# Kearsley



Figure 1: Kearsley Village Extent

The village of Kearsley is located between Aberdare, the hamlet of Elrington and the villages of Neath (via Neath Road) and Abernethy (via Kearsley Road). Kearsley is connected to Kitchener via unformed trails located along a spur of the former South Maitland Railway corridor.

The village comprises two distinct yet connected areas, being a larger lot residential area in the north-west, and a smaller lot residential area in the south-east with its core along Allandale Road. The two areas are connected by Caledonia Street and George Jeffrey Park. The north western area is zoned R5 Large Lot Residential with a mapped minimum lot size of 2,000m². The south eastern area is zoned R2 Low Density Residential with a mapped minimum lot size of 450m².

The village is surrounded by rural lands on most sides (which are predominantly vegetated), and adjoins Werakata National Park to the south east.

## Social Environment[1]

In terms of overall population size, the village is relatively comparable with other villages; however, it has a higher proportion of indigenous residents than other villages. The median age is relatively low, and the predominant household type is couples with children.



**Total Population: 861**

**Indigenous Population: 9.1%**

**Median Age: 35**

**Average Weekly Household Income: $1,260**
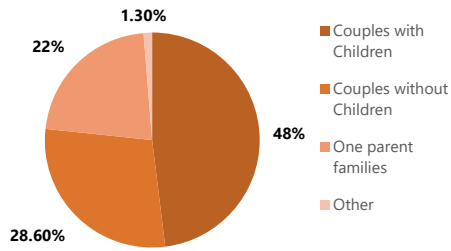
**Average Weekly Rent: $280**
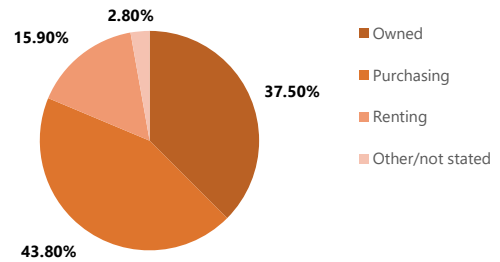
**Average Monthly Mortgage: $1,517**

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[1] ABS 2016 Quick Stats (https://quickstats.censusdata.abs.gov.au/census_services/getproduct/census/2016/quickstat/SSC12080), accessed 14 October 2021
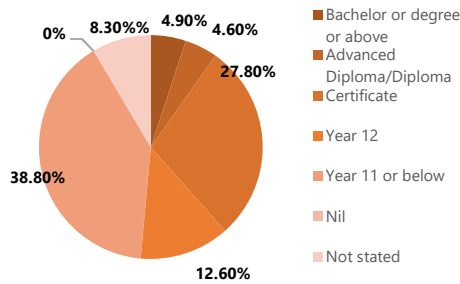
# Kearsley

**Household types**

- Couples with Children — 48%
- Couples without Children — 28.60%
- One parent families — 22%
- Other — 1.30%

**Housing tenure**

- Owned — 37.50%
- Purchasing — 43.80%
- Renting — 15.90%
- Other/not stated — 2.80%

**Highest level of education**

- Bachelor or degree or above — 4.60%
- Advanced Diploma/Diploma — 4.90%
- Certificate — 27.80%
- Year 12 — 12.60%
- Year 11 or below — 38.80%
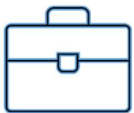- Nil — 0%
- Not stated — 8.30%

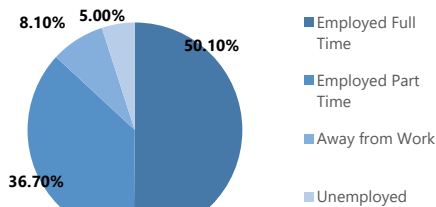**SEIFA (IRSD) Index Score[2]**

**910**

## Economic Environment[3]

Just over half (50.1%) of the population (aged over 15 years) was employed in a full time capacity. A further 36.7% of the population were engaged in part-time employment. Occupations represented in the Kearsley village include Technicians or Tradespeople, Labourers, Machinery Operators/Drives and Sales representatives.
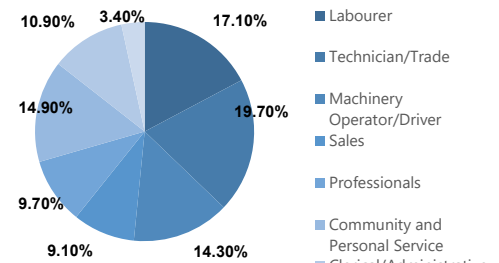
Coal mining is reported as the top industry of employment for Kearsley residents, and most people rely on private vehicles to get to and from work.
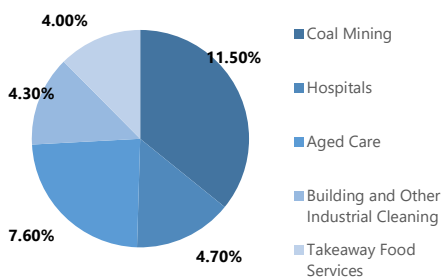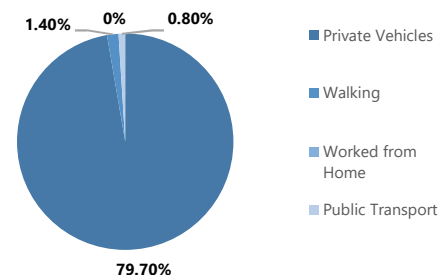
**Employment status**

