



SKATE AND BMX STRATEGY 2020

PLANNING FOR OUR PEOPLE
OUR PLACE OUR FUTURE

Document Control Table

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Section 1

Executive Summary

The overall objective of the Skate and BMX Strategy (the Strategy) is to provide an updated strategic direction on the future provision, development and management of wheeled sports for the Cessnock LGA.

There has been a significant growth in the use of Skateparks in the last 20 years. This can be demonstrated via the fact there is now over 1800 purpose built skateparks of varying age, size and style in Australia where thousands of Australians are engaging in active recreation every week (Skate Australia 2019).

The Cessnock LGA is presently witnessing substantial growth. Urban development is rapidly expanding within a growth corridor between Cessnock, Kurri Kurri and Maitland, and between Branxton, Greta and Rutherford. By the year 2031 it is anticipated an additional 29,000 people (33.5%) will call the Cessnock LGA home. This has implications on the provision of skate and BMX facilities which is examined in the Strategy.

Each of Council's three existing skateparks contain a number of high risks that are required to be addressed in the short term, should these facilities remain open and accessible. In regards to function and design, each of Council's skateparks are outdated, do not provide elements that would encourage or enable skill progression and are not catering for a broad range of users.

Key areas to note from the Strategy include:

- Skate and BMX facilities are now considered youth spaces or precincts and attract youth that are indirectly and directly participating at sites – supporting infrastructure is critical.
- Considering the core age groups for skate and BMX facilities and responses provided through community engagement, each of Council's facilities including the BMX dirt track do not provide for beginners with skill progression difficult.
- There is a preference for transition style as well as street style aspects, with the majority of Council's facilities lacking the street style element.
- Whilst future designs for skateparks need to be inclusive of all wheeled sports, there should also be a focus on scooter/BMX as this is a predominate use of Council's existing skateparks.

The Strategy reviewed each of Council's four Planning Area's (Cessnock, Kurri Kurri, Greta-Branxton and Rural West) in detail in regards to current and future provision finding gaps across all four. These gaps aim to be addressed through the provision of new skateparks at the following locations.

Table 1 - Summary of Planning Area Skatepark Provision

Planning Area	Skate Spot/Node	Local	District	Regional
Cessnock	Bellbird North Development Area	Bridges Hill*	-----	Mount View Park
	Kitchener Poppethead Park			Carmichael Park** (BMX)
Kurri Kurri	Jeffries Park, Abermain	Cliftleigh Meadows	Margaret Johns* Park, Kurri Kurri	-----
Greta – Branxton	Huntlee Development Area	Greta Central* Park	Miller Park, Branxton	-----
Rural West	-----	Crawfordville Park, Millfield	-----	-----

*Existing skateparks, **Existing BMX

Table 1 demonstrates Council's long term vision (to 2031) with a sound mix of local, district and regional facilities. To progressively reach the vision, a series of priorities have also been developed to enable Council to improve skatepark offerings in the short, medium and long term.

The high priority actions developed are outlined below:

High

- High priority items identified in the audit report for Cessnock Skatepark are to be completed.
- High priority items identified within the audit report for Kurri Kurri Skatepark are to be completed.
- High priority items identified within the audit report for Greta Skatepark are to be completed.
- Detailed designs are developed for Cessnock Regional Skatepark.
- Grant funding opportunities continue to be investigated for Cessnock Regional Skatepark as a priority.
- A local level skatepark is constructed within Crawfordville Park Millfield.
- A location be negotiated within the Huntlee development area for a local level skate facility (skate spot/node).
- A location be negotiated within the Bellbird North development area for a local level skate facility (skate spot/node).
- A detailed concept plan and design be developed for the Carmichael Park BMX facility.
- A local level skatepark be provided within Cliftleigh Meadows District Park.
- Concept and detailed design plans to be prepared for Cliftleigh Meadows local skatepark.
- A Masterplan be completed for Kitchener Poppethead Park incorporating a local level facility (skate spot/node).



Section 2

Introduction

In the last 10 years, skateparks have become increasingly popular diverse spaces, catering for many wheeled sports outside of skateboarding. This has required a change to planning for these spaces, which includes supporting infrastructure to create a 'youth space' and not just providing skate parks with isolated skate elements.

There has also been a significant growth in the use of skateparks. This can be demonstrated via the fact there is now over 1800 purpose built skateparks of varying age, size and style in Australia where thousands of Australians are engaging in active recreation every week (Skate Australia 2019).

The profile of skateboarding and BMX in particular has also continued to grow which is evidenced by the increasing number of opportunities to participate and compete on the local, regional, national and international stage.

Sport and active recreation (which includes activities within Skate and BMX facilities) brings people together and contributes to a stronger, healthier and more inclusive NSW. Each year sport and active recreation contributes around \$10 billion to the NSW gross state product, employs 30,000 plus people and attracts over 3.5 million people to the state each year (NSW Office of Sport 2018).

Contemporary skate and BMX facilities are needed now more than ever at the local level in the Cessnock LGA. This is confirmed by previous audits and assessments undertaken that have identified Council skateparks are at capacity. Skateparks promote opportunities for social inclusion and connection, keeping children and young people active but also provide important development pathways to higher levels of skateboarding and BMX and other wheeled sports.

Background

In 2011, Council engaged a skate specialist to complete a Skate & BMX Needs Assessment which provided recommendations regarding the current and future needs of skate and BMX facilities in the Cessnock LGA. Twelve of the fifteen recommendations have been completed/implemented (80%). Examples of some of the key works completed include:

- An upgrade to Kurri Kurri Skatepark including the installation of supporting infrastructure - seating, shade, a water bubbler and lighting (\$264,000);
- An upgrade to Greta Central Oval Skatepark (\$141,000); and
- The completion of concept designs for the proposed new regional skatepark at Mt View Park (Construction estimate \$1.5M).

The three outstanding actions were as follows:

- Bellbird BMX track – upgrade the beginner to intermediate sections.
- Kurri Kurri Skatepark – redevelop the existing snake run into a contemporary facility and integrate with the prefabricated section.
- Greta Skatepark – install basic amenities and support facilities.

Whilst there were actions outstanding within the Needs Assessment, Council resolved in August 2018 that prior to any further actions being implemented, a full review of the document be undertaken. As a result, this Strategy was prepared.

The Strategy recognises the need to consider other wheeled sports, outside of skateboarding. This encompasses such activities as scooters, inline skates, quad-skates, long boards, BMX and mountain bikes. Whilst this Strategy does not go into detail for all wheeled sports, it is assumed the skate and BMX facilities being discussed will cater to a broad market.

Objectives

The overall objective of the Strategy is to provide an updated strategic direction on the future provision, development and management of wheeled sports for the Cessnock LGA. This is to be informed and achieved via:

- Review and analysis of demographic data and population growth.
- Completion of a condition and function assessment for each of Council's three existing skateparks.
- Review of detailed community engagement undertaken for Cessnock Regional Skatepark and how this applies to the broader LGA.
- Review the needs of Skatepark users, in regards to Council's four Planning Areas being Cessnock, Kurri Kurri, Branxton-Greta and Rural West.
- Identification of future opportunities in regards to skate and BMX facilities.



Section 3

Planning Context

There are a number of local, regional, state and national planning documents which have informed the development of Council's Strategy and provided guiding information. These are outlined individually below.

Cessnock Community Strategic Plan 2027

The Strategy strongly aligns with a number of objectives in the plan including:

- Objective 1.1 - Promoting Social Connections – Skate and BMX facilities provide opportunities for inclusive activities reaching out to diverse demographics and backgrounds.
- Objective 1.2 - Strengthening community culture – The Strategy aims to ensure we have adequate recreation facilities.
- Objective 3.2 - Better utilisation of existing open space – The Strategy aims to provide skate and BMX facilities with suitable amenities and are close to where people live.

Cessnock City Council Recreation and Open Space Strategic Plan 2019

The Recreation and Open Space Strategic Plan (ROSSP) is Council's key strategic document in regards to the future provision and management of recreation facilities, programs and services in the Cessnock LGA. There is a high priority action within the ROSSP that is directly related to this Strategy being:

Action 2.1.4 – Undertake a review of Council's Skate & BMX Facilities Needs Assessment 2020.

Cessnock City Council Skate and BMX Facilities Needs Assessment 2020

The Skate and BMX Facilities Needs Assessment was completed in 2011. Although a little outdated in regards to demographics and trends in wheeled sports, the document still has a sound base in regards to the strategic direction for skate and BMX facilities within the Cessnock LGA. This Needs Assessment has been utilised as a base for the development of the Strategy.

Cessnock City Council Skate Facility Site Analysis 2015

The Site Analysis was adopted by Council in 2015 with the aim of identifying suitable locations for the provision of skate facilities throughout the Cessnock LGA. This document addresses many of the sites to be discussed in the Strategy and the majority of findings have been incorporated. Additional locations have been included mainly where current and future population growth is increasing, particularly in regards to the 5 – 18 year age bracket.

Cessnock LGA Skate Parks Audit Report 2019

Specialist skate consultants, Convic, were engaged in 2019 to undertake a detailed audit of each of Council's existing three skateparks. The report provided a condition and function assessment and has informed the development of this Strategy.

Draft Hunter Sport & Active Recreation Plan 2018 - 2023

This plan developed by the NSW Office of Sport is the first comprehensive sport and recreation plan for the Hunter with its vision being "to lead the way in providing everyone in the Hunter Region access to their choice of sport and active recreation opportunities".

Council's Strategy particularly aligns with three out of the six outcomes identified in the plan being:

- Increased participation of adults and children in regular sport and active recreation: e.g. Strategy 1.4 – plan for and promote child safe and child friendly environments;
- Fit for purpose facilities in the region: e.g. Strategy 4.4 and 4.5 – explore upgrades to existing and development of new facilities, 4.8 – plan for female friendly sports facilities; and
- Valued regional events – e.g. Strategy 5.1 – maintain and enhance existing successful sporting and active recreation events.

NSW Office of Sport Strategic Plan 2018 - 2022

Council's Strategy is aligned with the goals to be achieved by the NSW Office of Sport through their strategic plan, particularly:

- Places & Spaces – Well managed facilities that meet the needs of users and investors
- Participation – More people in NSW participating in sport and active recreation

Council aims to provide facilities that are fit for purpose so they will continue to receive high levels of use. The Strategy explores this further.

BMX Australia Strategic Plan 2015 - 2018

The vision of this document is to lead BMX through successful partnerships, participation growth and performance excellence. Council's Strategy particularly aligns to 1.1 Strong relationships – Generate relationships that maximise opportunities for BMX and 2.2 BMX Facilities – Improve availability of quality BMX facilities.

The Safety Grind - Guidelines for Safer Skate Parks 2019

These Guidelines were released in 2019, and were developed via a partnership with City of Casey, YMCA and the Victoria State Government. These guidelines were developed to provide a basis for local government to create and strengthen skate strategies. The four pillars discussed in this document being Needs Assessment, Design, Operation and Management have been incorporated where relevant within the Strategy.

Skate Australia Participation and Competition Strategy 2019

Skate Australia have partnered with the YMCA to deliver a new Strategy. The Strategy provides a framework for key stakeholders to work together to get more people more active and build local capacity within the action sports community. The Strategy recognises that a coordinated national approach is required with Local Council's playing a key role.

The Strategy states that the Australian Skateboarding and Skate Park Leagues series is a plan to strengthen and connect the action sports sector, boost participation and ensure every action sports athlete has the chance to be connected and involved. This is relevant to Council's Strategy in regards to opportunities to involve the local community in skatepark events.

Sport 2030 - National Sports Plan (Australian Sports Commission)

Sport 2030 is the vision and the plan for sport and recreation activity in Australia over the next ten years. Council's Strategy aligns with three of the four priorities including:

- Build a more active Australia: More Australians, more active, more often - upgraded and new skate and BMX facilities will achieve this;
- Achieving sporting excellence: National pride, inspiration and motivation through international sporting success - As illustrated later in the Strategy, skateboarding and BMX are now international sports, with local and regional facilities providing the platform/pathway to bigger events; and
- Strengthening Australia's sport industry: A thriving Australian sport and recreation industry. There are numerous opportunities in the Cessnock LGA to upgrade and build viable, contemporary and inclusive skate and BMX facilities which have potential to lead to economic and social benefits.

Getting Australia Active III: A systems approach to Physical Activity for Policy Makers - April 2020

This document covers a number of topics however relevance to this Strategy are the benefits that sport and recreation have on children and young people. These include mental and physical health, social (particularly crime reduction) as well as economic benefits.

Section 4

Demographic Profile

Who are we Planning for?

The Cessnock LGA is home to over 59,000 people. Of particular note for this strategy is that 20.9% of the population are children aged 0 -14 years. This is sizeable portion of the Cessnock population and a key demographic for the skate and BMX facilities discussed in this document.

In regards to the health of residents, residents of the Cessnock LGA have poor health indicators being higher than the State average rates for obesity and being overweight, and participating in low or no exercise (Hunter New England & Central Coast Health Data 2016).

It is anticipated that strategic planning for skate and BMX facilities will assist in addressing the alarming statistics above through encouraging active living and removing the financial barrier for participation with skate and BMX facilities being a public space available to all people at no cost.

The removal of financial barriers in encouraging active living is important as the social demographics for the Cessnock LGA when compared to rates for NSW indicates a higher unemployment rate, higher rate of individual low income and a Socio-Economic Index for Small Areas (SEIFA) score (925) that indicates a high level of social disadvantage being experienced within the community (Census 2016).

Encouragement of a healthy lifestyle and modifiable health risks for example increased participation in physical exercise (skate and BMX facilities) is necessary for the Cessnock LGA noting that when compared to NSW, the Cessnock LGA has:

- Higher rate of obesity, physical inactivity, smoking and alcohol consumption (source: Public Health Information Development Unit, Social Health Atlas of Australia (2015)).
- Higher incidence of hospitalisations due to diabetes, coronary heart disease and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (source: Medicare Local Data, 2013).

If Council is to continue to meet the needs of residents within the Cessnock LGA, youth facilities need to be a focus.

Planning Area Demographic Profile

To provide a better understanding of recreation needs at a district level, the Cessnock LGA has been divided into four Planning Areas being Cessnock, Kurri Kurri, Branxton-Greta and Rural West. These Planning Areas have been defined in consideration of public transport routes, access to services and facilities, and proximity to commercial districts. These Planning Areas have also been applied to this Strategy to ensure consistency across Council's strategic documents and in the way we plan for recreation spaces.

Cessnock Planning Area Demographic Profile

The Cessnock Planning Area includes the towns, villages and enclaves of Abernethy, Cessnock, Bellbird, Kitchener, Kearsley, Nulkaba, Mount View and Pokolbin. Table 7 compares the age profile of the Cessnock Planning Area to the broader Cessnock LGA. The table below only illustrates age profiles up to the 0-24 year age bracket as these are the predominant users of skateparks.

Table 2 – Cessnock Planning Area Age Profile (2016)

Five Year Age Groups	Cessnock Planning Area (%)	Cessnock LGA (%)
0 to 4	6.0	6.8
5 to 9	6.2	7.2
10 to 14	6.0	6.5
15 to 19	6.0	6.2
20 to 24	6.5	6.2

The age profile of the Cessnock Planning Area is relative to the LGA profile however there is a notable under representation of the 0-14 year old cohort and slightly higher representation of 20-24 year olds. This of note when planning for skate and BMX facilities for this Planning Area in terms of a focus on intermediate skill level.

Kurri Kurri Planning Area Demographic Profile

The Kurri Kurri Planning Area includes the towns, villages and enclaves of Abermain, Clifftleigh, Heddon Greta, Kurri Kurri, Mulbring, Neath, Pelaw Main, Stanford Merthyr and Weston. Table 3 compares the age profile of the Kurri Kurri Planning Area to the broader Cessnock LGA.

