



**UNSW**  
SYDNEY



# Riverwood North/Washington Park renewal project

## Final wave evaluation

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## Executive summary

This report summarises the findings of the Wave 3 fieldwork of the Riverwood North longitudinal evaluation study, which took place during the latter half of 2023. The objectives of the study were:

- To analyse the content, implementation and impacts of community regeneration activities;
- To quantitatively measure the socio-economic impacts of the scheme as achieved via population change and employability initiatives; and
- To gauge resident views about all aspects of scheme design, implementation and outcomes (both physical and community regeneration elements).

The findings highlighted throughout this Wave 3 report complements those of the Wave 1 fieldwork report (Liu et al. 2022), which reflected on the initial outcomes of the Riverwood North/Washington Park renewal project. Both reports can be found at [unsw.to/Riverwood](https://unsw.to/Riverwood).

## Methodology

The longitudinal evaluation was designed for similar activities to take place across two fieldwork waves, encompassing a mix of secondary data analysis, a resident survey, stakeholder interviews, and resident focus groups. It was recognised, however, that the original focus of Wave 3—to assess resident experiences approximately two years since the completion of renewal activities—had lost relevance. Instead, further insights into how different resident groups currently interact across and live alongside different social and tenure groups were preferred. Therefore, the planned resident survey did not proceed, with the qualitative components expanded to ensure broad resident views were captured. In all, 30 residents, comprising a mix of social renters (n=19), private renters (n=3), and owner-occupiers (n=8) participated in five separate focus group discussions, with most (n=27) currently living in the Washington Park area of the broader neighbourhood. Only one stakeholder participated in interviews; all others invited either did not respond, or noted that staff who were involved in the renewal had moved on, and there were no other staff who would have working knowledge of their organisation's involvement in the renewal.

## Physical design of the neighbourhood and buildings

For the most part, participants were positive when asked to reflect on the physical changes that the Washington Park part of the neighbourhood had undergone. The pedestrian-friendly nature of the plaza, and updated green infrastructure were particular highlights. There was also a high rate of satisfaction among participants with their new homes in terms of size, quality and affordability. How differently Washington Park looks compared to the rest of the neighbourhood, however, led many participants to reflect on a neighbourhood of split identities, noting there were few reasons for residents of the two areas to venture into the other part and interact.

While most teething programs reported in Wave 1 (Liu et al. 2022) have been addressed, increasing traffic and a perceived lack of safety remain ongoing matters that require further attention. Suggestions included enhancing the brightness of street lighting, improved maintenance and upkeep of public and common areas, installation of security cameras, and improved traffic management, especially to facilitate residents entering and existing the neighbourhood onto Belmore Road.

## Local infrastructure and services

While most are appreciative of the new and upgraded community facilities such as the Library and Knowledge Centre, some (especially owner and private renter participants) were at times less sure of who may be able to use these facilities. The two community gardens were highlighted as an example, where a lack of signage on how to apply or sign up to tenancies were noted as barriers. Likewise access to the community room at 9B Kentucky Avenue was mistakenly believed to be restricted to social housing residents. While shopfronts are incorporated on the ground floor of the Morton residential block, residents lamented the lack of variety of shops and eateries that would improve the overall liveability of the neighbourhood. Limited communication of when and where community activities happen was perceived as a barrier to more residents participating.

Suggestions for improvement included encouraging cafés and eateries into the neighbourhood, introducing more child-friendly events and activities in response to the changing neighbourhood demographics, improving communication of events and activities, and incorporating health and medical facilities within plans for further renewals.

## Living in a planned, mixed tenure neighbourhood

With the renewal-related construction completed a few years prior, there have been notable demographic and socioeconomic changes observed in the neighbourhood, particularly in Washington Park. These were largely facilitated by new households moving into Washington Park, as owner-occupiers, as private renters, and also new social renters being offered tenancies or having relocated from elsewhere. Most participants said they paid little attention to the different tenures.

At the broader level, Washington Park is functioning socially like many other higher density neighbourhoods. Interactions among residents of different tenure types remain largely incidental, with language proficiency and the lingering effects of the COVID-19 lockdowns presenting as possible barriers to deeper interactions.

As highlighted in literature, 'third spaces' can act as important venues in facilitating and encouraging neighbourhood social interactions. For now, community engagement and social activities like the weekly barbeques are performing this vital function. Suggestions of more local amenities like cafés and eateries would provide more opportunities for these incidental interactions to occur. With most participants intending to stay living in the neighbourhood, and as we continue to recover socially from the pandemic, it is likely that more and deeper levels of interactions may be cultivated in the years ahead.

## Looking ahead

On the main, participants expressed overwhelming support for renewing the remainder of the neighbourhood, citing the poor quality of housing, an impression of a lack of safety, and the need—for the neighbourhood, for Sydney, and for Australia more generally—for more affordable housing options as reasons for support. Participants noted the good quality and affordable housing as a factor enticing them to stay living in the neighbourhood for several years.

While participants noted the level of density—residential towers of 7 to 10 stories—seems about right, concerns remain over whether appropriate infrastructure, services and amenities may accompany further renewal. This is especially in view of the poor traffic conditions the

neighbourhood already experiences, and the general lack of shopping and eatery options in Washington Park. The final outcomes, of what may be delivered as part of an extended renewal, may determine whether and which of the residents will choose to remain living in the neighbourhood in the long term.

## Conclusion

Reflecting on the overall aim of creating an integrated residential and community precinct, it appears the renewal has to a large extent been successful. While noting that further improvements will enhance their quality of life, most participants considered that Washington Park as it stands is a nice enough place for owner-occupiers, private and social renters alike to want to call it home, for now and, for many, into the future. The areas suggested for improvement, as noted above and throughout this report, are not that different to those that also require attention in many other neighbourhoods, including those that have and continue to undergo similar renewals. In that way, the Riverwood North/Washington Park renewal has been successful in creating a 'normal' neighbourhood.

Nonetheless, there may be a broader need to rethink the communication and engagement opportunities for the neighbourhood. Keeping the community informed of plans for further renewal, and outcomes of how they have contributed to their community, are important ways to keep residents engaged. It is also an important mechanism to learning what adjustments to the renewal activities may be needed, and what additional support may benefit the community, in sustaining an integrated residential and community precinct as the renewal had intended.

# 1. Introduction

Riverwood is a middle-ring suburb of Sydney, around 15 kilometres south-west of the Central Business District. A large part of the suburb was first built as a public housing estate in the mid-1940s following the exit of American servicemen that occupied the site for a Naval Hospital during World War II. The Riverwood estate is situated directly south of the M5 Motorway and north of the T8 Airport & South train line, about 300m from the Riverwood train station.

Since its initial development, the estate has undergone different phases of extension and renewal, resulting in a notable mix of dwelling types and densities within the area. The most recent was initiated in the mid-2000s by the NSW Land and Housing Corporation<sup>1</sup> (LAHC), which recognised that dwellings on sections of the estate no longer suited modern day housing needs.

Consequently, a decision was made in 2008 to redevelop and replace one section in the northern end of the estate (nominally Riverwood North, now re-named Washington Park) into a mixed tenure and mixed-use community with improved housing and social outcomes.

The renewal commenced in 2010, with PAYCE Communities successful in tendering for the demolition and reconstruction contract, while SGCH Ltd took on tenancy management of the social housing component of the newly redeveloped site. The physical redevelopment of Riverwood North/Washington Park would see the replacement of 176 social housing units (primarily studio bedsits) with 150 new social housing units (all earmarked for >55 years occupation with 80+% of the units achieving silver level Livable Housing Design Guidelines certification that facilitate and support ageing in place), situated alongside 450 private market units and several new community facilities including a new library.

## 1.1 Commencing a longitudinal study

In 2014, UNSW Sydney's City Futures Research Centre was jointly commissioned by LAHC (now part of Homes NSW), SGCH Ltd and PAYCE Communities to commence a longitudinal study to evaluate the experiences and outcomes of the Riverwood North/Washington Park renewal. The aim of the study was to facilitate a better understanding of the renewal's impacts on the local communities, encompassing the remaining 'old estate' as well as the newly redeveloped part of the site. This would be achieved through tracking changes over time as the renewal project was progressed through its several stages. The objectives of the study were:

- To analyse the content, implementation and impacts of community regeneration activities;
- To quantitatively measure the socio-economic impacts of the scheme as achieved via population change and employability initiatives; and
- To gauge resident views about all aspects of scheme design, implementation and outcomes (both physical and community regeneration elements).

The study was designed to be conducted across two waves of fieldwork involving largely the same research activities and, where possible, research participants. It would involve both qualitative and quantitative components, to establish an evidence-base for achieving the above-stated objectives. These activities, as originally planned, are detailed in Table 1 overpage.

Wave 1 of the study was completed as planned during 2014 and 2015, when the initial phase of redevelopment (social housing re-provision) had been completed and tenanted. At that stage, the private housing component of the project had yet to be built and/or occupied. A draft of the Wave 1 report was duly circulated among the research partners for comments. Minor revisions were undertaken before a final working document was accepted and filed in 2016 as a commercial-in-confidence report to complete Wave 2. It was revisited in 2017 when Wave 3 was scheduled to take place, and further minor revisions were made before the revised version was once again filed

<sup>1</sup> On 1 February 2024, Homes NSW, a division of the NSW Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) was formed. It brings together the housing and homelessness services of DCJ, with the NSW Land and Housing Corporation, Aboriginal Housing Office and key worker housing functions from across government under one roof.

in mid-2018 as a commercial-in-confidence report, with discussion of research activities for Wave 3 subsequently paused.

*Table 1: Research activities of the Riverwood North longitudinal evaluation study, as planned in 2014*

	Wave 1 (2014)	Wave 3 <sup>1</sup> (2017/18) <sup>2</sup>
1. Secondary data review		
2. Stakeholder interviews (no. of stakeholder groups)	10	10
3. Relocated tenant interviews (no. of tenants)	6	
4. Resident survey (no. of respondents)	150	250
5. Resident focus groups <sup>3</sup> (no. of groups)	3	4

Note <sup>1</sup>: Wave 2 was scheduled in for 2016 as a 'light touch' progress review, and was completed on schedule.

Note <sup>2</sup>: Proposed activities and timing of Wave 3.

Note <sup>3</sup>: Up to 10 participants per focus group.

Since then, the broader Riverwood estate was explored with extensive stakeholder and community consultations to ensure it creates better outcomes for social housing residents. This has resulted in a similar approach to Washington Park, whereby a portion of the estate has been submitted for a rezoning proposal, and if approved will proceed to Development Application. This is to enable a progressive approach to renewing the estate in a timely manner, adapting and responding to the requirements of the community over time.

The Wave 1 evaluation report underwent a final phase of desktop publishing and was subsequently published on its project page on the City Futures Research Centre website in May 2022 (Liu et al. 2022). The published report can be accessed via this link: [unsw.to/Riverwood](https://unsw.to/Riverwood).

## 1.2 Re-commencing a longitudinal study

Discussion regarding the completion of the longitudinal study re-commenced between LAHC (now part of Homes NSW) and the research team at City Futures Research Centre in late 2022 following the publication of the Wave 1 report. It was recognised that the original focus of Wave 3—to assess resident experiences approximately two years since the completion of renewal activities—had lost its relevance and, therefore, required adjustment. A stronger emphasis should instead be placed on how different resident groups—social housing residents in Washington Park, social housing residents on the Riverwood estate, and private owner-occupiers and renters in Washington Park—interact across and live alongside different social and tenure groups. This shift in focus is especially appropriate since the community development organisation that operated on site during the initial years of the renewal completed its work some years ago, and that all community facilities that are part of the Washington Park renewal have been successfully delivered.

Adjustments to Wave 3 research activities take into account what was judged achievable within the agreed timeline. The adjusted program retained as much of the original design as feasible, re-scoped to take in account resource limitation and the shift in focus. Wave 3 components notably excluded the Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) resident survey due to budget and time limitations. The qualitative components, however, were expanded to ensure broad resident views are captured in lieu of the survey.

## 1.3 Structure of the report

Following this introductory chapter, a description of the methodology undertaken in this research is detailed in Chapter 2. Four chapters then follow, each providing a summary of residents' reflections on the physical built form of the neighbourhood and the buildings they live in (Chapter 3), the availability and suitability of local infrastructure and services (Chapter 4), living in a planned, mixed tenure neighbourhood (Chapter 5), and their hopes and wishes as the planned renewal activities

continue (Chapter 6). The report concludes with a summary of these findings, and a reflection of the renewal's overall achievements since its commencement in 2010.

## 2. Methodology

The adjusted Wave 3 program involved three complementary components.

### 2.1 Secondary data analysis

This component involved updating the secondary data sources as detailed in the Wave 1 report. These included:

#### 2.1.1 Demographic and socioeconomic data on Washington Park and Riverwood estate residents

Data from the 2011 Census of Population and Housing was incorporated into the Wave 1 report. Outcomes of the 2016 and 2021 Censuses have since been published. The research team replicated the tables included in the Wave 1 report to provide time-series reflections on how the local community has changed over the past decade.

The analysis differentiates Washington Park from the Riverwood estate (Figure 1). Census data was extracted from the Australian Bureau Statistics' (ABS) *TableBuilder Pro* platform, specifically the 'counting persons, place of usual residence' and 'counting dwellings, place of enumeration' profiles, using the relevant Statistical Areas Level 1 (SA1s, see Table A1 for full list). Equivalent data for the suburb of Riverwood (within which the study area sits entirely; Figure A1) and the state of NSW is included for comparison. Tables that reflect this context data is included as Appendix 5.

Figure 1: Boundaries of Washington Park (red) and the Riverwood estate (orange)



Time-series analysis between 2016 and 2021 is included to help contextualise how the neighbourhood has continued to settle since the completion of Wave 1 research. Time-series comparisons were limited to Washington Park and the Riverwood estate only to contrast the neighbouring areas, one that has recently undergone significant renewal and densification, with one that has not.

There were notable changes to the boundaries of SA1s between 2016 and 2021. Specifically, the 2016 boundaries had yet to fully recognise the renewal activities and increase in resident population in Washington Park. As such, one 2016 SA1 (1137310) covered the areas of Washington Park as well as a small part of the Riverwood estate (Figure A2a). A decision was made to extract 2016 data based on the smaller geography of mesh blocks (Table A1), which can more perfectly match the boundaries of Washington Park (Figure A2b). A smaller number of

variables than as covered in Appendix 5 is included in the time-series analysis, due to data availability, but also to facilitate an overview rather than detailed comparison. The outcomes are included as Appendix 6.

In 2021, there were 1,603 residents living in Washington Park, and 1,954 living in the Riverwood estate. During 2016-2021, the resident population of Washington Park increased significantly: an additional 524 residents resided in Washington Park in 2021 than in 2016, a 49% increase. In contrast, there were 43 fewer residents living in the Riverwood estate in 2021 than in 2016, representing a -2% decrease. Across the entire study area, population increased by 16% during this period (Table 2).

