

2018-2021 Children and Families Strategy



“Children are the future leaders of their communities, the future drivers of their local economies and the future parents of the next generation” – Camden Community Strategic Plan June 2017



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Mayor's Message

Camden Local Government Area (LGA) is one of the fastest growing areas in Australia. We understand our community is changing and there are a high number of families with young children choosing to make the Camden LGA their home. This strategy represents what Council will do with the community now to make sure this is the best place for young children and families to live and visit. Children are our future and we want them to be the best they can be. We want the Camden LGA to be a place that children not only call 'home' but feel that they are valued members of our community. Through this strategy, we are looking at ways we can ensure children have an opportunity to be a part of conversations on matters that impact them, and that adults listen to and respect their views.

We understand that some families in our community are under financial pressure to make ends meet and spend quality time with their children. We want the outcomes of this strategy to help strengthen families and to make sure we are providing affordable child-friendly activities such as events, parks and bike tracks for families to live, learn and grow together.

As a parent, I have first-hand experience of the pressures of parenthood. Having support from friends, other parents and local services can make raising children a little easier. This strategy focuses on supporting parents to connect and be actively involved in community life.

As Mayor and a parent raising children in the Camden community, I am proud of Council's role in facilitating this strategy for children aged 0-12 years and families.

Cr Peter Sidgreaves
Mayor of Camden



Executive Summary

Camden Local Government Area (LGA) is a great place to raise a family. It is an area surrounded by open rural and agricultural land with conveniently located playgrounds, walking and cycle tracks, libraries, health facilities and entertainment activities for children and families to enjoy together.

As the old saying goes, “it takes a village to raise a child”. Government agencies, educators, coaches, business owners, religious leaders, parents and carers all have a role to play in ensuring every child living in the Camden LGA enjoys a safe, healthy and happy childhood.

The earliest experiences of a child’s life significantly influence their success and development in adolescence and adulthood. An investment in children in their early years can contribute to a reduction in societal problems such as crime, poor literacy, obesity, poor health, unemployment and homelessness. Early intervention is not only a cost-effective solution to these broader and often cyclical social issues but has the potential to make a real difference in the day-to-day lives of children as they grow and develop.

Fundamental to the development of this strategy has been the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989). We want all children living in the Camden LGA to feel that they are equal members of our community. They should know that their views are heard, they are safe, and have access to quality education, play and cultural activities.

We are endeavouring to make the Camden LGA the best place for children and families to live now and in the future. Through implementing this strategy, we want an ongoing improvement of connectedness and empowerment for all families with children aged 12 years and under.

The Goal

“Camden LGA is a place where all children receive a safe, healthy and happy start in life, are actively connected and have a voice in their community”





How we created this strategy and action plan

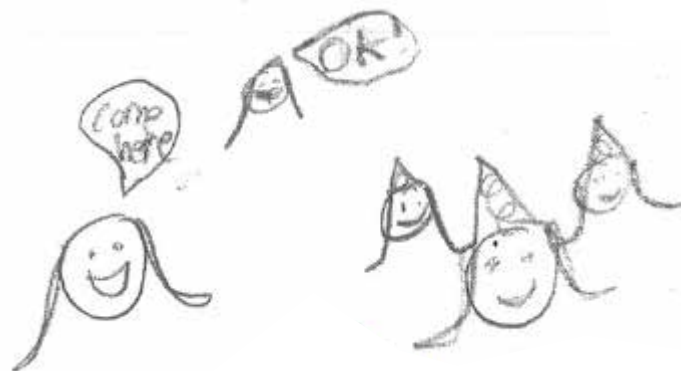
This strategy was developed by researching the current social trends of the Camden Local Government Area (LGA) and listening to the key voices in our community.

It has been informed by a compilation of Australian and International frameworks including the *NSW Strategic Plan for Children & Young People 2016-2019*.

This strategy will work towards achieving the community's aspirations for the Camden LGA that have been outlined in the *Camden Community Strategic Plan*. It does this by specifically focusing on what can be done to improve the quality of life and social connections for children and families living in the Camden community.

Children, parents/carers and local services (government and non-government) that work with families and children aged 0-12 years were consulted to develop this strategy. Their knowledge and expertise is the most valuable voice guiding this strategies direction. We have listened to and taken their ideas, views, experiences and values into consideration.

Council would like to thank people who have contributed to developing this strategy, especially those who took the time to complete a survey or attend a community conversation. The implementation of this strategy will involve Council continuing to work in partnership with the local community and service providers to achieve the goal set for local children and their families.

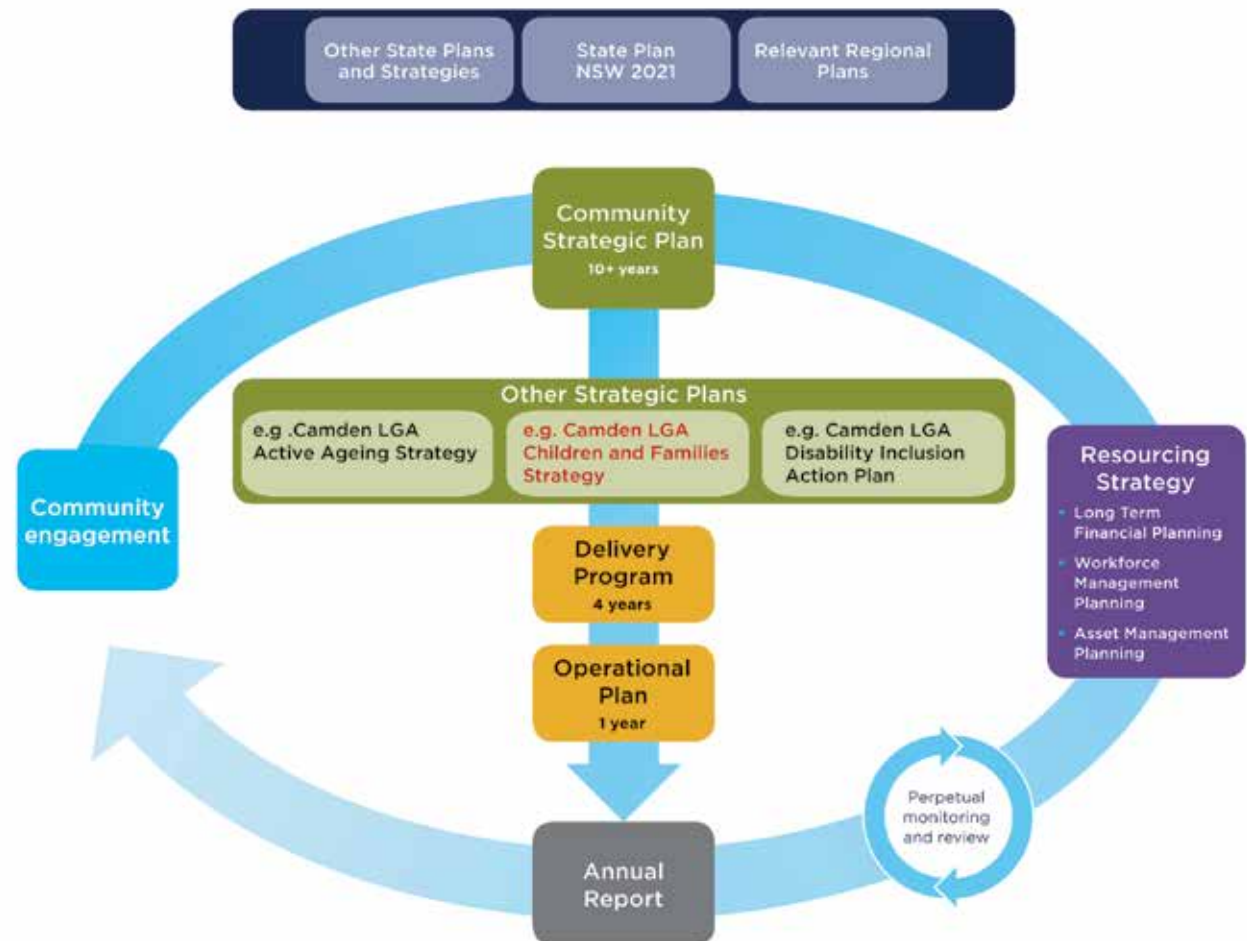


Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework – How this strategy fits

The Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) diagram below shows where the *Camden Children (0-12 years) and Families Strategy* fits in the IP&R framework.

Our Children and Families Strategy has been developed with the National and State strategies in mind. We seek to align with these strategies to ensure locally we are addressing State priorities.

This strategy also considers the unique characteristics of the Camden community and the future direction set for this local government area as outlined in the *Camden Community Strategic Plan*.





