

# Laguna



Laguna is the first village encountered in the bead of villages in the rural west in the Cessnock Local Government Area (LGA) when travelling north from the Central Coast/Sydney along the Great North Road.

The village area is small and comprises few dwellings, but supports populations of the surrounding district. The village core is located on Great North Road. The village is zoned RU2 Rural Landscape and has a mapped minimum lot size of 40 hectares.

The village comprises items of local heritage significance, and is the gateway to the Yengo National Park, a World Heritage Area and declared Wilderness Area.

Figure 1: Laguna Village Extent

## Social Environment<sup>1</sup>

The total population is low, but has a higher median age than other villages, exclusive of Wollombi, which has a similar age profile. Consequently, the predominant household composition is couples without children.

Home ownership rates are high, with over 58% of homes owned outright. The village also has higher education levels than most other villages, with over 20% of the population having completed a Bachelor or Degree or higher qualification. However, approximately 20% of the population did not report their level of education.



**Total Population: 216**



**Indigenous Population: 6.4%**



**Median Age: 54**



**Average Weekly Household Income: \$1,156**



**Average Weekly Rent: \$275**



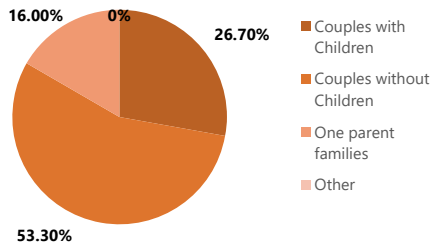
**Average Monthly Mortgage: \$1,624**

<sup>1</sup> ABS 2016 Quick Stats ([https://quickstats.censusdata.abs.gov.au/census\\_services/getproduct/census/2016/quickstat/SSC12237](https://quickstats.censusdata.abs.gov.au/census_services/getproduct/census/2016/quickstat/SSC12237)), accessed 14 October 2021

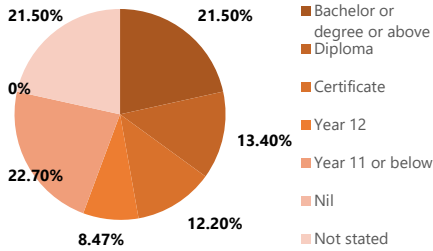
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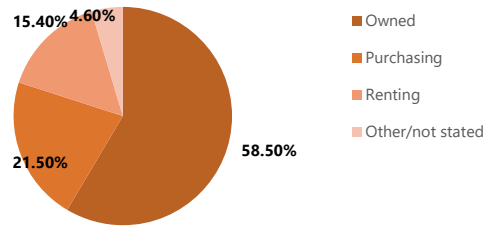
**Household types**



**Highest level of education**



**Housing tenure**

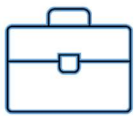


**SEIFA (IRSD) Index Score<sup>2</sup>**

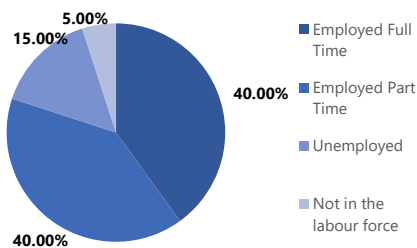
**972**

## Economic Environment<sup>3</sup>

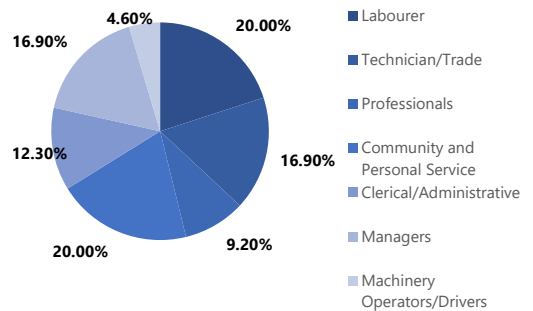
Of residents (over the age of 15), 40% were employed in full-time and part-time occupations. Whilst the Labourer and Technician/trades are prevalent occupations in Laguna, the industry of employment varies from other villages. Other Furniture manufacturing and Accommodation services were in the top industries of employment reported. This correlates with the higher number of employed residents working from home.