- Employed Full Time — 50.10%
- Employed Part Time — 36.70%
- Away from Work — 8.10%
- Unemployed — 5.00%

**Occupation**

- Labourer — 17.10%
- Technician/Trade — 19.70%
- Machinery Operator/Driver — 14.30%
- Sales — 9.10%
- Professionals — 9.70%
- Community and Personal Service — 14.90%
- Clerical/Administrative — 10.90%
- 3.40%

**Industry of employment[4]**

- Coal Mining — 11.50%
- Hospitals — 4.70%
- Aged Care — 7.60%
- Building and Other Industrial Cleaning — 4.30%
- Takeaway Food Services — 4.00%

**Journey to work[4]**

- Private Vehicles — 79.70%
- Walking — 1.40%
- Worked from Home — 0%
- Public Transport — 0.80%

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[2] *The Socio Economic Index for Areas (SEIFA) ranks areas in Australia according to relative socio-economic advantage and disadvantage. The Index of Relative Socio-economic Disadvantage (IRSD) is a general socio-economic index that summarises a range of information about the economic and social conditions of people and households within an area. This index includes only measures of relative disadvantage. A low score indicates relatively greater disadvantage in general. A high score indicates a relative lack of disadvantage in general (Source: Census of Population and Housing: Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA), Australia (cat. no. 2033.0.55.001), accessed 14 October 2021*

[3] *ABS 2016 Quick Stats (https://quickstats.censusdata.abs.gov.au/census_services/getproduct/census/2016/quickstat/SSC12080), accessed 14 October 2021*

[4] *Top responses only*

# Kearsley

Businesses include a pub, service station and joinery. Some home businesses also operate within and surround the village area. Vacant shopfront do not exist.



*Plate 1: Examples of local businesses (left to right) service station, pub, business premises*

## Built & Natural Environment[5]

### *Aboriginal Heritage*

Much of the developed area of the village has moderate to low cultural sensitivity. However, surrounding land and connections to other village areas (particularly between Abernethy and Neath) are culturally sensitive. These areas generally follow creek lines.

### *Landscape, Vegetation & Constraints*

The two residential areas are at similar elevations, with a drop in elevation between the areas around the location of George Jeffrey Park. A natural drainage feature/creek line also exists in this locality.

Because of this elevation, either end of Caledonia Road provides a view between each area of the village. Additionally, this elevation provides opportunity for views to the east towards the Heaton State Forest/Sugarloaf National Park. Views to other localities are generally obscured by dense vegetation.

Exclusive of the connection to Aberdare in the northwest, the village area is generally surrounded by vegetation.
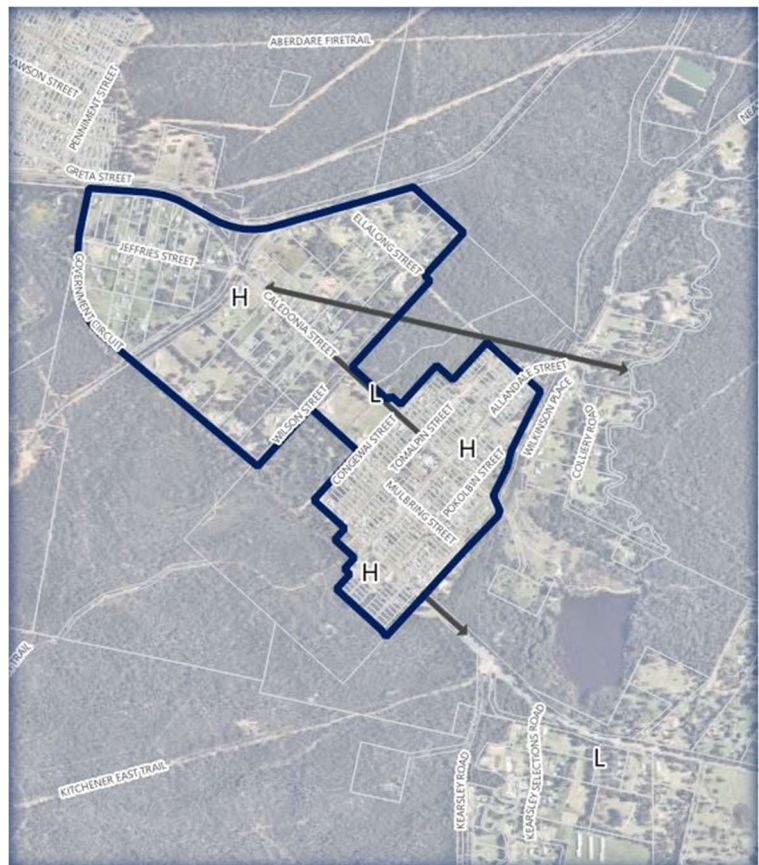


*Figure 2: Significant View Corridors*

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5 *ABS 2016 Quick Stats (https://quickstats.censusdata.abs.gov.au/census_services/getproduct/census/2016/quickstat/SSC12080), accessed 14 October 2021*