Table 3 – Kurri Kurri Planning Area Age Profile (2016)

Five Year Age Groups	Kurri Kurri Planning Area (%)	Cessnock LGA (%)
0 to 4	6.6	6.8
5 to 9	7.4	7.2
10 to 14	6.7	6.5
15 to 19	7.0	6.2
20 to 24	6.3	6.2

The Kurri Kurri Planning Area has a slightly younger age profile than the Cessnock LGA which is evident in the 5 to 24 year old cohort. This is important in planning for skate and BMX facilities in regards to ensuring there is beginner, intermediate and advanced riding opportunities to meet the demands of users.

Branxton-Greta Planning Area Demographic Profile

The Branxton-Greta Planning Area includes the towns, villages and enclaves of Branxton, East Branxton, Greta and North Rothbury. Table 4 compares the age profile of the Branxton-Greta Planning Area to the broader Cessnock LGA.

Table 4 – Branxton-Greta Planning Area Age Profile (2016)

Five Year Age Groups	Branxton-Greta Planning Area (%)	Cessnock LGA (%)
0 to 4	8.8	6.8
5 to 9	9.0	7.2
10 to 14	7.7	6.5
15 to 19	5.8	6.2
20 to 24	5.2	6.2

The Branxton-Greta Planning Area has a comparatively young age profile when compared to the Cessnock LGA with a notably higher representation of the 0-14 year age group. This can be indicative of demand for skate and BMX facilities within this Planning Area.

Rural West Planning Area Demographic Profile

The Rural West Planning Area includes the villages and enclaves of Ellalong, Paxton, Millfield, Wollombi and Laguna. Table 5 compares the age profile of the Rural West Planning Area to the broader Cessnock LGA.

Table 5 – Rural West Planning Area Age Profile (2016)

Five Year Age Groups	Rural West Planning Area (%)	Cessnock LGA (%)
0 to 4	4.6	6.8
5 to 9	7.1	7.2
10 to 14	6.5	6.5
15 to 19	5.3	6.2
20 to 24	4.2	6.2

The Rural West Planning Area has a relatively older age profile than the Cessnock LGA with an under representation of the 0–24 years cohort. Whilst skate and BMX facilities should be provided within this Planning Area there is no obvious demand for targeting certain age groups or skill levels.

The next section of the strategy examines how Cessnock's current population will look into the future and how this effects planning for skate and BMX facilities.

Section 5

Projected Population

Population Growth

The Cessnock LGA is presently witnessing substantial growth. Urban development is rapidly expanding within a growth corridor between Cessnock, Kurri Kurri and Maitland, and between Branxton, Greta and Rutherford.

To understand the actual and projected population change in the Cessnock LGA, and where in the city this change is expected to occur, a demographic analysis was undertaken based on population projections from the NSW Government and review of the Hunter Regional Plan 2036, Greater Newcastle Metropolitan Plan 2036 and Council's City Wide Infrastructure Contributions Plan (2020).

The analysis indicates that population growth will remain fairly stable over the next 11 years however at the end of this period the population is expected to increase by 33.5% which is a sizeable figure and one which will have impacts on planning for youth spaces.

Table 6 - Actual and Projected Population, Cessnock

Year	Population
2016	56,720
2031	85,416
Change 2016 – 2031	28,696
Average annual growth rate	1.7%

Cessnock City Wide Infrastructure Contributions Plan 2020

An additional 28,000 people (33.5%) within the Cessnock LGA has implications on the provision of skate and BMX facilities.

Population by Age

The age groups captured below, are only those anticipated to be frequent users of skate and BMX facilities. This is based on community engagement, statistics from state sporting associations and anecdotal evidence.

Table 7 – Population in the Cessnock LGA by Age

Age (years)	2016	2031	(11 year Change)
0-14	11,916	15,379	3,463
15-29	11,020	14,032	3,012
Total	22,936	29,411	6,475

ABS Regional Summary for the Cessnock LGA.

The table above demonstrates that there is a projected increase in the populations that will continue to utilise skate and BMX facilities and these need to be planned for across Council's Planning Areas.

Section 6

Participation

Whilst exact usage statistics are unknown of Council's skateparks (based on their being no need to register with a club, or book to use the facility) it is evident that the three facilities that Council have are popular (with some considered at capacity) and are utilised regularly by both the local and broader community of their respective towns.

When looking at trends in skateboarding, the profile of this sport has increased at a national and international level with 22 Australian skaters currently in the top 100 Olympic World Ranking and skateboarding being introduced as an event at the 2020 Olympic Games. There is also the establishment and continuation of several high profile skateboarding and BMX competitions such as the X-Games. Beginning in 1995, the X-Games is arguably the biggest international alternative sports competition, and includes prestigious skateboarding and BMX events. It made its first ever visit to Australia in October 2018.

Scooter riding is also aiming to be included in future Olympics, as evidenced by the formation of the Australasian Scooter Association and the Australasian Scooter Championships that were held in Sydney in April 2018.

BMX Australia is the second largest national BMX organisation in the world behind the United States, with clubs located in every state, in both rural and metropolitan regions.

Although participation statistics at a national level from the Australian Bureau Statistics are dated being from 2012 (these surveys are no longer being completed) the following table is still indicative of participation today and forms a sound base in which to draw participation conclusions.

Table 8 is significant in that it illustrates the popularity of both bike riding and skate wheeled sports (skateboarding, scootering and rollerblading) across Australia compared to the most popular organised sports for both boys (soccer, swimming and AFL) and girls (dancing, swimming, netball).



Table 8 – Children’s Participation in Selected Physical Recreation Activities compared with top three organised sports, by sex -2006, 2009 and 2012 (ABS 2012)

	2006		2009		2012	
	Number		Number		Number	Participation Rate
	'000	%	'000	%	'000	%
Males						
Bike riding	1003	73.4	922.5	66.1	998.8	69.9
Skateboarding, rollerblading, scootering	--	--	780.4	55.9	857.8	60
Soccer	268.5	19.6	277.8	19.9	309.7	21.7
Swimming/Diving	225.7	16.5	240.1	17.2	235.2	16.5
Australian Rules Football	188.5	13.8	223.7	16	212.7	14.9
Females						
Bike riding	803.2	61.9	721.1	54.4	770.6	56.8
Skateboarding, rollerblading, scootering	--	--	562.2	42.4	640	47.2
Dancing	300.1	23.1	348.5	26.3	367.4	27.1
Swimming/Diving	236.8	18.2	262.8	19.8	256.9	18.9
Netball	224.1	17.3	225	17	220.4	16.2

Table 8 demonstrates the less organised unstructured wheeled sports have a higher participation rate than the top organised sports and continues to increase.

Section 7

Benefits of Skate and BMX

There are numerous benefits to participating in wheeled sports (Convic 2018):

- They are inclusive activities reaching out to diverse demographics and backgrounds with many known physical and mental health benefits.
- They provide action, performance, creativity and culture within the community with various social benefits.
- Popular, well designed youth spaces increase tourism and provide economic and social benefits on a local, regional, state and national scale with potential for numerous events and competition.

Further to the above a recently released document Getting Australia Active III (2020) cites a number of health benefits that derive from physical activity. This can be directly related to the use of skate and BMX facilities.

Table 9 – Physical Activity Health Benefits

Age	Benefits
3 - <6 years	Improved bone health and weight status
6 – 17 years	<div>Improved:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cognitive function• Cardiorespiratory and muscular fitness• Bone health• Cardiovascular risk factor status</div> <div>Fewer symptoms of depression</div>



Section 8

Facility Hierarchy

When reviewing Council's existing skate and BMX facilities and future provision, a hierarchy of facilities was established. The hierarchy adopted is in line with that applied to Council's open space areas. This provides consistency in terminology but also how these areas are planned for.

The hierarchy provides a sustainable guide for the level of infrastructure required to meet the needs of intended users and to ensure that an appropriate standard of facilities is provided.

When referring to catchment in the hierarchy this relates to the area in which the skatepark services, i.e. the number of metres from the skatepark.

Local

Size: 50 – 400m²

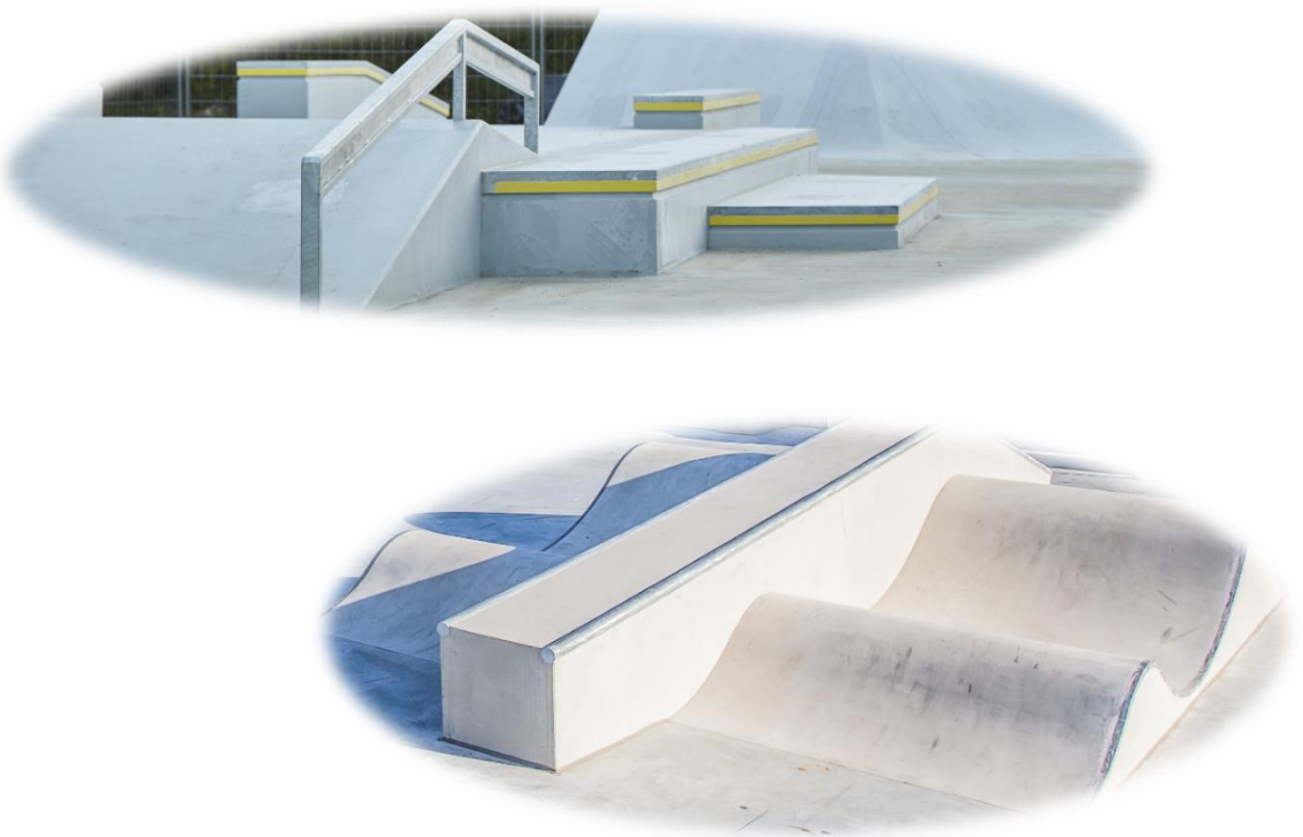
Catchment: 3,000m

Capacity of Skatepark: 10-20 riders

A local facility is generally a small scale space that caters for users of a local catchment only. These facilities aim to cater for a number of uses (scooter, BMX, skateboard etc.). The target for these facilities will be less experienced users with a focus on beginner and intermediate riders. Basic amenities should be provided including seating, bins, access to water and shade.

Skate Spot/Node: A Skate Spot/Node is considered a local level facility servicing the immediate area (up to 1km). It is a small skateable facility 50m² – 250m² with up to six skate elements. Minimal supporting infrastructure is provided at these sites however includes seating, pathways and access to water if possible.

Figure 1: Example of Skate Spots/Nodes



District

Size: 500 – 700m²

Catchment: 5,000m

Capacity of Skatepark: 15-30 riders

A district facility aims to service the Planning Area in which it is located. It aims to provide opportunities for skill progression from beginner, intermediate and advanced. A district facility should have the ability to host events with toilets being nearby preferable. Supporting infrastructure and pedestrian and bicycle connections are critical to the space.

Regional

Size: Minimum 800m²

Catchment: Citywide

Capacity of Skatepark: 20-50 riders

A regional facility services the entire Local Government Area. It is a purpose built facility containing ample space and components to provide for a variety of different skilled users. It is easily accessible by public transport and cars and forms part of a broader youth space, e.g. sporting fields, half/full multipurpose court, performance space etc.

Parks of this scale can support large events and should have high level amenity, seating, viewing areas, power, lighting, accessible toilets and carparking.

When applying this hierarchy to Council's existing skate and BMX facilities, Council currently has two local, one district and one regional facility. These are examined in the following section.

Section 9

Site Analysis

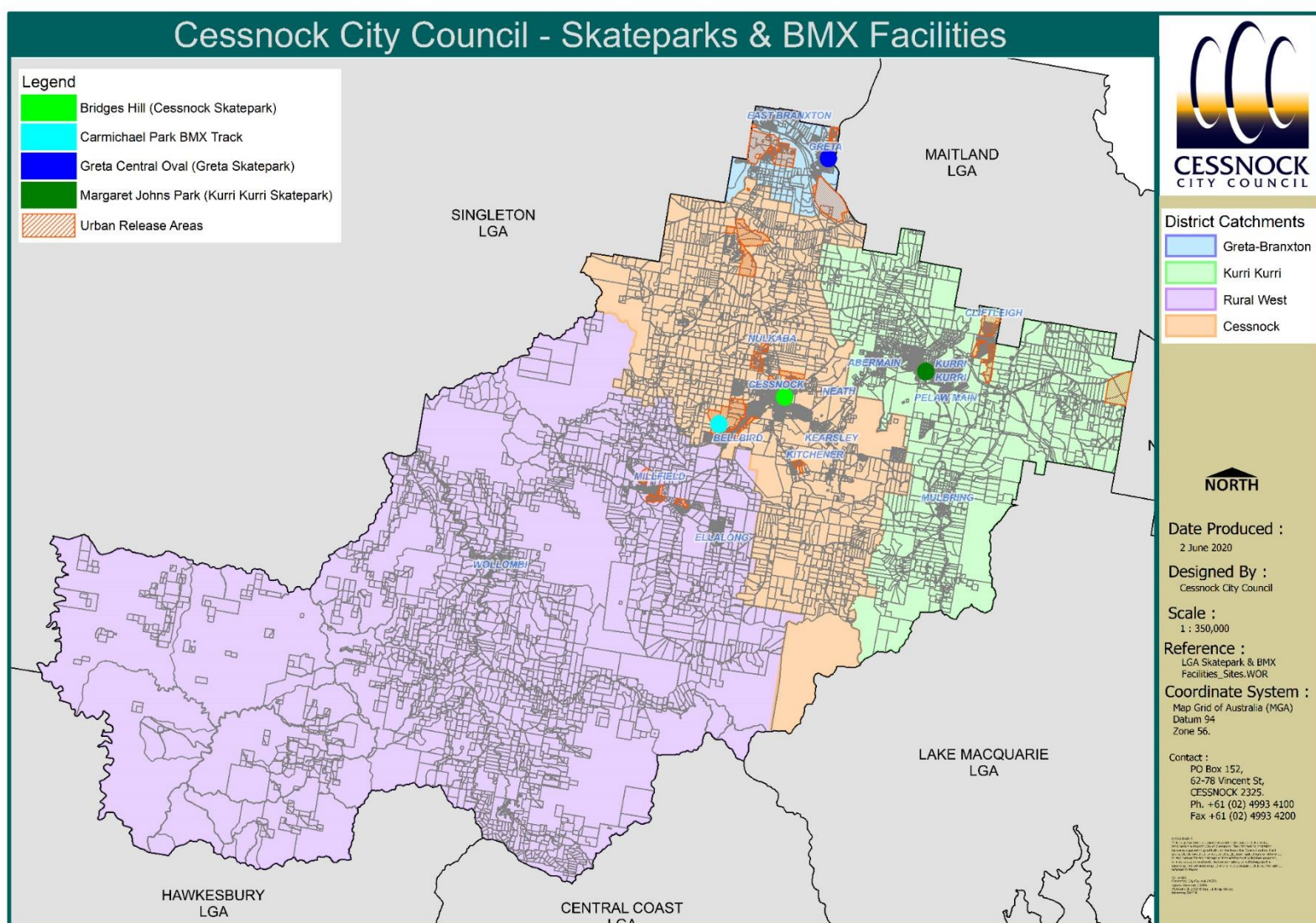
What Facilities do we Have?

