

Community Infrastructure Statement

Warrawong Plaza Planning Proposal

14 September 2023



1.0 Introduction

This Community Infrastructure Statement has been prepared on behalf of Elanor Investors to provide a preliminary assessment of the key community infrastructure requirements arising from a Planning Proposal submitted to the NSW Department of Planning and Environment. This assessment:

- Identifies the Planning Proposal that is the subject of this assessment.
- Identifies the demographic context of the locality and estimate the projected population arising from the Planning Proposal.
- Identifies existing provision of community infrastructure within the locality.
- Assesses demand arising from the proposed development.
- Comments on the funding approach and delivery arrangements for local, district and regional facilities.

1.1 The Site

The Site is legally described as Lot A DP421454, Lot 2 DP571183, Lot 1 DP571183, Lot 1 DP217579, Lot 2 DP 216785 and Lot 2 DP535215 (**Figure 1**). This landholding forms a large, consolidated irregularly-shaped area of more than 7 ha. The Site is known as Warrawong Plaza and is located in the centre of the suburb of Warrawong, within the Wollongong Local Government Area (LGA), approximately 6km south of the Wollongong CBD, within the Illawarra region. The Site is located at 43-65 Cowper Street, Warrawong. It is situated on the traditional land of the Dharawal people. The Site's regional context is shown at **Figure 2**. The local surrounds of the site and key features and facilities are shown in **Figure 3**.



 Site Boundaries



Figure 1 Aerial photograph

Source: Nearmap edited by Ethos Urban

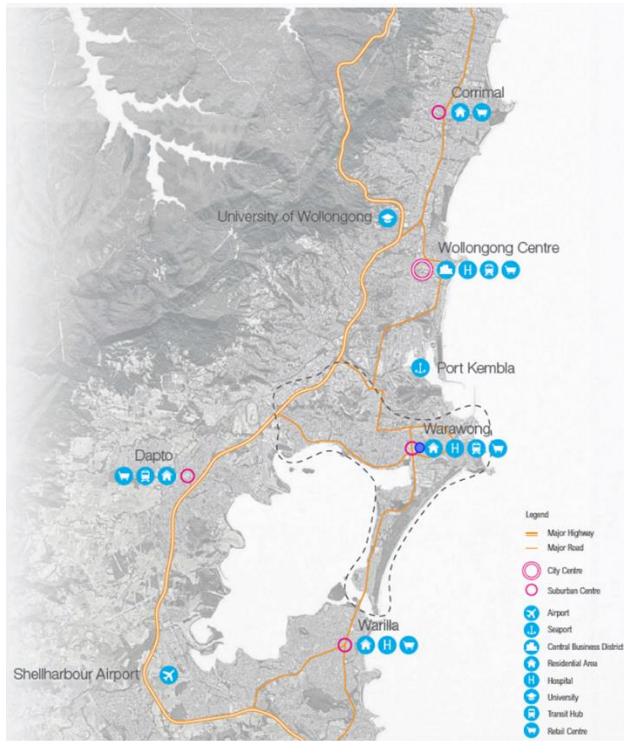


Figure 2 Regional context

Source: CHROFI



 Site Boundaries



Key

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. Warrawong High School | 12. Kully Bay |
| 2. Warrawong Public School | 13. Kully Bay East Park |
| 3. Port Kembla Train Station | 14. Existing Warrawong Library |
| 4. BlueScope Lands | 15. Darcy Wentworth Park |
| 5. Existing Warrawong Community Centre | 16. Noel Mulligan Oval |
| 6. Future Warrawong Library and Community Centre | 17. Kemblawarra Public School and Preschool |
| 7. Port Kembla Hospital | 18. Coomaditchy Lagoon |
| 8. Large format retail development to the east | 19. Port Kembla Beach |
| 9. Illawong Gardens Social Housing Estate (LAHC) | 20. Kemblawarra Bulky Goods Retail Precinct |
| 10. Kully Bay Playground | 21. Kully Bay Open Space |
| 11. Kully Bay Oval | 22. Gala Cinema |

Figure 3 Location of key surrounding development

Source: Nearmap edited by Ethos Urban

1.2 The Proposal

This statement has been prepared in respect of a Planning Proposal in respect of the Warrawong Plaza site at 43-65 Cowper Street, Warrawong. The Planning Proposal is described in detail in the separate report by Ethos Urban, and generally comprises the following amendments to the *Wollongong Local Environmental Plan 2009*:

- Amendment of the land use zoning of the Site (clause 2.1) from E2 Commercial Centre to MU1 Mixed Use.
- Increase to the Height of Building development standard from 24 metres to a variable height limit up to 75 metres (refer to the Urban Design Report prepared by CHROFI at **Appendix A** for the proposed height of building map).
- Amendment to the Key Sites Map to identify 43-65 Cowper Street, Warrawong as “Area 11” and introduction of a new ‘Local Provision’ in Part 7 of the WLEP 2009.

