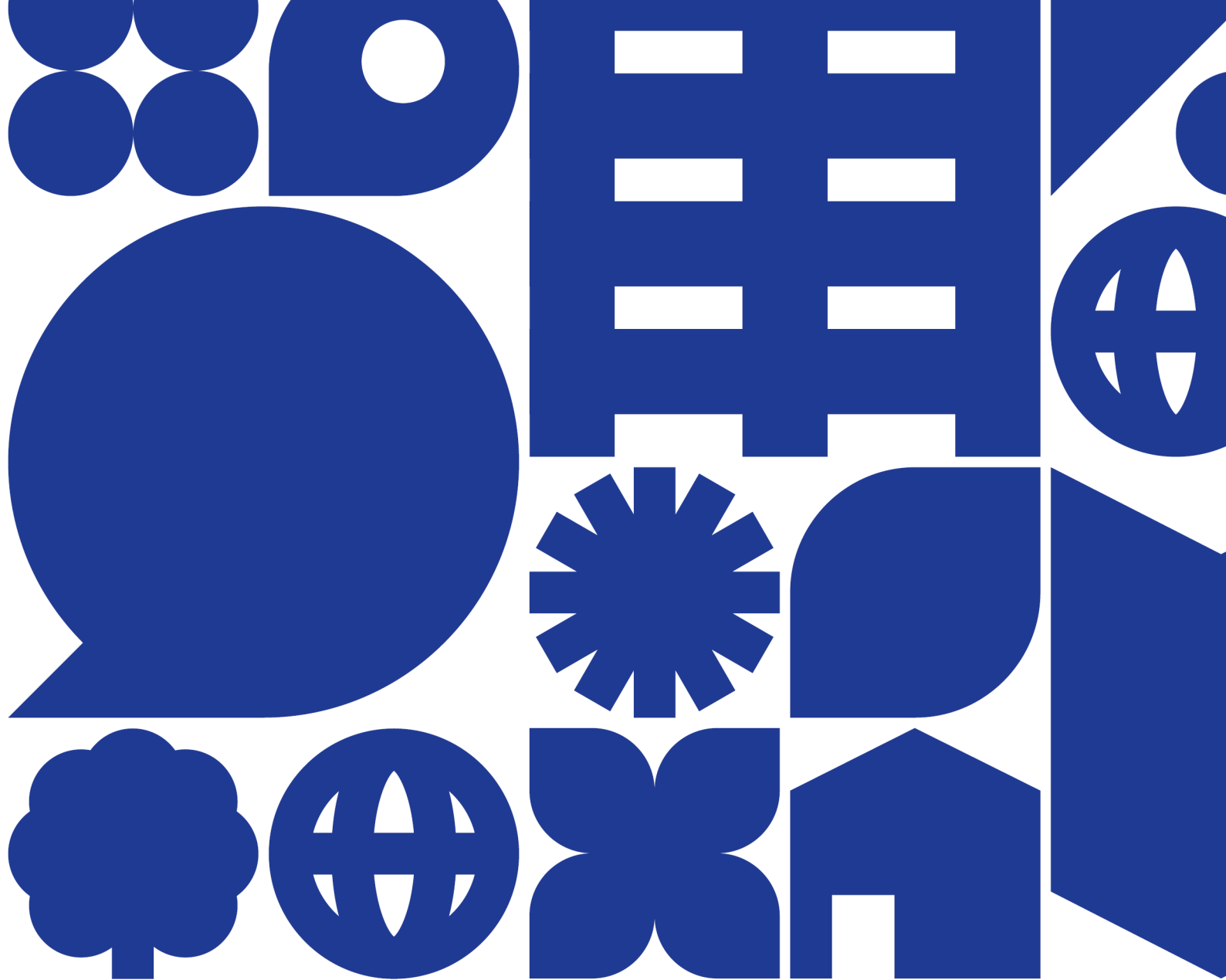




Social Infrastructure Needs Assessment Southern Beaches Plan

era

For consultation | June 2026

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We honour and pay our respect to Elders past and present, whose knowledge and wisdom has and will ensure the continuation of culture and traditional practices.

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Always was, always will be.

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Client	Sorell Council
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Glossary

Abbreviation	Definition
ABN	Australian Business Number
ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
AHURI	Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute
CTST	Community Transport Services Tasmania
GP	General practitioner
LGA	Local government area
NSW	New South Wales
OSHC	Outside school hours care
PLAWA	Parks and Leisure WA
QLD	Queensland
SES	State Emergency Service
SLSC	Surf Life Saving Club
TFS	Tasmanian Fire Service
UTAS	University of Tasmania
VET	Vocational education and training
WA	Western Australia

Executive Summary

This Social Infrastructure Needs Assessment forms one of the technical assessments supporting the Southern Beaches Plan. It provides a comprehensive review of community facilities, services, and spaces across the region. The assessment aims to identify current strengths, gaps, and opportunities for improvement in social infrastructure, ensuring the Southern Beaches can sustainably support its growing and changing population.

The approach involved a detailed audit of existing social infrastructure, benchmarking against best practice standards, and a community survey to understand local priorities and needs. A wide range of facilities and services were considered, including education and childcare, healthcare, emergency services, places of worship, youth support, community houses, arts and cultural venues, heritage sites, Aboriginal places, sporting and exercise facilities, beaches, parks and nature reserves, playspaces and additional community services such as transport and home-based support.

Population projections suggest continued growth in the region, especially among families and older adults. Through an online survey, the community expressed strong support for preserving natural assets, fostering social connection, and ensuring equitable access to essential services.

The Southern Beaches region is characterised by a diverse community, with unique demographic profiles, seasonality, and a mix of permanent and holiday residences. The analysis highlights the importance of flexible, inclusive, and accessible infrastructure to cater for all residents and visitors. The audit revealed areas of strength, such as vibrant community houses and active sporting clubs, while also identifying gaps in healthcare access, youth support, and public transport services.

Section 5.3 provides a detailed summary of the needs assessment, outlining key findings across community facilities and green/blue infrastructure. It highlights areas and assets requiring further testing through the project lifecycle and serves as the basis for future engagement with Council and community to ensure fit-for-purpose recommendations can be crafted and embedded in the Southern Beaches Plan.

Contents

Glossary	i
Executive Summary	ii
1 Introduction	1
1.1 About the project	1
1.2 How we developed this assessment	3
1.3 Community survey summary	4
2 What is social infrastructure?	7
2.1 What is social infrastructure?	7
2.2 Planning for social infrastructure	10
3 The Southern Beaches	12
3.1 About our place	12
3.2 Community profile	14
4 Social infrastructure audit	16
4.1 Community facilities	16
4.2 Green and blue infrastructure	23
4.3 Social programming	27
4.4 Supporting community services	28
5 Needs assessment	30
5.1 Population projections	30
5.2 Benchmarks	31
5.3 Assessment summary	34
6 Recommendations	36

1 Introduction

1.1 About the project

1.1.1 Southern Beaches Plan

Sorell Council (Council) is preparing the Southern Beaches Plan to guide the sustainable development of the area over the next 20 years, 2026 to 2046. The Plan will articulate a shared vision for land use and sustainable development in the Southern Beaches area. It will identify amendments (if required) to the Sorell Local Provisions Schedule and provide the required strategic evidence to facilitate these changes. The project focuses on the townships of Dodges Ferry, Lewisham, Carlton River and Primrose Sands while also taking a holistic view of the area's relationship with, and connections to, Sorell and Greater Hobart.

1.1.2 Social Infrastructure Needs Assessment (this report)

This Social Infrastructure Needs Assessment forms one of the key technical inputs to the Southern Beaches Plan, drawing on best practice reporting for Sorell Council and comparable regional communities. It assesses the social infrastructure that currently serves the Southern Beaches community and the wider Sorell municipality. Following community and stakeholder consultation on this draft report and the project Discussion Paper, the report will identify the social infrastructure required to support projected population growth and respond to community needs.

The work aligns with the directions set out in the Sorell Social Strategy, which emphasises the importance of social infrastructure in building socially sustainable, resilient and inclusive communities, and the need for Council to plan proactively for services, programs and facilities that meet the evolving needs of residents and visitors.

Supporting documents such as the Sorell Open Space Strategy and Sorell Playspace Strategy highlight local growth patterns, community expectations for recreation and public spaces, and the importance of quality, accessibility and maintenance in shaping use and outcomes. Comparative regional studies (including those prepared for the Snowy Mountains (NSW), Victor Harbor (SA) and Albury (NSW)) demonstrate how coastal and regional centres experiencing demographic change must adapt their social infrastructure networks to remain liveable, equitable and future-ready.

The purpose of this assessment is to:

- Provide an inventory of existing social infrastructure that services the Southern Beaches, and where relevant to context, the broader Sorell municipality, including community, cultural, recreation and play facilities, parks and nature reserves, and water-based assets
- Assess current and future needs based on relevant benchmark indicators, alongside projected population growth and demographic change
- Identify gaps and priorities for future social infrastructure in reflection of the demographic changes occurring in the area, that will support the needs of residents, respond to ageing, youth requirements, play needs, and support health, wellbeing and social cohesion

- Integrate findings with other Southern Beaches technical inputs, including demographic analysis, housing trends and environmental considerations, to ensure a coherent and place-responsive planning framework.

Together, these elements ensure the assessment provides a robust evidence base to guide decision-making, prioritisation and long-term planning for the Southern Beaches community.