*Plate 2: Views (left to right) Caledonia Street & Sugarloaf ranges (from Government Circuit), Caledonia Street (from Allandale Street), Allandale Street (from Neath Street) and Lake Road*

The north-western area of the village comprises more extensive vegetation cover than the residential area to the south. A corridor of vegetation exists along Government Road in the north of the village, and similarly along Wilkinson Place connecting to vegetation along Neath Road, just outside the village area to the south-east. Generally, the village has a canopy cover of approximately 28%

Vegetation surrounding the village comprises several Threatened Ecological Communities (TEC) including the Lower Hunter Spotted Gum-Ironbark Forest and Kurri Sand Swamp Woodland TECs.  The vegetation is identified predominantly as Category 1 bushfire prone vegetation, and as such, bushfire represents a high risk to the village and its residents.

During the 1% Annual Exceedance Probability (AEP) event, Caledonia Road becomes inundated, as does Lake Road to the south of the village, which results in the isolation of the south-eastern smaller lot residential area during such events.
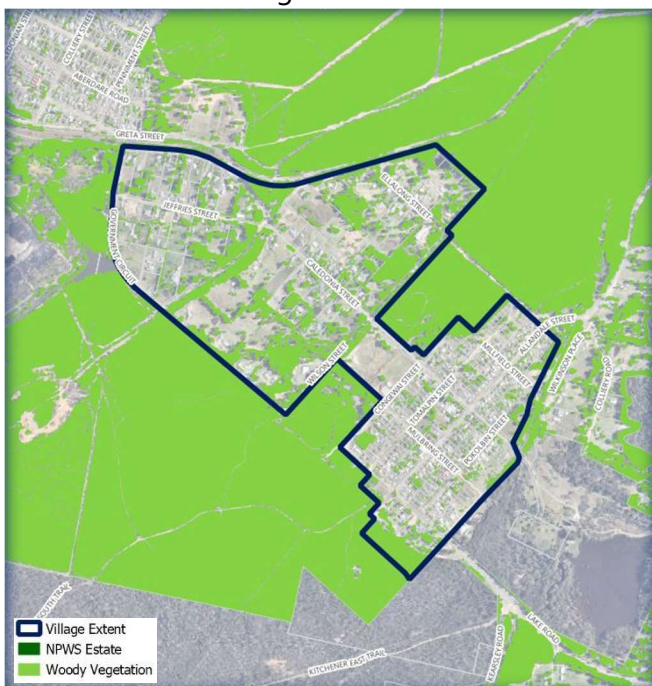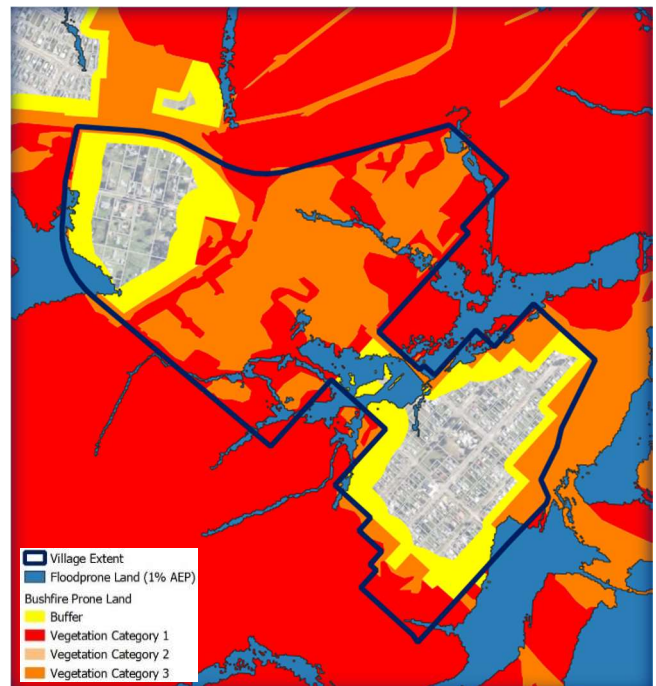


*Figure 3: Vegetation Cover*



*Figure 4: Bushfire Vegetation Categories and Flood prone Land*

# Kearsley

## *European Heritage*

The establishment of the village of Kearsley as a government town is closely tied to the Abermain No. 2 Colliery (located south of the current village and north of Lake Road) which commenced operation in 1910[6].

A school was opened in 1912 to support the growing population, but was moved to its current location in 1915[7]. Bills Horse trough is located in front of the school entry gates on Caledonia Street.

