

Make healthy eating and active living a priority in your local Council

A quick guide on how to have input into your council's Community Strategic Plan

Under state government legislation, all Councils in NSW must have a *Community Strategic Plan* (CSP) – a long term plan which sets out their priorities for the future.

Councils are required by legislation to review their CSP every four years in line with the election of new councillors. Once adopted, the CSP priorities cascade down to their 4-year delivery plans and annual operational budgets.

This is YOUR opportunity to ensure your local Council makes healthy eating and active living (HEAL) such as walking and cycling a priority!

This quick guide will help you to contribute to your council's CSP. It has been compiled by the Northern NSW Local Health District [Health Promotion Unit](#) and is based on work done by the [Premier's Council for Active Living](#) and [Bicycle NSW](#).

In line with encouraging [Healthy Eating and Active Living principles](#), this guide promotes integration of these principles into your council's Community Strategic Plan (CSP).

Examples of healthy eating and active living initiatives include:

- Footpaths, nature trails and open spaces to encourage walking and improve walkability of your area
- Cycleways to encourage and support cycling, particularly if they connect areas of high demand (such as schools, workplaces, recreational areas and shopping centres)
- Community gardens, farmers markets, road side stalls and food production, to encourage greater consumption of fresh, healthy food
- Parks, active playgrounds, sporting facilities, green spaces – to encourage physical activity and '[nature play](#)'
- Increased access to free drinking water, especially at sporting and community venues and high pedestrian areas
- Providing and enforcing smoke-free outdoor spaces, particularly in high pedestrian areas and public spaces
- Limiting alcohol availability by reducing alcohol density, trading hours and proximity to other land uses

Follow these **6** steps:

1. Look at the example below of Richmond Valley Council.
2. Read the summary provided about '**What is a Community Strategic Plan**'
3. Contact your local Council's **Integrated Planning & Reporting (IP&R)** strategic planner (refer to the contact list at the end of this guide)
4. **Prepare questions to ask or address** (see the 'Worksheet' attached)
5. Make a **meeting** with your local Councillor, as a group or individual
6. Make sure you are on the Council's **consultation list** for the Community Strategic Plan.

STEP 1: Example of Richmond Valley Council

The current [Community Strategic Plan for Richmond Valley Council](#) has seven key themes (termed 'focus areas'):

1. Our Natural Environment **[NOTE: physical activity and recreation fits into this]**
2. Our Local Economy
3. Our Community and Culture **[NOTE: healthy eating, community gardens and social inclusion fit here]**
4. Our Recreation and Open Spaces **[NOTE: Active transport fits well within this, as well as community gardens]**
5. Our Rural and Urban Developments
6. Our Transport and Infrastructure **[NOTE: Active transport fits well within this]**
7. Our Governance and Process

Some examples of HEAL projects/strategies include:

- Prepare and implement a strategy to increase the standard of picnic areas and playgrounds in select parks throughout the Council area (at 4.2.2)
- Commission a Casino Riverbank plan to improve the aesthetic appearance of the river, provide better practical recreational access, enhance biodiversity and encourage tourism and community use (at 4.2.3)
- Develop and implement a 10 year pedestrian and bicycle program; + Council include in its cycleway strategy funding to build a bicycle way from Musgrave Road to the end of Barling St Casino (at 6.1.3)
- Encourage local and regional community gardens and local farmers markets for food security (at 1.2.3)

STEP 2: What is a Community Strategic Plan?

The Community Strategic Plan represents the highest level of strategic planning undertaken by a local council. All other plans developed by the council as part of the Integrated Planning and Reporting framework **must reflect and support the implementation of the Community Strategic Plan.**