1.1.3 Policy alignment

A robust, sustainable and fair network of social infrastructure does not occur by accident, it must be shaped through strategic, long-term planning. This assessment is aligned with a range of current strategies and plans undertaken for the Sorell municipality. Table 1 outlines key documents.

Table 1: Relevant policy alignment

Document	Relationship to this report
Tasmanian Planning Policies	Chapter 1.3 (Social Infrastructure) of the Tasmanian Planning Policies establishes the requirement that settlement planning integrates the timely provision and equitable distribution of community facilities, services and public spaces with housing growth to support health, social inclusion, wellbeing and participation.
Sorell Council Strategic Plan 2019 - 2029	The municipality's overarching ten-year framework that sets Council's vision, objectives and priorities to guide decision-making, service delivery, infrastructure investment and advocacy in pursuit of a liveable, inclusive and sustainably managed community.
Sorell Social Strategy (2025)	Sets local priorities for inclusive, connected and resilient communities. Provides the social outcomes framework and key needs drivers that this assessment tests through an infrastructure lens.
Sorell Open Space Strategy (2020)	Sets out benchmarks, provides localised guidance for parks, trails and playspaces, outlines expectations for access and quality, and highlights gaps in provision. This strategy directly informs the assessment's review of open space and recreation needs.
Sorell Playspace Strategy (draft, 2025)	Guides the planning and improvement of playspaces in Sorell, focusing on inclusivity, accessibility and safety. It prioritises locations for new and upgraded facilities based on community needs and supports recommendations for future investment.
Tasmania's Wellbeing Framework (2025)	A whole-of-government framework and shared language for improving quality of life across domains such as community, health, learning and place. Provides overarching outcomes that social infrastructure investment can support.
Healthy Tasmania Five-Year Strategic Plan 2022–2026	Tasmania's preventive health plan, focusing on factors that influence health and wellbeing. Reinforces the role of accessible community facilities, open space and active transport in supporting wellbeing outcomes referenced throughout this assessment.
Tasmanian Housing Strategy 2023–2043	Sets long-term direction for housing supply, affordability and ending homelessness. Relevant because population growth and housing delivery directly drive demand for community facilities, health and wellbeing services, open space and local access.
Tasmanian Disaster Resilience Strategy 2020–2025	Provides an approach to disaster resilience (preparedness, response and recovery). Relevant to social infrastructure because community facilities can play roles in resilience so infrastructure planning can account for risk, access and continuity of services.
Tasmanian Walking and Cycling for Active Transport Strategy (2025)	Provides statewide direction for walking and cycling as everyday transport through infrastructure, land use planning and behaviour change. Supports the assessment's focus on access and the importance of connected, safe active travel networks linking settlements to services and open space.

1.2 How we developed this assessment

1.2.1 Guiding principles

Planning for social infrastructure in the Southern Beaches and wider Sorell municipality requires an approach that responds to population growth, service gaps between settlements, the unique coastal geography of the area, and the reasons people are drawn to make the area their home. These guiding principles draw from contemporary best practice to ensure facilities are planned and delivered in a way that supports liveability, accessibility and local identity across this interconnected region.

Plan as an integrated local network

Social infrastructure should be planned as a connected network of facilities across the Southern Beaches and the wider Sorell area, recognising service distribution, population growth and reliance on nearby centres. This involves considering geographic constraints, travel patterns and local settlement structure.

Locate facilities where people already travel

Given strong commuting patterns and the draw of Sorell as the district hub, facilities should be in areas that are accessible by the greatest number of residents and close to other community destinations such as schools, shops and transport routes.

Design for flexibility and multi-use

Facilities must accommodate multiple community purposes and adapt over time, supporting diverse user groups and changing needs. Multipurpose and co-located facilities offer clear efficiency advantages and help address space and funding constraints common in smaller Tasmanian communities.

Support place-based identity and local character

Facilities should reflect the natural coastal environment, local history and the strong community connection to beaches, foreshore areas and bushland. This includes ensuring spaces feel welcoming and contribute meaningfully to local identity and sense of place.

Embed long-term sustainability and stewardship

Planning must consider lifecycle costs, limited servicing infrastructure in the Southern Beaches (such as lack of reticulated water and sewer), and the need for resilient, durable, and environmentally responsible facilities suited to small, growing coastal communities.

1.2.2 Social infrastructure audit

A review of available data on existing community facilities, services, and open spaces across the Sorell municipality was undertaken to inform this assessment. The approach prioritised accessibility, relevance to local needs, and alignment with strategic plans. This method helped to identify gaps, strengths and opportunities in current social infrastructure provision and will inform future recommendations.

1.2.3 Benchmarking

Benchmarking enables a comparison of social infrastructure provision against recognised standards, best practice guidelines, and peer communities. This process helps to highlight gaps, strengths and areas for improvement, ensuring recommendations are evidence-based and tailored to local needs. Benchmarks were sourced from relevant government documents, industry standards, and academic research, then adjusted to reflect the unique characteristics and expectations of the Southern Beaches.

1.2.4 Assumptions and limitations

The audit and benchmarking approach is shaped by several assumptions and limitations. Data availability and quality may constrain the accuracy of findings, and benchmarks often reflect general standards rather than the full nuance of local needs, especially in non-urban or rapidly changing communities. There is also a risk that some community assets or informal spaces may not be captured in formal datasets, or are captured, but their useability is not consistent with what is expected. For this reason, it is essential to test audit findings and benchmark results with council and the community, ensuring recommendations are relevant and can be refined based on local insight.

1.3 Community survey summary

1.3.1 Purpose

This section summarises findings from the Southern Beaches Plan community survey as they relate to social infrastructure needs. The intent is to identify the facilities, services, spaces and enabling conditions required to support community wellbeing, social connection and equitable access as the Southern Beaches continues to experience population growth and change. The analysis focuses on themes with direct relevance to this Social Infrastructure Needs Assessment, rather than broader land use or environmental matters.

1.3.2 Survey context and community profile

The survey received 305 responses, with most respondents live locally, and many have long-standing connections to the area; over half having lived in or regularly visited the Southern Beaches for more than 10 years. The age profile is weighted toward 35–64 year olds, with a smaller but meaningful cohort of older residents (65–79). This reinforces the importance of infrastructure that supports mobility, access, family needs, ageing in place and intergenerational participation, rather than highly specialised or single-use facilities.

Importantly, the survey shows a strong foundation of social capital. Most respondents feel connected to their local community and report a strong sense of belonging. This provides a solid platform for social infrastructure investments that strengthen and extend existing community networks.

1.3.3 What matters most for community wellbeing

Respondents consistently identified the following as critical to liveability and quality of life, all of which have direct implications for social infrastructure planning:

- Access to community facilities (including schools, childcare, health and recreation)
- Sense of community and belonging
- Attractive, welcoming public spaces
- Local shops and essential services
- Feeling safe in public spaces

These priorities highlight that social infrastructure in the Southern Beaches is not limited to formal buildings. It includes a broader network of everyday places where people meet, participate and feel part of the community, such as village centres, open spaces, community hubs, and recreational facilities.

1.3.4 Enabling access to social infrastructure

While walking, cycling and public transport are not social infrastructure assets in themselves, the survey clearly demonstrates that they are important enabling infrastructure that allows people to access social infrastructure and community programming.

- Walking and cycling connections were among the highest-rated priorities, with strong concern about missing footpaths, unsafe routes and lack of continuous links between residential areas, schools, shops, community facilities and beaches
- Public transport recorded some of the poorest performance scores in the survey, particularly in relation to reliability, frequency and coverage for Primrose Sands.

These findings indicate that existing and future social infrastructure cannot be considered effective or equitable unless supported by safe, accessible and reliable movement networks. Without these enabling systems, groups such as older residents, young people, people with mobility limitations and households without access to private vehicles are less able to participate in community life.

Walking, cycling and public transport should therefore be treated as foundational access infrastructure, essential to unlocking the value of social infrastructure investment.

1.3.5 Key social infrastructure needs identified

1. Community facilities and multi-use spaces

Respondents expressed ongoing demand for flexible, multi-use community facilities that support a range of activities, programs and age groups. Open responses frequently refer to:

- Indoor community meeting spaces and halls
- Facilities that support local events, activities and informal gatherings
- Recreation spaces that cater beyond organised sport, including for older people, youth and families

There is particular emphasis on retaining and enhancing existing community assets, and ensuring facilities can adapt as the population grows and diversifies.

2. Recreation spaces and public realm

Parks, playgrounds, beaches and coastal reserves are central to daily life in the Southern Beaches. Survey feedback highlights the need for:

- Well-maintained, accessible and inclusive public open spaces
- Play and recreation areas suitable for a wider range of ages and abilities
- Supporting amenities such as seating, shade, toilets and safe access paths

These spaces are viewed not only as recreational assets, but as key settings for informal social interaction and community connection.

3. Health, education and family services

While some respondents rate access to community facilities as 'good', others raise concerns about capacity and future adequacy, particularly as the area continues to grow. Common themes include:

- Access to primary health services (such as GPs)
- Childcare availability
- School capacity and safe access to education facilities

The survey indicates a need to plan proactively for service demand, with consideration of both local provision and the community's reliance on services in Sorell and Greater Hobart.

4. Local hubs and village centres

Village centres are repeatedly described as social as well as economic infrastructure. Respondents seek:

- More coherent, pedestrian-friendly local centres
- Comfortable places to meet informally (i.e. seating, sheltered areas, cafés and gathering spaces)
- Centres that reinforce local identity and support everyday social interaction

Investment in village centres is closely linked to strengthening social cohesion and community life.