The Kearsley Cop-operative society store opened later in 1918[8], followed by the opening of the Kearsley Hotel in the early 1920's[9].
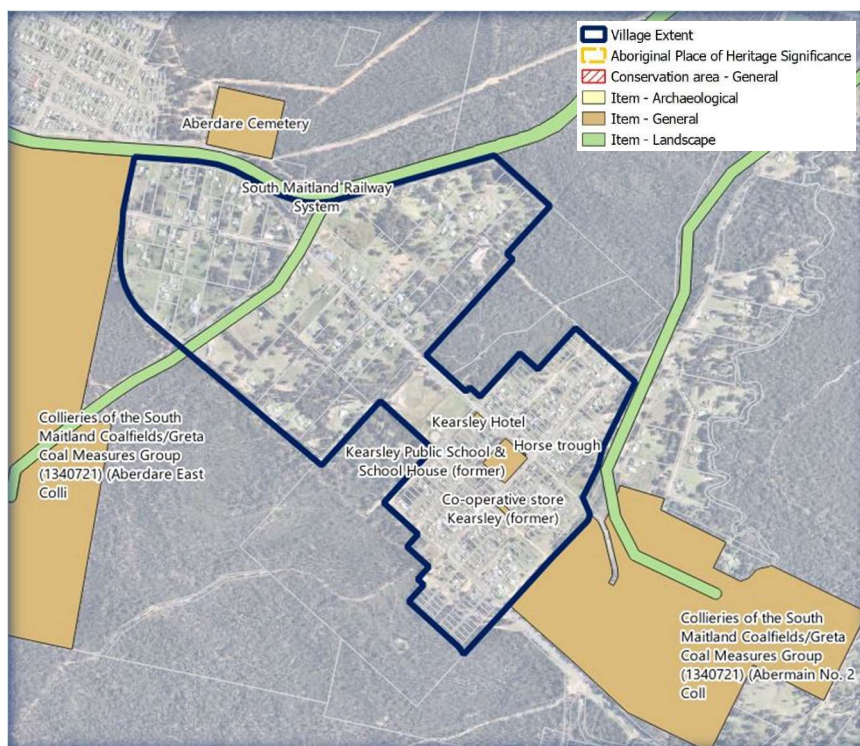


*Figure 5: Heritage Items*



Plate 3: Examples of heritage (from left to right) Former Co-op, Kearsley Hotel, Former School

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[6] *Pike, Walker and Associates, 1992-93 City of Cessnock Heritage Study (Abermain Colliery Houses Inventory Item Sheet Ref. No. 036, Kearsley Hotel Inventory Item Sheet Ref. No. 071 & Kearsley Public School Inventory Item Sheet Ref. No. 192)*

[7] *State Heritage Inventory, Kearsley Public School and School House (former)*
*https://www.hms.heritage.nsw.gov.au/App/Item/ViewItem?itemId=1340555, accessed 10 November 2021*

[8] *State Heritage Inventory, Co-operative Store Kearsley https://www.hms.heritage.nsw.gov.au/App/Item/ViewItem?itemId=1340557, accessed 12 November 2021*
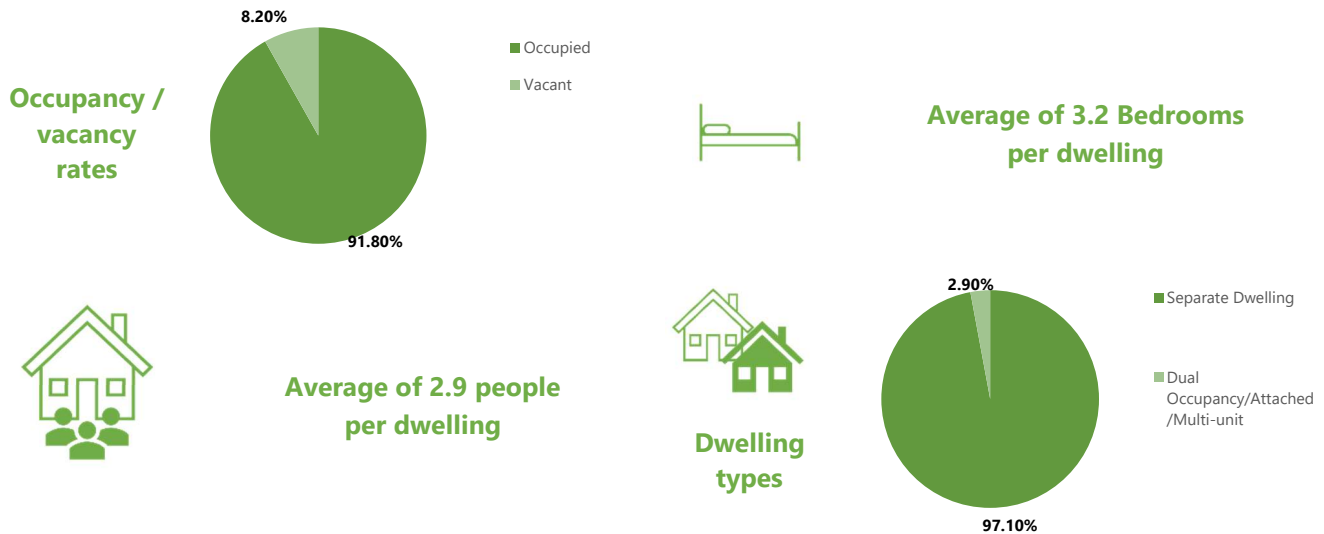
[9] *Pike, Walker and Associates, 1992-93 City of Cessnock Heritage Study (Abermain Colliery Houses Inventory Item Sheet Ref. No. 036, Kearsley Hotel Inventory Item Sheet Ref. No. 071 & Kearsley Public School Inventory Item Sheet Ref. No. 192)*

# Kearsley

## Built Form & Density

**Occupancy / vacancy rates**

8.20%

91.80%

■ Occupied
■ Vacant

**Average of 3.2 Bedrooms per dwelling**

**Average of 2.9 people per dwelling**

**Dwelling types**

2.90%

97.10%

■ Separate Dwelling

■ Dual Occupancy/Attached /Multi-unit

The village of Kearsley has two distinct areas, that to the north-west comprising larger lot residential development, and that to south-east, comprising smaller lot residential development.

