

Item: ENV009-24 Revised Population and Dwelling projections for Georges River Local Government Area

Author:

Directorate: Environment and Planning

Matter Type: Committee Reports

ENV009-24

RECOMMENDATION:

- (a) That Council endorse the Georges River Council *Evidence Base for the Local Housing Strategy* (March 2023) and Georges River *Population Forecast Adjustment* (September 2023) as strategic planning documents that will inform the development of policies and planning directions.
- (b) That Council place the Georges River Council *Evidence Base for the Local Housing Strategy* (March 2023) and the Georges River *Population Forecast Adjustment* (September 2023) on Council's website.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. In January 2019, consultants .id completed the *Evidence Base for Local Housing Strategy*, a study of current and future population and housing trends for the Georges River Local Government Area (LGA), to assist in the preparation of the *Local Housing Strategy, Inclusive Housing Strategy and Delivery Program*, and *Local Strategic Planning Statement (LSPS) 2040*.
2. In August 2022, Council engaged consultants .id to undertake an update of the *Evidence Base for Local Housing Strategy* to update the population projections for the LGA up to 2036, having regard to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and the changing demographics of Sydney's population.
3. The updated *Evidence Base for Local Housing Strategy* (March 2023) rebased the previous 2019 Strategy with data from the 2021 Census of Population and Housing, conducted by the Australian Bureau of Statistics but did not adjust any of the demographic or dwelling assumptions concerning the post-2021 period.
4. In September 2023, .id completed a comprehensive update of the post-2021 elements of the population forecast ("*Population Forecast Adjustment*"), extending it to 2046, remodelling demographic and dwelling change assumptions, while keeping the same geographic areas.
5. This report recommends Council endorse the Georges River Council *Evidence Base for the Local Housing Strategy* (March 2023) (**Attachment 1**) and *Population Forecast Adjustment* (September 2023) (**Attachment 2**) as strategic planning documents that will inform the development of policies and planning directions.
6. The Committee is advised that the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure have not released housing targets for the Georges River LGA at this stage.

BACKGROUND

7. In 2019, .id was engaged to prepare the Georges River Council *Evidence Base for Local Housing Strategy*, which analysed the current and future population and housing trends in the Georges River LGA. The Evidence Base assisted Council in preparing the *Local Housing Strategy; Inclusive Housing Strategy and Delivery Program; and LSPS 2040*.

8. Since completion of the *Evidence Base for Local Housing Strategy* in 2019, the COVID-19 pandemic has caused shifts in demographic trends, including rates of population growth and household formation and patterns.
9. Accordingly, Council considered a notice of motion (NM030-22) on the “Impact of COVID-19 on Housing Targets” at its meeting on 28 March 2022 and resolved in part:

That the General Manager provide a report to Council on any recent analysis undertaken on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on population, housing and economic growth in NSW and Georges River Local Government Area, and any associated revision of the current range of housing and job targets to 2036.
10. Furthermore, Council at its meeting on 28 March 2022 when considering “ENV009-22 Adoption for Public Exhibition – Draft Activating Our Centres Policy 2022”, resolved in part:

That Council defers the exhibition of this Policy until such time as a report on new population data is provided to Council.
11. Similarly, Council considered a notice of motion (NM039-22) for “Deferral of Draft Mortdale Town Centre and Beverly Hills Town Centre Master Plans” at its meeting on 26 April 2022 and resolved in part:
 - (a) *That Council defers the completion of the draft Beverly Hills Town Centre and draft Mortdale Town Centres Master Plans giving consideration to;*
 - i. *Council seeking updates from the Greater Sydney Commission on population projections for the LGA up to 2036 having regard to any effects of the COVID19 pandemic and the changing demographics on Sydney’s population.*
12. In accordance with the Council resolutions, Council engaged consultants .id in August 2022 to undertake an update of the *Evidence Base for Local Housing Strategy* (2019) to update the population projections for the LGA up to 2036, having regard to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and the changing demographics on Sydney’s population.
13. The updated *Evidence Base for Local Housing Strategy* (March 2023) rebased the previous 2019 Strategy with data from the 2021 Census of Population and Housing, conducted by the Australian Bureau of Statistics but did not adjust any of the demographic or dwelling assumptions concerning the post-2021 period.
14. In September 2023, .id completed a comprehensive update of the post-2021 elements of the population forecast (“*Population Forecast Adjustment*”), extending it to 2046, remodelling demographic and dwelling change assumptions, while keeping the same geographic areas.
15. The updated *Evidence Base for Local Housing Strategy* (March 2023) and *Population Forecast adjustment* (September 2023) provides insights on how external factors, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, has changed the demographic and housing trends in the Georges River LGA.
16. The revised population data has informed Strategic Planning projects, including the Beverly Hills Town Centre Master Plan and Mortdale Local Centre Master Plan and will be used to inform an update to the *Georges River LSPS 2040* which Council has commenced.