Background Information – Setting The Scene

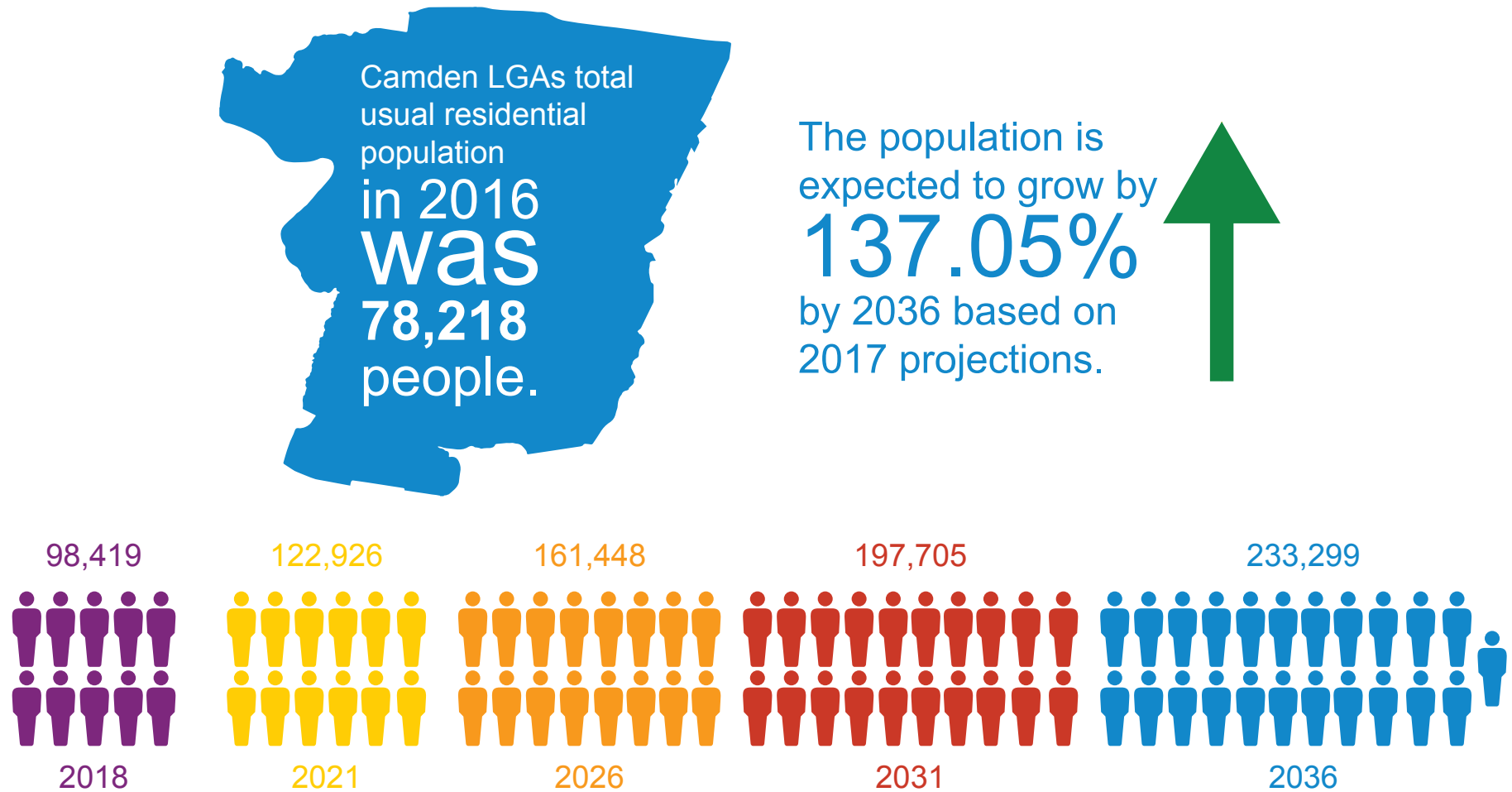
Camden's Community

The Camden Local Government Area (LGA) is located approximately 60km South-West of Sydney CBD and covers an area of 200 square kilometres bounded by Liverpool City Council in the North, Campbelltown City Council in the East and Wollondilly Shire Council in the South and West.

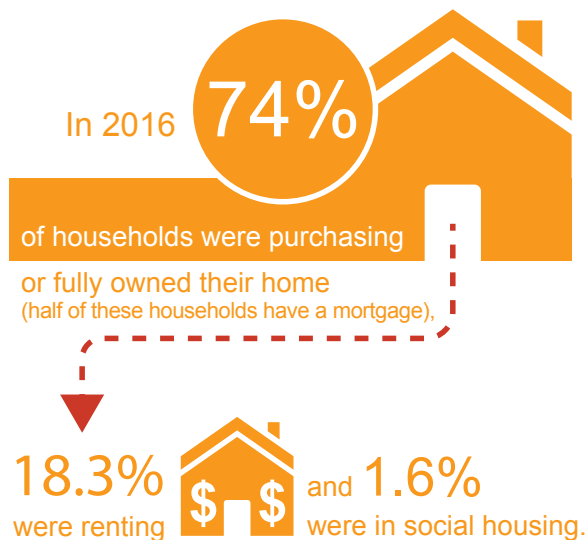
In the last few years the Camden LGA population has grown exponentially. Approximately 2,700 new residential dwellings were occupied in 2017 based on Council information. Census data shows trends of younger couples moving into the area, gravitating to the suburbs of Spring Farm, Gregory Hills and Oran Park. A large portion of our community is made up of 0-11 year olds. They make up the largest percentage at 19.5% of Camden's total population. We expect that over the next few years this percentage will continue to grow as younger couples begin to start their own families.



Camden's Community Profile¹



¹ Australian Bureau of Statistics Census 2016 – Camden Profile Id.



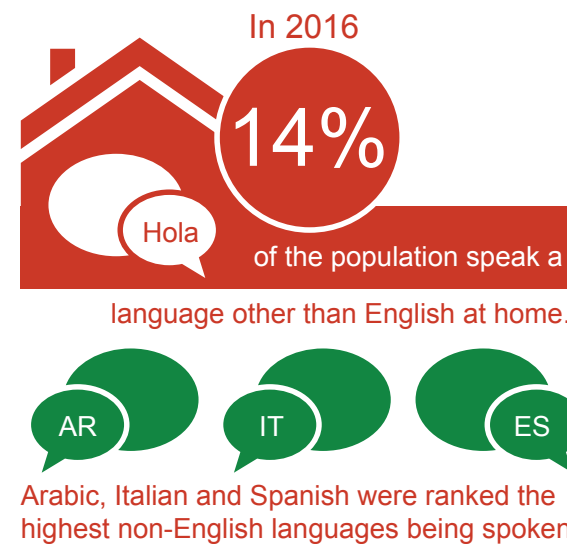
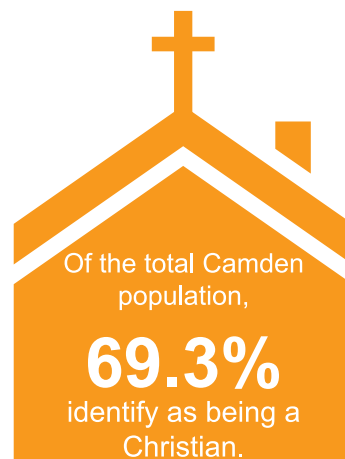
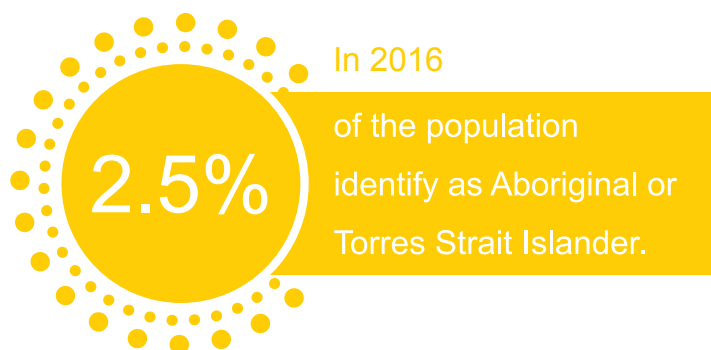
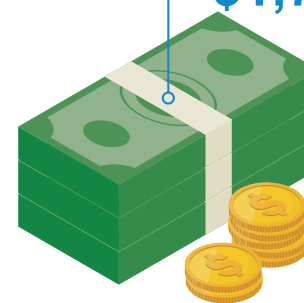
The median weekly household income in 2016 was

\$2,042



which is higher than Greater Sydney average at

\$1,745



Camden's Children²



Camden represents the typical nuclear family



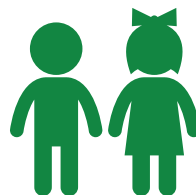
1,494 babies born to parents living in Camden LGA in 2017



36% of children are cared for by unpaid parents/carers



High concentration of children 0-4yrs live in **Spring Farm, Gregory Hills/Gledswood Hill & Oran Park**



High concentration of children 5-11yrs live in **Currans Hill, Harrington Park/Kirkam & Mt Annan**



64,910 items were borrowed by junior (0-12yrs) members at Camden libraries in 2017



30,361 children attended library activities in 2017



96% of children are full immunised by school

Camden LGA



19.5% are aged 0-11 years



46% of couples have children



6% of children aged 0-9 years have a disability

Greater Sydney



15% are aged 0-11 years



35% of couples have children



4% of children aged 0-9 years have a disability

² Sourced from: Australian Bureau of Statics Census 2016, Australian Government Department of Health and Camden Council information.

Infrastructure for children and families in the Camden Local Government Area³



23 Primary Schools



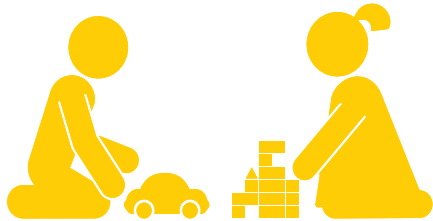
58 Long Day Care
Centres & Preschools



2 Community Pools



3 Community Libraries



27 Established
Playgroups



85+ Playgrounds



1 Sports Hub, **1** Skate
Park, **1** Leisure Centre,
23 Sportsground Sites



26 General Practitioner
Practices

³ Sourced from Camden Council data – Current as at June 2018

Profiles of Camden's children – Diverse lifestyles and experiences

The following profiles have been created to reflect the statistics captured in the latest Australian Census Data 2016 and also Camden LGA's unique geographical characteristics, which can contribute to Camden children experiencing different lifestyles and childhoods depending on where they live within the LGA.

This is Lucy.

