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Springwood Cultural and Community Facilities and Services – Needs Analysis

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	4
PART 1. BACKGROUND.....	7
Introduction	7
Springwood Town Centre	7
Civic Centre Site, Macquarie Road – eastern end	8
Northern car park, Macquarie Road – northern side	9
Southern car park, Macquarie Road – southern side	9
Other locations.....	9
Criteria and principles used	9
Springwood Revitalisation Project	10
Improving existing facilities.....	10
Demographic trends.....	10
Planning for an aging population	12
Current demand on facilities.....	12
Future demand on facilities	13
Principles of facility design.....	13
Building reports.....	14
Blue Mountains Service Delivery Framework	14
Methodology	14
PART 2. ISSUES AND OPTIONS	15
The Sites	15
The Civic Centre Site	15
The Northern Car Park	16
The Southern Car Park	16

The Facilities	17
Springwood Civic Centre	17
Springwood Neighbourhood Centre	18
Springwood Library	19
Braemar House.....	20
Blue Mountains City Council: Springwood Office	21
Integral Energy Site	23
Early Childhood Health Centre	24
Children’s Playground	25
Red Cross Hall.....	25
New Facilities - Options	26
Multipurpose Facility	26
Commercial Outlet	26
PART 3. SERVICES AND USER CONSULTATION	27
Introduction	27
Springwood Civic Centre	27
Springwood Neighbourhood Centre (SNC)	29
Springwood Library: main building	31
Springwood Library: ground floor	32
Braemar House and Gallery	33
Springwood Early Childhood Health Centre	34
Manners Park Building	35
Children’s Playground	35
Public toilets, Northern Car Park.....	36
Red Cross Hall.....	36
Public Open Space.....	37

Residential housing provision in Springwood Town Centre	37
PART 4. RECOMMENDATIONS	39
Introduction	39
Priortised Recommendations	39
Priority 1. An enhanced and consolidated Cultural and Community Precinct.	39
Priority 2. Multipurpose facility (including accessible public toilet and parenting room).....	40
Priority 3. Enhance Civic Centre	40
Priority 4. Refurbish and reconfigure Springwood Neighbourhood Centre	41
Priority 5. Investigate the provision of a Youth Services Hub in Springwood, and seek relevant external funding sources, if appropriate.....	41
Priority 6: Provide expanded premises for the Local Studies Collection	42
Priority 7. Extend Springwood Library building.	42
Priority 8. Develop a plan for Springwood Pocket Parks, and refurbish parks as appropriate..	42
Priority 9. Complete acquisition of Integral Energy site and seek expressions of interest from possible users	43
Priority 10. Investigate locating commercial premises (e.g. cafe/bookshop/retail facility) in the Cultural and Community Precinct	43
APPENDIX 1. Stakeholders Consulted	44
APPENDIX 2. Literature and documents	46

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides an assessment of community needs in relation to cultural and community facilities and services within Springwood Town Centre over the next fifteen to twenty years. The impetus for this research is the Springwood Revitalisation Project – an initiative of Blue Mountains City Council.

Springwood is an important service centre for the Lower Mountains and the location of a range of well utilised cultural and community facilities and services. The population of the area is expected to remain relatively static over the next twenty years, but the proportion of retired and aged people will increase significantly. This changing demographic will increase the demands made on facilities and services, and increase the need for easily accessible facilities and housing.

The assessment found that all services operating within council owned facilities in Springwood are operating at capacity; all require more space (operational and storage) in order to operate more effectively. Some services are particularly constrained by the lack of space, leading to concerns about levels of service provision, the protection of client privacy, and proper storage of records and equipment.

Stakeholders were strongly of the view that all major cultural and community services should be located on one site – preferably the existing Civic Centre Site. This is also likely to be the most cost effective option. Relocating facilities to another site would be supported if significant benefits (over the retain option) to services and the community could be demonstrated, and that existing synergies between services can be preserved or enhanced.

In terms of individual facilities currently located on the Civic Centre Site, it was found that enhancements and/or extensions are required to all existing buildings, or that new purpose built facilities be constructed within the existing or new Cultural and Community Precinct (see above). In addition, a new multipurpose room would be an ideal addition to the precinct, meeting a wide range of user needs.

The Civic Centre is used by numerous performing arts and community groups for diverse purposes. It requires updating and an overall refurbishment to address issues of acoustics, access, climate control. Springwood Branch Library needs to be extended, requiring additional floor space, study rooms and a training/conference room. The Local Studies Collection requires additional floor space and facilities to allow improved public access and correct storage of its archival materials and maps. The Springwood office of Blue Mountains City Council requires additional office space to run its services. Springwood Neighbourhood Centre Cooperative needs access to additional space for running programs and activities, and to provide confidential client services. Other users of the Springwood Neighbourhood Centre would benefit from additional space and access to interview rooms and training rooms.

Facilities located on other sites of Springwood are not fully meeting the needs of users – including the Early Childhood Health Centre, Manners Park Building and the Red Cross Hall. Council and the services occupying these facilities can work in partnership to determine the best ways of meeting service needs. The Integral Energy building, should it be acquired by Council, could provide additional space for service delivery, but will need extensive renovation.

There is a strong case to develop a Youth Services Hub in Springwood to deliver services to Lower Mountains Youth. This option would involve Mountains Youth Services Team and other youth services operating from a Springwood base. It would require additional space for programs, administration, interview rooms and storage.

In regard to public open space, it is important that the vista of the Town Square be preserved. A fenced children's playground should also be retained within the Town Centre, either in its present location or another central location. A plan is required for the future of the small 'Pocket Parks' in Springwood – currently the parks are of poor amenity and passive surveillance of park activities is difficult.

The existing main public toilets in Springwood are poorly located within a car park, and there is currently no dedicated parenting room. Additional facilities (for example attached to a new multipurpose room) could be considered, and improvements made to the safety of access to the car park toilets.

On the basis of this analysis, the report presents prioritised recommendations to enhance cultural and community facilities in Springwood to meet the needs of services and local and visiting populations over the next two decades. These recommendations are:

- Priority 1. Enhance and consolidate the Cultural and Community Precinct.
- Priority 2. Construct a multipurpose facility (including accessible public toilet and parenting room).
- Priority 3. Refurbish and enhance the Civic Centre.
- Priority 4. Refurbish and reconfigure Springwood Neighbourhood Centre.
- Priority 5. Investigate options for the provision of a Youth Services Hub in Springwood, and if appropriate, pursue relevant external funding sources.
- Priority 6. Provide expanded premises for the Local Studies Collection
- Priority 7. Extend Springwood Library building.
- Priority 8. Develop a plan for Springwood pocket parks, and refurbish parks as appropriate
- Priority 9. Complete the acquisition of the Integral Energy site and seek expressions of interest from possible users.
- Priority 10. Investigate locating commercial premises (e.g. cafe/bookshop) in the Cultural and Community Precinct.

PART 1. BACKGROUND

Introduction

This report assesses the needs for the provision of community and cultural facilities and services in Springwood, NSW, over the next fifteen to twenty years. An assessment is made of present and future demands on Springwood facilities. On this basis, a series of options are developed concerning both new facilities in Springwood and the enhancement of existing Council owned facilities. Priorities are developed from these options to guide future development in Springwood.

The report was commissioned by the Corporate Planning and Community Outcomes Branch, Blue Mountains City Council (BMCC) and undertaken by Argyle Research in collaboration with Council staff.

This report is in four sections:

- Part 1 Background: rationale, background research, and the criteria and methodology used in the assessment.
- Part 2 Issues and options: an overview of the key issues and options for each site and facility.
- Part 3. Service and user consultation: the outcomes of stakeholder consultation.
- Part 4 Recommendations: prioritised recommendations.

Springwood Town Centre

Springwood is a significant service centre in the Blue Mountains. It provides retailing, community and cultural services and facilities to the Springwood township and to the Lower Mountains. Springwood facilities and services are also used by residents from the wider Blue Mountains and visitors to the area, in particular, Springwood Library, the Local Studies Collection, the Springwood Civic Centre and Braemar Gallery.

In recent years concerns have arisen about the decline of Springwood as a retail centre and of the ageing and capacity of its cultural and community facilities. Currently, all council owned facilities are operating at capacity, most services require more space and enhanced facilities and the buildings are generally worn and in need of refurbishment. Blue Mountains Council has been investigating ways of revitalising Springwood Town Centre in the short term. Planning is also under way to enhance facilities to meet community needs over the next decades.

This needs analysis focuses on the sites and facilities within Springwood currently owned or managed by Council and the services and community groups operating from these locations. It also considers issues relating to the provision of health services, youth services, and housing options within Springwood.