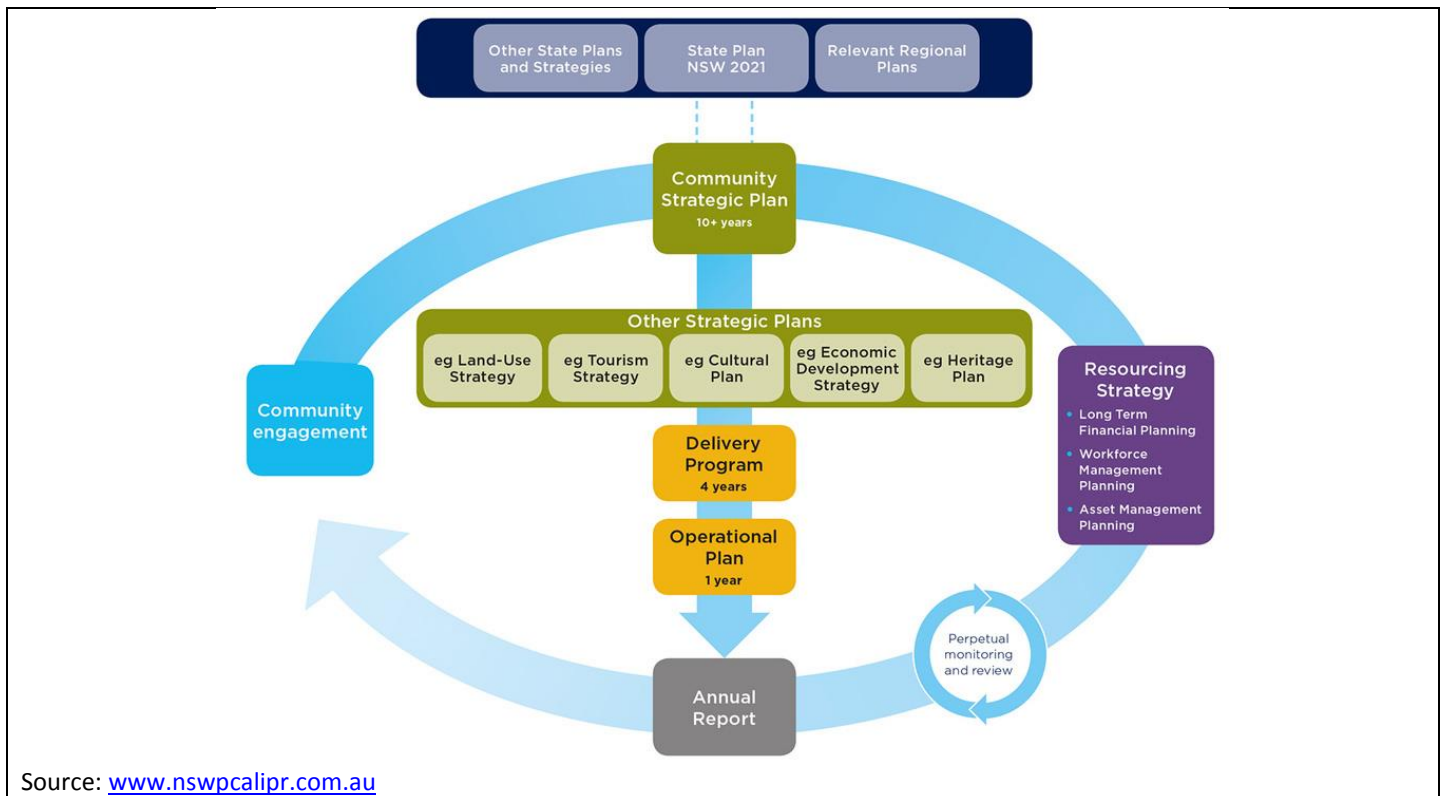
The Community Strategic Plan should identify the main priorities and aspirations of the community, providing a clear set of strategies to achieve this vision of the future. Building the Community Strategic Plan takes time and must involve a whole-of-community engagement process. It is important to note that while the council is the custodian of the Community Strategic Plan, it may not be responsible for the delivery of all of the activities the Plan identifies. It is important that the Community Strategic Plan identifies who is responsible for its implementation, including other partners such as State agencies, non-government organisations, business partners and community groups.

The Community Strategic Plan addresses four key questions for the community:

- 1 Where are we now?
- 2 Where do we want to be in ten years' time?
- 3 How will we get there?
- 4 How will we know when we have arrived?

The Community Strategic Plan must be based on the social justice principles of access, equity, participation and rights. It should also address the quadruple bottom line (social, environmental, economic and civic leadership) issues. It is recommended that a council uses a multi-disciplinary team to manage and implement the integrated planning process.

You can influence your Council to make healthy eating and active living initiatives a priority in your Community Strategic Plan.



Source: www.nswpcalipr.com.au

STEP 3: Contact Council’s Integrated Planning & Reporting (IP&R) strategic planner

Your local Council will have a person who is responsible for preparing the Council’s **Integrated Planning & Reporting (IP&R)** framework and **Community Strategic Plan**. This person probably works within Council’s corporate area, rather than planning or traffic. It is worthwhile contacting this person to let them know the following information:

A useful web resource has prepared by the NSW Premier’s Council for Active Living and the NSW Office of Local Government. The web resource has been specifically developed for council IP&R strategic planners to show Councils can incorporate active travel, cycling and walking into their IP&R and Community Strategic Plans. It provides guidance on how Councils can promote community health and well-being by addressing active living and healthy eating principles and practices, as they implement, monitor and review their Integrated Planning and Reporting (IPR) Frameworks.