Reference design drawings prepared by CHROFI Architects which have informed the Planning Proposal identify the provision of approximately 1,300 dwellings and 55,000m² of floorspace for non-residential uses, including retail, education, office and entertainment uses.

Of relevance to this assessment, it is noted that:

- residential accommodation in the form of shop top housing, seniors housing, co-living and build-to-rent is already permitted with development consent on the site, and
- the Planning Proposal does not seek to amend the maximum floor space ratio (FSR) for development on the site.

Accordingly, it is considered that the proposal does not give rise to any significant increase in the development capacity or potential residential population of the site compared to existing planning controls. Whilst the proposed amendments to zoning and building height limits established by the *Wollongong Local Environmental Plan 2009* will facilitate the delivery of housing in a more appropriate manner, it is expected that a similar residential population could be delivered within the existing planning controls but that this would result in a poorer built form outcome and result in adverse effects on the provision of retail and leisure facilities within the existing centre.

2.0 Context Analysis

2.1 Demographic Context

The following provides a snapshot of the demographic context of the locality, based primarily on data obtained from the 2021 Census of Population and Housing (2021 Census) conducted by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) unless otherwise noted:

- The age profile of Warrawong (suburb) is largely similar to that of the broader Wollongong LGA, with the exception of a higher proportion of older (70+) persons residing in Warrawong (17.7% of population compared to 13.5%).
- Warrawong has a much higher proportion of persons who do not speak English at home, with 35% of the population speaking a language other than English (main languages being Macedonian, Italian, Portuguese, Arabic and Turkish), compared to only 16% across the Wollongong LGA.
- The unemployment rate for residents of Warrawong (9.3%) is significantly higher than for the Wollongong LGA (5.7%).
- The ABS Index of Relative Socio-Economic Disadvantage (IRSD) index considers factors such as language skills, education, employment, disability and income levels to gauge the level of relative disadvantage within a locality. For Warrawong (suburb), the IRSD index of 764.6 indicates that the locality experiences one of the highest levels of socio-economic disadvantage within the Wollongong LGA. At a national level, this index level places Warrawong in the 2% percentile, indicating a relatively high level of disadvantage.
- Warrawong has a higher proportion of social housing compared to most other centres within the Wollongong LGA.

2.2 Strategic Context and Existing Funding Framework

Wollongong City Council's Community Strategic Plan (CSP) – *Our Wollongong Our Future 2032* (2022) – sets out Council and the community's priorities for the Wollongong LGA over the next decade. The following goals of the CSP are considered to be of key relevance to the project and the provision of community infrastructure:

- *2.1 Support educational and employment opportunities that retain young people and local talent, attract new workers and provide opportunities for the unemployed.*
- *2.3 Increase and attract new business investment and enterprise to Wollongong while supporting and growing existing local businesses.*
- *3.1 Using community art and cultural development practices, our places and spaces reflect the creativity, history and identity of our people.*
- *3.5 Provide communities with access to quality local spaces and places to meet, share and celebrate.*
- *4.4 Build awareness and understanding of Local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture, heritage and histories.*
- *4.11 Quality services, libraries and facilities are available to communities to access and gather.*
- *5.1 Accessible and appropriate medical services are available to the community.*
- *5.3 Work towards enabling all people in our community to have access to safe, nutritious, affordable and sustainably produced food.*
- *5.4 Provide a variety of quality and accessible public places and opportunities for sport, play, leisure, recreation, learning and cultural activities in the community.*
- *5.6 Healthy, active ageing programs are provided and promoted in partnership with government agencies and community organisations*
- *5.7 Provide an appropriate range of active and passive open spaces and facilities to cater for traditional and emerging recreational pursuits.*
- *5.8 Housing choice in the Wollongong Local Government Area is improved, considering population growth, community needs and affordability.*
- *5.12 Plan and deliver an accessible, safe, clean and inviting public domain.*
- *6.2 Wollongong continues to build infrastructure and programs to fulfill its role as a UCI Bike city.*