Council owned and managed sites and facilities in Springwood include:

Civic Centre Site, Macquarie Road – eastern end

- Springwood Civic Centre
 - Services/main user groups:
 - Blue Mountains Musical Society
 - Blue Mountains Concert Society
 - Blue Mountains Orchestra
 - Penrith Symphony Orchestra
 - Blue Mountains Food Services Inc.
 - Springwood Neighbourhood Centre Cooperative
 - Ivy Market
 - Dance and music groups (private and community)
 - Community groups
- Springwood Neighbourhood Centre Building
 - Services:
 - Springwood Neighbourhood Centre Cooperative
 - Non government organisations
 - Anglicare Host Family Program
 - Blue Mountains Recreation and Respite Service
 - Vietnam Veterans' Association
- Springwood Library
 - Services:
 - Springwood Branch Library
 - Blue Mountains Library Headquarters
- Braemar House
 - Services:
 - Local Studies Collection
 - Braemar Gallery
- BMCC Springwood Office
 - Services:
 - BMCC Springwood Client Services
 - Springwood Library administration (part)
 - Local Studies Collection (part)

Northern car park, Macquarie Road – northern side

- Early Childhood Health Centre
 - Dedicated service
 - Sydney West Area Health Service: Early childhood health services
- Children’s playground
- Toilet – single (adjacent to Early Childhood Health Centre)
- Toilets – male, female and accessible (within car park)

Southern car park, Macquarie Road – southern side

- Currently no facilities – but a potential location for new facilities.

Other locations

- Manners Park Building – within Manners Park, adjacent to Springwood Rail Station
 - Service
 - Mountains Youth Services Team
- Pocket Parks
 - Manners Park – adjacent to Springwood Rail Station
 - Telstra Park – Macquarie Road – northern side, between buildings
 - Buckland Park – Macquarie Road, behind Cenotaph
 - Rest Park – Macquarie Road, western end
- Town Square – Macquarie Road, southern side
- Integral Energy Building (vacant) – Springwood Avenue

Criteria and principles used

A number of criteria and principles were used to determine the priority needs for cultural and community facilities and services in Springwood Town Centre. The aim was to ensure an accurate assessment of current and future demand on services and facilities, and also to adhere to the principles and values underpinning township design and service provision that are currently in evidence in the Blue Mountains.

These criteria and principles included:

- The requirements of the Springwood revitalisation process
- The need to improve existing facilities
- Demographic trends
- Planning for an aging population
- Current demand on facilities and services
- Future demand on facilities and services
- Principles of facility design
- Cultural and heritage values
- Building reports
- Blue Mountains Service Provision Framework

Springwood Revitalisation Project

This assessment informs the Springwood Revitalisation Project – a Council initiative “which seeks to enhance the economic viability of Springwood Town Centre and to improve community facilities and services available within the Centre.”¹

The project involved Council considering expressions of interest (EOIs) from commercial entities for the provision of commercial and social and cultural facilities in Springwood. This process was undertaken in 2008, following a series of Council decisions over 2007². Subsequently, in February 2009³ a decision was made to review the expressions of interest from commercial entities and a process of direct public consultation (i.e. a poll or referendum) is to be undertaken.

An assessment of current and future needs for community and cultural facilities and facilities is clearly important, both for the specific Springwood Town Centre Project and for improvements to Springwood that may be achieved through other processes.

Improving existing facilities

This assessment started with the assumption that the aim of Council and service providers is to improve existing facilities. It is readily apparent that virtually all cultural and community facilities in Springwood have issues of one type or another that impact negatively on service delivery and user groups. The reason for clearly identifying the limitations of existing facilities is to determine ways in which facilities can be improved. Identifying ‘areas for improvement’ will assist Council and other agencies in systematically providing enhanced facilities.

Demographic trends

The numbers and characteristics of a population are a major influence on the services and facilities that are required and levels of service provision within a township. For example a static and aging population requires different facilities and services to an expanding population with a high birth rate. Using a demographic forecasting tool⁴ it is possible to predict population changes for the Blue Mountains to the year 2021 – that is, to 12 years from now. Our interest is in assessing community needs for the next 15 to 20 years, so this forecast should be taken only as an indicator of likely trends for the longer time periods.

¹ BMCC (2007). Council Business Papers, 7/08/07.

<http://www.bmcc.nsw.gov.au/yourcouncil/councilmeetings/2007meetings>

² BMCC (2007). Council Business Papers, 30/01/07, 24/04/07, 7/08/07.

<http://www.bmcc.nsw.gov.au/yourcouncil/councilmeetings/2007meetings>

³ BMCC (2009) Council Meeting Outcomes, 17/02/09.

<http://www.bmcc.nsw.gov.au/yourcouncil/councilmeetings>

⁴ forecast.id – Population Forecasts. <http://www.id.com.au/bluemountains/forecastid/Default.asp?bhcp=1>

Demographic trends are considered for the following areas:

- Springwood/Valley Heights⁵
- Planning Area 4 (The townships of: Springwood, Faulconbridge, Valley Heights, Winmalee, Yellow Rock and Hawkesbury Heights)
- Planning Area 5 (The townships of Blaxland, Glenbrook, Warrimoo, Mt Riverview and Lapstone)
- Lower Mountains (Planning Areas 4 and 5 combined)

Population changes 2009-2021

The population of Area 4 is predicted to increase modestly over the next 12 years, by around 270 people, to a total of around 22,520 people. However, the population of Springwood/Valley Heights itself is projected to increase by around 500 people (with declines in population in the other Area 4 townships). This prediction would be consistent with the assumption that there will be an increase in medium density housing suitable for older people and aged care facilities within the Springwood locality.

In terms of the Lower Mountains as a whole (Area 4 and Area 5) the population is predicted to remain stable over the next 12 years; a decrease in the population of Area 5 will offset the increase in population in Area 4.

Population: Springwood, Lower Blue Mountains and LGA: 2009 and 2021.

LOCALITY	POPULATION 2009	POPULATION 2021	CHANGE
Springwood/Valley Heights ⁶	10,346	10,839	Up 493
Area 4 (see above)	22,252	22,524	Up 272
Area 5 (see above)	18,785	18,488	Down 297
Lower Blue Mountains	41,037	41,012	Steady
Blue Mountains LGA	77,338	78,521	Up 1183

Source: forecast.id (BMCC website)

Significant age group changes 2009-2021

The main demographic change to note is the predicted increase in the numbers of people aged over 60. All other age groups within Springwood and Planning Areas 4 and 5 will tend to remain steady or decline slightly. The increase in older people will be a result of aging in the local population and of retired people moving to the area. This trend indicates that older people will generate the main increase in demand for community and cultural services.

⁵ Note that forecast.id use amalgamated figures for Springwood and Valley Heights.

⁶ As above.

Population: aged 60+, Springwood, Lower Blue Mountains and LGA: 2009 and 2021.

LOCALITY	PERSONS AGED 60+ 2009	% OF POPULATION	PERSONS AGED 60+ 2021	% OF POPULATION	INCREASE IN 60+ POPULATION
Springwood/Valley Heights	2318	22%	2965	27%	Up 647
Area 4	4180	19%	5456	24%	Up 1276
Area 5	3211	17%	3808	21%	Up 597
Lower Blue Mountains	7391	18%	9264	23%	Up 1873
Blue Mountains LGA	15573	20%	19964	25%	Up 4391

Source: forecast:ld (BMCC website)

Planning for an aging population

The demographic information clearly indicates that the population of Springwood and surrounds is ageing, with steadily increasing proportions of older people. In general, an older population means:

- A greater proportion of people with mobility and eyesight problems
- Increasing population of people on low incomes
- Increased demands on services provided during the day, and
- Increased demand for frail aged and disability services.

Priority needs for an ageing population in Springwood have been identified by the Corporate Planning and Community Outcomes Branch of BMCC as:

- Accessible, affordable housing within or close to Springwood town centre (housing that enables easy access to shops, and community facilities and services)
- Well lit, level pathways of travel between housing, rail, and facilities
- Collocation of services to enable ease of access
- Small halls/meeting rooms – enabling easy access and suitable for multiple types of activities such as classes, activities, meetings of 15 or more people.

Current demand on facilities

At a demand level, a community need is apparent when the service or facility is unable to meet the demands being placed upon it by service providers or community members, for example a service has insufficient space to see its clients or a library cannot store its collection adequately.

Additionally, new services and facilities may be needed by the community, for example a town square or a parenting room. The following issues were considered in assessing the demands made on facilities and services:

- The adequacy of the facility to meet the demands placed upon it
 - by service providers
 - by community members
- Problems of physical access
- Whether the quality of service offered is affected by the current facility
- Whether there are service restrictions due to limitations of the current facility (e.g. space)

- Adequacy of space for administration, storage, and document archival
- Occupational health and safety or security issues
- The capacity to interview clients privately if required
- Whether service needs can be met by a multipurpose facility or whether a specialised facility is required
- External standards relating to the service or facility

Future demand on facilities

Over time, demand on facilities is likely to vary due to changing users, changes in service delivery models, social trends and technological advances. In addition to an ageing population, the most significant changes likely to impact on facility provision in Springwood are:

- Changes for some services from centre based service delivery to outreach models
- Changes in the demands of older people:
 - Increasing demand for activities that support well aging –including technology training, adult learning activities and physical activity classes
 - Decrease in demand for ‘senior specific’ social and recreation facilities
- Digitisation of paper records – freeing up storage space
- Increase in demand for computer based training (software, digital film etc)
- Increase in laptop ownership and use (as for mobile phones); increase in public provision of wireless internet access.