The south-eastern area was developed as a government subdivision during the early 1900's and has the hallmark features of the design of this era. Subdivision pattern is grid-like, with regular lots and mid-block laneways (unformed).

Dwellings are variable in style, but some cottages are representative of the small cottages that were established during the village foundation.

The north-western area comprises predominantly single dwellings, set on large allotments. The average lot size is approximately 1.5 hectares, yielding a dwelling density of around 0.5 dwellings per hectare.

The south-eastern residential area is also comprised predominantly of single dwellings, but at a smaller average lot size of approximately 837m². This yields a density of around 8 dwellings per hectare.

*Plate 4: Examples of dwellings*

## Servicing

Most areas of the village have ability for connection to a reticulated water supply, exclusive of parcels to the rear of lots fronting Caledonia Street.

All parcels in the north-western residential area rely on on-site wastewater management systems for disposal of effluent, whilst the south-eastern residential area is connected to the reticulated sewerage

management network. Both areas are serviced by a general waste, green waste and recycling collection service.

Street lighting is located the length of Caledonia Street and provided at regular intervals within the southeastern residential area. Street lighting in the northwestern area is less regular.

Kerb and guttering is provided for the full length of the southern side of Caledonia Road, and partially on the northern side, concluding opposite Jeffrey Park. Kerb and guttering is provided for the full length and on both sides of Allandale Street.

Stormwater is managed by a series of culverts and drains within the road network, discharged into local waterways.
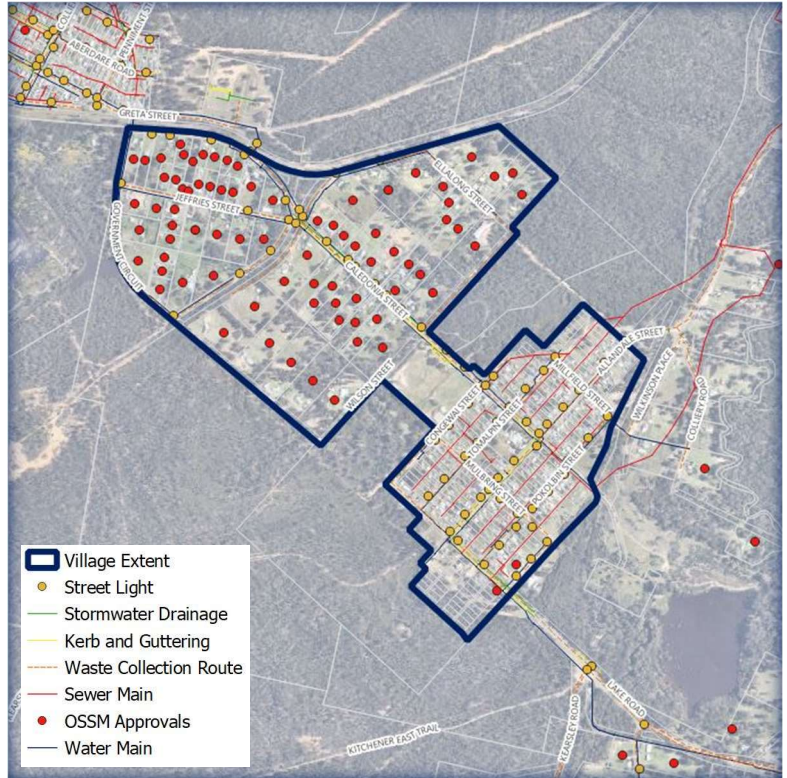


