

# Access to Open Space

Technical report on access to open space across  
the Central Coast Local Government Area

Distance: 400 m

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2020



# | Access to Open Space across the Central Coast Local Government Area

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

One of the NSW Premier's priorities is to increase accessibility to quality green, open, and public space for urban residents.

To achieve this, the NSW Government has set a target to increase the proportion of homes within a 10-minute walk (400 m) of public open space by 10% before 2023.

Spatial analysis to determine accessibility of open space within 400 m of people and dwellings was conducted for each "social planning district" within the Central Coast. "Social planning districts" are geographic locations or regions with a similar demographic profile, and are defined by the Australian Bureau of Statistics based on census data.

It was found that around 90% of people on the Central Coast had access to open space within a 10-minute walk of their home. However a large proportion of these areas contained no mapped open space improvements, such as play equipment, outdoor gyms, or paths.

The results of this study will be used to inform the Central Coast Green Grid Plan, through ensuring that the people of the Central Coast have quality open space within easy reach of their home.

## INTRODUCTION

Open Space is any open piece of land that has a primary purpose of public recreation. This may include local parks, sporting facilities, National Parks, Council bushland reserves, State Forests. Privately owned public space (POPs), are open areas that require memberships or permission for use. POPs include bowling greens and sportsfields owned by registered clubs, golf courses, and courtyards within shopping centres. In certain areas POPs provide important access to open space in key locations, or for key recreational pursuits.

The New South Wales government, through the Premier's priorities aim to the proportion of homes in urban areas within 10-minute walk to quality green open, and public space by 10% before 2023. A 10-minute walk is also considered to be a 400 m radius from someones home.

In 2016, the NSW Department of Planning, in association with the Greater Sydney Commission, conducted a public open space audit to determine open space shortages in the Sydney Metropolitan area. They found that 65% of people were within a 10-minute walk of available open space, however similar analyses have never been completed for the Central Coast.

The aim of this study was to determine the level of accessibility to areas of open space, including POPs zoned as Private Recreation Areas (zoned RE2), across each of the Social Planning Districts of the Central Coast. Specifically, this study investigated:

- Whether sufficient open space was available based on all current and potential open space;
- The proportion of people who had access to open space with mapped improvements, such as benches and play equipment;
- The proportion of people who had access to mapped bushland with a walking track or fire trail.



## METHOD

Using the best available spatial information based on the cadastre (i.e. spatial location of each individual land parcel and how they intersect with one another), analyses were completed using a Geographical Information System (GIS).

For each social planning district (Figure 1), the following information was obtained from spatial data:

- Where people live based on data collected in the 2016 Australian census\*; These are both Central Coast residents and visitors who were at a particular dwelling on Census Night. Thus, we have referred to these as people rather than residents;
- The location of dwelling houses;
- The location of different open spaces types, including land zoned for public recreation (RE1), private recreation areas (RE2), and publicly owned bushland areas with a mapped track that for bushwalking (Table 1); and
- The number of people within a 10 minute walk of a reserve with mapped improvements, such as an outdoor gym, paths, or a playground;

Using the above spatial information, for each Social Planning District, a 400 m circular buffer was placed around each parcel of public (RE1) and private (RE2) zoned recreational land, and any public bushland containing a walking track. The number of people and dwellings within the buffer region was determined to calculate how many people and dwellings were within 400 m of open space.

Table 1: Summary of open space types, ownership, and primary uses.

Open Space Type	Ownership	Primary Uses
Public recreation land (RE1 zoned)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Land owned and managed by Council.</li><li>- Land owned by the Crown (Crown Land), managed by Council.</li><li>- Privately owned land earmarked for acquisition by Council.</li><li>- May consist of land that has been transferred to the Local Aboriginal Land Council under NSW <i>Aboriginal Land. Rights Act 1983</i>.</li></ul>	Once publicly owned, lands zoned this way may be used as local parks, regional parks including sporting grounds and walking trails within Council bushland reserves. Lands may or may not include improvements such as playgrounds, pathways or seating.
Private recreation land (RE2 zoned)	Privately owned. Often owned by community groups or clubs, e.g. Returned Services League (RSL) Clubs, bowling clubs. May also be owned by private companies, e.g. Golf Courses.	Intensive sports use, such as lawn bowls, golf and rugby league.
Public bushland containing a walking track or firetrail	Central Coast Council, Forestry Corporation NSW (State Forest) and NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service (various reserves under the <i>National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974</i> ). These lands are under various zoning including E1 (National Park), RU3 (State Forest), E zones, RE1 and Deferred Matter zoning, predominantly 7a (Conservation).	Nature conservation, heritage protection and recreation (Council bushland and National Parks). Mixed use forest, including nature conservation, timber production and recreation, subject to specific zoning (State Forest).