There are currently three concrete skate and one freestyle BMX dirt facility in the Cessnock LGA, which are highlighted in Figure 2, these include:

- Cessnock Skatepark (Cessnock)
- Kurri Kurri Skatepark (Kurri Kurri)
- Greta Skatepark (Greta)
- Freestyle BMX dirt facility (Bellbird).

Council engaged skate specialists Convic in 2019 to undertake an audit of each of Council's skateparks. A detailed review of the audit undertaken can be viewed in Appendix A, however a summary of the main findings is outlined on the following pages.

Figure 2: Location of Cessnock Skateparks and BMX Tracks



Cessnock Skatepark (Bridges Hill) – Transition Style Facility

Figure 3: Location of Cessnock Skatepark (Bridges Hill)



Cessnock skatepark is a local level facility located close to the Cessnock Business District (CBD) adjacent to the newly upgraded Bridges Hill Regional Playground. The skatepark is a simple prefabricated traditional style facility with basic transition and street elements. Specific active elements include a grind block, grind rail (square), wedge fun box, opposing quarter pipes and wedge banks.

Key Condition Findings of the Audit

- The concrete in general is in poor condition with it being worn, with numerous cracks, chips and differential settlement.
- There are many high priority risk items that need to be addressed.
- It was given a condition score of 2/5 equating to 'Poor'.
- Assuming condition repair works are undertaken, it is estimated the facility has approximately 25% of life remaining (approximately 5 years). This however will not address the inherent functional issues associated with the facility.

Key Function Findings of the Audit

- The design of the facility is outdated and has limited functionality. It also only caters for intermediate riders (as opposed to also catering for beginners and advanced).
- The site has limited landscape and amenity (e.g. carparking, seating, shade, accessibility, bins etc.)
- The site was given a function rating of 2/5 also equating to a 'poor' category.

Kurri Kurri Skate Park (Margaret Johns Park) – Transition Style Facility

Figure 4: Location of Kurri Kurri Skatepark



Kurri Kurri skatepark is located in Margaret Johns Park to the north west of the Kurri Kurri Aquatic & Fitness Centre. It is a district level facility which consists of two sections. The most recent section is a prefabricated traditional style facility with basic transition and street elements. Specific active elements include a roll in, wedge bank, quarter pipe, grind block, spine and fun box with a grind block traversing along and down. The original section of the skatepark is an 'old school' style concrete snake run.

Key Condition Findings of the Audit

- The concrete is worn in most areas of the snake run, with substantial cracking, chipping, differential settlement and extensive aggregate present in the surface.
- There are a number of high priority risk items that need to be addressed.
- It was given a condition score of 2/5 equating to 'poor'.

Key Function Findings of the Audit

- The newer section of the facility functions adequately, however the snake run is outdated and in disrepair.
- There is little to no allowance for beginners and there is limited variety across the facility.
- The skatepark is not compliant in regards to accessibility.
- The site was given a function rating of 2/5 also equating to a 'poor' category.

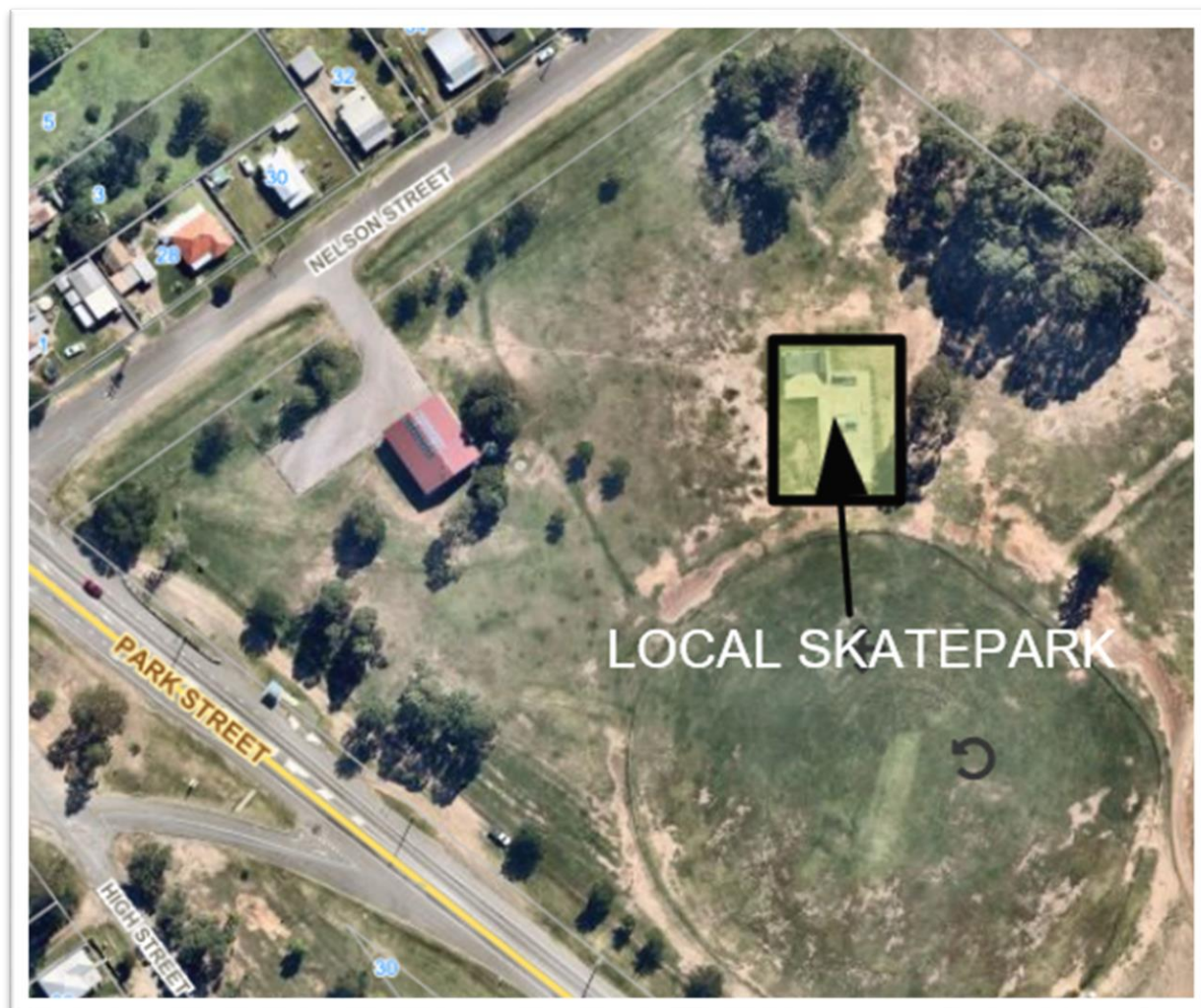
Two options were provided for this site:

Option 1 – Repair of high priority items only. Should all of the high priority condition items be addressed within the snake run this will extend the life span of the facility for a further 5 years.

Option 2 (recommended) – Demolition of the existing snake run and the construction of a new street focused section adjacent to the facility.

Greta Skatepark (Greta Central Oval) – Transition Style Facility

Figure 5: Location of Greta Skatepark



Greta skatepark is a local level facility located within Greta Central Park on the western side of the main cricket ground. The skatepark is a simple prefabricated traditional style facility with basic transition and street elements. Specific active elements include a wedge bank, three quarter pipes, grind block/manual pad, grind rail (square), a fun box and a small mini ramp.

Key Condition Findings

- The concrete surface is extremely weathered in most areas of the facility, with substantial cracking, chipping and differential settlement.
- The base slab of the pre-extension park is extremely weathered and aggregate is exposed.
- There are a number of high priority risk items to be addressed.
- It was given a condition score of 2/5 equating to 'Poor'.

Key Function Findings

- The facility functions reasonably well as a local level facility.
- There is limited allowance for beginners and has a limited variety of features for skill progression.
- There are instances across the facility of unsafe fall heights.
- There is no connecting pathways to the site (also not accessible).
- There is no toilet facility and there are no bins, bubbler or shade.

Two options were provided for this site:

Option 1 – Repair of high priority items only. This option does not address functional issues however will extend the lifespan of the facility for a further 5 years.

Option 2 (Recommended) – Construction of new local level facility. This option involves the demolition of the existing facility, and the construction of a new modern, local level youth precinct.

Privately Owned Facilities

There is one privately owned skatepark within the Cessnock LGA which is the Cessnock PCYC Indoor Skatepark. It contains a modern, indoor timber skatepark and features a wide array of elements that cater to users of all skill level. Elements include a full size half pipe with extensions and corners, a bowl with a spine, small funboxes, quarterpipes, hubbas, flatbars, banks and ledges.

Whilst this has been considered in the mix of facilities available in the Cessnock LGA, it has not been considered in rates of provision as there is a fee for service and the continued provision of this facility is not guaranteed (its use could change over time).

Summary of Skatepark Findings

It can be seen that each of Council's existing skateparks contain a number of high risks that are required to be addressed in the short term, should these facilities remain open and accessible. In regards to function and design, each of Council's three skateparks are outdated, do not provide elements that would encourage or enable skill progression and are not catering for a broad range of users.

It is also important to note, that there are currently no skate and BMX facilities provided for within the Rural West Planning area.

Carmichael Park – BMX Freestyle Facility

Figure 6: Location of BMX Track



Carmichael Park is regional freestyle BMX dirt facility designed for stunt riding and is not intended to be a competition track. Historically, local users of the site have maintained the integrity of the advanced dirt jumps, while Council monitors the use of the facility and undertakes regular risk assessments.

The facility currently lacks supporting infrastructure including shade, access to water, seating and pathways. The beginner and intermediate sections of the facility require upgrading and ongoing regular maintenance to maximise the potential use of the facility, provide the opportunity for young and inexperienced riders to enhance their skills and improve the level of safety.

Section 10

Benchmarking

How Does Cessnock Council Fare Regionally?

Following an analysis of the condition and supply of skate and BMX facilities in the Cessnock LGA, these facilities were compared across the Hunter Council's. This benchmarking exercise enables Council to see how they are faring in regards to provision of facilities and aims to ensure we are providing comparative, reasonable levels of service when it comes to skate and BMX facilities.

Table 10 – Benchmarking Exercise with Hunter Council's Skateparks

Council	No of Facilities	Population	People Per 1 Skatepark	Size of LGA (km ²)
Cessnock	3	59,985	19,995	1,996
Dungog	1	8,975	8,975	2248
Lake Mac	11	205,000	18,636	757.2
Maitland	7	83,203	11,743	392
Mid Coast	15	93,836	6,255	10,053
Muswellbrook	2	17,209	8,604	3,402
NCC	9	165,571	18,396	187
Port Stephens	9	72,695	8,077	1,000
Singleton	1	23,422	23,422	4,893
Upper Hunter	1	14,220	14,220	8,096

The table above demonstrates that when comparing population and size of the LGA across the Hunter Council's, Cessnock's provision of skateparks is relatively low. This is particularly highlighted when reviewing the average provision of skateparks which is 1 skatepark per 13,832 people compared to Council's 1 skatepark per 19,995 people. This is revisited later in the Strategy.

Table 11 – Benchmarking Exercise with Hunter Council's BMX

Council	No of Facilities	Population	People Per 1 BMX Track	Size of LGA (km ²)
Cessnock	1	59,985	59,985	1,996
Dungog	0	8,975	0	2248
Lake Mac	2	205,000	102,500	757.2
Maitland	1	83,203	83,203	392
Mid Coast	1	93,836	93,836	10,053
Muswellbrook	2	17,209	8,604.5	3,402
NCC	0	165,571	0	187
Port Stephens	2	72,695	36,347.50	1,000
Singleton	2	23,422	11,711	4,893
Upper Hunter	0	14,220	0	8,096

In regards to the provision of dedicated BMX tracks, Councils provision is in line with the majority of Hunter Council's, with the average of one BMX facility provided to service respective LGA's.

Who Utilises our Facilities and How?


The general strategic direction of the Strategy has not greatly changed from the adopted Cessnock Skate and BMX Facilities needs Assessment 2020, and substantial engagement was held with young people via the development of the design for Cessnock skatepark in 2018. This quantitative data combined with Council's understanding of youth spaces has been utilised as a basis to inform the development of the Strategy.

In February and March 2018 Council completed a number of community and targeted workshops (including in local high schools) in an attempt to understand who are the key users, how these users are currently utilising skate and BMX facilities and what types of infrastructure needs to be considered.

Aside from workshops and having a social media presence, another engagement method associated with the development of the design for Cessnock Skatepark was the distribution of a questionnaire. The questionnaire in particular has been a sound resource for this Strategy as this was completed across age groups and targeted residents throughout the LGA.

Questionnaire

In total 280 questionnaires were completed.



MY... CESSNOCK SKATE PARK

HI THERE! NAME _____ AGE _____ GENDER _____ WHERE DO YOU LIVE? (SUBURB) _____

TELL US ABOUT YOURSELF!

HOW DO YOU RIDE >>> (tick)

☐ SKI ☐ SCOOT ☐ NO BUT I WOULD LIKE TO LEARN ☐

☐ SKATE ☐ BLADE ☐

DO YOU WANT A BOWL? (tick)

☐ YES ☐ NO

DO YOU LIKE ROLLING TERRAIN? (tick)

☐ YES ☐ NO

WHICH STYLE OF PARK DO YOU PREFER TO RIDE >>> (tick)

☐ STREET & PLAZA (LEDGES, RAILS, STAIRS ETC...) ☐ SCULPTURAL (UNIQUE, ICONIC AND ORIGINAL FEATURES) ☐ FLOW (TRADITIONAL ELEMENTS, QUARTER PIPES, FLAT BANKS, PIPE) ☐ BOWL & TRANSITION (ENCLOSED BOWLS OF VARIOUS HEIGHTS) ☐ COMBINATION OF ABOVE

FLIP ME OVER

Key data that can be extrapolated from this questionnaire and applied more broadly to the LGA includes:

- Whilst there was a slightly higher response from males, participation in, as well as attendance at skate and BMX facilities is relatively evenly spread across genders.
- Responses were received from Ages 4 through to 44, however responses were predominately from the 5 – 14 years age bracket.
- Responses were received from across the LGA. Strong responses received from Cessnock, Kurri Kurri, Abermain and Bellbird, however responses were also received from outside the LGA including Singleton, Maitland and Newcastle.

- For the Cessnock LGA, riding a scooter appears to be the predominant use with 62% of responses, this is followed by BMX (45%), skateboarding (22%), roller blading (9%) with the remaining responses stating either they don't ride but would like to learn or they just like to attend these youth spaces.
- A flow style park came across as the most popular (with traditional elements, quarter pipes, flat banks and hips) followed by street/plaza (ledges, rails and stairs) and bowl and transition style (enclosed bowl of varying heights) came in at third.