5. Essential servicing as a public health issue

Water, sewerage and stormwater issues were frequently raised, particularly in connection with beach access, water quality and neighbourhood amenity. Although not classified as social infrastructure, these systems are viewed by the community as fundamental to health, environmental quality and the safe use of public spaces. For social infrastructure planning, this reinforces the link between servicing, public health and the ongoing usability of key community assets.

1.3.6 Implications for the Social Infrastructure Needs Assessment

The survey points to a clear set of Southern Beaches-wide priorities:

- Plan social infrastructure as a connected system, including facilities, public spaces, local hubs and the enabling infrastructure required to access them
- Prioritise access and inclusion, particularly through walking, cycling and public transport improvements that support participation across age groups and abilities
- Provide adaptable, multi-use facilities that can respond to population growth and enhance local character
- Strengthen everyday places for connection, including parks, beaches and village centres, supported by basic amenities
- Recognise essential services as determinants of wellbeing, particularly where they affect health, safety and access to public spaces.

Together, these findings support a social infrastructure strategy that is place-based, inclusive and access-focused, reinforcing the strong community foundations that already exist across the Southern Beaches.

Community Engagement - Ferry Hall & Community Facilities

Council undertook engagement on Ferry Hall and broader community facility needs between 3 and 31 March 2026, including an online survey, two drop-in community information and feedback sessions at Okines Community House, direct stakeholder discussions, and a review of existing community facilities across the Southern Beaches.

Engagement found support for retaining Ferry Hall due to its historical and social value, but more broadly identified demand for flexible, accessible and affordable indoor community space. Feedback highlighted pressure on existing venues, the loss of Forcett Hall, and concerns that some spaces are difficult to access, costly, or not suited to smaller or informal uses.

In the context of this Assessment, the engagement supports further testing of community facility need, especially for multipurpose spaces and meeting rooms. It reinforces that future provision is not only about new buildings, but also the function, accessibility, flexibility and long-term viability of existing assets.

2 What is social infrastructure?

2.1 What is social infrastructure?

2.1.1 Types of social infrastructure

Social infrastructure refers to the network of facilities and spaces that enable communities to thrive by supporting their social, cultural, physical and intellectual wellbeing. It includes the places where people learn, receive care, connect with others, participate in recreation, and access essential services. In the Southern Beaches, social infrastructure plays a foundational role in shaping a liveable, inclusive and resilient community, helping to meet the evolving needs of a growing and diverse population.

Infrastructure Australia defines social infrastructure as the facilities, spaces, services and networks that support the quality of life and wellbeing of our communities.

Community facilities

Community facilities are the buildings and spaces that enable people to meet, learn, access services, and participate in community life. They support social wellbeing by providing places for education, health services, community programs, and social connection. In the Sorell municipality, community facilities include schools, medical centres, emergency services, childcare centres, aged-care services, and neighbourhood houses.

A local example is Okines Community House in Dodges Ferry which plays a central role in supporting community cohesion and hosting programs, and the region's community halls that provide space for activities, local groups, and events.

Arts and cultural facilities

Arts and cultural facilities are spaces that enable creative expression, cultural participation, and celebration of local identity. These facilities can include galleries, exhibition or performance spaces, and cultural precincts, as well as public art and initiatives that showcase local history and heritage. Consultation for the Sorell Social Strategy identified a shortage of arts and cultural spaces in the Sorell region, with community aspirations for increased investment in cultural venues and activities. Opportunities exist to enhance cultural offerings in the Southern Beaches through community events, festivals, temporary performance spaces, and public art initiatives aligned with Sorell's strategic plans.

Green and blue infrastructure

Green and blue infrastructure includes the natural areas that provide environmental, recreational, and wellbeing benefits. Green infrastructure refers to parks, nature reserves, playgrounds, and open space that support passive and active recreation. Blue infrastructure refers to beaches, waterways and their supporting facilities, such as jetties, boat ramps, and surf lifesaving clubs. Local examples include the extensive coastline at Carlton Beach, Okines Beach, Red Ochre Beach, and Primrose Sands, as well as public boat ramps at Dodges Ferry and Lewisham. Carlton Beach is patrolled by the Carlton Park Surf Lifesaving Club and forms a key recreational asset that supports family-friendly and active lifestyles.

2.1.2 Spatial hierarchy

Social infrastructure is planned across a clear hierarchy of scales so that facilities can be matched to the size, needs and characteristics of the communities they serve. This approach recognises that some services are most effective when delivered locally, while others function best at a district or regional level. This creates a coordinated network that supports equitable access and strengthens liveability.

Table 2: Social infrastructure spatial hierarchy

Hierarchy	Purpose	Facilities	Catchment	Local application
Regional	Services large populations across multiple local government areas. Facilities are designed to handle a variety of activities, be easily accessible, and meet the needs of different people.	Major health and education institutions, large cultural venues, significant sporting precincts, and high-use recreation facilities.	Broad geographic areas with large populations and longer travel times, drawing users from an entire region.	Residents of the Southern Beaches rely on Greater Hobart for many regional-level health, education, cultural and specialist services. Higher order regional assets include the Royal Hobart Hospital, UTAS and TMAG. It is important to note that certain assets in Sorell also serve a regional function for local residents and the Tasman and Glamorgan Spring Bay LGAs. These assets include the Sorell Urgent Care Clinic, Pembroke Park, Sorell Emergency Services Hub, and full-line supermarkets.
Municipal	Supports a cluster of communities through mid-scale facilities that offer a wider range of programs and services than local assets. Often delivered as key hubs with co-located or multi-use facilities.	District libraries, multi-purpose community centres, indoor sports facilities, youth services, and larger recreation grounds.	Serves multiple suburbs with moderate travel distances and larger catchments than local facilities	The Sorell township functions as the district hub for the Southern Beaches, providing education, health, recreation and civic services used by surrounding settlements Municipal assets include the Sorell Library, Sorell School, allied health services and Ningana Aged Care. In a recreational sense, Park Beach and Lewisham Jetty serve a municipal role beyond the Southern Beaches.
Local	Delivers accessible, day-to-day facilities that support social connection, play, recreation, learning, and informal community activity	Local parks, playgrounds, small community halls, early years services, local paths, beaches, and small-scale recreation or cultural spaces	Walkable catchments for nearby residents, typically serving individual neighbourhoods	The Southern Beaches community relies heavily on local facilities such as Okines Community House, playgrounds, beaches, boat ramps and small public open spaces

2.1.3 Terms

Table 2 provides definitions for key terms commonly used when discussing social infrastructure. These explanations help clarify concepts and support understanding of the facilities described in this report.

Table 3: Common terms relevant to social infrastructure

Term	Definition
Co-location	Co-location means placing several services or facilities together on one site or nearby. It allows for sharing resources and parking so people can access multiple services in a single visit increasing convenience for community. It also supports efficient service delivery.
Community activation	Community activation empowers local residents to participate in activities, events, volunteering, and decision-making, aiming to build capacity, strengthen networks, and boost involvement in improving their neighbourhood
District facility	A community facility that serves a broader area than a single neighbourhood. District-level facilities, such as aquatic centres or cultural venues, support multiple suburbs or towns (typically tens of thousands of people within a 10–15 km radius).
Liveability	Liveability refers to the quality of life in a place and how well a community's needs are met in terms of safety, access to services, open space, housing affordability, environmental quality, transport, and social connection. Highly liveable communities are safe, healthy, inclusive, and offer a good standard of wellbeing for all residents.
Multipurpose facility	A flexible space or building designed for multiple uses. Multipurpose facilities can host a range of activities or services, for example, a single building might serve as a community hall, emergency shelter, meeting area, or indoor sports venue. They're easily adaptable and this approach maximises resources, letting communities use facilities as needs change.
Neighbourhood House	Neighbourhood Houses provide opportunities for connection, learning, recreation, and support services at the neighbourhood level, often through classes, events, and drop-in activities.
Place activation	Strategies to enliven public places by encouraging people to use them. This can include events, activities, or design improvements that make a space more vibrant, welcoming, and well used.
Place-based planning	Place-based planning is a method that adapts to the needs and features of a specific community. It delivers solutions suited to the local context, focusing on strengths and challenges to ensure planning is relevant and effective.
Public Art	Artworks installed in public spaces (such as murals, sculptures or installations) for everyone to enjoy. Public art enhances the visual environment and reflects local culture and identity, helping to foster community pride and expression.
Resilience	Resilience is a community's ability to withstand and recover from challenges like natural disasters, economic downturns, or other disruptions. Resilient communities adapt to change, keep essential services running during crises, and emerge stronger. Building resilience means preparing for emergencies, supporting the local economy, fostering social networks, and ensuring infrastructure and services are robust and adaptable.
Service catchment	A service catchment represents the area or community served by a particular item of social infrastructure. For example, a single neighbourhood is the catchment for a local park, while a whole municipality or region might be the catchment for a major hospital or regional sports complex.

Term	Definition
Service mapping	Service mapping involves identifying and mapping existing services and facilities in an area to highlight coverage, gaps, and overlaps. By visually mapping services (such as schools, healthcare, parks, public transport), planners can see well-served areas or service gaps, and guide investment decisions accordingly.
Social cohesion	Social cohesion is the strength of community trust, and belonging. When cohesion is high, residents feel connected, join in local activities, trust their neighbours, and cooperate for the common good. This leads to safer, more inclusive communities where people from diverse backgrounds feel respected and valued.