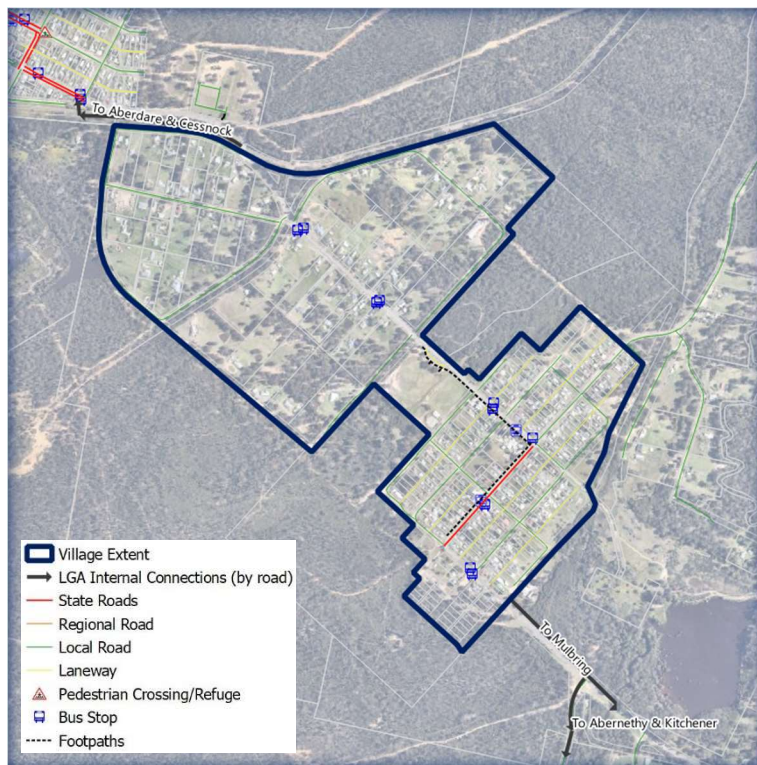*Figure 6: Servicing Infrastructure*

## Connectivity



The village of Kearsley is located between Aberdare, the hamlet of Elrington and the villages of Neath and Abernethy (via Kearsley Road). Kearsley is connected to Kitchener via unformed trails located along a spur of the former south Maitland railway line. Lake Road is one of the main tourism routes into the Cessnock Local Government Area (LGA).

Formal footpaths are restricted to land surrounding the school and in front of Kearsley Community Hall on Allandale Street. A pedestrian crossings of Caledonia Street is located adjacent to the school, and a pedestrian refuge island located adjacent to the Community Hall.

*Figure 7: Connectivity within and beyond Kearsley*

The series of local streets and laneways provides high levels of permeability within the south-eastern subdivision, however Allandale Street operates to isolate some areas within the south-eastern area, given its high traffic volume, including heavy freight.

A bus loop service between Abernethy to/from Kearsley and Cessnock operates daily. During the week, three morning and two afternoon services are available at approximately two hourly intervals commencing from 7:40am. Two morning and one afternoon service is available on Saturdays. There are no services on Sunday[10].

### *Open Space and Public Domain*

The primary area of open space within the village is George Jeffrey Park, located cetrally between the two residential areas. The park comprises two areas and functions as a district multi-purpose sports ground, and a local park comprising play equipment and picnic area.



*Plate 5: Examples of Open Space – George Jeffrey Park*

*Table 1: Recreation Facilities[11]*

| Name | Hierarchy | Area | Facilities / Embellishments |
|---|---|---|---|
| George Jeffrey Park | Local Park | 0.49 ha | ▪ Playground<br>▪ Sheltered picnic bench and table<br>▪ Water bubbler |
| George Jeffrey Park | District Sportsground | 4.43 ha | ▪ Amenity building<br>▪ Floodlighting<br>▪ Sheltered picnic bench and tables<br>▪ 1 rugby league field<br>▪ 1 turf cricket wicket<br>▪ 2 tennis courts |

The Kearsley Community Hall is located in the south-eastern residential area, located at the corner of Allandale and Mulbring Streets. Land surrounding the hall comprises park benches/seats and a flagpole.

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[10] *Transport for NSW Bus Route 162 Timetable https://transportnsw.info/documents/timetables/42-162-Cessnock-to-Abernethy-via-Kearsley-20211018.pdf, 12 November 2021*

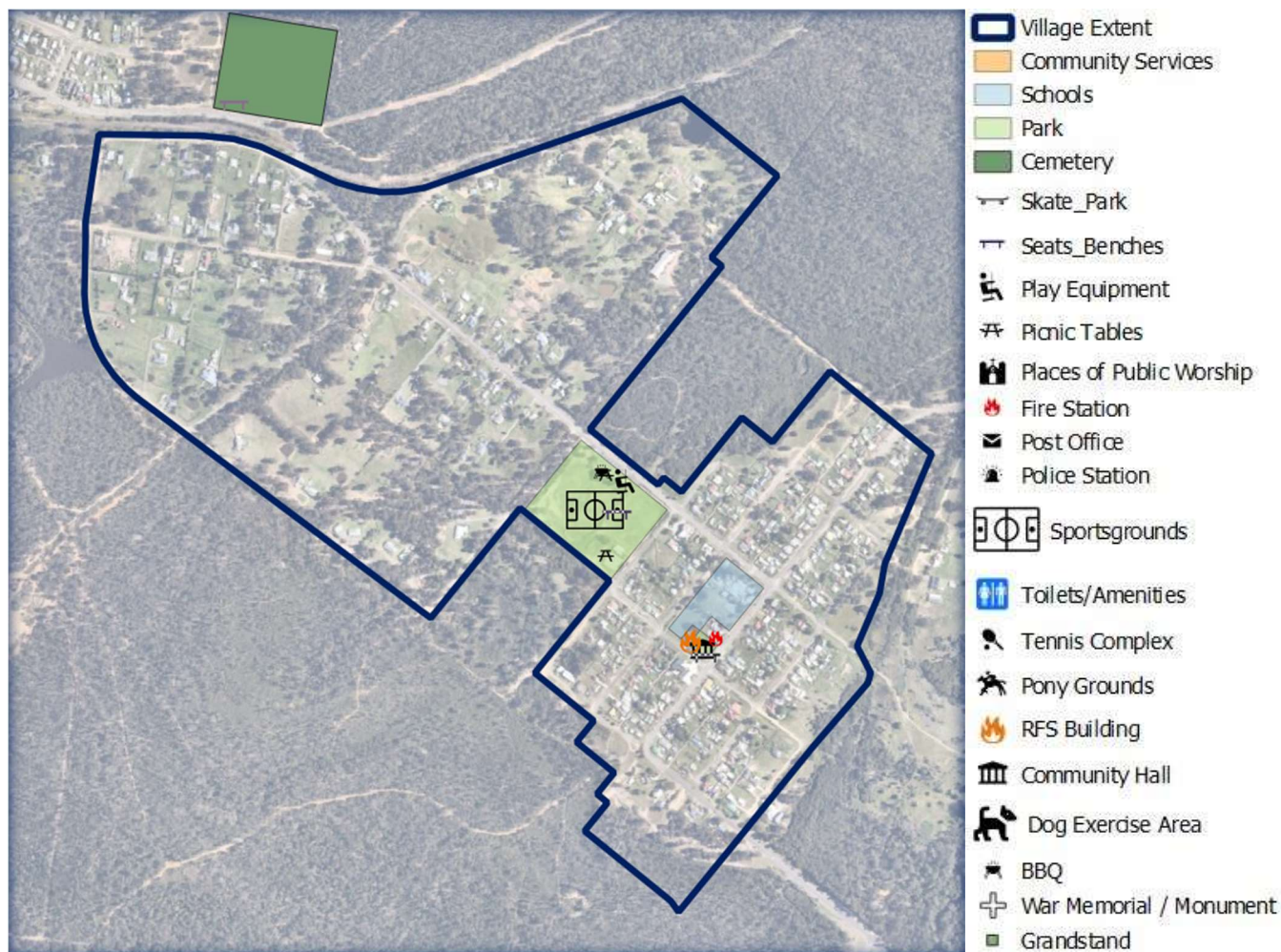[11] *Cessnock City Council Recreation and Open Space Strategic Plan 2020*

