20%

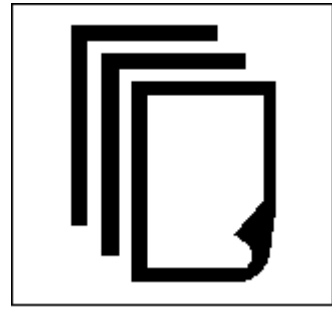
Table 2
Examples of Sections in relation to purchase price to be offered

	Easily accessible grave dug by machine	Somewhat accessible grave dug possibly by machine	Not easily accessible grave dug by hand
High demand Primary burial area Eg. Penrith Lawn 1, 2, & 5, St Marys Lawn 2, Catholic, Greek Orthodox, Coptic Orthodox	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Newest rows in which most recent burials are occurring • All Lawn sites 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rows adjacent to rows in which most recent burials are occurring 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rows well inside in which most recent burials are occurring
High demand secondary burial area Eg. Penrith Catholic Lawn 1 & 2, & older monumental sections St Marys Lawn & older catholic Emu Plains All Sections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All Lawn sites • Outside rows, graves adjacent to roadways etc 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rows adjacent to rows in which most recent burials are occurring 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rows well inside in which most recent burials are occurring

Document Control

Policy History	Date
Adopted	December 2017

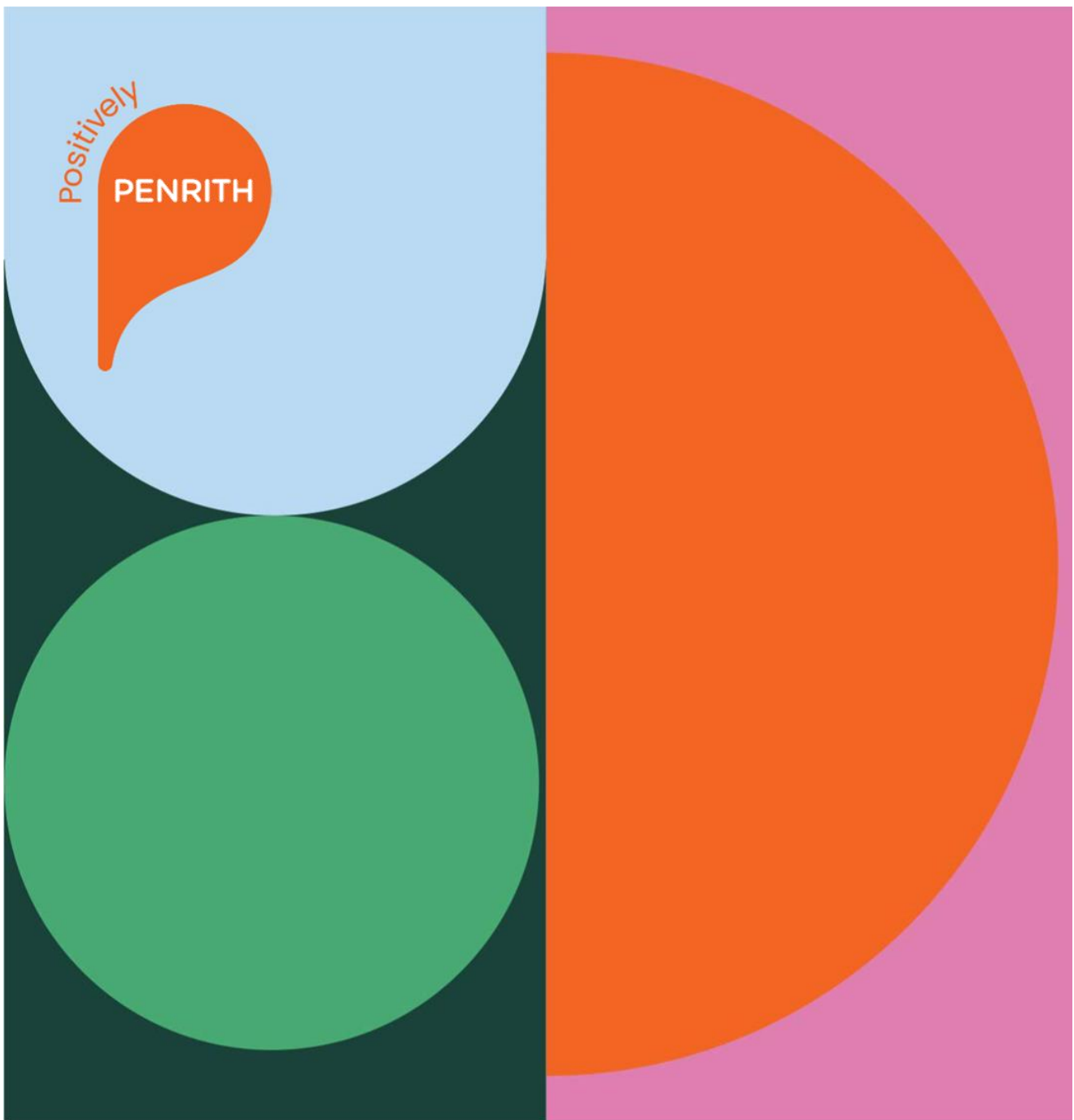
ATTACHMENTS



Date of Meeting: Monday 1 June 2026

Report Title: Update on draft Your Voice, Your Future:
Penrith Youth Strategy and Action Plan 2026
- 2030

Attachments: Your Voice, Your Future: Penrith Youth
Strategy and Action Plan 2026-2023
Funding Status of Penrith Youth Strategy and
Action Plan Actions



**Your Voice, Your Future:
Penrith Youth Strategy and Action Plan
2026 – 2030**



[penrith.city](https://www.penrith.city)

Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge and pay respect to the Darug and Gundungarra peoples who are the traditional owners in which Penrith Local Government Area is situated. We also pay our respect to Elders past, present and emerging, and to the First Nations people living in our community today.

DRAFT

Table of Contents

Section One:

- Acknowledgement of Country
- Data disclaimer

Section Two:

- The role of young people in Penrith
- The role of Council for young people
- What is the Penrith Youth Strategy and Action Plan 2026–2030?
 - Why we need the PYSAP
 - Developmental needs by age group
- What's the big picture?
- Ways to use the PYSAP

Section Three:

- Youth snapshot
- How this Strategy and Action Plan was formed

Section Four:

- Key Pillars, Findings and Action Plans
 - Pillar One: Health, Wellbeing and Safety
 - Pillar Two: Affordable Living and Opportunities
 - Pillar Three: Connection, Belonging and Culture
 - Pillar Four: Environment, Accessibility and Movement
- How Penrith will monitor delivery

Data Disclaimer

The Penrith Youth Strategy and Action Plan (PYSAP) draws on a range of national, state and local data sources to understand the experiences and priorities of young people in Penrith. The 8–24 age range reflects both international and national context – while the United Nations defines youth as 15–24 years and the Australian Government’s *Engage! Youth Engagement Strategy* identifies young people as aged 12–25, the PYSAP intentionally extends the lower age boundary to 8 years. This reflects Penrith’s local priorities, including the Maximising the Middle framework, which recognises that 8–12-year-olds are a critical but frequently underrepresented cohort in youth-focused strategies and services.

While the target age range for this project is **8–24 years**, most publicly available datasets do not report information using this exact age bracket. To ensure relevance and continuity, the analysis uses data from age ranges that fall within or closely align with the 8–24 cohort (e.g., 10–14, 12–24, 15–19, 20–24). Where required, insights have been interpreted with consideration of these variations.

All data has been used in good faith to provide an accurate representation of young people’s needs, while acknowledging minor differences in age segmentation across sources.

The Role of Young People in Penrith

Young people are at the heart of Penrith's story. They bring creativity, curiosity and courage to everything they do – shaping the city's identity today and leading it into the future.

We especially acknowledge the strength, creativity and leadership of First Nations children and young people whose voices and cultural knowledge continue to shape Penrith's story

Across schools, workplaces, sports clubs, neighbourhoods and online spaces, young people contribute in many ways:

- **Community builders** – through volunteering, mentoring, leading youth projects or civic representation, young people help strengthen community connection and local pride.
- **Creative thinkers** – through music, art, storytelling or performance, they share new perspectives and make Penrith's culture richer and more vibrant.
- **Innovators and problem-solvers** – from influencing the design of public spaces in the Penrith Mayoral Challenge to shaping digital engagement and sustainability projects, young people bring fresh ideas to local decision-making.
- **Future leaders** – programs like Council's Youth Leadership Team develop the next generation of civic leaders who are confident to speak up, collaborate and influence change.
- **Advocates and change-makers** – young people use their lived experiences to inspire action. For example: a Youth Leadership Team member is sharing her story to challenge the stigma around homelessness and advocate for better support.

Young people aged 8-24 make up around one-fifth of Penrith's population¹ and bring energy, innovation and empathy to community life.

Their participation reminds us that leadership isn't defined by age – it's about ideas, collaboration and commitment to making Penrith an even better place to live.

The Role of Council for Young People

Penrith City Council plays an important part in creating a city where young people feel supported, included and able to reach their potential. Council works with schools, youth services, community organisations and other levels of government to create opportunities for young people to be included in local conversations and decisions that shape Penrith’s future.

Council’s role focuses on connection, partnership and advocacy with Council working alongside others to strengthen collaboration and create pathways for young people to be heard and involved.

- **Connector** - Council connects young people with opportunities, programs and networks that encourage participation, wellbeing and belonging. Council creates and maintains places for leisure, transport, learning and culture to provide young people an opportunity to connect and build their community.
- **Partner** - Council works alongside youth services, schools and community organisations to share ideas, coordinate efforts and create positive outcomes for young people.
- **Advocate** - Council listens to young people and shares their perspectives to inform planning, policy and decision-making across Penrith and the wider region.

The PYSAP identifies Connector, Partner and Advocate as three Council roles strategically aligned with Council’s roles in the Penrith Community Strategic Plan (CSP) 2041+, translating its long-term community vision into direct action and outcomes for young people.



What is the Penrith Youth Strategy and Action Plan 2026–2030 (PYSAP)?

The Your Voice, Your Future: Penrith Youth Strategy and Action Plan 2026 –2030 (PYSAP) sets out how Penrith City Council supports, engages and empowers young people. The age range of the PYSAP includes 8–24-year-olds to ensure the middle years population of Penrith are not overlooked. Strongly guided by young people, it reflects their ideas, priorities and aspirations for a community that values inclusion, belonging and opportunity.

More than 300 young people took part through workshops, surveys and creative engagement. They shared what matters most – feeling safe, having opportunities, and being included in decisions that affect them.

Young people helped shape every stage, from designing online engagement questions, to delivering engagement and refining the pillars and directions for action.

Why We Need Your Voice, Your Future: Penrith Youth Strategy and Action Plan 2026 – 2030

Penrith is home to one of the largest youth populations in Western Sydney, with around one in five residents aged 8–24 years. As our city grows, so does the need to understand and respond to the issues that shape young people's lives.

While many young people are thriving, others are navigating challenges such as transport, housing costs, mental health and access to local opportunities.

The PYSAP captures what young people told us and offers a roadmap for how we can collectively support young people to thrive.

There are four key pillars. Each pillar starts with youth voice, which provides perspective and sets the intention of the PYSAP. The pillars provide a snapshot of current relevant data, detail the feedback received through different engagement methods and offer a summary of findings. From this data, a set of goals is outlined for each pillar, which guide how we can practically contribute to addressing the key issues identified by young people.

Developmental Needs by Age Group

The Your Voice, Your Future: Penrith Youth Strategy and Action Plan 2026–2030 recognises that young people are not a single, uniform group. Across the ages of 8–24, young people experience vastly different life stages, needs and priorities. To ensure the PYSAP is genuinely responsive, Penrith’s young people are considered across three distinct age groups, each reflecting the unique opportunities and challenges that come with each stage of growing up in Penrith. Importantly, while their needs differ, young people across all age groups identified common pressures including cost of living, access to affordable activities, mental health and feeling safe, reinforcing that the issues shaping young lives in Penrith are felt from as early as 8 years old.

- **Young people aged 8–12** benefit from safe, inclusive social spaces, opportunities to build skills, and strong connections with family and community.
- **Young people aged 13–17** seek to develop their identity, express their voice, build autonomy, and explore pathways and future aspirations.
- **Young people aged 18–24** need support to navigate education and career pathways, alongside access to wellbeing and mental health supports.

The chart below outlines the key developmental needs of young people across each of the three age groups, helping to ensure this PYSAP remains responsive to where young people are in their lives.

8–12-year-olds	13–17-year-olds	18–24-year-olds
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Belonging and safety • Identity, autonomy and voice • Skill development • Transition support • Family and community connection • Safe and secure housing and transport 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identity, autonomy and voice • Wellbeing and mental health • Connection and positive relationships • Pathways and aspirations • Educational and career support • Life skills and civic participation development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic participation • Educational and career support • Wellbeing and mental health • Social connection and community belonging • Mentorship, life skills and civic leadership opportunities • Affordable housing and reliable public transport options

What’s the Big Picture?

The Your Voice, Your Future: Penrith Youth Strategy and Action Plan 2026-2030 is informed by and aligns with the national *Engage! Youth Engagement Strategy (2024)*¹⁰, developed by the Australian Government’s Office for Youth. Engage! sets out a national vision that young people aged 12-25 are empowered, valued and able to contribute to government decision-making. Both strategies share a commitment to ensuring young people are genuine partners in shaping the decisions that affect them, not passive recipients of services. The themes that emerged through Penrith’s local engagement including mental health, cost of living, belonging, accessibility and the need for inclusive spaces mirror the national priorities identified through *Engage!*. This reinforces that the challenges facing Penrith’s young people are part of a broader picture, one that warrants a coordinated response across all levels of government.

The Your Voice, Your Future: Penrith Youth Strategy and Action Plan 2026 - 2030 builds on our shared Community Vision of opportunity, connection, pride, sustainability, care and prosperity.

It aligns with the direction set in Penrith Community Strategic Plan 2041+, which describes the city we want to become:

“We are welcoming, healthy, happy, creative and connected.”

The PYSAP translates this vision through the lens of young people, showing how Council and partners can create the conditions for them to learn, participate and shape the future.



The Your Voice, Your Future: Penrith's Youth Strategy and Action Plan 2026 - 2030 complements other key strategies and action plans that work together to make Penrith inclusive and resilient, including:

- Resilient Penrith Action Plan 2021-2030
- Cultural Strategy and Action Plan 2024-2028
- Multicultural Action Plan 2024-2027
- Draft Reconciliation Action Plan
- Draft Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2026-2030
- Community Safety Plan 2023-2027

Together, these plans help embed the wellbeing and participation of children and young people across everything Council does - from community development and culture to infrastructure and safety.

Ways to Use The PYSAP

The PYSAP is an intention-setting document that provides a shared roadmap for everyone supporting or wanting to support young people in Penrith. It can be used by Penrith City Council, schools, community organisations and partners to inform their work with young people. It can also be used by young people to self-organise or partner with organisations to co-lead projects or activities.

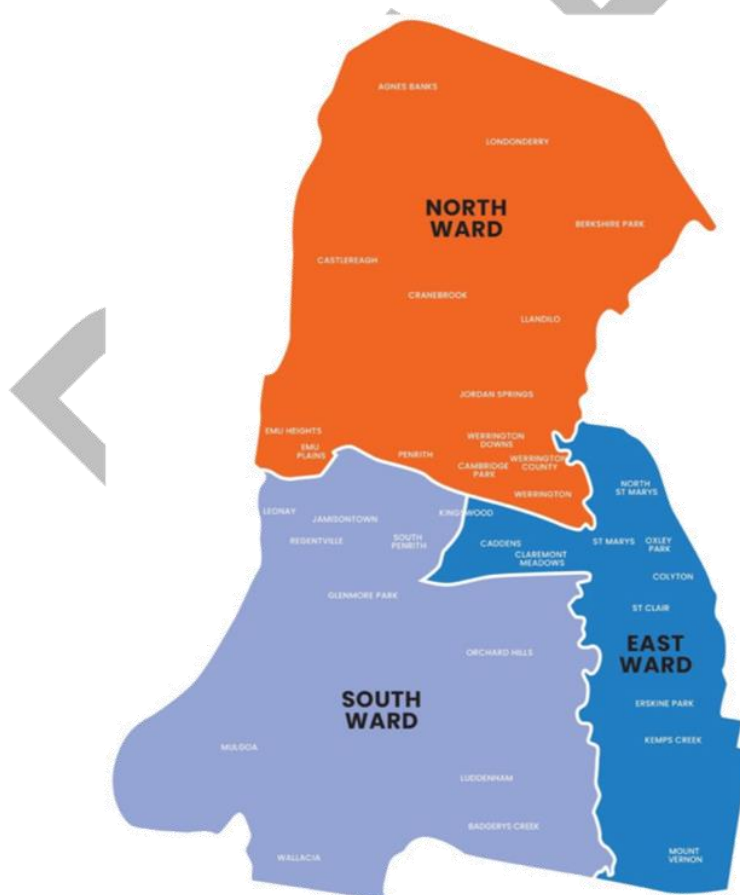
- **A guide for planning and reflection** - The PYSAP helps shape priorities, spark collaboration and inform initiatives that reflect what young people value.
- **A living document** - The Plan has been created so it can survive shifting priorities and remain relevant as Penrith grows and young people's needs change.
- **Led by young people** - The Youth Leadership Team was fundamental in the development of this PYSAP, their ideas, insights and lived experiences sit at the heart of every pillar and will continue to guide future engagement.

The PYSAP helps keep young people's voices central to decision-making and ensures Penrith remains a city where every young person can belong, contribute and thrive.

Youth Snapshot

Penrith is a young and growing city – a place where children and young people are shaping the story of one of Western Sydney’s most dynamic communities. Home to more than 219,000 residents, Penrith stretches from the Nepean River to the foothills of the Blue Mountains, blending city life with open space, creativity, and opportunity.

Around one in five people in Penrith are aged 8-24 years, bringing energy, culture, and fresh perspectives to the community. 7.2% of 12–24-year-olds identify as being of First Nations descent, and many others have cultural connections that span over 110 countries across the world. English is the most spoken language, but more than one in five households speak another, creating a rich cultural mix that defines modern Penrith.