2.2 Planning for social infrastructure

2.2.1 Participation in social activities

Recent reporting from [Ausplay](#) reveals that approximately 80% of Tasmanians participate in some form of sport or physical activity each year, while more than 67% of children aged 5-14 are involved in organised sport. Despite these positive rates, barriers such as limited facilities, travel distance, and cost remain significant, particularly in regional and coastal areas like the Southern Beaches. Ausplay data also suggests a rising demand for flexible, multi-use spaces that can accommodate a variety of activities, as shown in a national shift toward integrated community hubs. This is particularly important for smaller, growing communities, where population growth is placing increasing strain on existing infrastructure and available resources.

The [Creating Value: Results of the National Arts Participation Survey](#) shows that 84% of Tasmanians have attended or engaged with the arts in the past year. Visual arts, music, literature, and live events are all popular, and attendance at local events and venues is often above the national average. Importantly, 72% of Tasmanians agree that arts venues and programs strengthen community connection and foster local identity.

These findings highlight the need for adaptable infrastructure that supports both arts and sport participation, and equitable facilities across dispersed communities.

2.2.2 Social infrastructure trends

Recognising current trends is vital for the planning and delivery of social infrastructure. They help guide how communities' access and use facilities, helping ensure infrastructure remains adaptable, inclusive, and resilient for evolving community needs. Current trends include:

- A shift from single-purpose buildings to an integrated network of community facilities, open space, streets and services that work together to reduce duplication and improve access
- Changing participation patterns and tight budgets are requiring redesign of fit-for-purpose spaces that can be reconfigured, staged and repurposed over time
- People increasingly want welcoming outdoor places to meet, learn and socialise, with basic amenities (shade, seating) and digital access (Wi-Fi and power) supporting work, events and informal use
- Pop-up infrastructure and interim activations help respond early in growth areas and build momentum while permanent facilities catch up
- Facilities and public places are increasingly expected to support climate and/or natural hazard preparedness, communications, refuge and recovery, not just everyday use. This is reflective of a broader push to multi-use spaces in communities.

- An ageing population increases demand for accessible, local, low-cost places and programs that reduce isolation, noting that these requirements are of benefit to the broader community as well.
- Social infrastructure needs to perform under normal conditions and during holiday surges, especially around foreshore areas, open space and community facilities.

For the Southern Beaches, these trends point to a networked approach that links hubs, foreshore and blue-green corridors, with flexible, shared spaces that can handle both day-to-day needs and seasonal demand with resilience functions built in from the start.

2.2.3 Governance and funding

Delivering social infrastructure in Tasmania typically involves shared responsibility across local government, State agencies and the community sector. This means planning and delivery often depends on early agreement about who owns the asset, who operates/programs it, and who carries long-term maintenance and renewal costs, alongside coordination with State-led networks such as transport.

Sorell Council's current priorities reflect this partnership approach, with ongoing advocacy and coordination with State agencies, alongside staged delivery of community, active transport and coastal projects. In practice, this tends to favour governance models that 'make infrastructure work harder', such as co-location, shared use agreements, and program partnerships, to improve utilisation and financial sustainability over time.

From a funding perspective, councils in Tasmania generally assemble social infrastructure projects from a mix of own-source funding and multiple external programs, with grant funding often critical for new or expanded facilities. Key streams relevant to the Sorell LGA, including the Southern Beaches, include:

- Tasmanian Government community and wellbeing grants covering a range of community, inclusion, cohesion and resilience-focused programs
- Active Tasmania (sport and active recreation) grants, including periodic infrastructure programs to upgrade or build participation-focused facilities. These grants can also be applied for by sporting groups.
- Tasmanian Community Fund rounds which support community benefit projects across the state
- Australian Government local infrastructure programs that councils can use for eligible community and local works, including Local Roads and Community Infrastructure and Roads to Recovery

Tasmania's fiscal outlook is an important contextual factor. State Budget settings show ongoing deficits across the forward estimates and rising net debt, alongside an explicit focus on 'budget sustainability' measures and reprioritisation. In this environment, social infrastructure proposals are more likely to succeed where they are staged, clearly scoped, aligned to demonstrated need – and demonstrating multi-use functions, and supported by a credible operating model and partnerships.

3 The Southern Beaches

3.1 About our place

The Southern Beaches area comprises a network of coastal settlements located along Frederick Henry Bay and the lower Carlton River, linked by local road connections and sharing strong environmental, community and service relationships. Their spatial identity is shaped by beaches, estuaries and low coastal landforms, combined with a pattern of residential areas that rely on Sorell for higher-order services while supporting local facilities in the towns themselves. The area's prominent natural features, including surf beaches, bays, headlands and coastal reserves, strongly influence local character, recreation patterns and suburban form.

The built form of the Southern Beaches reflects its transition from coastal holiday settlements to an increasingly permanent residential area. Development is predominantly low-density and low-rise, shaped by historic subdivision patterns, limited servicing and strong coastal and landscape influences. Detached dwellings remain the dominant housing form, with building heights generally limited to one or two storeys.

Historic subdivision layouts continue to influence settlement structure, with irregular street patterns, narrow road reserves, limited footpaths and constrained public realm. These characteristics, combined with reliance on on-site wastewater and stormwater systems, shape lot sizes, dwelling footprints and the feasibility of more intensive development. Built form varies across the Southern Beaches, with Dodges Ferry exhibiting a more consolidated and suburban character around its service and commercial areas, while Lewisham, Carlton and Primrose Sands retain more linear, coastal and informal settlement patterns.



- Southern Beaches Area (50m buffer)
- Arterial Road
- National/State Highway

Southern Beaches Plan

Figure 1-1
Southern Beaches
Area



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Size	A3

3.2 Community profile

The Southern Beaches community profile summarises who lives in the study area today, and how the population is changing over time. It draws on available census and small-area forecast data to describe population growth, household structure, age profile, and the ongoing influence of seasonality and holiday homes across Dodges Ferry, Lewisham, Carlton, Carlton River and Primrose Sands. Overall, the data reflects a community in transition, shifting from a set of coastal holiday settlements toward a more permanent residential profile, while still experiencing pronounced seasonal peaks that shape housing use and local demand.

3.2.1 Community characteristics

The Southern Beaches is transitioning from a coastal holiday area to a more permanent residential community, while retaining a strong seasonal population component. At the 2021 Census the Southern Beaches localities totalled 6,364 usual residents, having grown by about 2.6% per year between 2016 and 2021. Growth is concentrated in Dodges Ferry (the largest township) and the adjoining coastal suburbs.

Household structure reflects an established coastal community with a high share of smaller households. Couples without children (29%) and lone person households (26%) are the most common household types, with families with children comprising 24%. Average household size is 1.8 persons per dwelling, lower than Greater Hobart (2.4), and consistent with an older population profile and a substantial holiday home market.

Compared with the Sorell LGA overall, the Southern Beaches has experienced strong growth but remains constrained by servicing and settlement structure, which shapes the pace and form of change.

3.2.2 Key demographics

Population distribution is uneven across the coastal settlements. Dodges Ferry accounts for around 35% of residents, followed by Carlton (18%) and Primrose Sands (16%), with Lewisham (11%) and Carlton River (5%) forming smaller communities.

The age profile is weighted toward older cohorts. More than 40% of residents are aged 50 and over, and the area has continued to age over the past decade, with a declining share of residents under 20 and a rising share over 60. There are also clear differences between settlements: Primrose Sands has a notably older profile, while Carlton and Carlton River include comparatively higher proportions of younger households and families. While the next Census data won't be available during this project's timeline, anecdotal evidence and school enrolments indicate an increase in local families moving to the Southern Beaches; this will be tested through engagement and should be validated once Census data is available.

Socio-economic and housing indicators reinforce a predominantly owner-occupier market. Around 83% of dwellings are owner-occupied (owned outright or with a mortgage), higher than Greater Hobart (71%). Median weekly household income is \$1,425, slightly below Greater Hobart (\$1,542), which is consistent with an older demographic and lower overall workforce participation.

Employment patterns show a commuter-based residential community. In 2021 there were 3,508 employed residents (about 46% of residents), with construction and health care/social assistance the largest employment sectors (each 15%). A substantial share of employed residents travel outside the area for work, including to Hobart (20%) and Sorell–Richmond (14%), while 17% work within the Dodges Ferry–Lewisham area.

3.2.3 Seasonality and holiday homes

Seasonality remains a defining feature of the Southern Beaches housing market and service demand. 2021 Census unoccupied dwelling data indicates a substantial stock of non-primary residences, particularly in

Primrose Sands (447 dwellings, 44.5% unoccupied), followed by Dodges Ferry (273, 21.0%), Carlton River (27, 18.5%), Carlton (91, 15.1%) and Lewisham (47, 13.2%). All suburbs (except Carlton River) recorded increased occupancy between 2016 and 2021, indicating continued transition toward year-round residence, alongside persistent holiday home use.

This dual profile has practical implications. Holiday peaks amplify demand for foreshore access, parking, waste services and community infrastructure, while the growing permanent population increases baseline demand for local services and facilities year-round.

4 Social infrastructure audit

4.1 Community facilities

4.1.1 Education and childcare

There are three government schools in the Sorell LGA – Sorell School (K-12), Dodges Ferry Primary School and Dunalley Primary School. While the total enrolments for the other two government schools in the Sorell LGA have remained relatively constant with year-to-year variations, enrolments at Dodges Ferry have increased since 2018 to 2025 by over 100 students. This is despite a slight decline in the number of school aged persons (i.e. 5 to 14 years) in the Southern Beaches area between 2016 and 2021 – this datapoint, combined with growing enrolments, indicates an increase in local families since the last Census. The Tasmanian Government has committed \$25 million for a major redevelopment of Dodges Ferry Primary School to provide additional capacity, and contemporary learning areas, support spaces, and amenities.