*Table 2: Change in resident population in Washington Park and the Riverwood estate, 2016-2021.*

	Washington Park		Riverwood estate		Study area	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Male	207	38%	-14	-2%	193	14%
Female	304	57%	-27	-2%	277	17%
Total	524	49%	-43	-2%	481	16%

Source: ABS (2022)

The changes in population reflect the notable adjustments to the number of occupied dwellings in Washington Park and in the Riverwood estate over this period (Table 3). In 2021, there were 718 occupied dwellings in Washington Park and 889 in the Riverwood estate. As a relatively new neighbourhood, where new private apartment blocks were completed and occupied from 2018, there were 314 more occupied dwellings in Washington Park between 2016 and 2021, equivalent to a 60% increase. In contrast, with no renewal activities in the area, there was only four fewer occupied dwellings in the Riverwood estate over the same period, likely dwellings where previous tenants had recently moved out and new tenants yet to move in.

*Table 3: Change in the number of occupied dwellings in Washington Park and the Riverwood estate, 2016-2021*

	Washington Park		Riverwood estate		Study area	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Count of dwellings	314	60%	-4	0%	310	19%

### 2.1.2 Housing management records

Analysis of tenancy management records provides insights into the outcomes of management transfers of public housing tenancies to a community housing provider in terms of resident outcomes as well as operational efficiencies. These datasets were supplied by SGCH Ltd.

### 2.1.3 NAPLAN scores

A major aspired deliverable of estate renewal programs is improvements in educational outcomes. Analysis of NAPLAN scores and relevant education attainment statistics from the Census are used as a proxy of monitoring changes in educational performance. Changes in school enrolments are also included in the analysis. Due to changes in results comparison implemented from 2019, only data from this date are included, with the comparative performance colour coding of the previous report no longer included in the analysis. No NAPLAN assessments were conducted in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, thus the year is omitted from analysis.

### 2.1.4 Crime and safety data from the NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research

Changes in crime incidences and perceptions of safety are another major aspired deliverable in public estate renewal. With the absence of data specific to Washington Park and the Riverwood estate, recorded crime trends for the local government area (LGA) of Canterbury-Bankstown (within which the study area sits entirely; Figure A3) are analysed instead. Comparisons are made to the trends observed in NSW as a whole.

### 2.1.5 Employment data from the National Skills Commission

Time-series data on unemployment rates are sourced from the National Skills Commission's (2022) Small Area Labour Market publication series to measure changes in level of unemployment in the Riverwood SA2. These are compared to changes in the broader Canterbury-Bankstown LGA between December quarter 2010 to June quarter 2023, the most recently available release at the time of writing.

## 2.2 Resident experiences on social and tenure mixing

This component of the research involved convening six resident focus groups to gauge views on renewal project impacts, including satisfaction with homes and neighbourhood, as well as experiences of, and opinions about, social interactions within the community.

Each focus group was designed to comprise up to 10 participants, and was strategically grouped as follows:

- 2 focus groups with private owner-occupiers and renters living in Washington Park
- 1 focus group with social housing residents living in Washington Park,
- 1 focus group with social housing residents living on the broader Riverwood estate,
- 1 focus group with social housing residents living on the broader Riverwood estate to be conducted in Arabic<sup>2</sup>, and
- 1 focus group with social and private housing residents to be conducted in Mandarin Chinese<sup>2</sup>

The six focus groups were two more than the four planned as part of the original design for Wave 3. This extension was in lieu of the CATI resident survey, which could not be delivered within the budget remaining.

The distribution of invitations to the focus group was supported by the SGCH local housing office, with flyers in English, Simplified Chinese and Arabic (Appendix 2) printed and displayed at local community facilities from Monday 9 October 2023; flyers were also printed onto A3 paper and displayed as posters. SGCH also sent an SMS text message with a link to the English flyer to all tenants living in Washington Park and on the estate on Monday 16 October 2023 (Appendix 3) as electronic promotion. Residents were encouraged to contact the research team directly for more information and/or to sign up to participate.

The focus groups were conducted on site in Riverwood at the Washington Park community room, ground floor, 9B Washington Avenue between 18 and 30 October 2023. The focus groups were scheduled to take place on different days of the week, and at different times of the day, to facilitate a broader range of residents with different work and/or family commitments to participate. These schedules were:

- Wednesday 18 October 2023, 6.30pm-7.30pm
- Thursday 19 October 2023, 9.30am-10.30am (Arabic focus group)
- Monday 23 October 2023, 1pm-2pm
- Wednesday 25 October 2023, 6.30pm-7.30pm (Mandarin focus group)
- Monday 30 October 2023, 1pm-2pm
- Monday 30 October 2023, 3.30pm-4.30pm

Initial sign-up to the focus group was low (1 resident participated in the first focus group, while none attended the second, Arabic-speaking focus group). In response, following the 19 October Arabic focus group, the research team printed 300 copies of the English and Simplified Chinese promotional materials as double-sided flyers; a research assistant distributed these flyers on the

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<sup>2</sup> 2021 Census data (ABS 2022) reveals that Arabic (20%) is the most commonly spoken non-English language within the Riverwood estate (26% speak English at home), while Mandarin Chinese (21%) is the most commonly spoken non-English language in Washington Park (24% speak English at home).

afternoon of Friday 20 October 2023 to resident letterboxes, concentrating on the private and mixed-tenure residential buildings in Washington Park. Resident enquiries and sign ups notably increased following this promotional method.

Adjustments to recruitment and method were also made to engage Arabic-speaking residents after the unsuccessful initial focus group. On 16 November 2023, SGCH sent a further SMS text message, this time in Arabic, to all Arabic-speaking tenants who lived in Washington Park or on the Riverwood estate to promote one-on-one interviews. The same discussion guide and incentive offer were to be used. No resident, however, expressed interest or contacted the research team in the two weeks following the text messaging. This alternative approach to engage Arabic-speaking residents was, therefore, also considered unsuccessful and closed.

In all, 23 residents signed up to participate, although two did not, in fact, attend. Nine other residents who did not previously sign up, however, instead participated. This brought the total number of focus group participants to 30. All groups involved participants from a mix of tenures.

Discussions used a pre-determined question guide (Appendix 4) agreed with SGCH and LAHC (now part of Homes NSW) input as a guide. With participant consent, the focus groups (and interviews) were audio recorded. Each participant was provided with a \$50 Coles Myer gift voucher at the end of the focus groups as a gesture of thanks for their participation and contribution. The focus group discussions were audio-recorded and professionally transcribed. For the Mandarin-speaking focus group, a Research Assistant wrote up detailed notes in Simplified Chinese and translated to English for analysis.

### 2.2.1 Participants profile

The final 30 participants included a mix of older singles and couples, young families (with single or coupled parents), as well as younger and middle-aged singles and couples. There was also a mix of residential histories, ranging from longer-term residents who had lived on the estate for several decades, to more recent arrivals who had lived in the neighbourhood for a year or less. Because of the adjusted recruitment strategy, most participants lived in Washington Park and were currently renting socially from SGCH.

An overview of the participants' profile is included in Table 4.

*Table 4: Overview profile of focus group participants*

	Number of residents
Renting (social)	19
Renting (private)	3
Owned (with or without mortgage)	8
Live in Washington Park	27
Live in the Riverwood estate	3
Participated in English-speaking focus group	23
Participated in Mandarin-speaking focus group	7

### 2.3 Stakeholder perspectives of facilitating social and tenure mixing

To complement resident perspectives, the research was planned as including up to 10 semi-structured interviews with stakeholders on the delivery and operation of a mixed tenure community. Stakeholders invited include the local housing offices of Housing NSW (now part of Homes NSW) and SGCH Ltd, managers of the community facilities, as well as operators of local businesses and other services.

Ten initial invitations were sent out via email between 22 September and 25 October 2023, with follow-up emails sent two weeks later if the initial invitations were not responded to. In the event, however, only one stakeholder agreed to be interviewed. Most other invitations and follow-ups were either not responded to, or in one stakeholder's case, enquired about further details before ceasing correspondence. A couple of the organisation also noted that staff who were involved in the renewal had moved on, and there were no other staff who would have working knowledge of their organisation's involvement in the renewal. The one interview was conducted in person at the participant's office. With participant consent, the interview was audio recorded. In lieu of professional transcription, the Research Assistant wrote up detailed notes of the recorded discussions for analysis.

## 2.4 Ethics approval

This project received ethics approval from UNSW Sydney's Human Research Ethics Advisory Panel E: Built Environment on 4 September 2023, approval number HC230519.

## 2.5 Limitations

Given the lower than anticipated number of resident and stakeholder participants, the views reflected in this report may not be taken as representative of the views of the broader neighbourhood—particularly since only three were living on the Riverwood estate. Participants, however, were of diverse backgrounds, not least with residents of different tenure, age and cultural groups represented, but as shown throughout this report, they also represent different lengths of residence in the area, socioeconomic backgrounds, and different levels of engagements and connections with services and the local community.

### 3. Reflections on the neighbourhood and buildings' physical designs

A major function of renewal projects is to physically transform and modernise neighbourhood buildings and public spaces, to improve the usability of the spaces, and introduce new facilities to enhance liveability. This is reflected in the housing policies in Australia and abroad (e.g. Levin et al. 2022; Popkin et al. 2004; 2009; Tallon 2010; Watt & Smets 2017). In this chapter, we discuss residents' reflections on the physical changes that the Washington Park neighbourhood has experienced since the start of the renewal in 2010. Discussions focused on how the overall neighbourhood has changed, including the two areas that now look very different; on the impacts of the physical redesign of the neighbourhood on traffic and safety; as well as how well the residential buildings fit their day-to-day needs.

#### 3.1 A neighbourhood of split identities?

Overall, the physical changes that have taken place in Washington Park were viewed favourably by most participants. As seen by the longer-term residents, these changes were a long overdue upgrading of the area. This is despite many properties on the estate having been part of previous, smaller scale renewal programs such as the Neighbourhood Improvement Program in the 1990s. All participants appreciated the now modern look of the neighbourhood, conveying a sense of a vibrant, inner city-like area but with close proximity to green spaces like the Karne Street Reserve and the Riverwood Wetlands (Figure 2). To them, this represented a good mix of modernised upgrades while maintaining the area's suburban identity.

*Figure 2: Entrance to the Riverwood Wetlands, adjacent to Washington Park*



Source: Edgar Liu

A concern, however, was brought up regularly across the focus groups, regarding the identity of the neighbourhood. An obvious distinguisher was how differently the renewed part looks to the original estate. Participants were also unsure if the name Washington Park referred specifically to the renewed area, or if it only referred to the marketing strategy for selling the new private apartments. The latter confusion was especially related to the now faded 'Welcome to Washington Park' signage at the Belmore Road end of Washington Avenue (Figure 3), leaving residents unsure if the name still applies now that the construction of those apartment buildings have been completed for several years.

*No. I don't know where Washington Park is. [social tenant, Washington Park]*

Figure 3: Faded signage at the Washington Avenue entrance to the estate.



Source: Edgar Liu

For the most part, participants referred to the renewed area as Washington Park, and the rest of the neighbourhood as the 'real' Riverwood. Several participants, however, were unsure that, if the rest of the estate is also renewed, whether the entire neighbourhood would be renamed, or if different sections would take on new, distinct identities.

Distinguishing the renewed and original areas was more than just how residents referred to them. For many, the two areas nowadays function as separate and distinct parts of the neighbourhood. While many referred to the whole area as Riverwood, there were generally felt to be few reasons for residents of one area to venture into the other. This was especially true for many of the participants living in Washington Park, who avoided walking or driving into the older parts of the neighbourhood, partly out of safety concerns, but many also highlighted it as an unattractive area. Hard rubbish being regularly left on streetside, and under-maintained common areas (and some private gardens) were two such noted instances. The absence of shops or public amenities within the Riverwood estate was also noted in explaining the lack of attraction for residents living outside the estate's boundaries. The main noted exception would be for parents with children attending

Riverwood Public School in the southwestern corner of the estate. Several participants, however, reported frequently driving through the older parts of the estate to reach the shops near the railway station, to avoid the busy traffic on Belmore Road, with traffic entering or exiting the M5 motorway just to the north of Washington Park.

Reflections on the maintenance of public spaces also extended to the renewed Washington Park part of the neighbourhood. While hard rubbish was less in evidence here, litter was a noted problem, whether blown around after waste collection, or due to wildlife digging through rubbish bins. A few participants also complained that grass in common areas is not mown regularly and appears untidy. Aside from these niggling issues, however, participants generally appreciated how the Washington Park part of the neighbourhood looks and functions, especially the pedestrianised section of Kentucky Road (Figure 4), a public space well used by residents.

*Figure 4: A pedestrianised section of Kentucky Road in Washington Park.*



Source: Edgar Liu

*They haven't been maintaining it properly. Garbage is not handled well. The company responsible for garbage collection has undergone frequent changes. [...] the garbage bins often remain filthy. Just a few days ago, they left trash scattered about. They really don't manage it well. [social tenant, Washington Park]*

*That nature strip, it used to be bad. I saw council workers were working on it the past couple of weeks so I think they're getting around to it but for the longest time, for a good maybe three, four months it was just untouched. [...] I guess they got around to it but not as often as they could. [owner-occupier, Washington Park]*

### 3.2 Traffic and on-street parking

Change in traffic conditions was highlighted as an area of concern during the Wave 1 fieldwork of this research (Liu et al. 2022). Such concerns referred to the number of tradespersons' trucks and vans parked on neighbourhood streets, including at times too close to bus stops. This proved especially challenging for residents with mobility limitations when getting on or off buses unable to stop close enough to the kerbs. While several longer-term residents recalled these inconveniences, they also reflected that, now that construction has been completed for some time, these problems have become less of an issue.

Linked with the notable increase in housing density brought about through the renewal, on-street parking was raised by many participants as an on-going issue and a growing concern. Many apartments only have access to one secure parking spot within their building. Households with more than one car (true for many couple and family households), finding another secure parking space often proved challenging. There are limited on-street parking options available within Washington Park, and many participants were also reluctant to drive into and park in the older parts of the estate due to concerns over safety and convenience. Needing to unload a car full of groceries and/or children was simply not an option for many participants.

*The transportation situation has deteriorated significantly. There has been a noticeable increase in traffic volume. [...] If there are plans for further development in this area, it is imperative to address the transportation issue. [owner-occupier, Washington Park]*

*Riverwood has got so huge, and that street, the main road – where's everyone going to park? [owner-occupier, Washington Park]*

*What the problem is too with the units as well, because there's limited parking in the units for tenants. I'm fortunate, our unit has two parking spaces, so we're lucky, but our neighbours that are on our level, they've only got one, so they park in the visitor parking. That becomes frustrating because when you do have visitors, you've got nowhere to park. [owner-occupier, Washington Park]*

The M5 Motorway offramp at Belmore Road was upgraded just prior to the Wave 1 fieldwork of this research taking place in 2014. As a consequence, residents reported a significant increase in traffic volumes on Belmore Road. In Wave 1, residents reflected on the increased difficulty if they wanted to drive from the estate and turn onto Belmore Road to access local services (such as Riverwood Plaza on the opposite side of the railway station) or further afield. This was especially the case if they needed to turn right from the estate, with constant traffic flow—and at times, banked up traffic—making it difficult to turn onto Belmore Road (see report cover).