\* Data included both Central Coast residents, and visitors staying in a dwelling in the Central Coast on census night. As such, we have referred to those present in the census data as people rather than residents.

## RESULTS

### General access to open space

Across the Central Coast local government area, it was found that 90% of people and 92% of dwellings are within 400 m from any public (RE1) or private (RE2) zoned land (Table 2). When considering RE1 zoned land only, 89% of people and 91% of dwellings are within a 400m radius from these, however this reduced slightly when ownership was considered, with not all RE1 land being publicly owned, due to future acquisition or the claiming of land under the NSW Aboriginal Land Rights Act 1983. (Table 2).

When considering access to different types of open space, the results varied. Only 23% of people and 24% of dwellings are within 400m of a mapped walking track/ and or fire trail in a National Park, State Forest or Council bushland reserve. When considering proximity to sporting facilities or playgrounds on RE1 or RE2 land, 64% of residents and 67% of dwellings were within 400m of these facilities (Table 2).

Table 2. The number and percentage of people and dwellings at varying distances from different types of open space and open space features on the Central Coast.

Type of Open Space	No. People Outside	No. People Within	% People Outside	% People Within	No. Dwellings Outside	No. Dwellings Within	% Dwellings Outside	% Dwellings Within
All RE1 and RE2 zoned land	31380	296357	10	90	11359	133027	8	92
All RE1 zoned land	34588	293149	11	89	12974	131412	9	91
All publicly owned RE1 zoned land	35216	292521	11	89	13281	131105	9	91
All RE1 and RE2 zoned land with sports facilities or playgrounds	118274	209463	36	64	48350	96036	33	67
All publicly owned bushland with mapped walking tracks and fire trails	253797	73940	77	23	110144	34242	76	24
All publicly owned RE1 and bushland with walking tracks and fire trails	31168	296569	10	90	11477	132909	8	92

## ACCESS AT THE SOCIAL PLANNING DISTRICT SCALE

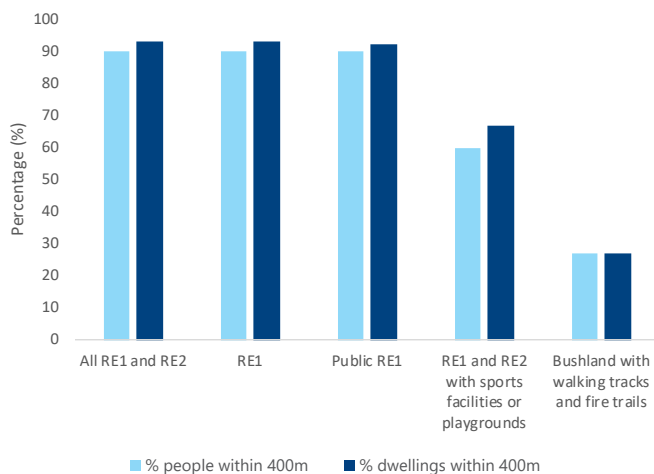
### General accessibility

Comparison of the Social Planning Districts within the Central Coast LGA showed that access to Open Space is not equally distributed. Less developed districts were found to have lower proportions of both dwellings, and people within walking distance of Open Space.

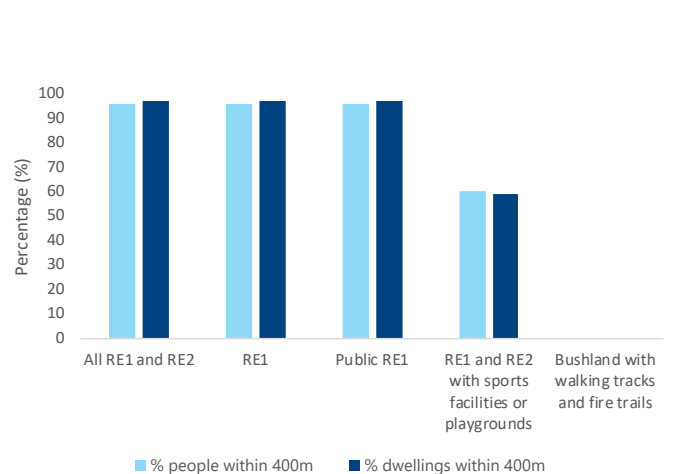
In the Toukley district, all people and dwellings are within a 400m radius to zoned RE1 and/ or RE2 land. Similar patterns were found in the East Brisbane Waters, Gorokan, Gosford Central, Narara Valley, Northern Lakes, Peninsula, The Entrance, West Brisbane Waters and Wyong Districts, where less than 5% of residents and dwellings were more than 400m from RE1 and RE2 zoned land.