Nipakawa Steiner School is a new non-government primary school in Carlton which is currently accepting students from kindergarten to year 2. Indie School Sorell is a non-government school in the Sorell township that provides an alternative education for young people aged 15-18. It is understood that council is in ongoing conversations with Catholic Education Tasmania regarding a new school in the LGA.

There nearest university facilities to the Southern Beaches are the University of Tasmania campus facilities across Greater Hobart. The Southeast Tasmania Study Hub in the Sorell township offers local support services and study facilities for students enrolled at any university or vocational education and training provider.

A notable portion of school aged residents travel out of the Southern Beaches area to attend school, particularly high school. This has an impact on vehicle movements and how residents move through the region, while also exposing gaps in public transport connections for school students.

Early childhood support in the Southern Beaches is also strengthened by non-school services and informal family infrastructure. Dodges Ferry Primary School offers the free [Launching into Learning](#) program for children aged 0 to 4 and their families, providing an accessible early years entry point that supports development, parent connection and familiarity with school. This complements the existing 50-place Gumnut Long Day Care Centre in Dodges Ferry and nearby playground assets already identified in Table 4, together forming an important local early childhood network.

Table 4 - Education and childcare facilities

Type	Name	Location	Places
Tertiary education	University of Tasmania	Greater Hobart	-
	South East Tasmania Study Hub	Sorell	-
Secondary school	Sorell School (K – 12)	Sorell	821

Type	Name	Location	Places
	Indie School	Sorell	40 +
Primary school	Dodges Ferry Primary School (K-6)	Dodges Ferry	551
	Nipakawa Steiner School (K-2)	Carlton	-
	Dunalley Primary School	Dunalley	110
Long day care	Gumnut Long Day Care Centre	Dodges Ferry	50
Outside of school hours care	Gumnut Outside School Hours Care (located on Dodges Ferry Primary School grounds)	Dodges Ferry	60
Playgroup	Little Ripples Playgroup	Carlton (at Nipakawa Steiner School)	-
	Dodges Ferry Playgroup	Dodges Ferry (at Okines Community House)	-

4.1.2 Healthcare

There are two private family medical practices in the Sorell township and one private doctors' surgery in Dodges Ferry. There is also one community medical centre and family practice located in the Sorell LGA, offering a range of services.

There are no identified aged care services in the Southern Beaches. The closest aged care facility is located in the Sorell township.

There are no major district hospitals located in the Sorell LGA. The nearest major hospital is the Royal Hobart Hospital, which offers specialised services and an emergency department. The Sorell Medicare Urgent Care Clinic opened in December 2025 and offers free, immediate treatment for non-life threatening conditions, providing priority care without the need for emergency department visits. This facility services the broader south east region, beyond the Sorell Municipality.

Table 5 - Medical facilities

	Name	Services	Location	Capacity
Medical practices	Dodges Ferry Medical	GP clinic	Dodges Ferry	-
	Sorell Family Practice	GP clinic	Sorell	-
	Sorell Community Health Centre	Community Continence Service Child Health and Parenting Service Community Physiotherapy Service Sorell Dental Clinic	Sorell	-
Hospitals/urgent care	Royal Hobart Hospital	Major hospital	Hobart	501 beds
	Sorell Medicare Urgent Care Clinic	Urgent care clinic	Sorell	-

	Name	Services	Location	Capacity
Aged care	Uniting AgeWell Ningana Independent Living	Residential aged care	Sorell	72

4.1.3 Emergency services

Dodges Ferry Ambulance Station is a double branch station with a paramedic rostered on 24-hours per day as well as volunteer support staff. There are two other ambulance stations within the Sorell LGA. The Sorell Ambulance Station is a full-time station with paramedic crews rostered on 24-hours per day, and the Dunalley Ambulance Station is a volunteer only station.

There are no police stations in the Southern Beaches. The nearest police stations are the Sorell Police Station and the Dunalley Police Station.

There are two volunteer fire stations within the Southern Beaches, in Dodges Ferry and Primrose Sands. The nearest career brigade is in Hobart. There are no State Emergency Services (SES) units in the Southern Beaches, with the nearest branch in the Sorell township. Sea Rescue Tasmania is based in Dodges Ferry and provides an emergency response and marine rescue service. The Carlton Park Surf Lifesaving Club also aids with emergency marine search and rescue activities.

Table 6 - Emergency services

Type	Name	Location	Capacity
Ambulance	Dodges Ferry Ambulance Station	Dodges Ferry	Double Branch station – a paramedic is rostered on 24 hours per day, with volunteer support
	Sorell Ambulance Station	Sorell	Full-time station – paramedic crews are rostered on 24 hours per day
Police	Sorell Police Station	Sorell	
	Dunalley Police Station	Dunalley	
Fire and rescue	Dodges Ferry Fire Station	Dodges Ferry	Volunteer
	Primrose Sands Fire Station	Primrose Sands	Volunteer
	Hobart Fire Station	Hobart	Career brigade
	State Emergency Service – Sorell Unit	Sorell	
	Sea Rescue Tasmania	Dodges Ferry	

4.1.4 Places of worship

There is one place of worship in the Southern Beaches, which is co-located with the Christian Youth Camps Blue Lagoon facility.

Table 7 - Places of worship within the Southern Beaches

Name	Services	Location
South East Anglican Southern Beaches	Sunday Services and Sunday kids program	Dodges Ferry

4.1.5 Youth support

The Sorell Social Strategy identified a shortage of spaces and services tailored for older children and youth, particularly in the Southern Beaches. This has contributed to feelings of loneliness, boredom and social isolation of young people in the area.

This gap has recently begun to be addressed through the establishment of Fitzies, Sorell's new youth hub at 11 Fitzroy Street. Opened in April 2026, Fitzies provides a dedicated space for youth programs, events and informal connection, and represents an important step toward more visible, place-based support for young people in the broader south east.

4.1.6 Community houses

There are two community houses in the Southern Beaches. Okines Community House in Dodges Ferry is part of the Neighbourhood Houses Tasmania network. Further information about Okines Community House is in Section 4.3.1.

The Primrose Sands Community Hall is a council-owned, multipurpose facility that provides meeting and event spaces, supports local clubs and community activities, and offers recreation infrastructure including a playground, skate ramp and BMX track for the Primrose Sands community. Events at the Primrose Sands Community Hall include the Primrose Sands Market.

Table 8 - Community houses

Name	Services	Location
Okines Community House	Local hub for the Southern Beaches offering food support, community activities, learning and wellbeing programs, a community garden, affordable facilities, volunteering opportunities, and information and referral support	Dodges Ferry
Primrose Sands Community Hall	Community facility owned by Sorell Council, managed by community group Primrose Sands Community Hall Inc. and used as a local venue for community activities, events and services including the Primrose Sands Market	Primrose Sands

4.1.7 Arts facilities

There are limited dedicated arts facilities in the Southern Beaches. Most of the arts services in the area are delivered through programming and events.

Table 9 - Arts facilities within the Southern Beaches

Name	Services	Township
Red Ochre Studio	Hosts ceramics classes, workshops and events	Dodges Ferry
Beatties Studio	Photographic museum commemorating the life and work of Hobart photographer John Watt Beattie.	Dodges Ferry
Park Art	Artist run cooperative gallery, located at the rear of Park Beach Cafe	Dodges Ferry
Dodges Ferry Mosaics	Hosts mosaic classes, workshops and events	Carolton River

4.1.8 Historic heritage

Historic heritage within the Southern Beaches is closely linked to its development as a holiday and shack-based settlement during the twentieth century and its gradual transition to permanent residential use. While there are no formally listed heritage places, the area's identity is strongly shaped by modest beach houses, informal construction, early subdivision patterns and long-standing community facilities.

Elements such as community halls, jetties, foreshore access points and remnants of early shack development contribute to local character and a shared sense of place. The places listed in Table 10 illustrate the Southern Beaches' transition from early settlement and farming to shack-based holiday communities.

Table 10 - Places of historic heritage value within the Southern Beaches

Name	Description
Ferry Farm	Established in the early 1830s by Ralph Dodge, associated with one of the earliest ferry crossings of Pitt Water and early agricultural activity; remnants and interpretation signage remain on the foreshore near Dodges Ferry Primary School.
Lagoon Farm site and Lagoon Park	Former nineteenth-century farmstead now commemorated through signage and public open space, illustrating early rural land use and subsequent adaptation into community recreation areas.
Ferry Hall	A relocated early-twentieth-century timber community hall that has served multiple civic functions over time, reflecting the informal, adaptive reuse characteristic of Southern Beaches heritage.
Lewisham Jetty	A long-standing maritime structure supporting fishing, boating and local transport, representing the area's coastal settlement and recreational history; the jetty remains an active and valued community asset.
Historic shack precincts	While largely unlisted, clusters of modest beach shacks, early subdivision layouts and foreshore access points collectively express the twentieth-century holiday settlement character that defines much of the Southern Beaches' identity.

Name	Description
Carlton River Congregational Church and Cemetery	The Carlton River Congregational Church and Cemetery is an early colonial church and burial ground that holds heritage value and references the area's nineteenth-century settlement and religious history.