*You need [traffic] lights down here to get out because you can't get out, especially down here. [owner-occupier, Washington Park]*

*Sometimes I go back streets to get out. I go all the way down to Woolworths just so I can get easily on the road to come all the way back because I want to turn - I want to get out of here into the second lane to turn right. [owner-occupier, Washington Park]*

*I don't know how to get across the roads. [social tenants, Riverwood estate]*

Many participants talked about driving to the local shops by passing through the estate and avoiding Belmore Road completely, including using the narrow railway underpass between Lillian Road and Webb Street. A few participants also talked about travelling further afield, such as to Roselands Shopping Centre, rather than supporting their local shops because the latter have become too difficult to access. Walking to the local shops is also not necessarily an option,

particularly for older residents and those with mobility difficulties, often needing to cross several streets enroute. Several older participants highlighted that the uneven footpaths are neither suitable nor safe for wheelchair and pram users, and those with need of a walking assistance aid such as a walking frame or crutches.

*It happened to me last September, I tripped over and got swollen my knees and - because not enough - very dark. Most of the road here, the ground, it's very - I feel sorry for the old people. Most of the people here is using the trolley because it's just walking distance from the shops, and then it's hard to push the trolley for all the old people also when the ground is uneven. [social tenant, Washington Park]*

*I think the council should do a lot about the footpaths, because my mum fell outside Woolworths, that street at the back. You should see it, it's like this, and all the bricks are up. My mum fell and nearly hit her head on a brick wall. [social tenant, Riverwood estate]*

*No, I don't go down that way. I don't drive down. Like I said, I go to Roselands. I find that it's quicker because there there's more traffic. [social tenant, Washington Park]*

*If I drive down Riverwood, it's too much traffic, people getting out of cars and this and that. I could do it in five minutes to Roselands from here, and it's nice and quiet - it's much quieter there. [social tenant, Washington Park]*

Traffic issues, therefore, continues to decrease the overall liveability of their neighbourhoods. Most participants anticipated that the traffic conditions will continue to get worse if and when the renewal continues through the rest of the estate, further decreasing the area's liveability.

### 3.3 Street lighting and safety

Safety was raised by most participants as an issue of concern. While not stated explicitly, it appeared to negatively affect residents' daily living the most, with participants reporting changing their habits, times and routes of walks through the neighbourhood in response. Some of these issues relate to the physical design of Washington Park and the Riverwood estate, with street lighting regularly mentioned as a contributing factor. While most participants noted that they feel safe walking in Washington Park and to and from the railway station along Belmore Road during daytime, most would not walk through the Riverwood estate out of safety concerns. Most female participants said that they would not walk in Washington Park or the Riverwood estate after dark. While few if any of these participants had experienced any unsafe incidents, all said that inadequate street lighting contributed to their lack of a sense of safety. For those affected, resulting adjustments to routines and habits negatively affected overall living experiences in the neighbourhood.

*I avoid going out at night. I never come out at this time. [social tenant, Washington Park]*

*The safety of the area is not as assured as it once was. [social tenant, Washington Park]*

*I wouldn't go there in the dark, before 5pm only. Even then sometimes, because even by myself it's a long walk. [owner-occupier, Washington Park]*

*I'm too scared to go out late at night around here. I never used to feel that way, but there's a lot of crime we don't hear about. [social tenant, Washington Park]*

*By myself, with my son, going to the shop, go just on 7:00 and we just feel so unsafe walking from the Plaza. [social tenant, Washington Park]*

*I tell you what, my other half and I, it's the quickest walk home you'd ever want to think. When we walk home - normally we cut across the streets, but we walk along the main road, then straight up cut across the back area, but we'll come up everywhere where cars are driving along, just to have that safety feel. Which is sad, because I don't like feeling like that, because I love this area. [owner-occupier, Washington Park]*

*My nephew, he was walking to work at 3:00 in the morning down Michigan Road and he said - how eerie he said it was. He said he's not going to do it again, it was very eerie at 3:00 in the morning, it was that dark. He's 40. He's a big bloke. [social tenant, Riverwood estate]*

*I think maybe more streetlights because a bit dark at night, feels scary if you're walking around here. [owner-occupier, Washington Park]*

*I think more streetlights at the park because that - you know how it loops around? At night it's just pitch black so people kind of just avoid the park altogether. Because it's a nice walkway but once it gets dark you can't really see anything. [owner-occupier, Washington Park]*

When asked about the reasons why they feel unsafe walking in the Riverwood estate, many participants referred to a stigmatised reputation that the Riverwood estate has had over the years. This is especially given that incidents of record crime in Canterbury-Bankstown had continued to decline over recent years, including at fast rates than NSW (Table A37). For newer residents, such impressions may be based on hearsay rather than lived experiences of confrontations and incidents.

*Even in a car, I'm nervous [laughs]. Yeah, I just drive quickly in there [laughs]. No, it's not safe in that area. [owner-occupier, Washington Park]*

*That part, yeah. I wouldn't like to park over there or go into it or walk in the night, no way. [social tenant, Washington Park]*

*There's a couple of - I don't know, I've never seen them, but they say that there's a couple of people who deal with drugs across the road. [social tenant, Washington Park]*

*It's just three floors, yeah. I'm on the top floor so I feel safe but if I was probably on the bottom I wouldn't. You can just come into your window, your front door. [social tenant, Riverwood estate]*

A couple of the newer owner-residents had grown up on the estate or nearby, and so were also aware of its historically stigmatised reputation. For them, proximity to family and affordability of housing available for purchase were major drawcards when deciding to buy into the renewed Washington Park. They would, however, still have few reasons to venture into the estate except when visiting family or friends. A handful other owner-residents had rented locally within Washington Park before purchasing more recently, and similarly named affordability and proximity to services and infrastructure as main reasons for purchasing in the area. In some cases, nevertheless, reservations were expressed about the locality:

*It's dirty. People don't care. People, the lawns are not done. It's not very nice. It's people throw things, there's rubbish everywhere. [social tenant, Washington Park]*

*It was very funny because I grew up at Peakhurst and when I said to my dad I'd bought it he goes, "Well, I'm glad it's not on the dark side." Because this was called the dark side, and that was the reputation, or it was called the Rood, as in Riverwood hood. My dad lived at Peakhurst as well his whole life. [owner-occupier, Washington Park]*

Beyond complaints about inadequate street lighting, a few participants reported having experienced opportunity crime. These primarily involved ground floor residents, noting the theft of garden ornaments and other items.

*I think often things go missing. Sometimes if I sell something on Gumtree and I can't be home at the time the person wants to collect and they say can you just leave it out, and then I put it out and then within five minutes someone goes past and just takes it. So, you can't really do that here. I've seen other people go past and take things, whether they live here or nearby, things go missing. [owner-occupier, Washington Park]*

All participants living in Washington Park, however, were appreciative of the secured, swipe card access to their blocks, which limits building entrants to specific floors of the building. This was found to be comforting, knowing that only immediate neighbours are able to access their residential floor.

*I think it's good that probably a lot of the elderly people feel more safe in the high-rises because they've got intercoms and stuff like that. [owner-occupier, Washington Park]*

*Our building is quite secure, tap on to enter lobby, tap on for the lift. [owner-occupier, Washington Park]*

Several participants suggested that increased surveillance may be necessary in pre-empting opportunity crimes, and to improve residents' sense of safety. Suggestions included increased police presence, for example, having a pop-up booth in the pedestrianised plaza once a week; as well as having more security cameras as both deterrent and to provide footage for police reporting.

*Maybe in future they can have security at night to make sure that people are okay, maybe like in Europe. They have a small house where they sit there and they check the cameras are working, the lights are working. They call the police if they have to. [social tenant, Washington Park]*

*Just a small community clinic and more police visibility, it's more feel safe. It looks like every Friday, if it is possible to have police just around the area to feel secure, even the kids are playing together, having - they feel safe. [social tenant, Washington Park]*

Others disagreed, arguing instead that increased police presence could increase neighbourhood stigmatisation:

*it feels a bit intimidating sometimes seeing police patrolling in your... It makes you think something - a lot of bad things are happening. [owner-occupier, Washington Park]*

### 3.4 Suitability of the residential buildings

In addition to increasing the overall density of Washington Park, the renewal project also improved the quality of housing available for rent and purchase. Among research participants, there was universal acclaim for the quality of the new buildings. Owner participants commented positively on both the size and the affordability of their apartments. Family household participants acknowledged that they would have been otherwise unable to afford a three-bedroom apartment relatively close

to the Sydney Central Business District and/or to family. The opportunity to purchase a suitable home in Washington Park may have also enabled them to avoid repeated house moves to accommodate expanding needs. The affordable opportunity to buy a relatively large apartment in a convenient location has allowed these residents to benefit from locational stability, to join in and participate in community life, and enjoy a stable, family life rather than needing to regularly seek more appropriate dwellings.

*I visited the housing here [before making a purchase]. It's quite big... quite spacious. I bought it in 2018. [owner-occupier, Washington Park]*

*It's big enough. I wouldn't want anything smaller. I live by myself so it's big enough for me but I think if you were living with another person you would need something bigger. [owner-occupier, Washington Park]*

The opportunity to afford a suitably sized home was also reflected by one owner participant who purchased into the area more recently when they looked to downsize. Washington Park's attractions for that respondent included its convenient location, the secured buildings, and having lifted access.

*I had a three- or four-bedroom house, too big for just me. [...] I looked at when these units went up – I hadn't been over to see them, but I've always had an eye – I'd like to live there one day. I liked the walking trail, I liked the aspect of it and that. We went to the first open house of the unit that I got, my real estate agent who was selling my house had that unit, and it was bang, bang, right, it's yours, and it's perfect. I've been here six months now. Absolutely love it. [owner-occupier, Washington Park]*

Most participants renting their homes from SGCH expressed general satisfaction with their dwelling. Older participants especially liked that many of the apartments in Meridian and Monte have liveable design features like wider doorways, ergonomic switches and handles, features that facilitate ageing in place. This included participants living in the Riverwood estate looking forward to being able to access such features so that they can remain independent rather than needing to rely on family or external, professional services. This may be by moving to Washington Park if a vacancy becomes available, or if and when the rest of the estate is renewed.

*Mine's very big, I have a very big room. My bedroom is very big, my loungeroom is very big. It's open plan, which I love open plan and I have a big balcony. I look at the trees, I open up the [colour] blinds and I've got the trees and sometimes I think I'm in Queensland [laughs] because of the trees. [social tenant, Washington Park]*

*You know why I like here? I no like relying the kids' back, I don't like staying my daughter, I don't like staying my son. I like my own boss. I want to manage how I do it because this is easy for me. [social tenant, Riverwood estate]*

*I thought my goodness, is this housing or what because I've never thought housing would be like that. I thought I'm going to get a little room, for sure. I was hoping I wouldn't get a small one but I thought oh my god. So they're like - I've seen a few other people with that too. So really, it is a nice place here. [social tenant, Washington Park]*

Only a few respondents, especially those less familiar with the needs-based assessment and allocation system, noted that they would have preferred an extra bedroom to accommodate family visits. Satisfaction with bedroom space standards was generally expressed by respondents across

all tenures. Only a few would have preferred to sacrifice bedroom space in exchange for slightly larger living areas.

*One person living in one bedroom and I have two people. One bedroom, two people. The housing here is like there are two people, they have one people and two people, the same, one bedroom, yeah. [social tenant, Washington Park]*

Research participants put forward some suggestions for improvements to common areas. These could primarily be grouped into two topics:

1. A building feature widely cited as sub-optimal was that each block is only serviced by one lift. This proved somewhat inconvenient, especially when several residents were entering or exiting at once, such as those coming home from the same train or bus. Related to this, a few participants considered the lifts as comparatively small for the number of residents served. This can be an issue when residents with a pram and/or mobility aid need to share a lift with others.

*The only one I don't like living here, the lift is only one. [social tenant, Washington Park]*

*Somebody comes in with a wheelchair and that, we have to stay out and wait until they get on and then we get on. [owner-occupier, Washington Park]*

2. Another suggestion concerned the maintenance of the common areas and facilities. Participants noted that most of their floors have up to 20 households sharing one common hallway. While appreciating that a building manager is usually on site, and that a cleaning service also visits regularly, it was said to be difficult to maintain cleanliness of common areas under these circumstances.

Regarding the maintenance of common facilities, participants said that the responsiveness of building managers usually enabled related issues to be resolved quickly. Lift breakdowns were, however, reported as commonplace, and on occasions it had been several days before they could be fixed. This could prove very inconvenient, especially for those living on higher floors, experiencing difficulty using the stairs, or needing to carry young children and/or groceries home. The lack of a second lift meant that there were simply no alternatives but to use the stairs or stay home until it was fixed.

*He responds very quickly but some things he can't - it's out of his hands. So, if something is out of order like a lift or something, he has to send someone and then it's happened before where it's been like five whole days and I live on level 8 and I've got a baby, a toddler, so we've had to go up and down every day, and that's out of his hands. Otherwise, he's good on the things that aren't as urgent. I know he's there. [owner-occupier, Washington Park]*

*My lift's broken about five times this year. [owner-occupier, Washington Park]*

Among the few participants living in the Riverwood estate, there was also general satisfaction with the housing they were able to access and afford. All, however, looked forward to the renewal continuing to their parts of the neighbourhood, so that they also have the opportunity to live in newer, better quality housing and improved street life. Several participants mentioned the difficulties they encountered in getting maintenance logged and completed. This partly reflects their ability to navigate a different system of logging maintenance requests, having been transferred from the public to the community housing sector as part of the renewal project.

*Five months I'm fighting, calling, I shame myself, very rude I am because I always go knocking the door, fix my bathroom, fix my bathroom, so bad. I feel bad myself. It's hard, brother, very hard to fix. [social tenant, Riverwood estate]*

### 3.5 Chapter summary

This chapter reported on participants' reflections on the physical changes that the neighbourhood has experienced since the start of the renewal in 2010. There is general appreciation of the physical transformation that the Washington Park area has undergone as part of the renewal, with its pedestrian-friendly nature and updated green infrastructure such as the Reserve and the Wetlands nearby being major positives. Similarly, there is a high rate of satisfaction with their new homes. Dwelling features generally suit residents' needs in terms of size, quality and affordability. Some of the teething problems reported in the Wave 1 report (Liu et al. 2022) such as tradespeople parking too close to bus stops seem to have largely dissipated, although others like increasingly heavy traffic may have worsened over time as more residents moved into Washington Park.

Some of the suggestions put forward by participants might be implemented relatively easily. These include:

- Enhancing the brightness of street lighting to improve residents' sense of safety.;
- Installation of security cameras to deter opportunity crimes;
- Improved maintenance and upkeep of public areas in Washington Park and in the Riverwood estate, as well as the common areas in residential buildings.

Other suggestions may be more challenging to address. Participants were conscious that these may not be plausible or likely in their buildings or in Washington Park, but have suggested them for consideration for if and when the renewal continues throughout the rest of the estate. These include:

- Having more than one lift for each residential building, given the number of households they serve on a daily basis;
- Improved traffic management to facilitate entering and exiting the neighbourhood.