EVIDENCE BASE FOR THE LOCAL HOUSING STRATEGY (MARCH 2023) (2021 TO 2036)

17. In August 2022, Council engaged consultants .id to undertake an update to the *Evidence Base for Local Housing Strategy* (2019) to update the population projections for the LGA up to 2036, having regard to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and the changing demographics on Sydney’s population.

- The updated *Evidence Base for Local Housing Strategy* (March 2023) rebased the previously 2019 Strategy with data from the 2021 Census of Population and Housing, conducted by the Australian Bureau of Statistics

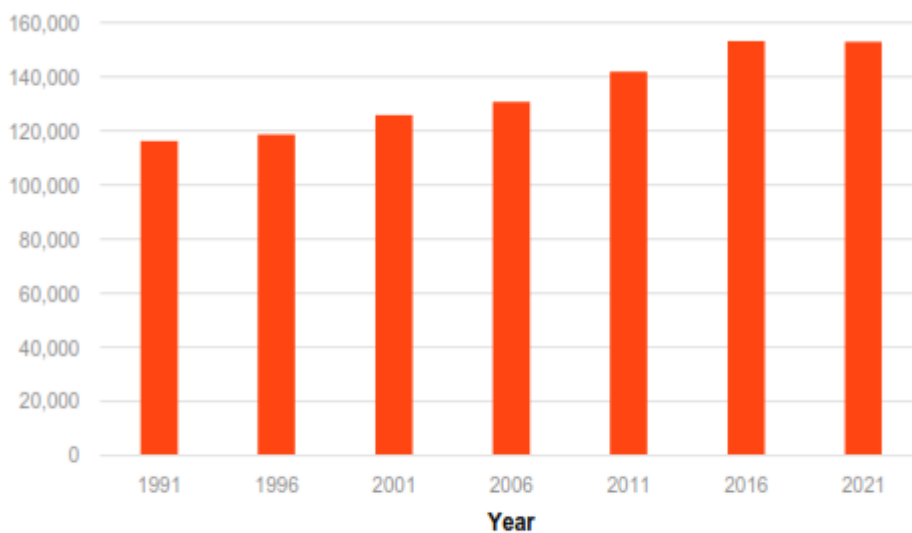
POPULATION FORECAST ADJUSTMENT (SEPTEMBER 2023) (2021 TO 2046)

- The updated *Evidence Base for Local Housing Strategy* (March 2023) did not adjust any of the demographic or dwelling assumptions concerning the post-2021 period.
- Accordingly, in September 2023, .id completed a comprehensive update of the post-2021 elements of the population forecast (“*Population Forecast Adjustment*”), extending it to 2046, remodelling demographic and dwelling change assumptions, while keeping the same geographic areas.

KEY FINDINGS OF THE EVIDENCE BASE FOR LOCAL HOUSING STRATEGY AND POPULATION FORECAST ADJUSTMENT

Population and Households

- In 2021, Georges River experienced a decline in population. Much of the slowing in population growth can be explained by the COVID-19 pandemic, which interrupted the usual migration pattern into the LGA. The population declined by 458 people as shown in **Figure 1**.