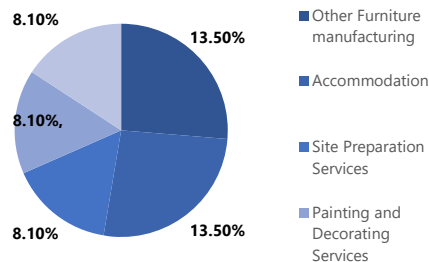
**Employment status**



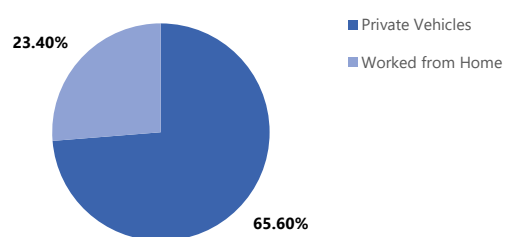
**Occupation**



**Industry of employment<sup>4</sup>**



**Journey to work<sup>4</sup>**



<sup>2</sup> 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)

<sup>3</sup> ABS 2016 Quick Stats ([https://quickstats.censusdata.abs.gov.au/census\\_services/getproduct/census/2016/quickstat/SSC12237](https://quickstats.censusdata.abs.gov.au/census_services/getproduct/census/2016/quickstat/SSC12237)), accessed 14 October 2021

<sup>4</sup> Top responses only

# Laguna

Businesses in Laguna include a real estate agency, service station, local produce provider, café and gallery. A number of accommodation services operate in the locality, and home businesses/occupations are likely to be present.

Surrounding industries include viticulture, horticulture (olives), and extensive agriculture (cattle grazing), as well as extractive industries (sandstone extraction).



Plate 1: Examples of local businesses (from left) Olive Grove, building within the Great Northern Trading Post cluster

## Built & Natural Environment<sup>5</sup>

### *Aboriginal Heritage*

Laguna is situated east of Yengo National Park. The park and Mount Yengo are important spiritual places for Aboriginal people, and link to the time of creation. There are extensively recorded cultural sites in the locality that are representative of the Dreaming, ceremony, and resources and gathering, with linkages to cultural landscapes outside of the Cessnock LGA<sup>6</sup>.

Closer to the village core, higher areas of cultural significance are located in the valley floor, stretching to Wollombi and beyond, and generally coinciding with local waterways.

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<sup>5</sup> ABS 2016 Quick Stats ([https://quickstats.censusdata.abs.gov.au/census\\_services/getproduct/census/2016/quickstat/SSC12237](https://quickstats.censusdata.abs.gov.au/census_services/getproduct/census/2016/quickstat/SSC12237)), accessed 14 October 2021

<sup>6</sup> Virtus Heritage 2021, *Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Study*, Cessnock City Council

# Laguna

## **Landscape, Vegetation & Constraints**

Laguna is located in a low valley. A number of localities within the village support views, particularly along road corridors (some of which are tree lined) to nearby higher elevations, but also of agricultural landscapes.



Figure 2: Significant View Corridors



Plate 2: Views (top to bottom) rural landscape, Great North Road, tree-lined roads

The valley floor has been extensively cleared, exclusive of vegetation along riparian corridors and steeper slopes. Lower slopes adjoining the cleared area include River-flat Eucalypt Forest Threatened Ecological Community (TEC), which is also present along some riparian areas. Small pockets of Kurri Sand Swamp Woodland TEC are also mapped as being present.

These steeper slopes comprise Category 1 bushfire prone vegetation, whilst the vegetation on the valley floor comprises Category 2 bushfire prone vegetation.