Young people are studying, working, volunteering, representing their peers and contributing across every part of community life. Most are in education, many balance work and study, and local industries such as retail, hospitality, construction, and health care are powered by youth employment. Yet challenges remain - with transport access, housing costs, and mental health support emerging as shared concerns through community engagement.

Penrith's young people are resilient, creative, and future-focused. They want a city that listens, includes, and empowers them, a city that offers opportunities for growth, connection, and leadership.

Penrith at a glance:

- 404 km²
- 55km west of Sydney CBD
- 2021 Population - 217, 664
 - 9th largest LGA in NSW
- 2041 Population - 271, 518
- Youth Population (8-24 years) ~48,000 (22%)
- Top languages
 - Arabic - 1.8%
 - Punjabi - 1.4%
- Youth employment - 77% of (18-24) in labour force
 - Retail
 - Hospitality
 - Construction
- Youth disengagement (not in work or study) - 15% (18-24)
 - Above Greater Sydney (11%)
- Most common long-term health issue - mental health (12.5% of 18-14-year-olds)
 - Higher than Greater Sydney average
- 5.5% need assistance with core activities
- 5% First Nations
 - Higher than metro average (1.7%)
- 29% people born overseas
- 24% households where non-English language is used
 - Tagalog - 1.2%
 - Hindi - 1.1%
 - Mandarin - 0.8%

How This Strategy and Action Plan Was Formed

The Your Voice, Your Future: Penrith Youth Strategy and Action Plan 2026 – 2030 was developed through a collaborative process shaped by the voices, experiences and ideas of young people across Penrith.

In February 2025, 29 young people responded to an Expression of Interest to join the Penrith Youth Leadership Team to inform the development of the PYSAP. Council also worked with schools, youth services and community organisations to ensure the PYSAP reflects a broad range of youth perspectives and experiences.

Between June and November 2025, more than 300 young people aged 8 – 24 shared their views through online engagement and face-to-face conversations. The process aimed to reach young people across different settings – schools, community spaces and digital platforms – ensuring participation was inclusive and accessible.

The online engagement was co-designed with the Youth Leadership Team (YLT) – a group of young people aged 15-20 who helped design survey questions and lead the engagement during Youth Week 2025. Their involvement ensured the process stayed grounded in youth perspectives and lived experience.

Youth Led Engagement Snapshot

- 300+ young people engaged
- 171 Your Say responses
- 128 workshop participants
- 55 stakeholders consulted
- 6 engagement sessions
- 20+ youth organisations are actively engaged

Who We Heard From

Young people who participated represented a wide range of experiences and identities, including:

- Children and teenagers aged 8-17 years participating through schools and youth programs
- Young adults aged 18-24 living, studying or working in Penrith

- First Nations young people (25% of total participants)
- Young people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds (5% of total participants)
- Young people with disabilities or who access additional support (9% of total participants)
- LGBTQIA+ young people and peer advocates (10% of total participants)
- Young parents, students, workers and job seekers

This diversity of voices helped shape a holistic picture of what young people value, what they want to see change, and how they contribute to Penrith's community life.

It is important to note that while demographic information was sought at each engagement activity throughout the process, providing this information was optional for participants. The data recorded is therefore only indicative of those who chose to respond to those specific questions and may not fully reflect the demographic intersectionality of all participants.

Engagement Tools and Approach

To hear from as many young people as possible, Council used a mix of online and face-to-face tools. Each approach was designed to make participation easy, meaningful and youth friendly.

- **Your Say Penrith survey** – The Your Say Penrith online platform hosted a short, youth-focused survey open from March – April 2025. It asked young people about:
 - What they enjoy most about living, studying or working in Penrith
 - What challenges or barriers they experience day to day
 - What would make Penrith a better place for young people
 - How Council and the community can support their wellbeing and opportunities

The Youth Leadership Team (YLT) helped shape the questions used in the survey to ensure they were clear, concise, engaging and relevant. They also encouraged their peers to participate through schools, local networks and social media – helping make the survey more accessible and relatable to a wider group of young people.

The survey received 171 responses, representing young people from across Penrith's suburbs, schools and backgrounds.

- **Face-to-face engagement** - To complement the online survey, Council facilitated seven engagement sessions across schools and community settings. These sessions reached over 128 participants, ranging in age from 8 to 17 years, and were designed to be interactive. We asked young people:
 - What do you think Penrith Council does?
 - From a list of 22 items, choose the five most important and the three least important
 - If you were the Mayor, what three things would you do to make your neighbourhood a better place?

- Face-to-face engagement included:
 - **A Place to Go** (North St Marys) – is a program for young people aged 10-17 in contact with the justice system. 12 young people participated in the engagement.
 - **Community Junction** (Werrington) – delivers a range of youth programs for 12 – 18-year-olds. 15 participants took part.
 - **Braddock Public School** (Cranebrook) – 27 students aged 10-12 participated in a facilitated workshop.
 - **Pride Place** (Breakthru Office, High Street Penrith) – is a monthly drop in LGBTIQ+ safe space. We had 3 participants identifying as gender and sexually diverse.
 - **Vacation Care Groups** (Erskine Park/Emu Plains/Kindana/Ngamae coordinated by Uniting and Penrith City Council Children’s Services) – 51 children and young people participated in guided activities to identify their top three ideas for improving their local area, encouraging creative and aspirational thinking.
 - **Culture Fusion** (St Marys) – a multicultural event for families. 20 young people provided feedback at an engagement pop up stall.

Each session used creative tools including engagement boards, voting activities and visual worksheets to help young people share ideas about their lives, their communities, and their aspirations for Penrith’s future. Asking young people about what they would do if they could be the Mayor for a day helped draw out what truly matters for young people.

- **Peer-to-peer engagement** - Peer engagement was a cornerstone of the process. The Youth Leadership Team (YLT) – made up of 29 young leaders aged 15-20 – acted as ambassadors for the PYSAP. They helped refine engagement questions, promoted the Your Say survey, hosted

informal conversations within their networks and schools, and led a large engagement campaign during Youth Week 2025.

- **Partner and stakeholder engagement** – Council surveyed 55 members at Penrith Youth Interagency to understand the most effective ways to engage young people and identify key partners to help develop and deliver the PYSAP. PCC also worked with more than 20 organisations to understand the broader landscape of youth programs, needs and opportunities across the LGA.

Partners included:

- Local schools and education providers
- Youth and community services such as A Place to Go, Community Junction, Youth Employment Services, Platform Youth Services, Street Uni, Uniting and others through the Penrith Youth Interagency
- Youth health and wellbeing organisation, including Breakthru and Headspace
- Cultural and recreation groups and interagency networks

These conversations helped confirm that the themes raised by young people were consistent with what local practitioners and educators observe every day.

Key Pillars, Findings and Action Plans

The engagement process revealed a clear and consistent message: young people across Penrith share many of the same priorities, even if their experiences are different.

Through workshops, surveys, pop-ups and conversations, four key pillars emerged. Each pillar reflects what young people said matters most to them, supported by local data, youth stories and community insights.

These pillars build on one another, together showing what young people value, the challenges they navigate, and how Council and partners can respond in ways that make a meaningful difference.

1. **Health, Wellbeing & Safety** – *Feeling safe, supported and connected is essential for young people's wellbeing.*

This pillar explores young people's views on mental health, access to support, safety in public spaces, and the importance of inclusion and belonging. It combines youth insights with data on health, safety and access to services.

2. **Affordable Living & Opportunities** – *Creating opportunities for young people to live, learn and work locally.*

This pillar captures what young people told us about cost of living, housing, jobs and access to education and training. It includes insights on how affordability affects participation and independence, supported by local economic and social data.

3. **Connection, Belonging & Culture** – *Celebrating diversity, identity and inclusion across Penrith.*

This pillar focuses on how young people connect with each other, their communities and culture. It explores belonging, representation, and how creative and cultural spaces can help young people express who they are and feel part of Penrith's story.

4. **Environment, Accessibility & Movement** – *Building a sustainable, inclusive and connected city for young people.*

This pillar explores access to transport, parks, recreation, and the natural environment. It includes young people's ideas on sustainability, accessibility

and what makes Penrith's neighbourhoods feel safe and easy to move through.

Snapshot of goals

Within each pillar are several goals. These goals form the basis of the action plan and guide how Council will support young people to live, work and thrive in Penrith.

Pillar One: Health, Wellbeing and Safety

- 1.1 Communities where young people can access support early and without stigma
- 1.2 Environments and spaces that are inclusive, accessible and welcoming for all
- 1.3 A culture of respect, healthy relationships and safety across everyday settings

Pillar Two: Affordable Living and Opportunities

- 2.1 A city where young people are connected to opportunities and meaningful pathways into education, training and work
- 2.2 Housing, transport and services that support young people's independence and participation
- 2.3 Young people are equipped with the skills and confidence to navigate work, learning, civic engagement and life

Pillar Three: Connection, Belonging and Culture

- 3.1 A community that celebrates identity, culture and diversity in everyday life
- 3.2 Social spaces that invite participation, leadership and expression

Pillar Four: Environment, Accessibility and Movement

- 4.1 A city that is easy, safe and intuitive for young people to move through
- 4.2 Neighbourhoods and natural spaces that support health and connection to place
- 4.3 Public spaces and facilities designed with youth accessibility at their core

Pillar One: Health, Wellbeing & Safety

Youth Voice: Jaden's Story – 16 years old

LGBTQIA+ young person | Balancing school, work and belonging

"I'm in Year 10 and live with my family in Colyton. I go to school nearby and work part-time at a café on Queen Street in St Marys. Most weekends I'm out with my friends – sometimes at the shops, sometimes at the skate park or just hanging out at home.

I like school, and I've got a good group of friends, but there are times I feel out of place for being different. I'm part of our school's diversity club, which really helps – it's one of the few places I can talk openly and feel supported.

Getting around can be tricky, though. Buses don't always line up with school or work, and it's hard to get home from youth events when they finish late. Sometimes that means I just don't go.

I'd love to see more safe spaces and programs for young people – places that are easy to get to, where you can just be yourself and not feel judged."

What Jaden's Story Tells Us

- Many young people are balancing study, part-time work and social life while navigating identity and confidence.
- Inclusive spaces at school and in the community play a major role in supporting mental health and belonging.
- Access to safe, reliable transport affects whether young people can attend programs, events or services.
- Young people want environments that are welcoming, inclusive and affirming of diversity.

What the Data Tells Us^{3,4,10}

- The Black Dog Institute Youth Mental Health Survey found the proportion of young people aged 15–19 years who reported psychological distress increased from 18.7% in 2012 to 24.9% in 2023.³
- In Penrith, young people are 7% more likely to have a long-term health condition when compared to Greater Sydney⁴
 - 12–17-year-olds – 16% (Penrith) vs 13% (Greater Sydney)
 - 18–24-year-olds – 25% (Penrith) vs 16% (Greater Sydney)
- The most common health conditions for our young people in Penrith:

- Asthma - 12–17-year-old (9.7%) vs 18–24-year-old (9.8%)
- Mental health conditions - 12–17-year-olds (7%) vs 18–24-year-olds (12.5%)
- The national *'Engage! Youth Engagement Strategy'* quotes that 46.1% of young people aged 12–25 identified mental health as one of the most important issues for the government to address.¹⁰

What Young People Tell Us

Your Say Penrith Survey - 171 responses

- 56% said healthcare services (doctor, dentist, mental health support) are most needed or used in their local area.
- 49% said they need mental health support (therapy, counselling) to be happy and healthy.
- 54% said they need a safe environment to be happy and healthy.
- Young people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds were more likely to value "healthy food" (83%) compared with non-CALD participants (42%).
- Male participants valued "physical activity" (60%) more than the female participants (35%).

Face-to-Face Engagement - Focus Groups - 128 participants

- 56% of respondents rated access to doctors and health care services as very important. This ranked second out of all topics, demonstrating that this is a critical concern for young people.
- 40% of respondents identified safe neighbourhoods as an important feature of their local area, while 20% highlighted the importance of healthy relationships, indicating that safety is experienced as both physical and social.
- Support for mental health was identified as an important service by 24% of respondents, reinforcing its significance for young people.
- Participants at Community Junction mentioned drug use and safety concerns more frequently than their peers at Pride Place and a Place to Go, reflecting local differences in experience.

Peer to Peer Engagement – 29 YLT members

- Young people emphasised the role of parents, family, and trusted adults in supporting wellbeing and a sense of safety.

Love and care start from parents and trusted adults - young people said "family, teachers and mentors all play a role in creating a sense of safety."

- They also linked financial stress, limited transport and access barriers with feelings of isolation, anxiety and disconnection – showing that wellbeing and safety are influenced by both emotional and practical factors.

"When you can't get to things or afford them, it makes you feel cut off. It's not just about health; it's about being included."

What the Findings Tell Us

Young people across Penrith spoke openly about their health and wellbeing; what helps them stay well and what gets in the way.

The data shows rising levels of psychological distress among young people over the past decade, with mental health conditions now among the most common long-term health issues.⁵ Young people in Penrith are also more likely to have a long-term health condition than their peers across Greater Sydney.⁶

Through the Your Say Penrith survey, focus groups and peer-led engagement, young people described a strong need for early mental health support, safe public spaces, and affordable healthcare. They also spoke about wanting to feel safe at home, at school and in their neighbourhoods, and about the importance of trusted relationships with adults and peers.

For many, wellbeing was not just about services but about connection, confidence and belonging. Young people from culturally diverse backgrounds linked health to family, food and cultural connection, while LGBTQIA+ young people and those living with disabilities emphasised the need for inclusion and acceptance.

Together, these insights show that for young people in Penrith, health and safety are about more than access to care; they're about feeling valued, connected and supported by their community.

1.1: Communities where young people access support early and without stigma				
ACTION	COUNCIL'S ROLE	KEY PARTNERS	MEASURE	TIMEFRAME
Partner with local businesses and service providers to support the development of resources that create accessible, safe, welcoming and inclusive services for young people	Partner	Youth and community services Local businesses Young people	Number of businesses and service providers engaged Number of resources developed, updated or shared annually	Ongoing
Support the development of a youth-led resource with key touchpoints that help young people navigate mental health services	Advocate	Youth mental health services Youth services Young people	Youth-led resource developed with input from young people and relevant services Resource promoted through Council, schools, youth services and community networks	2026-2027
1.2: Environments and spaces that are inclusive, welcoming and accessible for all				
ACTION	COUNCIL'S ROLE	KEY PARTNERS	MEASURE	TIMEFRAME
Work with local businesses and venue providers to identify how they could make their public spaces and events more safe, welcoming and inclusive for young people	Partner	Youth and community services Local businesses Venue providers Young people	Number of businesses or venue providers engaged Number of practical inclusion initiatives identified and communicated to key stakeholders	Ongoing
1.3: A culture of respect, healthy relationships and safety across everyday settings				
ACTION	COUNCIL'S ROLE	KEY PARTNERS	MEASURE	TIMEFRAME
Partner with schools, youth services and community organisations to support the delivery of programs that encourage respectful relationships and wellbeing	Partner	NSW Police Local schools Youth and community services	Number of partnerships or collaborative activities delivered Number of programs, workshops or events supported	2027-2030

Pillar Two: Affordable Living & Opportunities

Youth Voice: Nick's Story – 23 years old

Job seeker | Outdoor enthusiast | Rebuilding confidence

"I live in Emu Plains and recently finished a construction traineeship. When the company closed, I thought I'd find something new quickly - but it's been harder than I expected.

I've applied for heaps of jobs, but most want experience I don't have. Volunteering at the community garden has helped me stay busy and clear my head, but it's tough seeing rent and bills go up while work feels out of reach.

I want to build a career and stay in Penrith - near my friends and family - but it feels like everything's getting more expensive. I just want more chances to learn, work and get ahead."

What Nick's Story Tells Us

- Transitioning from training to employment remains challenging, particularly where entry-level roles require experience.
- Rising living and housing costs compound employment barriers, making it harder for young people to establish independence.
- Motivation and community involvement alone are not enough without clear pathways to work and skills development.
- Accessible employment, training and affordable living options are critical to help young people build careers and remain connected to Penrith.

What the Data Tells Us^{7,10}

- Most young people in Penrith City live in single-dwelling properties (freestanding houses)
 - 88% - 12-17-year-old
 - 81% - 18-24-year-old
- Medium density properties (townhouses/villas)
 - 10% - 12-17-year-old
 - 11% - 18-24-year-old
 - Only a small portion of young people live in medium-density housing likely due to a lack of availability, reducing options for young people when they are looking to live independently.
- High density (apartments/units)
 - 1% - 12-17-year-old
 - 6% - 18-24-year-old

- A very small portion of young people live in high-density households, meaning young people likely have very few affordable and accessible rental options, pushing them to less suitable housing types.
- Education
 - 92% of 15-17-year-olds had a secondary school qualification
 - 1.2% had a certificate I to IV qualification
 - 0.4% stated having no formal qualification
 - 21.6% of Penrith City young people aged 18-24 attended university
- Youth disengagement from education and or employment
 - 4.3% – 15-17 years old
 - 15% – 18-24 years old
- Income
 - The median household income where 12-17 years old lives is \$2,532 per week
 - The median household income where 18-24 years old lives is \$2,831 per week
- Employment
 - 92% are employed
 - 33% – full-time
 - 41% – part-time
 - 8% are unemployed
 - 3% – looking for part-time work
 - 5% – looking for full-time work
 - Industry of employment for people aged 18-24 years old:
 - 16% retail trade
 - 16% construction
 - 12% accommodation/food service
- The national 'Engage! Youth Engagement Strategy' quotes that 55.3% of young people aged 12-25 identified cost of living as the single most important issue for government to address, with housing affordability, rent and home ownership identified as a priority by 30.3% of respondents.¹⁰
 - The national 'Engage! Youth Engagement Strategy' quotes that 29.1% of young people aged 12-25 identified education and training as a priority issue for government to address.¹⁰
 - The national 'Engage! Youth Engagement Strategy' quotes that young people aged 12-25 preferred accessing employment and training information through events at school, TAFE or university (40.3%) and youth organisations (31.7%).¹⁰

What Young People Tell Us

Your Say Penrith Survey – 171 responses

- 33% of participants said that they need financial resources to be happy and healthy.
- 67% of young people with disability or additional support needs said they need financial resources to be happy and healthy compared to 29% of young people living without a disability or additional needs
- Over 40% of respondents said employment services or support are the most needed or used services in their local area.
- 78% of young people with disability valued employment support as a service most needed in their area

Face-to-Face Engagement – 128 participants

- 80% of respondents voted affordable homes as a priority for young people ranking it highest out of all responses
- 44% of respondents voted having enough money as a priority for young people
- 40% of students at Community Junction said Council provides valuable support for people experiencing financial stress or homelessness.
- Nearly 21% of the respondents said if they were Mayor, they would improve housing and homelessness support across the city.