4.1.9 Aboriginal places

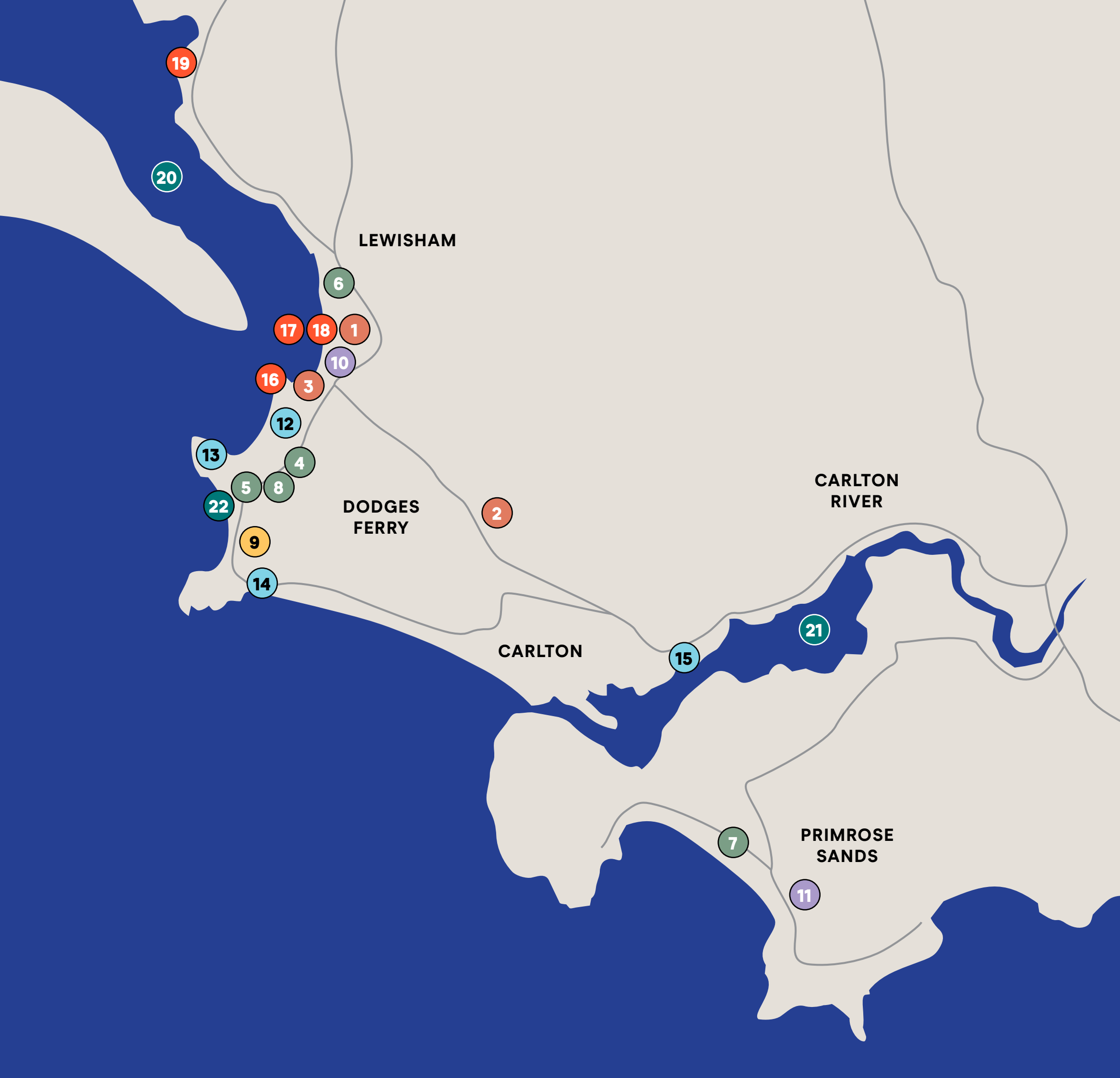
The Southern Beaches form part of a culturally significant coastal landscape for the Traditional Owners, the Mumirimina people of the Oyster Bay nation, who have long-standing connections to land, sea and waterways. Estuaries, lagoons and coastal margins within the study area were important places for movement, food gathering and cultural practice, and these connections continue despite extensive post-colonial land use change.

Aboriginal heritage values are primarily embedded in natural features rather than the built environment, and may not be immediately visible. The places listed in Table 11 indicate that Aboriginal heritage in the Southern Beaches is landscape-based, continuous and living, and must be considered in land use change affecting Land, Sea and Sky Country including coastal areas, wetlands and estuaries.

Table 11 - Places of Palawa heritage value within the Southern Beaches

Name	Description
Pitt Water-Orielton Lagoon	A Ramsar-listed estuarine system of international significance that forms part of the traditional lands of the Mumirimina people, with long-standing use for food gathering, movement and cultural practice; Aboriginal values are embedded in tidal flats, saltmarshes and shorelines.
Carlton River estuary	A culturally significant waterway and estuarine landscape historically used for seasonal movement and resource harvesting, forming part of the broader coastal cultural system linked to Pitt Water and Frederick Henry Bay.
Blue Lagoon and surrounding wetlands	Coastal lagoon and wetland systems associated with Aboriginal food sources and travel routes, where cultural values are closely tied to water, landforms and vegetation communities rather than visible artefacts.
Red Ochre Beach and Park Beach	Red Ochre Beach and Park Beach hold Aboriginal heritage value as part of the coastal Country of the Mumirimina people, reflecting long-standing cultural connections to shoreline resources, movement routes and living cultural practice.

Community facilities



Ref	Name of asset
Education and childcare	
1	Dodges Ferry Primary School
2	Nipakawa Steiner School
3	Gumnut Long Daycare Centre
Healthcare and emergency services	
4	Dodges Ferry Medical
5	Dodges Ferry Ambulance Station
6	Dodges Ferry Fire Station
7	Primrose Sands Fire Station
8	Sea Rescue Tasmania
Places of worship	
9	South East Anglican Southern Beaches
Community houses	
10	Okines Community House
11	Primrose Sands Community Hall
Arts facilities	
12	Red Ochre Studio
13	Beatties Studio
14	Park Art
15	Dodges Ferry Mosaics
Historic heritage	
16	Ferry Farm
17	Lagoon Farm / Lagoon Park
18	Ferry Hall
19	Lewisham Jetty
Aboriginal heritage	
20	Pitt Water-Orielton Lagoon
21	Carlton River estuary
22	Blue Lagoon

4.2 Green and blue infrastructure

4.2.1 Sporting and exercise facilities

The Dodges Ferry Recreation Reserve includes the local football oval (known as 'Shark Park') for the Dodges Ferry Football Club, facilities such as change rooms and score boards. The skate park was upgraded in 2017 and is understood to be well-utilised.

The Dodges Ferry Community Recreation Centre is also located at Dodges Ferry Primary School and comprises a sports court. Across the road from the Dodges Ferry Recreation Reserve, the Southern Beaches Swim Centre is currently being built to provide a multi-use aquatic facility. Flippers Aquatics is located in Lewisham and provides learn-to-swim services. The Healthy Horizons Gym is also located across the road from the Dodges Ferry Recreation Reserve and provide services including membership and group fitness.

Christian Youth Camps Blue Lagoon is located on Bally Park Road, Dodges Ferry. It is a youth camp facility that includes a large recreation hall. The Carlton Park Surf Life Saving Club is located at Carlton Beach and includes parking, toilet facilities, and established walkways to the beach.

The Primrose Sands Community Hall provides an indoor basketball court which doubles as a community hall, and a neighbourhood house type facility. There are outdoor playground facilities, including play equipment for toddlers, a small bike pump track, skate facility, a basketball hoop, and outdoor seating areas.

Table 12 - Sporting and exercise facilities within the Southern Beaches

Name	Description	Location
Carlton Park Surf Lifesaving Club	Surf lifesaving clubrooms	Carlton
Christian Youth Camps Blue Lagoon	Recreation hall including full size basketball court and indoor climbing wall	Dodges Ferry
Dodges Ferry Community Recreation Centre	Supports activities including Okines Community Volleyball	Dodges Ferry
Dodges Ferry Skate Park	Skate park	Dodges Ferry
Dodges Ferry Recreation Ground	Known locally as 'Shark Park'. Supports the Dodges Ferry Sharks Football Club	Dodges Ferry
Flippers Aquatics	Swim school	Lewisham
Healthy Horizons	Gym	Dodges Ferry
Okines Community Centre	Supports activities including Mat Pilates classes	Dodges Ferry
Primrose Sands Community Hall	Indoor basketball court	Primrose Sands
Southern Beaches Swim Centre (under construction)	Multi-use swimming facility	Dodges Ferry

4.2.2 Parks and nature reserves

The Southern Beaches area contains several parks and nature reserves that provide opportunities for conservation and recreation.

Table 13 – Parks and nature reserves within the Southern Beaches

Name	Location
Casuarina Reserve	Dodges Ferry
Dodges Ferry Reserve	Dodges Ferry
Jacks Flat Reserve	Lewisham
Blue Lagoon Park	Dodges Ferry
Lagoon Park	Dodges Ferry
Payeena Reserve	Dodges Ferry
Samuel Thorne Reserve	Lewisham
Townsend's Lagoon	Lewisham
White Gums Reserve	Dodges Ferry

4.2.3 Playspaces

There are five formalised playspaces located within the Southern Beaches.