# Laguna

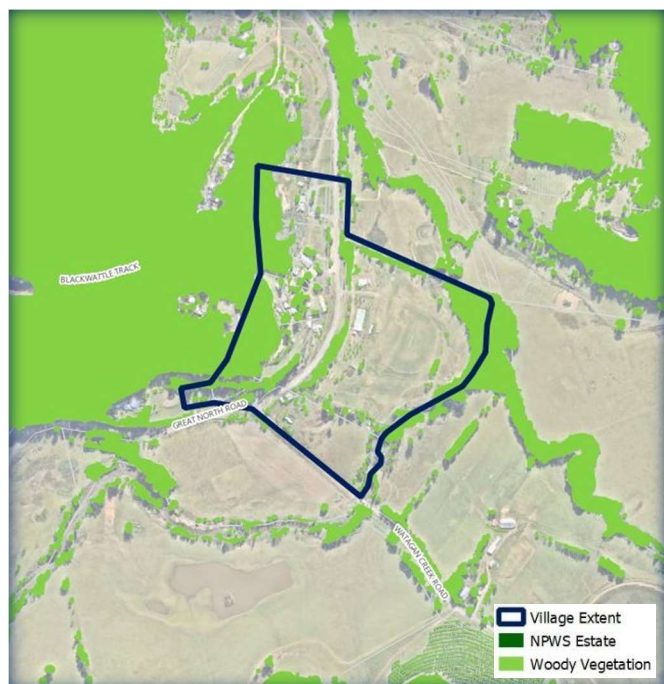


Figure 3: Vegetation Cover

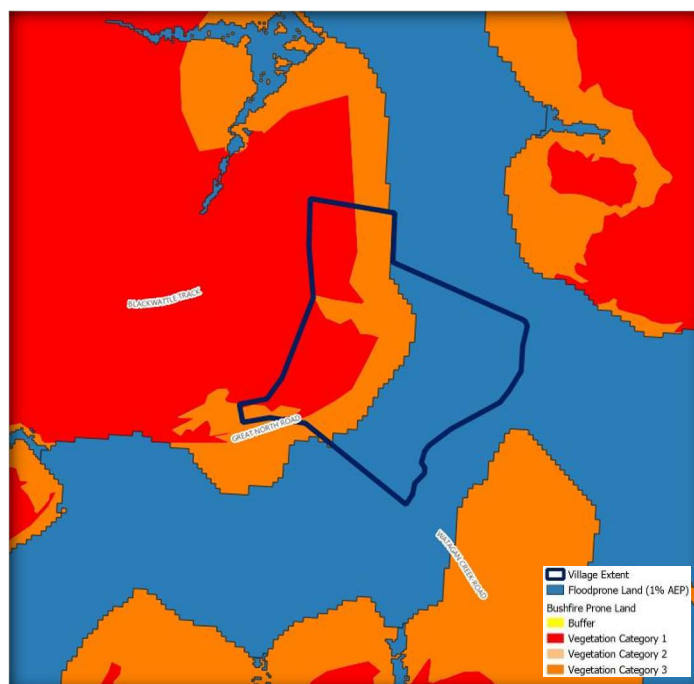


Figure 4: Bushfire Vegetation Categories and Flood prone Land

## European Heritage

Laguna is situated on the Great North Road, which is tied to the convict and colonial past of Australian history. The road was constructed by convicts from 1826<sup>7</sup> to provide an inland route between Sydney and the fertile soils of Hunter Valley. Much of the settlement along the road comprised self-sufficient homesteads using the land for agricultural (grazing) purposes<sup>8</sup>.

Remaining heritage items within the village area include the Great North Road itself (including cuttings), Laguna Public School, St Marks Anglican Church (on the former school site)<sup>9</sup>, a house on the corner of the Great North and Watagan Creek Road. Other heritage items in the vicinity of the village include the Laguna House Group as well as properties on Milsons Arm Road and Upper Yango Creek Road.

<sup>7</sup> State Heritage Inventory, 2021, Rising Sun Inn (former), <https://www.hms.heritage.nsw.gov.au/App/Item/ViewItem?itemId=5045088>, accessed 16 November 2021

<sup>8</sup> Pike, Walker and Associates 1992-93, City of Cessnock Heritage Inventory Study (Cattle Feeding Shed and Barns, Laguna House Inventory Item Sheet Ref. No 280)

<sup>9</sup> State Heritage Inventory, 2021, St Marks Anglican Church, <https://www.hms.heritage.nsw.gov.au/App/Item/ViewItem?itemId=1340586>, accessed 16 November 2021