The transitioning Warnervale-Wadalba district has around 60% of residents and dwellings > 400m from Open Space, while in the in the Valleys and Mountain districts, which generally have larger lots and lower general residential development, more than 80% of people and 70% of dwellings were more than 400m from any RE1 or RE2 zoned land.

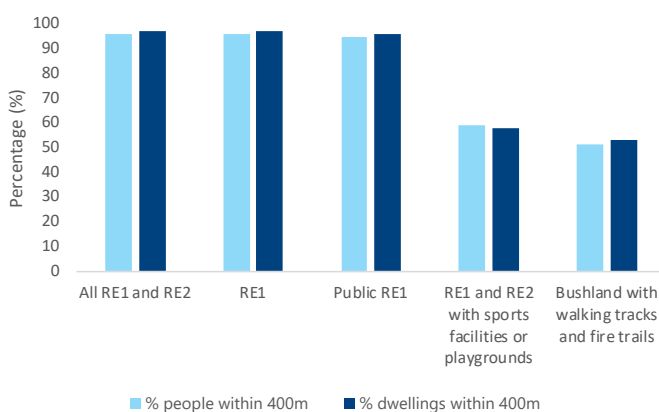
#### COASTAL DISTRICT



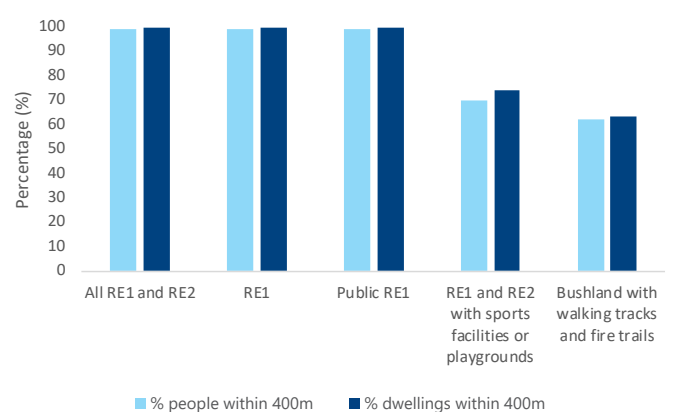
#### GOROKAN DISTRICT



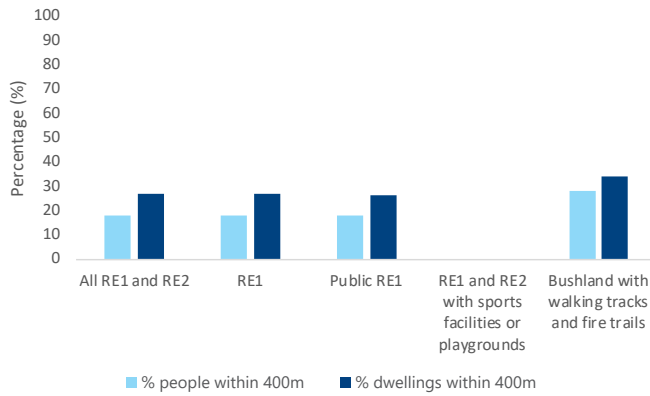
#### EAST BRISBANE WATERS DISTRICT



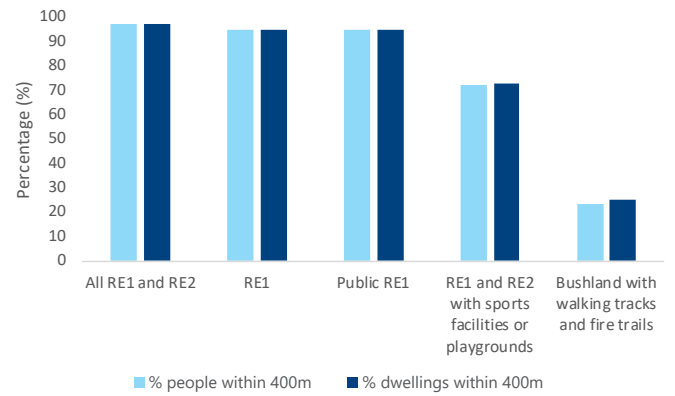
#### GOSFORD CENTRAL DISTRICT



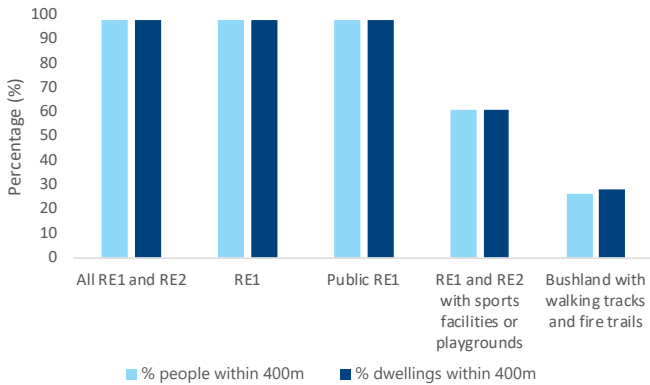
## MOUNTAINS DISTRICT



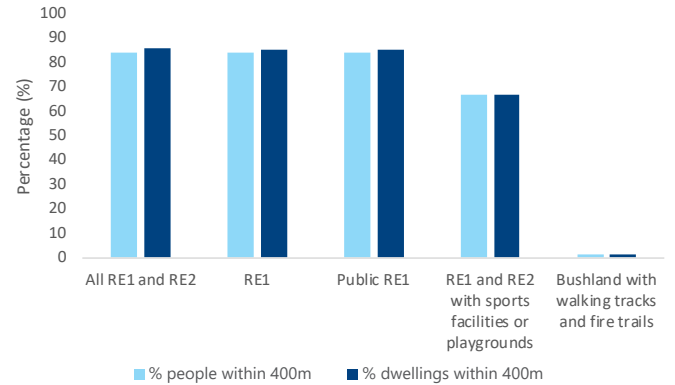
## PENINSULA DISTRICT



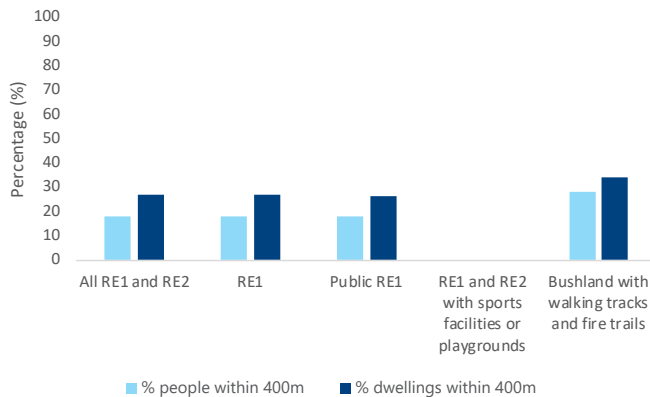
## NARARA VALLEY DISTRICT



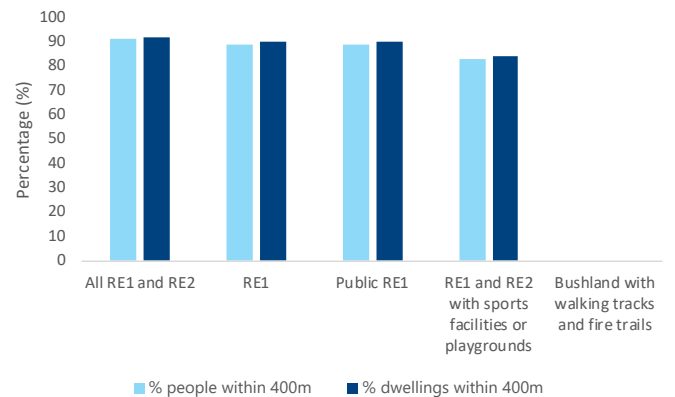
## SAN REMO BUDGEWOI DISTRICT



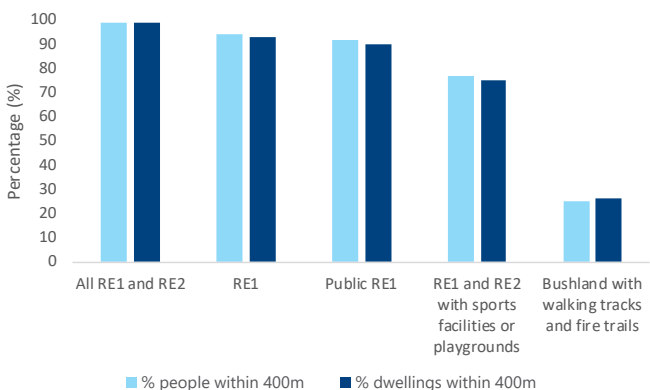
## NORTHERN LAKES DISTRICT



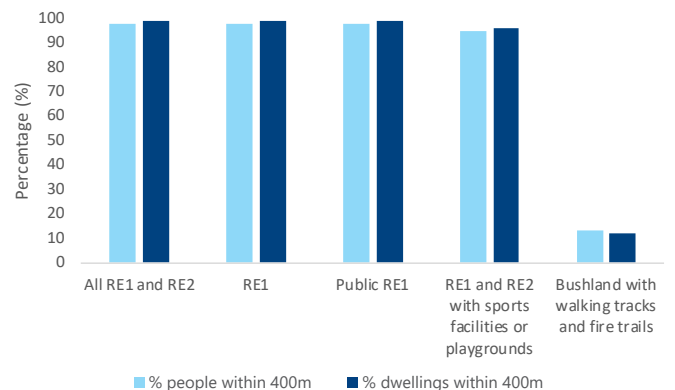