Social infrastructure planning within the Wollongong LGA is currently guided by Wollongong City Council's *Places for People – Wollongong Social Infrastructure Planning Framework 2018-2028* (2018). In December 2022, Council resolved to publicly exhibit a successor to this policy in the form of the Draft *Places for the Future - Social Infrastructure Future Directions Plan 2022-2036* (Draft Plan). Both strategies are focused primarily on the provision of community facilities (comprising libraries, community centres and multi-function spaces) by Council. Warrawong is located within 'Planning Area 8' under the Draft Plan, in which the delivery of a new Warrawong Library and Community Centre is identified as a priority project that Council is already undertaking to meet community facility needs.

Local infrastructure is funded by Council through a combination of general revenue streams (rates etc.) and contributions levied on new development. The *Wollongong City-Wide Development Contributions Plan 2022* requires that all development with a cost of works greater than \$200,000 makes development contributions to Council at a rate of 1% of development cost pursuant to Section 7.12 of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*. The Plan identifies key projects to be funded through the plan, which relevantly includes local road upgrades within Warrawong town centre and the delivery of the new Warrawong Library and Community Centre.

Regional infrastructure provided by the NSW Government is funded through a combination of general revenue and the recently-introduced Housing and Productivity Contribution (HPC). The HPC seeks to “set fair and consistent contributions toward the costs of infrastructure provided by the NSW Government”¹ by levying a fixed-rate contribution on new residential and commercial development which is to be paid directly to the NSW Government. The intent of the HPC is to assist the NSW Government in funding key State and regional infrastructure projects, such as health, education, justice, active transport, open space and biodiversity conservation. Funding will be expended through a combination of NSW Government projects and funding to local Councils.

¹ NSW Department of Planning and Environment, *Housing and Productivity Contribution*, May 2023, <https://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/2023-05/housing-and-productivity-contribution.pdf>

3.0 Projected Population

Table 1 summarises the projected residential population arising from the Planning Proposal, whilst **Table 2** provides an estimate of the service life stage for this population.

Average occupancy rates for existing apartments within the Wollongong LGA, based on data from the 2021 Census, have informed the future population assumptions in **Table 1**. Data for age distribution, outlined in **Table 2**, has been based upon the entire population of the Wollongong LGA using 2021 Census data.

Overall, the project would support approximately 1,300 dwellings with an estimated residential population of 2,128 residents.

The demographic and age mix of residents is likely to be reflective of the broader Wollongong LGA, noting that there is a prevalence of large detached housing in the local housing market but limited supply of smaller and more affordable apartment-typology housing which is therefore likely to draw from a wider housing sub-market beyond the immediate Warrawong locality. Housing on the site is expected to accommodate a range of household types, including couples without children (both young couples and empty-nesters), families, lone-person households and shared households. Accordingly, the community infrastructure needs of the future population are expected to be generally in accordance with the LGA-wide patterns and trends already observed.

Table 1 Projected population

Apartment Type	Indicative Dwelling Mix	Total Dwellings	Occupancy Rate (persons/dwelling)	Projected Occupants
1-bed	40%	503	1.20	625
2-bed	40%	503	1.74	904
3-bed	20%	251	2.30	599
Total		1,300 dwellings		2,128 residents

Table 2 Projected service age profile

Service Age Group	Proportion of Population	Projected Population
Early Childhood and Preschool (0-4)	6%	120
Primary School (5-11)	8%	177
High School (12-17)	7%	151
Working Age (18-66)	62%	1,329
Retirees (66+)	17%	352
Total		2,128

4.0 Community Infrastructure Assessment

4.1 Education

4.1.1 Early Childhood

Australian Government Department of Education data indicates that 32.9% of children in NSW utilise formal child care arrangements, comprising a mix of centre-based day care, family day care and outside of school hours (OOSH) care². Centre-based day care accounted for 59.7% of childcare usage, with an average of 32.1 hours/week/child attending centre-based care. Attendance at formal pre-school occurs at a higher rate of c.87% for children aged four years old³.

At the 2021 Census there were 288 children aged between 0-4 years residing within the suburb of Warrawong. Based on state-wide utilisation indicators, this would indicate a need for a maximum of 127 centre-based childcare and pre-school places.

Table 3 summarises the existing provision of registered child care providers within a c.1.5km radius of the site, which indicates that there is approved capacity for approximately 196 children within centre-based child care centres.