She is 3 years old. She lives with her parents and has no siblings. They live in Spring Farm. She has many neighbours nearby who are of similar age to her. Lucy's parents are in their early 30s; they are mortgage holders and moved into the Camden area from Campbelltown LGA just before Lucy was born. Both Lucy's parents are in the work force, but her dad is looking for another trade qualified job.

This is Zoe.

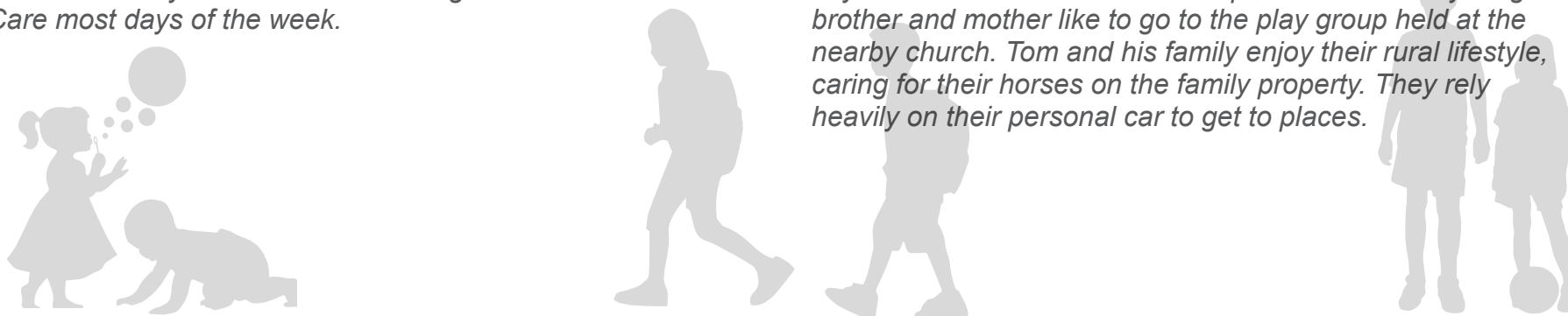
She is 8 years old. She has recently moved to Oran Park from the inner city area. She enjoys riding her bike to school and walking with her parents to the parks near her home. Her parents work full-time in professional jobs and still travel in to the city for work on public transport. They have minimal extended family around them so Zoe goes to Out Of School Care most days of the week.

This is Michael.

He is 9 years old. He has an 11 year old brother and they are living and renting in Currans Hill with their mum who is in her late 30s. Many of their friends from school live nearby. Michael's family speak Spanish at home more so than English. Michael's mum works part-time in the Campbelltown area and goes to TAFE. She catches the bus to work.

This is Tom.

He is 5 years old and has just started kindergarten at Aspect Macarthur School where he gets an intensive autism specific program. Tom's family lives on acreage in Cobbitty. Generations of his family have grown up in the Camden area. Tom has a younger brother, James, who is 3 years old. His mother works part-time and cares for James on the days he does not attend the local preschool. Tom's younger brother and mother like to go to the play group held at the nearby church. Tom and his family enjoy their rural lifestyle, caring for their horses on the family property. They rely heavily on their personal car to get to places.



International, National, State, District and Local considerations

TABLE 1: How the *Camden Children (0-12 years) and Families Strategy* links to other strategic policy and frameworks.



 International perspective	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child	<p>In 1990 Australia ratified the United Nations <i>Convention on the Rights of the Child</i> (CRC). This means that Australia has a duty to ensure that all children in Australia enjoy the rights set out in the treaty.</p> <p>Core Principles of the <i>Convention on the Rights of the Child</i>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All children have the right to live and develop; • Respect for the best interests of the child as a primary consideration in all decisions relating to children; • The right of all children to express their views freely on matters affecting them; and • The right of all children to enjoy all the rights of the CRC without discrimination of any kind.
	UNICEF Child Friendly Cities	<p>A Child Friendly City is the embodiment of the <i>Convention of the Rights of the Child</i> at the local level. In practice, the Rights are reflected in policies, laws, programmes and budgets. In Child Friendly Cities, children are active agents; their voices and opinions are taken into consideration and influence decision-making processes.</p>
	World Health Organisation's (WHO's) Country Cooperation Strategy 2018-2022	<p>WHO's objective is the attainment by all people of the highest possible standard of health.</p>
 National perspective	National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2009–2020	<p>The purpose of the <i>National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children</i> is to support families and children through strengthening family relationships and parenting skills. It focuses very much on prevention and intervention. Their key message is "<i>protecting Australia's children is everyone's responsibility</i>".</p>
	National Plan to reduce violence against women and their children 2010-2022	<p>This plan brings together all State Jurisdictions to make a real and sustained reduction in the levels of violence against women. It focuses strongly on building respectful relationships and increasing gender equality to prevent violence from occurring in the first place. It recognises the impact on children who are exposed to violence in the home.</p>



Table continued...


 State perspective	NSW Children and young persons (care and protection) Act 1998	<p>The objectives of this Act are that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children receive the care and protection necessary for their safety, welfare and wellbeing including their parent and carers capacity. • Children are provided with long-term, safe, nurturing, stable and secure environments. • Institutions, services and facilities responsible for caring and protecting children are free from violence and exploitation and provide services that foster their health, developmental needs, spirituality, self-respect and dignity. • Parents receive assistance for performing their child-rearing responsibilities to promote a safe and nurturing environment.
	NSW Children (Protection and Parental Responsibility) Act 1997	<p>This Act considers the responsibility of parents for the behaviour of their children. It enables police to escort certain children from public places to their parents' residences and other places. It makes provisions for local crime prevention plans to ensure community safety.</p>
	NSW Premier's Priorities	<p>The Premier's Priorities most relevant to this strategy include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protecting our kids: Decrease the percentage of children re-reported at risk of significant harm by 15% by 2020. • Tackling childhood obesity: Reduce overweight and obesity rates of children by 5% by 2025. • Improving Education results: Increase the proportion of NSW Students in the top two NAPLAN bands by 8% by 2019.
	NSW Strategic Plan for Children and Young People (2016-2019)	<p>This plan aims to ensure "children and young people in NSW are safe, connected, respected, healthy and well, with opportunities to thrive and have their voice heard." (Office of the Advocate for Children and Young People).</p>



Table continued...




 State perspective	Families NSW Program (targets children 0-8 as well as parents) – Delivered by NSW Health, Department of Education and Department of Family and Community Services (FACS).	Priorities within this program include providing support for childhood development, providing information to parents for decision-making, and that children are healthy and safe (i.e. immunisations).
	NSW Family and Community Services (FACS) Targeted Earlier Intervention Program	A two stream program (1. a community strengthening stream and 2. a wellbeing and safety stream) targeting children 0-3 years, Aboriginal children and children raised by young parents. It aims for children within these groups to have a safe and affordable place to live; live a healthy life; learn, contribute and achieve; contribute to and benefit from our economy; are safe; participate and feel culturally and socially connected and contribute to decision-making that affects them; and live fulfilling lives.
	NSW Domestic and Family Violence Blueprint for reform 2016-2021	The purpose of the reform is to better support victims and reduce re-victimisation rates especially for women and children; change the behaviour of perpetrators and hold them accountable; and intervene early within vulnerable communities. Their key message is that violence is preventable and communities should work together to achieve this goal.



Table continued...

 South West Sydney district perspective	South Western Sydney Local Health District Health Improvement for Children, Young People and Families 2016-2025	<p>The plan is focused on helping babies, children and young people to grow to their potential. It guides the development and enhancement of health based services from preparing for parenthood and antenatal and postnatal care, through to promoting healthy diet and lifestyles for children of all ages.</p>
	South Western Sydney Local Health District – Growing Healthy Children: Childhood Overweight and Obesity Prevention and Management Action Plan 2017-2025	<p>This plan aims to create and promote healthier physical activity and food environments by working with local governments to heighten the availability and affordability of healthy food options, increase incidental and planned physical activity opportunities, enabling people to rehydrate at water refill stations in public places and educating vulnerable communities about healthy choices.</p>
 Local perspective	Camden LGA Community Strategic Plan	<p>Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Caring for the urban and natural environment including heritage sites. • Integrated and safe transport system. • Celebrating social diversity and cultural expression. • Opportunities for lifelong learning. • Maintain strong partnerships and shared responsibilities with stakeholders. • Community and stakeholders are kept informed.
	Camden Disability Inclusion and Access Plan 2017 – 2021	<p>Ensuring play and exercise equipment, buildings and facilities and community events are accessible and inclusive of people with disability.</p>
	Pedestrian Access and Mobility Plan 2014	<p>This plan sets out how Council intends to improve pedestrian connectivity across the Camden area.</p>





What you told us

Children's voices

Over the last five years (2013 to 2017) Camden Council has taken the opportunity to find out from children what they like about the place they live, what they like to do and what they wanted more of in the Camden area. We did this at community events including Camden Play Day for Families, Narellan Rhythms Festival and Camden Craft Markets. Their responses have been summarised below. From some of our younger respondents, going to a playgroup and duck feeding was something they enjoyed. Other children mentioned indoor activities such as playing the computer or watching TV or stated non-specific activities such as “fun stuff” or “hanging out with friends”. Children also said they liked to visit their grandparents and friends. A collection of their responses has been detailed below.

Where do you like to visit in Camden?

- Mount Annan Botanic Gardens.
- The Community Farm and Belgenny Farm.
- Family friendly cafes.
- Sustainable living education centre.
- Movies.
- Play Zone.
- Church.
- The pools.
- Walking track.
- The library.

What do we need more of in Camden?

- Free Play Day events.
- Parks to play in and play equipment.
- A motorbike track.
- A water park.
- Trees, grass and plants.
- Slide park and bike track in Grasmere.
- A farm.
- Dog parks.

What do you like about living in Camden?

- Parks/playgrounds.
- Bike tracks.
- Swimming pools.
- Library.
- Community events (Camden Show, fetes/fairs and markets).