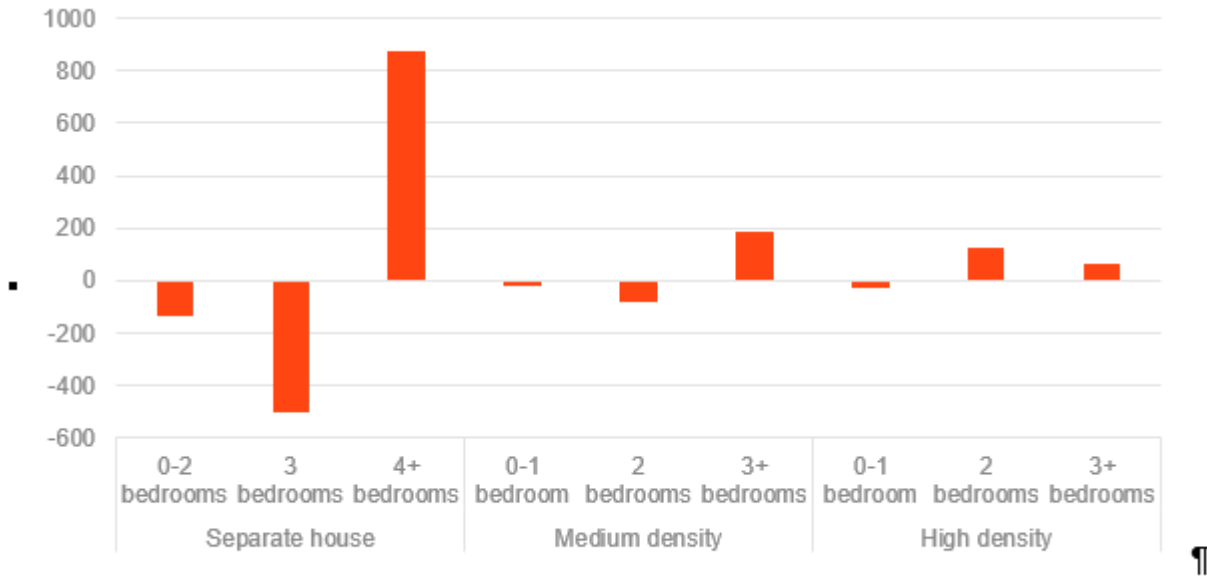
Source: ABS Estimated Resident Population, Cat. 3218.0, 2001, 2006, 2011, 2016 and 2021

Figure 1 – Estimated population Georges River – 1991-2021

- The population of the Georges River LGA is forecast to reach 176,000 by 2036 and 184,426 by 2046, an increase of 31,699 from 2021. The majority of growth is driven by major centres of Hurstville and Kogarah
- While new, high-density developments in Kogarah and Hurstville are attracting young adults to the area the population continues to age. There has been an increase of 5,822 adults aged 55 or older between 2016 to 2021.
- While family households are still dominant in the area, there is significant growth in older couples without children and elderly lone persons. The increase was most significant in older couples without children, increasing by 683 households and older lone persons, increasing by 652 households.

Dwelling, Tenure and Housing Stress

- 25. Growth continues to be concentrated in the Hurstville City Centre and Kogarah, with the Kogarah New City Plan contributing to smaller, but notable, growth in Carlton and Beverly Hills -Narwee.
- 26. In Georges River high-density dwellings is higher than the Greater Sydney average and medium and high-density dwellings are slightly larger than average, with many having two or more bedrooms, and very few one-bedroom properties.
- 27. There is an increasing number of families with children living in medium and high-density homes while majority still live in large separate houses. As shown in **Figure 2**.



Source: ABS, Census of Population and Housing (2016 and 2021)

Figure 2- Net change in couples with young children, by dwelling type

- 28. Older couples are increasingly living in large, separate houses with four or more bedrooms, however, there has been some evidence of a small number of older residents downsizing.

Renting is becoming more common in the LGA due to affordability pressures. The number of households renting in the Hurstville City Centre has increased by just over 900 households in the past decade. **Figure 3** shows the increase of renters in each suburb.