## SOUTHERN LAKES DISTRICT



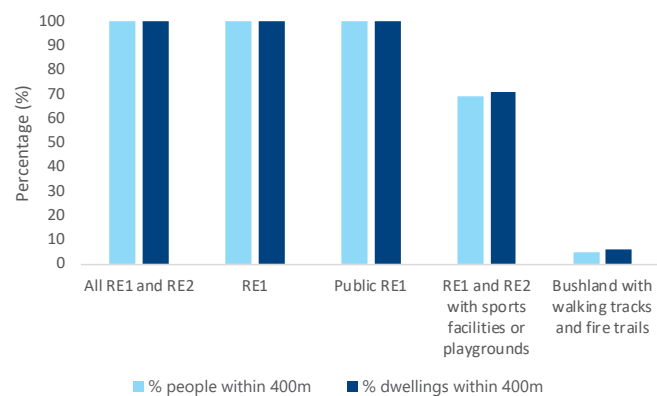
## OURIMBAH DISTRICT



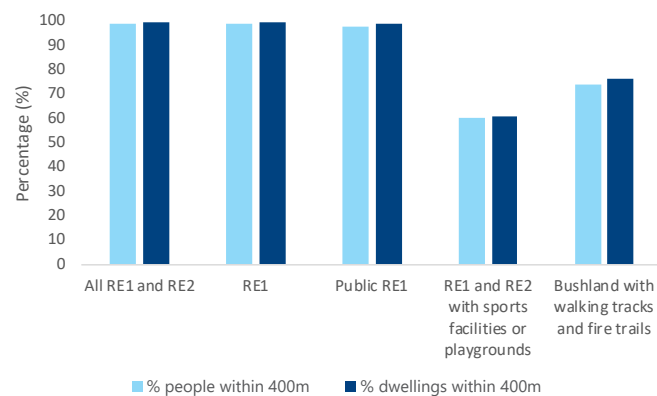
## THE ENTRANCE DISTRICT



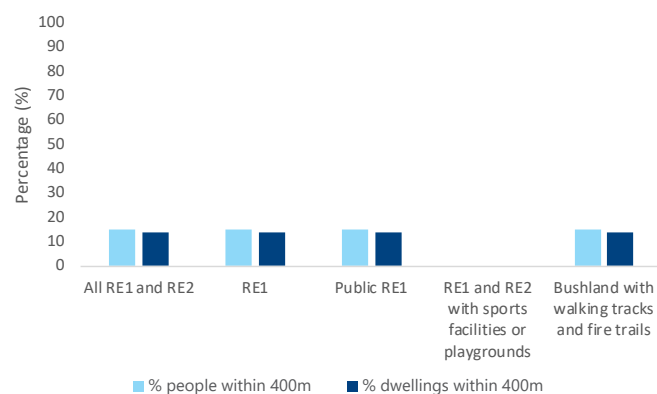
## TOUKLEY DISTRICT



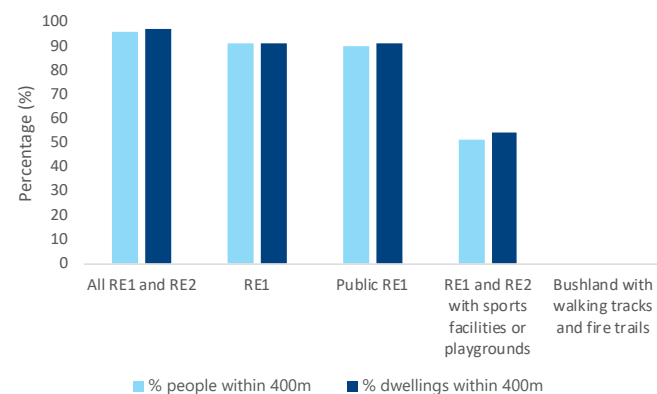
## WEST BRISBANE WATERS DISTRICT



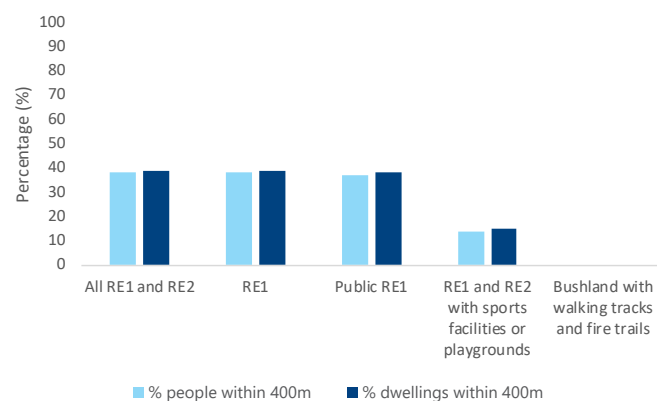
## VALLEYS DISTRICT



## WYONG DISTRICT



## WARNERVALE-WADALBA DISTRICT





## CONCLUSIONS

This study has demonstrated that 90% of people and 92% of dwellings are potentially within a 10-minute walk to open space. The equitable access to open space however is not uniform, with less developed SPDs having lower access to open space than those that are largely urban. This is likely to be a consequence of lot size, with rural areas often having lots that are larger than one hectare in size, which can be used as private open space.