Principles of facility design

A number of principles can inform how buildings and physical spaces are designed and to who services are provided. In this analysis the following principles were considered in assessing community need and priorities:

- Access and equity
- Safety in design
- Child Friendly Cities

Although these principles differ in some respects, they are all aimed at ensuring that people can move around safely and easily within urban environments – and that particular effort is made to ensure equity of access for people with disabilities and mobility problems and for children.

As such the following issues were considered in this assessment:

- Physical access to facilities and services
- Pedestrian access and safety
- Preservation of public open space and children’s play areas
- Planning for an aging population
- Access to public toilets and parenting rooms
- Safety of parks and public areas
- Energy and water efficient design

It should be noted that physical access is also governed by Australian Building Codes, so that there is a statutory requirement that any retro fitting of buildings or new premises will be safe and accessible to people with disabilities or mobility difficulties.

Heritage and cultural values

In terms of heritage and cultural values, community needs relate to the history of the area, cultural identity and sense of community, for example, where a building or open space should be kept because it is historically or culturally important to local people.

In assessing historic and cultural values, the following issues were considered:

- Is the facility heritage listed?
- Does the facility have other historic value?
- Does the service/facility contribute to:
 - the identity and sense of place of local people in Springwood/Blue Mountains?
 - community development and social inclusiveness
- Was the facility established using community financial or 'in kind' contributions?

Building reports

In October 2008, building condition reports were conducted for most of the Council owned community facilities in Springwood in October 2008. The general findings from these reports are included in this analysis – noting that reference should be made to these reports for specific details.

Blue Mountains Service Delivery Framework

A framework for service provision in the Blue Mountains has been developed over the past 12 years (see the 1995 and 2007 Community Plans). This framework involves a Master List of Needed Services – which lists minimum service and facility provision at City, district and township level. This list was referred to in this needs assessment to identify gaps in service and facility provision in Springwood Town Centre.

Methodology

The methods used in this needs assessment included:

- Semi structured interviews with key informants (Council, non government and government agencies and community)
- Analysis of relevant Council planning and policy documents
- Analysis of existing research of community and cultural needs in Springwood (see Appendix 1)
- Analysis of 51 community submissions (submitted as part of the process of the community consultation process for the Springwood Town Centre Project and which pertained to community and cultural facilities and services in Springwood)
- Analysis of other relevant documents

The interviewees selected for this study included:

- Council officers with responsibilities relating to community and cultural facilities and services
- Representatives of key agencies and community groups operating in Springwood Town Centre
- Blue Mountains Division of General Practice
- Interested community members

A full list of the persons and organisations consulted is included at Appendix 1.

PART 2. ISSUES AND OPTIONS

The Sites

The Civic Centre Site

THE CIVIC CENTRE SITE – MACQUARIE ROAD, EAST		
FACTOR	COMMENTS	DATA
Buildings	Springwood Civic Centre, Braemar House (including Braemar Gallery and Local Studies Collection), Springwood Library, Springwood Neighbourhood Centre and Blue Mountains City Council Springwood Office.	BMCC
Condition	Overall the site is in reasonable condition, although the buildings require refurbishment (see relevant sections below).	Building report
Issues	Possible relocation of facilities from the Civic Centre Site was considered in the consultation conducted for this report. Overwhelmingly stakeholders and community members would like to see the Civic Centre Site retained as a community and cultural precinct.	Stakeholders
THE CIVIC CENTRE SITE – OPTIONS		
1	Retain site in present condition undertaking necessary maintenance and safety upgrades.	
2	Retain and consolidate the Civic Centre Site as a Cultural and Community Precinct. This option would involve retaining all the cultural and community facilities on this site, refurbishing facilities and enhancing amenity and access to the site.	
3	Relocate the Civic Centre and/or other facilities to another site in Springwood. This option would enable the Civic Centre Site to be used for an alternative purpose – but can only be recommended if provides enhanced outcomes in comparison to Option 2 (see discussion below).	

The Northern Car Park

NORTHERN CAR PARK, MACQUARIE ROAD, NORTH		
FACTOR	COMMENTS	DATA
Facilities	Early Childhood Health Centre, single public toilet, children's playground, accessible public toilets (in car park), car parking facilities.	BMCC
Condition	The site is in good condition.	BMCC
Issues	This site could potentially be used for building of new community facilities; it has flat topography, a central location and good public transport access. The location of public toilets within the car park is problematic (see below).	BMCC
NORTHERN CAR PARK – OPTIONS		
1	Retain site in present condition undertaking necessary maintenance and refurbishments to existing buildings within the site.	
2	Use this site for the location of new community facilities (i.e. as a site to relocate existing services and users into new built facilities).	

The Southern Car Park

SOUTHERN CAR PARK, MACQUARIE ROAD, SOUTH		
FACTOR	COMMENTS	DATA
Facilities	Car parking facilities	BMCC
Condition	Storm water and drainage issues	BMCC
Issues	Steep topography, and no direct vehicle access to Macquarie Road.	BMCC
SOUTHERN CAR PARK – OPTIONS		
1	Retain site in present condition undertaking necessary maintenance.	
2	Use this site for the location of new community facilities (i.e. as a site to relocate existing services into new built facilities). Although this would involve addressing the various site issues (above).	

The Facilities

Springwood Civic Centre

SPRINGWOOD CIVIC CENTRE		
FACILITY	COMMENTS	DATA
Details	Large hall (including stage and tiered seating), dressing rooms, lower hall, supper room, kitchen, upper meeting room.	Building report
Condition	Generally in reasonable physical condition, but requires ongoing typical maintenance and an upgrading due to age and wear.	BMCC
Main users	A multipurpose multi-user facility, users include, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blue Mountains Musical Society • Blue Mountains Food Services • Springwood Neighbourhood Centre Cooperative • Community Groups (for a full list of users see Page 8)	Stakeholders
Building Issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The building requires an upgrade, including – renewal of fittings, seating, ceilings, flooring and paint. • Lacks adequate climate control (e.g. avoided by users in summer months) • Acoustic separation is needed between the dining facility and the main hall. • The steeply tiered seating presents access difficulties (although additional level seating can be used). • The upper meeting room only has stair access. 	Building report, users, stakeholders
User issues	<u>Performing Groups</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inadequate climate control – hall unusable in summer months • Tiered seating difficult to access (floor level seating impedes viewing) • Require orchestra pit in front of stage (currently behind performers, creating acoustic problems) • Insufficient room for performers on ‘stage right’ due to piano location • Need for extension of ‘black performance background’ along roof and stage stair wall. • Insufficient storage for costumes • Limited season as main hall also used by Ivy Markets <u>Blue Mountains Food Services</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Require dedicated locked storage facilities • Insufficient storage for tables and chairs 	Stakeholders

SPRINGWOOD CIVIC CENTRE– OPTIONS	
1	Retain building in current state undertaking typical maintenance only.
2	Refurbish building to meet the standards expected of large community performance space, including climate control, enhanced acoustics, acoustic separation between dining facilities and main hall, less steeply tiered seating, and general renewal of fittings, ceilings, flooring and paint.
3	Replace the building with a purpose built venue; demolish or develop alternative use for the existing building.

Springwood Neighbourhood Centre

SPRINGWOOD NEIGHBOURHOOD CENTRE BUILDING		
FACILITY	COMMENTS	DATA
Details	Civic Centre Site. Springwood Neighbourhood Centre building.	BMCC
Condition	The building is generally in good condition but requires upgrading; the kitchen is in poor condition.	Building report
Main users	<p><u>Springwood Neighbourhood Centre Cooperative</u> (Major projects are listed in next section, and include community services and development, referral and advocacy).</p> <p><u>Other agencies:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blue Mountains Recreation and Respite Services • Anglicare • Vietnam Veterans 	BMCC
Building Issues	<p>Interior is dated and worn</p> <p>Ventilation in offices</p> <p>Offices lack proper access to kitchen facilities</p>	<p>Building report</p> <p>Stakeholders</p>
User issues	<p><u>Springwood Neighbourhood Centre Cooperative</u> (main user of the centre)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insufficient administration and staff office space • Insufficient program room space • Lack of interview rooms in which to privately interview clients. <p><u>Other agencies</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insufficient space for the services provided • Lack of meeting room • Lack of interview rooms • Range of issues with amenity of building • Disability access and parking • Lack of storage 	Stakeholders

SPRINGWOOD NEIGHBOURHOOD CENTRE- OPTIONS	
1	Maintain building in current state undertaking maintenance and essential upgrading only.
2	In conjunction with the provision of a new multipurpose room (see below) – reconfigure and refurbish the Neighbourhood Centre. This option depends on the building of a new multipurpose room that can be used by the Neighbourhood Centre for programs and classes, so allowing the Centre to expand into their existing program area. Additional space for two small interview rooms, and project workers and administration office space would be created.
3	Other agency users to investigate relocation to premises better suited to the services being delivered.