What do Camden children most like to do?

Most respondents said they liked active play or sports (mostly outside), and to visit parks and open areas. Activities they enjoyed included dancing, singing, horse riding, karate, drama, kick ball, roller skating, skateboarding and swimming.

Children attending the Camden Play Day for Families event on Sunday, 21st May 2017 worked with a cartoonist to draw things they would like to see and do in their fictional Camden Kingdom. Some of their responses have been listed below.

As the ruler of the Camden Kingdom, what events would you run for your people to have fun?

- Running days including running down hills.
- Race days such as racing turbo cars and rollercoasters.
- Adventure walks where people are educated about good and bad snakes.
- A Poke Walk event where people chase Pokemon in a big group and feel part of a community playing a common game.

Other items drawn by children included:

- A telescope to see the stars.
- Sunset views because they enjoyed admiring the sunsetting during family walks at dusk.
- Houses to illustrate the notion of coming together with family.
- A modern city with lots of hotels and restaurants.



Based on these responses it can be inferred that Camden children are interested in animals, nature, water and recreational activities, playing videogames and online games, science/technology and astronomy. Children also indicated family, teachers, and grandparents were important people to them.



Parents', carers' and grandparents' voices

During the 2017 calendar year, Council surveyed parents attending family events and children's activities including Camden Family Play Day for Families (May 2017), Children's Week Art Workshops (September 2017), Welcoming the Babies (September 2017), Camden Kids Fun Day (September 2017) and Grandparents Day (November 2017).

What makes Camden LGA a good place to raise children aged 0-12 years?

- Safe, friendly and well-cared for areas that are central as well. Also, all the government initiatives that are run for children and the services which are applicable for them (e.g. library and days like Kids Fun Day).
- So many great facilities and a lot of young families.
- Camden is a community.
- Love the family and community atmosphere.
- Lots of family and free activities. Lots of parks.
- Lovely parks and outdoor spaces. Free family activities through Council and library. Love the Babies Into Books (BiBs) sessions at the library.
- Friendly neighbourhood – Lots of infrastructure and kid friendly.

What parents want in the future?

- Affordable family events like Camden Play Day for Families and Kids Fun Day.
- Shaded areas over playgrounds.
- Information about after hours General Practices and pharmacies located in the Camden LGA.
- Better access to specialised support services and programs within Camden LGA.

What parents value the most?

- Parks and playgrounds that were fenced and had toilets, water play based activities, nature walks and facilities that catered for babies and toddlers;
- Social activities including mother's groups, family events and community activities and other opportunities for parents to meet others in the area.
- Good quality education institutions. Quality Education and transition to school programs were deemed the most important (14%) with day care, preschool, family day care and before and after school care services a close second (12%).

What would make Camden better?

- 56% of respondents said the key challenge to accessing activities, services and facilities for families was "the lack of knowledge about activities and services and eligibility criteria".
- The top 3 ways parents/carers said they prefer to receive information included on social media and Apps (53%), followed by the Camden Kids website (40%) and email (28%).

A small number of parents and grandparents came along to share their opinions and perspectives about raising young children in the Camden area.

Despite only a small group of parents/carers participating in this conversation, we are thankful that they shared openly about their experiences. A summary of this conversation has been detailed here. →



Generally, the Camden LGA was considered a great place for children and families. They agreed Camden offered a nice community, and the suburb-based community Facebook pages are great too. They specifically said the “parks are amazing” and they liked the quantity of affordable activities (e.g. Storytime, Babies into Books, children and family events like Fun Day and the previous beach bus).

One person commented “it is amazing what is available now [for children and families] compared to 20-30 years ago.”

When discussing what can be challenging about being a parent in the Camden LGA parents spoke about balancing family commitments and working. One parent said “if only one parent works, we can’t afford all the extra-curricular activities we want for our children.

If both parents work, we can’t take them to these activities.” Participants spoke about the fact we are more spread out, which limits social/family connections. A lack of public transport, traffic congestion during peak travel periods, and not being aware of activities available for children and families were highlighted as barriers for them to engage in community life.

Parents/grandparents wished children had a greater opportunity to share with decision makers their thoughts and ideas about the facilities, playgrounds and activities they need and want. They felt children should tell adults what makes them truly happy and what they think makes Camden a good place to live.

What needs to happen to improve the lives of children and families in the Camden LGA?

"Out of hours care needs to be more flexible for parents who have to stay back late at work or get held up in traffic on the odd occasion. They also need to provide activities that are appealing to older aged kids in care".

"I have to travel outside the area for second language classes for my child. In Europe and other countries, it is common practice for children to be fluent in more than one language. I would like to see more classes available locally to teach children a second language."

"Bring back the maternity ward at Camden Hospital"

"We would like more child friendly business in Camden LGA – promotion of safe and child-friendly venues, somewhere to share a meal with our kids."

"Rather than a child friendly framework we need a community development one – how are we as community are going to support children to develop"

"More activities and events specifically for grandparents caring for their grandchildren."

"Local environmental resources should be better utilised and advertised to people who have recently moved to the area."

"Parents need to be involved in community decisions on an ongoing basis e.g. families commenting on park designs. Maybe a working committee needs to be established to talk about issues/needs for children and families regularly"

"Adults need to advocate for children in planning decisions"

"The child's voice needs to be heard"

"We need more places that are safe and affordable for children to play in after school"

"Council should consider opening the libraries on Sundays to accommodate for families and our growing community."



Child and family workers' voices

Camden Council facilitated a focus group consultation with 36 child and family workers and industry professionals in February 2018. The session was attended by NSW Health (represented by the South Western Sydney Local Area Health District), NSW Police Force (represented by Camden Policing Area Command) as well as representatives from Western Sydney University, local children and family workers, preschools/day care and Out of School Care service providers. Below is a summary of the conversations that took place on the day.

Most workers felt the Camden LGA was a great location for families and children. They said there are great schools, good infrastructure and community events for families. Camden is a proud LGA with lots of open green space that offered families a mixed urban and rural lifestyle. Traffic congestion, lack of public transport and limited health services however were identified as disadvantages for Camden families. There is also a perception that the area is growing too quickly, constantly changing and yet can be stuck in its small country town ways.

Child and family workers and professionals rated having “a connected and healthy community that focused on a child’s development and education” as the most important strategic priority areas for the Camden LGA. Workers felt the co-location of services in a child and family community hub within the Camden LGA would make it easier for Camden families to access local services funded to support children and parents/carers. They wanted to investigate opportunities for services to adopt more flexible operating hours to meet the availability of working parents. Workers recognised more needs to be done to engage new residents, people new to parenthood and emerging community groups such as Cultural and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) communities. Workers said the lack of ongoing and long-term funding for not-for-profit service providers hindered their ability to deliver programs for Camden’s children and families.

In the pursuit of a child-friendly Camden, workers said it was important for children to be given a greater voice in the community and to take on a leadership role. They felt this needed to be strongly embedded within this strategy. Workers discussed the design and construction of physical spaces for families. They said decision makers should be more community focused rather than retail/business focused. Spaces must be designed to facilitate building social capital between families and their community, and children and their parents/carers. For this to take place, the needs of the whole family should be considered.

A summary of priorities identified by local children and family workers and professionals

More financial assistance for families to pay for their child's participation in sport, music and other services they need. This will support children to build their social skills/confidence to interact in their community.

Restrict the number of unhealthy takeaway/food outlets and increase the access to healthy affordable foods.

Better access to affordable early intervention/development support services without delays e.g. speech pathology, dental and occupational therapy.

Introduce a Children's Council.

More supported playgroups.

Greater access to inclusive child care services for children with additional needs.

5-12 years needs more attention.

Greater community awareness about the importance of "play" and play based education programs. Ways parents can interact with their children to support learning through connected/engaged play.

More reliable, safe and affordable public transport so parents and children can access activities, events and programs/build connections in their community.

Establish a purpose built early intervention/community service hub – Families to access services to meet identified needs.

Increase local medical services and facilities.

More services to travel out to families in the more isolated areas (e.g. Leppington/Bringelly).

Decision makers need to regulate the location of Early Childhood Education and Care facilities to prevent services being established in close proximity to each other.

All facilities for children and families support healthy eating e.g. greater healthy options, no sugary drinks and no advertising of unhealthy foods.

Advocating to the State Government for schools to be better located in the community, to reduce a school's student enrolment capacity and one on one support for children with additional needs.

Identify safe routes to walk/cycle to school or day care/ preschool.

More free family activities and events for children that are inclusive of all children.

Integrate opportunities for parents/carers to chat with children about everyday activities – How does food get into shops? Where does beef come from? Plaques or tip sheets for parents on the walls in shops. Language needs to be in everyday life.

Health and nutrition fun days and school holiday programs for children/families e.g. healthy food stalls, cooking workshops for kids, appearance from a nutrition magician or Healthy Harold type program.

Investigate opportunities for services to work collaboratively with schools.

Offer more family friendly restaurants/ places for families to catch up other than a park.

Increase community knowledge of services and how to access them.

Place local leisure, sport and cultural facilities in new areas so people don't have to travel.

What we will do together to make the Camden Local Government Area the best place for children to live, learn and grow

How our Children and Families Strategy supports the community's vision for Camden Local Government Area

The *Camden Community Strategic Plan* outlines the Camden community's long-term vision and goals. It sets the key directions for the whole local government area and aims to improve the quality of life for all residents. The *Camden Children (0-12 years) and Families Strategy* will contribute to achieving the community's broad vision by focusing on what can be done for children and families. Detailed in the table below are the directions, objectives, strategies and indicators of the Camden Community Strategic Plan that this Strategy will support.