Existing utilisation of these centres is not known, however, this provision indicates either that there are centres operating with surplus capacity to accommodate additional children, or that centres within Warrawong are servicing a wider catchment.

Based on the projected population arising from the proposed development of 120 children aged 0-4, this would give rise to a need for approximately 53 centre-based childcare and preschool places. The development concept indicates a provision of approximately 1,500m² of new GLA for the purpose of centre-based childcare, which would provide more places than required, allowing the development to meet both the needs of the future on-site population as well as the wider community.

Table 3 Summary of existing centre-based childcare and pre-school within 1.5km radius of site

Centre Name	Address	Approved Places
Warrawong Community Preschool	99 Shellharbour Road PORT KEMBLA NSW 2505	40
Hillview Child Care Centre	89-91 Cowper WARRAWONG NSW 2502	24
Kemblawarra Public School Preschool	Shellharbour Road PORT KEMBLA NSW 2505	40
Hoskins Education & Care	30 Hoskins Ave WARRAWONG NSW 2502	24
Toddlers Palace Kindergarten	Lot 3 Eyre Place WARRAWONG NSW 2502	29
Little Peoples Early Learning Centre Lake Heights/Warrawong	80 Jane Avenue WARRAWONG NSW 2502	39
		196

² Australian Government, Department of Education, December 2022 Quarterly Snapshot, <https://www.education.gov.au/early-childhood/early-childhood-data-and-reports/quarterly-reports-usage-services-fees-and-subsidies/child-care-subsidy-data-report-december-quarter-2022>

³ Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2022), *Preschool Education*, <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/education/preschool-education/latest-release>

4.1.2 Primary and Secondary Schools

2021 Census data indicates that 73% of primary school-aged children and 63% of secondary school-aged children attend government schools, with the balance attending religious and other non-government schools. Based on the projected population profile, the whole development would give rise to demand for government school infrastructure to accommodate 130 primary school students and 111 secondary school students.

The site is currently located within the catchment areas of Kemblawarra Public School and Warrawong High School. A number of additional public schools are located within the vicinity of the site, including Warrawong Public School, Lake Heights Public School, Port Kembla Public School and Primbee Public School.

It is noted that based on the lead times for planning approval and construction, and the intended staged delivery of housing delivery on the subject site, it is not anticipated that there would be demand for government school infrastructure earlier than the 2028 school year. This provides ample time for the NSW Government to incorporate the proposal into its school infrastructure planning program, if required.

4.2 Health Care

The subject site is approximately equidistant between Wollongong and Shellharbour Hospitals. The NSW Government is currently planning for the New Shellharbour Hospital and Integrated Services Project, which will facilitate the construction of a new hospital at Dunmore, to provide improved and additional health services to meet the health needs of the growing Illawarra community. The NSW Government has also indicated that as part of the Integrated Services Project, a new Community Health Centre will be constructed on the south-east corner of the Port Kembla Hospital site, approximately 500 metres to the west of the subject site. Accordingly, the site is considered to be well serviced by existing and planned State health infrastructure.

The proposed future population will also give rise to the need for some privately-provided healthcare services, including general practice/medical centre, imaging, health consulting services and the like. The proposed development indicates a provision of approximately 4,000m² GLA for the purpose of a health and wellbeing precinct, an increase of approximately 1,200m² of GLA currently allocated to health and wellbeing uses. This would provide additional capacity to provide local health services to meet the health needs of the existing and future community in a convenient and accessible location.

4.3 Community Facilities

There are two main Council-operated community facilities currently provided within Warrawong:

- Warrawong Library, which is located approximately 250 metres to the south of the site within a small retail complex on Hoskins Ave. Whilst relatively close in distance, this facility is somewhat isolated from the main town centre. The library is relatively modern and provides facilities commensurate with other libraries provided by Council.
- Warrawong Community Centre, which is located approximately 150 metres to the north-west of the site on Green St. This facility is more centrally located than the library, with a main hall and meeting rooms. Whilst the facility was renovated in 2017, the building itself is over 50 years old and provides limited functionality.

Council is in the process of delivering a new district-level multi-function community facility and library at the corner of Green Street and King Street, which will replace and enhance the two existing community facilities. The new Warrawong District Community Centre and Library received planning approval in late-2022 and comprises:

- A new district library split between Ground Level, Level 1 and Level 2;
- Community centre with lounge, community rooms, kitchen, amenities and office space on ground floor;
- Space for the Illawarra Legal Centre on Level 2
- A food and drink premise (café) at ground floor level;
- Approx. 200 seat community hall
- landscaped forecourt area; and
- Car parking.