Springwood Library

SPRINGWOOD LIBRARY BUILDING		
FACILITY	COMMENTS	DATA
Details	Civic Centre Site. Circulation area, library desk, offices, children's area, young adult area, toilets.	Building report Stakeholders
Condition	Overall good physical condition, but requires ongoing typical maintenance and general upgrading. The building structure is considered to be adequate for the next 50 years.	BMCC
Main users	BMCC Library Services Family Studies Local Studies Public	Stakeholders
Building Issues	As for property condition (see above)	Building report, stakeholders
User Issues	<u>BMCC Library Services</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Require increased overall floor space from 600m² to a minimum of 860m² . Require three glassed small study/meeting rooms to accommodate 8-10 people (3 x 12m²) Require access to a training room / separate activity room 	Stakeholders

*(Note that a population based benchmark of 1862m² for Springwood has been determined by the Library's Technical Committee – so 860m² is presented as a minimum floor size only)

SPRINGWOOD LIBRARY – OPTIONS	
1	Maintain building in current state undertaking maintenance and essential upgrading only. (Over time, extra space should be made available by the digitisation of some hard copy resources)
2	Extend the library by at least 260m ² to provide additional space for the following functions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small study rooms 3 x 12m² (for private study or group work) • A separate activity room - approximately 30m² (consider in view of library access to multi purpose room if constructed) • Additional shelving for books and publications.
3	Construct a new purpose built library, either within the Civic Centre site or elsewhere in Springwood.

Braemar House

BRAEMAR HOUSE		
FACILITY	COMMENTS	DATA
Details	Civic Centre Site. Historic building.	Building report Stakeholders
Condition	In overall good condition but requires some maintenance, including stabilisation from tree root damage.	BMCC
Main users	Braemar Art Gallery Local Studies Collection	Stakeholders
User issues	<p><u>Local Studies Collection</u></p> <p>Require additional space for general storage of collection, proper storage of archival documents and public access to the collection. Premises need to be increased from current 65m² to approximately 180m² to cater for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enlarged reading room • Public access to maps • Additional shelving • Additional storage and archives <p><u>Art Gallery</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of space for administration <p>Heavily booked art gallery space.</p>	Stakeholders
BRAEMAR HOUSE – OPTIONS		
1	Undertake essential maintenance	
2	Relocate Local Studies Collection to larger premises, either within or adjacent to the library. This will provide space for a larger reading room and additional areas for administration, photocopying and archival storage. It will also provide additional space to Braemar Gallery for administration and exhibition.	
3	Local Studies collection to continue in its present location and to investigate digitisation of archival material and off site storage of materials.	

Blue Mountains City Council: Springwood Office

BLUE MOUNTAINS CITY COUNCIL: SPRINGWOOD OFFICE		
FACILITY	COMMENTS	DATA
Details	Civic Centre Site. Offices located below Springwood Library, on the ground floor. Public counter, foyer, offices, Sassafras Meeting Room.	BMCC
Condition	Good	Building report
Main users	BMCC – Council services to the public.	BMCC
Building Issues	Nil	N/A
User issues	<p><u>BMCC</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Require extra space for seats for Council call centre staff 2) Insufficient office space for disaster recovery 3) Meeting room (Sassafras) entry by staff, requires crossing the public area 4) Meeting room is too small for larger meetings <p><u>Other services (if a co-location option pursued)</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Additional counter and office space 2) Secure storage 	Stakeholders
BLUE MOUNTAINS CITY COUNCIL: SPRINGWOOD OFFICE – OPTIONS		
1	Investigate relocating BMCC office to other location in Springwood that will provide sufficient space for service delivery.	
2	Extend library building to provide increased space for the BMCC office.	

Manners Park Building

MANNERS PARK BUILDING		
FACILITY	COMMENTS	DATA
Details	A small building located within Manners Park, divided into two offices and a kitchenette	BMCC
Condition	In reasonable condition and requiring typical ongoing maintenance.	Stakeholder
Main user	Mountains Youth Services Team	BMCC
Building issues	Access to a toilet.	Stakeholder
User issues	<p><u>Youth Service Hub</u> If Springwood is to be the location of a 'Youth Services Hub' – then the Manners Park facility is clearly inadequate. Although, the building could feasibly continue to be the location for the provision of some youth services (e.g. those provided by MYST, see next point).</p> <p><u>Mountains Youth Services Team (if to remain in this location)</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Insufficient office space for up to 5 staff 2) Require interview room 3) Require access to an activity room 4) Insufficient accessible storage. 	Stakeholder
MANNERS PARK BUILDING– OPTIONS		
1	The future of the building to be viewed in the context of Council's commitment to actively search for a suitable location for a Youth Services Hub in the lower mountains (see below for further discussion).	

Pocket Parks

POCKET PARKS		
FACILITY	COMMENTS	DATA
Details	Small Parks along Macquarie Street: Rest Park, Telstra Park, Manners Park, Buckland Park	BMCC
Condition	Fair to poor. The parks have generally poor amenity.	BMCC Stakeholder
Main user	Public Mountains Youth Services Team – Manners Park	Stakeholders
Issues	Rest Park and Telstra Park are under utilised, as are parts of Buckland Park. Problems for all parks include vandalism, public safety risks and deterioration. The location of Rest Park and Buckland Park at the edges of the Town Centre inhibit passive surveillance and increase opportunities for criminal behavior.	BMCC
POCKET PARKS – OPTIONS		
1	Retain all current pocket parks undertaking typical maintenance, demolition of obsolete toilets and safety upgrades only.	
2	Refurbish all parks to substantially improve amenity, lighting and public safety	
3	Rationalise pocket parks, considering alternative uses for the land contained in Rest Park, Telstra Park and the lower section of Buckland Park. Refurbish Manners Park.	

Integral Energy Site

INTEGRAL ENERGY SITE		
FACILITY	COMMENTS	DATA
Details	Old Integral Energy Building. Raymond Road, Springwood.	BMCC
Condition	Fair condition, and will require refit and repair to be suitable for community use.	BMCC Stakeholders
Main user	None. Vacant	
Building Issues	A full assessment will need to be made – but at minimum will require internal refit and structural work (e.g. replacing building supports).	Stakeholders
User issues	There are a number of potential users of this building. It would be best suited to services: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> not requiring a high level of accessibility (it is located away from Town Centre), and able to contribute to costs of refurbishment. 	BMCC Stakeholders
INTEGRAL ENERGY SITE – OPTIONS		
1	BMCC to complete acquisition of the building and investigate refurbishment.	
2	BMCC to complete acquisition and seek expressions of interest from possible users – where the tenant(s) will contribute substantially to the cost of refurbishment	

Early Childhood Health Centre

EARLY CHILDHOOD HEALTH CENTRE		
FACILITY	COMMENTS	DATA
Details	Adjacent to the Northern Car park, with frontage facing Macquarie Road (behind Children's Playground). Entrance, clinic room, waiting room/reception, kitchen, sitting room, storage, toilets. staff car parking (2 spaces), adjacent parking for large health service vans (e.g. breast screening)	BMCC Stakeholder
Condition	Fair condition and affecting by cracking. Requires refurbishment and ongoing maintenance.	Building report
Main user	Sydney West Area Health Service – Early Childhood Health Service	BMCC
Building issues	See property condition.	Building report, stakeholders
User issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to additional room to run toddler group, post natal depression support, and provide services from counselors and outreach workers • Larger waiting room (accommodate 20 people) • Parent room – breast feeding and baby change facilities • Additional toilet • Existing toilet – hot water • Secure pram storage area – (9m²) • Doorways widened to accommodate twin strollers • Flooring compliant with infection control standards – i.e. vinyl with curved skirting (see Health Facilities guidelines) • Possible relocation to shop front close to transport • IT cabling • New signage – multilingual, aboriginal friendly (e.g. Aboriginal symbols or flag) 	Stakeholder interview
EARLY CHILDHOOD HEALTH CENTRE – OPTIONS		
1	Undertake property repairs and refurbishment, and address cracking issues – as per Building Report October 2008.	
2	SWAHS and BMCC investigate the possibility of extending and refurbishing early childhood health centre to better meet its service requirements (as above)	
3	SWAHS and BMCC investigate relocating the Early Childhood Health Centre to a premises that better meets its service requirements.	

Children's Playground

CHILDREN'S PLAYGROUND		
FACILITY	COMMENTS	DATA SOURCES
Details	Small fenced playground adjacent to the Early Childhood Health Centre	
Condition	Reasonable condition, apart from lower retaining wall.	Building report
Main user	Parents with small children	Stakeholders
Building Issues	The playground is in reasonable condition, but the lower retaining wall needs to be replaced within two years and the tree in the playground removed. The playground equipment should be replaced in the next three years.	Building report, users, stakeholders
User issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parents would like to see a playground retained in a central location in the Springwood Township. Replace soft fall. 	Stakeholder interview
CHILDREN'S PLAYGROUND– OPTIONS		
1	Retain playground in current site and undertake necessary maintenance and timely replacement/renewal of playground equipment.	
2	Relocate playground to another site in Springwood close to shops and facilities – e.g. Telstra Park.	