Key Direction	Objectives	Strategies	Indicator
2. Healthy Urban and Natural Environment	2.1 Caring for urban and natural environments including heritage sites.	2.1.1 Protect the built and natural heritage of the Camden LGA. 2.1.2 Conserve native flora and fauna and their habitats, and promote local involvement through community education programs.	Increase community participation in protecting and managing the natural environment.
4. Effective and Sustainable Transport	4.1 Integrated and safe transport system.	4.1.1 Ensure the provision of adequate transportation network facilities are available across the Camden LGA (bus, railway, walking, cycle and car).	Maintain or reduce the number of pedestrian and vehicle accidents in the Camden LGA.

Table continued...

Key Direction	Objectives	Strategies	Indicator
5. An Enriched and Connected Community	5.1 Celebrating social diversity and cultural expression.	<p>5.1.1 Foster strong, cohesive, healthy and safe communities.</p> <p>5.2 Build partnerships with local community organisations and groups in the delivery of services to a diverse community across the Camden LGA.</p> <p>5.1.3 Facilitate community connections, inclusion, resilience and sense of belonging through the provision and support of a broad range of events and activities.</p>	<p>Maintain or increase number of culturally diverse programs/celebrations.</p> <p>Maintain or increase number of recreation facilities, sporting fields and open space.</p> <p>Reduce crime rates.</p>
	5.2 Opportunities for life-long learning.	5.2.1 Provide library services that promote community hubs, enable people to connect, stimulate opportunities to share information and learn, and foster cultural and social exchange.	<p>Maintain or increase the number of places available at local schools and colleges.</p> <p>Maintain or increase the number of library members.</p>
6. Strong Local Leadership	6.1 Maintain strong partnerships and shared responsibilities with stakeholders.	6.1.1 Provides services and facilities that are high quality, accessible and responsive to the community's needs.	Increase partnership project arrangements with external community groups and/or the private sector
	6.2 Community and stakeholders are kept informed.	<p>6.2.1 Continue to engage the community and stakeholders in the decision-making process.</p> <p>6.2.2 Deliver services through adequate resources and best value options.</p> <p>6.2.3 Strengthen partnerships with a wide range of service providers to avoid duplication, synchronise service delivery and seek economies of scale.</p>	Local media outlets continue to service the Camden LGA.

The Camden Children (0-12 Years) and Families Strategy Outcomes

Through the implementation of the activities detailed in the Action Plan 2018/19 to 2020/21 (page 34-63), we endeavour to deliver the following outcomes for children and families living in the Camden LGA.







 <p>Voice</p>	<p>1.1 Children have increased opportunities to have their voices heard by adults particularly those in decision-making roles.</p>	<p>1.2 Children have a greater sense of belonging in their community.</p>	<p>1.3 Children go to the Camden Kids website to obtain information about matters that affect them locally.</p>
 <p>Learning and Development</p>	<p>2.1 The Camden LGA remains above the Greater Sydney average for all 5 AEDC developmental domains.</p>	<p>2.2 The Camden LGA AEDC 'developmentally on track' scores are at least 85% for all 5 domains by 2028.</p>	<p>2.3 The indicator related to children being regularly read to at home prior to kindergarten improves from 94.8% in 2015 to 98% in 2028 based on teacher's reports recorded in AEDC data.</p>
	<p>2.4 Improvement in the results for suburbs identified at risk or vulnerable based on 2015 AEDC data by 2028.</p>	<p>2.5 Families report their children are being read to most days of the week at home.</p>	
 <p>Connect</p>	<p>3.1 Reduced social isolation amongst new parents and new residents and the inclusion of all children and families.</p>	<p>3.2 Children can participate in spontaneous play and exploration in their local neighbourhood.</p>	<p>3.3 Children are educated and supported to demonstrate cultural inclusion, kindness and acceptance of social diversity.</p>
 <p>Wellbeing</p>	<p>4.1 Reduction in the number of primary school aged children requiring dental intervention.</p>	<p>4.2 Reduction in childhood obesity rates.</p>	<p>4.3 Parents can access information about healthy eating practices.</p>
	<p>4.4 Children and parents suffering with a mental health issue are seeking help from support services.</p>		

Table continued...

 Safe	5.1 Knowledge of cyber safety reported by parents and children.	5.2 Organisations are up to date with child protection/child safe organisations requirements and practices.	5.3 Parents/carers have a better understanding about the dynamics of family violence and its impact on children.
	5.4 Integrated and safe transport system resulting in fewer road safety incidents involving children.	5.5 Fewer children requiring hospital treatment due to a preventable accident at home.	5.6 Emergency preparedness initiatives consider families with children (dependants).
	5.7 The 0 drowning rate for children aged 0-12 years in the Camden LGA is maintained.		
 Informed and Empowered	6.1 More children and parents to know about services and programs available for them in the local area.	6.2 Increase in traffic on the Camden Kids website.	6.3 Increase in the Camden Kids email list registrations.





STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1: CHILDREN HAVE A VOICE AND ARE HEARD IN THEIR COMMUNITY



“Children have the right to express their views, obtain information and make ideas or information known, and ... have their opinions taken into account in any matter or procedure affecting them” United Nations, 1989

WHERE WE ARE NOW

Camden Council over the last five years has facilitated age-appropriate activities to document the views of Camden children (see the *“what children told us”* section on page 20). We could however be doing more to make sure children’s voices are being documented and heard by decision makers.

We need to inform, educate and provide children with opportunities to become advocates, problem solvers and positive change makers in the Camden community. We need to support them to become confident at making choices about matters that affect them whether that’s at home, at school or in the community.

WHAT WE WANT

1. Children to share their views and ideas and for these to be listened to and respected by adults.
2. Children to know where they can go to get information about matters that affect them and where they can go to get help (i.e. Kids Helpline).
3. Council and other organisations to adopt innovative and age-appropriate ways to ask children what they think and want.
4. Children’s needs are investigated, and their wants heard when managing the Camden LGAs growth.

If you ever wanted to know what is important to a child, ask them!

Camden children told us:

- “I love butterflies, rainbows, my mum, my home and my cat. They mean a lot to me.” (Age 6)
- “I’ve drawn a picture of me having fun swimming in the pool” (Age 5)
- “I love my family. They do lots of stuff for me.” (Age 10)
- “Life, Country, Respect – Paying respect to different cultures and lives. (Age 8)
- “My talents are art, knitting, skipping, and playing on the monkey bars and hopscotch.” (Age 8)
- “I love nature and respecting the environment.” (Age 7).
- “I like riding my bike and feeding the ducks” (Age unknown).



“My mum lets me pick what I want to take to school for lunch and asks what parks/things we want to do”

Camden Children have Voices Survey 2018, Child age 8.



Action Table 2018/19 – 2020/21
Strategic priority 1: Children have a voice and are heard in their community

	Strategic action	Target group/age	Measurement of success	Implementation timeline ⁴	Lead organisations and their role ⁵
1.	Council ensures children are consulted on matters that affect them including playground and community facility design and social planning matters using best practice engagement methods for children.	Children (3-12).	Number of children participating in consultations increases compared to benchmark data collected by Council.	Ongoing.	Camden Council (service provider).
2.	Build the capacity of parents/carers to support their child's decision-making skills and confidence in expressing their opinions to adults.	Parents/carers.	Number of parents to receive information about the importance of teaching children to become confident decision makers and positive agents of change via the Camden Kids website and other platforms.	Ongoing.	Camden Council with identified project partners (capacity builders).

⁴ Timeline reflects indicative project commencement.

⁵ Service provider's role is to deliver the project, program or service; capacity builder's role is to provide opportunities for people through upskilling, education and empowerment; a connector's role is to identify and create networks and partnerships; a facilitator's role is to actively support the development of a project/service; and a supporter's role is to promote activities to gain exposure and/or offer advice to the project, program or service provider.

Table continued...

	Strategic action	Target group/age	Measurement of success	Implementation timeline ⁴	Lead organisations and their role ⁵
3.	Utilise creative writing and art classes/workshops to enable children to express their thoughts and ideas in non-verbal formats.	Children (5-12).	<p>Number of children participating in creative writing and art classes.</p> <p>Number of workshops delivered.</p> <p>Number of cultural activities run to highlight children's voices to the broader Camden community.</p>	Ongoing.	Camden Council with identified project partners (service provider).
4.	Include child-friendly features on the Camden Kids website and promote this site as a child's one-stop shop to find out about local matters that affect them.	Children (5-12).	Number of hits on the child-friendly sections of the Camden Kids website.	2020.	Camden Council (service provider).

Table continued...

	Strategic action	Target group/age	Measurement of success	Implementation timeline ⁴	Lead organisations and their role ⁵
5.	Council's frontline customer service staff are skilled in listening and responding to enquiries from children (age appropriate), families with language barriers and children or parent/carers with disability and are equipped with simplified communication tools (i.e. use pictures and simple language) to communicate Council information.	All children and families.	<p>Number and type of strategies used by frontline Customer Service staff to manage enquiries and promote council's services and resources to children and families.</p> <p>Customer service and frontline Council staff report they feel they can support children, families with language barriers and children/carers with a disability to access information.</p>	2020 and ongoing.	Camden Council (service provider).
6.	Develop a community education campaign to promote Children's Rights and raise awareness that children are valuable community members with expertise in "childhood".	Whole of community.	Community education campaign is developed and implemented.	2021.	Camden Council with identified project partners (capacity builders).



LEARNING & OPPORTUNITY

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2: ALL CHILDREN FROM BIRTH THROUGH TO PRIMARY SCHOOL AGE HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO ENHANCE THEIR DEVELOPMENT AND LEARNING.



**Binyang the
Bookasaurus**

“Quality early learning and care play a vital role in the development of our children and sets the best foundation for the future of our children and nation” The Hon Dame Quentin Bryce AD CVO, 2016.