The website is available for free at www.nswpcalipr.com.au

Examples of Actions and Activities that Council could include:

Community Strategic Plan	Delivery Program (4 years)	Operational Plan (1 year)	Performance Measures
Directions	Activities	Immediate actions	Monitoring + Reporting
Ensure that localities are walkable for people of all abilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Prepare Pedestrian Access and Mobility Plan (PAMP) – Reduce speeds on local roads eg. LATMs and high pedestrian areas – Program for footpath/ shared path construction – Program to improve existing pedestrian infrastructure eg. additional kerb ramps, remove obstacles on footpaths, improve footpath surfaces, install pedestrian crossings, reduce pedestrian wait time at signalised intersections – Increase residential and mixed-use densities in development areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Accessibility audits of key locations – Priority works on footpaths and share paths – Review State Government advice on PAMPs – Audit speeds and safety on local roads + intersections – Review footpath connections between residential areas, shopping, campuses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Increased area of 40 km/h zones – Increased funding allocation to footpath construction + maintenance – Improved provision of walking infrastructure e.g. added kerb ramps, removed obstacles on footpaths, improved footpath surfaces, installed pedestrian crossings
Ensure active	– Incorporate walking + cycling paths in local	– Read NSW Government Guidelines	– Increased mode share of

travel options (walking + cycling) are readily available between home, school, shopping and work	<p>structure planning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Prepare + update a Council-wide Bicycle Plan - Review Development Control Plan provisions on end-of-trip facilities - Prepare an Integrated Transport Plan - Apply for grant funding for eligible infrastructure projects - Lobby State Government for public transport improvements - Undertake program of traffic management to improve pedestrian and cycling experience - Revise car parking requirements - Introduce an education program on travel options - Establish a Workplace Travel Plan 	<p>on Bicycle Planning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Consult with local bicycle groups and users - Engage with local schools, health and tertiary campuses - Compare other councils' DCP provisions, PAMPS - Survey and model public transport needs - Prioritise traffic management actions - Improve information provided to public about travel options - Undertake a staff travel survey 	<p>walking, cycling and public transport</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reduced use of cars for short trips - Increased proportion of school children walking + cycling to school - Increased number of schools actively encouraging walking + cycling - Increased cycling infrastructure: e.g. length of cycleways + shared paths, bicycle parking
Increase community access to healthy food options and drinking water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop a plan to support and promote healthy options at food outlets - Develop guidelines on healthy food provision at recreational centres - Provide access to drinking water at recreational facilities, community centres and high pedestrian areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Research other councils / health promotion work with community supermarkets and farmers' markets to promote healthy food options - Research opportunities to promote healthy food at council owned or leased recreational premises - Audit existing drinking water availability at council owned facilities, parks, sporting and community facilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number, location and density and type of healthy food outlet - Number and type of collaborative actions with food outlets - Number, location and density of drinking water facilities

More examples here: <http://www.nswpcalipr.com.au/examples/example-actions-and-activities-for-councils/>

STEP 4: Worksheet – things to think about before approaching Council

1. What priorities and targets does your council have in its current strategic plan and/or other plans?
2. What priorities do you/does your group think should be included in the new plan? How can you word them to have broad appeal?
3. How would progress on those priorities be measured? What targets/measures/data should there be?
4. Who else and what other groups would be supportive of some or all of your suggestions?
5. How will you make contact with them, your members, and/or your community, to garner support during the consultation period?
6. What ideas or lessons can you share with other groups to help them with their council areas?
7. How might you collaborate or partner with council to achieve the intended outcome?

STEP 5: Make a meeting with your local Councillor

You can meet with your local Council representative either as a group or individual. Check your Council's website or refer to the list included in this document for their contact details.

Remember that they are busy people, so come prepared with 3-4 key messages, e.g.

- 1) This is who we represent
- 2) We believe cycling, walking and access to healthy food are important to the community because....
- 3) Council should consider the following top 3 priorities...

STEP 6: Get onto the Council's consultation list

Make sure you are (or someone from your community group is) on the Council's consultation list for the Community Strategic Plan.

Check your Council's website (or phone them) to find out how you can be part of this consultation.

Further Resources

NSW website developed specifically for Councils undertaking IP&R www.nswpcalipr.com.au

NSW Premiers Council for Active Living – Resources for Councils www.pcal.nsw.gov.au/local_government

Examples of Community Strategic Plans: www.olg.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/Community-Strategic-Plans-Group-1-Councils.pdf

Office of Local Government: www.olg.nsw.gov.au/councils/integrated-planning-and-reporting/framework

Terminology

It is important to ensure that **cycling, walking, active transport, healthy eating etc** are incorporated throughout Council's documents – on the public website, on the Council's own intranet pages, in brochures and pamphlets issued by Council, and in Council's strategic and operational plans.