Not all land zoned as RE1 is publicly owned. These analyses found that if those privately owned RE1 lands were acquired by Council, a further 600 people would have access to open space within a 10-minute walk.

It was also found that while there is a large amount of RE1 and RE2 land within a 10-minute walk of people and dwellings, not all of these lands contain improvements, such as play equipment, benches and paths. This represented a further 26% of people not having access to improved open space. When considering availability to mapped bushland with walking tracks and fire trails, which allow for a unique type of open space experience, 23% of people were within a 10-minute walk to the start of one of these tracks or trails. This may be partially due to not all trails being mapped from which further investigation is required.

The results of this study will be used to inform the Central Coast Green Grid Plan, ensuring that the people of the Central Coast have quality open space within an easy reach of their home.

## FURTHER RESEARCH

While improvements have been documented for areas of open space, it is unknown if these areas now constitute 'quality' open space. Quality open space is a subjective term, meaning different things to different user groups.

'Future studies at the more detailed Social Planning District level are recommended, which should include community input to identify what 'quality' open space means to different user groups.

'These studies can be assisted by the criteria for defining "quality" open space, which is being developed by the NSW Department of Planning Industry & Environment. The departments' Draft NSW Public Space Charter and the corresponding draft Evaluation Tool for Public Space (exhibited for comment 2020) is a resource aimed at supporting the planning, design, evaluating and management of public spaces in NSW.

## APPENDIX

The number and percentage of people and dwellings > 400 m from any RE1 or RE2 zoned land within the Central Coast Council Local Government Area for each Social Planning District.