WHERE WE ARE NOW?

In the Camden LGA, we have a higher number of people providing unpaid child care to their own children or another person's child (36.2%) compared to the Greater Sydney region (27.3%)⁶. This result has increased slightly since 2012 (35.5%). For many families the affordability of formal childcare services such as day care is likely to be swaying them towards unpaid childcare. We are anticipating many parents will re-evaluate the affordability of formal day care with the Federal Government's introduction of the Child Care Subsidy.

The Australian Early Development Census data (AEDC)⁷ is a nationwide data collection of early childhood development, captured at the time children commence their first year of school. It provides Council and the community with evidence to develop policy and projects aimed at addressing the evolving needs of children's learning and development in the early years (0-5 years). The data is collected by the Australian Government every 3 years. The AEDC data collected in 2015 showed a 39% increase in the number of children attending preschool in the Camden LGA and fewer children attending day care (3.6% reduction) and playgroups (8.1% reduction) in comparison to the 2012 results. Despite this, 98.4% teachers surveyed as part of AEDC said kindergarten students overall transitioned well to school and 94.8% of teacher's felt kindergarten students were regularly read to at home prior to starting primary school

⁶ Australian Bureau of Statistics Census 2016 – Camden Profile Id

⁷ Australian Early Development Census data 2015

2015 Camden LGA Australian Early Development Census data results

Developmental on Track	Camden LGA	Greater Sydney
Physical Health & Wellbeing	85%	78%
Social Competence & Wellbeing	82%	77%
Emotional Maturity	82%	79%
Language & Cognitive Skills	92%	89%
Communication & General Knowledge	82%	76%

Developmentally vulnerable	Camden LGA	Greater Sydney
Physical Health & Wellbeing	5%	8%
Social Competence & Wellbeing	5%	9%
Emotional Maturity	4%	6%
Language & Cognitive Skills	2%	4%
Communication & General Knowledge	3%	8%

Developmentally at risk	Camden LGA	Greater Sydney
Physical Health & Wellbeing	10%	13%
Social Competence & Wellbeing	11%	14%
Emotional Maturity	12%	14%
Language & Cognitive Skills	3%	7%
Communication & General Knowledge	13%	16%

Domain	Domain Description
Physical health and wellbeing	Children's physical readiness for the school day, physical independence and gross and fine motor skills.
Social competence	Children's overall social competence, responsibility and respect, approach to learning and readiness to explore new things.
Emotional maturity	Children's pro-social and helping behaviours and absence of anxious and fearful behaviour, aggressive behaviour and hyperactivity and inattention.
Language and cognitive skills (school-based)	Children's basic literacy, interest in literacy, numeracy and memory, advanced literacy and basic numeracy.
Communication skills and general knowledge	Children's communication skills and general knowledge based on broad developmental competencies and skills.

Above: Descriptions of the AEDC developmental domains



WHAT WE WANT

1. Children to receive high quality education locally, particularly in the early years to enable them to maximise their individual ability and potential.
2. Parents and carers are better informed about the benefits of 'play' and 'play-based education programs'.
3. Parents are aware and skilled in how to enhance their child's learning in the home environment and supported to do this in the public domain.
4. Children to be socially, emotionally and cognitively ready to transition from preschool to primary school and from primary school to high school.
5. All children to be read to at home.
6. Increased enrolments in preschool programs based on parents/carers gaining a heightened awareness of its importance.



Did you know?

90% of a child's brain development occurs in the first 5 years of their life, making it a critical window for early education and learning.

Source: NSW Department of Education website, 2018.

Action Table 2018/19 – 2020/21

Strategic priority 2: All children from birth through to primary school age have the opportunity to enhance their development and learning

	Strategic action	Target group/ age	Measurement of success	Implementation timeline ⁸	Lead organisations and their role ⁹
7.	Camden Libraries children's activity program (Babies into Books, Storytime, Baby Playdate, Mini Builders Lego at the Library, Paws 'n' Tales and school holiday activities for primary school aged children) continues.	Children 0-12 years. Parents/carers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High participation rates are maintained. 	Ongoing.	Camden Council (service provider).
8.	A community based early literacy program (Camden Paint the Town REaD) is implemented.	Whole of community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased community awareness of Camden Paint the Town REaD. A reading day and other Camden Paint the Town REaD activities run annually. Parents/carers attending a Camden Paint the Town REaD activity report they will implement the campaign's message of reading, talking rhyming and singing to a child daily. 	Annually.	Camden Paint the Town REaD Committee (service providers).

⁸ Timeline reflects indicative project commencement.⁹ Service provider's role is to deliver the project, program or service; capacity builder's role is to provide opportunities for people through upskilling, education and empowerment; a connector's role is to identify and create networks and partnerships; a facilitator's role is to actively support the development of a project/service; and a supporter's role is to promote activities to gain exposure and/or offer advice to the project, program or service provider.

Table continued...

	Strategic action	Target group/ age	Measurement of success	Implementation timeline ⁸	Lead organisations and their role ⁹
9.	Council investigates partnerships with researchers, universities, place-makers and local businesses to facilitate opportunities for children's language development to become part of their everyday lives (e.g. visits to the playground/park and retailers).	Whole of community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of locations in the public domain that parents/ carers receive prompts to engage in a conversation with their child. 	2020 and then ongoing.	Camden Council (connector/ provider) with identified project partners (provider/ facilitators).
10.	Early childhood education and care providers are supported to provide an inclusive learning environment, and staff are empowered to identify children with learning or behavioural needs and/or make referrals to external specialist support services.	Early Childhood Education and Care services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of centres participating in training courses. Evaluation tools used to determine quality and quantitative data from participants. 	2020 and then ongoing.	Camden Council in partnership with training facilitators (capacity builders). Early childhood education and care providers (service providers).
11.	Target geographical areas identified as being developmentally at risk based on AEDC and other relevant data.	Parents of children aged 0-5 years.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improvement in suburb specific AEDC data. 	Ongoing.	Camden Council with identified place-based project partners (service providers).
12.	Advocate to service providers to deliver more supported playgroups in the Camden Local Government Area (LGA).	Children 0-5 years.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At least 2 new playgroups are established in the Camden LGA by 2021. 	Ongoing.	Camden Council (advocate/ supporter) and playgroup providers (service provider).

Table continued...

	Strategic action	Target group/ age	Measurement of success	Implementation timeline ⁸	Lead organisations and their role ⁹
13.	Increase parent/carer awareness about benefits of preschool and other transition to school programs (i.e. playgroups).	Parents of children aged 0-5 years.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased number of children attending daycare/preschool programs and playgroup based on AEDC data post-awareness raising campaign. Continued overall improvement in the 5 domains of the AEDC data. 	2019 and then ongoing.	Camden Council with identified project partners (capacity builders).
14.	Explore the need for community-based transition to school programs (both preschool to primary school and then primary school to high school) targeting both children and parents/carers.	<p>Preschool aged children and their parents/carers.</p> <p>Children in year 6 and their parents/carers.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of visits on blog or webpages. Number of participants in webinars. Number of parents/carers and children attending in person information sessions. Children in Kindergarten and year 7 report experiencing a smoother transition to school. 	2019.	Camden Council with identified project partners (service providers/capacity builders).
15.	Advocate for and promote activities/groups for grandparents providing informal care for their grandchildren.	Grandparents and children aged 0-5 years.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of grandparent/grandchild activities offered in the Camden LGA and participation rates. 	Ongoing.	Camden Council (advocate) and community services/groups (service providers).

Table continued...

	Strategic action	Target group/ age	Measurement of success	Implementation timeline ⁸	Lead organisations and their role ⁹
16.	Implement Carers NSW initiatives to provide a greater level of support to young carers in the Camden community, and assist teachers to identify students who may be caring for another family member.	Primary schools.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of schools implementing Carers NSW Young Carer programs. 	2019.	Carers NSW (capacity builder) and primary schools (service provider). Camden Council (connector/ supporter).
17.	Establish and promote creative writing activities, reading challenges, afterschool homework groups and tutoring services to primary school children to maintain their engagement in reading and literacy programs.	Children 5-12 years.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of activities provided. Participation rates in activities. Number of new groups established and/or services promoted. 	Ongoing.	Camden Council with identified project partners (service provider).
18.	Council, NSW Department of Planning and the NSW Department of Education work together to ensure primary schools in the Camden Local Government Area (LGA) are being built in a timely manner.	Children 5-12 years.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quarterly meetings between Council and relevant State Government agencies are held to resolve planning matters related to primary schools. 	Ongoing.	Camden Council (connector) with the NSW Department of Education and NSW Department of Planning (service providers).







CONNECT

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 3: CAMDEN LGA IS A CHILD-FRIENDLY PLACE WHERE CHILDREN AND FAMILIES ARE CONNECTED TO THEIR LOCAL COMMUNITY

“A child-friendly built environment [enables children to] participate in family, community and social life” NSW Commission for Children and Young People, 2009

WHERE WE ARE NOW?

- The community consultations highlighted a need for:
 - community service providers and facilities to be physically located in geographically isolated areas of Camden LGA;
 - improved connectivity (i.e. safe and well-connected paths and cycle routes) to create a healthy and resilient community;
 - more affordable, frequent and safe events/activities for children;
 - better public transport to assist parents and children to build social connections and participate in their community.
- Social capital is essential to building social connections. A recent study by Cred Consulting found Camden CBD had a high number of social connectors and was considered a good example within Camden LGA¹⁰.

WHAT WE WANT

- The urban built environment in the Camden LGA is child-friendly and adopts Universal Design principles.
- Local businesses (i.e. restaurants, cafes, theatres, cinemas and art gallery) to adopt child-friendly philosophies and to assist parents with connecting socially with the wider community.
- Green spaces to be maintained and balanced with urban growth.
- Children as a stakeholder group to be considered in strategic land use planning decisions.