Aside from individual engagement exercises that will take place for any future upgrades or provision of new facilities, this data highlights some key issues that are explored further in the strategy:

- Skate and BMX facilities are now considered youth spaces or precincts and attract youth that are indirectly and directly participating at the site – supporting infrastructure is critical.
- Considering the core age groups for skate and BMX facilities and responses provided in the survey, each of Council's facilities including the BMX dirt track do not provide for beginners with skill progression difficult.
- There is a preference for transition style as well as street style aspects, with the majority of Council's facilities lacking the street style element.
- Whilst future designs for skateparks need to be inclusive of all wheeled sports, there should also be a focus on scooter/BMX as this is a predominate use of Council's skateparks.

In terms of how Council normally provides for open space areas (number of facilities per person of the population) skate and BMX facilities are faring quite well. The main issue however, which is specific to the Cessnock LGA is that we have quite a large Council area (1,996 square kilometres). What this means is that although the number of existing facilities may meet population requirements overall, the demographic which utilises these facilities can often not access them. This is mainly due to public transport being required to get there and this is often inappropriate or unsafe for youth.

Council will not be able to remove distance as a constraint in every suburb/town however the approach taken with this Strategy is to examine populated areas and in conjunction with the Needs Assessment and Site Analysis completed previously, clarify if gaps still do exist and examine how to close these gaps.



Additional Demand for Facilities

Following a detailed review of Council's record management system there have been a number of community requests in the last ten years for skate and BMX facilities, both from individual community members and groups.

Table 12 – Community Requests for Skateparks and BMX facilities

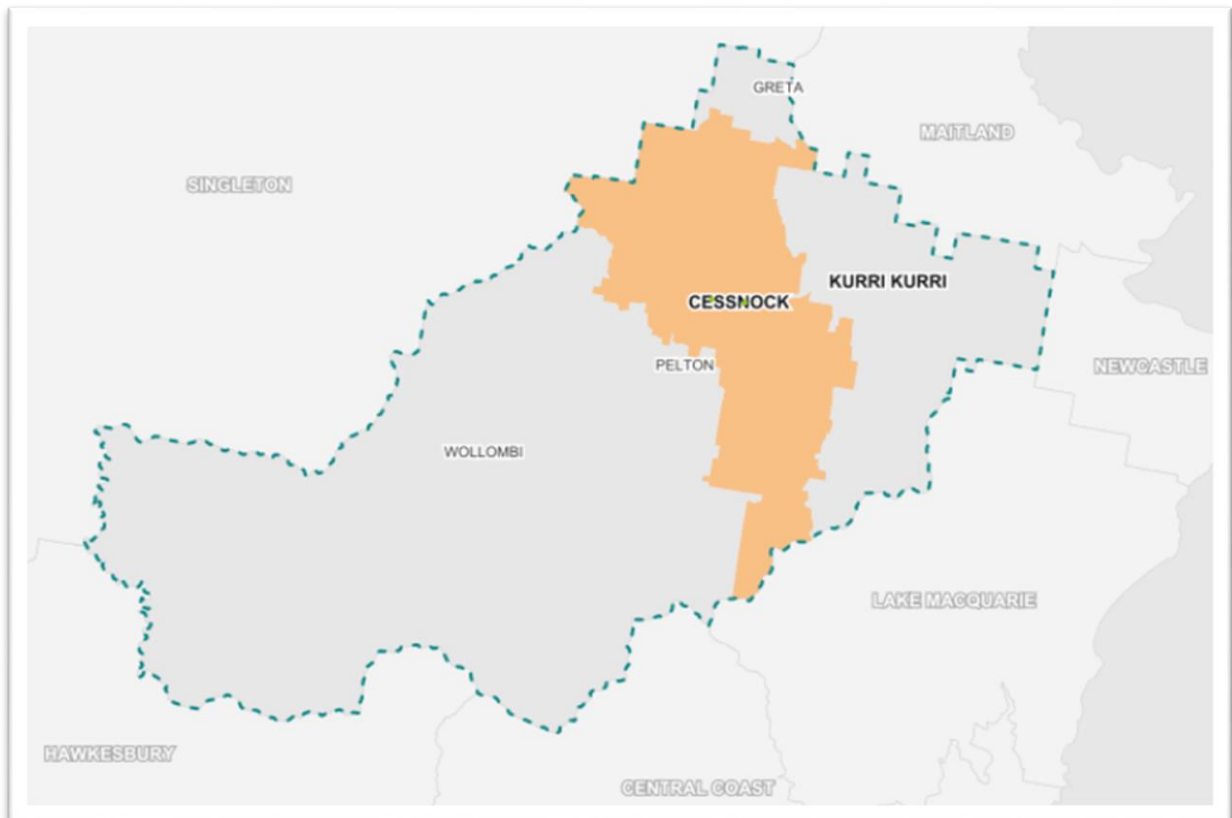
Planning Area	Detail/Number of Submissions
Cessnock Planning Area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2013: 1 petition for a skatepark in Kitchener with 100 signatures 2009-2017: 7 community requests to upgrade the BMX Track at Carmichael Park 2013-2017: 2 community requests for a new skatepark in Cessnock
Kurri Kurri Planning Area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2013: 1 petition from Weston Public School with 7 signatures for a skatepark in Weston 2010: 1 petition for a skatepark in Abermain with 200 signatures 2009: 1 community request for a BMX track in Kurri Kurri 2007: 1 community request for a skatepark in Abermain
Greta – Branxton Planning Area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2017: 1 petition for a skatepark in Branxton with over 200 signatures 2017-2020: 4 requests for a skatepark in Branxton 2010: 1 petition from Branxton Public School for a skatepark in Branxton with 20 signatures 2010: 1 petition from St Brigid's Primary School with 16 signatures requesting a skatepark in Branxton.
Rural West Planning Area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2017: 1 petition for a skatepark in Millfield with 48 signatures 2013: 1 petition for a skatepark within Millfield with over 100 signatures 2006: 2 community requests for a BMX track in Paxton

Whilst these requests have been acknowledged and incorporated within site specific Masterplans where possible (e.g. Miller Park), it further demonstrates there is demand for skate and BMX facilities within the Cessnock LGA.

What Skate and BMX Facilities do we Need?

This section will commence examining each of the four Planning Area's and then the Local Government Area as a whole.

Figure 7: Cessnock Planning Area



Cessnock Planning Area - BMX

There is one freestyle BMX track located within this Planning Area at Carmichael Park, Bellbird. This is a citywide facility and there are no future plans to provide additional dirt BMX facilities in the Cessnock LGA. This approach is consistent with local, state and national planning guidelines and there is no evidenced demand for an additional freestyle facility.

The facility at Carmichael Park is currently in poor condition and not meeting user needs. It is recommended that a detailed concept plan and design be prepared for the BMX facility to ensure the site is functional, safe and catering for a wide range of skill level.

It is also recommended a Management Plan be established for the site with consideration for the establishment of a working group so that ongoing maintenance practices are developed and implemented. A map has not been provided as this is outlined within the review of existing sites.

In regards to a competition BMX track, there is currently no established club in the Cessnock LGA and there is no identified demand for this type of facility. Should demand arise, this type of facility could be supported but any site considered would need to have a sound business case developed and would need to demonstrate sustained demand.

Recommendation:

1. A detailed concept plan and design be developed for Carmichael Park BMX facility.
2. A management plan is developed for Carmichael Park BMX Facility.

Cessnock Planning Area - Skateparks

As a result of projected growth within the Cessnock Planning Area, it is expected that the proportion of people looking for access to youth spaces will increase. The following sites have been approved for residential development and are illustrated in Figure 8.

- Bellbird North – 10,150 residents
- Nulkaba - 1,300 residents
- Golden Bear, Rothbury - 870 residents
- Kitchener (other) – 642 residents
- Government Road Cessnock – 1,305 residents
- Kitchener - 642 residents
- Bellbird Heights – 840 residents

The residential development above will account for an additional 15,749 people within this Planning Area. At a very conservative figure, an assumption of one child per family equates to 5,200 children.

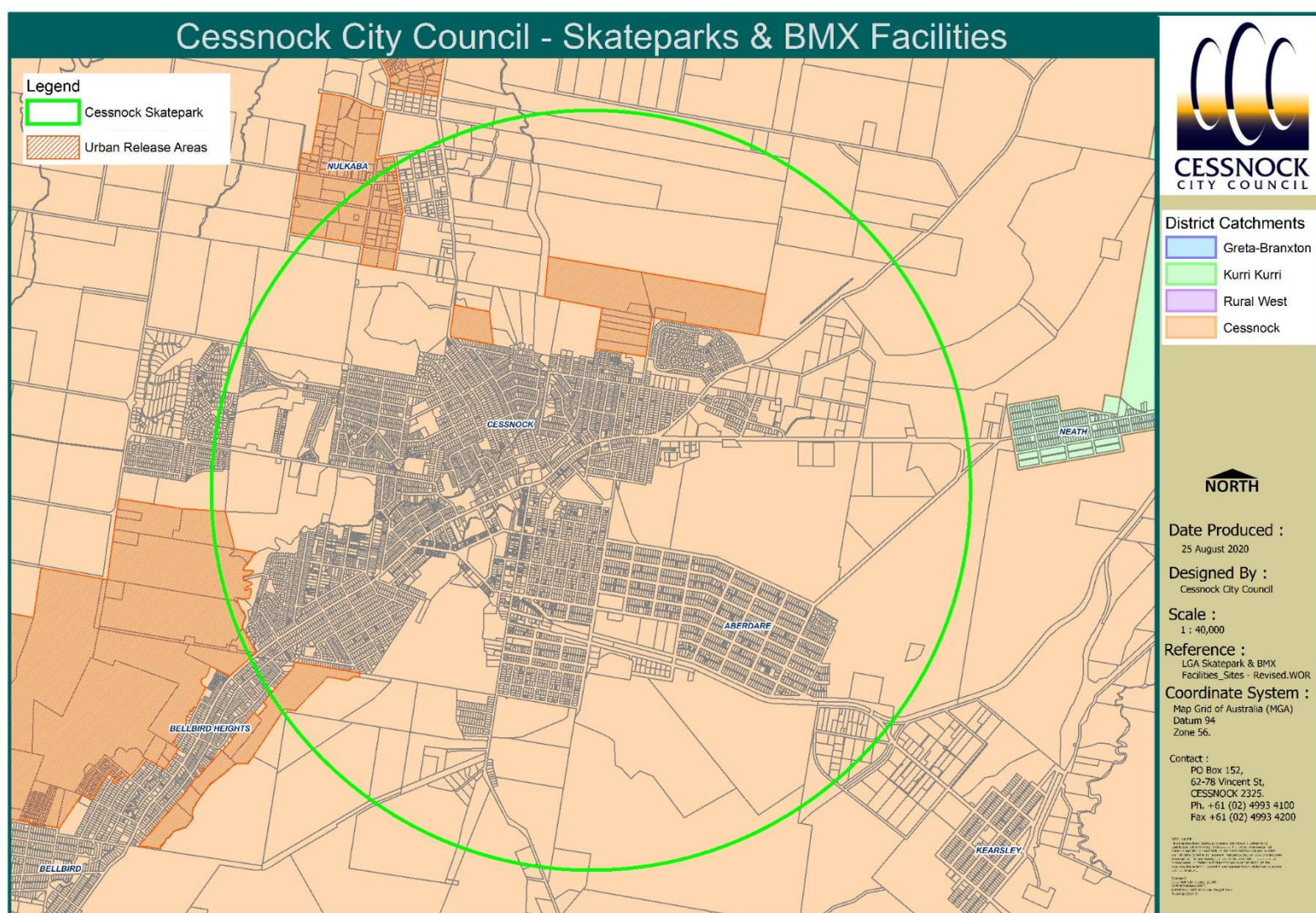
When the catchment area for existing skateparks is overlaid on the residential development map (Figure 8), it demonstrates there are existing and future gaps, especially when taking into consideration residential developments.

As can be seen from Figure 8, there are visual gaps at Bellbird, Kitchener, Kearsley, Nulkaba, Pokolbin and Rothbury. Bellbird and Kitchener are considered existing gaps as they are already outside of the catchments identified and projected population growth will only intensify the need for skateparks. Whilst Kearsley and Pokolbin are also outside of the skatepark catchment, current and predicted population levels do not justify skate facilities.

Nulkaba's current population does not justify a skatepark, however its disconnect from the CBD and future residential developments warrant this as an area for future investigation.

Rothbury is experiencing slight growth, however due to the proximity to proposed skatepark facilities within the Huntlee development area additional facilities within this location would be considered a duplication and not recommended.

Figure 8: Residential Development & Existing Skateparks within the Cessnock Planning Area*



**The Proposed Cessnock Regional Skatepark has not be illustrated in Figure 8 as it applies citywide and not specific to the Cessnock Planning Area.*

Council's adopted Skate Facility Site Analysis was completed in 2015 as a direct result of actions contained within the Skate & BMX Facility Needs Assessment (completed in 2011). The Site Analysis identified potential locations for additional skateparks. As the Site Analysis is now nine years old, and additional information is available in regards to the demographic profile of Cessnock and population growth some of the sites identified have been reconsidered.

Recommendations from the adopted 2015 Site Analysis that still apply include:

Kitchener

The site analysis stated that Council consider the inclusion of local skate facilities in future planning agreements and contributions plans for dedicated open space. At the time the audit was completed Poppethead Park, Kitchener did not meet the requirements for a skatepark due to the historic character of the site.

In the last few years, Poppethead Park at Kitchener has grown to be a great youth space. Upgrades have included 591m of shared walking paths, a district size playground and improvement to the viewing platform over Kitchener dam. With limited Council owned/managed open space in this area, and wanting to align with Council's objective of 'better utilisation of existing open space', it is recommended that a local skate facility be located within this reserve. There is also demonstrated community demand for this facility.

Figure 9: Kitchener Poppethead: Proposed Local Skate Spot/Node



It is recommended a Masterplan be completed for the site incorporating a skate facility between 100 – 150m² and be identified as a skate spot/node (a small skateable area including 3-5 elements). A contribution from all new development within the Kitchener area should be provided for the skatepark.

Recommendation:

1. A Masterplan be completed for Kitchener Poppethead Park incorporating a local level facility (skate spot/node).

Cessnock

The Site Analysis recommended that a district skatepark be located within Mount View Park. This action has significantly progressed in the five years since the analysis was completed. Council has an adopted Masterplan for the site and concept plans have been completed for a regional skatepark in this location with Council continually exploring options to fund the project.

Recommendation:

1. Detailed designs are developed for Cessnock Regional Skatepark.
2. Grant funding opportunities continue to be investigated for Cessnock Regional Skatepark as a priority.