## 4. Local infrastructure and services

The construction of Washington Park has been accompanied by the upgrading of existing—and the constructing of new—social and community infrastructure within or near to the Riverwood estate. As our Wave 1 report described, some of these infrastructure investments—such as the upgrading of the Riverwood Wetlands and the community gardens, as well as the building of the Morris lemma Indoor Sports Centre just opposite Washington Park next to the M5 offramp—were already completed by the time of the Wave 1 fieldwork; likewise were the upgrading of the Riverwood railway station and the campaign for peak hour express train services. For several years until 2018, PAYCE Communities also employed a community engagement service (Brooks Community Engagement) to act as a community liaison, with community regeneration increasingly featured in estate renewal programs in Australia and elsewhere (e.g. Adamson & Bromiley 2013), including as a key to successful mixed tenure developments (e.g. Khor et al. 2023). As well as directly organising community events, the Brooks role included canvassing residents' ideas on local infrastructure, services and programs potentially of benefit to the neighbourhood. Capacity building by Brooks included the establishment of the Residents Organisation At Riverwood (ROAR), which continues to function to this day, taking over some of the roles previously undertaken by Brooks.

With the completion of the final residential and community buildings in 2018, the new library and knowledge centre became functional. More recently, the COVID-19 pandemic interrupted many of the community activities remaining live after 2018, although some of these began to be re-established in 2023.

In this chapter, we report on residents' reflections on the continuing changes to infrastructure and service delivery in the neighbourhood, the extent to which these have met expectations, and what other such initiatives might be welcomed by the community.

### 4.1 Availability of local infrastructure and services

As noted above, since the completion of the Wave 1 fieldwork in 2015, all remaining residential and community buildings in Washington Park were completed and residential units occupied. This includes the Riverwood Library and Knowledge Centre at 80 Kentucky Road, officially opened in December 2018 (Figure 5). A small number of commercial tenancies are also available for local businesses to establish themselves in the neighbourhood. These are primarily concentrated on the ground floor of the Morton residential building, also on Kentucky Road, adjacent to the pedestrianised plaza. At the time of the final wave fieldwork in October and November 2023, these businesses included a real estate agency, and a small neighbourhood supermarket.

*The library's beautiful, and it's a place for people to see each other. Apart from that, it's tai chi in the morning. There's a lot of things that happen. [social tenant, Washington Park]*

Many participants reflected that, while they enjoyed the new infrastructure and facilities provided, they were promised a lot more. As such, several participants felt that the project had failed to fully deliver initiatives pledged in its earlier stages.

*We got things in the mail saying there's going to be a florist here, there's going to be a swimming pool here, there's going to be this - before COVID, and on to the next one. I'm like oh wow, it's going to be like, you know. I think a lot of us kind of... They overpromised. [social tenant, Riverwood estate]*

Figure 5: The new Riverwood Library and Knowledge Centre, which opened in December 2018.



Source: Edgar Liu

#### 4.1.1 Shops, cafés and eateries

When asked about the new local infrastructure and services, all participants expressed some disappointment about the perceived lack of variety of shops in the area. This is especially in view of the local supermarket, as reported by several participants, mainly catering to a Chinese clientele (with signage only in Simplified Chinese); at the time of the fieldwork it was closed on most days of the week, and without clear signage in any language on its opening hours. Most participants thought it had shut down, with only cardboard boxes piled high visible from the outside. This is despite several participants recalling its competitive pricing and convenient location that led them to shop there several times previously. As a consequence, most participants patronised shops near to the railway station, or, as noted above, prefer shopping centres further away due to the traffic as discussed in section 3.2. This seems likely to further undermine the viability of the local businesses, inadvertently creating an adverse cycle that only compounds residents' frustrations over the lack of attractive local shopping options.

*I don't know why, it's [the local shop] been closed for the last two weeks. ... It's got a sign in Chinese, so I don't know why they closed. [social tenant, Washington Park]*

*No, she's [the corner shop] doing a wholesale of the kitchen so from Monday to Wednesday she's doing the deliveries, because if she will only get the income from the shop, she can't afford it, because it's very little income. [...] You can go there on Thursday and Friday for the fresh fruits and vegetables and some frozen nice fish, you can order some meat, and the price is also – it's good when you compare. [social tenant, Washington Park]*

*I was not here during COVID or before COVID but I noticed there's a grocery, there's a Chinese grocery but it opens occasionally [laughs]. It doesn't have formal trading hours. I don't know if it's because of COVID. [owner-occupier, Washington Park]*

As well as noting the lack of local shopping variety, several participants also voiced disappointment that the renewal project had failed to engender the establishment of new cafés and eateries in the area, as had been anticipated at the time of the Wave 1 fieldwork. Participants lamented the lack of café options in the neighbourhood, arguing that the pedestrianised plaza seemed ideal for this kind of amenity, which could serve as a neighbourhood focus.

*Coffee shop, there was supposed to be a coffee shop there next to the library. [social tenant, Riverwood estate]*

*I remember there was a coffee van there, and people gathered. Even the Chinese who don't drink coffee, mainly, the older ones, still stay there and it was beautiful. Then COVID took it, and it has never come back. [social tenant, Washington Park]*

*See the park over there next to the library? That's where the coffee shop was meant to be. The equipment is there, but somehow the Council never granted it to anybody to have a coffee shop. I think it'll be ideal to have something there that people can come. You know how many times people say that, that they can come and have lunch and talk and it'll be a good point to have for advertising, come and meet us at whatever, but it just doesn't happen. [social tenant, Washington Park]*

*When we were given information about what was happening, they also said that there was cafes getting built in this area - I haven't seen that happen - and shops as well. [owner-occupier, Washington Park]*

*I think a coffee shop would be wonderful, a wonderful meeting place, and a little shop [owner-occupier, Washington Park]*

*Yeah, or a bakery or something, yeah. [owner-occupier, Washington Park]*

While there are numerous cafés and eateries along Belmore Road near the railway station, these are less conveniently located for the estate itself. The lack of local café options became more evident to participants during the COVID-19 lockdown periods, and also subsequently when many residents have continued to work from home for at least part of the week. It was also suggested that, if the rest of the estate is renewed, it would be beneficial to have a small shopping centre within the estate that can extend local shopping and restaurant options, especially given the increasing traffic concerns as detailed in the previous chapter.

#### **4.1.2 Community facilities**

Most participants appreciated the convenient location of the Library and Knowledge Centre. Several noted that they attend regularly, whether to browse and borrow books and other items, or simply to have a quiet, air-conditioned place to sit and work. The facility was also valued as a convenient site for local information and resources displayed on the community noticeboard.

Aside from the Library and Knowledge Centre, however, other community facilities (e.g. the community room or community gardens) were less commonly used by research participants. In part, this reflected confusion on who could access and use such facilities. For example, owner and private renter residents were uncertain of their entitlement to use the community room in which the focus group discussions took place. While most participants had seen it when passing through the pedestrianised plaza, many had assumed that its co-location with the SGCH Riverwood office on the ground floor of the Monte social housing block meant it was intended for the exclusive use of social housing residents. There was similar confusion over who could access the community gardens (Figure 6), with no signage on who or how to make enquiries with, and even the community events.

*I don't know how they work. I don't know how it is. There's not enough information, and I notice that sometimes with housing, that there's not enough information. [social tenant, Washington Park]*

*I'm not sure if we were allowed to come to that [Halloween party in the park]... Here I thought it was only for this building or only for that building. I didn't know if I was able to come and see it. [owner-occupier, Washington Park]*

Figure 6: One of the two community gardens in Washington Park for residents to rent



Source: Edgar Liu

Given the age-specific requirements of the Meridian and Monte buildings, as well as many older residents living throughout the neighbourhoods, participants suggested more infrastructure for the ageing population is needed.

*There's a shortage of exercise facilities for the elderly. At the very least, they should install some basic exercise equipment. [social tenant, Washington Park]*

#### 4.1.3 Community and personal services

In terms of other infrastructure, participants mentioned the childcare centre at the corner of Roosevelt Avenue. None of our participants (even those with young children of their own), however, reported making use of this facility.

Given that the social housing in Washington Park involves age-specific units, including many of which meeting Livable Housing Australia's LHA Silver Level standards for flexibility and adaptability, participants suggested that more services that cater towards the older cohorts may be appropriate. Ideas included having a general practice and nursing clinic locally, and community transport options. Many of our older participants, especially those who had lived locally for extended periods, however, said that they enjoyed long-established relationships with health and medical services elsewhere. One older participant who recently bought into Washington Park also noted the area's relative proximity to the Bankstown-Lidcombe Hospital as a drawcard to them settling into the area. With an expectation that the rest of the estate will be renewed, participants believed that there will be an increased need for such services locally.

*Nurses is not a bad idea. However, everybody that is old has access to an aged plan, ACAT [Aged Care Assessment Team] or something. Having it [a nurse] wouldn't hurt. I think police is what we need here, because then we could come out at night. This is beautiful at night with the lights and everything, but I wouldn't come. [social tenant, Washington Park]*

*There's no hospital, only GPs. To go to a hospital, we need to go to Hurstville or Bankstown. [social tenant, Washington Park]*

*Everything bulk-billing. [owner-occupier, Washington Park]*

## 4.2 Community events and interactivity

The regular presence of Brooks Community Engagement in the neighbourhood until 2018 facilitated the establishing of many community events and activities during the initial years of the renewal project. As reported in our Wave 1 report (Liu et al. 2022, Table 6), these included (to name a few):

- Weekly Friday afternoon community barbecue
- Carols in the Wetlands
- Cinema under the Stars
- Music in the Garden
- Sponsorship of school-based and after-school activities
- Craft and sporting classes and groups
- Employment and training programs

These activities and events were supported by funding from PAYCE and SGCH, as well as sponsorships from local businesses and groups such as Club Rivers.

During these initial years, as noted above, ROAR was also established. Residents were supported to build capacity for the organisation to become self-sustaining. Such training encompassed organisational governance and management as well as grant application processes. It seems, however, that ROAR has become less active in recent times, and that its existence remains unknown to many newer residents.

*Everybody keeps to themselves, and I've never seen a residents' group or anything. [social tenant, Washington Park]*

Nevertheless, when asked about what and how community activities and events are continuing to run, several participants pointed to the quarterly program calendar that SGCH produces in collaboration with ROAR, the Riverwood Community Centre, and the local government of Canterbury-Bankstown (Figure 7). These include many activities and events that have been running since the start of the renewal, such as the Chinese dancing and art classes and community barbecue. Participants also mentioned more informal activities, such as the walking group, that are not listed in this quarterly calendar. Participants and the stakeholder interviewed noted that many public events, such as Cinema under the Stars and Carols in the Wetlands ceased at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. Most have not returned, but a few (such as Carols) are slowly being re-introduced in recent and coming months.

*This [event calendar] tells you all the things that are available. Some of them are not for here. [social tenant, Washington Park]*

*We had numerous activities before the pandemic. Following the pandemic, activities are gradually resuming. [social tenant, Washington Park]*

*There are a lot of different community activities and programs that are always happening as well. I think that helps to meet the people in the area too. [owner-occupier, Washington Park]*

*Monthly program we have for all and everything, what's happening in there, including in that paper [calendar], monthly, which is enough for everybody to understand what we have, variety for exercise, for dancing, for singing, for sewing, knitting, everything there including in the paper which is very good, very good here. [social tenant, Washington Park]*

Figure 7: Community event calendar, updated quarterly by SGCH's Riverwood office.

## WHAT'S ON RIVERWOOD & HURSTVILLE

TERM 4 - OCTOBER TO DECEMBER 2023

→ To register or for more information regarding any of the **FREE** activities contact the CPP Team on 1800 573 370 or email [getinvolved@sgch.com.au](mailto:getinvolved@sgch.com.au)

Connect with us online [sgch.com.au/cpp-studio](http://sgch.com.au/cpp-studio)  Get Involved@SGCH  @sgch\_ltd



SGCH Community Room: 9B Washington Ave Riverwood  
SGCH Hurstville Office: L5, 38 Humphreys Lane, Hurstville

**Monday**  
Red River Original Chinese  
Dancing Class  
• 10:00am-1:00pm  
• Weekly (During School Term)  
• SGCH Riverwood Community  
Room

Play To Learn  
• 10:00am-11:00am  
• Weekly (During School Term)  
• Ages 3-5 years  
• Riverwood Library

Line Dance Group  
• 2:30pm-4:00pm  
• Weekly  
• Riverwood Library  
• Bookings essential contact  
**9707 5436**

Riverwood Community BBQ  
• 2:00pm-5:00pm  
• Weekly  
• Corner of Virginia Place &  
Roosevelt Ave

### Tuesday

#### Winnie's Art Class

- 9:30am-4:30pm
- Weekly
- SGCH Riverwood Community Room

#### English Conversation Group

- 10:00am-12:00pm
- Weekly (During School Term)
- Riverwood Library

#### Baby Rhyme Time

- 10:00am-10:45am
- Weekly (During School Term)
- Ages 6-24 months
- Riverwood Library

#### Chair Yoga

- 12:30pm-1:30pm
- Weekly
- Riverwood Library
- Bookings essential contact  
**9707 5436**

### Wednesday

#### Pre-School Story Time

- 10:00am-11:00am
- Weekly (During School Term)
- Ages 2-5 years
- Riverwood Library

#### Choir Practice

- 11:00am-1:00pm
- Weekly
- SGCH Riverwood Community Room

#### Youth Drop-In

- 3:00pm-6:00pm
- Weekly
- Ages 12-17 years
- Riverwood Community Centre, 151 Belmore Road North, Riverwood



### Thursday

#### ROAR Group

- 11:00am-12:30pm
- Weekly
- SGCH Riverwood Community Room

#### Pacifica Group

- 12:30pm-2:00pm
- Weekly
- SGCH Riverwood Community Room

#### Youth Drop-In

- 3:00pm-5:30pm
- Weekly
- Ages 12-17 years
- Riverwood Community Centre, 151 Belmore Road North, Riverwood

#### After School Fun

- 3:30pm-5:00pm
- Weekly, ages 5-12 years
- Riverwood Library

### Friday

#### Winnie's Art Class

- 9:30am-3:00pm
- Weekly
- SGCH Office, Hurstville, Level 2

#### Knitting Group

- 10:00am-12:00pm
- Second and fourth Friday of the month
- Riverwood Library

#### Coffee Group

- 10:00am-11:00am
- Weekly
- SGCH Riverwood Community Room

#### Chinese Book Club

- 10:00am-11:00am
- First Friday of the month
- Riverwood Library

#### Tongle Dance Group

- 11:30am-2:30pm
- Weekly
- SGCH Riverwood Community Room

#### ROAR Group Barbecue

- Every Friday
- 4:00pm-6:00pm (or until servings are finished)
- SGCH Riverwood Community Room

## OTHER EVENTS

### MobilEyes Optometry

- 9:30am-4:30pm
- Friday 6 October
- SGCH Riverwood Community Room
- RSVP Essential contact  
**1800 573 370**

### FREE SGCH and ROAR Group Christmas Party

- 11:00am-1:00pm
- Thursday 7 December
- SGCH Riverwood Community Room



Such community activities and events that continue to function are said to be generally well attended. Those run during daytime are more likely attended by social renters and older residents. As such, classes and group activities tend to involve relatively small numbers of participants. Groups of this size were, however, generally preferred by participants, since this was considered conducive to cultivating more meaningful friendships and associations. Owner participants noted they were often at work when such activities happen, but mentioned that they have on occasion attended community barbeques, which continue to be well attended. Participants said that big community events like the barbeques allow them to interact with other residents, some they may have seen at the local shops or when walking in the neighbourhood, others they may not have encountered previously. Several participants saw the many offerings of social activities as a major benefit to living in the neighbourhood. Participants' reflections on meeting and mingling with residents of different backgrounds and tenures are discussed in more detail in the next chapter.