Table 14 – Playspaces within the Southern Beaches

Name	Type	Location
Lewisham Boat Ramp	Local	Lewisham
Lewis Court Reserve	Local	Lewisham
Boat Park	Regional	Dodges Ferry
Snake Hollow Park	Local	Carlton
Primrose Sands Community Hall	District	Primrose Sands

4.2.4 Blue infrastructure

The coastal landscape of the Southern Beaches provides opportunity for passive recreation and other social benefits derived from experiencing blue infrastructure.

The Lewisham to Carlton trail links the Lewisham Boat Ramp, along the foreshore, to Dodges Ferry and Carlton Beach beyond. It provides a valued coastal link that is well used by the community. In Primrose Sands, there are trails throughout the dunes and along the foreshore that are used by the local community. Established gravel and sealed walking trails extend along Old Forcett Road, and parts of Lewisham Scenic Drive, Carlton Beach Road, and Carlton River Road, as well as smaller streets with footpaths.

Table 15 - Blue infrastructure within the Southern Beaches

Type	Name	Location
Beach	Blue Lagoon Beach	Dodges Ferry
	Carlton Beach	Carlton
	Okines Beach	Dodges Ferry
	Park Beach	Dodges Ferry
	Parnella Reserve Beach	Dodges Ferry
	Primrose Sands Beach	Primrose Sands
	Red Ochre Beach	Dodges Ferry
	Tiger Head Beach	Dodges Ferry
Rivers, lakes and estuaries	Carlton River	Carlton River
	Blue Lagoon	Dodges Ferry
Fishing spot/boat ramp	Dodges Ferry Boat Ramp	Dodges Ferry
	Gypsy Bay Boat Ramp	Primrose Sands
	Lewisham Jetty	Lewisham
Surf lifesaving	Carlton Park Surf Lifesaving Club	Carlton

Blue & green infrastructure



Ref	Name of asset
Sporting and recreation facilities	
1	Carlton Park Surf Lifesaving Club
2	Christian Youth Camps Blue Lagoon
3	Dodges Ferry Recreation Ground
4	Dodges Ferry Skate Park
5	Flippers Aquatics
6	Healthy Horizons
Parks and Nature reserves	
7	Casuarina Reserve
8	Dodges Ferry Reserve
9	Jacks Flat Reserve
10	Blue Lagoon Park
11	Lagoon Park
12	Payeena Reserve
13	Samuel Thorne Reserve
14	Townsend's Lagoon
15	White Gums Reserve
Playspaces	
16	Lewisham Boat Ramp
17	Lewis Court Reserve
18	Boat Park
19	Snake Hollow Park
20	Primrose Sands Community Hall
Blue infrastructure	
21	Dodges Ferry Boat Ramp
22	Gypsy Bay Boat Ramp
23	Lewisham Jetty

Beaches, lagoons, rivers and estuaries are noted directly on the map.

4.3 Social programming

4.3.1 Case study: Okines Community House

Okines Community House Inc. is a registered Tasmanian charity, established in 1999. It operates as a not-for-profit organisation and forms part of the statewide Neighbourhood Houses Tasmania network. Okines offers a wide range of programs and services that contribute to social outcomes within the Southern Beaches area. It operates as a local access point for community-based activities and informal support in a peri-urban context with limited proximity to higher-order services.

Programs are shaped by local needs and delivered through a mix of staff, volunteers and partnerships. A wide program of regular activities supports physical health, mental wellbeing and social inclusion.

- Programs such as Dodges Ferry Flicks, shared meals, craft groups, choirs, and community events provide opportunities for social participation at a local level. These activities support the maintenance of social networks and regular community contact, particularly for residents with limited mobility or transport options.
- Okines supports food access and affordability for households experiencing cost pressures and provides an additional point of local social interaction. The Food Co-op increases local availability of affordable food options and reduces the need for residents to travel to Hobart or larger centres. The community pantry and emergency food relief program provide additional food security.
- Programs including cooking classes, internet & computer access and the Bike Shed support access to practical skills and shared resources. The Bike Shed contributes to low-cost transport options and reuse, while access to computers and informal learning opportunities assists residents who may otherwise experience digital exclusion.
- Group-based exercise, gardening, and wellbeing activities provide opportunities for routine physical activity and social engagement. The Community Garden supports food growing, shared use of space, and connection to place, with potential benefits for food literacy and informal learning. The DiGnity Gardening program provides a therapeutic, supported environment for community members to engage with community gardening, including those with physical or mental disabilities, cognitive constraints or those who are socially isolated.
- Youth services are provided through programs such as the Grow & Learn school partnership with Dodges Ferry Primary School, where students use the community garden for hands-on learning in food growing, environmental education and wellbeing. It also supports young people through school holiday activities, access to the Community Pantry and Breakfast Club, creative and recreational groups, and volunteering opportunities.



Okines works in partnership with Neighbourhood Houses Tasmania and engages with government and community sector organisations, including the Tasmanian Department of Premier and Cabinet. These partnerships support program delivery, governance, and alignment with broader community development and social policy objectives. Okines also works with external organisations and government to bring funding, training and services into the Southern Beaches, including community resilience planning and disaster preparedness initiatives.

4.3.2 Case study: Carlton Park Surf Lifesaving Club

Carlton Park Surf Life Saving Club is a long-standing, volunteer-run organisation providing essential lifesaving, water safety and community services to the Southern Beaches. Operating from Carlton Beach, the Club plays a critical role in public safety, youth development and community connection in a high-use coastal environment.

Carlton Park Surf Life Saving Club provides volunteer beach patrols during the patrol season, with members undertaking patrol duties, rescues, first aid and water safety activities at Carlton Beach. These patrols support public safety at one of the most heavily used beaches in the Sorell municipality, and arguably, Southern Tasmania. In addition to regular patrols, the Club provides water safety services for surf sports and community events held at Carlton Beach. The Carlton Park Surf Festival is an annual festival that signals the start of summer and surf sports activities each year.

Youth participation is a core focus of the Club's activities. Carlton Park SLSC operates a large Nippers program, providing structured surf education, water safety skills and physical activity for children and young people. The program also supports progression into junior lifesaving, surf sports and leadership.

Carlton Park Surf Life Saving Club hosts surf sports competitions, training sessions and social events that are open to members and the wider community. These activities contribute to local participation in coastal recreation and support intergenerational involvement in surf lifesaving. The Club also works with groups promoting inclusivity such as Lifesavers with Pride and Disabled Surfers Association of Tasmania.

4.4 Supporting community services

4.4.1 Transport services

There are two community transport services offered in the Southern Beaches. Community Transport Services Tasmania (CTST) operates in the Southern Beaches and provides flexible door-to-door transport options. Area Connect is powered by CTST and provides a twice-weekly bus service between Primrose Sands and Sorell that is pre-booked and collects patrons from the door. Regular bus services are operated by Kinetic. Bus services operated by Kinetic in the Southern Beaches currently consist of:

- Monday to Friday: seven daily outgoing bus services from Carlton to the Hobart Interchange via the Southern Beaches and Sorell, with eight daily incoming services.
- Saturday/Sunday/Public Holidays: four daily outgoing bus services from Carlton and the Hobart Interchange via the Southern Beaches and Sorell, with five daily incoming services.

While the area's population is ageing, previous engagement with local youth shows that transport remains a distinct access issue for young people, who often have no alternative to private lifts and report that existing bus services do not meet after-school, weekend or cross-settlement travel needs. This limits access to education, work, services, recreation and social connection. Community transport should therefore be considered as an inclusive access response that supports all demographics, including older people, young people and households without reliable private vehicles.

4.4.2 Home-based support

Key home-based support services in the Southern Beaches area include Meals on Wheels and Community Aged Care Packages.

Table 16 - Home-based support services

Provider	Service provided
Meals on Wheels Eastern Shore & Dodges Ferry Branch	Deliver meals and conduct wellbeing checks
South Eastern Nursing & Home Care Association Inc Community Aged Care Packages	Approved provider for Home Care Packages, subsidised by the Australian Government

5 Needs assessment

5.1 Population projections

REMPPLAN forecasts modest population growth from about 6,023 (2021) to about 6,983 (2046) and growth in occupied private dwellings from about 2,713 to about 3,272 over the same period. It also projects unoccupied private dwellings increasing from about 870 (2021) to about 1,053 (2046), indicating ongoing demand for non-primary dwellings (i.e. holiday homes, and thus a seasonal population) even as permanent occupation rises. Age projections in the same dataset show growth in older age groups through to 2046, which will further shape the types of services required in a community with a strong seasonal dimension.

Table 17: Southern Beaches population projections by age cohort (REMPPLAN)

Population projections	2021		2036		2046		2021 - 2046
	People	%	People	%	People	%	Change in cohort
Preschool (0 - 4)	306	5.08%	363	5.39%	382	5.47%	+0.39%
School Age (5 - 14)	723	12.00%	809	12.02%	853	12.22%	+0.22%
Youth (15 - 24)	632	10.49%	651	9.67%	682	9.77%	-0.72%
Young Workers (25 - 34)	733	12.17%	706	10.49%	707	10.12%	-2.05%
Workers (35 - 49)	1,038	17.23%	1,204	17.89%	1,215	17.40%	+0.17%
Older Workers (50 - 64)	1,482	24.61%	1,348	20.03%	1,438	20.59%	-4.02%
Retirement (65 - 79)	981	16.29%	1,210	17.98%	1,178	16.87%	+0.58%
Elderly (80+)	128	2.13%	438	6.51%	528	7.56%	+5.43%
Total	6,023		6,729		6,983		

5.2 Benchmarks

Table 17 presents a consolidated set of social infrastructure benchmarks for the Southern Beaches. The benchmark assessment is based on population projections, which provides a reference point for social infrastructure provision, rather than an absolute requirement. Effective social infrastructure planning requires consideration of a range of additional factors, including demographic trends, socio-economic and health status, household structure, accessibility, community preferences and funding availability.