¹⁰ Cred Consulting 2017 – Greater Sydney's Social Capital: Its Nature and Value.



Action Table 2018/19 – 2020/21
Strategic priority 3: Camden LGA is a child-friendly place where children and families are connected to their local community

	Strategic action	Target group/ age	Measurement of success	Implementation timeline ¹¹	Lead organisations and their role ¹²
19.	<p>Child-friendly businesses:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Pilot a child-friendly audit of an established CBD to identify potential modifications to the physical environment to make it more accessible, safe and child-friendly. 2. Educate local businesses about child-friendly principles and offer to conduct an audit to award retailers with a child-friendly status. 3. Promote child-friendly businesses to families via the Camden Kids website and other platforms. 	Whole of community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pilot one CBD child-friendly audit. • Number of businesses requesting an audit and awarded “child-friendly status”. • Parents report positive experiences when attending child-friendly businesses. 	2021 then ongoing.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Camden Council with community stakeholders (service providers). 2. Camden Council (service providers) with Camden Chamber of Commerce, Greater Narellan Business Chamber (supporters). 3. Camden Council (service providers).
20.	Council applies the principles of Universal Design to playspaces and refers to the NSW Government’s <i>Everyone Can Play: Inclusive Play spaces</i> for guidance.	Whole of community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council receives positive feedback that playspaces in the Camden LGA are designed for children of all ages and abilities and considers the needs of their families and carers. 	Ongoing.	Camden Council (service provider).

¹¹ Timeline reflects indicative project commencement.

¹² Service provider’s role is to deliver the project, program or service; capacity builder’s role is to provide opportunities for people through upskilling, education and empowerment; a connector’s role is to identify and create networks and partnerships; a facilitator’s role is to actively support the development of a project/service; and a supporter’s role is to promote activities to gain exposure and/or offer advice to the project, program or service provider.

Table continued...

	Strategic action	Target group/ age	Measurement of success	Implementation timeline ¹¹	Lead organisations and their role ¹²
21.	Council has strategies in place to ensure environmental sustainability and social planning are key considerations during the assessment of developments and land use planning decision-making.	Whole of community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Measure the number of Social Impact Assessments (SIA) referred to Council's social planners for review. Long-term, children will inherit an environment that is green, clean and safe from rubbish and pollution. The community feels that Camden's urban growth is balanced with achieving positive social, health and economic outcomes for children and families. 	Ongoing.	Camden Council (service provider).
22.	Identify community facilities needed by children and families, and provide input into their future planning.	Children and Families.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of occasions input was provided during the planning stage of community facilities that children and/ or families are identified as a stakeholder group. 	Ongoing.	Camden Council (service provider/facilitator).
23.	Children are engaged in learning about environmental sustainability, storm water renewal, waste reduction and recycling and can actively be involved in caring for the natural environment.	Children 3-12 years.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children's participation in Council run environmental education programs and bush care activities. 	Ongoing.	Camden Council (service provider/capacity builder).

Table continued...

	Strategic action	Target group/ age	Measurement of success	Implementation timeline ¹¹	Lead organisations and their role ¹²
24.	Affordable family friendly events are held annually.	Children and Families.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feedback from event attendees. Number of local families with young children attending. Learn what services and programs are available in the Camden LGA. 	Annually.	Camden Council (service provider) with community service providers (supporters).
25.	Regular activities are held for children in their “tweens”.	Children 9-12 years.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The number of activities/ events offered for children aged 9 to 12 years and participation rates. 	Pilot 2020 and then ongoing.	Camden Council (facilitator/ service provider).
26.	Support emerging community groups and new families moving to new residential estates in the Camden LGA to build connections with services and other residents to assist them to engage in community life.	<p>CALD communities.</p> <p>New families to the Camden LGA living within new urban land release estates.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feedback from parents who have recently moved into the Camden LGA via the Welcome Program Officers. 	Ongoing.	Camden Council Cohesive Communities Advisory Group (connector/service provider) and Welcome Program Officers within new residential estates (supporter).
27.	<p>Children are encouraged to embrace individual differences and respect diversity.</p> <p>Parents/carers are supported to discuss cultural diversity with their child and have the opportunity to learn about different cultural values and beliefs within the Camden community.</p>	Children 3-12 years.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The number of parents/carers to receive existing resources for discussing cultural diversity with children. Children and family participation rates at multicultural and cohesive community events/activities. 	Ongoing.	Camden Council (service provider) with community groups (supporters).





WELLBEING

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 4: FAMILIES ARE HEALTHY AND WELL BALANCED EMOTIONALLY, PHYSICALLY AND MENTALLY

“Nutritious food and regular physical activity supports the normal growth and development of children” Australian Government Department of Health 2009 and “a child’s family is the first and biggest influence on their mental health – Children can be taught how to cope with their emotions, to bounce back from problems and to develop positive relationships” KidsMatter 2018.

WHERE WE ARE NOW

- The availability of health data on a local government area level is limited.

WHAT WE WANT

- Children have access to medical/health treatment and healthy food.
- Affordable recreational activities for children and families.
- Children and parents with mental health concerns can access adequate support locally.
- Parents and early childhood and care providers are supported to teach emotional resilience and social skill development.
- Families to work together to make “healthy” normal including encouraging parents to role model positive behaviours to their children.

Did you know?

Providing children with the experience of safety, predictability, encouragement and emotional comfort during their infancy can positively affect their social and emotional development and their long-term outcomes.

Source: National Health and Medical Research Council website, 2018.



Action Table 2018/19 – 2020/21

Strategic priority 4: Families are healthy and well balanced emotionally, physically and mentally

	Strategic action	Target group/age	Measurement of success	Implementation timeline ¹³	Lead organisations and their role ¹⁴
28.	Promote the benefit of physical activity for children including participation in community-based sport, incidental physical exercise and recreationally (i.e. visits to a park).	Parents.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of applications for the Active Kids Rebate locally. Children's participation rates in local sport programs on Council-owned facilities. 	Ongoing.	Camden Council with identified project partners (capacity builders).
29.	Encourage community based sports to participate in the NSW Health "Finish with the right stuff" training and make efforts to increase the visibility of healthy food and drink options at a child's eye level within their canteens.	Community based sport clubs with canteen facilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of clubs attending training and implementing advice. 	2019 and then ongoing.	Camden Council (connector) with NSW Health and community based sports clubs (service providers).

¹³ Timeline reflects indicative project commencement.

¹⁴ Service provider's role is to deliver the project, program or service; capacity builder's role is to provide opportunities for people through upskilling, education and empowerment; a connector's role is to identify and create networks and partnerships; a facilitator's role is to actively support the development of a project/service; and a supporter's role is to promote activities to gain exposure and/or offer advice to the project, program or service provider.



Table continued...

	Strategic action	Target group/age	Measurement of success	Implementation timeline ¹³	Lead organisations and their role ¹⁴
30.	Promote the Healthy Kids website and State and Federal Government Health programs targeting children to parents/carers and Early Childhood Education and Care Service providers (includes reducing childhood obesity, increasing a family's physical activity, nutrition and mental health initiatives).	Children, parents/carers, primary schools and Early Education and Care Institutions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promotion of the Healthy Kids website on the Camden Kids website. NSW Health program promotional flyers distributed by Council. Attendance rates at NSW Go 4 Fun project in the Camden LGA. Number of preschools and playgroups participating in NSW Health's Munch and Move program. 	Ongoing.	Camden Council (supporter) with Federal and NSW Health Departments (service provider).
31.	Expand the availability of water refill stations at Council-owned parks and ensure water refill stations are provided at large scale community events targeting children and families.	Children and Families.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased number of events and locations where water refill stations are used. 	2018 and then ongoing.	Camden Council with Sydney Water (service providers).
32.	Link vulnerable families with services providing healthy food pantry and meal programs.	Families.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vulnerable families not currently engaged with local services know about these programs and how to access them. 	Ongoing.	Camden Council (supporter/connector) with community service providers and church groups (service provider).

Table continued...

	Strategic action	Target group/age	Measurement of success	Implementation timeline ¹³	Lead organisations and their role ¹⁴
33.	Promotion of family fun, inclusive and affordable activities that encourage families to get active (e.g. the promotion of bike and walking tracks and outdoor gym equipment locations).	Families.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of activities and projects held. 	2020 and then ongoing.	Camden Council (service provider/supporter).
34.	Promote mental health support services to parents and children who need help with anxiety, depression, bullying, low self-esteem and other behaviours, emotional and mental health issues.	Children 3-12 years.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of referrals from the Camden LGA to mental health support programs and services. 	Ongoing.	Camden Council (capacity builder/connector).
35.	Build the capacity of out of school activity providers (e.g. coaches and Out of School Hours Care services) to support children with behavioural issues due to trauma or disability.	Primary school aged children. Children with disability.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coaches and out of school activity providers report they feel they know how to best support a child with disability or behavioural issues. 	2019.	Camden Council (facilitator) with specialised community service providers (supporters) and out of school activity providers (service providers).





STRATEGIC PRIORITY 5: CHILDREN ARE AND FEEL SAFE AT HOME AND IN THEIR COMMUNITY

“Children and young people should be able to feel safe in all spaces – in their home, at school, at work, out and about and in their community.”

Office of the Advocate for Children and Young People, 2016

WHERE ARE WE NOW

- Over the last five (5) years rates of domestic violence assaults have increased in the Camden LGA, however this is likely to be reflective of Camden’s population growth and an increase in people reporting domestic violence incidents due to National, State and local education campaigns¹⁵.
- No children have drowned in the Camden LGA over the last 5 years (2013 to 2017)¹⁶.
- There has been increased demand placed on local resources for children of all ages to receive cyber safety education.