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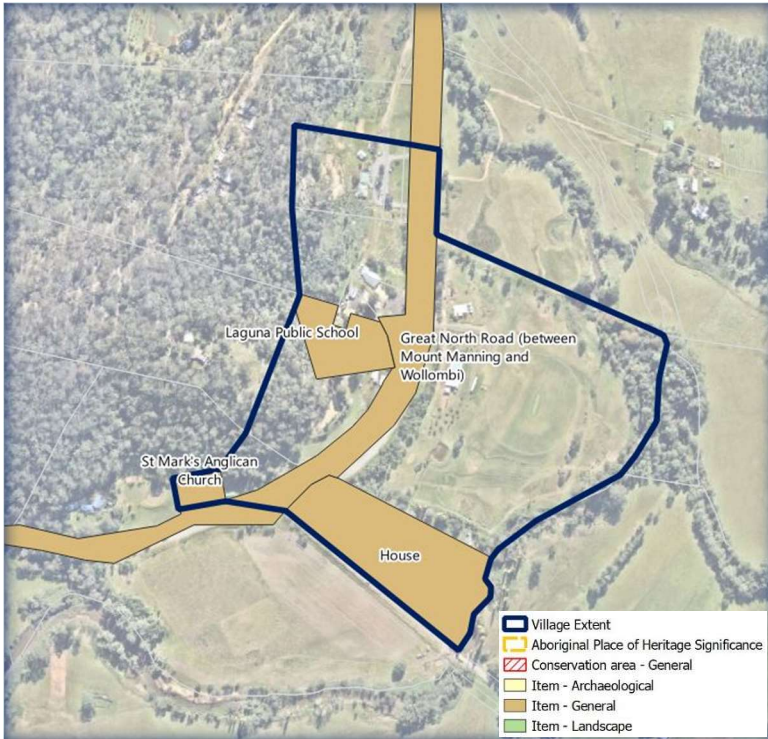
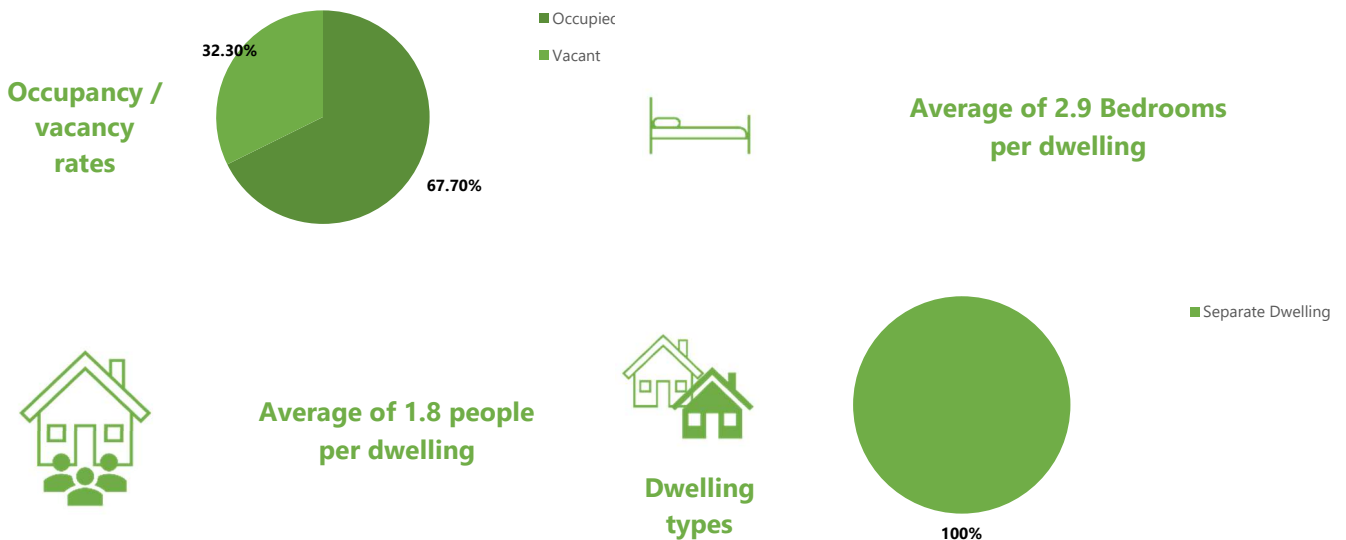


Figure 5: Heritage Items



Plate 3: Examples of Heritage House on Corner of Great North Road & Watagan Creek Road (top), St Marks Anglican Church (bottom)

## Built Form & Density



Most dwellings are situated on rural allotments outside of the village extent.