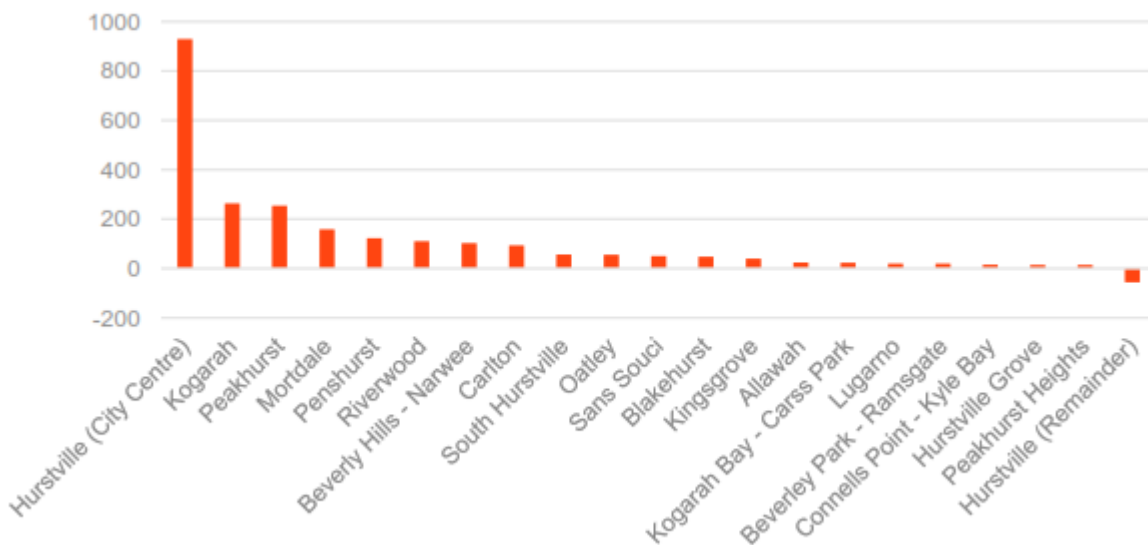


Figure 3 – Growth in rental households, 2016-2021

29. The rate of housing stress in Georges River is higher than the Greater Sydney average, especially for renters with very Low or low incomes.

Housing Demand

30. Median house sale prices have risen sharply in Georges River over the past five years, growing by approximately 5.5% per year. In 2017. The medium cost of a house in the area was around \$1,400,000 and in 2022 the median house price was \$1,830,500, a similar growth rate to the Greater Sydney average.
31. Units in Georges River are generally less costly than the Greater Sydney average, currently 7% lower than the metropolitan Sydney median. A medium cost of a unit in Georges River in 2022 was \$709,000 and in Greater Sydney \$760,000.
32. Just over two thirds of key workers in Georges River also live in the area. In 2021-22, just 10 property sales and 203 rental listings were affordable to a key worker living on their own.
33. Similarly, there were very few property sales or rental listings that would be considered affordable for those on very low or low incomes.

Housing Supply

34. There is a mismatch in the demand and supply of dwellings in Georges River with 50.1% of households being small and only 35.5% of dwellings classified as small (0-2 bedrooms).
35. The *Evidence Base* indicated that infill development would provide a net gain of 4,696 dwellings (not including major sites). At recent rates of development (approximately 500 dwellings per annum), this represented about 9 years of supply. The *Population Forecast Adjustment* resulted in a reduction of infill development to 4,396 dwellings (300 fewer).
36. A total of 8,547 dwellings are assumed to be delivered in the major sites between 2022 and 2046 – i.e., current planning proposals, local centre master plans for Beverly Hills and Mortdale, current housing investigation areas (HIAs) etc.
37. By 2046, there are forecast to be 71,340 dwellings in Georges River. This is an increase of 12,943 dwellings between 2021 and 2046.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

38. The Evidence Base for Local Housing Strategy (March 2023) highlights a number of challenges that Council will need to address in future planning policy and strategies, consistent with the 2019 Strategy.
39. The main challenges for Council are:
- Supporting ageing in place - Significant growth of smaller households due to broad social and demographic trends and an ageing population. Policy should support services in aiding the elderly to stay in their own homes longer.
 - Encouraging housing choice – A potentially large mismatch between supply and future demand. There is a need for policy and investment that can support the building of different forms of medium density housing in a wider range of suburbs in Georges River in order to allow for the transition from mature families to empty nesters and older lone person households.
 - Need age diversification - The current housing supply of larger detached dwellings reflects a historical role of providing for larger households, typically families. With older, smaller households occupying this stock, it does not become available to attract or retain younger households to the area. Diversifying housing may free up the stock of three or more-bedroom dwellings, increasing the range of dwelling choices for family households, the dominate household in the LGA.

- Addressing housing affordability - A diverse dwelling stock means a wider variety of price points within the housing market. This goes some way to addressing issues of housing affordability.
- Continue to encourage development along transport corridors - Ideally, future residential development would occur in and around activity centres and transport corridors, where residents have easy access to amenities, services and public transport infrastructure.

COUNCILLOR BRIEFING

40. A Councillor briefing was held on 4 December 2023 to present the findings of the *Evidence Base for Local Housing Strategy* (March 2023) and *Population Forecast adjustment* (September 2023).
41. The population and dwelling forecasts in the Strategies was discussed which has considered the widest range of data available, including satellite imagery, development approvals, completions and trends.

NEXT STEPS

42. That Council endorse the Georges River Council *Evidence Base for the Local Housing Strategy* (March 2023) and *Population Forecast Adjustment* (September 2023) as strategic planning documents that will inform the development of policies and planning directions.
43. The challenges highlighted will be considered as part of the review of the Local Strategic Planning Statement (LSPS) which has commenced.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

44. Within budget allocation.

RISK IMPLICATIONS

45. No risks identified.

FILE REFERENCE

D23/317034

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment [↓](#)1 Georges River Evidence Base for Local Housing Strategy



Attachment [↓](#)2 Forecast Adjustment Summary