Peer to Peer Engagement – 29 YLT members

- Young people said that finding and keeping work is one of their biggest challenges.
- Many mentioned the need for access to local employment opportunities, training and apprenticeships close to home.
- They highlighted cost-of-living pressures as major barriers to staying in Penrith or taking part in work and study.
- Participants valued mentors, role models and leadership programs that focus on their strengths and help them build confidence, not just qualifications.
- Several spoke about wanting open, youth-friendly spaces where they can meet, learn new skills and feel supported by their community.

What the Findings Tell Us

Young people across Penrith are ambitious and community-minded, but many are finding independence harder to achieve. They spoke about the pressure of rising rents, transport costs and the difficulty of finding local jobs that match their skills or study schedules. For some – particularly those living with disability or from

low-income households - these barriers affect confidence, wellbeing and connection.

Peer discussions reinforced that financial stability, access to training, and reliable transport are essential to wellbeing. Young people want to feel secure, capable and optimistic about their future. They also emphasised the importance of mentorship and supportive environments that help them stay motivated and build real-world experience.

At the same time, young people recognise Penrith's potential. With its mix of education providers, local businesses and community programs, they see opportunities for a city that connects learning, work and affordable living.

They want a Penrith where they can rent affordably, travel easily and find meaningful work close to home - a community that helps them thrive, not just get by.

DRAFT

2.1: A city where young people are connected to opportunities and meaningful pathways into education, training and work				
ACTION	COUNCIL'S ROLE	KEY PARTNERS	MEASURE	TIMEFRAME
Support work experience opportunities at Council's community events as entry point for young people into work and civic participation	Advocate	Education providers Employment services Youth and community services	Number of work experience opportunities for young people at Council community events	Ongoing
Proactively promote Council's Community Funding Program and other local grant opportunities to youth and community services for the delivery of youth-focussed outcomes	Partner/Connector	Youth and community services	Number of youth-focussed grants funded through Council's CFP Number of other local grant opportunities promoted to youth and community organisations	Ongoing
Continue to coordinate sector networking opportunities that support a collective and cohesive approach to youth outcomes	Partner/Connector	Youth and community services	Number of networking opportunities Number of participants Number of organisations	Ongoing

2.2: Housing, transport and services that support young people's independence and participation				
ACTION	COUNCIL'S ROLE	KEY PARTNERS	MEASURE	TIMEFRAME
Continue advocating to Australian and NSW governments for an improved public transport network	Advocate	Youth and community services	Number of advocacy actions completed	Ongoing
Prepare a Public Transport Position Paper and deliver a public and active transport-focussed advocacy campaign	Advocate	Youth and community services	Position paper developed Advocacy campaign delivered	2026 – 2028
Continue to advocate for affordable housing options for young people in Penrith	Advocate	Housing services Youth and community services	Advocacy delivered	2027-2030

2.3: Equip young people with the skills and confidence to navigate work, learning, civic engagement and life				
ACTION	COUNCIL'S ROLE	KEY PARTNERS	MEASURE	TIMEFRAME
Continue to deliver youth programming and proactively connect young people to Library youth programming including workshops and HSC lectures	Connector	Youth and community services Local schools	Number of youth-focussed Library programs delivered Number of young people participating in Library programming each year	Ongoing
Investigate the feasibility and opportunity for Children's Services to develop a "Middle Years" program that promotes wellbeing and connection, and supports the development of confident, socially engaged citizens during the middle years	Connector	Youth and community services	Feasibility assessment completed	2029 – 2030
Design and deliver a civic youth engagement program such as the Penrith Youth Forum and Penrith Youth Committee	Connector	Young people Schools Youth and community services	Deliver at least one Penrith Youth Forum annually Deliver at least four Penrith Youth Committee meetings annually Number of participants in each	2026 – 2030

Pillar Three: Connection, Belonging & Culture

Youth Voice: Aaliyah's Story - 11 years old

First Nations young person | Creative learner | Loves her community

"My name's Aaliyah and I live in Cambridge Park with my mum and two younger brothers. I'm proud of my Darug heritage - we talk about Country and culture at school, and I love when we get to paint or dance.

I feel happiest when I can be creative and share stories about who we are. Sometimes it's hard when activities cost too much or are too far away. I wish there were more free things to do after school, close to home - places to hang out, learn, paint and make new friends.

I love Penrith because it feels like home. I just want more spaces for kids like me to be creative, proud and connected."

What Aaliyah's story tells us

- Affordable, local activities are critical to ensure young people can participate without cost or transport barriers.
- Creative and cultural expression supports identity and wellbeing, particularly for First Nation young people.
- Accessible youth-friendly spaces enable connection, learning and positive social relationships.
- Celebrating culture strengthens belonging, helping young people feel seen, proud and connected to their community.

What the Data Tells Us^{8,10}

- 7.5% of 12-17-year-olds and 6.9% of 18-24-year-olds identified as having First Nations ancestry - higher than the Greater Sydney average.
- In 2021, 14% of people aged 12-17 and 18% aged 18-24 in Penrith were born outside of Australia.
- One in five Penrith residents speak a language other than English at home.
- The national 'Engage! Youth Engagement Strategy' quotes that 5% of young people aged 12-25 identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.¹⁰
- The national 'Engage! Youth Engagement Strategy' quotes that 16.3% of young people aged 12-25 are born overseas, and 25.9% live in regional and remote areas.¹⁰

- The national 'Engage! Youth Engagement Strategy' quotes that 7.3% of young people aged 12-25 identify as lesbian, gay or bisexual.¹⁰

What Young People Tell Us

Your Say Penrith Survey – 171 responses

- 57% of participants said creative opportunities (art, music, performance, theatre, cultural expression) are important to their happiness and wellbeing.
- 74% said they connect with friends and family in-person while 34% also connect via Instagram and Snapchat.
- 51% said they need social support (friends, family, community) to be happy and healthy.
- Young people from CALD backgrounds were more likely to value social support (friends, family, community) (83%) compared with the non-CALD participants (65%).

Face-to-Face Engagement – 128 participants

- Young people highlighted free events and activities and places to hang out as the top two important factors to connection and belonging.
- 24% valued friendly communities and 18% valued access to music and arts.
- Participants at *Pride Place* expressed a strong desire to celebrate diversity and different cultures.
- Across all groups, there were at least 10 mentions of healthy relationships and friendly communities, reinforcing the link between connection, wellbeing, and happiness.

Peer to Peer Engagement – 29 YLT members

- Young people want to feel accepted and respected for who they are, without judgment. They spoke about the importance of tolerance, kindness and understanding differences.
- They described a need for more open, youth-friendly places where they can connect with friends, be creative and feel welcome. They want alternatives to commercial or adult-dominated areas.

What the Findings Tell Us

Young people in Penrith see connection as essential to feeling well and confident. They told us that belonging comes from being accepted and represented – through culture, creativity and shared experiences.

Participation in art, music and cultural events helps young people build identity, pride and community ties. Those opportunities are most meaningful when they reflect Penrith's diversity - its First Nations heritage, multicultural communities, people with disabilities, the LGBTIQ+ community and the growing creative scene.

Many participants said they want more welcoming spaces that invite interaction - places to gather, collaborate and relax without cost or judgement. They also described kindness, empathy and community spirit as the values that make Penrith feel like home.

Mentors, role models and inclusive programs were seen as vital for helping young people feel seen and supported, particularly for those who may not always feel they belong. When creativity, diversity and connection are nurtured, young people gain a stronger sense of who they are and where they fit, and Penrith becomes a city where everyone can belong.

DRAFT

3.1: A community that celebrates identity, culture and diversity in everyday life				
ACTION	COUNCIL'S ROLE	KEY PARTNERS	MEASURE	TIMEFRAME
Investigate and pilot a legal graffiti wall in the LGA to celebrate young people's creative and cultural expression	Connector	Local cultural organisations Young people Youth and community services Schools	Legal graffiti wall delivered Number of young people participating	2028 – 2029
Partner with Penrith Performing and Visual Arts (PPVA) to support accessible and inclusive programs and events for young people that celebrate identity, culture and diversity	Partner	Penrith Performing and Visual Arts Young people	Number of accessible and inclusive programs or events for young people delivered annually Number of instances of access	Ongoing
3.2: Social spaces that invite participation, leadership and expression				
ACTION	COUNCIL'S ROLE	KEY PARTNERS	MEASURE	TIMEFRAME
Work with young people to design and deliver events that meet their needs and celebrate identity, belonging and culture	Connector	Youth and community services Young people	Number of events delivered Number of young people participating	Ongoing
Deliver the Penrith Mayoral Challenge in partnership with a local school to support young people to contribute to the design and delivery of playgrounds and public spaces	Connector	Schools Young people	Penrith Mayoral Challenge delivered in partnership with a local school Number of young people participating	Ongoing

Pillar Four: Environment, Accessibility & Movement

Youth Voice: Maya's Story – 20 years old

First-generation university student | Living with disability | Aspiring social worker

"I'm studying social work at Western Sydney Uni, and I live with my parents in Jordan Springs. My family moved here from the Philippines when I was little.

I use a mobility aid because of a chronic condition. Uni has been supportive, but it can be hard to get to places or join events when transport isn't easy or venues aren't accessible. Sometimes it makes me feel like I'm missing out.

I love volunteering at the youth centre and mentoring younger students from multicultural backgrounds. It's where I feel most connected – like I'm part of something.

I just want Penrith to be a place where everyone can join in, where accessibility isn't an after-thought – whether it's at uni, at work or in the community."

What Maya's Story Tells Us

- Accessibility remains a barrier to participation, particularly for young people living with disability when transport and venues are not inclusive.
- Inclusive design supports social connection, enabling young people to fully participate in education, work and community life.
- Volunteering and mentoring build belonging and purpose, especially for young people from multicultural backgrounds.
- Accessibility must be embedded, not incidental, to ensure all young people can engage equally across services, spaces and opportunities in Penrith.

What the Data Tells Us^{9,10}

- In 2021, 4.6% of 12–17-year-olds and 2.9% of 18–24-year-olds in Penrith reported needing assistance due to disability.
- 2021 Census Data shows that only 3.1% of Penrith residents travelled to work by public transport, while 51.3% used a private vehicle highlighting car reliant travel networks that limit young people's mobility and access to education, work and recreation.
- The national 'Engage! Youth Engagement Strategy' quotes that 9.3% of young people aged 12–25 have a disability.¹⁰

- The national 'Engage! Youth Engagement Strategy' quotes that 4.1% of young people aged 12-25 are carers.¹⁰

What Young People Tell Us

Your Say Penrith Survey – 171 responses

- 40% of participants said that access to green space is important for being happy and healthy.
- Participants with disability (78%) valued access to green space more highly than participants without disability (42%).
- 43% said recreational spaces (parks, gyms) were the most used or needed facilities in their local area.
- 54% said they need a safe environment to feel happy and healthy (e.g. public spaces with good lighting).

Face-to-face Engagement – 128 participants

- Young people made more than 10 mentions of wanting better access to nature and footpaths showing a strong preference for green, walkable neighbourhoods.
- 36% mentioned that looking after the environment is important, reflecting a sense of environmental responsibility and care for future generations.
- 36% through the 'dotmocracy' exercise voted for prioritising public transport and accessibility.
- Participants at *Pride Place* and *A Place to Go* called for more frequent and reliable transport options, especially in the evenings.
- Students at *Braddock Public School* said that they feel unsafe riding bikes alongside cars, but cycling is often the only way they can visit friends.

Peer to Peer Engagement – 29 YLT members

- Young people spoke about how accessible environments and reliable transport are essential for independence and wellbeing. They said that when spaces are hard to reach or navigate, it limits their ability to participate in community life.
- Participants said caring for the environment helps them feel connected to community and place.
- Young people with disability and mobility needs shared the importance of accessible design: ramps, crossings, and inclusive facilities that allow everyone to join in.

What the Findings Tell Us

Young people want Penrith to be green, connected and inclusive – a city where they can move freely, access spaces easily, and feel safe wherever they go. They see transport, accessibility and sustainability as deeply linked to independence and wellbeing.

They spoke about the challenge of limited public transport and car dependency, which make it harder to get to school, work or events. Many said they want safer, more reliable options – especially for cycling and walking – and more youth-friendly public spaces connected by well-lit paths.

Young people with disability or mobility needs emphasised that accessibility should be built into everything, from playgrounds and parks to public transport and events. They also expressed pride in Penrith’s natural environment and a shared responsibility to protect it – through clean green spaces, recycling, tree planting and sustainable design.

For young people, a connected and inclusive city is one where everyone can move, meet and participate – where green space, good design and safe transport bring people.

4.1: A city that is easy, safe and intuitive for young people to move through

ACTION	COUNCIL'S ROLE	KEY PARTNERS	MEASURE	TIMEFRAME
Partner with state agencies and community services to improve safety, accessibility and movement options for young people across Penrith	Partner	NSW Police Youth and community services	Number of joint initiatives, workshops or projects delivered	Ongoing

4.2: Neighbourhoods and natural spaces that support health and connection to place

ACTION	COUNCIL'S ROLE	KEY PARTNERS	MEASURE	TIMEFRAME
Connect young people to Caring for Country programs that support environmental stewardship and connection to land	Connector	State government agencies Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations Schools Youth and community services First Nations community	Number of Caring for Country programs delivered Number of instances of access	Ongoing
Deliver the Muru Murak Junior Rangers program in partnership with local schools and Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations	Connector	Schools Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations Youth and community services First Nations community	Muru Murak Junior Rangers program delivered Number of instances of access	Ongoing

4.3: Public spaces and facilities designed with youth accessibility at their core

ACTION	COUNCIL'S ROLE	KEY PARTNERS	MEASURE	TIMEFRAME
Investigate the development of a resource that promotes accessible and inclusive youth-friendly public space and facility design	Connector	Youth and community services Young people	Resource developed and promoted with key stakeholders	2028 – 2029

How Penrith will monitor delivery

The Your Voice, Your Future: Penrith Youth Strategy and Action Plan 2026–2030 sets out the actions we will take over the next four years, in conjunction with our partners and the broader youth sector, to support and empower young people in Penrith.

Many actions will be delivered by and in partnership with community organisations, youth services and state government agencies. Council's role will vary – at times leading delivery, and at others facilitating, advocating or linking. Where actions are delivered alongside partners, progress will be considered as a shared outcome across the sector.

The timelines assigned to each action reflect the nature of the work involved. Some actions are focused on a specific outcome and will be completed within a defined period, while others require sustained effort across the life of the PYSAP to be effective. All actions include explicit measures. Progress on delivery will be reported annually.

Progress on the PYSAP will also be monitored through Council's existing strong relationships with youth services and community partners, particularly through the Penrith Youth Interagency. This will provide an ongoing forum to share updates, test progress, and maintain sector-wide alignment on agreed priorities.

In addition, monitoring will occur through the continued promotion and integration of the PYSAP across Council business. This includes ensuring that relevant grant-funded and business-as-usual activities are aligned with the priorities identified by young people through the engagement process.

Together, these mechanisms will support a shared understanding of progress across Council and the broader youth sector, recognising that delivery is both a Council and collective responsibility. Regular updates on progress will continue to be communicated to young people, partners and the wider community through Council's established communication channels, including sector newsletters and youth engagement platforms.

DRAFT

The development of the Penrith Youth Strategy and Action Plan was led by the Community Capacity and Community Safety Teams at Council. If you would like to discuss the content of this document or find out more about this work, please contact us at community.capacity@penrith.city or at 4732 7777.

References

1. Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2021). *2021 Census All persons QuickStats – Penrith (LGA16350)*
2. Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2021). *2021 Census All persons QuickStats – Penrith (LGA16350)*
3. Black Dog Institute. (2021). *Youth Mental Health Report 2012–2020*.
4. Penrith City Council. (n.d.). *Demographic Analysis Report: Young People*
5. Black Dog Institute. (2021). *Youth Mental Health Report 2012–2020*.
6. Penrith City Council. (n.d.). *Demographic Analysis Report: Young People*
7. Penrith City Council. (n.d.). *Demographic Analysis Report: Young People*
8. Penrith City Council. (n.d.). *Demographic Analysis Report: Young People*
9. Penrith City Council. (n.d.). *Demographic Analysis Report: Young People*
10. Australian Government Office for Youth. (2024). *Engage! A strategy to include young people in the decisions we make.*

DRAFT

Appendices

Key partners

- Headspace Penrith
- Nepean Blue Mountains PHN
- NSW Health
- Disability Inclusion Network
- Western Sydney University
- Community Junction
- A Place to Go
- NSW Police
- Local schools
- PCYC
- Nepean Community & Neighbourhood Services (NCNS)
- TAFE NSW
- Business Penrith
- Mission Australia
- Bushcare groups
- Environmental organisations
- Community garden groups
- WSU environmental programs

Attachment 2: Funding Status of Penrith Youth Strategy and Action Plan (PYSAP) Actions
1 June 2026 – Policy and Strategy Committee Meeting

The PYSAP is built on four key pillars. Each pillar reflects what young people said matters most to them, supported by local data, youth stories and community insights.

Within each pillar there are several goals. These goals form the basis of the action plan and guide how Council will support young people to live, work and thrive in Penrith.

The draft PYSAP contains 21 actions and the tables below identify the funding status of each action.

Pillar One: Health, Wellbeing and Safety

Goal 1.1: Communities where young people access support early and without stigma	
ACTION	FUNDING STATUS
Partner with local businesses and service providers to support the development of resources that create accessible, safe, welcoming and inclusive services for young people	To be funded by Council operational budget as part of a future work program. Grant funding may also need to be sought to augment this deliverable.
Support the development of a youth-led resource with key touchpoints that help young people navigate mental health services	To be funded by Council operational budget as part of a future work program. Grant funding may also need to be sought to augment this deliverable.