Council's areas of concern:	Request that Council also add the following words:
Access to sports & recreation	With safe bike routes to get there (more space for sport, less needed for parking)
Parks & playgrounds	With safe routes to get there (and add more kids' bike tracks)
Mental health & wellbeing	Active transport opportunities and green spaces to get to by walk/bike
Children's education & childcare	With safe access by bike to reduce traffic danger. Add bike racks, and at schools.
Community services for all ages	Easy & convenient to reach by walk/bike
Council facilities, libraries, etc	Easy & convenient to reach by walk/bike
Neighbourliness, reduced social isolation, more social capital	By more people walking & riding bikes, to increase social contact and neighbourhood trust and safety
Safe places to interact...	And safe ways to get there...
Improved accessibility	For all (including those too young/old to drive)
Reduce crime or improve safety	Including road crime/road safety (which affects so many, and deters bike/walk)
Affordable housing	By reducing need to always include cost of parking / need for car
Services for new migrants	Bike/walk/public transport info to help them access services and work
Learning opportunities	Including cycling courses for adults & children, to improve health & air quality
Cultural activities, events, etc	Encourage access by bike & walk
Reduce greenhouse emissions	Reduce car use. Encourage walking, riding and public transport.
Reduce waste	Project to recycle old bicycles.
Increase walking & cycling & PT	Install bike racks, distribute maps, run courses, improve planning controls for buildings to have bike parking & facilities, build bike network & signage.
Improve air quality. Reduce noise.	Reduce car use. Improve streets for walking and riding.
Reduce congestion.	Build facilities for active transport.
Reduce water pollution	Reduce car use (main source of stormwater pollutants) Provide connected cycling and walking infrastructure
Support local economy/business	Encourage walking & cycling (because in a car people drive to more distant regional shopping areas, not their local shops). Install bike racks & benches.
Leadership by councillors & staff	Encourage them to walk & ride to have view that reflects all the community, not just a windscreen view. Add council bike fleet and make sure it is well used. Regular inspection rides with community.
Efficient and healthy workplace	Encourage walking & riding for health & for efficient travel to site meetings.
Ethical, and value for money	Spend a fair share of road/infrastructure budget on the sizeable part of the community not in cars (including young, old, new migrants, disadvantaged).

Council Contact Details

Council	Councillors	CSP + IP&R officer	Council contact
Ballina	phil.meehan@ballina.nsw.gov.au nathan.willis@ballina.nsw.gov.au stephen.mccarthy@ballina.nsw.gov.au sharon.cadwallader@ballina.nsw.gov.au jeff.johnson@ballina.nsw.gov.au keith.williams@ballina.nsw.gov.au eoin.johnston@ballina.nsw.gov.au ben.smith@ballina.nsw.gov.au david.wright@ballina.nsw.gov.au	Roberto Kenk robertok@ballina.nsw.gov.au Steve Barnier steveb@ballina.nsw.gov.au 2013-2023 'Our Community: Our Future' http://www.ballina.nsw.gov.au/cp_themes/default/page.asp?p=DOC-RMX-52-15-70	council@ballina.nsw.gov.au 02 6686 4444
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Clarence	richie.williamson@clarence.nsw.gov.au jim.simmons@clarence.nsw.gov.au jason.kingsley@clarence.nsw.gov.au andrew.baker@clarence.nsw.gov.au greg.clancy@clarence.nsw.gov.au peter.ellem@clarence.nsw.gov.au arthur.lysaught@clarence.nsw.gov.au debrah.novak@clarence.nsw.gov.au karen.toms@clarence.nsw.gov.au	dan.griffin@clarence.nsw.gov.au phillip.chambers@clarence.nsw.gov.au 'Our Community Plan 2015-2024' https://www.clarence.nsw.gov.au/page.asp?f=RES-NAH-13-07-78	council@clarence.nsw.gov.au 02 6643 0200
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Tweed	Current councillors since 2012: kmilne@tweed.nsw.gov.au gbagnall@tweed.nsw.gov.au cbyrne@tweed.nsw.gov.au blongland@tweed.nsw.gov.au pyoungblutt@tweed.nsw.gov.au wpolglase@tweed.nsw.gov.au	Arthur Piggott apiggott@tweed.nsw.gov.au 2013-2023 http://www.tweed.nsw.gov.au/IPRF	tsc@tweed.nsw.gov.au 02 6670 2400