*This area is quite nice. There is a weekly offering of free bread from Woolworths. Additionally, the library hosts various activities. Every Sunday, they hold church activities here, and sometimes we participate in them. [social tenant, Washington Park]*

*People from other neighbourhoods are rather envious of the vitality in our community. For instance, some of us practice tai chi in the mornings, while others enjoy walks and singing. We have the opportunity to engage in a wide range of activities. [social tenant, Washington Park]*

Census analysis confirms that there has been a significant increase in the number of households with children living in Washington Park in recent years. Indeed, during the period 2016-2021, both couple households and children and one-parent households with children doubled (Table A36). By 2021, therefore, they accounted for one-third of all households in Washington Park (Table A9). Reflecting on this, several participants suggested more child-friendly community events would facilitate social interaction among family households in the neighbourhood. This is especially when many of these participants do not currently use the local childcare services as abovementioned, or that the children attend school outside of the neighbourhood. Suggestions included fair day-type events, with rides and jumping castles that facilitate children from different parts of the neighbourhood to interact.

*You can see many children at the Friday BBQ. [social tenant, Washington Park]*

A few participants noted that while play equipment is available in the Karne Street Reserve and in the Riverwood Wetlands, they had been recently vandalised, and it took some time before repairs were made. Likewise, vandalism damage to the footbridge connecting Washington Park with the Riverwood Community Centre took quite some time to be fixed. This made accessing the community centre and the Wetlands Playground a bit less convenient.

*The playground, the first playground, which is for children, it was renovated. I don't know how long it took - years, to be renovated. Even once it was renovated, three of the pieces of the equipment were broken before, and they're still broken, and they put a cage around them and left them. [social tenant, Washington Park]*

*I do know in terms of the park and stuff it can be maintained a bit better. I know it took a while for the - because I have a toddler - it took a while for the play area to get redone and refurbished. [owner-occupier, Washington Park]*

Such anti-social behaviour may be symptomatic of the lack of outlets for children of different age groups, especially adolescents. One participant reflected that, given escalating cost of living, some families may not be able to regularly afford the paid programs that are available locally.

*We also have the community centre, which should be used more than what it is. I know that the guys, the young people, are now playing basketball. But that's a private thing. You have to pay I don't know how much money to - I know that there's people that would like to play but they can't. [social tenant, Washington Park]*

#### **4.2.1 Staying informed**

While participants generally appreciated the activities and events staged for residents, these were not always publicised through channels visible to owner and private renter participants. Several participants said that they only learned of the weekly barbeques by chance when they happened to walk past. Many were unaware of the SGCH local events calendar as posted in the community room. As reported in section 4.1.2, several owner and private renter participants did not realise that is a space they could access. While some events are publicised on the ROAR website <https://roar.asn.au/events/>, this appears to be limited and not regularly updated.

*I think a lot of pamphlets get put into the library. I use the library a lot because I work from home, and I just go down there to photocopy stuff at times. When you walk in, there's actually a lot of brochures of things that are happening in the area. But if you don't go to the library, you won't. [owner-occupier, Washington Park]*

Longer-term residents spoke of the community newsletters that used to be available locally to help residents stay informed. The Village Talk, with its associated Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/RiverwoodVT/>) and Twitter/X account (<https://twitter.com/riverwoodvt>), was one such communiqué initiated by Brooks Community Engagement, but it was discontinued in 2018 when Brooks concluded its service in the area.

*I'm not a pamphlet collector, but I feel like around here there are never any pamphlet drops. [...] I feel like sometimes this is a forgotten area sometimes of notifications and stuff like that. [owner-occupier, Washington Park]*

*Every now and then I'll see a poster, either on the convenience store wall or somewhere in our building that promotes whatever's going on in the community. There's also a Facebook group for Riverwood and Penshurst, they just post local events that are going on. If you're not in that group, there's not really a digital way to get an update on what's going on. [owner-occupier, Washington Park]*

Complaints about lack of communication by stakeholder agencies also extended to the possibility of further renewal activity on the Riverwood estate. Most participants were aware that this was, or had been, envisaged by government, but no one recalled being provided with any details about what this could involve and in what timeframe. Confusion over the name Washington Park, as discussed in the previous chapter, has compounded uncertainty about whether a new phase of the renewal project was indeed in prospect. Participant reflections on this topic are further discussed in Chapter 6.

*Even since COVID, there seems to have been no update to say what was happening. [owner-occupier, Washington Park]*

*What we were told a few years ago was we were going to get new units, and then recently I had an inspection with St George, they said no, they're not going to do them, they're just going to renovate I think kitchens and bathrooms. [social tenants, Riverwood estate]*

Residents have, in any case, initiated their own community communications networks. There is, for example, a WhatsApp messaging group for Washington Park residents. One participant, for example, posted a picture of our focus group flyer to the group, which led to others signing up and participating. Others mentioned that the group is active in promoting activities, cautioning other residents if they witnessed or experienced opportunity crimes, or that parcels have been delivered to their building lobby. Such bottom-up initiatives were well-regarded by respondents:

*There's a Washington Park subgroup; my friend that lives over there told me about it. They have things like packages have been left in the doorway, who's this. [owner-occupier, Washington Park]*

*I think WhatsApp is a bit too... For everyone and it's a bit too intrusive. I feel like a newsletter is good, or like - I think there's a Facebook group for the community as well. Something that's a bit more like you can opt in if you want to receive. [owner-occupier, Washington Park]*

Suggestions for other ways to improve communication and information distribution within the neighbourhood varied. While SGCH is able to circulate information to its tenants electronically, this does not encompass the owner and private renter residents. Furthermore, even though the NSW Strata Schemes Management Act 2015 requires all strata titled schemes to maintain a noticeboard in a prominent location, most participants were unaware of such facilities.

*There's a big noticeboard in there. But if you don't go in there, you don't see it. It's near the bin area. [owner-occupier, Washington Park]*

*I will look in my lift when there's stuff put in the lift there, so when it's clean-up week and when pest control's coming and all that. [owner-occupier, Washington Park]*

*I think posters either in the lift or near the exit of the lift would be good because then you don't miss it. [owner-occupier, Washington Park]*

### 4.3 Chapter summary

In this chapter, we reflected on participants' views and use of the local infrastructure and community events that are available locally in Washington Park. While most are appreciative of the new and upgraded community facilities such as the Library and Knowledge Centre, some (especially owner and private renter participants) were at times less sure of who may be able to use these facilities. The two community gardens were highlighted as an example, where a lack of signage on how to apply or sign up to tenancies were noted as barriers. Likewise access to the community room at 9B Kentucky Avenue was mistakenly believed to be restricted to social housing residents. While shopfronts are incorporated on the ground floor of the Morton residential block, residents lamented the lack of variety of shops and eateries that would improve the overall liveability of the neighbourhood. Limited communication of when and where community activities happen was perceived as a barrier to more residents participating.

Several suggestions were put forward by participants on ways that may improve the overall liveability of their neighbourhood. Like those discussed in the previous chapter regarding the physical design of buildings and public outdoor spaces, some of these suggestions may be more easily implemented than others. These included:

- Improving communication of social and community events and activities, including clearer signage at facilities on how to join;
- Introduce more child-friendly events and activities;

- Encouraging cafés and eateries into the neighbourhood.

Others may require more longer-term considerations, consultations and planning, including:

- Clearer messaging on longer term plans for renewing the Riverwood estate;
- Having a greater variety of shops in the area, including the siting of a new local shopping centre if/when the Riverwood estate renewal continues;
- Encouraging the incorporation of health and medical care facilities within plans for the further renewal of the Riverwood Estate, if this is to proceed.

## 5. Living in a planned, mixed tenure neighbourhood

A third aspect of the Riverwood North/Washington Park renewal project was the creation of a mixed tenure neighbourhood. This was achieved through the demolition of outdated bedsit units that once stood on that part of the neighbourhood, and their replacement by new social and private housing units within a high-density setting. Resulting changes are reflected in Table A13 and Table A31 in Appendices 6 and 7. In this chapter, we report on research participants' reflections on living in a planned, mixed tenure neighbourhood, including the types and levels of interactions across tenure groups, and, for owner and private renter participants, to what extent their knowledge of neighbourhood tenure mix influenced their decisions to move into the area.

### 5.1 Moving to settle in Washington Park and the Riverwood estate

Pathways into Washington Park and the Riverwood estate were quite diverse among research participants. Most had lived in their current units on the estate for more than three years. Some had been offered tenancies by the then Housing Commission of New South Wales. A few such participants had subsequently accepted relocation to Washington Park on account of their age and need for a more age-friendly home, which the social housing units in Washington Park have been specifically designed for.

*We live in the old one down there where the [unclear] used to be, in Michigan Road. My mum was in a wheelchair ... she can't walk the stairs anymore. So we got a transfer to here. [social tenant, Washington Park]*

*Somebody said to me if you're by yourself why don't you move into a - they call it a bedsitter. So, I moved into a bedsitter which was... [Facilitator: So, you were the original ones here?] I'm original. Bedsitter down the road was St George, and then sent around - they said to me - one time they rung me up and they said these buildings are going to be built for over-55s, and I was 54 then. They said by the time it's finished you'll be qualified so I've been here what, 11 years now and never looked back. [social tenant, Washington Park]*

A few more recent arrivals had settled into the estate via similar pathways. Among these social tenant participants, prior knowledge of Riverwood varied, from two who had never heard of the estate before, to one who knew of it but had never visited.

*They said they have a vacancy that I can move in. Then they asked me to check it and then when I first saw it I said, this is a blessing. Because I have an 11-year-old son, so there's a library, there's all the shops in here, then also the school. Then, yeah, in the first time, the feedback is not really good but I said to myself, looks like I feel comfortable. Yeah, I moved in 2019, been here for four years already, and we're loving the community. [social tenant, Washington Park]*

Other participants living in social housing in Washington Park all met the age-specific eligibility criteria for these units. Only one participant had previously lived in the now demolished bedsit units and subsequently returned to the estate when the new homes had been constructed. Despite initial teething issues, the participant reflected that their living conditions had much improved compared to previously.

*What it was before, it was cramped, but to move from where I was in a - they call it a bedsitter into what I've got here now, it's just a lot bigger, room to move. They had their faults when we first moved in because they were rushed to put them together but they gradually ironed them out bit by bit. [social tenant, Washington Park]*

Among the more recent arrivals to the neighbourhood, there is a large Chinese-born, Mandarin-speaking cohort living in the Meridien and Monte social housing buildings. There are also residents of other cultural backgrounds who live in these and the more recently completed Trinity building. Most of these participants also had little or no prior knowledge of the Riverwood estate, of Washington Park, or SGCH as a community housing provider. Most decided to accept the offer because of the new (or near new) housing units they were shown, as well as the convenient location of Washington Park.

*I love this community, so lovely warm, friendly. Shop is very close to us. The friends care for you, you know, you're not coming home, calling you. If you live in posh place, nobody calling you or nothing. This is very warm, Riverwood, very, very warm. I love it. [social tenant, Riverwood estate]*

*I was living at Croydon Park and I wanted Canterbury area, and at the end they said would you come look at this place here and if you like it you can have it, otherwise you can go back to where I was before. I'm on that list, but the same thing, you know. So, I thought it looks very nice, and I like it the way it was and I said yes, okay. I said I've got - I love Roselands, we've got Riverwood here but I prefer - I love Roselands for shopping so it was easy, because I drive and still there's the buses, it's easy. So, that's how I came to come here. [social tenant, Washington Park]*

Of the owner and private renter participants, affordability was highlighted as a major influencing factor in their decisions to buy or rent in Washington Park. A couple of the participants with young families emphasised that it would be difficult for them to afford a suitably sized apartment in a similarly conveniently located suburb. Several of these participants had family nearby, making Washington Park a convenient location to maintain family contacts, and to receive care from (or offer care to) family.

*I'm living with my partner at the moment. We don't have any kids, and we are obviously younger. I guess the most attractive thing for this place is affordability in terms of pricing, but also proximity to the city because I work from home two days a week and I still need to go to the office three days a week. Having that access to the train station relatively easy. [owner-occupier, Washington Park]*

*Amenities were pretty good around and I knew that they redeveloped this part of Riverwood as well because I had a friend - a couple of friends that were living down Kentucky back when I was growing up in high school, so I remember what it used to look like 15 years ago. Then seeing redevelopment, it was a lot more nicer. It looked like a good place to start a family, live here for a couple more years to - yeah, it gave a better impression of what it used to look like. [owner-occupier, Washington Park]*

A small number of the owner participants had rented in Washington Park prior to purchasing in the area. One had lived in nearby suburbs for decades before deciding that Washington Park was a good option for a downsizing move, enabling them to avoid settling for a smaller unit otherwise within their price range, housing not fully meeting their needs, or a dwelling in a more distant and less familiar location. Others said the relatively affordable rent allowed them to save up to buy in an area that they have grown familiar with.

*Where I was from, Carlton, was not in a price range for us to rent, so we were on Domain and to be honest, I didn't even know Washington Park existed until I did a search. We came out probably a couple of weekends, there was a lot of open houses, a lot of - had a look at the units, and we just applied for a bunch of them and we ended up renting. But that was six years ago and earlier this year we just*

*bought off the vendor. That's how literally we found about it, just searching, trying to find cheap rental places that were close to shops, train station, bus station, just for easy access. [owner-occupier, Washington Park]*

## 5.2 Interactions across tenure

A major stated aim of mixed tenure renewals is to create neighbourhoods where households occupying different types of housing interact with one another. The employment of a community engagement service during the initial years of the renewal was partly intended to facilitate this.

In reflecting on Washington Park as a planned neighbourhood with households of different tenures living side-by-side, most participants said they paid little attention to their neighbours' housing tenure. While all were aware that there are social housing units throughout different buildings in Washington Park, and also in the Riverwood estate, most professed disinterest in whether the neighbours encountered on local walks or at the Library and Knowledge Centre may be renting or purchasing their home. Most highlighted that housing tenure was rarely if ever discussed with neighbours at community events or otherwise.

*We have a barbecue here every Friday that is free for residents, and nobody asks you if you're from housing or not housing. [social tenant, Washington Park]*

*I don't see any problems. No. The problems I have seen have nothing to do with people living - being owners or being housing residents. I haven't seen that. Where I live, which is 70 apartments, we don't know who belongs to housing. You could guess a couple, but that's it. [social tenant, Washington Park]*

*We don't know who are owners and who are not. [social tenant, Washington Park]*

*I find this area quite decent, really! [...] Perhaps they've been selective about the residents they allow to live here... Of course, it can't quite compare to Northern Sydney, but I don't think it's much different from Hurstville. [owner-occupier, Washington Park]*

Despite reportedly paying little heed to their neighbours' housing tenure, there seemed to be few interactions across tenure groups. Most participants spoke of mainly keeping to themselves or their existing friendship circles. This could have been partly a lingering impact of pandemic lockdowns, with people still slowly readjusting to 'normal' life. Most, however, recalled having incidental interactions with neighbours, such as when attending community barbeques and other activities, and discovering interlocutors' housing situation in passing. These interactions tend to remain incidental rather than turning into longer-lasting friendships.