Figure 10: Mount View Park – Regional Skatepark Location

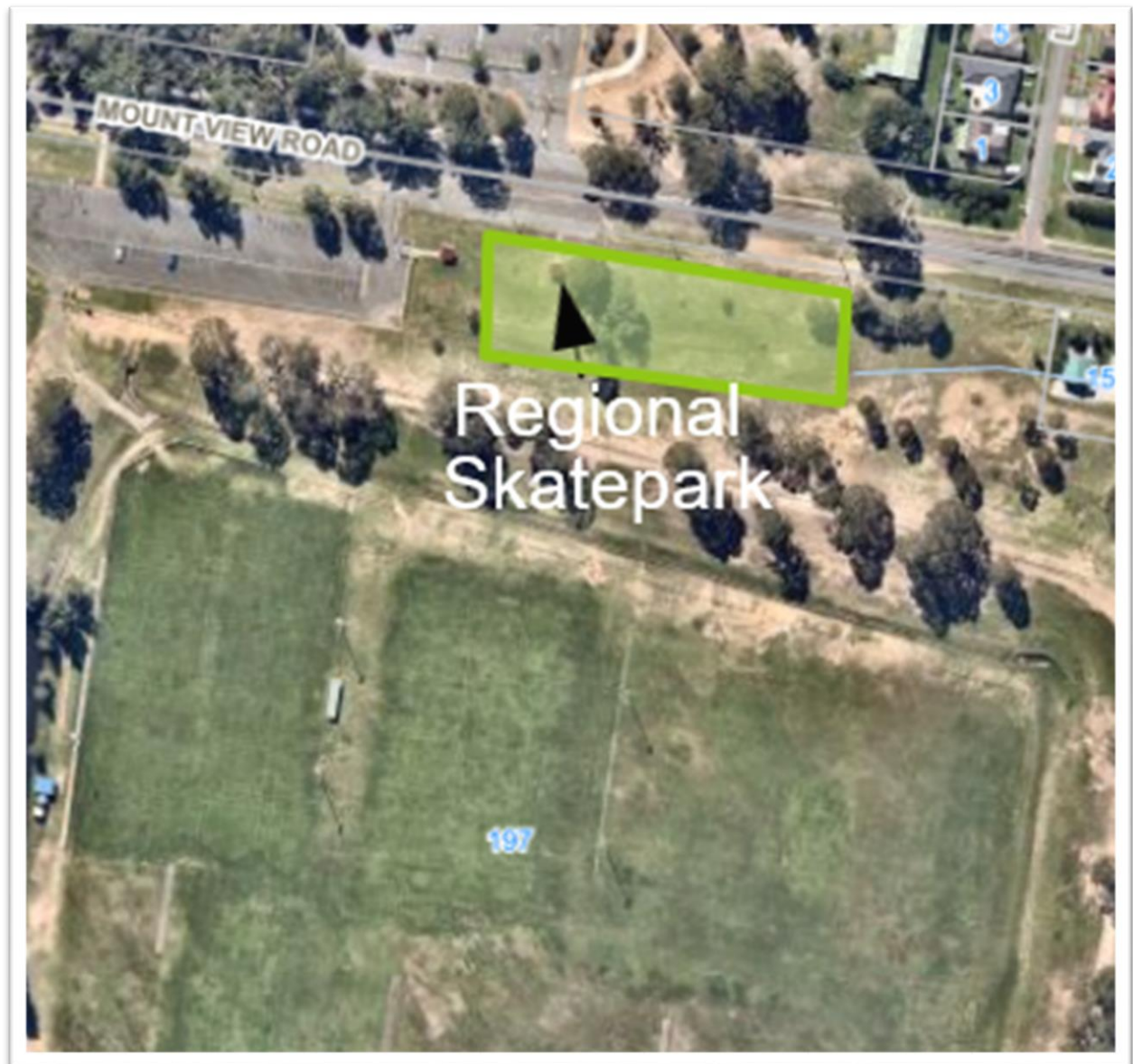


Figure 11: Concept Plans Cessnock Regional Skatepark (Mt View Park)



Additional Recommendations for the Cessnock Planning Area

Bellbird

Bellbird was not identified within the adopted Needs Assessment or Site Analysis. Based on the projected population for this area (10,150), and increased number of families, a local skate facility should be provided.

A local level skate facility (skate spot/node) is recommended to be located within the proposed district sports facility within the Bellbird North development area. The skate spot/node should be between 150 – 200m² including 4-6 elements. A map has not been provided as the exact location is not yet known.

Although Kitchener and Bellbird are located within the catchment area of the regional facility, the concentration of growth in their respective areas warrants access to a skate space.

Recommendation:

1. A location be negotiated within the Bellbird North development area for a local level skate facility (skate spot/node).

Nulkaba

As stated previously Nulkaba's current population does not justify a skatepark, however it's disconnect from the CBD and future residential developments warrant this as an area for future investigation. It is recommended that once identified residential development is complete in the Nulkaba area a feasibility exercise be undertaken in regards to provision of a skate facility. If warranted, the size of the facility would be a skate spot/node no more than 50 – 100m².

Recommendation:

1. A feasibility study be undertaken for a skate spot/node if demand is triggered for Nulkaba.

Cessnock Skatepark (Bridges Hill)

Following Council's resolution in 2017 to retain Cessnock skatepark, this site requires significant works to ensure it is a functional safe space. It is recommended the site remain as a local level facility (minimum 400m²) and a Masterplan be completed identifying future upgrades and connectivity to the newly upgraded Bridges Hill Playground. A map has not been provided as this is illustrated in Section 9 of the Strategy.

Until such time that funding becomes available to upgrade the local skatepark the high priority items identified within the audit report (Appendix A) are to be completed to extend the life of the existing facility.

Recommendation:

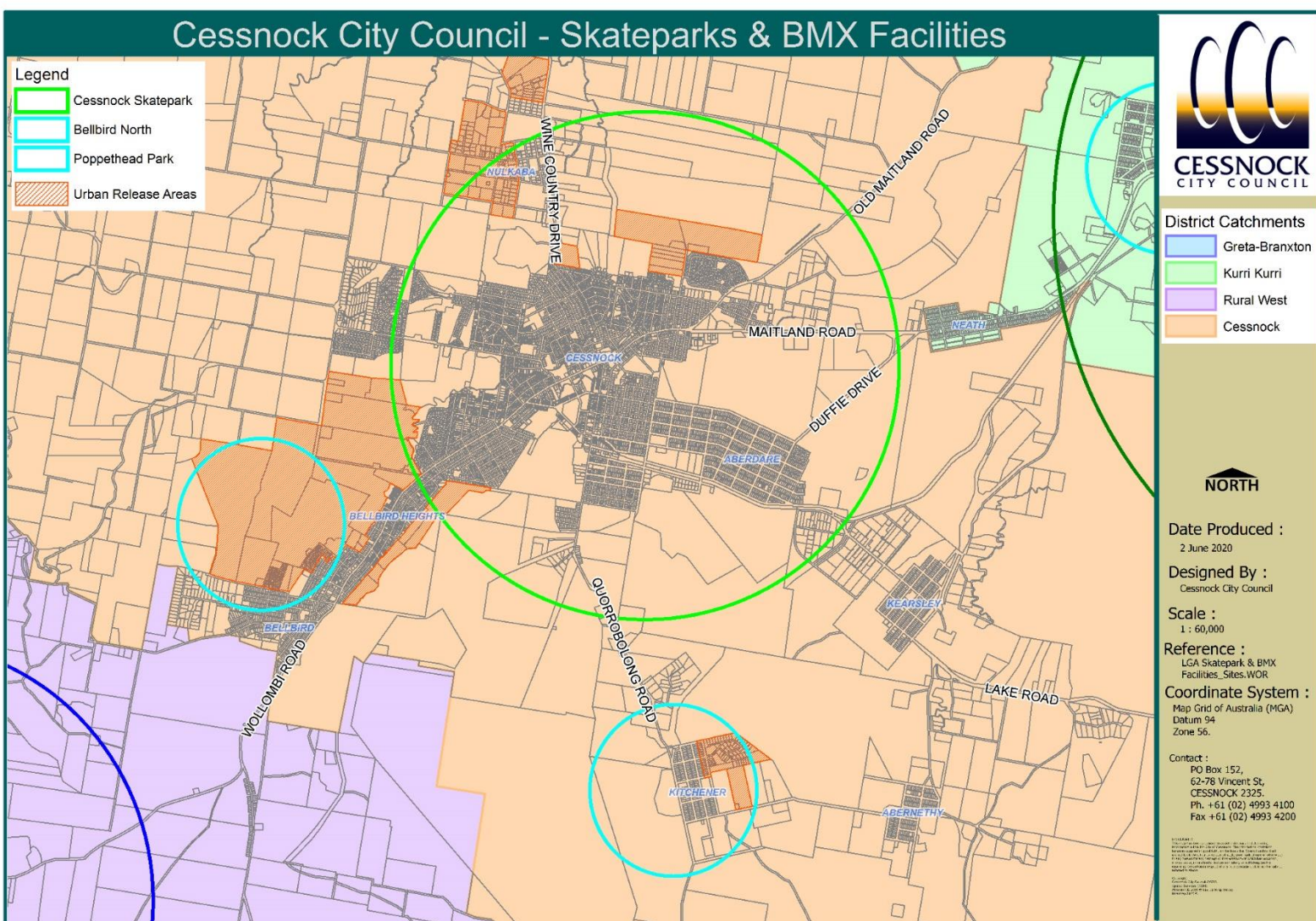
1. A Masterplan be completed for Cessnock Skatepark illustrating a new local level skatepark.
2. The high priority items identified in the audit report for Cessnock Skatepark are to be completed.

District Facilities

There are no district facilities proposed for this Planning Area. This is based on the provision of the proposed regional facility and a good mix of local level facilities with varying styles.

Figure 12 demonstrates a revised image of the Cessnock Planning Area incorporating new facilities.

Figure 12: Updated Skatepark Map for the Cessnock Planning Area *



**Proposed local skatepark at Bellbird North and Kitchener Poppethead Park (1km catchment) – Blue Outline, Existing Cessnock Local Skatepark at Bridges Hill (3km catchment) – Green Outline*

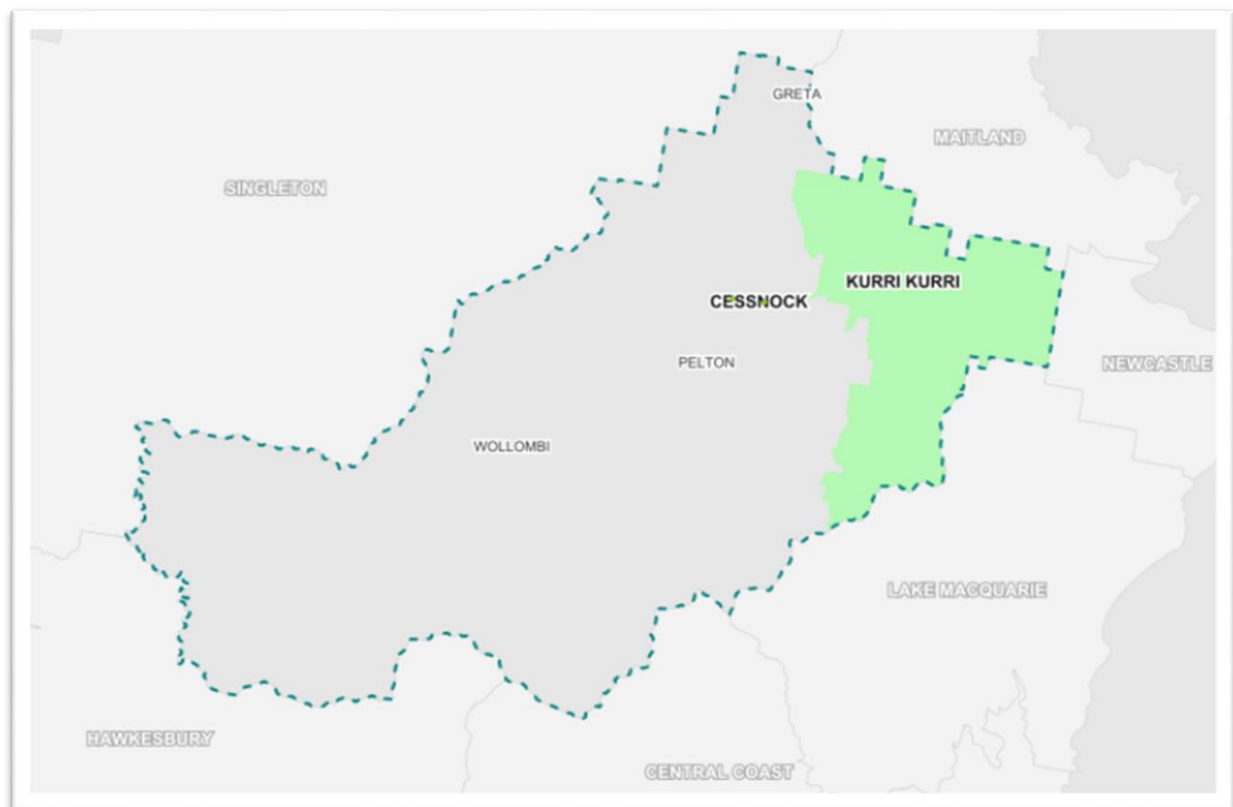
Summary of Recommendations for Cessnock Planning Area

These recommendations are not in order of priority but the order in which they were assessed in the Strategy:

1. A detailed concept plan and design be developed for Carmichael Park BMX facility.
2. A management plan is developed for Carmichael Park BMX Facility.
3. A Masterplan be completed for Kitchener Poppethead Park incorporating a local level facility (skate spot/node).
4. Detailed designs are developed for Cessnock Regional Skatepark.
5. Grant funding opportunities continue to be investigated for Cessnock Regional Skatepark as a priority.
6. A location be negotiated within the Bellbird North development area for a local level skate facility (skate spot/node).
7. A feasibility study be undertaken if demand is triggered for Nulkaba.
8. A Masterplan be completed for Cessnock Skatepark illustrating a new local level skatepark.
9. The high priority items identified in the audit report for Cessnock Skatepark are to be completed.

Kurri Kurri Planning Area - Skateparks

Figure 13: Kurri Kurri Planning Area

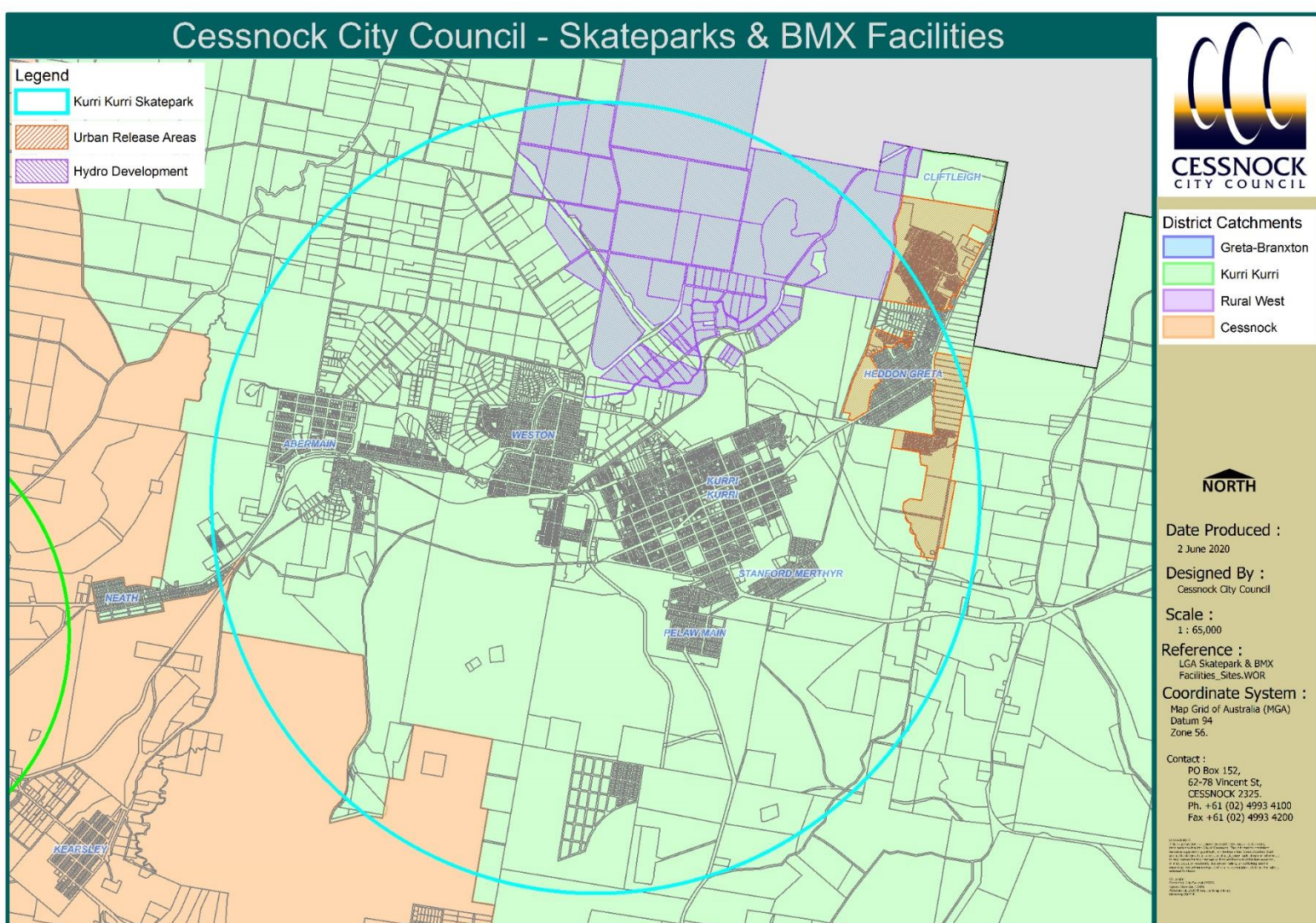


As a result of projected growth within the Kurri Kurri Planning Area, it is expected that the proportion of people looking for access to youth spaces will increase. The following sites have been approved for residential development and are illustrated in Figure 14.