Goal 1.2: Environments and spaces that are inclusive, welcoming and accessible for all	
ACTION	FUNDING STATUS
Work with local businesses and venue providers to identify how they could make their public spaces and events more safe, welcoming and inclusive for young people	Can be delivered within current and future operational capacity. Grant funding may also need to be sought to augment this deliverable.

Goal 1.3: A culture of respect, healthy relationships and safety across everyday settings	
ACTION	FUNDING STATUS
Partner with schools, youth services and community organisations to support the delivery of programs that encourage respectful relationships and wellbeing	To be funded by Council operational budget as part of a future work program. Grant funding may also need to be sought to augment this deliverable.

Pillar Two: Affordable Living and Opportunities

Goal 2.1: A city where young people are connected to opportunities and meaningful pathways into education, training and work	
ACTION	FUNDING STATUS
Support work experience opportunities at Council's community events as entry point for young people into work and civic participation	Can be delivered within current and future operational capacity.
Proactively promote Council's Community Funding Program and other local grant opportunities to youth and community services for the delivery of youth-focussed outcomes	Can be delivered within current and future operational capacity.
Continue to coordinate sector networking opportunities that support a collective and cohesive approach to youth outcomes	Can be delivered within current and future operational capacity.

Goal 2.2: Housing, transport and services that support young people's independence and participation	
ACTION	FUNDING STATUS
Continue advocating to Australian and NSW governments for an improved public transport network	Can be delivered within current and future operational capacity.
Prepare a Public Transport Position Paper and deliver a public and active transport-focused advocacy campaign	Can be delivered within current and future operational capacity.
Continue to advocate for affordable housing options for young people in Penrith	Can be delivered within current and future operational capacity.

Goal 2.3: Equip young people with the skills and confidence to navigate work, learning, civic engagement and life	
ACTION	FUNDING STATUS
Continue to deliver youth programming and proactively connect young people to Library youth programming including workshops and HSC lectures	To be funded by Council operational budget as part of a future work program. Grant funding may also need to be sought to augment this deliverable.
Investigate the feasibility and opportunity for Children's Services to develop a "Middle Years" program that promotes wellbeing and connection, and supports the development of confident, socially engaged citizens during the middle years	Can be delivered within current and future operational capacity.
Design and deliver a civic youth engagement program such as the Penrith Youth Forum and Penrith Youth Committee	Council Officers currently determining costs and possible funding sources related to this.

Pillar Three: Connection, Belonging and Culture

Goal 3.1: A community that celebrates identity, culture and diversity in everyday life	
ACTION	FUNDING STATUS
Investigate and pilot a legal graffiti wall in the LGA to celebrate young people's creative and cultural expression	Can be delivered within current and future operational capacity. Investigation may lead to future delivery costs not yet determined.
Partner with Penrith Performing and Visual Arts (PPVA) to support accessible and inclusive programs and events for young people that celebrate identity, culture and diversity	Can be delivered within current and future operational capacity. Grant funding may also need to be sought to augment this deliverable.

Goal 3.2: Social spaces that invite participation, leadership and expression	
ACTION	FUNDING STATUS
Work with young people to design and deliver events that meet their needs and celebrate identity, belonging and culture	Can be delivered within current and future operational capacity. Grant funding may also need to be sought to augment this deliverable.
Deliver the Penrith Mayoral Challenge in partnership with a local school to support young people to contribute to the design and delivery of playgrounds and public spaces	To be funded by Council operational budget as part of a future work program. Grant funding may also need to be sought to augment this deliverable.

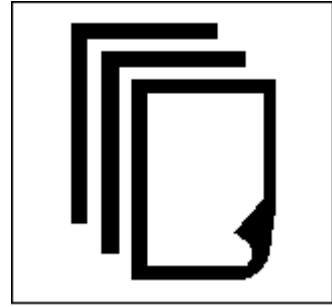
Pillar Four: Environment, Accessibility and Movement

Goal 4.1: A city that is easy, safe and intuitive for young people to move through	
ACTION	FUNDING STATUS
Partner with state agencies and community services to improve safety, accessibility and movement options for young people across Penrith	Can be delivered within current and future operational capacity. Grant funding may also need to be sought to augment this deliverable.

Goal 4.2: Neighbourhoods and natural spaces that support health and connection to place	
ACTION	FUNDING STATUS
Connect young people to Caring for Country programs that support environmental stewardship and connection to land	Can be delivered within current and future operational capacity. Grant funding may also need to be sought to augment this deliverable.
Deliver the Muru Murak Junior Rangers program in partnership with local schools and Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations	NSW State Government grant funding secured to deliver this outcome.

Goal 4.3: Public spaces and facilities designed with youth accessibility at their core	
ACTION	FUNDING STATUS
Investigate the development of a resource that promotes accessible and inclusive youth-friendly public space and facility design	Can be delivered within current and future operational capacity. Investigation may lead to future delivery costs not yet determined.

ATTACHMENTS



Date of Meeting: Monday 1 June 2026

Report Title: Draft Our River Plan 2026-46

Attachments: Attachment 1 - Draft Our River Plan 2026-46
Attachment 2 - Funding Status of Proposed
Priority Projects and Priority Council Actions



OUR RIVER PLAN

2026-2046

A 20 year vision for the Nepean River



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

We acknowledge and pay respect to the Darug and Gundungarra people who are the traditional owners in which Penrith Local Government Area is situated. We also pay our respect to elders past, present and emerging, and to the First Nations people living in our community today.





DISCLAIMER

While every effort has been taken to make sure the information in this document at the time of publication is current and accurate, information is constantly changing and may become out of date or inaccurate. In circumstances where loss, damage or injury is possible, please ensure you have accurate data. Council denies liability for any loss, damage or injury resulting from any person relying on information obtained by or through this document. Copyright of materials in this publication resides with Council unless otherwise stated. Apart from any use permitted under the Copyright Act 1968, no part of such content may be reproduced, modified, adapted, published or used in any way for any commercial purpose whatsoever. This document is designed to be read as an A3 sized landscape spread.

Contents

Mayor's message	4
Overview	5
Purpose of this plan	6
Building on a decade of success	8
Vision	11
Objectives	12
Guiding principles	13
Current context	14
Managing a river city	15
Building on our existing strategies and plans	16
Projects completed or underway	19
Listening and responding to our community	20
The way forward	22
River precincts	23
Northern Precinct	24
Lakes Precinct	26
Central Precinct	28
Southern Precinct	30
Implementation approach	32
Priority projects	34

A message from our Mayor

The Nepean River is Penrith's greatest natural asset – an integral part of our City's identity that is much loved by residents and visitors. As a proud river city, we celebrate its social, recreational and cultural significance.

This *Draft Our River Plan* has been developed by Penrith City Council to guide actions to unlock further potential in and around the river over the next 20 years. It outlines Council and the community's shared vision and the key role the river plays in the future wellbeing of our people and prosperity of the City.

Running through one of Australia's fastest-growing regions, the Nepean River is a drawcard for Western Sydney. The river improves local amenity and encourages active lifestyles. It offers a beautiful setting where people can gather and relax. It provides opportunities to escape the heat and connect with nature. And it boosts Penrith's recreation and tourism, which supports this City's growing economy.

Rivers are living systems that present challenges, too. Council is committed to working with others in managing this dynamic water system well including risks like flooding.

For the first time, we have developed a plan for the entire length of the Nepean River in the Penrith Local Government Area, with 4 precincts that enrich Penrith's story. This plan responds to community and stakeholder feedback on what is important to them for the future of the Nepean River.

This work builds on the success of Penrith's 2013 *Our River Master Plan*. A decade of progress has seen more than \$459 million of public investment and improvement in Penrith – made possible with support from the Australian and NSW Governments – together with significant private investment, valued at around \$1 billion. Included in this, Council has welcomed an estimated \$50 million of investment in dining options alone, which have enhanced both sides of the river.

Major achievements to date include the multi-million-dollar Regatta Park upgrade, Yandhai Nepean Crossing pedestrian bridge, and the Police Cottage restoration. We have just unveiled a kayak launch deck at Leonay to improve river access.

We also proudly delivered the Nepean Avenue Pedestrian Pathway completing the bridge-to-bridge loop of the Great River Walk and upgraded Tench Reserve – the backdrop for Council's flagship Real Festival that attracts more than 50,000 attendees annually.

Council's commitment to caring for the Nepean River is strengthened through partnerships with First Nations community members and agencies, including the Barduu Ngaadjung First Nations Water Forum. This work extends into broader Water Country initiatives such as on-Country learning, ecological and water monitoring, supporting shared understanding and long-term stewardship of the river.

This plan is a framework to encourage and guide future investment. It is currently unfunded and aspirational. It identifies priority opportunities and calls for collaboration with partners, ensuring our objectives are aligned and purposeful in our ongoing efforts to further enhance the Nepean River. Council will require support from others including further public and private investment for it to be realised.

The *Draft Our River Plan* affirms Council's ongoing commitment to deliver positive outcomes for current and future generations. Penrith is already a world-class City. Through collaboration, we can continue to strengthen connections to the Nepean River, bringing community, nature and culture together.

I look forward to continuing success and what we will achieve through the *Draft Our River Plan*.



Councillor Todd Carney
Penrith Mayor





Purpose of this plan

Our River Plan supports a vision for the entire length of the Nepean River within the Penrith Local Government Area. It builds on and contemporises Council's Our River Master Plan 2013 and it complements existing strategies that relate to the river and its use.

The vision is supported by objectives, guiding principles and initial projects that could be implemented by Council, Australian and NSW Governments, community organisations or businesses to achieve the outcomes for our community we seek.



THE PLAN IS:

- ✓ A strategic guide for Council, stakeholders and community to ensure that collective efforts are aligned and purposeful.
- ✓ A long-term high-level framework for planning and decision making that can be applied to design and management actions at precinct and site level over the short and medium term.
- ✓ A prioritised list of potential projects that will guide investment and grants funding as it becomes available.
- ✓ A way of identifying and securing sustainable resourcing to achieve the plan's vision.
- ✓ A way to foster collaboration opportunities during the plan's implementation to amplify impact of joint efforts.
- ✓ A way to promote the river as a cultural, recreational, tourism and economic resource to benefit Penrith's people and economy.

THE PLAN IS NOT:

- ✗ A statutory plan or set of controls.
- ✗ A detailed design specification or advice for specific sites or projects.
- ✗ A financial commitment to undertake every project or idea.
- ✗ A way to specifically manage flooding, river health, or day to day operational river and river's edge management, including traffic and parking issues.

These matters are dealt with through other Council strategies, policies and plans (see pages 16-17) or are identified as part of implementation next steps in progressing the Our River Plan (see page 32).



Source: New South Wales Government

PENRITH CITY COUNCIL DRAFT Our River Plan

7

Building on a decade of success

In 2013, Council developed its 'Our River' Master Plan which was the first step in defining a shared vision to celebrate, activate and protect the Nepean River and showcase this beautiful natural asset for the lifestyle that it affords our City. The Master Plan outlined key actions to better connect the river with the Penrith City Centre, enhance the natural environment, support active and healthy lifestyles while celebrating the river's rich history and cultural values.

Council has been able to attract significant investment to realise the vision it had, and at last count the value of government projects delivered and underway is \$459 million.

Collaboration across government has been key to success. Joint government commitments have included a \$34 million investment in Regatta Park, a flagship project, and \$13 million for significant Tench Reserve upgrades (see page 19).

This public investment has given confidence and been a catalyst for major private investment in and around the river corridor in the region of \$1 billion, seen in the new dining, entertainment and accommodation offers now available. The private investment in dining precincts alone is in the order of \$50 million, invested on both sides of the river.

The transformation has been substantial and so have the benefits for community. It has delivered environmental benefits supporting a healthy river. It has changed the way locals interact with the river, delivering quality open spaces and facilities and enabling events and activities in naturally beautiful settings. It has also changed who visits Penrith and how our City is perceived. And it has firmly cemented the river's tourism economy as a key contributor to the local Penrith economy.

This has all been possible because Council had a clear and strategic vision. Council also had an implementation framework to focus actions and worked determinedly to harness the support, collaboration and resources of the many partners needed to realise our aspirations.

Council will build on this successful track record of on-ground delivery, collaboration and partnerships over the last decade as we lead the next chapter for the Nepean River and guide continued investment.

As a result of improvements visitation to the river has increased. The Central Precinct area now attracts an average of **1,615 visits per day**, generating just under **\$180,000 in local visitor spend each day**. The contribution to the gross regional economy from the river is estimated at \$11.8 million annually, making the river a major contributor to Penrith's economy.



The river has new and improved spaces for events and festivals. Council's 2025 REAL Festival at Tench Reserve attracted **50,000 people**, with one in ten residents attending. Additionally, 98% of attendees agreed that the REAL Festival makes them feel proud of their local area.



Walking and cycling infrastructure along the river corridor is highly valued and increasing in use. In the 3 years from 2022 - 2025, there has been a **43% increase** in people using the Yandhai Nepean Crossing and a **53% increase** in the number of people walking or cycling along Nepean Avenue.







Vision

The Nepean River is our drawcard and a much-loved living system bringing nature, community and culture together. It is the thriving heart of Penrith, vital for our wellbeing and local economy. Strong connections to the river add vibrancy and create opportunities for Penrith and the surrounding region.

Objectives

1. RESPECTED AS A LIVING SYSTEM

A culturally significant place

Those who care for, plan and use the river corridor acknowledge and appreciate its significance to First Nations people, with ancient and contemporary cultural values and sites that are protected, respected and celebrated.

A healthy and resilient ecosystem

The river is valued for its cooling properties, waterway health and biodiversity values that continue to be protected, restored and enhanced. Planning and development across the corridor focus on building resilience and adapting to living within a dynamic river system.

A thoughtfully managed river

A balanced risk based approach to river management is evident to protect safety while maximising opportunities.

2. A DEFINING LANDMARK AND GATEWAY

Our signature

The river is a defining element of our City's identity and shapes the story of Penrith we share with others. It's a focus of life, movement, business and recreation in Penrith. The river corridor welcomes people to our place and guides people through its distinct landscapes and diverse experiences.

A clear river brand

Places and spaces along the river have a distinct identity that is clearly communicated to residents and visitors and promotes the river and what it offers.

An economic driver

Riverfront spaces draw people in, with their diversity of recreational, entertainment, cultural and tourism opportunities. Redevelopment of river corridor sites provides new opportunities to engage with the river and ensures that the river and its edges remain central to Penrith's economy.

3. ACCESSIBLE AND ENGAGING

An active river's edge

The river's edge is alive with activity day and night. A full range of civic, recreation and entertainment activities occurs in our public open spaces, urban places and parks, that support a healthy and active community and positions Penrith as a prime tourism destination for visitors.

A focus for experiences

The river and its edges provide a stage for events and experiences, big and small. They provide an element of surprise and interest for locals and visitors. They encourage people to reconnect with the river and nature, with our First Nations and multicultural river history and heritage, and to each other.

A recreation playground

The river is active with water based sport and recreational activities that are supported by land based amenities and infrastructure. Residents and tourists alike enjoy the activities and facilities.

A place for everyone

Public spaces are safe and accessible both day and night for people of all ages and abilities. River frontage in public ownership is thoughtfully planned to maximise opportunities for public access to the river. Everyone is able to enjoy the cooling respite the river provides.

4. CONNECTED

A connected blue green spine

The river and its edges pull together a diverse network of urban centres, rural landscapes and open spaces from one end of the Penrith LGA to the other. People are drawn to the river by the high-quality public space. Travel to and within the river corridor is easy and convenient.

A linking thread

Through engaging with the River, people are encouraged to explore further, drawn from the corridor outward and to the many other City opportunities and experiences on offer close by.

Deeper care and stewardship

The river links people, culture, ecology and Country. Through sharing stories of the river – in public art, infrastructure, events and activities – about its meaning through history and across cultures, we all deepen our connection, appreciation and sense of stewardship and care for the river.

Guiding principles

Our guiding principles ensure decisions over the short, medium and long term are made consistently and thoughtfully, supporting a unified vision where people, nature and place thrive together.

They provide a framework to consider future uses, protect what matters most, and unlock opportunities that are in harmony with the river's enduring history, cultural values and character, and the future we envisage.

While these guiding principles apply to the river corridor as a whole, their relevance will vary between river locations and therefore will be applied in ways that respectfully respond to each location's distinct characteristics and opportunities.