WHAT WE WANT

- Children to be safe in all areas of the community including online.
- Children and parents to know where they can get help to ensure their child’s physical and virtual safety.

The safety, welfare and wellbeing of the child is paramount.

Source: Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998



¹⁵ NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics, 2018

¹⁶ Royal Lifesaving Society Australia, 2018

Action Table 2018/19 – 2020/21

Strategic priority 5: Children are and feel safe at home and in their community

	Strategic action	Target group/ age	Measurement of success	Implementation timeline ¹⁷	Lead organisations and their role ¹⁸
36.	Child accident prevention a. Promote child accident prevention information and resources to ensure children are safe at home, during play, in the car and when near water. b. Promote the Poison Information Line to parents.	Parents.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of hits on child accident prevention information on the Camden Kids website. 	Ongoing.	Camden Council (capacity builder).
37.	Cyber Safety a. Host a Cyber Safety education workshop for parents and children with intellectual disability. b. Promote cyber safety education programs administered by the federal and local police to primary schools. c. Refer parents/carers to the Office of eSafety Commission and NSW Department of Education <i>Bullying No Way</i> website for tips and advice about protecting their children online. d. Promote the Kids Helpline to primary school aged children who may be victims of cyber bullying and their parents/carers.	Parents and children 5-12 years.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Targeted cyber safety workshop for children with a disability is delivered. Number of cyber safety education sessions run in schools by local police. Children and parents/carers report they feel more empowered to manage online safety matters, have a better understanding of the law and where to go for support if they or their child are victimised. 	Ongoing.	a. Camden Council with Camden Police Area Command and identified training facilitators (capacity builders/service providers). b. Camden Council (supporter) and Camden Police Area Command (service provider). c. Camden Council (capacity builder). d. Camden Council (capacity builder).

¹⁷ Timeline reflects indicative project commencement.

¹⁸ Service provider's role is to deliver the project, program or service; capacity builder's role is to provide opportunities for people through upskilling, education and empowerment; a connector's role is to identify and create networks and partnerships; a facilitator's role is to actively support the development of a project/service; and a supporter's role is to promote activities to gain exposure and/or offer advice to the project, program or service provider.

Table continued...

	Strategic action	Target group/ age	Measurement of success	Implementation timeline ¹⁷	Lead organisations and their role ¹⁸
38.	Child Protection a. Encourage Early Childhood Education and Care services to implement protective behaviours programs. b. Review Camden Council's implementation of Child Safe Organisations Principles (Australian Human Rights Commission).	Children aged 3-5 years.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Early Childhood Educators report number of children who participate in the SAFE book series program at their preschool/day care centre. Council's internal Child Safe organisation practices are reviewed. 	Ongoing.	a. Camden Council (connector) with NSW Office of Children's Guardian and Australian Human Rights Commission (facilitator/ capacity builder) and Early Childhood Education and Care Services (service provider). b. Camden Council (service provider)
39.	Family violence a. Increased community awareness/ education campaigns about the effects of family violence on children. b. Local primary schools are encouraged to undertake school based and/or participate in community based White Ribbon Day initiatives and other funded domestic violence programs.	Whole of community and primary school aged children.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A greater number of people are aware of what constitutes domestic violence and are aware of their options to report incidents of domestic violence to the NSW Police Force, as indicated by BOSCAR data and referrals to the Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Program. Number of schools who implement White Ribbon Day initiatives and/or participate in community based White Ribbon Day events. 	2019 then ongoing.	a. Camden Council with Camden Wollondilly Domestic Violence Committee (capacity builders). b. Camden Council (supporters) and primary schools (service providers).

Table continued...

	Strategic action	Target group/ age	Measurement of success	Implementation timeline ¹⁷	Lead organisations and their role ¹⁸
40.	Road Safety a. Coordinate 4 free child restraint fitting days annually and utilise this opportunity to disseminate information about children and road safety. b. Identify safe and accessible pedestrian paths of travel using markings on footpath around day care centres/preschools and primary schools to encourage children and parents to walk, ride or scooter to school.	Parents and Children 0-12 years.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fewer road safety incidents involving children. Increased participation in child restraint fitting days. Collect and measure baseline data from schools about student's transportation methods to school. 	Ongoing.	a. Camden Council (service provider). b. Camden Council (facilitators).
41.	Emergency preparedness. a. Promote the Triple Zero Kids campaigns locally. b. Families that live in bushfire and flood prone areas are supported to have an evacuation preparedness plan. c. Explore providing basic first aid for kids training locally.	Parents and Children 0-12 years.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of hits on the Triple Zero awareness information on the Camden Kids website. Number of families living in bushfire and flood prone area to receive emergency preparedness information. Number of children to be educated in basic first aid. 	Ongoing.	a. Camden Council (capacity builder). a. Camden Council (facilitator) with emergency response services (service providers). b. Camden Council (connector).
42.	Water and pool safety a. Promote the benefits of children learning to swim and local providers to parents.	Parents with children 3 months to 12 years.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain 0 drowning incidents of children aged 0-12 years in the Camden LGA. 	Ongoing.	b. Camden Council (capacity builder).

Table continued...

	Strategic action	Target group/ age	Measurement of success	Implementation timeline ¹⁷	Lead organisations and their role ¹⁸
43.	Animal safety a. Council's responsible pet ownership education campaign, <i>Paws and Pip</i> is offered to preschools, primary schools and children's community groups (e.g. Scouts) in Camden LGA. b. The <i>Paws and Pip</i> messages are delivered to children attending relevant community events.	Children 3-12 years.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of children who are informed through the Council's <i>Paws and Pips</i> program about how to interact with dogs, cats and other animals at home and in public places. 	Ongoing.	a. Camden Council (service provider/capacity builder). b. Camden Council (service provider/capacity builder).







INFORMED AND EMPOWERED

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 6: FAMILIES HAVE ACCESSIBLE AND ACCURATE INFORMATION TO MAKE INFORMED DECISIONS FOR THEIR CHILD/CHILDREN AND FAMILY

“Knowledge is power. Information is liberating. Education is the premise of progress, in every society, in every family”. Kofi Annan

WHERE WE ARE NOW?

- Parents/carers surveyed in 2017 said *“the key challenge to accessing activities, services and facilities in the Camden area was the lack of knowledge about activities and services and eligibility criteria”*.

WHAT WE WANT

- Children and parents/carers are informed about topics of interest to them and in the formats they utilise the most.
- Parents/carers to report they find it easy to locate accurate and up to date information about local services and programs.
- Parents/carers feel empowered to make educated decisions for their families.



Did you know?

Constant and sometimes contradictory information from multiple “experts” as well as opportunities to compare one-self with others (including celebrity mothers and bloggers) are contributing factors to heightening anxiety rates in new mothers.

Source: Western Sydney University, 2017

Action Table 2018/19 – 2020/21
Strategic priority 6: Families have accessible and accurate information to make informed decisions for their child/children and family

	Strategic action	Target group/age	Measurement of success	Implementation timeline¹⁹	Lead organisations and their role²⁰
44.	The <i>Camden Kids</i> website is updated (including the addition of child-friendly features that provide children with the information they want in a fun and interactive way) and marketed to parents and children.	Parents and children aged 5-12 years.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of visitors to the Camden Kids website. 	Ongoing.	Camden Council (service provider).
45.	Increase social media presences across the Camden Council Facebook page and local mother's group pages to engage families.	Parents.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Level of engagement across Facebook posts. 	Ongoing.	Camden Council (service provider).
46.	Coordinate a quarterly eNewsletter about upcoming parenting, children and family events and activities to be disseminated to the Camden Kids website mailing list subscribers.	Parents.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of people receiving the eNewsletter. 	2019 and then ongoing.	Camden Council (service provider) with community services (supporter).

¹⁹ Timeline reflects indicative project commencement.

²⁰ Service provider's role is to deliver the project, program or service; capacity builder's role is to provide opportunities for people through upskilling, education and empowerment; a connector's role is to identify and create networks and partnerships; a facilitator's role is to actively support the development of a project/service; and a supporter's role is to promote activities and activities to gain exposure and/or the project planning and delivery.



How council will monitor and review this plan

Camden Council will be the custodians of the *Camden Children (0-12 years) and Families Strategy* and will monitor the implementation of the action tables. We will review the strategy outcomes and report on these in line with Council's Delivery Program reporting schedule.

Part of the evaluation process will be ensuring we regularly have conversations with children, parents/carers, grandparents and workers to gauge their views and to find out what is working and what needs improvement. Their everyday experiences will assist us to identify emerging needs and put in place appropriate responses.

Council will also use relevant data captured by external organisations including Australian Bureau of Statistics, Australian Early Development Census, NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research and NSW Health data to evaluate our impact.

After this strategy's implementation, the current action tables will be reviewed and the next 4 year action tables (2021/22 to 2024/25) will be developed.

Conclusion

Children are our future. We want the children of today and tomorrow to live within a Camden community that values children, has a liveable and clean physical environment and is a safe and inclusive place for young families to call home. We want children to be empowered to become actively engaged in the Camden community and to feel confident to express their concerns and ideas.

This strategy is Camden Council's commitment to make the Camden LGA an even better place for children (0-12 years) and families. But we cannot do this alone. A collaborative approach with other tiers of government, local service providers, parents, carers and of course children is paramount to ensuring our goal for Camden's children becomes a reality.

It is important that this strategy is viewed as the first step in building our child-friendly Camden community. We recognise that children's needs change as new generations are born and because of situational factors such as our rapid urban growth. Emerging needs for children and families will continue to be monitored and responded to through our *Camden Children (0-12 years) and Families Strategy*.

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