Common language proficiency was reportedly a challenge, sometimes limiting incidental interactions to simple hellos or a wave and a nod. Residents of similar backgrounds, especially those with a common language, however, were more likely to have extended interactions. Several of the participants of our Mandarin-speaking focus group, for example, noted their regular attendance at language-specific organised activities together, such as the art and dancing classes. Other participants with young families also said they were more likely to strike up conversations and meet ups with other young families due to similar life stages.

*There's a language barrier, but basic interactions are still possible. [social tenant, Washington Park]*

*We have a non-Chinese neighbour who has been participating in our tai chi sessions for several years. [social tenant, Washington Park]*

In that sense, Washington Park is functioning socially in ways not dissimilar to other recently developed, higher density, mixed housing neighbourhoods, where interactions among neighbours, regardless of tenure, are predominantly incidental and cordial. This is what Thompson (2018; and Thompson et al. 2015) refers to as 'weak ties', and highlights the importance of 'third spaces' in contributing to social sustainability in neighbourhoods. In the case of Washington Park and the Riverwood estate, the variety of community engagement and social activities as discussed throughout this chapter act as these 'third spaces' that facilitate and encourage social interactions. While from the outset the incidental interactions may seem superficial, they nonetheless serve important functions in contributing to community harmony and social cohesion. The familiarity of the same faces that you see, though you may not know their names or backgrounds, can be grounding. This finding is also similar to that observed in the Ashmore (Easthope et al. 2023a) and Green Square precincts (Easthope et al. 2023b), neighbourhoods that are also undergoing major renewal and densification activities.

This compares starkly to participants' reflections of social interactions among residents of Washington Park and the Riverwood estate. Given that many Washington Park residents highlight they do not walk or drive into the estate, incidental interactions among residents of the two areas are somewhat limited to the organised community events and activities. Of the very few who do, it was more likely for visiting friends, family or former neighbours, therefore, people who they already had pre-existing relationships and interactions with, rather than forming new bonds.

### 5.3 Chapter summary

In this chapter, we reflected on how different residents came to live in the neighbourhood, and whether and how they interact with each other. At the broader level, Washington Park is functioning socially like many other higher density neighbourhoods. Interactions among residents of different tenure types remain largely incidental, with language proficiency and the lingering effects of the COVID-19 lockdowns presenting as possible barriers to deeper interactions.

As highlighted in literature, 'third spaces' can act as important venues in facilitating and encouraging neighbourhood social interactions. For now, community engagement and social activities like the weekly barbeques are performing this vital function. Suggestions of more local amenities like cafés and eateries as discussed in previous chapters would provide more opportunities for these incidental interactions to occur. With most participants intending to stay living in the neighbourhood (which we detail in the next chapter), and as we continue to recover socially from the pandemic, it is likely that more and deeper levels of interactions may be cultivated in the years ahead.

## 6. Looking ahead

In this chapter, we reflect on participants' aspirations for the future. These include their plans to stay on or leave the neighbourhood, as well as how they hope the renewal of the Riverwood estate may proceed.

As hinted in the previous chapter, most of our participants expressed their intention to continue living in the neighbourhood. Cited reasons included the relative affordability of homes for purchase or rent, convenient location, and suitably sized homes. Participants with young families especially spoke of the reduced likelihood of needing to periodically upgrade or upsize as their family circumstances change, allowing them to stay put, and really connect with the neighbourhood and neighbours. All these contribute to a sense of attachment and belonging, and facilitate the development of more meaningful interactions as the neighbourhood continues to mature and settle in.

*Here very warm, Riverwood. I like everywhere same building [to be] fixed like that, nice balcony. My balcony [is] tiny, it doesn't matter, I have the roof [over] my head. [social tenant, Riverwood estate]*

### 6.1 Renewing the Riverwood estate

Noting how different Washington Park and the Riverwood estate currently look, participants were asked for their views on the possibility that renewal activities will continue. Most expressed support for the Riverwood estate to undergo a similar kind of renewal as seen in Washington Park. Longer-term residents said that this had been needed for a long time. This is despite many properties having been part of the Neighbourhood Improvement Program during the 1990s to upgrade their level of liveability and community safety. Participants who have moved into the neighbourhood more recently agreed, citing the split identity as discussed earlier in section 3.1, that the renewal extending to the estate would not only unify how the neighbourhood looks and functions, but also contribute to resolving the housing affordability crisis that continues to be experienced throughout much of Sydney and indeed Australia. This is especially given that many of the owner and private renter participants have benefited from the relatively affordable yet suitably sized housing options available in the neighbourhood.

Several participants living on the estate noted that, while their dwellings were comfortably familiar, they were also rather old, and under-maintained.

*I love Riverwood but problem is my house is very old. After nearly five months, leaking upstairs, people's shower leaking in my bathroom. [social tenant, Riverwood estate]*

Despite the near universal support for the renewal activities to continue throughout the estate, such support was not without concerns. As highlighted in preceding chapters, the traffic conditions and the lack of cafés and eateries in the neighbourhood are primary areas cited as requiring attention to improve liveability. Participants voiced fears that, if the renewal is to extend to the Riverwood estate, these concerns may be further exacerbated. Further improvements in traffic management would be needed to accommodate the sizable increase in population that would result.

*I believe redevelopment is a positive step, but a prerequisite is achieving a balance between the buildings and traffic. Now the traffic capacity is inadequate. While solutions do exist, they often demand substantial financial investment. [social tenant, Washington Park]*

Figure 8: An example of a walk-up flats as seen from Belmore Road, where several older participants had relocated from and into newer units in Washington Park



Source: Edgar Liu

*If you're going to build a community, you need to add everything in this area for a community. You can't just build it and go, we've done it, just go up there to the shops, go down there for the doctors. You need to now have accessibility. [owner-occupier, Washington Park]*

*The main thing is the services. Before you can build any more, bring people in, improve the services for the people that are here now. [owner-occupier, Washington Park]*

*As long as there's parking to compensate for the density. I'm guessing every building's got an underground level, three or four levels. So yeah, get people off parking on the street and in their spots, then that's how you counteract that - some of the density issues. [owner-occupier, Washington Park]*

As noted in previous chapters, there have also been suggestions to improve the availability and variety of services in the area. As abovementioned, participants' primary focus is on cafés and local eateries; some would also like to see a small shopping and service centre set up if the renewal extends to the Riverwood estate, where a bulk-billing GP clinic may also be located alongside such cafés and eateries.

*A refresh of all the streets and lighting and putting more restaurants and stuff like that, that would be very helpful. [owner-occupier, Washington Park]*

*I think the main thing for me would be whatever the original was supposed to be, like a little shop, a coffee shop. I think that builds community as well. [owner-occupier, Washington Park]*

*One building, where they have the dental, the medical centre, and then the shopping mall and something like that. [social tenant, Washington Park]*

*This kind of outdoor area, nice chairs and lots of greenery. I think if they could get rid of those old buildings that might make this area - improve the look of this area even more and make it look more like this, like this side. [owner-occupier, Washington Park]*

### **6.1.1 Visions for a renewed Riverwood estate**

Given their concerns over traffic management and lack of local eatery options, participants were asked to reflect on what they would deem to be an acceptable level of density. Specifically, participants were asked to reflect on whether the density experienced in Washington Park—where residential blocks are between 7 and 10 storeys high, primarily separated by single-lane, two-way roadways—is about the right level, or if they would envision something more or less dense for the neighbourhood. Most agreed that the current level of density in Washington Park seems about right for the area, so long as more shops and services become available (as discussed above) and that the traffic conditions also improved.

*I think that if they're going to propose or look at doing upgrades, they need to look at major road traffic, schooling, all that first before they start building. [owner-occupier, Washington Park]*

*I personally don't think it's too much. I think it's just - I feel it's comfortable. [owner-occupier, Washington Park]*

*I don't want to see them go any higher than what we've got. [...] I'm just seeing in my head the area is now going to become completely flooded with apartments, and if they're going to be high rise, you're going to be adding so many more [...] If it got to a stage where the whole area was flooded like that, I don't think I would probably stay in the area. I think we would move. [owner-occupier, Washington Park]*

*If they replicate how this looks in terms of high rises, use all the bottom units as shopfronts. So get rid of a road, leave it as a walking area for everyone to walk around, five or six different shops around and then yeah, everyone would be able to have that greenery, have that walking space, a shared area and shops to go to. [owner-occupier, Washington Park]*

Participants generally saw Riverwood as a family-friendly area, and suggested that the continuation of the renewal should reflect this. This could include making more family-friendly (with 3 bedrooms or more) yet affordable apartments available for rent and purchase. The planning of local amenities should also respond to this vision, with an expectation that many families will look to remain in the neighbourhood rather than move on in a few years. Several participants highlighted that at present there are few appropriate amenities or facilities for teenagers nearby, and this may have contributed to the level of opportunity crime committed out of boredom that these participants experience. While there is a skate park immediately north of the Riverwood Community Centre, this was not considered as well used. In addition to the community centre, there is also the Morris lemma Indoor Sports Centre, both of which are near Washington Park. While both offer children and youth programs, they (especially at the Indoor Sports Centre) often require fees and charges that may be unaffordable to households that are more financially pressured and/or contain several children and teenagers. It was suggested that more public facilities could be installed at Kentucky Road Reserve, Salt Pan Creek Reserve, and/or Riverwood Park near existing facilities such as the Riverwood Legion Junior Rugby League Football Club house, and public toilet facilities.

*I think it's good for families now. I've noticed a lot of people that have babies and toddlers, take their kids out for walks. [owner-occupier, Washington Park]*

There were similar observations regarding whether the local schools may have the capacity to take on the number of children that will likely move into the neighbourhood as the renewal continues.

*Parents are going to come with children. They're going to go to school in the next few years ... go to school. If this school says, no, we can't take anymore, where can they go to school? [owner-occupier, Washington Park]*

## 6.2 Chapter summary

In this chapter, we reflected on participants' vision for the neighbourhood. Specifically, participants were asked about their opinions of whether the renewal should continue and extended to the rest of the Riverwood estate and, if so, to what density and amenity. On the main, participants expressed overwhelming support for further renewal, citing the poor quality of housing, an impression of a lack of safety, and the need—for the neighbourhood, for Sydney, and for Australia more generally—for more affordable housing options as reasons for support. While they note the level of density—residential towers of 7 to 10 stories—seems about right to participants, concerns remain over whether appropriate infrastructure, services and amenities may accompany further renewal. This is especially in view of the poor traffic conditions the neighbourhood already experience, and the general lack of shopping and eatery options in Washington Park. The final outcomes, of what may be delivered as part of an extended renewal, may determine whether and which of the residents will choose to remain living in the neighbourhood in the long term.

## 7. Conclusions

A revised approach to examine the longer-term impacts of estate renewal on the suburb of Riverwood was conducted throughout 2023. This aimed to gauge residents' views on whether and how the renewal activities have met their stated objectives of providing quality affordable housing (for rent and for purchase), reducing the stigma of a housing estate, and creating an integrated residential and community precinct. In all, 30 residents and 1 stakeholder participated in a series of focus groups and interviews. These reflections of lived experiences are accompanied by analysis of secondary data from the Australian Census, housing management records, NAPLAN scores, recorded crime and safety information, and employment data, to collectively paint a picture of how the neighbourhood as a whole has changed over the course of the renewal.

This final wave evaluation of the Riverwood North estate renewal adds to the small number of examples where the longer-term lived outcomes of the renewal continue to be monitored well after renewal activities are completed. This relatively long-term, decade-long commitment allow the expected outcomes, some of which—as noted in our previous report (Liu et al. 2022) and other similar studies (e.g. Popkin et al. 2004)—may take longer to emerge to be properly reflected on by residents and stakeholders alike. A distinction was made between the areas of Washington Park (a small section of the estate that has undergone complete physical redevelopment) and the Riverwood estate (the remainder of the neighbourhood where plans for renewal may commence in the next few years), to highlight potential differences in outcomes enjoyed by the two groups of residents.

In this report, these reflections have been thematically grouped into four chapters, respectively relaying participants' views on the physical design of the neighbourhood, the availability of local infrastructure and services, the experiences of living in a mixed tenure precinct, and their hopes for what may come. While most agreed that Washington Park, and to a lesser extent the Riverwood estate, is an attractive place to live, several areas of improvement were suggested as ways to increase the overall liveability of the neighbourhood. These primarily concerned improved traffic management, broadening the variety of shops and eateries in the area, and the upgrading of local infrastructure like streetlighting and uneven pavements to enhance safety. These are especially important in light of potential further renewal, accompanied by notable population and housing density increases, where there are concerns of these being further exacerbated.

When asked to specifically reflect on living in a mixed tenure precinct, most participants said they paid little attention to the different tenures. While aware that it (at the least, Washington Park) was built with the intention of owner-occupiers, private and social renters living side-by-side, most did not consider the difference in tenures as a potential barrier to social interactions. Given the many different cultural groups that live in Washington Park and the Riverwood estate, however, language (more specifically English) proficiency was more likely an obstacle that limited more meaningful interactions across different resident groups. This is despite all participants thinking that mixed culture neighbourhoods, just as they currently experience in Washington Park and the Riverwood estate, is a very positive aspect of Australian societies.

Reflecting on the overall aim of creating an integrated residential and community precinct, it appears the renewal has to a large extent been successful. While noting that further improvements will enhance their quality of life, most considered that Washington Park as it stands is a nice enough place for owner-occupiers, private and social renters alike to want to call it home, for now and, for many, into the future. The areas suggested for improvement, as noted above and throughout this report, are not that different to those that also require attention in many other neighbourhoods (e.g. Easthope et al. 2023a, 2023b), including those that have and continue to undergo similar renewals (e.g. Pinnegar & Liu 2019; Pinnegar et al 2013). In that way, the Riverwood North/Washington Park renewal has been successful in creating a 'normal', imperfect neighbourhood rather than some idealised, utopian vision that residents know do not exist and also do not want.

*We can't have perfect, don't look for perfect, it doesn't exist. [...] I know we can't get perfect but we can improve on things. [social tenant, Washington Park]*

Participants reflected on not knowing what social and community activities are occurring, on who may be able to access which local amenities and facilities, and on whether and when the renewal of the remainder of the estate will commence. This highlights a broader need to rethink the communication and engagement opportunities for the neighbourhood. Reviving discontinued newsletters was suggested as a potential avenue; supporting ROAR to continue its bottom-up, grassroot actions was proposed as another. Keeping the community informed of plans for further renewal, and outcomes of how they have contributed to their community (e.g. in initiating and running activities, in participating in consultations), are important ways to keep residents engaged. It is also an important mechanism to learning what adjustments to the renewal activities may be needed, and what additional support may benefit the community, in sustaining an integrated residential and community precinct as the renewal had intended.