- Avery's Village – 2,400 residents
- Hebburn Estate, Weston - 250 residents
- Cliftleigh – 2735 residents
- Weston – 55 residents
- Hydro Aluminum, Kurri Kurri – 6,000 residents
- Heddon Greta – 546 residents

An increase of 11,986 people (not including Cliftleigh as this development is nearing completion) is anticipated within this Planning Area. Utilising a similar approach to the Cessnock Planning Area, if only 1 child was anticipated per family (and discounting any adult riders), there could be an additional 3,900 children. This figure combined with the visible gaps in Figure 14 and community demand, demonstrates that additional skateparks are required.

Figure 14: Residential Development and Existing Skateparks within the Kurri Kurri Planning Area



**Existing Kurri Kurri Skatepark-Margaret Johns Park (5km catchment) – Blue Outline*

District Skateparks within the Kurri Kurri Planning Area

There is currently one district size facility located within this Planning Area which is located at Margaret Johns Park Kurri Kurri. The 5km catchment as demonstrated in Figure 12 does cover the Planning Area with the exceptions of Neath, Clifbleigh and Mulbring however with a predicted population growth of 11,986 people and the lineal nature of this Planning Area (heavily concentrated along a thin urban belt) additional skatepark facilities should be considered.

It is also important to highlight that the very nature of this planning area means that the key target audience of the existing skate facilities require public transport (or lifts from friends/family) to access it. A 3km walk from Neath/Abermain and similarly Heddon Greta/Clifbleigh is not viable.

In regards to Mulbring, whilst it is outside of the catchment area for the district skatepark, current and predicted population levels do not justify skate facilities in this area.

Local Skateparks within the Kurri Kurri Planning Area

Recommendations from the adopted Site Facility Analysis 2015 that are still relevant to this Planning Area include:

Abermain

The Site Analysis recommends that a site specific Plan of Management and Masterplan for Jefferies Park, Abermain be developed with the inclusion of a local skate facility. This is still supported.

Figure 15: Jefferies Park - Proposed Local Skatepark (Skate Spot/Node)



To expand on this further, it is proposed that a local level skate facility be provided at this location between 100 – 150m² and be identified as a skate Spot/Node (a small skateable area including 3-5 elements).

Recommendation:

1. Prepare a site specific Plan of Management for Jefferies Park, Abermain
2. A Masterplan be completed for Jefferies Park, Abermain illustrating a new local level skatepark.

Heddon Greta

The Site Analysis recommends that Council consider the inclusion of local skate facilities in future planning agreements and contribution plans for dedicated open space in Heddon Greta.

This recommendation is still largely supported, however to cater for the area with the most predicted population growth (Heddon Greta/Loxford/Cliftleigh) it is proposed to locate a local level skate facility within District Park Cliftleigh adjacent to the existing playground. Note, the trigger for this skatepark in terms of demand is largely required as a result of the ongoing residential development in this corridor and the proposed skatepark will service the corridor. A contribution from all new development in the Cliftleigh corridor should be provided for this facility.

In order to support this space, it is also recommended that a multipurpose court be investigated and be located adjacent to the skatepark. This aligns with Action 2.4.4 within Council's Recreation and Open Space Strategic Plan 2019 which is to investigate installing multipurpose courts at District facilities.

Figure 16: Cliftleigh Meadows District Park - Proposed Location of Local Skate Park



The skatepark should be 300m – 400m² and meet criteria outlined within the adopted hierarchy.

Recommendation:

1. A local level skate facility be provided within Cliftleigh Meadows District Park.
2. A multipurpose court be investigated for Cliftleigh Meadows District Park adjacent to the local skate facility.

District Skateparks within the Kurri Kurri Planning Area

Kurri Kurri Skatepark

As outlined within the site audit, Margaret John's skatepark is in relatively poor condition, especially the snake run component. It is proposed to prepare a Masterplan for this site to enable it to better function as a district skate facility (this includes ensuring the site is a minimum 500m²). The Masterplan will examine the park as a whole including connections to Kurri Kurri Aquatic Fitness Centre and surrounds and supporting infrastructure. A map has not been provided as this is illustrated in section 9 of the Strategy.

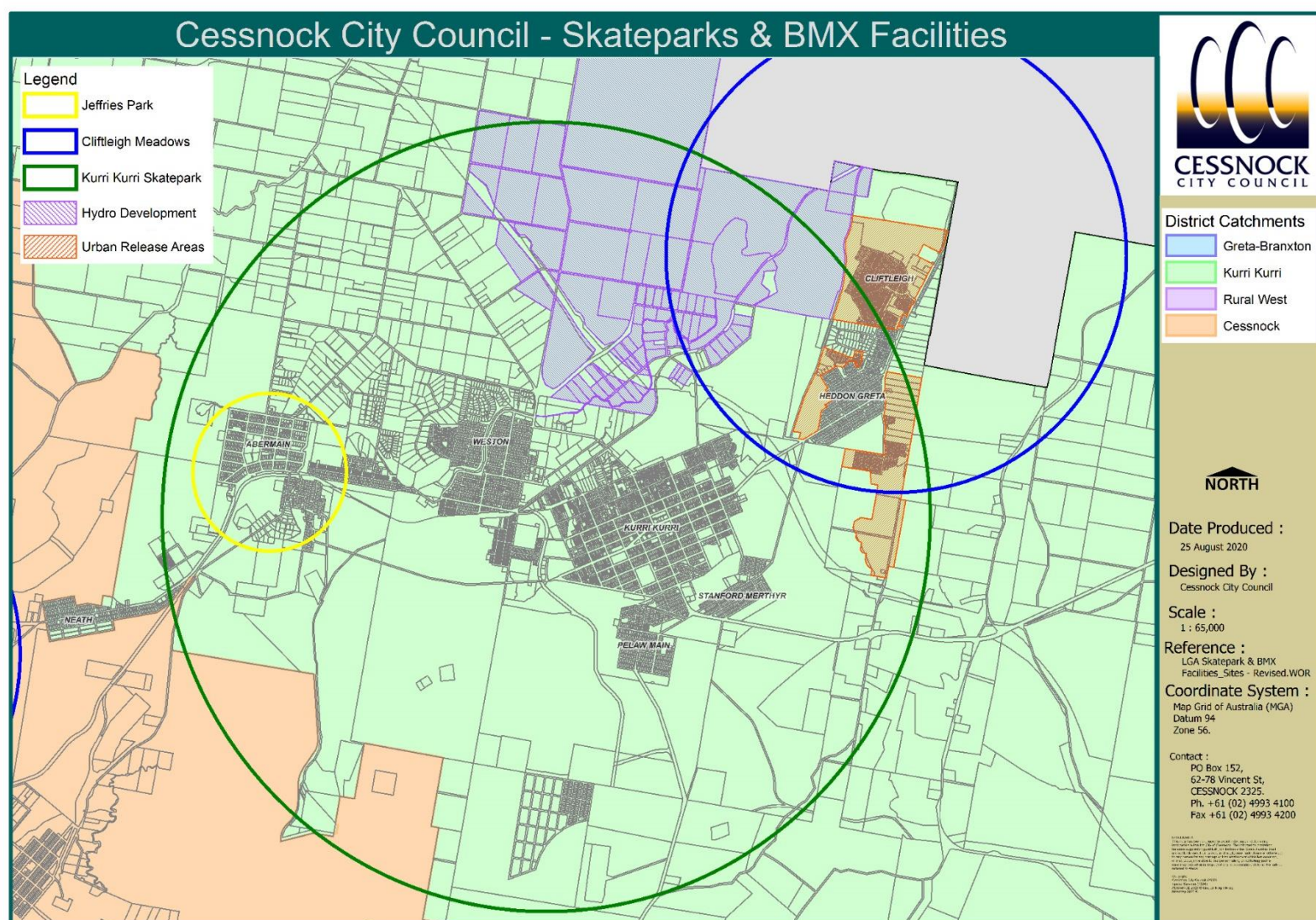
Concept plans and detailed designs should then be developed to upgrade the skatepark.

Until such time that funding becomes available to upgrade the district skatepark the high priority items identified within the audit report (Appendix A) are to be completed to extend the life of the existing facility.

Recommendation:

1. A Masterplan be developed for Margaret Johns Park including the district skatepark.
2. Concept and detailed design plans to be prepared for Kurri Kurri Skatepark.
3. High priority items identified within the audit report for Kurri Kurri Skatepark are to be completed.

Figure 17: Updated Skatepark Map for the Kurri Kurri Planning Area*



*Proposed local facilities at Jeffries Park (1km catchment) – Yellow Outline, Existing District Skatepark at Margaret Johns Park (5km catchment) – Green Outline, Proposed Local Skatepark at Cliftleigh Meadows District Park (3km Catchment) - Blue Outline.

In regards to Figure 17, there is an obvious overlay between the proposed skatepark at Jeffries Park (the yellow outline) and the existing skatepark at Margaret Johns Park (the green outline), however the size and scope of the proposed skatepark at Jeffries Park, Abermain will result in it servicing the immediate area (1km catchment).

The final mix of facilities for this Planning Area will include two local level facilities supported by a high quality district facility.

Summary of Recommendations for the Kurri Kurri Planning Area

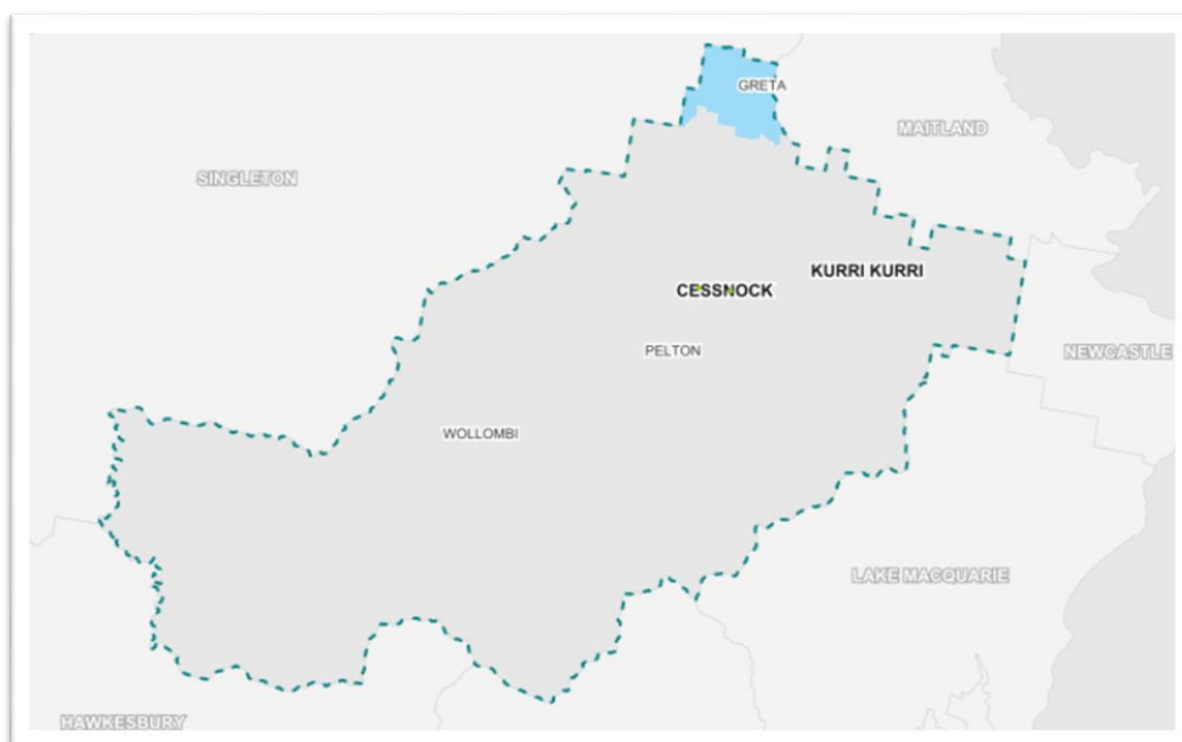
These recommendations are not in order of priority but the order in which they were assessed in the Strategy:

1. Prepare a site specific Plan of Management for Jeffries Park, Abermain.
2. A Masterplan be completed for Jeffries Park, Abermain illustrating a new local level skatepark.
3. A local level skate facility be provided within Cliftleigh Meadows District Park.
4. A multipurpose court be investigated for Cliftleigh Meadows District Park adjacent to the local skate facility.
5. A Masterplan be developed for Margaret Johns Park including the district skatepark.
6. Concept and detailed design plans to be prepared for Kurri Kurri Skatepark.

High priority items identified within the audit report for Kurri Kurri Skatepark are to be completed.

Greta-Branxton Planning Area - Skateparks

Figure 18: Greta-Branxton Planning Area



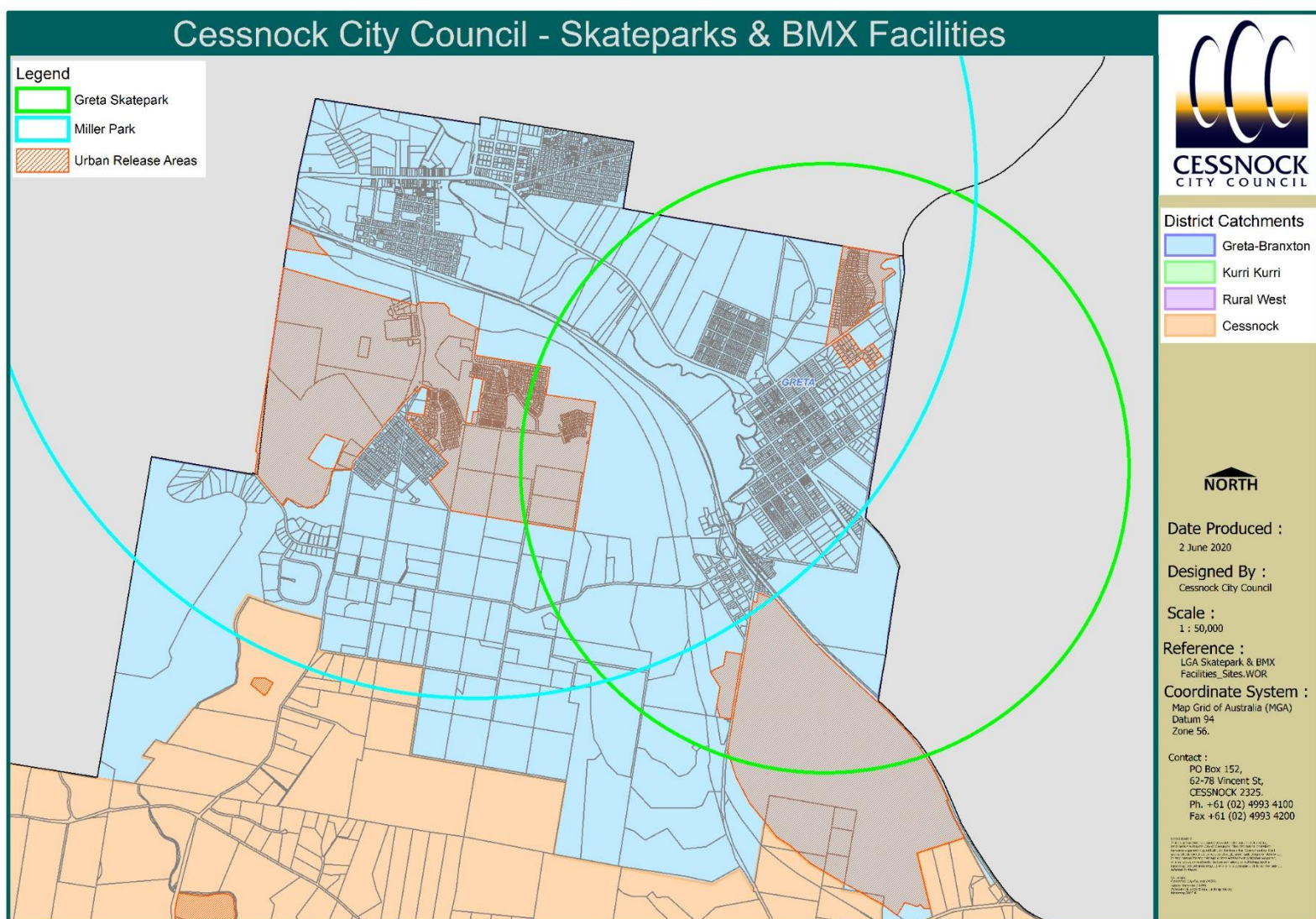
As a result of projected growth within the Greta-Branxton Planning Area, it is expected that the proportion of people looking for access to youth spaces will increase. The following sites have been approved for residential development and are illustrated in Figure 19.