We will support uses and activities that contribute to:



A PLACE FOR EVERYONE

- Be reflective of First Nations history, heritage and our diverse cultures
- Offer an inclusive and safe environment for all
- Be accessible to people of all ages and abilities
- Embody local identity and pride
- Deepen understanding, appreciation and stewardship of the river



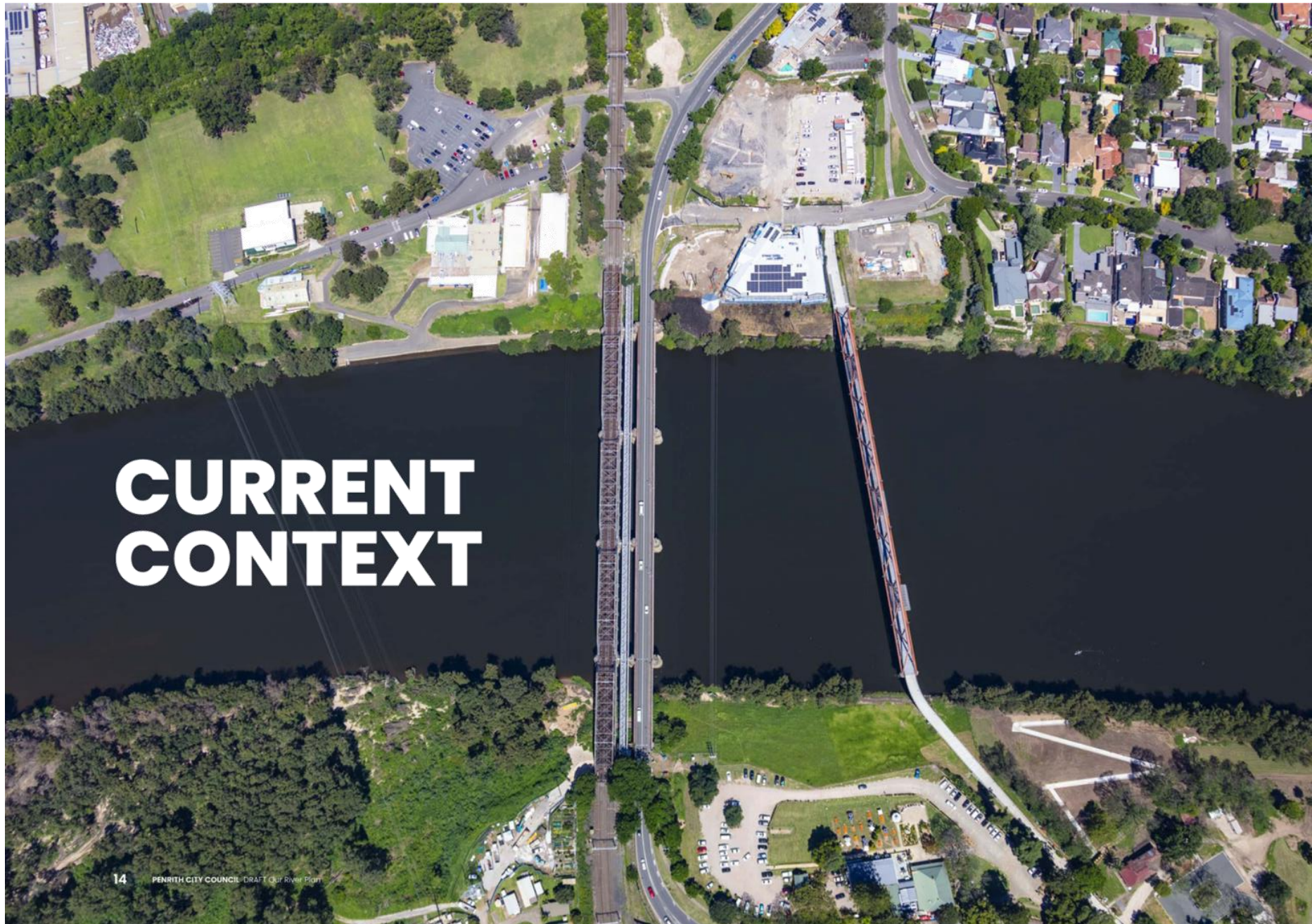
UNLOCKING OUR POTENTIAL

- Encourage new community events, activities and programs
- Encourage new economic opportunities and investment
- Support and attract business
- Bring new resources to Penrith through new partnerships and collaborations



A DIVERSITY OF DESTINATIONS

- Provide connections to nature, scenic views and spaces for quiet reflection
- Expand water play offerings with recreation, adventure and places to cool off
- Create a lively and engaging corridor with things to see and do
- Enable memorable settings for cultural celebrations, festivals and events
- Provide places to relax, play and dine
- Contribute as a regional drawcard to attract entertainment, leisure and tourism

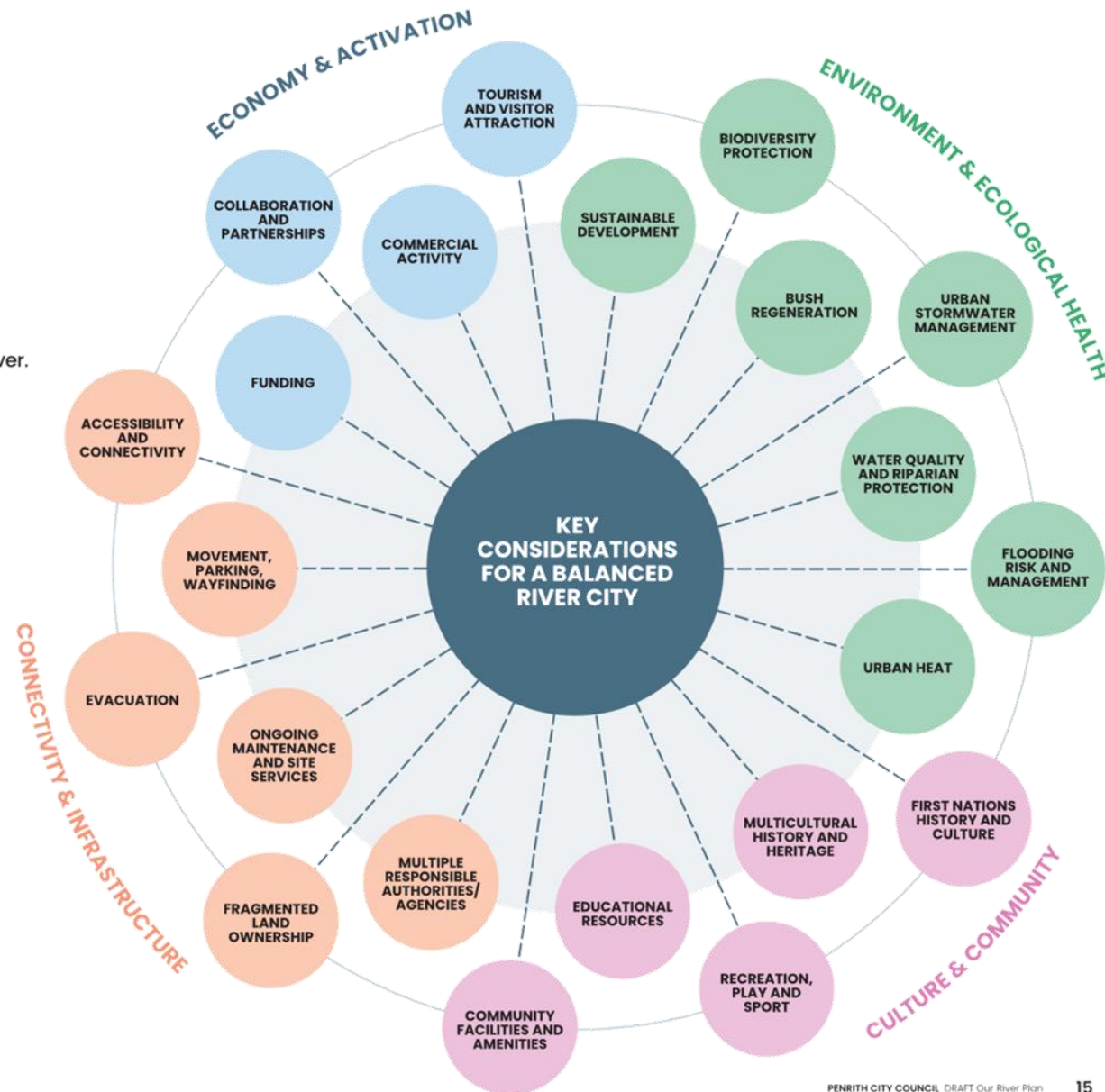


Managing a river city

Penrith lies in the Hawkesbury – Nepean Catchment and its landscape is characterised by rivers and creeks, the most significant being the Nepean River.

Our community has told us that the natural environment including our rivers and creeks is one of our biggest strengths, enjoyed by residents and visitors alike. At the same time in recent years our community has been significantly impacted by a number of flood events.

In leading a river city, Council faces the complex challenge of managing the safety and connectivity of residents as a priority, along with good outcomes for our environment and continued economic prosperity. We take this extremely seriously, with a considered risk based approach that seeks to balance all of these matters in a responsible way that protects safety while maximising opportunities



Building on our existing strategies and plans

This Our River Plan is a strategic framework providing an overarching and unifying vision to build and capitalise on the Nepean River's social and economic opportunities. This plan is only one part of Council's planning for the river corridor.

The following pages show the breadth and depth of detailed planning and resourcing that Council invests into our Nepean River to bring about good environmental, social, cultural and economic outcomes in an integrated and meaningful way.

The Our River Plan builds on these foundations to provide an overarching framework that captures and draws together the aspirations for the river for the next 20 years to come.

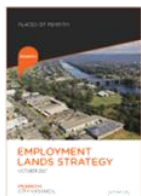
For further information on these strategies and plans and how they are being implemented please visit Council's website at penrith.city.



Biodiversity Strategy

(currently under review)

The Penrith Biodiversity Strategy recognises the Nepean River corridor as a key ecological and landscape asset, vital for habitat connectivity, biodiversity conservation, and community wellbeing. It prioritises actions to protect and enhance the corridor through riparian restoration, weed and erosion management, and sensitive planning to balance ecological integrity with recreation and development. The strategy emphasises maintaining natural river processes, preserving scenic and cultural values, and fostering community stewardship to ensure the long-term health and resilience of the river environment.



Employment Lands Strategy

The Employment Lands Strategy (2021) sets out how Council will identify, protect and grow Penrith's employment lands across industrial precincts, commercial centres and key special-purpose precincts to support local jobs for local people and strengthen Penrith's economic resilience as the city grows. It aligns with Council's Local Strategic Planning Statement and the 'Economic Triangle' vision, providing clear directions and actions to ensure there is a reliable pipeline of employment land in the right places, improved amenity and connectivity in employment areas, and readiness to leverage major opportunities linked to the Western Sydney Airport and Aerotropolis.



Flood Management

Flood management in Penrith, particularly along the Nepean River corridor is guided by the latest NSW Flood Risk Management Manual (June 2023) and the NSW Flood Prone Land Policy, and is a central focus of the City's planning and resilience initiatives. The river's natural floodplain is managed to minimise risk to people, property, and infrastructure while preserving ecological and recreational values. Strategies include mapping flood-prone areas, implementing flood mitigation infrastructure, maintaining and restoring riparian vegetation, and integrating flood risk considerations into land use and development planning. These measures aim to balance safety, environmental protection, and community access, ensuring that the river corridor remains both resilient to flooding and a valued public and ecological asset.



Economic Development Strategy and Visitor Economy Strategy

Both the Penrith Economic Development Strategy and Visitor Economy Strategy recognise the Nepean River corridor as a catalyst for local prosperity and place identity. The river precincts are positioned as a key focus for economic activation, tourism growth, and lifestyle investment – linking recreation, hospitality, culture, and events to the broader city economy. The strategies emphasise enhancing the riverfront's amenity and accessibility, supporting river-based enterprises and experiences, and strengthening its role as a premier visitor destination within Western Sydney, by aligning environmental stewardship with economic and tourism outcomes. The river corridor is framed as a defining asset for Penrith's sustainable growth and city-shaping vision.

BUILDING ON OUR EXISTING STRATEGIES AND PLANS



Resilient Penrith Action Plan

The Resilient Penrith Action Plan identifies the Nepean River corridor as a critical area for reducing vulnerability to climate-related shocks and stresses, such as flooding, heat and ecological disruption. It highlights the need for strategies to protect riverbanks, enhance natural buffers, maintain and expand green open space along the river, and integrate river corridor precincts into emergency preparedness and long-term climate adaptation. By strengthening ecosystem health, improving access to cooling landscapes, and embedding resilience thinking into land use and infrastructure decisions, the plan positions the river precinct as a core part of Penrith's capacity to adapt and thrive under environmental change.



Rural Lands Strategy

The Penrith Rural Lands Strategy recognises the Nepean River corridor as a defining rural and scenic landscape of regional importance. It identifies protection of the river's adjacent rural flats, especially in the Rural North West precinct, where high-quality agricultural land and scenic vistas along the river are among the highest-priority features. The strategy commits to maintaining the rural-urban edge, safeguarding ecological health, preserving scenic landscapes and views, and ensuring land use planning around the river respects its environmental, visual and cultural values.



Penrith Accessible Trails Hierarchy Study (PATHS)

The PATHS provides a framework to enhance walkability and connectivity across Penrith, with a strong emphasis on active transport networks along the Nepean River. It identifies priority routes, infrastructure upgrades, and design principles that support recreation, health, and environmental sustainability. By promoting continuous, high-quality trails, PATHS reinforces the river corridor as a key recreational spine, guiding shared path improvements, wayfinding, and access to riverfront destinations while connecting surrounding neighbourhoods and supporting a more connected, inclusive, and liveable city.



Green Grid Strategy

The Penrith Green Grid Strategy was finalised in 2021 and puts forward a plan to support the creation of cool and green neighbourhoods and active transport by connecting schools, public transport and town centres to green infrastructure such as green spaces, parks, waterways and bushland. The Strategy also identifies and addresses challenges which are unique to Penrith including how to increase tree canopy to reduce heat and retrofit solutions to older suburban areas, as well as those undergoing urban renewal. Funding to develop the Penrith Green Grid Strategy was provided by the NSW Government's Metropolitan Greenspace Program as a way to improve access to open space and increase liveability in Penrith.



Penrith Sport and Recreation Strategy

The Penrith Sport and Recreation Strategy identifies the Nepean River and its foreshore precincts as key locations for delivering high-quality open space, active recreation, and public amenity. It proposes river-edge facilities and parkland enhancements that both connect the community with the water and deliver health, leisure and tourism benefits. The strategy emphasises integrating passive and active uses along the river, ensuring that infrastructure upgrades, recreation fields, trails, and amenity buildings are designed to respect ecological values, ensure safe access, and enhance the river precincts as focal points for recreation, community gathering, and visitor attraction.



We Create Penrith: Cultural Strategy and Action Plan 2024-28

We Create Penrith is Council's approach to advancing cultural outcomes for people and places in Penrith LGA. It facilitates opportunities for Penrith residents to come together in ways that are creative, respectful and inclusive, giving us the means to express and celebrate our shared culture. We Create Penrith recognises the Nepean River as a cultural asset, with significant cultural and heritage values to Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people.



Projects completed or underway

1 Tench Reserve

- \$13m joint funded, reopened September 2023.
- Transformed riverside hub – new paths with lighting, boardwalk, parking, seating, picnic areas, public art, inclusive play space.

2 Regatta Park

- \$34m joint funded, opened March 2025.
- New facilities – 112m pavilion with water play, public art, amenities and kiosk, cricket oval, new play spaces, river viewing decks, kayak launches, path links and additional parking.

3 Yandhai Nepean Crossing

- \$49m NSW Government funded, opened 2018.
- New landmark pedestrian/cycle crossing anchoring the bridge-to-bridge loop.

4 Great River Walk – Nepean Avenue link

- \$3.75m joint-funded, completed 2025.
- New shared path with bollards and in-ground lighting completing the 8km bridge-to-bridge loop.

5 Great River Walk – Pedestrian Lighting (Jamison Road to Nepean Avenue)

- \$1.0m Australian Government funded, completed 2022.

6 Great River Walk – North Reopening

- \$1.1m joint-funded, completed 2026.
- Stabilising riverbank and repairing pathway and boardwalk.

7 River Road active transport (to Hunter Fields)

- \$155,000 Council funded for detailed design.
- New shared paths – Hunter Street, Cary Street and Nepean Street.

8 Factory Road active transport

- \$5m NSW Government funded.
- New shared-user path, crossings and safety improvements.

9 River Precinct interactive amenities map

- Council funded.
- New online resource for community to explore projects and facilities along the Nepean River.

10 Penrith Beach

- NSW Government funded, first opened summer 2023.
- 450,000 visitors since opening.

11 Kayak Launch Deck – River Road, Leonay

- \$0.5m joint funded.

12 Police Cottage restoration

- \$3m joint funded, opened 2023.
- Restoration delivered heritage riverfront café/dining venue.

13 Weir Reserve

- Rowing pontoon extension – \$270,000 Australian Government funded, opened 2018.
- Weir Reserve pedestrian bridge and path restoration works – \$0.75m joint funded.

14 Peach Tree & Lower Surveyors Creeks – floodplain management

- Council funded, flood study completed 2019.
- Floodplain Risk Management Study & Plan adopted June 2025 to guide future works.

15 Draft Emu Plains Floodplain Management Study and Plan

- Draft released in 2026 to guide future works.



Listening and responding to our community

Through Council's engagement with community and stakeholders between 2023 - 2025 about the Our River Master Plan and the Community Strategic Plan 2041, we have heard how valued and important the Nepean River is, and where some of the pressure points are.

We have heard that:

- **Access and active travel matter.** People want continuous, safe walking and cycling links to and around the river corridor and easier, low-impact ways to get onto the water.
- **Nature is treasured.** Residents speak with pride about the river's vegetation, birdlife and views, and ask for more shade and tree canopy.
- **Everyday amenity counts.** Simple things - picnic tables, toilets, seating - are seen as essential for families and inclusive use of both river banks.
- **Community, culture and custodianship are front-of-mind.** Community members expect First Nations voices to shape decisions and stories told along the Nepean River and want to showcase and embed more art into the landscape. Having more events space and programming that encourages gathering and community activities is valued.
- **Cafes and restaurants are important.**
- **Availability of parking and traffic congestion is an issue.** Issues at peak times limit user experience and impact safety, connectivity and comfortable usage.
- **Pet friendly facilities would add to the experience.**

We have drawn upon over 2,500 points of feedback directly about the river and over 1,600 points of additional feedback about what is important for Penrith's future.