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## 9. Appendices

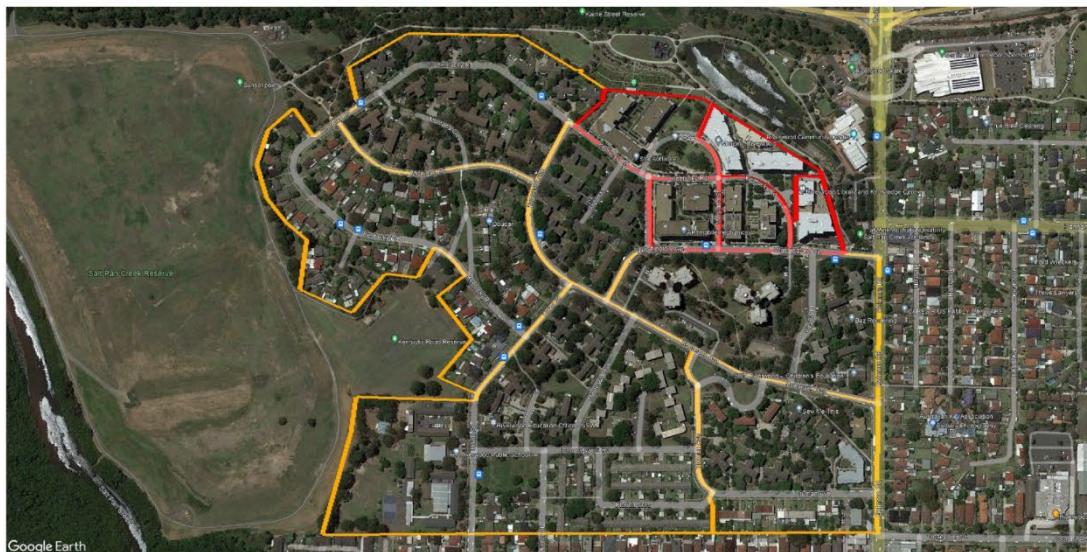
### *Appendix 1: Key stakeholder interviews – master topic guide*

1. Can you tell me a little about your role in relation to the renewal of Riverwood North/Washington Park?
  - a. How long have you/were you involved in the renewal?
    - i. Is that still continuing?
  - b. Did you know much about the area prior to this?
2. How do you think the renewal has changed Riverwood as a neighbourhood and as a community?
  - a. What are some of the major improvements that you have seen?
  - b. What are some of the areas that still need further attention?
3. A major focus on the renewal was the delivery of a mixed tenure neighbourhood. To what extent do you think it has achieved that?
  - a. Do you see much interaction across different groups of residents?
4. The rest of the Riverwood estate is expected to be renewed as a mixed tenure development in a similar way to how Washington Park was renewed.
  - a. Reflecting on the processes in place at the time, what do you recall worked well?
  - b. For things that didn't work well
    - i. What were they?
    - ii. How can they be improved?
  - c. What do you hope the continuation and completion of the renewal activities will do for the neighbourhood and community? [prompts: physical change, social change, sense of community/attachment]



## Riverwood North/Washington Park renewal project – final wave evaluation

Researchers at UNSW are looking to speak with people in Riverwood / Washington Park about your experiences of living in the neighbourhood in a series of focus group discussions.



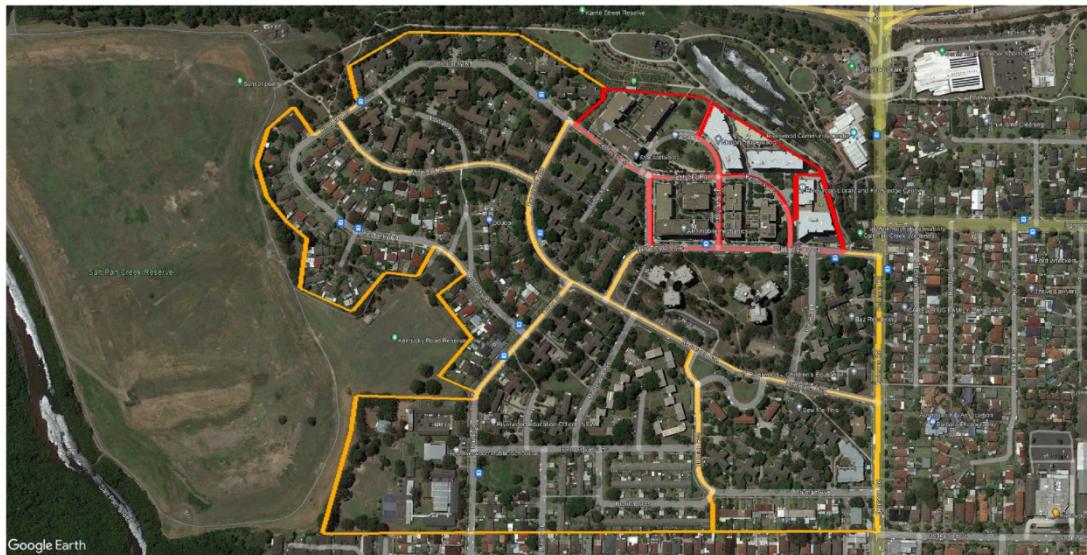
Places are limited. If you live within the **red** or **orange** boundaries in the map above, are aged 18 years or older, and are interested in speaking with us, please contact our project manager Dr Edgar Liu ([Edgar.liu@unsw.edu.au](mailto:Edgar.liu@unsw.edu.au); +61 2 9065 8969) for more details, or check out our Project Information Statement at [unsw.to/Riverwood](http://unsw.to/Riverwood).

The selected participants will receive a \$50 Coles Myer gift voucher at the conclusion of the focus groups.

This project has UNSW ethics approval (Approval number HC230519).

## Riverwood North/Washington Park 重建工程—— 最后一轮评估

新南威尔士大学研究人员正在开展一个项目，旨在通过一系列焦点小组访谈，了解您在 Washington Park / Riverwood 的生活体验。



参与本次研究名额有限。如果您居住在上面地图中**红色或橙色**边界内，年满 18 岁，对此项研究有兴趣，请联系项目负责人廖宇立博士 (Dr Edgar Liu, [Edgar.liu@unsw.edu.au](mailto:Edgar.liu@unsw.edu.au); +61 2 9065 8969) 获取更多详情，或查看《参与者信息声明和同意书 [unsw.to/Riverwood](http://unsw.to/Riverwood)》。

焦点小组访谈结束后，被选中的参与者将获得价值 50 澳元的 Coles Myer 礼券。

该项目已获得新南威尔士大学伦理委员会(HREC) 批准 (批准号 HC230519)。

## مشروع تجديد ريفروود نورث/ واشنطن بارك- تقييم الفوج الأخير

يرغب باحثون من جامعة نيو ساوث ويلز في الحديث مع سكان منطقة ريفروود/ واشنطن بارك حول تجاربهم في العيش في المنطقة وذلك عبر سلسلة من اللقاءات الجماعية (مجموعات التركيز). ستعقد مجموعات التركيز حسب التوقيت المذكور أدناه في غرفة المجتمع المحلي والتي تقع في 9B Washington Avenue في ريفروود.

الخميس، 19 أكتوبر، 9:30-11:00 صباحاً



الأماكن محددة.

إذا كنت من المقيمين ضمن المناطق المحددة باللون **الأحمر** أو **البرتقالي** كما هو موضح على الخارطة أعلاه، وتبلغ من العمر 18 عاماً أو أكثر، وترغب في الحديث معنا والحصول على التفاصيل ، يرجى التواصل بالإنجليزية مع مدير المشروع د. إدغار ليو ([Edgar.liu@unsw.edu.au](mailto:Edgar.liu@unsw.edu.au)) أو بالعربية مع رنا الشكعة ([r.shakaa@student.unsw.edu.au](mailto:r.shakaa@student.unsw.edu.au)). يمكنك أيضا الإطلاع على بيان معلومات المشروع على الرابط [unsw.to/Riverwood](http://unsw.to/Riverwood)

سيحصل المشاركون المختارون في ختام مجموعات التركيز على قسيمة شراء من كولز ماير بقيمة **50** دولاراً.

هذا المشروع حاصل على موافقة لجنة أخلاقيات البحث العلمي في جامعة نيو ساوث ويلز (رقم الملف: HC230519).

Appendix 3: Resident focus groups promotional text message

Monday 11:31 am

SGCH here. Join us for a Focus group at the SGCH Riverwood office. Click link for more info.

[link.sgch.com.au/UNS](http://link.sgch.com.au/UNS)

Questions? Call Kristin at [9001 4436](tel:90014436). No reply

Appendix 4: Resident focus groups – master topic guide

In English	In Simplified Chinese	In Arabic
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How long have you lived in Riverwood?             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What prompted you to move to/settle in Riverwood?                     <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Did you know about the suburb before moving here?</li> </ol> </li> <li>How has the suburb changed since you first moved here?</li> <li>Have the changes been for better or for worse?</li> </ol> </li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>您在 Riverwood 生活了多久?             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>是什么原因促使您搬来或在 Riverwood 定居?                     <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>在搬来这里之前, 您对这个郊区了解吗?</li> </ol> </li> <li>和您刚搬来这里时相比, 该郊区有什么变化?</li> <li>这些变化是好还是坏?</li> </ol> </li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>منذ متى وأنت تعيش/تعيشين في منطقة ريفر وود؟             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ما الذي دفعك للانتقال والعيش في ريفر وود؟                     <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>هل كنت تعرف/تعرفين المنطقة قبل الانتقال إليها؟</li> </ol> </li> <li>كيف تغيرت المنطقة منذ إنتقالك إليها؟</li> <li>باعتقادك, هل تغيرت المنطقة للأفضل أم للأسوأ؟</li> </ol> </li> </ol>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What do you remember of the renewal activities that happened at the northern end of the estate/suburb?             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Did you take part in any consultation activities?</li> <li>Do you think your inputs were considered or taken on board?</li> <li>How (else) did it impact your day-to-day life?                     <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Have the changes been for the better or worse? How so and in what ways?</li> </ol> </li> </ol> </li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>您对发生在该园区/郊区北端的重建工程有哪些印象?             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>您是否参与过咨询活动?</li> <li>您认为您的想法是否被考虑或采纳?</li> <li>该工程对您的日常生活(还)有哪些影响?                     <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>发生的变化是好还是坏? 有哪些变化? 从哪些方面表现出来?</li> </ol> </li> </ol> </li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ماذا تذكر/تذكري من أنشطة التجديد التي حدثت في الطرف الشمالي من المنطقة؟             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>هل شاركت بأي اجتماعات أو لقاءات محلية بخصوص المشروع؟</li> <li>هل تعتقد أن مشاركتك قد تمأخذها بعين الاعتبار؟</li> <li>كيف أثرت هذه الأنشطة على حياتك اليومية؟                     <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>هل تعتبر/تعترين أن هذه التأثيرات كانت للأفضل أم للأسوأ؟ كيف ذلك ومن أي ناحية؟</li> </ol> </li> </ol> </li> </ol>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What do you think of having a mix of people (tenure mix / social mix) live in the new Riverwood North/Washington Park?             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Do you think that has changed the community? How so and in what ways?</li> </ol> </li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>您对不同人群混合(业权混合/社会背景混合)居住在 Riverwood North/Washington Park 新社区有什么看法?             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>您认为混合居住的形式改变了社区吗? 有哪些变化? 在哪些方面改变了社区?</li> </ol> </li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ما هو رأيك بالتنوع السكاني (تنوع حيازة الملكية/تنوع اجتماعي) الحاصل في منطقة ريفر وود نورث/واشنطن بارك؟             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>هل تعتقد/تعتقدين أن هذا التنوع ساهم في تغيير المجتمع المحلي؟ كيف ذلك ومن أي ناحية؟</li> </ol> </li> </ol>

<p>b. Do you interact with different groups of residents much? How so and in what ways?</p> <p>c. How important do you think tenure/social mix has part of Riverwood's ongoing renewal? [Prompt: compared to other factors like quality/size of the new homes, the location, changes to local amenities etc]</p>	<p>b. 您与不同群体的住户互动频繁吗? 有哪些互动? 以什么方式与他们互动?</p> <p>c. 您认为业权混合/社会背景混合对于 Riverwood 的重建有多重要? [提示: 与新房的质量/大小、位置、当地设施的变化等其他因素相比]</p>	<p>ب. هل تتفاعل مع فئات السكان المختلفة؟ كيف ذلك وما هي وسائل التفاعل؟</p> <p>ت. برأيك، ما أهمية التنوع السكاني (تنوع حيارة الملكية والتنوع الاجتماعي) الحاصل في عملية التجديد الحضري المستمرة في ريفر وود؟</p>
<p>4. What do you think about community activities that were introduced around the time the renewal started (e.g. movie night, weekly barbecue)?</p> <p>a. Did you participate much?</p>	<p>4. 您对重建工程初始时举办的社区活动（如夜间电影、每周烧烤）有什么看法？</p> <p>a. 您参与得多吗？</p>	<p>4. ما هو رأيك بالأنشطة والفعاليات التي أقيمت أو حصلت في المراحل الأولى من التجديد (مثلا: سينما في الهواء الطلق ، حفلات الشواء الأسبوعية) ث. هل كنت تشارك باستمرار في هذه الفعاليات؟</p>
<p>5. Many of these activities were facilitated by Lance Brooks and his company. How have things changed since they left?</p> <p>a. Do you know if many of these activities are still continuing?</p> <p>b. Has the level of participation changed (are there more people going? Fewer people?)</p> <p>c. Has the kinds of activities changed?</p>	<p>5. 这些活动很多是由 Lance Brooks 和其公司举办的。他们离开以后发生了哪些变化？</p> <p>a. 您知道这些活动是否还在继续举办？</p> <p>b. 参与程度是否有所变化（参加人数是增多还是减少了？）</p> <p>c. 活动类型是否发生变化？</p>	<p>5. لقد كانت معظم الفعاليات والأنشطة منظمة من قبل ليس بروس وشركته. كيف تغيرت الأمور عقب مغادرة الشركة؟</p> <p>أ. هل تعلم/تعلمين إذا كانت أي من الأنشطة أو الفعاليات مستمرة حتى الآن؟</p> <p>ب. هل تغيرت نسبة الحضور (هل ازداد العدد أم أصبح أقل؟)</p> <p>ت. هل تغيرت طبيعة هذه الأنشطة والفعاليات؟</p>
<p>6. What do you hope the renewal will bring to Riverwood North/Washington Park? [prompts: physical change, social change, sense of community/attachment]</p>	<p>6. 您希望重建工程对 Riverwood North/Washington Park 带来什么？[提示：物质方面的变化、社会方面的变化、社区归属感]</p>	<p>6. ماذ تأمل/تأمين أن يجلب مشروع التجديد إلى منطقة ريفر وود/ واشنطن بارك؟ (مثلا: تغييرات فيزيائية، تغييرات اجتماعية، تكافل مجتمعي)</p>

Appendix 5: Boundaries of geographies used for data collation

Table A1: List of Statistical Areas Level 1 (SA1, 2021) and mesh blocks (2016) used for Census data extraction

Washington Park		Riverwood estate	
2016 (mesh blocks)	2021 (SA1s)	2016 (mesh blocks)	2021 (SA1s)
10192671000	11903137327	10181330000	11903137308
11205044300	11903137329	10181352000	11903137309
11205044400	11903137331	10181410000	11903137312
	11903137332	10182720000	11903137313
	11903137334	10192630000	11903137314
		10192640000	11903137330
		10192701000	
		10192702000	
		10192703000	
		10192704000	
		11204921300	
		11204962000	
		11204969900	
		11205003300	
		11205044500	
		11205860400	

Figure A1: Washington Park and the Riverwood estate within the broader context of the Riverwood suburb, 2021.