*Figure 8: Existing Facilities / Embellishments within Open Space Areas*

There are few street trees within the village extent, exclusive of some large Eucalypts and bottlebrush (*Callistemon sp.*) within the village. Some recent plantings have been installed in front of George Jeffery Park and along the village approach from Lake Road. George Jeffrey Park supports some formal parking; however on street or parking is required for overflow parking during larger spectator sporting events.

Fencing along street frontages and laneways comprises multiple forms and materials, including hedges, colourbond, galvanised mesh, and timber palings.

Entry signage is consistent with the current signage strategy, (exclusive of the "Welcome to Wine Country" sign on Lake Road), however street name signage and other directional signage (e.g. signage to Neath) is not.

## Planned Public Domain Facilities / Embellishments and Works Projects

An audit of existing Council strategies and plans has been prepared to identify works which are currently being undertaken (or have recently been completed), and those planned. Additionally, the audit has identified key principles for the delivery and supply of services and infrastructure, which may assist in identifying additional public domain projects.

Where practicable these are identified on Figure 9, but are listed in full in Table 2. The location of the planned improvements is indicative only, and may alter subject to further planning and design. Timing for delivery is also affected by funding availability.
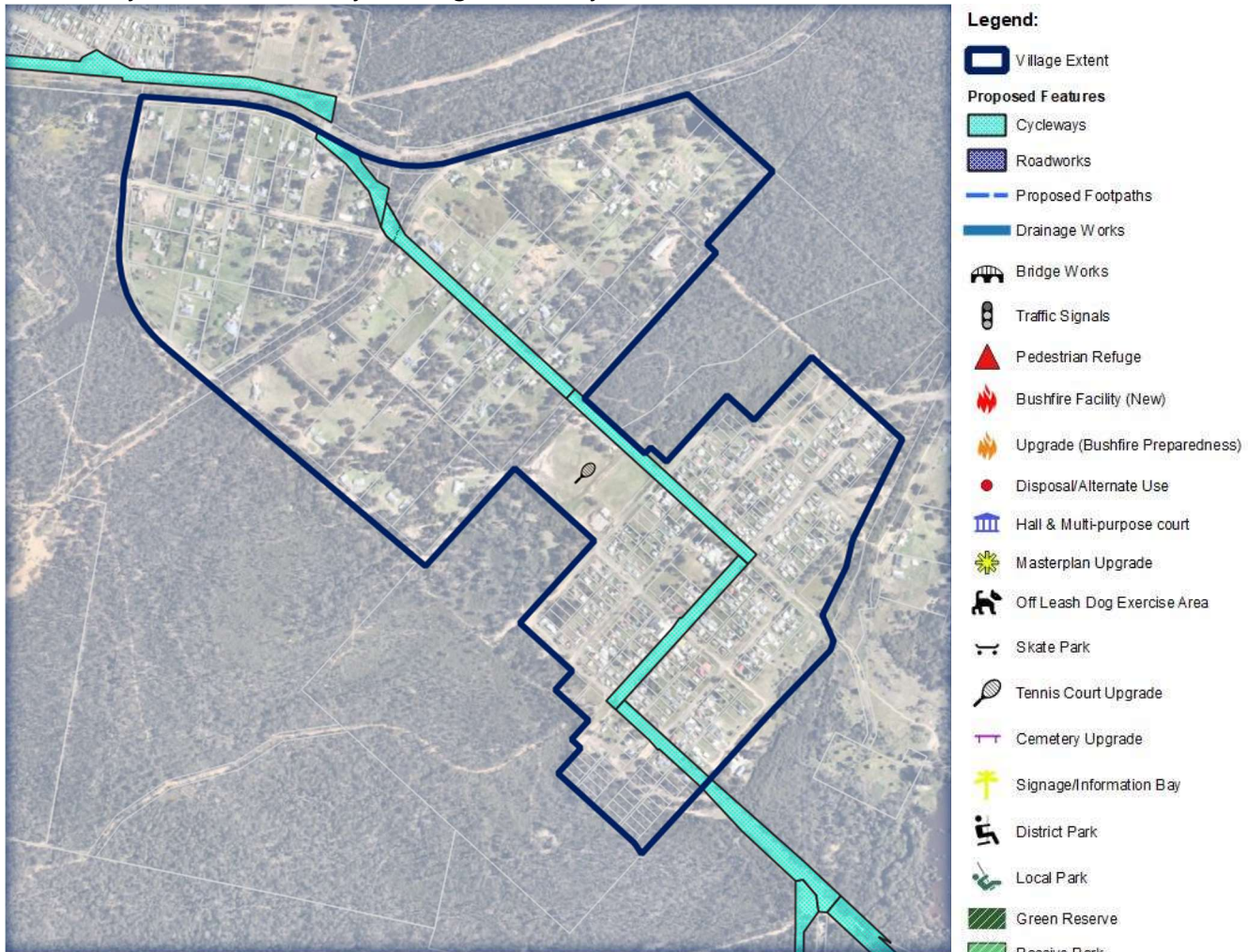