Many such dwellings are homestead style constructions with multiple outbuildings, representative of development occurring during the era of construction of the Great North Road, however there are examples of more contemporary construction styles present.

# Laguna

The local commercial core (the Great Northern Trading Post) has been constructed in and around an existing dwelling, with many of the outbuildings providing retail/commercial space for local businesses.



Plate 4: Examples of Dwellings around Laguna Village

## Servicing

Centralised services in the village are restricted to a general waste, green waste and recycling collection service. All dwellings and commercial premises are reliant on individual water collection and supply, and on-site wastewater management systems for effluent disposal.

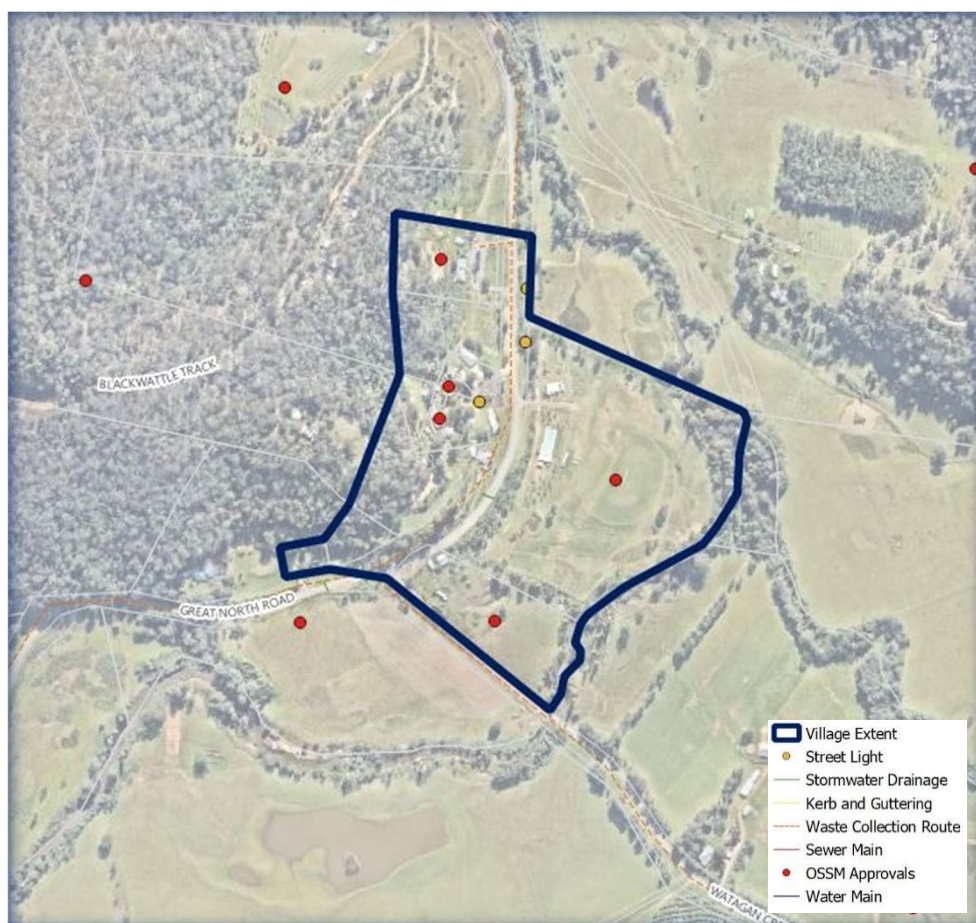


Figure 6: Servicing Infrastructure

Minimal street lighting is provided near the public school, and along the Great North Road, around access points for the Trading Post.