Social Planning District	No. of People within 400m radius	% of People within 400m radius	No. of People outside 400m radius	% of People outside 400m radius	No. of Dwellings within 400m radius	% of Dwellings within 400m radius	No. of Dwellings outside 400m radius	% of Dwellings outside 400m radius
<b>Coastal</b>								
All RE1 and RE2 zoned land	30930	90	3248	10	14286	93	1124	7
RE1 zoned	30930	90	3248	10	14286	93	1124	7
Publicly owned RE1 zoned land	30835	90	3343	10	14252	92	1158	8
All RE1 and RE2 zoned land with sports facilities or playgrounds	20632	60	13546	40	10283	67	5127	33
All public bushland with walking tracks and fire trails	9214	27	24964	73	4121	27	11289	73
<b>East Brisbane Waters</b>								
All RE1 and RE2	28959	96	1177	4	12968	97	430	3
RE1	28959	96	1177	4	12968	97	430	3
Publicly owned RE1	28719	95	1417	5	12852	96	546	4
All RE1 and RE2 with sports facilities or playgrounds	17913	59	12223	41	7772	58	5626	42
All public bushland with walking tracks and fire trails	15472	51	14664	49	7115	53	6283	47
<b>Gorokan</b>								
All RE1 and RE2	19687	96	833	4	8494	97	280	3
RE1	19687	96	833	4	8494	97	280	3
Publicly owned RE1	19687	96	833	4	8494	97	280	3

Social Planning District	No. of People within 400m radius	% of People within 400m radius	No. of People outside 400m radius	% of People outside 400m radius	No. of Dwellings within 400m radius	% of Dwellings within 400m radius	No. of Dwellings outside 400m radius	% of Dwellings outside 400m radius
All RE1 and RE2 with sports facilities or playgrounds	12313	60	8207	40	5179	59	3595	41
All public bushland with walking tracks and fire trails	0	0	20520	100	0	0	8774	100
<b>Gosford Central</b>								
All RE1 and RE2	19651	99	118	1	9511	> 99	33	< 1
RE1	19651	99	118	1	9511	> 99	33	< 1
Publicly owned RE1	19651	99	118	1	9511	> 99	33	< 1
All RE1 and RE2 with sports facilities or playgrounds	13814	70	5955	30	7061	74	2483	26
All public bushland with walking tracks and fire trails	12190	62	7579	38	6024	63	3520	37
<b>Mountains</b>								
All RE1 and RE2	694	18	3106	82	497	27	1333	73
RE1	694	18	3106	82	497	27	1333	73
Publicly owned RE1	659	18	3141	83	477	26	1353	74
All RE1 and RE2 with sports facilities or playgrounds	0	0	3800	100	0	0	1830	100
All public bushland with walking tracks and fire trails	1080	28	2720	72	615	34	1215	66
<b>Narara Valley</b>								
All RE1 and RE2	29213	98	602	2	11513	98	214	2
RE1	29213	98	602	2	11513	98	214	2
Publicly owned RE1	29205	98	610	2	11510	98	217	2
All RE1 and RE2 with sports facilities or playgrounds	18200	61	11615	39	7157	61	4570	39
All public bushland with walking tracks and fire trails	7863	26	21952	74	3251	28	8476	72

Social Planning District	No. of People within 400m radius	% of People within 400m radius	No. of People outside 400m radius	% of People outside 400m radius	No. of Dwellings within 400m radius	% of Dwellings within 400m radius	No. of Dwellings outside 400m radius	% of Dwellings outside 400m radius
<b>Northern Lakes</b>								
All RE1 and RE2	16390	99	107	1	7634	99	43	1
RE1	15582	94	915	6	7144	93	533	7
Publicly owned RE1	15170	92	1327	8	6907	90	770	10
All RE1 and RE2 with sports facilities or playgrounds	12782	77	3715	23	5771	75	1906	25
All public bushland with walking tracks and fire trails	4164	25	12333	75	1993	26	5684	74
<b>Ourimbah</b>								
All RE1 and RE2	3043	68	1427	32	1209	70	530	30
RE1	3043	68	1427	32	1209	70	530	30
Publicly owned RE1	3043	68	1427	32	1209	70	530	30
All RE1 and RE2 with sports facilities or playgrounds	1660	37	2810	63	695	40	1044	60
All public bushland with walking tracks and fire trails	247	6	4223	94	102	6	1637	94
<b>Peninsula</b>								
All RE1 and RE2	35242	97	932	3	17621	97	467	3
RE1	34478	95	1696	5	17195	95	893	5
Publicly owned RE1	34478	95	1696	5	17195	95	893	5
All RE1 and RE2 with sports facilities or playgrounds	26090	72	10084	28	13231	73	4857	27
All public bushland with walking tracks and fire trails	8476	23	27698	77	4520	25	13568	75
<b>San Remo - Budgewoi</b>								
All RE1 and RE2	17147	84	3225	16	7337	86	1230	14
RE1	17016	84	3356	16	7290	85	1277	15