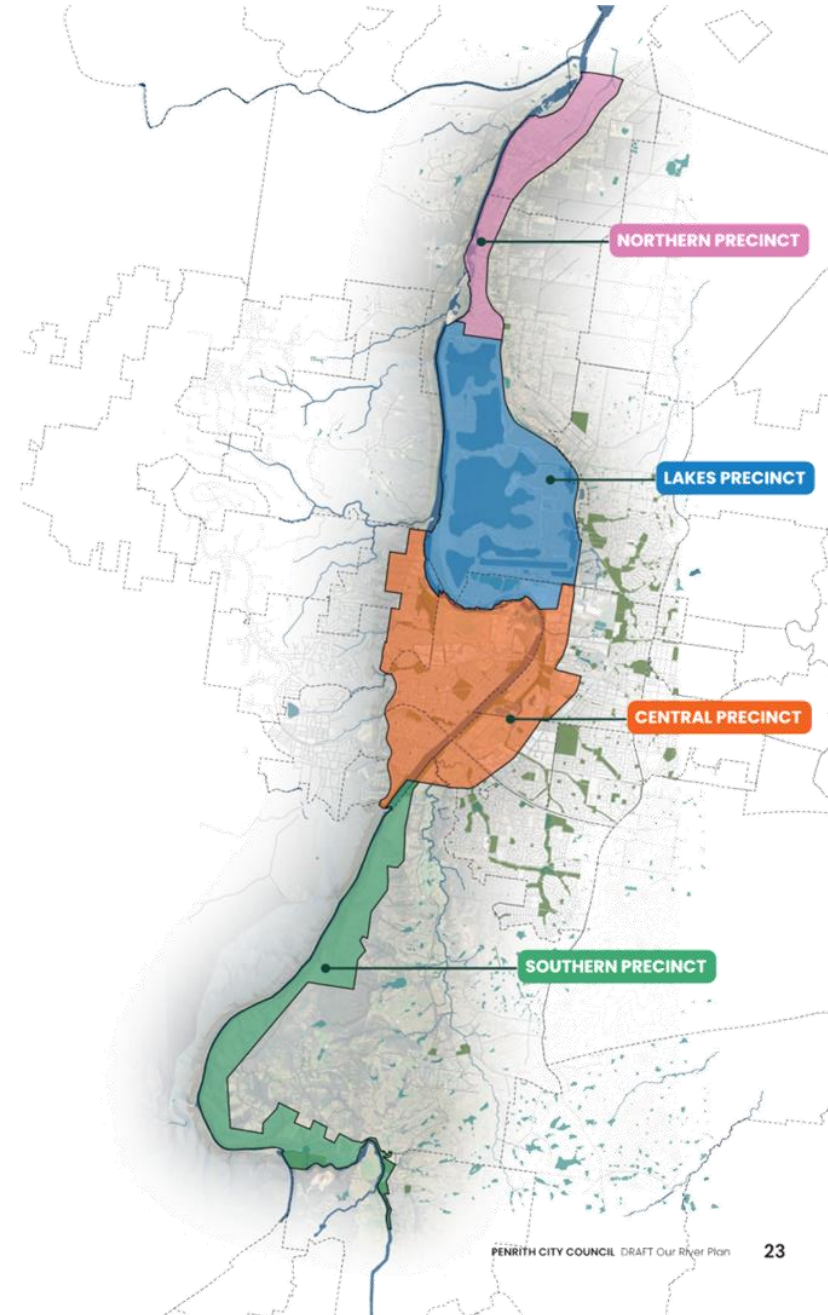
In planning the next 20 years of the Nepean River corridor we are guided by our communities' needs and preferences and what is important to them.





River precincts

The 2026 Our River Plan applies to the Nepean River along its entire length within the Penrith LGA. For planning purposes, the river corridor is divided into 4 precincts. The following pages outline the planning context, character and objectives for each precinct, along with place-specific opportunities to guide future collaborations, partnerships, development and investment.



Northern Precinct

“AN ENDURING RURAL LANDSCAPE, RICH IN STORIES”



Experience enduring rural landscapes and historic stories that shape Penrith’s northern approach, where the Nepean River connects past, place and community.

The Northern Precinct is a predominantly rural landscape marking the northern approach to Penrith City from the Hawkesbury. Characterised by large open paddocks, rural residences, agricultural and equestrian uses, with views to the Blue Mountains, it offers a peaceful setting in contrast to urban areas further south.

The precinct holds deep First Nations cultural and spiritual significance. The precinct is also layered with a rich colonial history, most notably Castlereagh’s foundation in 1810 by Governor Lachlan Macquarie as one of the original 5 Macquarie towns. The historic Castlereagh Hall (and former council chambers) and commemorative obelisk mark this legacy.

A long-standing agricultural presence and surviving heritage assets, such as farmhouses and outbuildings along with surrounding churches and cemeteries, reinforce the area’s identity. Together, these cultural, rural, and historical elements define the precinct’s character and its important role within Penrith’s story and the wider river corridor.



24 PENRITH CITY COUNCIL DRAFT Our River Plan

PLANNING CONTEXT

The Northern Precinct is predominately zoned for primary production, environmental conservation and some public recreation uses to encourage low-impact development that protects the rural and environmental character of the precinct. Land uses that align with rural productivity and tourism, rural lifestyle, and environmental conservation are supported. Permissible uses also enable initiatives like heritage interpretation, walking trails, and community events while maintaining the area’s natural and cultural values. Existing zones and permissible land uses will continue to apply.

Although flood planning and riparian controls impose constraints on development near the river, there are potential opportunities for interpretive signage, flood awareness and education, habitat restoration and low-impact recreational uses.

The environmental conservation zone along most of the riverfront aligns with the Our River Plan’s principles for a well-managed and cared-for river system with opportunities for passive public access that connect people to nature and Country. There is potential to work with landowners on coordinated stewardship and land management initiatives that contribute to the ecological health of the river corridor, noting the fragmented landownership across the precinct.

CHARACTER STATEMENT

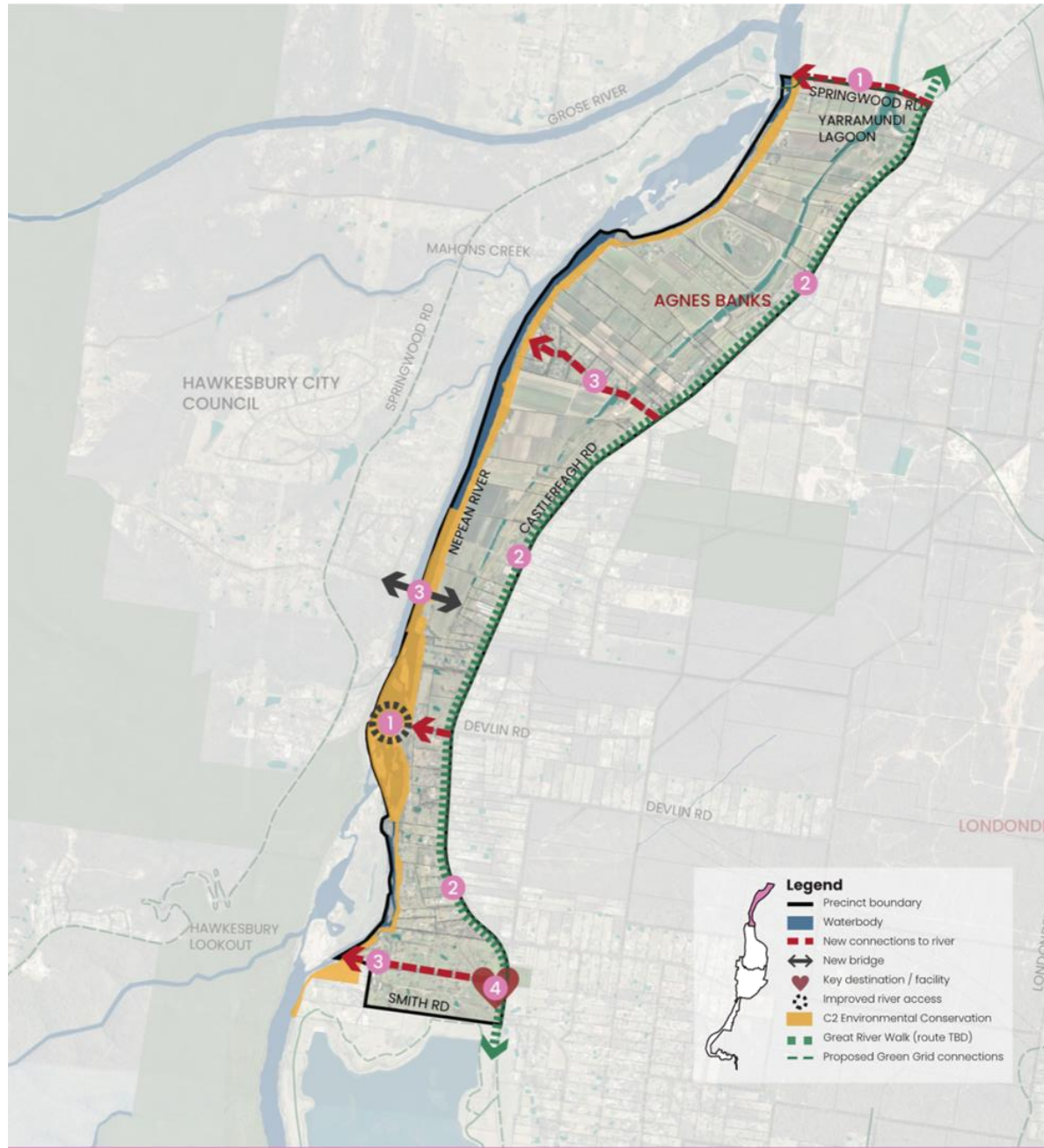
The Northern Precinct will be a distinctive rural gateway to Penrith City, where productive agricultural lands along the Nepean River are protected, Blue Mountains views frame the landscape, and cultural and heritage values are celebrated. The precinct’s identity will be defined by its rural character and the enduring presence of the river, remaining a place of quiet strength where working landscapes, cultural narratives, and natural systems shape the broader LGA.

Alongside the enduring presence of the river, the precinct will connect community, heritage and nature, supporting passive recreation, respectful tourism and stronger connections between people and Country. The river will be a valued public asset, with on-water activities such as boating, kayaking, and fishing encouraged where they support environmental values and reinforce the precinct’s character as a tranquil and culturally significant gateway to the City.



PRECINCT OBJECTIVES

- Celebrate the river’s cultural legacy by recognising and sharing the precinct’s rich First Nations and European heritage, cultural values and stories.
- Strengthen regional connections by improving public and active travel links between local and regional river experiences and destinations.
- Enhance access and wayfinding to the river through improved visibility, arrival points and leveraging future infrastructure projects to improve connectivity.
- Encourage low-impact use and enjoyment through passive recreation and gentle interaction with the river landscape.
- Protect and restore the river landscape by supporting conservation and restoration initiatives that enhance ecological values.
- Maintain the rural character and identity of the precinct by preserving views and vistas, sustaining productive agricultural and rural uses, and supporting low-impact development that respects the landscape setting.



NORTHERN PRECINCT OPPORTUNITIES

- 1 Explore options and funding opportunities to improve public access points at Devlin Road Reserve and Springwood Road, including wayfinding, signage, and appropriate infrastructure to encourage low-impact exploration and use of the river including water access for non-powered activities.
- 2 Explore options and funding opportunities to extend the Great River Walk through the Northern Precinct, building on the momentum of existing sections in Penrith, Richmond and Windsor, to create a continuous walking and cycling corridor along the Hawkesbury-Nepean River.
- 3 Explore options and funding opportunities for new public access points and connections to the river from Koorungal Drive/Coolamon Road, Castlereagh Hall/Smith Road and as a part of any progress made towards a future Castlereagh Connection.
- 4 Promote Castlereagh Hall as a distinctive venue connected to the river landscape, suitable for low-impact community events and social functions.

PRECINCT WIDE (UNMAPPED)

- 5 Explore opportunities to promote and encourage small-scale rural and agri-tourism across the precinct that highlights the rural river landscape, offers cultural and historical experiences, and preserves environmental and cultural values.
- 6 Encourage opportunities across the precinct to publicly share the cultural values and stories of the precinct in future projects and through public art.

Lakes Precinct

“OUR AQUATIC PLAYGROUND”



Transforming the former quarry into diverse parklands with open spaces and waterway facilities for the wellbeing and enjoyment of the people of Western Sydney and visitors alike.

Western Sydney Lakes is a 20km² site, presenting an enormous tourism, recreation, economic and social opportunity. The precinct is currently characterised by grassed areas, interspersed by stands of trees and large lakes, against a stunning backdrop of the Blue Mountains. While the lakes are a manmade system of waterways, this precinct is rightly considered by the community as being an important ‘natural asset’ by virtue of the environmental features and biodiversity values it provides.

The Lakes Precinct has been largely locked away from public use and access for decades. Up until 2015, Western Sydney Lakes was a major quarrying site, producing gravel and sand. In the 1980s, the Penrith Lakes Development Corporation (now known as Western Sydney Lakes) partnered with the NSW Government to rehabilitate the quarry into a vast parkland and lake system, termed the Penrith Lakes Scheme. The work included stabilising landforms, removing contaminants, re-establishing natural habitats and designing flood mitigation systems.

The Sydney International Regatta Centre and Penrith Whitewater Stadium were built for the 2000 Olympics, now recognised internationally as a venue for rowing, kayaking, rafting and regattas. Penrith Beach opened to the public for the 2023 summer season and has since attracted around 450,000 visitors. The Nepean Business Park, under construction, is a 47-hectare business park development with a tree-lined central spine and connection to the Great River Walk.

PLANNING CONTEXT

Western Sydney Lakes is governed by State Environmental Planning Policy (Precincts – Western Parkland City) 2021 (the SEPP) and comes under the planning authority of the NSW Government. In 2023, the SEPP was amended to allow for new uses including a heliport, golf driving range and golf course, water-based recreation, as well as cafés, restaurants and office spaces. The amendment also provides for the protection of key view corridors and stronger flood evacuation provisions.

The Land Zoning Map under the SEPP provides a ‘Parkland’ zone around the immediate area of the Regatta Centre waterway, and 2 smaller ‘Tourism’ zones in the vicinity of these parklands. The Nepean Business Park has an ‘Employment’ zone. An ‘Environment’ zone covers selected areas of the lakes site, but the vast majority of the lakes site is unzoned. Four areas to the east of Castlereagh Road are zoned ‘Residential’, although these are outside the Lakes Precinct boundary adopted in this plan.

The Penrith Lakes Development Control Plan Stage 1 provides the development framework and design guidelines for tourism and employment zoned land. It includes guidance on landscaping, views, traffic movement, stormwater management, water quality, flooding and built form. Council is calling on the NSW Government to undertake a comprehensive vision and master planning process for the lakes site to unlock its economic potential.

CHARACTER STATEMENT

The Penrith Lakes Precinct will be a vibrant and inclusive regional destination, showcasing the unique natural qualities of the river-lakes system. The lakes will provide a cooling heart for the City and spaces for play, leisure, sport, and connection to nature, where people of all ages can swim, paddle, kayak, sail, and relax in ways that are safe, environmentally responsible and complementary to the landscape. The lakes site will also provide economic opportunities in the form of cafes, restaurants, entertainment and leisure based businesses.

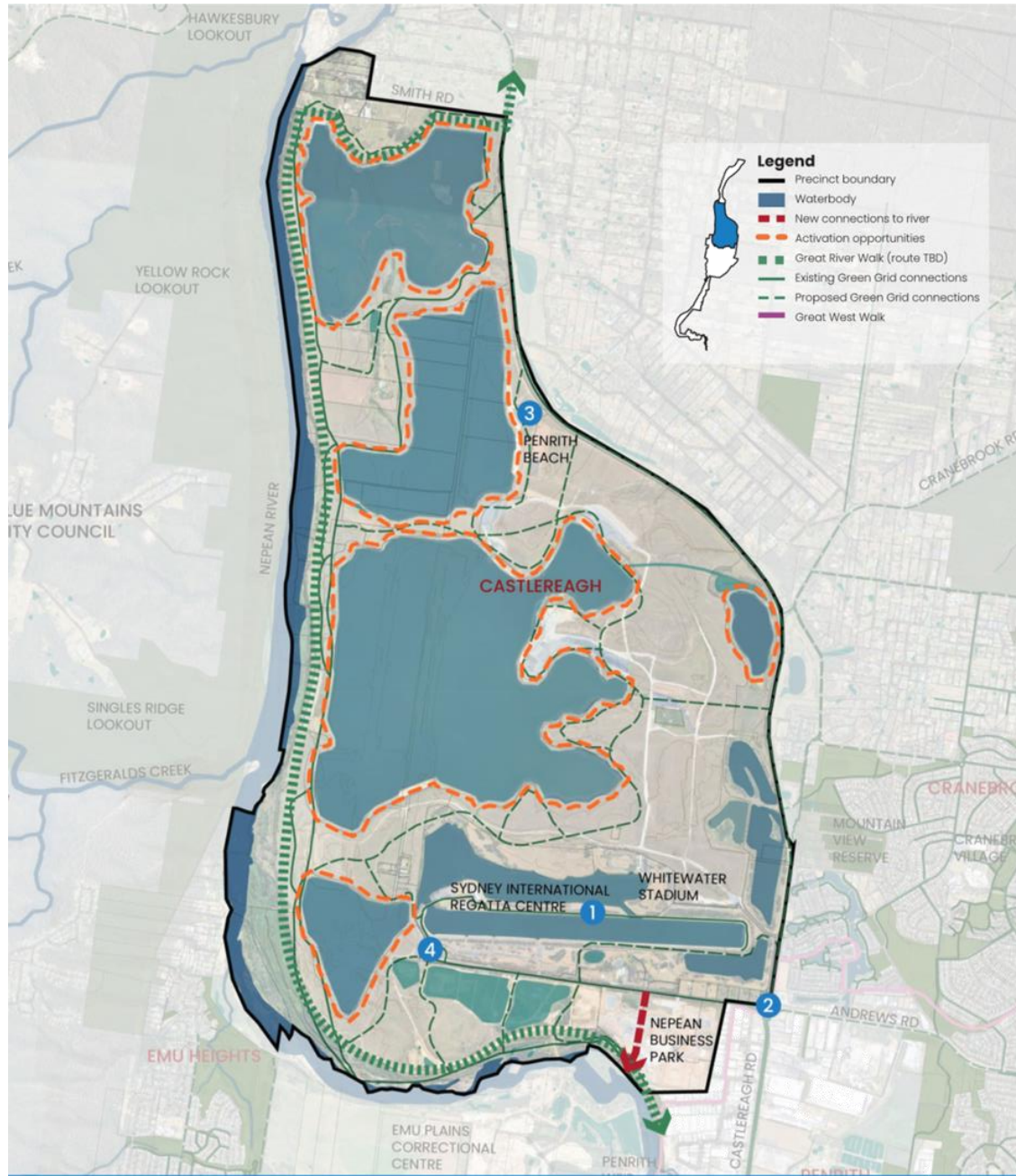
Connected by the Great River Walk and surrounding open spaces, the lakes will offer accessible blue-green experiences that draw residents and visitors into the precinct. With careful stewardship, Penrith Lakes will become a regional icon and lasting legacy, supporting recreation, environmental health, economic opportunities and a strong sense of community identity.



Source: Western Sydney Lakes

PRECINCT OBJECTIVES

- Strengthen walking and cycling connections between the lakes, river and Penrith City Centre.
- Frame and protect key views across the lakes site, toward the river and mountains.
- Prioritise uses and activities that are accessible to the whole community.
- Ensure commercial uses and activities contribute substantially to local jobs or tourist generation.
- Explore opportunities for year-round events and programming that utilise the River and lakes to support culture discovery and education opportunities.
- Harness the cooling potential of the lakes by increasing tree canopy cover and expanding the range of aquatic activities available.
- Support the permanent summer opening of Penrith Beach.
- Support activation of Penrith Lakes as a premier regional recreation and tourism hub, underpinned by NSW Government funding for a comprehensive master plan to guide development potential.
- Embrace the international significance of the Sydney International Regatta Centre and Penrith Whitewater Stadium as venues for global events and community celebration.