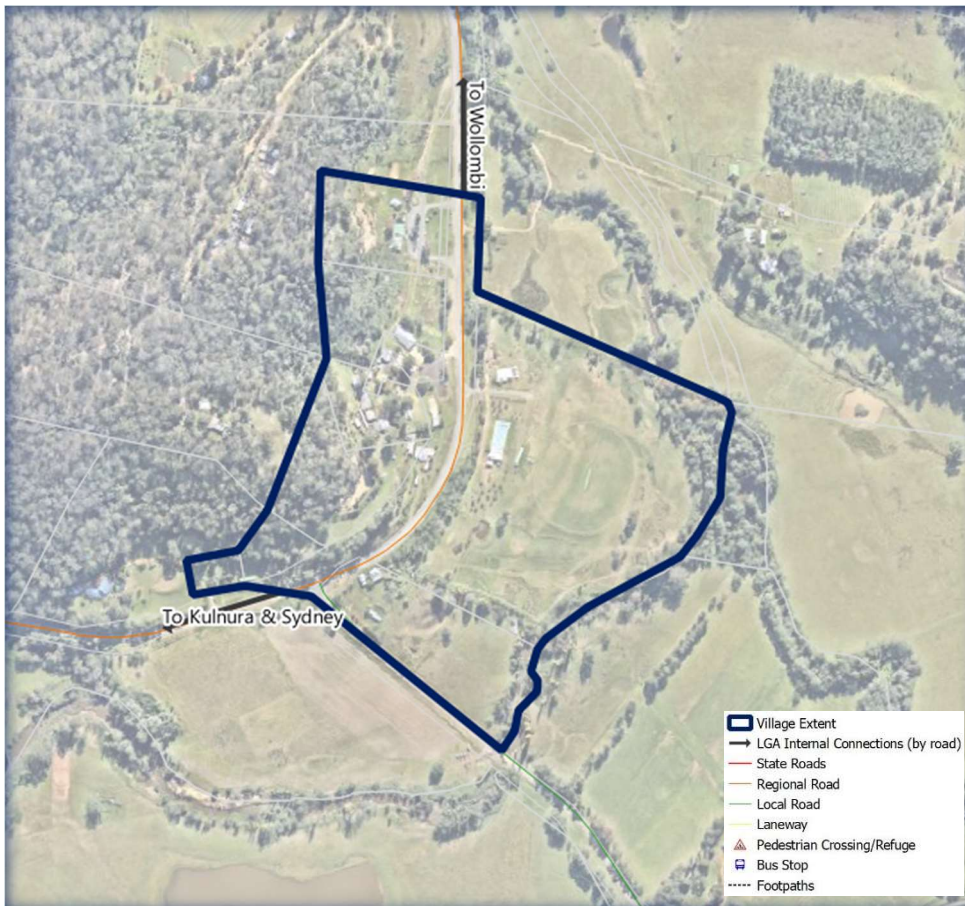
Culverts are located under Great North Road for stormwater drainage purposes, however no other formal stormwater infrastructure is provided.

# Laguna

## Connectivity

Laguna is the first village encountered in the bead of villages in the rural west when travelling north from the Central Coast/Sydney along the Great North Road.

Within the LGA, Laguna is connected to Wollombi via the Great North Road.



There are no public bus services provided with connections to/from Laguna, however a school bus service operates to/from Laguna and Bellbird/Cessnock and Mount View commencing and concluding at the intersection of Murray's Run Road and the Great North Road<sup>10</sup>.

Figure 7: Connectivity within and beyond Laguna

## Open Space and Public Domain

The Laguna Community Hall is located adjacent to the public school.

Table 1: Recreation & Community Facilities

Name	Hierarchy	Area	Facilities / Embellishments
Laguna Community Hall			▪ Hall

A privately owned parcel east of the village core on Great North Road provides opportunities for more formal recreation within the village, including swimming and cricket, as well as offering a space for activities for the students of Laguna Public School<sup>11</sup>.

<sup>10</sup> Rover Coaches School Timetables, 2021, <https://www.rovercoaches.com.au/site/index.cfm?display=256899>, accessed 15 November 2021

<sup>11</sup> Our Own News, Community news for Wollombi, Laguna and surrounding districts, Issue 429 – April 2019, <https://wollombivalleyprogress.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/OON-April-2019.pdf>, accessed 15 November 2021