Social Planning District	No. of People within 400m radius	% of People within 400m radius	No. of People outside 400m radius	% of People outside 400m radius	No. of Dwellings within 400m radius	% of Dwellings within 400m radius	No. of Dwellings outside 400m radius	% of Dwellings outside 400m radius
Publicly owned RE1	17016	84	3356	16	7290	85	1277	15
All RE1 and RE2 with sports facilities or playgrounds	13596	67	6776	33	5776	67	2791	33
All public bushland with walking tracks and fire trails	141	1	20231	99	107	1	8460	99
<b>Southern Lakes</b>								
All RE1 and RE2	23165	91	2298	9	9056	92	736	8
RE1	22631	89	2832	11	8773	90	1019	10
Publicly owned RE1	22631	89	2832	11	8773	90	1019	10
All RE1 and RE2 with sports facilities or playgrounds	21017	83	4446	17	8190	84	1602	16
All public bushland with walking tracks and fire trails	0	0	25463	100	0	0	9792	100
<b>The Entrance</b>								
All RE1 and RE2	26554	98	490	2	14208	99	211	1
RE1	26554	98	490	2	14208	99	211	1
Publicly owned RE1	26554	98	490	2	14208	99	211	1
All RE1 and RE2 with sports facilities or playgrounds	25729	95	1315	5	13907	96	512	4
All public bushland with walking tracks and fire trails	3642	13	23402	87	1704	12	12715	88
<b>Toukley</b>								
All RE1 and RE2	9772	100	0	0	4713	100	0	0
RE1	9772	100	0	0	4713	100	0	0
Publicly owned RE1	9772	100	0	0	4713	100	0	0
All RE1 and RE2 with sports facilities or playgrounds	6695	69	3077	31	3360	71	1353	29

Social Planning District	No. of People within 400m radius	% of People within 400m radius	No. of People outside 400m radius	% of People outside 400m radius	No. of Dwellings within 400m radius	% of Dwellings within 400m radius	No. of Dwellings outside 400m radius	% of Dwellings outside 400m radius
All public bushland with walking tracks and fire trails	457	5	9315	95	261	6	4452	94
<b>Valleys</b>								
All RE1 and RE2	634	15	3582	85	214	14	1354	86
RE1	634	15	3582	85	214	14	1354	86
Publicly owned RE1	634	15	3582	85	214	14	1354	86
All RE1 and RE2 with sports facilities or playgrounds	0	0	4216	100	0	0	1568	100
All public bushland with walking tracks and fire trails	631	15	3585	85	225	14	1343	86
<b>Warnervale - Wadalba</b>								
All RE1 and RE2	5807	38	9391	62	1979	39	3122	61
RE1	5807	38	9391	62	1979	39	3122	61
Publicly owned RE1	5634	37	9564	63	1927	38	3174	62
All RE1 and RE2 with sports facilities or playgrounds	2175	14	13023	86	742	15	4359	85
All public bushland with walking tracks and fire trails	0	0	15198	100	0	0	15198	100
<b>West Brisbane Waters</b>								
All RE1 and RE2	13806	99	198	1	5462	> 99	16	< 1
RE1	13806	99	198	1	5462	> 99	16	< 1
Publicly owned RE1	13683	98	321	2	5397	99	81	1
All RE1 and RE2 with sports facilities or playgrounds	8455	60	5549	40	3329	61	2149	39
All public bushland with walking tracks and fire trails	10351	74	3653	26	4171	76	1307	24

Social Planning District	No. of People within 400m radius	% of People within 400m radius	No. of People outside 400m radius	% of People outside 400m radius	No. of Dwellings within 400m radius	% of Dwellings within 400m radius	No. of Dwellings outside 400m radius	% of Dwellings outside 400m radius
<b>Wyong</b>								
All RE1 and RE2	15548	96	634	4	6256	97	210	3
RE1	14651	91	1531	9	5887	91	579	9
Publicly owned RE1	14613	90	1569	10	5872	91	594	9
All RE1 and RE2 with sports facilities or playgrounds	8277	51	7905	49	3514	54	2952	46
All public bushland with walking tracks and fire trails	0	0	16182	100	0	0	6466	100