Planning for this facility follows an extensive community consultation and site selection process to determine the location and nature of facilities provided. This space is intended to service district-scale needs well beyond the immediate requirements of Warrawong, with capacity to accommodate future growth. Completion of the facility is expected to occur in 2025. Funding for this project is drawn from a combination of funds raised through the

Wollongong City-Wide Development Contributions Plan and other Council revenue sources (e.g. rates). Future development on the subject site would contribute to the provision of this new facility in accordance with these existing revenue frameworks. Noting the significant increase in capacity and quality of community facilities provided through this project, as well as the long-term capacity embedded in this project to reflect future population growth, it is considered that the existing/planned community facilities are adequate to accommodate the proposed development.

Notwithstanding the above, future Development Applications for development of the subject site may consider opportunities to provide a range of communal indoor facilities (meeting rooms, bookable spaces, music rooms etc) to meet communal space requirements of the future population in accordance with the applicable planning framework.



Figure 4 Indicative images of future Warrawong Community Centre and Library

Source: Wollongong City Council

4.4 Open Space and Public Domain

Future residents on the subject site will require access to a range of active and passive open spaces to support leisure, amenity and health outcomes.

4.4.1 Active and Passive Open Space

The site is well-located relative to existing active and passive open spaces, sitting on the northern edge of an expansive open space network which extends around the shoreline of Kully Bay and through to Port Kembla Beach in the east. This corridor includes a diverse range of recreational areas and facilities, including:

- Children's playgrounds
- Exercise stations
- Walking, running and cycling paths
- Maritime/boating facilities
- Sportsgrounds – rectangular and oval – including amenities buildings
- Port Kembla Swimming Pool
- Port Kembla Beach

These facilities are in various states of modernity and repair, however, there is clearly capacity for relatively minor improvements in the quality of facilities to deliver significant additional utilisation capacity to support future use. Examples of enhancements which could be undertaken at relatively low cost (compared to say acquiring new land) include installation of additional seating, picnic tables and related amenities, upgrades to turf and drainage systems, replacement of amenity buildings, installation of new pathways or play equipment, and better utilising current areas of open grass for more intensive purposes. More intensive options to deliver additional capacity can include selective conversion of grass playing fields to hybrid or synthetic turf fields or the installation of sports lighting.

Wollongong City Council adopted the *Sportsgrounds and Sporting Facilities Strategy 2023-2027* and Implementation Plan in early-2023 which identifies specific actions for the provision of sporting infrastructure. This plan identifies short, medium and long-term priorities for the provision of sporting infrastructure within the LGA. The plan recognises different priorities and needs for different areas of the LGA based on levels of projected population growth and local availability of facilities and land. There is significant capacity within sporting facilities

and open space in the immediate vicinity of the site to support future demand through implementation of standard strategies and initiatives outlined in this policy. Council funds open space and sporting infrastructure projects through a combination of funds raised through the *Wollongong City-Wide Development Contributions Plan* and other Council revenue sources (e.g. rates). Future development on the subject site would contribute to the provision of local sport and recreational infrastructure in accordance with these existing revenue frameworks.

Accordingly, the site is considered to have good access to public open space and has existing capacity to support further additional utilisation. However, there are opportunities to enhance connectivity between the Warrawong Town Centre and the regional open space network. At present, the existing Warrawong Plaza development acts as a significant barrier to north-south permeability and particularly pedestrian movements between Cowper Street and open space to the south of Northcliffe Drive. Future development of the subject site can seek to address this issue by providing a mid-block pedestrian connection between King St and Shellharbour Road to allow pedestrians from the subject site and the population to the north of Cowper Street to better access this open space. It is recommended that any design guidelines or master plan adopted for this site seeks to facilitate improved pedestrian connectivity between Cowper Street and Darcy Wentworth Park.

4.4.2 Private Sporting and Leisure Facilities

There are a number of private sporting and recreational facilities provided within the local catchment area, including private gymnasiums and indoor recreation facilities. These facilities are distributed throughout the town centre and the employment lands to the south of Hoskins Ave. Future development on the subject site has the capacity to provide additional private sporting and recreation opportunities within the site subject to demand and needs.