LAKES PRECINCT OPPORTUNITIES

- 1 As opportunities arise, encourage further investment in the existing world-class Olympic facilities and open spaces to capitalise on these venues, attract other recreational users and return facilities back to public use.
- 2 Explore options and funding opportunities to create pedestrian and cycle links from the Penrith City Centre to the lakes, so that people may access the Lakes Precinct without relying heavily on private vehicles.
- 3 Advocate to the NSW Government to extend the use of Penrith Beach, making it a permanent fixture of the Lakes Precinct – allowing the community to benefit from this unique swimming venue, providing a place for exercise and family fun, but particularly, delivering relief on hot days which are becoming more prevalent in Western Sydney.
- 4 As opportunities arise, encourage the NSW Government to continue plans to deliver a permanent home for the Penrith Lakes Environmental Education Centre which has existed for over 25 years, wherein trained teachers offer excursion programs for visiting school groups, linked to NSW syllabuses.

PRECINCT WIDE (UNMAPPED)

- 5 Advocate to the NSW Government to undertake a comprehensive vision and master planning process for Western Sydney Lakes to guide future development, and that Penrith City Council have a seat at the table to advocate for greater access for the community.
- 6 As part of the NSW Government's master planning for the entire lakes site, encourage recreational and cultural activities that support the health and wellbeing of residents and visitors, namely by creating diverse open space parklands and waterway facilities around the lakes and along the Nepean River.
- 7 As part of the NSW Government's master planning for the entire lakes site, encourage uses and activities to transform the lakes into a significant regional tourism hub with economic opportunities and a point of difference within Western Sydney.

Central Precinct

“THE HEART OF OUR RIVER CITY”



A point of interest around every corner, this precinct offers the widest range of opportunities to enjoy dining, entertainment, community events, water-based activities, culture and recreation.

Aside from the river itself, this precinct's landmark feature is the striking Yandhai Nepean Crossing. The bridge and its surrounds offer panoramic vistas of the Nepean River and the Blue Mountains. Popular recreation destinations in this precinct include Regatta Park and Tench Reserve, with recent upgrades including children's play equipment, sporting fields, kayak launches, and lots of places to enjoy sitting, walking or cycling beside the river.

The Central Precinct is the premier destination for dining and entertainment. Popular offerings include Penrith Paceway and Showground, The East Bank, The Log Cabin, The Orchard and O'Donoghue's Pub, to name just a few. The Panthers site with its club premises, stadium, accommodation, and new conference centre, is a major tourism and commercial entertainment draw of the precinct. The Panthers site is establishing itself as a multi-faceted entertainment, living and leisure destination.

The Central Precinct is where entertainment and culture meet. Popular attractions include the Penrith Regional Gallery, Nepean Belle Paddlewheeler and the Arms of Australia Inn Museum – each providing an opportunity to engage with the local stories, culture and history of Penrith. The precinct is also a major destination for adventure sports and family fun – including Cables Wake Park, iFly indoor skydiving and Aqua Golf – with the Winter Sports World slated to add to the already wide offering of the Central Precinct.

PLANNING CONTEXT

The Central Precinct allows the widest range of land uses of all the river precincts. The precinct includes local centres at Emu Plains and Leonay, residential zones of predominately low and medium density housing, employment 'productivity support' zones like that covering the Penrith Homemaker Centre and industrial areas. But there is also small-lot rural land, areas of recreation and environmental conservation, a 'waterways' zone, and a number of Special Use zones that cover such uses as the Panthers site, East Bank, seniors living establishments, the correctional centre, cemetery and railway line. Flooding is an important consideration for the precinct, requiring a thoughtful balance between vibrant uses and development that attract people, while strengthening the precinct's resilience and responsiveness to flood risks.



CHARACTER STATEMENT

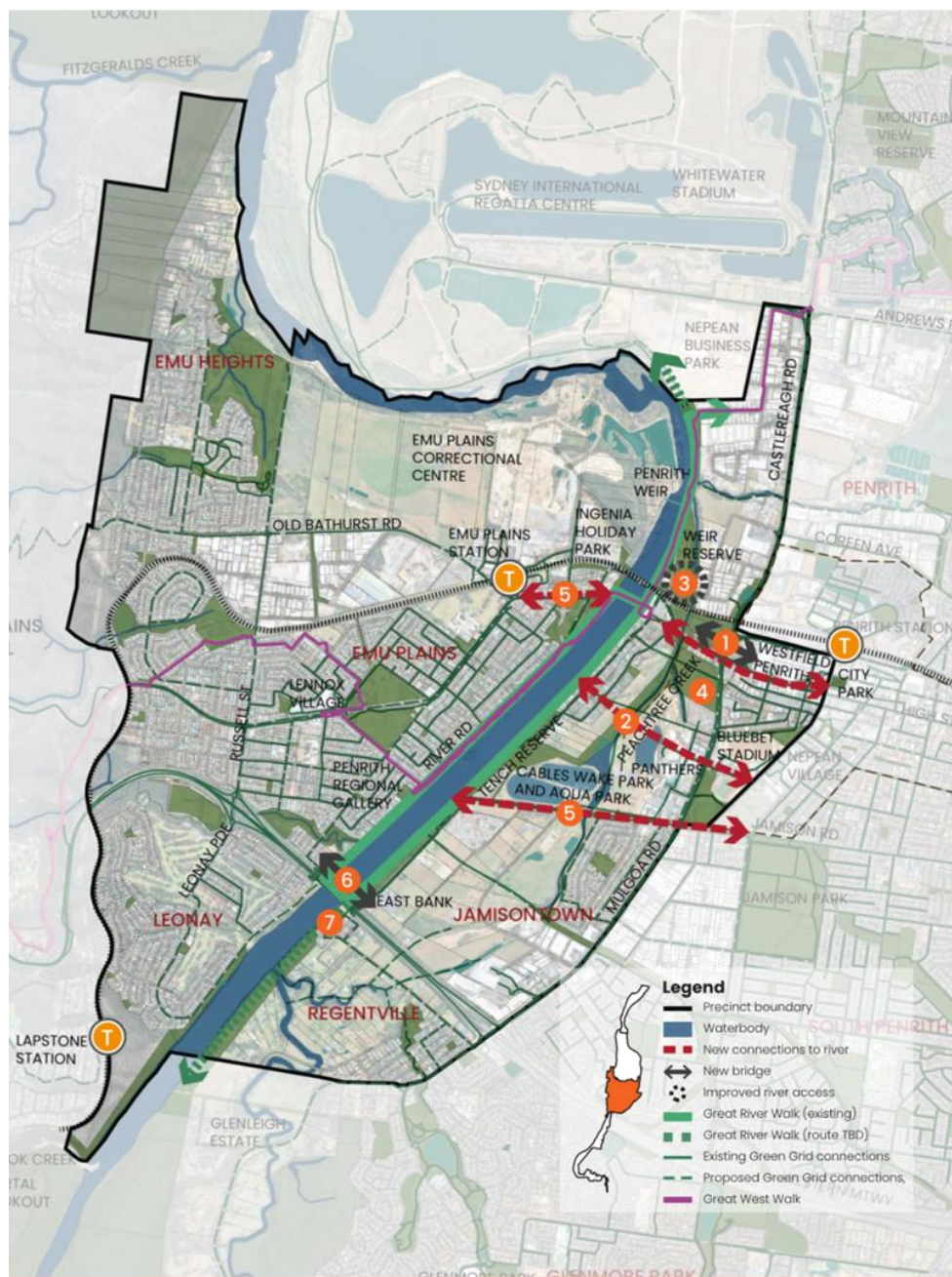
The Central Precinct will be a vibrant place to live, work and visit, anchored by a network of activity nodes that support leisure, tourism and community life. It will share a synergistic relationship with Penrith City Centre, together forming a connected urban environment that is central to Penrith's future liveability and prosperity.

The public domain will be green, open and tree-lined, framing key vistas to the Blue Mountains, Peach Tree Creek and the Nepean River. A connected network of open spaces and waterways will support active and passive recreation, safeguard natural habitats and showcase water-sensitive urban design.

The Weir Reserve Rowing and Paddlesports Precinct is highly regarded for its long, straight stretch of river. Permissible on-water activities, such as boating, kayaking and fishing, will be encouraged where they complement environmental values and enhance the precinct's identity as a distinctive riverside locations that celebrates both its natural and cultural heritage.

PRECINCT OBJECTIVES

- Create strong synergies with the Penrith City Centre, especially reinforcing pedestrian and cycle connections to the retail and business centre of Penrith, to City Park and links to public transport.
- Create a highly desirable visitor destination by supporting exciting entertainment, leisure and lifestyle offerings.
- Support our local cultural, recreational and tourism industries.
- Leverage the popularity of the Great River Walk which is a major attractor of local, regular and repeat visitors.
- Improve accessibility and connectivity across the precinct, including developing future connections to the Western Sydney Lakes.
- Grow the number of footpaths, activities and 'destinations' on offer within the precinct.
- Improve connections from Emu Plains Station to the Nepean River by enhancing pedestrian and cycling links both northwards and eastwards, strengthening access to key recreation, tourism and community destinations.
- Recognise and enhance the Weir Reserve Rowing and Paddlesports Precinct as a centre of national and international significance, supporting elite, community and school rowing and paddlesports.
- Improve access to the river's edge and Weir Reserve pontoon for all users, ensuring safe, equitable and visible connections between the Paddlesports Precinct, Great River Walk and broader open space network.



CENTRAL PRECINCT OPPORTUNITIES

- 1 Advocate to the NSW Government for the provision of an active transport bridge to enhance pedestrian and cycle connections from the Penrith City Centre across Mulgoa Road and improve access to the Great River Walk and the Yandhai Nepean Crossing.
- 2 Explore options and funding opportunities to create environment-friendly pathways through Peach Tree Creek, creating an open space and hydrological corridor from Great Western Highway to Jamison Road, with east-west links that connect Penrith City Centre to the creek and river, as envisaged in the Green Grid Strategy.
- 3 Explore options and funding opportunities to upgrade Weir Reserve to improve pedestrian, cycling and vehicle access, open space, water sports and recreation facilities, along with river foreshore access.
- 4 Explore options and funding opportunities for future use of the Carpenters Site on Mulgoa Road.
- 5 Explore options and funding opportunities to embellish pedestrian and cycling connections running east-west to the river corridor, including from Emu Plains station and along Jamison Road.
- 6 Advocate to the NSW Government to upgrade pedestrian access ramps to M4 bridge at Emu Plains and to deliver a new pedestrian and cycling footbridge river crossing at the M4.
- 7 Explore options and funding opportunities to upgrade and embellish open space at Factory Road Reserve for greater recreation uses.

PRECINCT WIDE (UNMAPPED)

- 8 Incorporate opportunities for cooling and respite from the heat into new and upgraded spaces and facilities wherever possible, as the Central Precinct experiences the greatest vulnerability to heat.
- 9 Explore options to collaborate with landowners along the river's edge to activate vacant sites.
- 10 As the gateway to the Blue Mountains, provide opportunities to capture tourists on their way to and from major destinations in the mountains.
- 11 Continue advocating and engaging with NSW Government agencies for ongoing monitoring and management of the waterway, to ensure the balanced and equitable use of powered and non-powered watercraft and public and commercial operations.

Southern Precinct

“PLACE TO PAUSE, DISCOVER AND CONNECT”



Set against the backdrop of the Blue Mountains and shaped by the Nepean River and surrounding wooded hills, the Southern Precinct combines natural assets with valued cultural heritage to create a tranquil setting for residents and visitors.

The precinct transitions from the urban fringe to a largely forested landscape, moving south. The Nepean River defines the western edge, forming a densely vegetated gorge as part of the Blue Mountains National Park. Elevated vantage points, including The Rock Lookout off Fairlight Road, offer spectacular views. With limited formal public access and facilities, this stretch of the river corridor presents as a quiet, secluded environment. Recreational activities include Nepean Belle cruising, boating, kayaking, fishing and bushwalking.

The eastern extent of the precinct is generally defined by ridgelines and dense vegetation on steeper slopes, which form a distinctive visual backdrop within the Mulgoa Valley. Elevated points within the precinct provide views across pastoral landscapes.

Immediately adjoining the precinct boundary, the exceptional historic Fernhill Estate has potential as a major drawcard and community venue with its scenic vistas, native bushland and grand Fernhill House. Owned and managed by the NSW Government, Fernhill has the potential as a multifunctional space that balances conservation with public enjoyment, operating as a complementary destination that strengthens visitation, events, recreation and heritage tourism outcomes.

Around Wallacia, the precinct retains a sense of tranquillity and offers a visual connection to the river from Wallacia Bridge and nearby reserves.

PLANNING CONTEXT

The eastern banks of the Nepean River are zoned for national park to protect the environmental significance of that land and denote its management under the National Parks and Wildlife Act.

Areas adjacent to the national park, which are generally well-vegetated steep slopes, are zoned for environmental conservation purposes. This zone aims to prevent development from impacting on the environmental values of the national park and river. It allows a very narrow range of uses, such as recreation areas, environmental facilities, and environmental protection or flood mitigation works.

Just beyond the precinct boundary is Fernhill Estate, which is zoned for both environmental conservation and management purposes. The estate is guided by a Foundation Plan of Management, Landscape Master Plan, draft Conservation Management Plan and environmental program to manage and support its transformation into an activated public park and destination.

Two locations at the southern end of the precinct are zoned for public recreation where people can directly access the river – Bialand Crossing Reserve and Fowler Reserve at Wallacia, which are managed by NSW Crown Lands, and Warragamba Park, Nortons Basin.

CHARACTER STATEMENT

The Southern Precinct will be recognised as a distinctive landscape of natural and cultural significance, where scenic beauty, heritage and the natural environment are respected and enjoyed together.

Walking trails will link river lookouts, recreation spaces and cultural heritage sites, offering authentic, nature-based experiences.

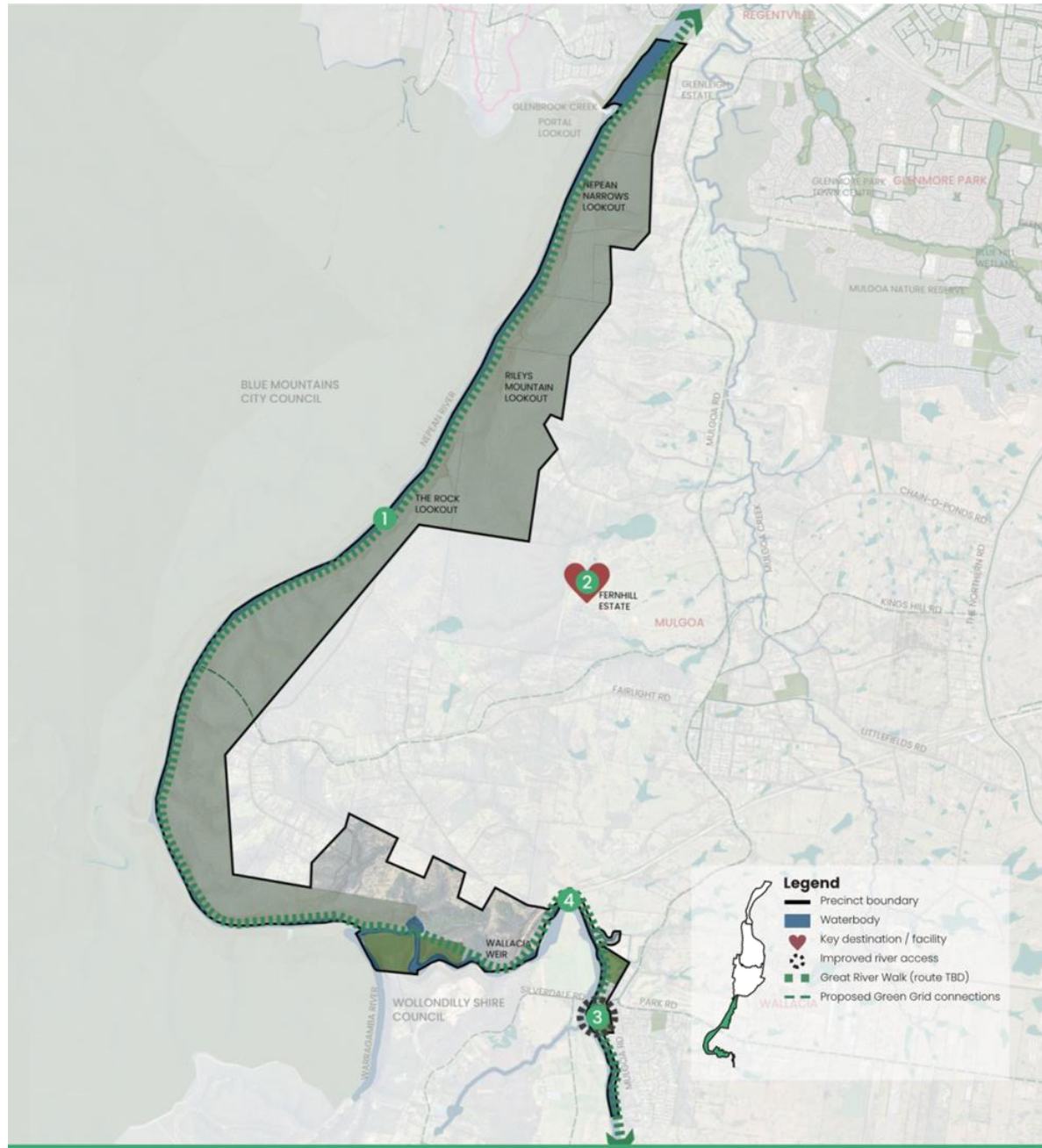
Fernhill Estate will evolve into a vibrant adjoining destination for cultural events, recreation and community gatherings, creating strong synergies with the precinct and providing opportunities for locals and visitors to connect with the precinct's heritage and natural landscapes.

The river will be recognised as a valued public asset. On-water activities such as boating, kayaking and fishing will be encouraged where they are compatible with environmental values, supporting a peaceful, landscape-rich counterpoint to Penrith's urban areas and a complementary experience within the broader Nepean River corridor.