Red Cross Hall

RED CROSS HALL		
FACILITY	COMMENTS	DATA
Details	Small hall located at the front of Buckland Park	BMCC
Condition	Serviceable condition and requiring typical maintenance.	Building report
Main users	Red Cross (meetings and opportunity shop) RSL and Vietnam Veterans (during commemorative events) Community Groups	Stakeholders
Building issues	Very small kitchen	Stakeholder
User issues	<u>Red Cross</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meeting room can be crowded on occasion Insufficient and difficult to access storage for Opportunity Shop. 	Stakeholder
RED CROSS HALL– OPTIONS		
1	Undertake maintenance as required and investigate the provision of additional storage facility for hall users, or improving access to existing storage.	

New Facilities - Options

Multipurpose Facility

MULTIPURPOSE FACILITY – LOCATED ON CIVIC CENTRE SITE	
FACILITY	COMMENTS
Details	<p>Proposed new building to be constructed within existing the Cultural and Community Precinct, or in new Precinct (see Priority 1, below)</p> <p>Extension of existing building within Civic Centre Site – 60m²</p> <p>And to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kitchenette (8m²) • Accessible toilet (accessible after hours) • Parenting room (6m²) • Storage room for tables, chairs etc. (12m²)
Need	<p>Existing cultural and community services in Springwood lack an appropriate facility for larger group activities – such as computer based training, seminars and exercise classes (e.g. for older people). A multipurpose room would help meet this need for space in both the immediate term and over the next twenty years. A room that can be divided into two smaller rooms, suitable for smaller groups, would increase the functionality of the space. Ideally, accessible toilets, a parenting room and a kitchenette would also be included in the multipurpose facility.</p>
Potential users	<p>The following services have all indicated a need for a larger space for group activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Springwood Library • Springwood Neighbourhood Centre Cooperative • Blue Mountains Youth Services • Sydney West Area Health Service • Blue Mountains Recreation and Respite Services • Vietnam Veterans <p>A multipurpose room could also be hired to community groups.</p>

Commercial Outlet

COMMERCIAL OUTLET– CIVIC CENTRE SITE	
FACILITY	COMMENTS
Details	A facility suitable for commercial use, ideally a cafe/ restaurant and/or bookshop
Need	<p>A cafe was proposed as a possible option by community members and services. It was suggested that this type of facility could provide additional opportunities for social engagement and interaction – and further enhance the vibrancy and amenity of the Civic Centre Site. The venue could also be used for live music, poetry and book readings and other community activities.</p>
Potential users	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local residents • Visitors • Civic Centre Site service providers

PART 3. SERVICES AND USER CONSULTATION

Introduction

This part of the report discusses the main issues for service providers and users in relation to facilities in Springwood. It also discusses the various options that could be pursued to address these issues. Over time, the services and groups using council owned facilities are likely to change, thus consideration is also made of different demands that are likely to be made on facilities in coming decades.

Springwood Civic Centre

The Springwood Civic Centre is a facility used for multiple purposes and by a diverse range of community and professional groups. It is the largest community venue in the Blue Mountains. As such, the facility needs to meet the demands that include being: a venue for performing arts, a community kitchen, a covered market place, and meeting rooms. The multiplicity of demands can lead to conflicting patterns of use. Essentially the issue is of how best to improve the Civic Centre to meet the needs of the diverse users, and whilst retaining its multipurpose nature.

Performing arts users

Performing arts users of the Civic Centre have expressed number of concerns about the venue relating to acoustics, climate control, stage size, access and conflicting use. In terms of acoustics it has been observed that the audience cannot always hear performers properly and that sound from the dining room can impinge on users in the main hall. The lack of climate control means the building is uncomfortable in the summer months, for example, the Blue Mountains Musical society schedules no performances, nor rehearsals, between November and January. For larger performers the stage and wing areas can be cramped, and ideally these areas would be enlarged to fit an additional 15 to 20 performers. Conflicting use patterns have diminished since food preparation for the community kitchen was relocated to Lawson – however, noise from the main dining room can still be heard in other areas. The monthly Ivy Markets also mean that performance seasons must sometimes be truncated. There are specific access issues, including difficulties for people with mobility problems to access the steeply tiered seating. Although flat seating can be provided in front of the tiered seating, the view of performances is not as good from this position.

Additional enhancements suggested by performing arts users include:

- An orchestra pit (sometimes the should of the orchestra can be too loud from the current location at the back of the stage)
- Extra storage space for props, backdrops and costumes.
- Painting sections of the roof and the stage stair wall black (to visually extend performance space – currently black cloth has to be placed on these sections each performance)
- A location to film performances

- Improved cabling (currently runs along the walls)
- A fly tower
- Sprung floor for dance

Other users

Aside from the issues pertaining to the main performing arts space, there are other issues of concern for services and groups using the Civic Centre. The upstairs meeting room is only accessible by stairs, making access difficult or impossible for people with mobility difficulties. Climate control is also an issue in this meeting room and other parts of the Civic Centre, particularly given hot summer temperatures.

Blue Mountains Food Services runs a regular community luncheon two days per week in the Civic Centre supper room and kitchen. About 30-35 clients attend the lunch, using about 6 tables in the dining room. Currently the key issues for this service include the lack of a commercial kitchen compliant with the NSW Food Safety Act, insufficient storage for both food and equipment, and no area to store tables and chairs that are not being used.

The Ivy Market is a local craft market, run on a monthly basis. It is a volunteer run charity that donates the funds raised back to the local community. Local charities and community groups can also participate in the market to raise funds. The under cover central location provides an ideal location for the markets.

Discussion

There is a need to undertake significant renewal works of the Springwood Civic Centre, including the installation of climate control measures, improvements to acoustic separation, and access enhancements. These improvements would create a facility of the standards expected of a large multipurpose community facility. Further improvements have been suggested by groups using the facility as a performance space (see sections above). Undertaking some or all of these works would be expected to benefit the experience of performers and audiences in the Civic Centre.

Rebuilding the Civic Centre elsewhere in Springwood is one of the options that could be considered in revitalising Springwood, however, it emerged in the consultation that this option has very little community or stakeholder support. The high cost of completely rebuilding the current Civic Centre would need to be assessed against the fact that the building is structurally sound and that a refurbishment of the existing facility could meet the needs of current and future users. Furthermore, the current location enables important synergies between the different services and community organisations using the facilities on the Civic Centre site, including sharing resources and volunteers. Any relocation would also need to preserve these existing relationships.

As far as addressing the needs of the Blue Mountains Food Services (or another food service), the Civic Centre refurbishment could involve upgrading the kitchen to commercial standards and increased storage for food preparation and dining tables and chairs. The positives of a food service continuing to use this space include the fact that it is easily accessible, the service can share

resources and volunteers with Springwood Neighbourhood Centre and the Civic Centre is 'community space' as opposed to 'seniors space' – i.e. can potentially be used by a wide range of age groups who would benefit from a community luncheon. However, it is possible that a multipurpose space could meet all these requirements if equipped with a commercial kitchen and adequate storage. The demand for community lunches for people on low incomes and/or at risk of social isolation is likely to increase over the coming decades. As such, space for community lunches needs to be provided in Springwood, either within the Civic Centre or elsewhere in Springwood

One particular issue raised was use of the Civic Centre by older people. The building is currently well utilised by this demographic, including the community lunch, performances and activities. Use by older people is another reason to improve physical access to the Civic Centre. In addition, it was suggested in the community consultation, that the lower hall could be used as a dedicated 'senior's space'. Any consideration of this option would need to be undertaken in view of the value of multipurpose facilities (usable by a wide range of ages and groups) and a growing trend amongst older Australians to participate in intergenerational classes and activities.

Springwood Neighbourhood Centre (SNC)

Springwood Neighbourhood Centre Cooperative

The primary user of the SNC building is Springwood Neighbourhood Centre Cooperative (SNCC). This not for profit service provides information and referrals to community members, runs a range of social programs and educational and interest courses. The service also provides space for people to drop in and socialise. SNCC is staffed by a manager and main project worker and a variable number of staff on part time and casual contracts funded for specific projects.

The programs and activities currently run through SNCC, include:

- Community and cultural development
- Community visitors scheme (for nursing home residents)
- Volunteer home visitors
- Managing volunteers and volunteer run activities
- Health promotion projects
- Advocacy
- Referral services
- BM Talking Gazette
- Support groups
- Venue for a wide range of classes for physical activity, leisure and learning

As such, SNCC plays an important role in the community: promoting community integration and providing opportunities for local learning and activities; it also supports and works with some of the more vulnerable members of the local community. Furthermore, SNCC facilitates the contribution of large numbers of volunteers, both to the service itself and to the wider community.

The principle issues for the SNCC are the lack of space to administer and run programs, insufficient space to run the community classes and the lack of small private interview rooms. At present staff

are overcrowded in the existing office. It is difficult for the service to run classes because the single program room is used for multiple purposes (also contains areas for people dropping into the centre to sit and socialise). And, although the service runs welfare programs, there are no dedicated interview rooms in which to speak privately with clients – creating an issue if the meeting rooms are booked. Other issues include the age of the building (generally worn and dated) and the lack of prominent signage at the front of the building.