*Figure 9: Audit Outcomes - Planned works and Infrastructure*

*Table 2: Audit Outcomes – Planned Works, Infrastructure and Principles*

| Category | Strategy / Plan | Action |
|---|---|---|
| Cycleways / Paths / Trails | Cycling Strategy 2016 | New local off-road path on Aberdare Road / Cessnock Road / Caledonia Street – Colliery Street to Ellalong Street |
| | Cycling Strategy 2016 / City Wide Local Infrastructure Contribution Plan 2020 | New district on-road connection on Lake Road – Kearsley Road to Leggetts Lane |
| | Cycling Strategy 2016 / City Wide Local Infrastructure Contribution Plan 2020 | New district off-road path on Lake Road – Kearsley Road to Allandale Street |
| | Cycling Strategy 2016 / City Wide Local Infrastructure Contribution Plan 2020 | New district off-road path on Allandale Street – Lake Road to Caledonia Street |
| | Cycling Strategy 2016 / City Wide Local Infrastructure Contribution Plan 2020 | New district off-road path on Caledonia Street – Allandale to Wilson Street |

| Category | Strategy / Plan | Action |
|---|---|---|
| Land Use Planning | Urban Tree Canopy Policy 2021 | Develop an Environmental Strategy that aims to create an interconnected Urban Tree Canopy across the Cessnock LGA to assist in climate mitigation and adaptation, reducing the urban heat island effect, improving health and wellbeing, supporting healthy urban ecosystems, improving soil moisture and water quality and providing links to green spaces; |
| | Greater Cessnock Jobs Strategy 2020 | Develop a local character statement for each town to inform place activation and development |
| | | Develop heritage colour and material palette options for buildings along the main street which integrates with the street furniture and signage strategy. |
| | | Improve the visual amenity of public domains and commercial centres by implementing masterplans in Cessnock, Kurri Kurri, Branxton and other strategic locations. |
| | | Utilise street pole banners in activation areas to promote upcoming activity, events, landmarks to community and visitors. |
| | | Review the permissible uses within the environmental and rural land use zones to ensure economic activities associated with nature based tourism are included. |
| Open Space | Open Space and Recreation Strategy 2020 / City Wide Local Infrastructure Contribution Plan 2020 | Investigate redeveloping tennis courts at Jeffrey Park, Kearsley (DS1) (RS1) into multi-purpose courts.<br>Upgrade to Jeffrey Park tennis courts |
| Public Transport | Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2021 – 2025 | Support safe and accessible transport options |
| Recreation Buildings / Amenities | Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2021 - 2025 | Improve the accessibility of public spaces and facilities |
| Roads and Drainage | Greater Cessnock Jobs Strategy 2020 | Prioritise the upgrade, maintenance and visual amenity of high volume tourist entry points to the Cessnock LGA. These roads include Freemans Drive, Leggetts Drive, Lake Road, Lovedale Road, Wine Country Drive and Wollombi Road. |
| Signage | Cessnock LGA signage Strategy | Suburb Entry Signs: It is recommended that all Suburb Entry Signs be installed simultaneously. Existing suburb signage is to be removed. |
| | | Street Signs: A gradual replacement of street signs is recommended. In order to achieve economies of scale it is recommended that areas be identified for upgrade and new signage progressively rolled out across the LGA. Where individual replacement signs are required, old signs are to be removed and new signs installed. |