- Huntlee - 19,600 residents
- Anvil Creek, Greta 3,822 residents
- Branxton/Greta/North Rothbury – 2,375 residents
- Wyndham Street, Greta - 672 residents

Population growth for this Planning Area is significant with an estimated 26,469 population increase. Considering the number of young families that will continue to be drawn to these areas, consideration needs to be given to the type and number of skatepark facilities in this Planning Area.

Figure 19 appears to have relatively good coverage of skateparks when the catchment area of 3kms is applied.

Figure 19: Residential Development & Existing Skateparks within the Greta-Branxton Planning Area*



**Proposed Miller Park District Skatepark (5km catchment) – Blue Outline, Existing Greta Local Skatepark (3km catchment) – Green Outline*

Local Skateparks within the Greta-Branxton Planning Area

Greta

There is a local level skatepark located within Greta Central Park. The condition audit undertaken for the site notes it is currently in poor condition and the recommendation from the specialist consultant is to construct a new local level facility. This involves the demolition of the existing facility, and the construction of a new modern, local level youth precinct.

Based on the location of this facility (on the eastern side of the New England Highway) and servicing existing needs as well as the proposed development areas of Wyndham Ridge and Anvil Creek, the above recommendation is supported and is identified within the adopted Masterplan for Greta Central Park 2019. A map is not provided as the location is illustrated within section 9 of the Strategy.

Until such time that funding becomes available to construct a new local skatepark the high priority items identified within the audit report (Appendix A) are to be completed to extend the life of the existing facility.

Recommendation:

1. Concept designs be prepared for a new local level skatepark facility at Greta Central Park.
2. High priority items identified within the audit report for Greta Skatepark are to be completed.

Proposed District Skateparks in the Greta-Branxton Planning Area

Branxton

Council's adopted Site Facility Analysis 2015 identified the following:

- Identify Miller Park as the preferred location for a district skate facility in the Branxton-Huntlee area. This recommendation is supported and has been identified within the adopted Masterplan for Miller Park, Branxton (2018);
- In consultation with the community and key stakeholders, revise the current Miller Park Plan of Management and Masterplan to include a district skate facility. Supported and complete as outlined above;
- Consider the suitability of a district skate facility within Huntlee during the planning of open space areas. This recommendation is not supported. Miller Park Masterplan is now an adopted strategy of Council. A skatepark at Miller Park is conducive to a district facility in that there is ample space and complimentary support facilities including toilets and carparking. Additionally, open space planning is now too advanced within Huntlee to consider a district size skatepark.

Council's adopted Masterplan for Miller Park, Branxton (outlined in blue in Figure 19) demonstrates a pump track (Figure 20) to be provided at the site. This style of facility is reflective of community engagement undertaken in that it is suitable for all wheel sports, especially bikes and scooter which has a high participation rate in the LGA. Also of note is that there are no other pump tracks provided within the Cessnock LGA which adds to the recreation mix of opportunities being provided.

Figure 20: Example of Pump Track



To ensure this facility captures the essence of a district skate facility, other street/transition elements should be incorporated within the pump track design to ensure it meets user needs.

Recommendation:

1. Concept plans are developed for a district level skatepark at Miller Park, Branxton.

Additional Recommendations for Greta-Branxton Planning Area

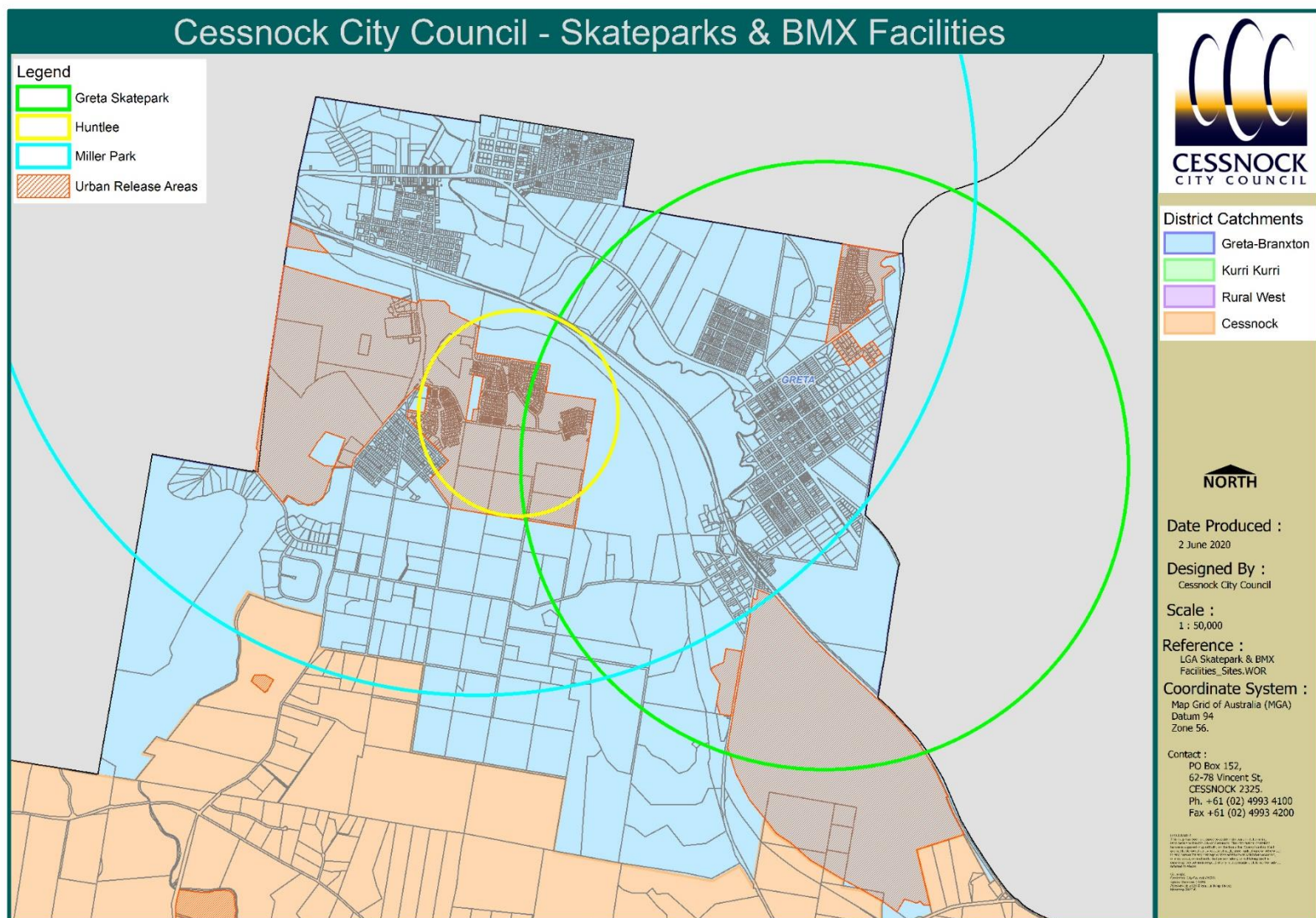
Branxton

A local level skate facility is proposed for Huntlee in the form of a skate spot/node. Whilst Huntlee is located within the district skatepark catchment area for Miller Park, the high concentration of future population growth within this area justifies access to skate elements.

Recommendation:

2. A location be negotiated within the Huntlee development area for a local level skate facility (skate spot/node).

Figure 21: Updated Skatepark Map for the Greta-Branxton Planning Area*



**Proposed Miller Park District Skatepark (5km catchment) – Blue Outline, Existing Greta Local Skatepark (3km catchment) – Green Outline, proposed Huntlee Local Skatepark (1km catchment) – yellow outline.*

When examining Figure 21, there are clear overlays in the catchment areas between facilities. This is justified in that there are three core residential areas being provided for within this Planning Area being Greta, Branxton and Huntlee and there is significant infrastructure (the New England Highway) that divides them. This is particularly the case for the local skatepark facility at Greta Central Park whose intent is to cater for those residents east of the highway.

Miller Park, Branxton aims to cater for the catchment area as a whole (Greta/Branxton and Huntlee) as well as to service those west of the New England Highway. The proposed local level facility at Huntlee will be servicing the immediate area.

The final mix of facilities for this Planning Area will include two local level facilities supported by a high quality district facility.

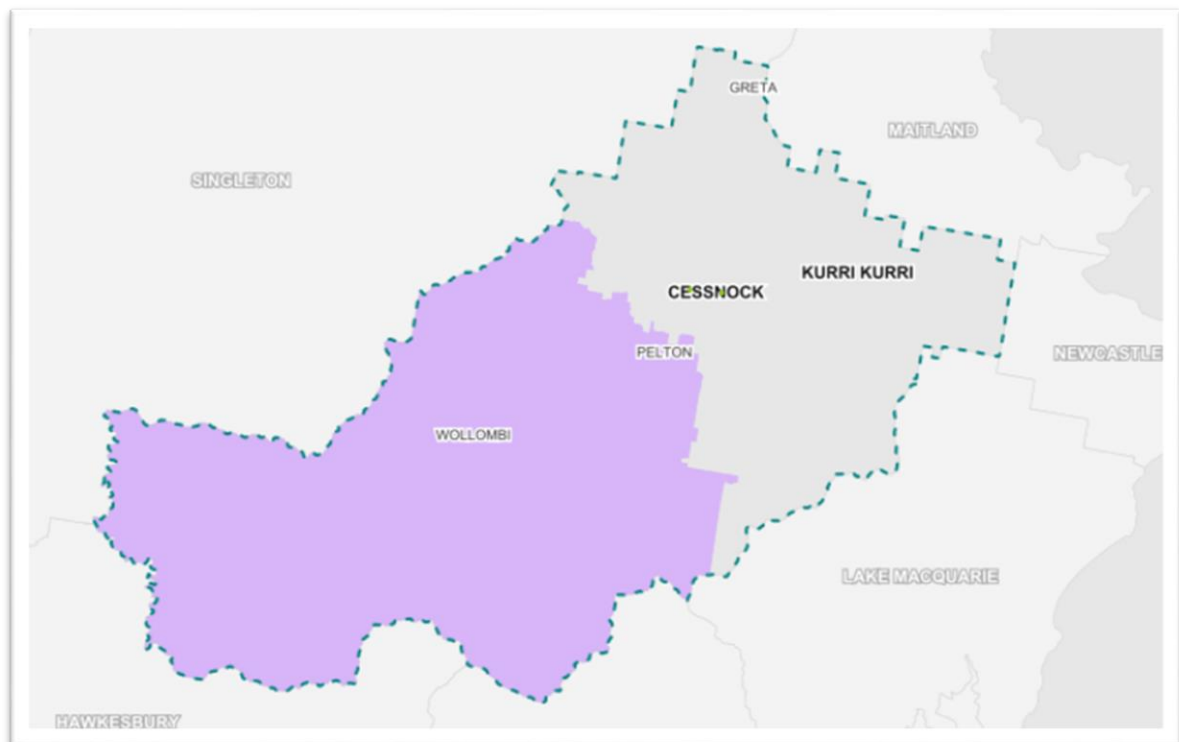
Summary of Recommendations for the Greta-Branxton Planning Area

These recommendations are not in order of priority but the order in which they were assessed in the Strategy:

1. Concept design plans to be prepared for a new local level skatepark facility at Greta Central Park.
2. High priority items identified within the audit report for Greta Skatepark are to be completed.
3. Concept plans are developed for a district level skatepark at Miller Park, Branxton.
4. A location be negotiated within the Huntlee development area for a local level skate facility (skate spot/node).

Rural West Planning Area - Skateparks

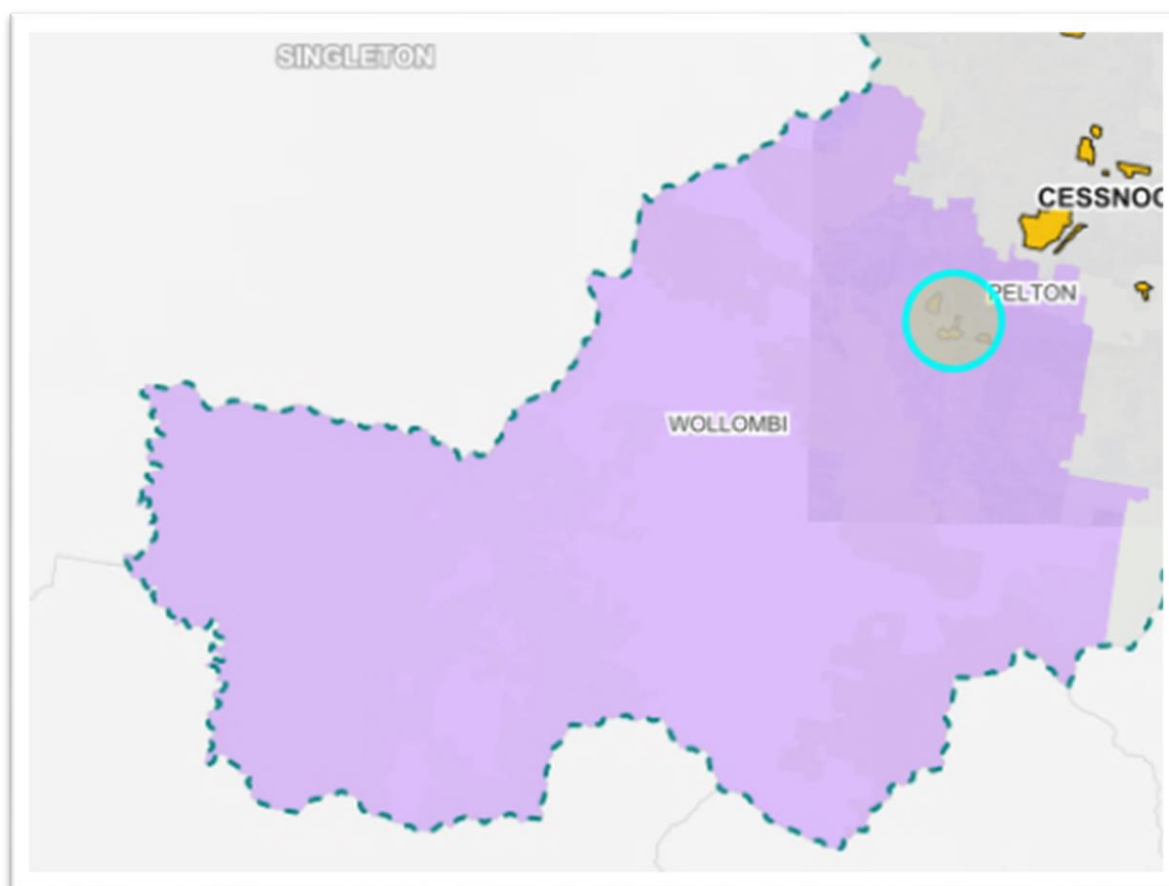
Figure 22: Rural West Planning Area



When considering the projected growth as well as the existing residents within the Rural West Planning Area, it is expected the demand for youth spaces will increase. The following sites have been approved for residential development and are illustrated in Figure 23.