Other users

The Anglicare Host Family Program and Blue Mountains Recreation and Respite services share an office in the SNC, with one and two staff respectively. The Blue Mountains Vietnam Veterans and Associated Forces are located in a small adjacent office. Use of these facilities by these organisations follows the conditions outlined in Council's Community Buildings Policy⁷: community service organisations have fully subsidised rent, but hold responsibility for minor maintenance and outgoings.

All services have found that their service delivery is affected by a lack of space and privacy. In particular, services require access to a client interview room (particularly as clients may be discussing confidential matters or distressed). The offices also lack adequate soundproofing so conversations can be heard between the Anglicare/BMRRS office and the office of the Vietnam Veterans. Lack of storage space is also an issue, with all services requiring additional secure storage of client and staff records and archival material. In addition, BMRRS requires additional space to store its recreational equipment.

Other building issues include:

- Inadequate wiring (often trips from power overload)
- Poor ventilation in the office
- Difficulties accessing the toilet (through a locked door that is difficult to open)
- No access to running water
- No parking/storage suitable for an 8 seat van

All services would also benefit from access to an additional meeting/training room for meetings, support groups and in which to run training programs for volunteers.

Discussion

Over the next fifteen to twenty years It can be expected that the SNC will continue to be the premises both for SNCC and as offices and activity rooms for a range of not for profit organisations serving the local community. Whilst the organisations occupying the building may change, it is predictable that there will be an ongoing need for office space, interview rooms and program/training rooms. At present, people who are older, socio-economically disadvantaged and

⁷ BMCC (2002). Community Buildings Policy.

people with disabilities and their carers are the main client groups of the services delivered from SNC; an aging population can be expected to further increase the need for these types of services.

The SNC needs, at minimum, to be refurbished. The building should also either be rebuilt or extended to meet the needs of SNCC and other resident services. Alternatively an additional adjacent (or connected) multipurpose room constructed and made available for use to the services within SNC.

In terms of location, there are a number of advantages of co-locating Springwood Neighbourhood Centre with other community and cultural services and facilities (such as the library and Civic Centre). Residents are able to easily access multiple services, for example, visit library, attend community lunch, then attend a class at SNCC. Currently, services within the Community and Cultural precinct share resources and space and refer clients to each other; and these relationships are highly valued by these services. As such, any potential relocation process would need to preserve or enhance the existing synergies between services.

Springwood Library: main building

Blue Mountains Library Services: Headquarters and Springwood Branch Library

Springwood Library is an important community facility, offering services to the general population and targeted services to particular population groups (older people, youth, children, etc). The library offers opportunities for learning, research and social interaction, and provides access to community information, computers and the internet. Springwood Library has an average of 14,000 visits per month.

The Springwood Library building also accommodate the administrative headquarters of library services across the Blue Mountains

The limited space within the main library building has constrained the services that can be offered from this location. In particular there is a need for small study/meeting rooms, access to a training/conference room and increased floor area for administration, the library collection and public access (including tables, chairs and computers). Using standards developed by the State Library of NSW, it has been estimated that Springwood library could be increased from its current 600m² to 1862m², to better meet the needs of the population it services.⁸

Discussion

Springwood Library is an important community facility, and requires extensions and enhancement to provide better services to the local resident population and wider population of the Blue Mountains. At minimum, the library requires additional areas for small study rooms, library administration and access to a training room (either within the library or as part of a multipurpose room).

⁸ State Library of NSW (2005). People Places: a guide for public library buildings. State Library of NSW: Sydney.

It should be noted that information, journals and books are increasingly in electronic format, so the need for an enlarged area to hold the physical book and journal collection could be expected to diminish over the next twenty years. However, the requirement for areas enabling public electronic access to information (computers, electronic readers) would be expected to increase. In addition, increasing patronage by older people (as this population group grows) will increase the demand for areas for social interaction, for example, areas containing couches and group tables.

The extent to which the existing floor area of the library can be expanded to accommodate additional rooms and open floor area, will require the advice of building consultants.

Springwood Library: ground floor

Blue Mountains City Council Springwood Office (and contains part of the Local Studies Collection and Library administration)

The Blue Mountains City Council Springwood office provides customer service functions and space for:

- Library administration
- Health and building inspections
- Community facility management, ad
- Disaster recovery support
- Local studies archives (map storage and compactus units)

There is also a small meeting room (the Sassafras Room) used by council for staff meetings and when meeting with the public. In terms of customer services, the office provides council services to the Lower Mountains – including lodging Development Applications, paying rates and making enquiries. Call centre services are also provided, sharing this role with the Katoomba Headquarters of BMCC.

The main issue for the business centre are insufficient space, namely to seat call centre staff, and to local the disaster recovery office space. The current means of access to the Sassafras room is also seen as less than ideal because staff need to cross through the public area in order to enter the room.

Discussion

The location of a Springwood service office provides equity of access to Lower Mountains residents to Council staff and services. There are benefits in collocation with the BMCC run library including a single IT system and the capacity to share office space and meeting rooms. Also, BMCC has recently reconfigured the space to make the best possible use of the area currently provided. Increasing the space available could be achieved by relocating the BMCC Springwood Office to a shop front in Springwood, co-located with the RTA for example (as at Katoomba HQ). Expansion of the library building and increase in administration space for the library, and or alternative premises for the local studies collection could also increase the space available for BMCC.

Braemar House and Gallery

Braemar House is an historic building constructed in 1892, with recognised historic and cultural value to the Blue Mountains community.

The Local Studies Collection and Braemar Gallery

The local studies collection is part of Springwood Library, including 3000 reference books, articles, archival materials, newspapers (on microfilm), sound recordings, photographs and maps. It is a collection of National Significance used by local state national and international researchers. The main issue for access and viability of this significant collection is a lack of space.

In order to be managed and accessible the collection requires a reading room (the materials are not for loan), staff work area, photocopier, microfiche reader and public access computers. Currently the reading room can only seat three people and there can be over a dozen people waiting to use the collection. This has led to the situation where researchers are sometimes permitted to take material to other areas – a practice which is not ideal in terms of ensuring document preservation.

The storage of archival material is also an issue. At present overflow material of 200 archive boxes, 40 periodicals and additional books are held in 24 compactus bays in an area under the main library. Maps are stored in two overcrowded cabinets. All these materials are very difficult to access for both library staff and researchers wanting to use the archival parts of the collection.

Building issues for the Local Studies Collection relate to the lack of reliable power and data cabling to run computers and other electronic equipment.

Braemar Gallery is a volunteer run public gallery space. It has hosted regular art exhibitions since the 1980s, and currently has a particular interest in exhibiting the work of young artists. The gallery space serves the Blue Mountains community and visitors. The main issues for the Gallery are the limited capacity for showing art works (with the space always booked well in advance) and limited space to undertake the administration associated with managing the service – at present, this function is undertaken in the homes of volunteers.

Discussion

Braemar House has great value to the community both as an attractive historic building and public gallery space for the Blue Mountains. As such it forms an important part of the existing Cultural and Community Precinct, providing both an older historic element and an established gallery space within the precinct. Braemar House cannot be practically relocated. Thus the contribution of this 'in situ' facility to a vibrant precinct should be fully considered in any future plans for configuring cultural and community facilities in Springwood. Also, the heritage value of the building needs to be maintained with appropriate upkeep and maintenance.

The issues of over crowding and unsatisfactory storage of archival materials faced by the Local Studies Collection could best be resolved by relocating the collection to larger and more appropriate premises. Relocating the Local Studies Collection would also address the issues faced by the Art Gallery – if the Gallery were able to use the space vacated by the collection, it would provide both greater exhibition and administration space.

Springwood Early Childhood Health Centre

Sydney West Area Health Service (dedicated facility)

SWAHS provides early childhood health services from this dedicated facility next to the Northern car park. The services offered include immunisation, early childhood health clinic, and groups for new parents. The size of the clinic room is adequate for the provision of clinical services. Additional space would enable SWAHS to offer additional services to parents and enhance existing services provision. Lack of space is an issue for the following areas/services:

- Waiting room needs to be enlarged (to accommodate up to 20 people)
- Parenting room required (including breastfeeding and baby change facilities)
- Additional room for parenting groups required (e.g. toddler group, post natal depression group), and to deliver counselling and outreach services
- Secure pram storage area required

Other building issues include:

- Lack of hot water in existing toilet
- Doorways need to be widened to accommodate twin strollers
- Flooring compliant with infection control standards – i.e. vinyl with curved skirting (see Health Facilities guidelines)
- IT cabling
- New signage – multilingual, aboriginal friendly (e.g. Aboriginal symbols or flag)

Discussion

The Early Childhood Health Centre is currently in a good position for access by parents and young children. Spatial issues could be addressed either by relocating elsewhere in Springwood, extending the centre or using other facilities for some activities (e.g. parenting groups could be held in a multipurpose room). Any decision of this nature would need to be determined by SWAHS, and, if appropriate, addressed in partnership with BMCC.