PRECINCT OBJECTIVES

- Celebrate the Nepean River corridor as a defining natural and cultural landscape through expanded access, views and interpretation.
- Strengthen the Southern Precinct as a gateway and distinct regional destination that blends heritage and nature-based tourism, capturing airport stopovers and regional visitors seeking nature immersion close to Sydney.
- Leverage the proximity of Fernhill Estate as a major complementary destination and strengthen physical and visual connectivity between Fernhill Estate, the river and the broader trail network.
- Support low-impact tourism and nature-based experiences that align with the precinct's landscape values.
- Protect and restore, where necessary, the ecological integrity of the river corridor while enabling passive recreation and discovery.





SOUTHERN PRECINCT OPPORTUNITIES

- 1 Explore options and funding opportunities to extend the Great River Walk southward through the precinct, incorporating new bushwalking trails to high points and lookouts with expansive views of the Nepean River.
- 2 Advocate to the NSW Government to activate Fernhill Estate as a cultural and heritage destination with strong links to the river and event programming that celebrates place and story.
- 3 Explore options and funding opportunities to improve public access and facilities at Wallacia to encourage low-impact recreational use and enjoyment of the river.
- 4 Continue efforts to enhance riparian zones not within the national park with revegetation and interpretation to protect biodiversity and showcase the natural character of the corridor.

Implementation approach

Successful implementation of the Our River Plan relies on Council working together with governments, developers, businesses, landowners and the community over the next 20 years. In the immediate future, Council will seize opportunities to implement the plan, remaining open to new ideas from partners, stakeholders and the community that help realise the potential we envisage.

COUNCIL'S ROLE AND KEY ACTIONS

Council has a central role in planning and driving the long-term vision for the river corridor, coordinating project delivery and advocating for the investment needed to make it happen.

While Council is a key stakeholder, it cannot achieve this vision alone. This plan sets out new, and at this stage unfunded aspirations, that will require additional funding sources.

Council has prepared the Our River Plan as a framework to facilitate progress and encourage investment. Council will focus on building and maintaining strong partnerships and securing sustainable funding to deliver the best environmental, social, cultural and economic outcomes along the river corridor.

At the same time, Council will continue to build on existing work and maintain momentum using the existing resources we have available. We are committed to continued success along the river corridor and will prioritise additional actions as more resourcing and opportunities become available, including those outlined further here.

Fostering strategic partnerships and vision alignment

Council will continue to work closely with key delivery partners to target specific outcomes for each precinct and agree clear pathways for delivery. Many of the critical connections to the Nepean River are influenced by other stakeholders. There are opportunities to build on existing partnerships and form new relationships that support shared planning, coordinated delivery and aligned investment. Council will use the Our River Plan to clearly communicate the vision, encourage collaboration and support joint efforts that realise the full potential of the river corridor.

Preparing a river marketing plan

Locally, the Nepean River is well known and well loved. A focused river marketing plan will help build broader awareness of this valued natural asset and support visitation. Being 15km from Western Sydney International (Nancy-Bird Walton) Airport, there is a growing market of new visitors, both national and international, who can be welcomed to experience the river corridor and surrounds. Clear and consistent river communications will help promote the City as a place for culture, recreation, leisure and nature experiences, and contribute to the ongoing economic prosperity of the Penrith community.

Advocating for support and investment

The combined resources of many partners will be fundamental to delivering the plan. Council will be proactive in advocating to the Australian and NSW Governments and other partners for support and investment in projects that give effect to the Our River Plan and deliver on-the-ground change. Council will also explore the best mix of funding approaches including government programs, partnerships and other investment opportunities to support delivery over time. Given the scale of change and transformation already occurring in Western Sydney, Council will remain open to new and emerging opportunities that align with and help deliver the vision for the river.

Reviewing and preparing river corridor planning requirements

To support the long term vision for the Nepean River, further place based planning and strategic work will be undertaken over time. The character and objectives for each river precinct outlined in this plan will help inform future planning processes, including place based plans, reviews of Council's strategic planning framework and updates to relevant planning controls where appropriate.

Preparing a movement and wayfinding plan

We want our community to be able to get to, from and around the river corridor easily and efficiently. We also want visitors to confidently navigate and find their way. Council will prepare a movement and wayfinding plan that supports the easy and efficient movement of people and vehicles in and around the river corridor. Important considerations in this work will be wayfinding, traffic and parking, pedestrian and cycling movements, along with opportunities for improved public transport which will be key to achieving good outcomes for people and place as our community grows and opportunities expand.

Supporting day-to-day experience and progressing existing strategies and plans

Day-to-day management of the river corridor remains critical to the community's experience. Council will continue our servicing, maintenance and monitoring of the corridor to support safety, ease of use and high-quality spaces and experiences. Council will also continue to implement specific social, cultural, environmental, economic and flood management strategies and plans we have under way that together protect, revitalise, activate and connect people with the river corridor and move us towards the long-term Our River Plan vision.



Priority projects

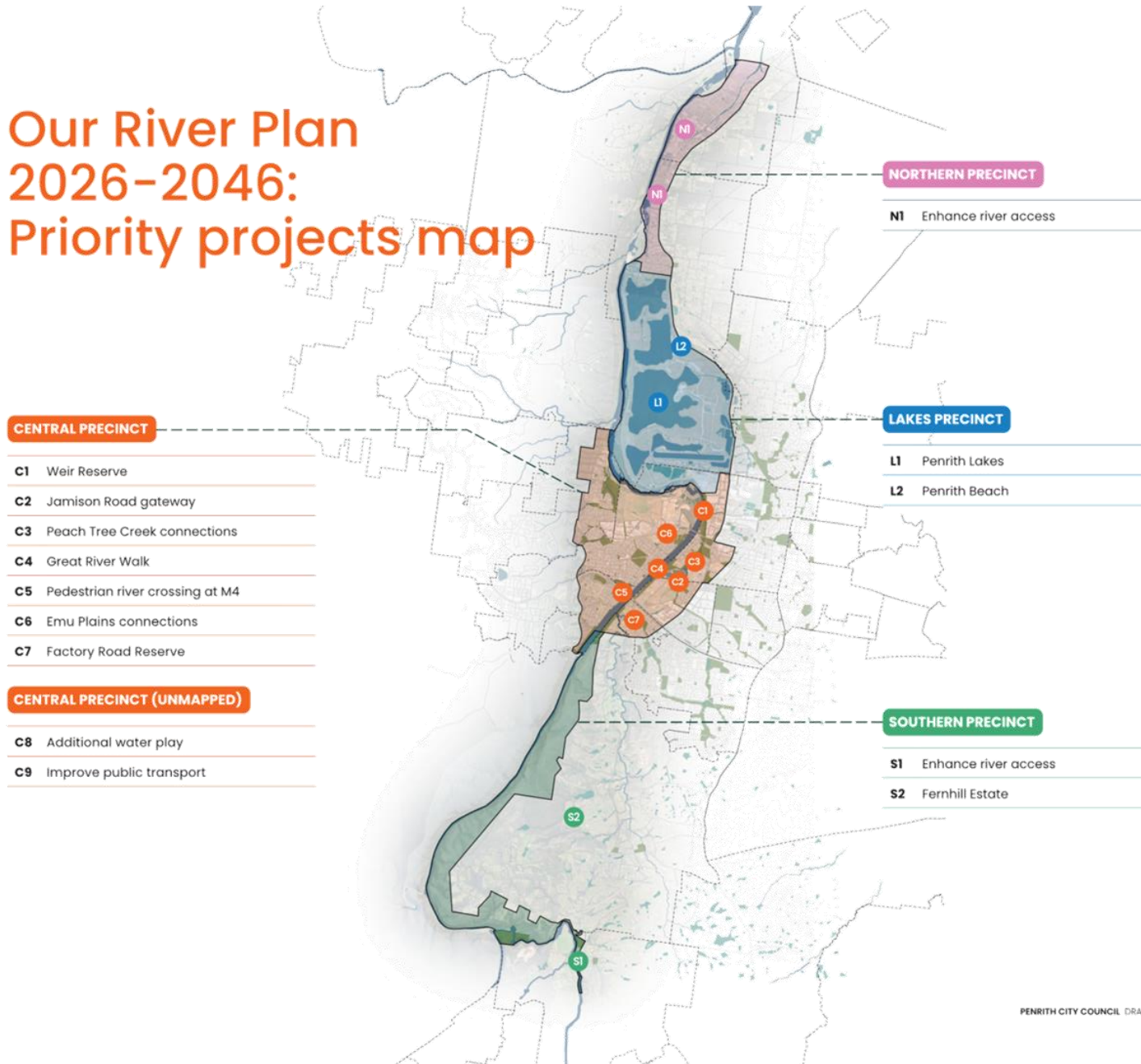
There are a number of opportunities that are important for unlocking future connectivity to and around the river and providing more experiences.

The priority projects listed here will require collaboration with landowners and stakeholders and funding sources, including in some instances funding for further project scoping, testing and optioneering, design and concept development. We consider these projects to be of value to our community, aligned to their needs and preferences, and achievable over time with the focused determination of many.

In some instances, the projects are not within the remit of Council to act on and deliver. In these cases we will continue to raise our local communities' needs and preferences through our advocacy efforts and work with and through others to realise the best outcomes for the people of Penrith and the vision we have in the Our River Plan.

NORTHERN PRECINCT		
N1	Enhance river access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore options and funding opportunities to improve public access points and connections to the river at Agnes Banks from Koorringal Drive and Coolamon Road
LAKES PRECINCT		
L1	Penrith Lakes	Advocate to the NSW Government to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliver a comprehensive vision and master plan for Penrith Lakes Expand public access to Penrith Lakes for nature-based recreation, including nature trail walking and cycling, where the level of infrastructure required to support such activities would be minimal
L2	Penrith Beach	Advocate to the NSW Government for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Permanent opening of Penrith Beach for swimming and recreation, and new infrastructure to improve experience and amenity A shuttle bus service operating Friday to Sunday during December and January connecting Penrith Beach to Penrith City Centre
CENTRAL PRECINCT		
C1	Weir Reserve	Explore options and funding opportunities to facilitate the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Upgrade and renew boat shed facilities including storage and amenities Upgrade and embellish open space Improve accessibility to the river's edge for users and watercraft Improve the road network, shared paths and car parking within Weir Reserve Improve the intersection into Weir Reserve at Memorial Avenue / Ladbury Avenue
C2	Jamison Road gateway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore options and funding opportunities to upgrade the Jamison Road / Mulgoa Road intersection as a gateway landmark to the River corridor and to support a more pedestrian friendly experience
C3	Peach Tree Creek connections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore options and funding opportunities to deliver new open space, boardwalk and shared paths along Peach Tree Creek to connect Penrith City Centre to the river Advocate to the NSW Government to deliver a footbridge over Mulgoa Road at the Mulgoa Road / High Street intersection to connect Penrith City Centre to the river
C4	Great River Walk	Explore options and funding opportunities to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extend Great River Walk north from Regatta Park to the Weir crossing Extend Great River Walk north from Weir Reserve to the Lakes Precinct with connections to Nepean Business Park Upgrade the Great River Walk south from Tench Reserve to Factory Road Reserve
C5	Pedestrian river crossing at M4	Advocate to the NSW Government to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Upgrade pedestrian access ramps to M4 bridge at Emu Plains Deliver new pedestrian and cycling footbridge river crossing at the M4
C6	Emu Plains connections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore options and funding opportunities to deliver active transport links to connect Emu Plains station to Regatta Park Explore options and funding opportunities to deliver active transport links from Russell Street east along the river's edge
C7	Factory Road Reserve	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore options and funding opportunities to upgrade and embellish open space for greater recreation uses
C8	Additional water play	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore options and funding opportunities to provide additional water play and swimming within the Central Precinct
C9	Improve public transport	Advocate to the NSW Government to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase service frequency of existing bus routes over weekends and busy periods (like Panther's home games and events) to Tench Reserve, Regatta Park, Panthers Precinct, connecting with Emu Plains and Penrith stations Prioritise bus stop improvements within the river corridor Central Precinct to support ease of use and encourage mode shift to more public transport trips – e.g. bus stop shelters, signage, seating
SOUTHERN PRECINCT		
S1	Enhance river access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore options and funding opportunities to improve public access points and connections to the river at Wallacia
S2	Fernhill Estate	Advocate to the NSW Government to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase public access and activations at Fernhill Estate for enjoyment as a cultural heritage and recreation destination

Our River Plan 2026-2046: Priority projects map





For more information contact
Council's City Strategy team

PENRITH CITY COUNCIL

Civic Centre
601 High Street
Penrith NSW

Phone: 02 4732 7777

Email: citystrategy@penrith.city

Attachment 2

DRAFT OUR RIVER PLAN 2026 – 2046:

FUNDING STATUS OF PROPOSED PRIORITY PROJECTS AND PRIORITY COUNCIL ACTIONS

PROPOSED PRIORITY PROJECTS		
NORTHERN PRECINCT	PRIORITY PROJECT	FUNDING STATUS
	N1 Enhanced River Access <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore options and funding opportunities to improve public access points and connections to the river at Agnes Banks from Koorungal Drive and Coolamon Road 	Unfunded – Progressed should funding become available
LAKES PRECINCT	PRIORITY PROJECT	FUNDING STATUS
	L1 Penrith Lakes Advocate to the NSW Government to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliver a comprehensive vision and master plan for Penrith Lakes Expand public access to Penrith Lakes for nature-based recreation, including nature trail walking and cycling, where the level of infrastructure required to support such activities would be minimal 	Funded through existing resources
	L2 Penrith Beach Advocate to the NSW Government for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Permanent opening of Penrith Beach for swimming and recreation, and new infrastructure to improve experience and amenity A shuttle bus service operating Friday to Sunday during December and January connecting Penrith Beach to Penrith City Centre 	Funded through existing resources
CENTRAL PRECINCT	PRIORITY PROJECT	FUNDING STATUS
	C1 Weir Reserve Explore options and funding opportunities to facilitate the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Upgrade and renew boat shed facilities including storage and amenities Upgrade and embellish open space Improve accessibility to the river's edge for users and watercraft Improve the road network, shared paths and car parking within Weir Reserve Improve the intersection into Weir Reserve at Memorial Avenue / Ladbury Avenue 	Unfunded – Progressed should funding become available
	C2 Jamison Road gateway <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore options and funding opportunities to upgrade the Jamison Road / Mulgoa Road intersection as a gateway landmark to the River corridor and to support a more pedestrian friendly experience 	Unfunded – Progressed should funding become available
	C3 Peach Tree Creek connections <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore options and funding opportunities to deliver new open space, boardwalk and shared paths along Peach Tree Creek to connect Penrith City Centre to the river 	Unfunded – Progressed should funding become available

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advocate to the NSW Government to deliver a footbridge over Mulgoa Road at the Mulgoa Road / High Street intersection to connect Penrith City Centre to the river 	Funded through existing resources
	<p>C4 Great River Walk Explore options and funding opportunities to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extend Great River Walk north from Regatta Park to the Weir crossing Extend Great River Walk north from Weir Reserve to the Lakes Precinct with connections to Nepean Business Park Upgrade the Great River Walk south from Tench Reserve to Factory Road Reserve 	Unfunded – Progressed should funding become available
	<p>C5 Pedestrian experience at M4 river crossing Advocate to the NSW Government to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Upgrade pedestrian access ramps to M4 bridge at Emu Plains Deliver new pedestrian and cycling footbridge river crossing at the M4 	Funded through existing resources
	<p>C6 Emu Plains connections</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore options and funding opportunities to deliver active transport links to connect Emu Plains station to Regatta Park Explore options and funding opportunities to deliver active transport links from Russell Street east along the river’s edge 	Unfunded – Progressed should funding become available
	<p>C7 Factory Road Reserve</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore options and funding opportunities to upgrade and embellish open space for greater recreation uses 	Unfunded – Progressed should funding become available
	<p>C8 Additional water play</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore options and funding opportunities to provide additional water play and swimming within the Central Precinct 	Unfunded – Progressed should funding become available
	<p>C9 Improve public transport Advocate to the NSW Government to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase service frequency of existing bus routes over weekends and busy periods (like Panther’s home games and events) to Tench Reserve, Regatta Park, Panthers Precinct, connecting with Emu Plains and Penrith stations Prioritise bus stop improvements within the river corridor Central Precinct to support ease of use and encourage mode shift to more public transport trips – e.g. bus stop shelters, signage, seating 	Funded through existing resources
SOUTHERN PRECINCT	PRIORITY PROJECT	FUNDING STATUS
	<p>S1 Enhance River access</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore options and funding opportunities to improve public access points and connections to the river at Wallacia 	Unfunded – Progressed should funding become available
	<p>S2 Fernhill Estate Advocate to the NSW Government to:</p>	Funded through

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase public access and activations at Fernhill Estate for enjoyment as a cultural heritage and recreation destination 	existing resources
PROPOSED PRIORITY COUNCIL ACTIONS		
ALL PRECINCTS	PRIORITY ACTION	FUNDING STATUS
	Fostering strategic partnerships and vision alignment Council will continue to work closely with key delivery partners to target specific outcomes for each precinct and agree clear pathways for delivery.	Funded through existing resources
	Advocating for support and investment Council will be proactive in advocating to the Australian and NSW Governments and other partners for support and investment in projects that give effect to the Our River Plan and deliver on the ground change.	Funded through existing resources
	Reviewing and preparing river corridor planning requirements To support the long term vision, Council will undertake further place based planning and strategic work over time to support the character and objectives for each river precinct.	Funded through existing resources
	Preparing a movement and wayfinding plan Council will prepare a movement and wayfinding plan that supports the easy and efficient movement of people and vehicles in and around the river corridor.	Unfunded - Progressed should funding become available
	Preparing a river marketing plan Council will prepare a focused river marketing plan to help build broader awareness and support visitation.	Unfunded - Progressed should funding becomes available
	Supporting day-to-day experience and progressing existing social, cultural environmental, economic and flood management strategies and plans. Council will continue day-to-day management, servicing and maintenance of the river corridor, which is critical to the community's experience. Council will also continue to implement issue-specific strategies and plans under way that protect, revitalise, activate and connect people with the river and move us towards the long term vision.	Mix: Unfunded - Progressed should funding become available / Funded through existing resources