- Mount View Road, Millfield - 398 residents
- Rose Hill, Millfield - 280 residents
- Congewai Creek 5, Millfield – 360 residents
- Paxton North – 120 residents

Figure 23: Residential Development *



**Proposed Crawfordville Park Local Skatepark, Millfield (3km Catchment Area) Blue Outline*

There are currently no skate facilities provided within the Rural West Planning Area. The proposed skate facility in Millfield has been identified in Figure 23.

Council's adopted Site Facility Analysis 2015 identified the following:

Millfield/Paxton

- In consultation with the local community and key stakeholders, revise the current Crawfordville Park Plan of Management and develop a Masterplan to include a local skate facility. The Masterplan should identify the location and facility type (skate dot, spot or skatepark) as defined in the Skate & BMX Facilities Needs Assessment.

This recommendation is supported and Council has progressed this recommendation significantly. Detailed design and construction drawings have been completed for the local skatepark with construction due to commence in October 2020. The Plan of Management for the site is due to commence in the coming months.

Figure 24: Concept Plans for Local Skatepark at Crawfordville Park, Stage 1

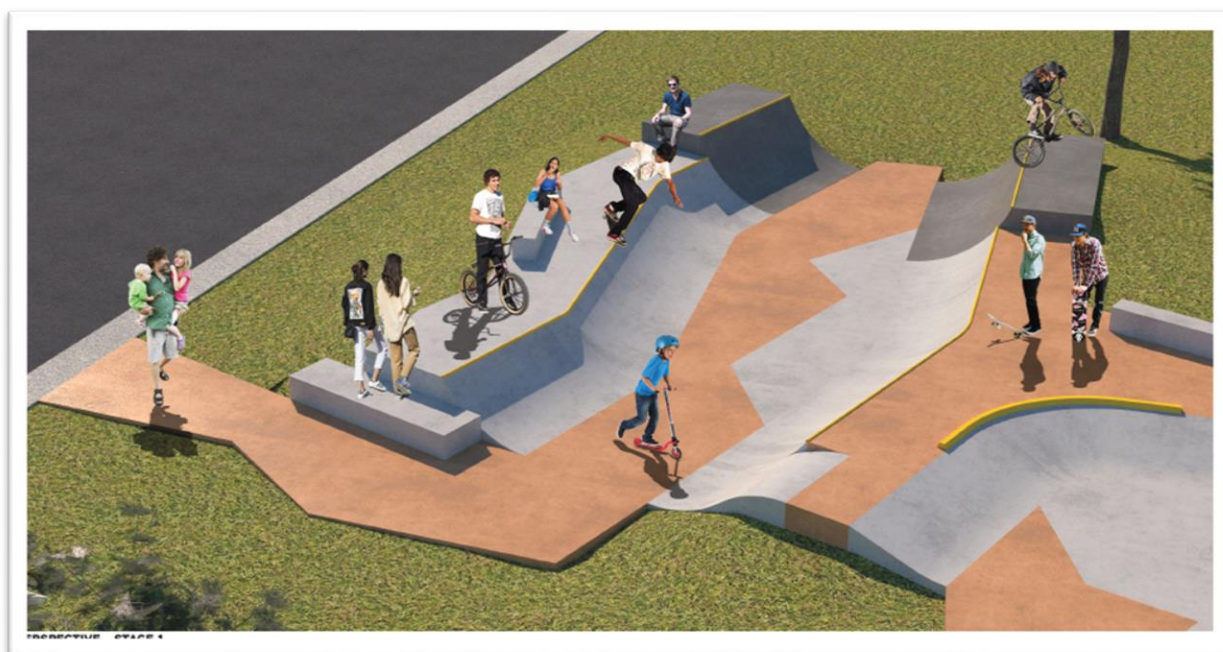


Figure 25: Concept Plans for Local Skatepark at Crawfordville Park, Stage 2

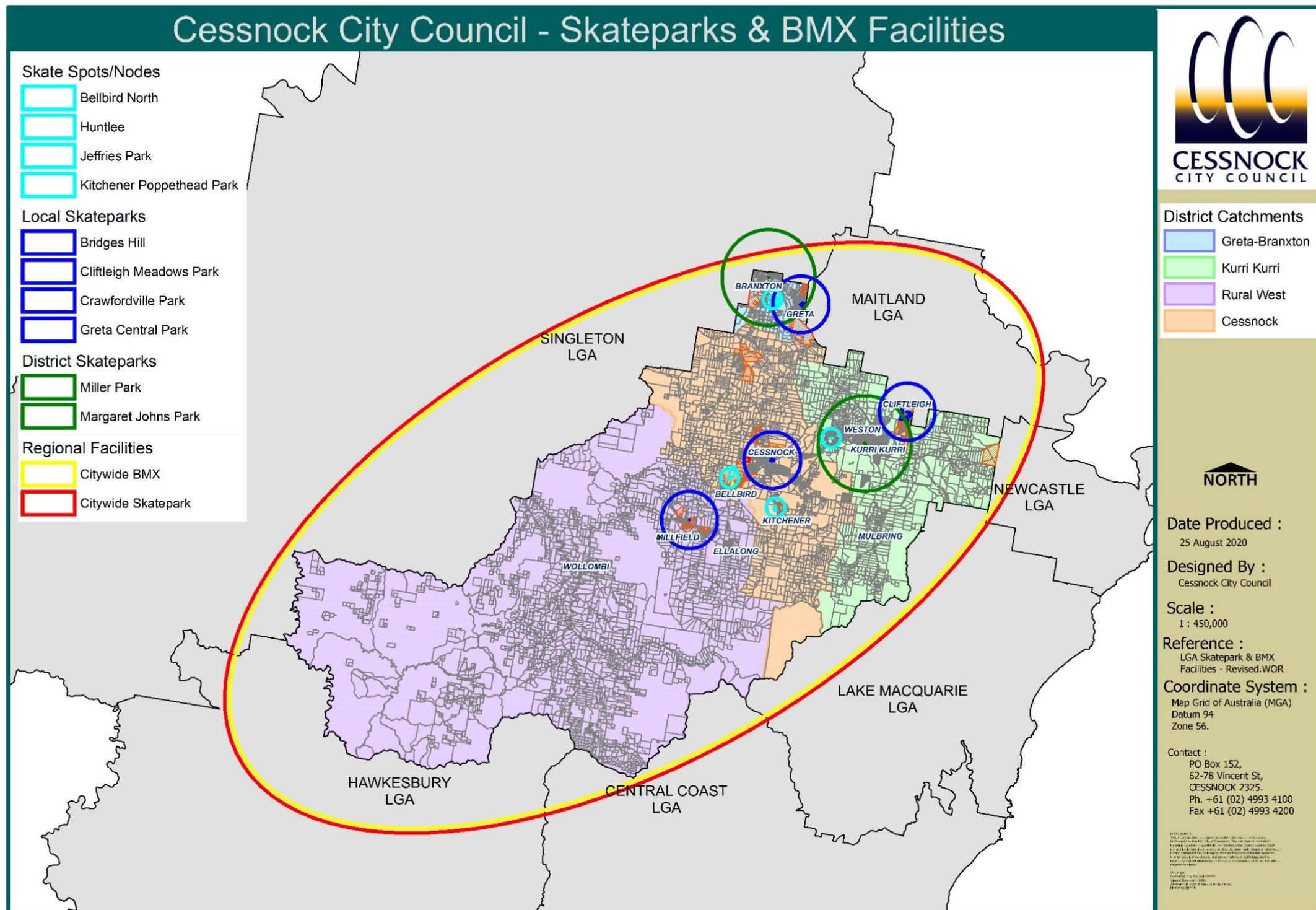


When reviewing Figure 23, the catchment area of 3km incorporates the township of Paxton, however Ellalong, Wollombi and Laguna are outside the catchment area. Current and projected population growth does not support stand alone facilities within these townships. It is anticipated the proposed facility at Millfield will meet the needs of residents within the Rural West Planning Area.

Recommendation:

1. A local level skatepark is constructed within Crawfordville Park Millfield.

Figure 26: Existing and Proposed Skateparks – LGA Wide



A summary of the map above is also provided in table 13 below. It can be seen that moving forward, Council will have a sound mix of facilities across its four Planning Areas. The rate of provision has also increased for skateparks. In the benchmarking section of the Strategy it was demonstrated that Council's level of provision was relatively low compared to Hunter Council's particularly considering population and LGA size.

Council's level of provision is now more closely aligned to the Hunter Council's average (13,832) and has increased from 19,995 people per skatepark to 11,433 people per skatepark in 2031 (should the recommendations be implemented). Note, skate spots/nodes have not been included in this calculation due to their small skateable area and limited catchment area. Council's level of provision for BMX facilities remains unchanged.

Table 13 – Summary of Skatepark Provision to 2031

Planning Area	Skate Spot/Node	Local	District	Regional
Cessnock	Bellbird North Development Area	Bridges Hill*	-----	Mount View Park
	Kitchener Poppethead Park			Carmichael Park** (BMX)
Kurri Kurri	Jeffries Park, Abermain	Cliftleigh Meadows	Margaret Johns* Park, Kurri Kurri	-----
Greta-Branxton	Huntlee Development Area	Greta Central* Park	Miller Park, Branxton	-----
Rural-West	-----	Crawfordville Park, Millfield	-----	-----

**Existing skateparks, **Existing BMX*

When planning and designing new skateparks, as outlined in Table 13, it is recommended that the Safety Grind – Guidelines for Safer Skateparks (2019) be considered and applied.

Section 13

Mountain Bike Parks

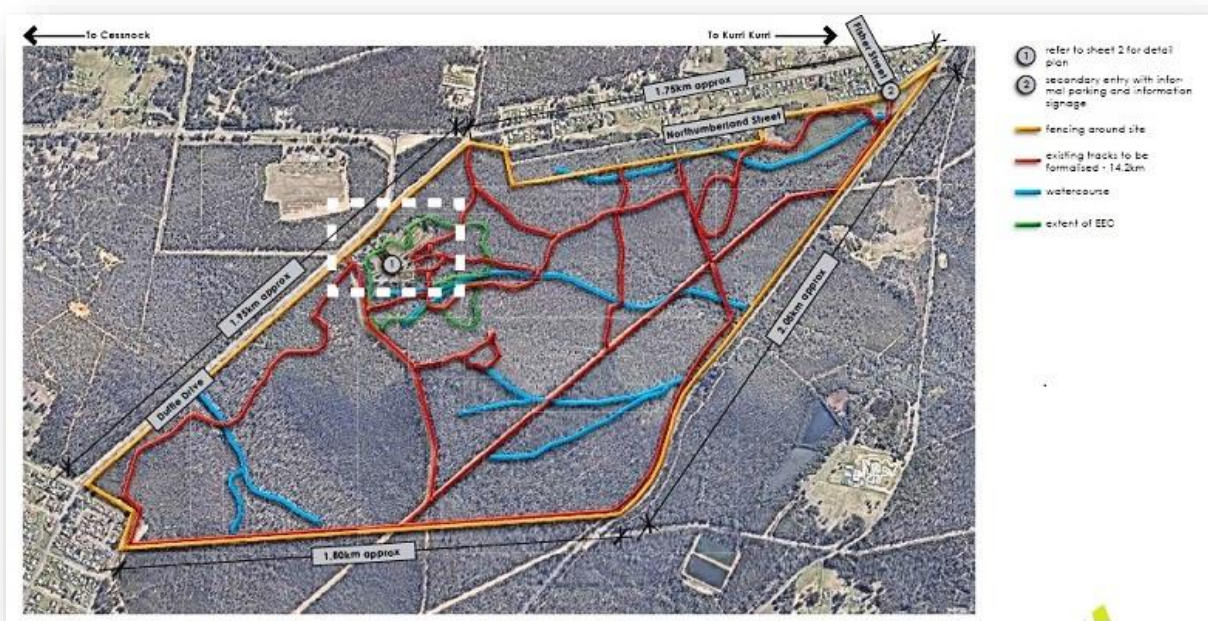
Mountain Bike Parks

The focus for this strategy has been BMX and skate facilities, and whilst mountain bikes do utilise these facilities Council has identified demand through previous engagement for a stand-alone mountain bike facility in the Cessnock LGA.

Concept plans have been developed for a state significant mountain bike facility in Cessnock. This proposal also has links to Council's adopted Trails Strategy (2019).

The current proposal is located off Duffie Drive in Cessnock and is outlined below.

Figure 27: Proposed Mountain Bike Park



Further engagement needs to be held with the private land owners of the above site to determine whether this site is a viable way forward. Impacts on the Endangered Ecological Community present at the site (Lower Hunter Spotted Gum) also needs to be further investigated.

Should land owner consent not be received, or environmental impacts deemed too great, alternate sites will need to be investigated within the LGA.

Recommendation:

1. Engage with private land owners for the proposed Mountain Bike Park in Cessnock and further review the environmental impact of the proposal.

Section 14

Recommendations

Recommendations

Outlined below are the recommendations across Council's four planning areas assigned to High, Medium and Low priorities. These have not been prioritised on cost to construct as there is currently not a budget allocation for Council's skate and BMX facilities. Priorities have been determined based on safety and condition of existing skateparks (to ensure the facilities we do have remain open and accessible), availability of development contribution funding, ability to absorb the development of concept plans/Masterplans within Council's current operating budget and closing gaps in provision where population growth is ongoing.

High

- High priority items identified in the audit report for Cessnock Skatepark are to be completed.
- High priority items identified within the audit report for Kurri Kurri Skatepark are to be completed.
- High priority items identified within the audit report for Greta Skatepark are to be completed.
- Detailed designs are developed for Cessnock Regional Skatepark.
- Grant funding opportunities continue to be investigated for Cessnock Regional Skatepark as a priority.
- A local level skatepark is constructed within Crawfordville Park Millfield.
- A location be negotiated within the Huntlee development area for a local level skate facility (skate spot/node).
- A location be negotiated within the Bellbird North development area for a local level skate facility (skate spot/node).
- A detailed concept plan and design be developed for the Carmichael Park BMX facility.
- A local level skate facility be provided within Cliftleigh Meadows District Park.
- Concept and detailed design plans to be prepared for Cliftleigh Meadows District Park.
- A Masterplan be completed for Kitchener Poppethead Park incorporating a local level facility (skate Spot/Node).

Medium

- A multipurpose court be investigated for Cliftleigh Meadows District Park adjacent to the proposed local skate facility.
- Prepare a site specific Plan of Management for Jeffries Park, Abermain.
- A Masterplan be completed for Jeffries Park, Abermain illustrating a new local level skatepark.
- A management plan is developed for Carmichael Park BMX Facility.
- A masterplan be completed for Cessnock Skatepark illustrating a new local level skatepark.
- A Masterplan be developed for Margaret Johns Park including the district skatepark.
- Concept and detailed design plans to be prepared for Kurri Kurri Skatepark.
- Concept plans be prepared for a new local level skatepark facility at Greta Central Park.
- Concept plans are developed for a district level skatepark at Miller Park, Branxton.

Low

- A feasibility study be undertaken for a skate spot/node if demand is triggered for Nulkaba.
- Engage with private land owners for the proposed Mountain Bike Park in Cessnock and further review the environmental impact of the proposal.



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Section 15

Appendix A

Cessnock LGA Skateparks Audit Report