The Centre is also an ideal location for a parenting room, and upgrading the current toilet for this purpose should be investigated.

Manners Park Building

Sole user: Mountains Youth Services Team

Mountains Youth Services Team (MYST) currently operate their Springwood services from a small building in Manners Park. The service particularly aims to reach and support young people at risk. Springwood has been presented as a possible ideal site for a youth services hub⁹ – where programs, health, counselling etc for Blue Mountains youth will be provided from the township. Any future consideration of youth services provision in Springwood needs to be undertaken in the context of this plan.

Currently, the main issues for the Manners Park facility are insufficient administration space for the 5 staff operating from the building, a lack of program room, insufficient storage for equipment and no interview room (for confidential meetings with clients) or meeting room.

Discussion

Council is committed to actively searching for a new location for MYST to provide youth services in the Lower Mountains – in either Springwood or Blaxland.¹⁰ Currently the Manners Park Building provides a good central location for the operation of outreach youth services in Springwood, however, it is inadequate for current levels of service delivery. Providing additional youth services in Springwood (*viz* through establishing a Youth Services Hub) will require the provision of additional space for offices, programs, interview rooms and storage. This could be achieved through either a new dedicated premises or access to shared premises, using either an existing building or through the construction of a new purpose built facility. Sourcing state or federal funding would

Children's Playground

Local parents and children

The Children's Playground is a well utilised small contained playground centrally located in Springwood. Community submissions expressed strong support for the playground to be retained in this location, or if it had to be relocated, to be kept in a central location. Essentially the playground needs new playground equipment and renewed soft-fall, and for stability works to be undertaken on the retaining wall.

Discussion

Retaining the playground in its current location and undertaking necessary refurbishment and repair, would meet the expressed needs of the community. Relocating the playground to another central location within Springwood, close to public toilets and shops would also be acceptable.

⁹ BMCC. (2009). Council Resolution. Meeting 24/3/09. Minute 110. Resolution number 4.

¹⁰ BMCC. (2009). Council Resolution. Meeting 24/3/09. Minute 110. Resolution number 4.

Public toilets, Northern Car Park

Public and visitors

The main public toilets in Springwood are located within the Northern Car Park. These toilets are adequate and include an accessible facility, but the location within the middle of a busy car park creates safety issues. At present, users of the toilet must cross through traffic and past cars backing in and out of car parks.

Discussion

Springwood, as a major service centre in the Blue Mountains, requires public toilets located close to shops and public facilities. The present main public toilets, whilst located within reasonable proximity to the town centre, are poorly positioned within the Northern Car Park. Parents with small children or people with mobility problems face safety risks crossing the line of traffic to access the toilets. Relocating the public toilets or determining ways to improve safety of access should be considered. Any replacement toilets would need to be accessible and could include a parenting room

Red Cross Hall

Australian Red Cross

The Red Cross Hall is the headquarters for the Springwood branch of the Australian Red Cross. It is used for monthly meetings, and a two day a week opportunity shop. During the week the hall is used by a number of community and private groups, running classes, church groups and meetings, for example, Toastmasters and reflexology classes. The hall is also used by the RSL and Vietnam Veterans during special events; they find the hall particularly useful due to its proximity to the cenotaph.

The main issues for the facility include insufficient storage for the goods sold in the opportunity shop (so they need to be cleared away each day), difficulties accessing storage under the hall and problems unloading goods directly outside the hall (there is no place to legally stop). Also, the Red Cross has raised the possibility of running the opportunity shop two more days a week – however, expanded premises would be required for this purpose if the hall was also to be used by external hirers. The kitchen is also very small, and its capacity is stretched when larger numbers of people meet at the hall.

Discussion

The hall is a very well utilised facility, ideal for smaller meetings and activities. The central location, street parking, and location next to the war memorial mean the hall is well suited for smaller groups and returned services organisations. A few minor improvements would improve the utility of the hall, including basic refurbishment, an extension to the kitchen, improved access to the storage area beneath the hall (or constructing a small separate storage area) and placing a loading zone on the street near the hall.

Although the Red Cross have suggested expanding the hall to at least twice its current size so that they can run their shop on more days, it is probable that the construction costs involved would not warrant this expansion. It is possible that the opportunity shop could be run from another location in Springwood. Alternatively, the Red Cross could make the decision to not hire out the hall on

particular days in order to run their shop. Additional meeting rooms in Springwood (for example in a multipurpose facility) could provide an alternative venue for hirers.

Public Open Space

- Springwood Town Square
- Pocket Parks, including:
 - Manners Park (Manners Park Hall, open space and seating)
 - Buckland Park (open space, playground, closed public toilets)
 - Rest Park (open space, closed public toilet)
 - Telstra Park (open space and seating)

Springwood Town Square is located centrally in Macquarie Road. The Square was constructed after a long community campaign, thus is highly significant to the community. There is an attractive vista to the South, which is the only open view of any consequence from the Town Centre.

The Pocket Parks are all located along Macquarie Road (see above) They are mostly in fair to poor condition with problems of vandalism and weeds and difficulties with passive community surveillance of park activities - – particularly for Buckland Park and Rest Park as they are away from main thoroughfares.

Discussion

Springwood Town Square and its vista are important community assets. As such, both need to be protected. An investigation needs to be undertaken into the current use and future options for the Pocket Parks. These small parks currently detract from the amenity of Springwood – issues of broken glass, vandalized equipment and seating and lack of passive surveillance, all need to be addressed.

Residential housing provision in Springwood Town Centre

Within the Town Centre there is a small amount of residential housing, mostly in the form of older style apartment blocks. A full housing needs assessment was not part of this report, It was also observed that there is a severe lack of accessible housing close to facilities across the Blue Mountains.

Discussion

Stakeholders said that the revitalisation of Springwood could provide the opportunity to increase housing provision in the Town Centre. There is currently an unmet demand for low maintenance medium density housing across the Blue Mountains. Older people in particular can favour this form of housing, as it is supportive of healthy ageing at home and ease of living. As such Springwood could provide an ideal opportunity to increase levels of medium density housing, either as apartment blocks or through 'shop top' apartments. If new facilities are constructed, using part of the facility for housing could be an option.

General Practitioner and allied health services

There are 6 medical practices providing services to the Springwood district (townships totaling around 22,000 people). These practices employ a total of 9 full and part time GPs and a further 3 GP registrars. This gives a ratio of 1 full time GP position for every 2121 people in the district.¹¹

Comparatively, the district is greatly underserved with GPs: Blue Mountains as a whole has a ratio of 1:1700, and the Federal Government benchmark is 1 GP to every 1100 patients.

Discussion

GP and allied health service are largely delivered by private providers and do not usually make use of Council owned facilities. As such, the role of Council in helping to address unmet demand is minimal. However, it is noted for the purposes of this report that there is a strong demand for extra GP and allied health services. In addition, it is noted that the Balance! Super Clinic plans to deliver additional GP and allied health services to Springwood and to provide additional facilities that may be available for community use.

¹¹ Information provided by the Blue Mountains Division of General Practice

PART 4. RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

These recommendations give priorities for new and refurbished facilities in Springwood, in order to provide for community needs over the next fifteen to twenty years. Priorities were determined on the basis of current and projected needs – as discussed above. Priority is given to those facilities that will a) best meet a range of service and community needs over time, and b) for which there is a pressing current demand that is unlikely to change.

Prioritised Recommendations

Priority 1. An enhanced and consolidated Cultural and Community Precinct.

Details: Retain and further develop a 'Cultural and Community Precinct', either within the Civic Centre Site OR another site in Springwood.

Rationale: There is a very strong case to collocate cultural and community services within a dedicated precinct – either within the existing Civic Centre Site or at another site in Springwood. During the consultation, community members and service providers expressed strong support for retaining and consolidating the Cultural and Community Precinct within its current Civic Centre Site. Very little support has been expressed for 'breaking up' the precinct and locating the main services and facilities to other parts of Springwood. It should also be noted that historic Braemar House cannot feasibly be relocated.

Collocation of facilities in an identifiable precinct assists access to services by the community, facilitates the shared use of space and resources, and underpins the synergies between services. If relocation is to be considered it would need to be demonstrated that this would deliver better outcomes to community services and groups currently occupying and using the site, that services would be minimally disrupted and that existing synergies would be preserved.

The professional opinion of BMCC social planners and the external consultant is that if enhanced and collocated facilities cannot be provided at a site elsewhere in Springwood, then the existing site should be consolidated. This would involve an undertaking to retain and develop the existing site and provide enhanced facilities, and short term measures such as improved signage, access improvements and essential building refurbishments.

Priority 2. Multipurpose facility (including accessible public toilet and parenting room)

Details: A multipurpose room to be located within the Cultural and Community Precinct, and used for the following purposes:

- Computer and technology training
- Seminars and meetings
- Classes – art, language etc
- Exercise classes

Ideally this room would be positioned either as an extension to the library or Springwood Neighbourhood Centre – or close to these facilities. It would include the following:

- Main room – dividable into two smaller rooms (60m²)
- Kitchenette (8m²)
- Accessible public toilet (5m²)
- Parenting room (6m²)

Rationale. A multipurpose room would meet the immediate needs for space of a range of local services (including Springwood Library, Springwood Neighbourhood Centre, youth services and community groups). It would be expected that these types of activities will continue to be offered to the community over coming decades. This room will be highly accessible, for example, as compared to the upper meeting room of the Civic Centre.