Note on benchmarking approach

It is important to recognise that benchmarking alone cannot determine provision levels. Actual needs depend on factors such as proximity, utilisation, local context, and the role of surrounding centres. Draft benchmarks should be workshopped with Council to ensure alignment with strategic objectives, settlement patterns, and service delivery models.

Where provision appears either well-catered for or lacking, further analysis is required to assess whether existing infrastructure is fit for purpose, appropriately located, in good condition, and capable of supporting the desired services, programs, and community outcomes. These considerations will guide engagement on this Draft and ensure that infrastructure planning remains responsive and relevant.

5.2.1 Benchmark sources

Local context documents

- Sorell Social Strategy (2025) provides local social infrastructure priorities, drivers, and community expectations, ensuring the benchmarks reflect Sorell-specific planning principles and demographic characteristics
- Sorell Open Space Strategy (2020) offers local open-space benchmarks, geographic context, settlement pattern insights, and community use/preferences for parks and recreation
- Sorell Playspace Strategy Draft Report (2025) contributes contemporary standards for play, catchment thinking, quality requirements and distribution insights, ensuring alignment with local provision realities.

Core benchmark sources

- PLAWA Community Infrastructure Guidelines (2020) provides population-based facility triggers, definitions, hierarchy guidance and principles for co-location and flexible design
- Snowy Mountains SAP Social Infrastructure Study (2021) provides benchmark ratios across all facility types and a comprehensive explanation of the limitations, caveats and best-practice interpretation of benchmarks.

Comparative case studies

- Victor Harbor Social Infrastructure Assessment (2024) relevant as a coastal, peri-urban, lifestyle area with aging demographics and similar service pressures (youth, early childhood, community centres), reinforcing the need for nuanced interpretation of supply
- Albury Social Infrastructure Strategy (2025) provides best-practice guidance on multipurpose hubs, co-location, lifecycle planning and strategic alignment, supporting the hybrid benchmarking approach.

5.2.2 Benchmark assessment

Table 18: Social infrastructure benchmarks

Category	Benchmark	2046 demand	Assessment	Identified need
District/ regional community hub	1 : 20,000– 30,000	0.35 – 0.23	Not triggered	Consider provision at LGA scale
Local community centre	1 : 6,000–10,000	1.16 – 0.70	Need for one multipurpose centre triggered	Okines Community House could be considered as providing for this need, however its local role in the context of this definition requires consideration. Engagement to explore function/role, capacity, programming and utilisation, and also to consider feedback garnered through consultation on the future of Fery Hall.
Community meeting room	1 : 2,500–3,000	2.79 – 2.33	Need for at least 2-3 meeting rooms (distributed or co-located) triggered	Okines Community House and Primrose Sands Community Hall may provide for this need. Engagement to explore capacity, programming and utilisation
Library	1 : 20,000– 30,000	0.35 – 0.23	Not triggered	Engagement to explore potential for mobile, outreach, digital-first library services from Sorell
Early childhood centre	1 place : 5 children aged 0- 4 years	76	Need for ~25 additional places triggered	Additional early childhood care facilities required
Primary school	1 : 7,500	0.93	Need for one primary school triggered	Dodges Ferry Primary School provides for this need. Masterplan and expansion underway
Secondary school	1 : 20,000	0.35	Not triggered	Focus on access for high school students attending outside the Southern Beaches area, primarily through public transport provision.
Youth centre	1 : 15,000–20,000	0.47 – 0.35	Not triggered	Explore youth space or integrated youth programming in existing facilities leveraging the engagement completed through the South East Youth Engagement Project Youth Advisory Group. Explore outreach to the Southern Beaches area from the newly established Fitzie's (Sorell Youth Hub).
General Practitioner (GP)	1 : 1,000	6.98	Need for 7 GPs triggered	Dodges Ferry Medical Centre has one GP; additional need may be met via services in Sorell (medical centre and urgent care clinic), however, this is to be investigated through engagement with providers

Category	Benchmark	2046 demand	Assessment	Identified need
Community health centre	1 : 20,000–30,000	0.35 – 0.23	Not triggered	Need may be met via services in Sorell and Greater Hobart. Local focus on outreach and visiting allied health services
Emergency services (fire, police, ambulance)	Emergency services are based on response time, not population	-	Need dependent on risk, access, road distance rather than population	Ambulance, Fire and Sea Rescue services provided within the study area. Emergency Services Hub located in Sorell. Engagement to explore volunteer TFS and SES capacity
Home care packages (aged care support)	1 : 1,000 people aged 70+	135	Need for 135 home care packages triggered	Residential aged care provision is typically planned for at the regional or district level. Engagement to explore regional and district demand
Residential aged care places	6 : 1,000 people aged 70+	80	Need for 80 aged care places triggered	Best-practice planning reflects a home-first aged care system where most older residents are supported to remain in their homes for as long as possible. Engagement to explore regional and district demand
Arts and culture facility	1 : 30,000	0.23	Not triggered	Focus on multi-use community space with cultural programming, local events and public art
Local creative and cultural practice space	1 : 8,000	0.87	Nearing trigger	Explore opportunities for local space provision and/or additional programming
Sports field	1 : 4,000–6,000	1.75 – 1.16	Need for 1-2 sports fields triggered	Dodges Ferry Recreation Ground provides for this need locally. Pembroke Park provides for this need at the district scale. Engagement to explore capacity, programming and utilisation
Indoor recreation	1 : 10,000	0.70	Nearing trigger	Engagement to explore demand drivers for indoor sports. Pembroke Park addresses this at a district scale.
Skate park, pump track facility	1 : 5,000	1.40	One wheeled sports space triggered	Dodges Ferry Skate Park provides for this need locally. Engagement to explore additional demand
Playspaces	1 : 1,000	6.98	Need for 7 playspaces triggered	There are five formalised playspaces in the study area; engagement will further explore this need alongside the findings and priorities outlined in the Sorell Playspace Strategy.
Local park	1 : 1,500	4.66	Need for 5 local parks triggered	To be investigated through community and Council engagement as to

Category	Benchmark	2046 demand	Assessment	Identified need
Community park	1 : 3,000	2.33	Need for two community parks triggered	investment pipeline, demand and variety. Consideration for ped shed assessment will also be made. Priority is upgrades or enhancements, rather than new assets.
District park	1 : 20,000	0.35	Not triggered	Pembroke Park addresses this at a district scale.

5.3 Assessment summary

The benchmark assessment in Table 18, indicates that minimal new social infrastructure assets are required in the Southern Beaches. These preliminary findings will be tested through community and stakeholder engagement to ensure the assessment is context-appropriate, and will also take into account access, quality, capacity and utilisation when developing future recommendations.

There may be a greater need for upgrades or enhancements to existing infrastructure, or additional provision of services and programming, rather than the development of new infrastructure itself, and this too will be explored through engagement.

5.3.1 Community facilities

- Okines Community House and Primrose Sands Community Hall may provide for local needs associated with **community centres and community meeting rooms**, however this requires further engagement with the community and a reflection on recent engagement regarding the future of Ferry Hall which highlighted a perceived shortage of flexible, accessible and affordable indoor community space. It is important that engagement explores the demand, capacity and utilisation of these spaces and where opportunities may exist for improvements to quality, access and flexibility of use at these assets, or others.
- The assessment does not indicate a need for a **local library**, however, engagement should explore the potential for mobile, outreach, digital first library services from Sorell.
- Additional **early childhood care** spaces (~25) will be required to meet the needs of the community as the population grows. This provision should be monitored closely to track growth in the 0-4 year old cohort.
- The assessment does not indicate a need for a local **high school**, however, it is recommended that the project consider access for students attending high school outside the area, with a focus on public transport provision.
- The assessment indicated a local shortfall on the provision of **General Practitioners** noting the Dodges Ferry Medical Centre has one GP. Demand and desire for local health services will be explored through engagement, noting additional need may be met via services in Sorell.
- The assessment does not indicate a need for an **arts and culture facility**, but that population projections will approach the trigger for a **local creative and cultural practice space**. It is recommended the project focus on exploring the potential for multi-use community spaces, cultural programming, local events and public art

5.3.2 Green and blue infrastructure

- Dodges Ferry Recreation Ground provides for local needs associated with **sports fields**, while Pembroke Park provides for this need at the district scale. It is recommended that engagement explores the capacity and utilisation of these spaces and where opportunities may exist for improvements to quality, access and flexibility of use
- The assessment does not indicate a need for an **indoor sports facility**, however, projections are nearing the trigger; engagement to explore local demand drivers
- Dodges Ferry Skate Park provides for local **wheeled sports** needs; engagement to explore additional demand
- The Draft Sorell Playspace Strategy identifies a number of gaps in **playground** provision based on a 500 m ped shed from residential areas, these will be further tested with Council and the community for prioritisation
- Future need for **park and reserves** to be investigated through community and Council engagement as to investment pipeline, demand and variety. Consideration for ped shed assessment will also be made. Priority is upgrades or enhancements, rather than new assets.

6 Recommendations

Recommendations will be formulated as part of an updated report to accompany the Draft Southern Beaches Plan. Recommendations will be informed by ongoing engagement with the community and Council, as well as further testing of identified needs and opportunities. This collaborative approach will ensure that the recommendations are tailored to local priorities and reflect the feedback received throughout the consultation process.

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