# Laguna



Plate 5: Private Open Space Entry, Great North Road, Laguna

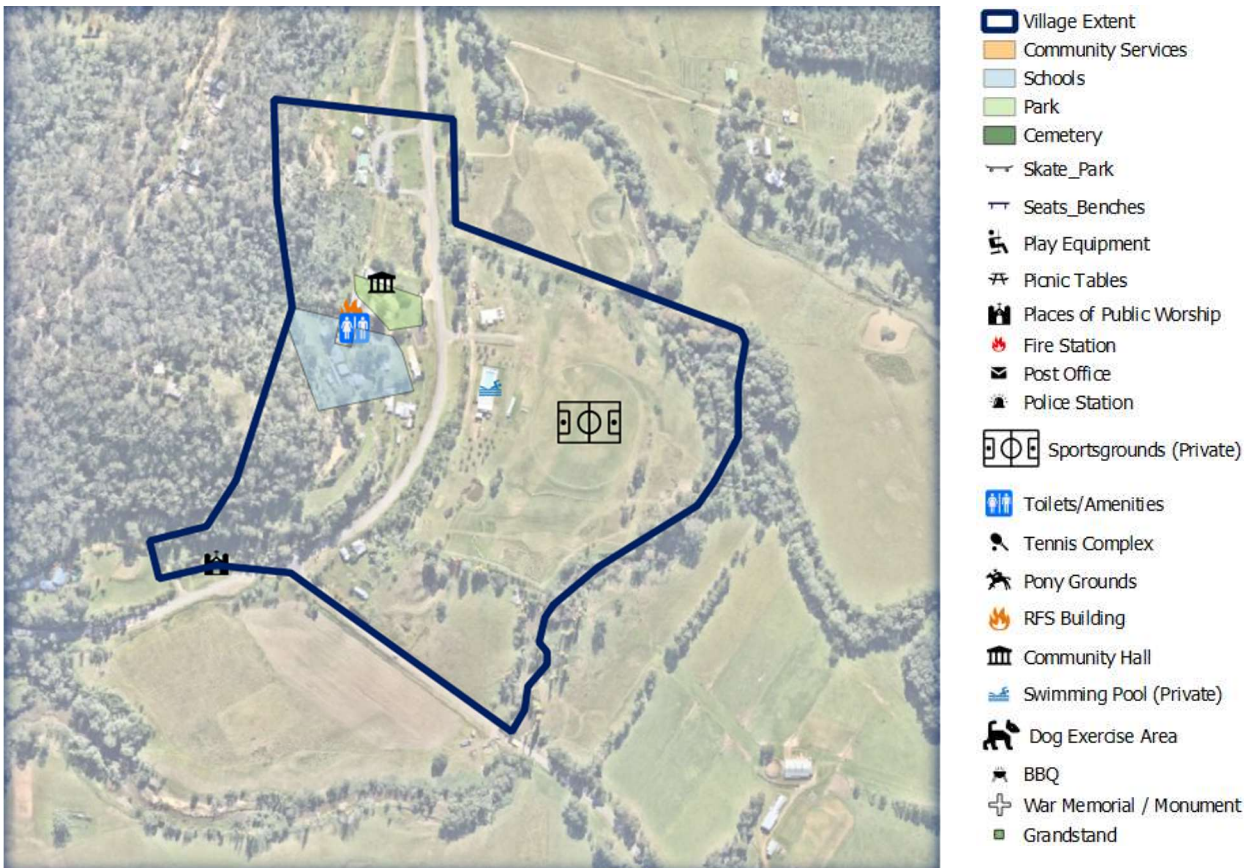


Figure 8: Existing Facilities / Embellishments within Open Space Areas

There are limited improvements to the public domain, exclusive of formal, sealed car parking in front of the community hall and school.

Entry and directional signage comprises multiple forms.

## 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
Community Facilities	2021 – 2022 Capital Works Program	Bushfire disaster preparedness – Community Hall
Cycleways / Paths / Trails	Trails Strategy 2020	Review and update existing cross-regional vehicle touring routes (e.g. Route 33, Convict Trail) to provide clear information, and to integrate with the recreational trails network where possible, particularly where themes are aligned.
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

Category	Strategy / Plan	Action
		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.
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	2021 – 2022 Capital Works Program	Rehabilitate Murrays Run Road – bank stabilisation
		Refurbishment of Watagan No. 1 Bridge (Phase 2 - detailed design and Phase 3 – construction)
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.