4.4.3 Civic and Urban Open Space

Whilst Warrawong has a very high provision of outdoor open space, there is a dearth of more urbanised public spaces within the town centre core. Urban public spaces play an important role in acting as a public meeting place, and provide opportunities for rest and community interaction for a range of uses who may not typically utilise spaces in more dispersed parkland settings.

The New Warrawong Library and Community Centre project will provide a relatively small (c. 1,000m²) urban plaza within the town centre, between the proposed building and car park. This space will provide significant amenity to the local centre, however, the retail/leisure precinct of the existing and proposed Warrawong Plaza (and the future residential population) will experience significantly greater visitation rates in comparison to the library precinct, and there is opportunity to provide a more significant space to enhance public amenity. The master plan proposes a highly-activated urban plaza within the heart of the site with an area of at least 3,000m², shielded from adjoining major roads to provide greater amenity whilst remaining publicly accessible on a 24-hour/7-day basis. This will provide significant additional amenity to future residents of the subject site, and the much higher number of persons who visit the Warrawong town centre on a daily basis.

The project also provides the opportunity to facilitate the upgrade of areas of public domain immediately adjoining the subject site, in accordance with Council's development policies. This will contribute positively to the quality and safety of the public domain for a significant area of the Warrawong Town Centre for existing and future residents.

5.0 Conclusion

Overall the subject site is very well-located in respect of access to education, health care, community facilities and passive and active open space. Any future population on the subject site will gain significant amenity from proximity to a wide range of community infrastructure in the locality, as well as direct access to community infrastructure and amenities proposed to be delivered on the subject site.

This assessment has not identified any locality- or site-specific constraints in terms of community infrastructure capacity or availability which would constrain the ability for future population growth in accordance with the Planning Proposal. Whilst the project will result in delivery of additional housing, which is not currently present on the site, it is considered that the infrastructure needs of these households can be met within the existing infrastructure funding and provision frameworks which apply to the site. It is noted that whilst the Planning Proposal seeks to amend the zoning and maximum building heights, no change to the maximum FSR is sought and residential accommodation is already permitted under the *Wollongong Local Environmental Plan 2009* – therefore, the development is providing housing within capacity already allowed under the existing planning and infrastructure framework.

The proposed development offers the opportunity to deliver enhancements in local community infrastructure and amenity through the provision of new medical and health facilities, centre-based childcare, new pedestrian through-site links, the provision of a significant new urban public space and enhanced public domain.

Whilst this assessment has not addressed housing demand, which is addressed separately in the Planning Proposal, it is noted that the provision of 10% of future residential floorspace as Affordable Rental Housing is a very significant community infrastructure contribution in excess of any existing planning requirements.

Table 4 summarises the key findings of this assessment.

Table 4 Summary of findings

Infrastructure Category	Current Provision	Impact of Proposal	Project Contribution & Funding Sources
Education	<p>Good provision of early-childhood education facilities</p> <p>Close proximity to local government primary and secondary schools</p>	<p>Net positive impact on early childhood care and education.</p> <p>Provision of additional childcare capacity surplus to immediate needs of development.</p> <p>Increase in demand for government schools, capacity to support at existing sites.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design Guidelines assure provision of childcare and consideration of educational uses within the site NSW Housing and Productivity Contribution
Health Care	<p>Planned delivery of new Shellharbour Hospital at Dunmore.</p> <p>Approx. 2,800m² GLA of private health and wellbeing uses at Warrawong Plaza.</p>	<p>Minor additional demand for regional facilities, within capacity of planned projects such as Shellharbour Hospital and Warrawong Community Health Centre.</p> <p>Provision of approx. 4,000m² of local private health and wellbeing services.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design Guidelines assure provision of floorspace for health and wellbeing uses NSW Housing and Productivity Contribution
Community Facilities	<p>New Warrawong Library and Community Centre being developed by Council for c.2025 opening.</p>	<p>Additional demand for local community facilities, including library and community spaces.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Section 7.12 Development Contributions NSW Housing and Productivity Contribution
Open Space	<p>Very high local provision of active and passive outdoor space within Kully Bay-Port Kembla Beach open space corridor.</p> <p>Poor provision of urban/civic spaces.</p>	<p>Improved access to regional open space network with Cowper-Northcliffe through-site link.</p> <p>Provision of >3,000m² urban public open space within subject site.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design Guidelines assure provision of urban open space and improved connection to open space network Section 7.12 Development Contributions NSW Housing and Productivity Contribution