Priority 3. Enhance Civic Centre

Details: Refurbish the Civic Centre to provide, at minimum:

- Climate control
- Acoustic improvements
- Acoustic separation between dining area and main hall
- Access enhancements
- Separate entry to dining facility
- New seating (less steeply tiered)
- New paint, ceiling coatings/gyprock and fittings

Depending on funding options the following options to also be considered (in consultation with facility users):

- Larger stage and wing space
- Orchestra Pit
- Fly Tower
- Sprung flooring (for dance)

Rationale: the Civic Centre is a building of key cultural significance in the Blue Mountains. Whilst it is 'just adequate' for its current purposes – the quality of production of community events will be

enhanced by the refurbishment, as will physical access and attractiveness. The facility needs to be improved to the contemporary standards expected of a large community performing arts facility.

Similarly, if a new Civic Centre is to be constructed, this should provide enhanced facilities (as outlined above) and that surpass what is currently available; a new building would also need to be located within a Cultural and Community Precinct (see Priority one for rationale).

Priority 4. Refurbish and reconfigure Springwood Neighbourhood Centre

Details: in conjunction with the provision of a new multipurpose facility (above), refurbish and reconfigure Springwood Neighbourhood Centre, including:

- Reconfiguration to increase current office area – this can be flexible with use of moveable partitioning so that the service can respond to changes in staff numbers (note that worker numbers constantly fluctuate – but that a 4 person office is typically 20m² and a staff workstation 4.4 m² to 5.5m²).
- Interview rooms x 2. (each 9m²)
- Refurbish existing kitchen
- Refurbish centre to improve natural lighting and amenity.

Rationale: over the next twenty years it can reasonably be expected that Springwood Neighbourhood Centre will continue to be a site for the delivery of activities, education, community projects and welfare services, both by Springwood Neighbourhood Centre Cooperative and a range of other human services agencies. Springwood Neighbourhood Centre Cooperative and the other users of the building are currently hampered by insufficient office space and a lack of interview rooms. The kitchen requires refurbishment.

Refurbishing and reconfiguring the existing SNC will be adequate to address current and future demands on the facility by SNCC and other users. Any decision to reconstruct SNC needs to ensure the requirements of these services are met (as detailed above) and the building should be located within a Cultural and Community Precinct (see Priority 1).

Priority 5. Investigate the provision of a Youth Services Hub in Springwood, and seek relevant external funding sources, if appropriate.

Details: The Manners Park Building is inadequate for the delivery of youth services. Council has a commitment to supporting the provision of a Youth Services Hub in the Lower Mountains and to actively search for a suitable site in either Springwood or Blaxland. If it is decided to locate the hub in Springwood, State and Commonwealth funding opportunities should be sought to provide the necessary resources for buildings and fit out.

Rationale: Springwood provides an ideal central site for a Youth Services Hub.

Priority 6: Provide expanded premises for the Local Studies Collection

Details: Provide expand premises for the Local Studies Collection either as an extension of the existing Springwood library, or in a building adjacent to the library. If the BMCC Springwood Office is relocated – this area could be used to accommodate the Local Studies Collection.

- Total size of new premises: approximately 180m²
- 1 x reading room: 40m² to 50m².
- Office, photocopying and archival areas (utilising flexible office layout)

Rationale: Given the significance of this collection to the local and wider community, the current difficulties with public access and the risk of deterioration of archival materials, this collection needs to be relocated in larger premises. Ideally it will continue to be located close to Springwood Library and within a Cultural and Community Precinct.

Priority 7. Extend Springwood Library building.

Details: Provide extensions to Springwood Library (possibly by extending the building into the current car park behind the library). Specifically, the extensions to include:

- Small study rooms x 3.(for private study or group work – up to 8 people) (each 12m²)
- Additional space for shelving for books and publications (to be determined).
- Activity room (30m²)(consider in view of access to multipurpose room)

Rationale: Springwood Library services are currently hampered by a lack of space for particular library based activities – namely, public access to specialised collections (e.g. family studies) and quiet or group study rooms. The library service could make use of a new shared multipurpose room (Priority 1) – but needs additional space to better support community research and learning.

A new library building could also be considered if resources became available. Although, as a key cultural and community resource, this would need to be located within a Cultural and Community Precinct (see above).

Priority 8. Develop a plan for Springwood Pocket Parks, and refurbish parks as appropriate

Details: an investigation needs to be undertaken into the condition and current and potential uses of the Pocket Parks. Alternative community uses may be considered for the land contained in Rest Park, Telstra Park and the lower section of Buckland Park. Manners Park requires refurbishment with new plantings, park furniture and landscaping.

Rationale: Rest Park, Telstra Park and Buckland Park are currently greatly under utilised. Rest Park and Buckland Park present particular difficulties for passive surveillance due to their location. An investigation of these parks should be undertaken, and a plan developed for the future use – e.g. to either refurbish and reconfigure as appropriate or to determine if the land could be better used for other community purposes.

Manners Park is currently well utilised, particularly by young people, but is worn and in need of refurbishment. Refurbishing this park will improve the amenity of Springwood generally. The upper section of Buckland Park must be retained due to its proximity to the Cenotaph; the lower section could also be redeveloped for community purposes and the playground removed.

Priority 9. Complete acquisition of Integral Energy site and seek expressions of interest from possible users

Details: This recommendation is close to being finalised. The building requires extensive refurbishment, so potential users would need to be in a position to contribute to costs.

Rationale: Providing additional space for other agencies within Springwood could help meet the demand for low cost office space.

Priority 10. Investigate locating commercial premises (e.g. cafe/bookshop/retail facility) in the Cultural and Community Precinct

Details: one or more commercial premises located within the Community and Cultural precinct, such as a cafe or bookshop, opening evenings and with covered outdoor seating.

Rationale: stakeholders have expressed the view that a cafe would enhance the community and cultural precinct. A commercial venture such as a cafe would provide a place for people to socialise, a space for cultural performances and for activities such as quiet reading and working on laptops. This facility could enhance the amenity of the Cultural and Community Precinct and add a source of possible revenue for Council.

APPENDIX 1. Stakeholders Consulted

COUNCIL OFFICERS	
NAME	POSITION
Simon Ambrose	Cultural Centre Director
Maurice Brady	Program Leader, Community Outcomes
Terry Cameron	Facilities Management Officer
Jo Clancy	Cultural Services Officer
Sharyn Connyngham	Springwood Civic Centre, Bookings officer
Vicki Edmonds	Head librarian, Blue Mountains City Library
Judy Finch	Children's Services Officer
Prue Hardgrove	Aged and Disabilities Services Officer
John Merriman	Local Studies Collection Librarian
Warrick Purdy	Manager, Business and Information Centre
Ryn Vlachou	Youth Services Development Officer
Janne Yardy	Manager Springwood Town Centre Revitalisation / Cultural and Recreation Planner

AGENCY AND COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVES	
NAME	ORGANISATION AND POSITION
Carmel Blackburn	Executive Officer, Blue Mountains Food Services Inc
Damien Cooper	Coordinator, Mountains Youth Services Team
Graham Glasson	Secretary, Blue Mountains Vietnam Veterans
Lauren Harris	Community and Cultural Development Coordinator, Springwood
David Howell	Chair, 377 Committee, Braemar Gallery.
Thelma Murphy	Community member and seniors spokesperson
Jean Nicholson	Chair, Friends of Blue Mountains Library. Member, Katoomba Library Technical
Jeanette Ormerod	Member, Friends of Blue Mountains Library.
Toni Quigley	Coordinator, Springwood Neighbourhood Centre Cooperative
Lyn Trindall	Coordinator, Winmalee Neighbourhood Centre and community member
Representative	Sydney West Area Health Service Early Childhood Health Service
Representative	Blue Mountains Recreation and Respite Services
Representative	Ivy Market
Representative	Anglicare Host Family Program
Representative	Blue Mountains Red Cross
Representative	Seniors Dance Group
Representative	Blue Mountains Concert Society
Representative	Blue Mountains Musical Society

APPENDIX 2. Literature and documents

The literature and documents used in this assessment included:

- BMCC, Community Outcomes Team (2007). Springwood Town Centre Revitalisation: Assessment of existing services and facilities on the three sites being considered for re-development in Springwood.
- 51 Submissions by community members to the Springwood Town Centre Revitalisation Options Report (2007). (all community submissions which referred to community or cultural services/facilities)
- State Library of NSW (2005). People Places: a guide for public library buildings.
- BMCC (2007) The Blue Mountains Community Plan 2007
- BMCC (2006) The Cultural Strategy 2006-2016
- Iris Research (2001, 2003, 2006) Blue Mountains City Council: Community Survey
- David Hall Building Appraisals Pty Ltd. (2008) Dilapidation Reports (Springwood Town Centre)