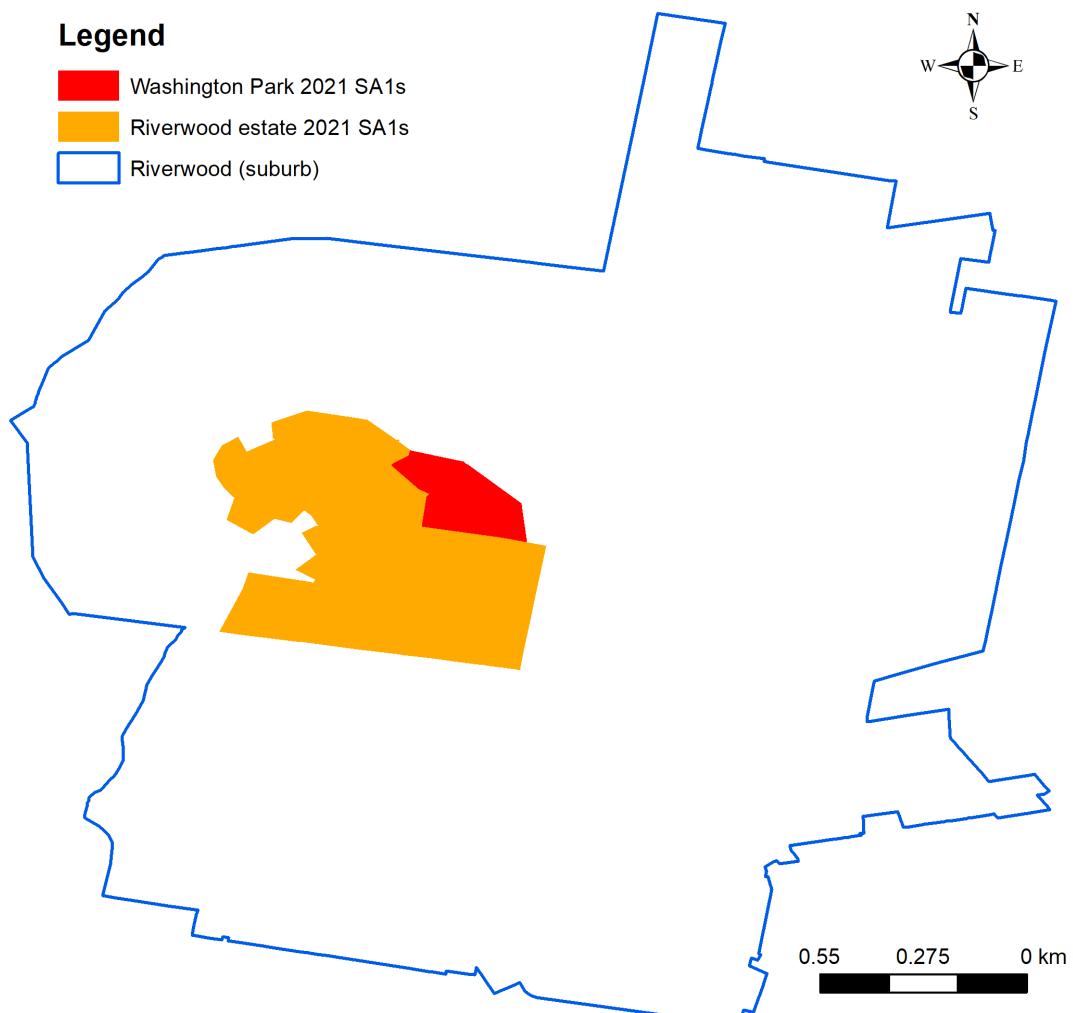


Figure A2: Change in Statistical Area Level 1 boundary between 2016 and 2021



Figure A3: Washington Park and the Riverwood estate within the broader context of the Canterbury-Bankstown Local Government Area, 2021.

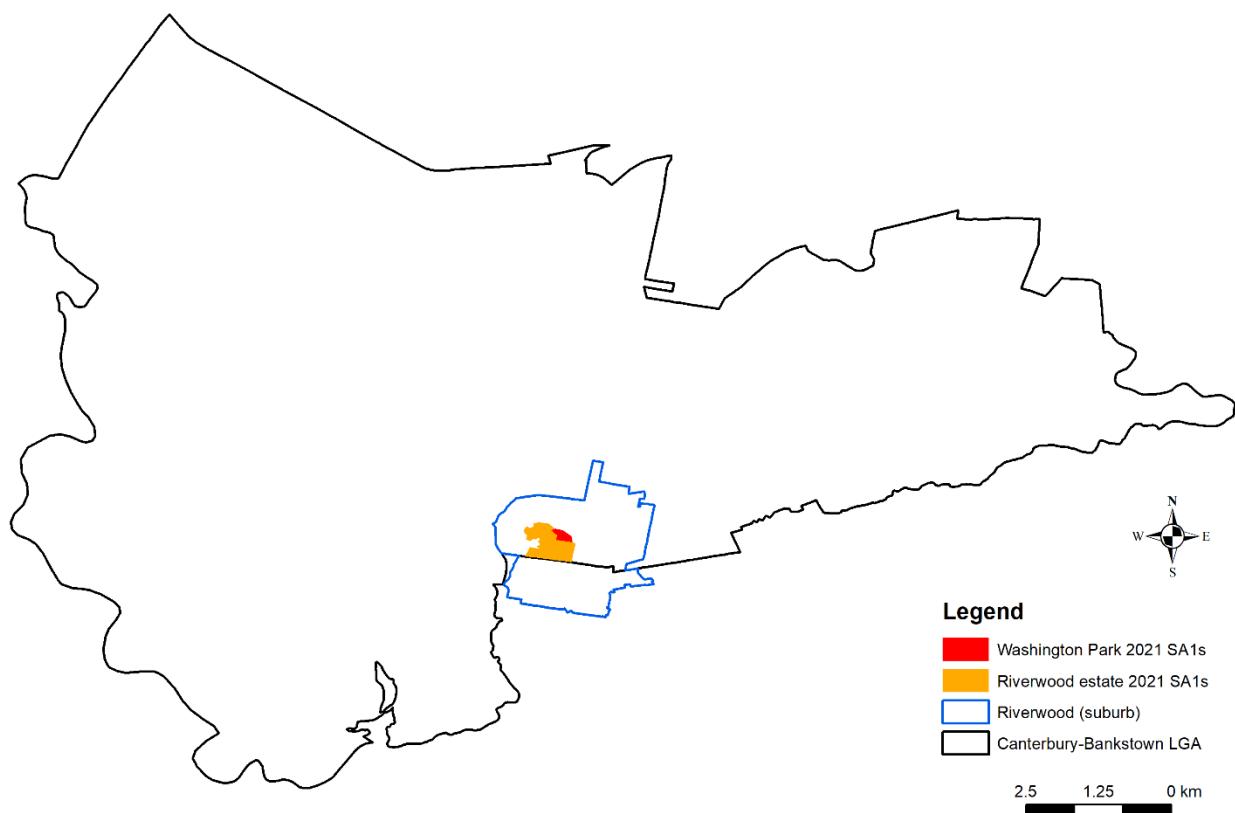
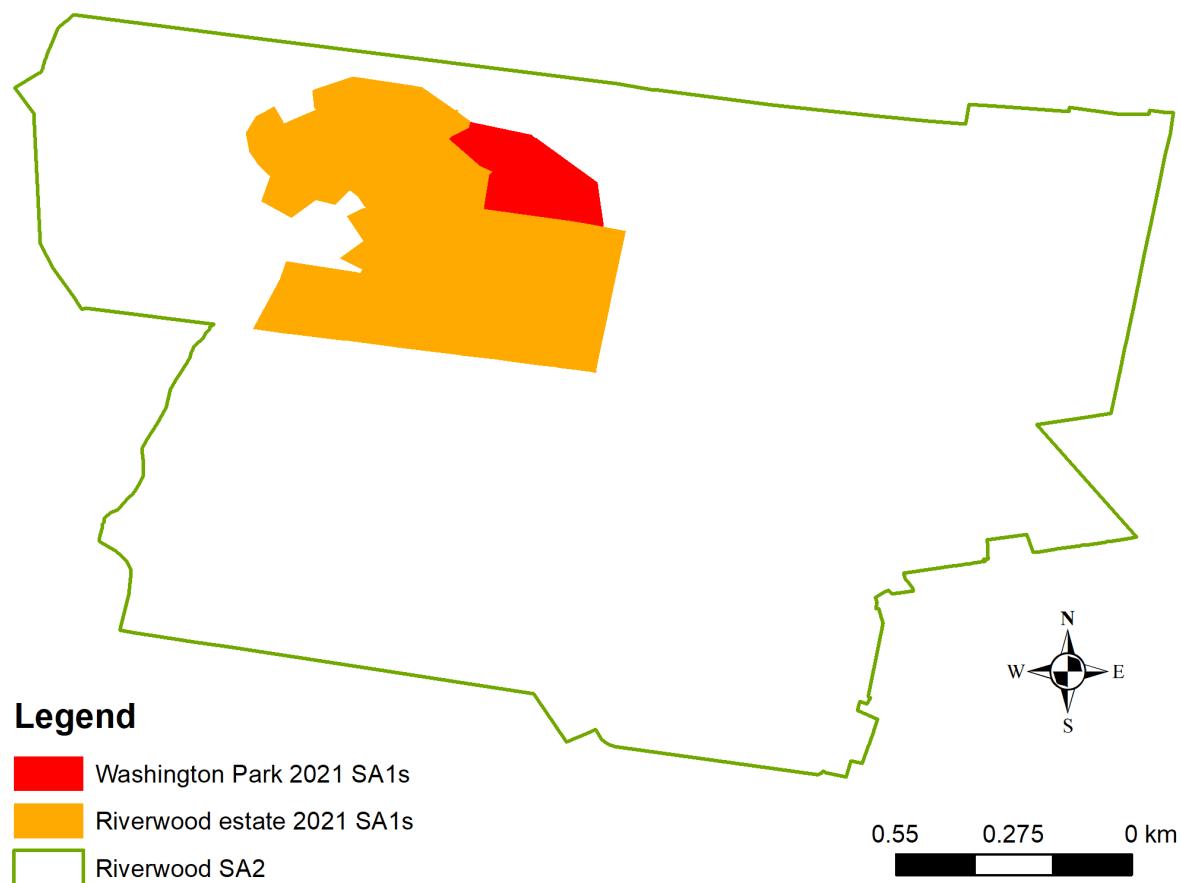


Figure A4: Washington Park and the Riverwood estate within the broader context of the Riverwood Statistical Area Level 2, 2021.



## Appendix 6: 2021 contextual data

This appendix provides an overview of the current population of Washington Park and the Riverwood estate. Data is primarily sourced from the 2021 Australian Census of Population and Housing (ABS 2022). Comparisons to the suburb of Riverwood (see Figure A1), and the state of NSW are made to provide comparative contexts. All totals reported exclude individuals and/or households within each variable that were classified as 'not applicable' so that only relevant responses are included. For example, only households currently paying off mortgages are included when discussing monthly mortgage repayments (Table A14); likewise, only individuals aged 15 years or older (Australia's minimum working age) are included when discussing labour force status (Table A22).

For some data sources (e.g. changes to unemployment rate from the National Skills Commission's (2022) Small Area Labour Market series), data may not be available at these geographic levels. Data from the Riverwood Statistical Area Level 2 (see Figure A4) and/or the Canterbury-Bankstown LGA (see Figure A3) may be presented instead.

For data on school enrolments and literacy and numeracy levels taken from the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority's [www.myschool.edu.au](http://www.myschool.edu.au) websites, data for the two schools that local Riverwood residents would most likely attend is included.

In 2021, and by age profile, there were notable contrasts between the residents of Washington Park and the Riverwood estate (Table A2). With a median age of 34.5 (same as the state of NSW), the residents of Washington Park was comparatively younger than that of the Riverwood estate, whose median age was 52.0. the most common age group for Washington Park residents was 25-34 years; for residents of the Riverwood estate, it was 55-64 years.

*Table A2: Resident age profile, 2021*

Washington Park		Riverwood estate		Riverwood suburb		NSW		
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
0-14 years	243	15%	263	13%	1,967	15%	1,470,001	18%
15-24 years	154	10%	232	12%	1,481	12%	954,081	12%
25-34 years	503	31%	141	7%	1,934	15%	1,142,024	14%
35-44 years	295	18%	181	9%	1,736	14%	1,103,169	14%
45-54 years	78	5%	225	12%	1,519	12%	1,016,942	13%
55-64 years	113	7%	324	17%	1,684	13%	961,783	12%
65-74 years	93	6%	299	15%	1,334	10%	788,727	10%
75+ years	124	8%	289	15%	1,123	9%	635,419	8%
Total	1,603		1,954		12,778		8,072,146	
Median age	34.5		52.0		44.5		34.5	

Source: ABS (2022)

In 2021, almost half of the Washington Park population aged 15 years or older were married (Table A3). This was a slightly higher percentage than compared to the Riverwood suburb (45%) and the state of NSW (47%). For the residents of the Riverwood estate, less than one-third were married in 2021 (31%), with more (33%) having never been married. There were notably higher percentages of Riverwood estate residents having been divorced (19%) or widowed (11%) than in the other areas analysed.

The majority of Washington Park and Riverwood estate residents in 2021 were born overseas (Table A4). Indeed, while two-thirds of NSW residents were born in Australia (65%), only two-fifths of Riverwood suburb residents, and one-third of Riverwood estate residents (35%) were born in Australia. The proportion drops to 28% for Washington Park residents, making Australia the second most common birthplace, behind China (29%), which was also the second most common birthplace in both the Riverwood estate (18%) and suburb (21%).

Table A3: Resident marital status, persons aged 15 years or older, 2021

Washington Park		Riverwood estate		Riverwood suburb		NSW		
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Married	656	49%	522	31%	4,863	45%	3,124,151	47%
Separated	47	3%	103	6%	414	4%	209,657	3%
Divorced	123	9%	325	19%	1,196	11%	569,516	9%
Widowed	50	4%	188	11%	627	6%	339,990	5%
Never married	474	35%	564	33%	3,720	34%	2,358,844	36%
Total	1,350		1,702		10,820		6,602,158	

Source: ABS (2022)

Table A4: Resident birthplace, 2021

Washington Park		Riverwood estate		Riverwood suburb		NSW		
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Australia	447	28%	704	35%	4,970	39%	5,277,497	65%
New Zealand & rest of Oceania	45	3%	49	2%	452	4%	183,935	2%
UK & Ireland	5	0%	7	0%	110	1%	302,353	4%
Rest of Europe	33	2%	109	5%	537	4%	299,427	4%
China*	451	29%	364	18%	2,728	21%	311,515	4%
Rest of Asia	388	25%	218	11%	2,123	17%	817,669	10%
Middle East & North Africa	72	5%	244	12%	678	5%	232,021	3%
Other/Not stated	134	9%	291	15%	1,163	9%	647,730	8%
Total	1,575		1,986		12,761		8,072,147	

Note: \* includes China and the two Special Administrative Regions of Hong Kong and Macau.

Source: ABS (2022)

Of the overseas-born resident population in Washington Park, almost half (47%) were relatively recent migrants to Australia, having arrived since 2011 (Table A5). This is a much higher percentage compared to the state of NSW as a whole (32%), the suburb of Riverwood (28%), and even more so compared to the Riverwood estate (13%). Most of the estate's overseas-born residents arrived in Australia before 2000.

Table A5: Overseas-born residents' year of arrival in Australia, 2021

Washington Park		Riverwood estate		Riverwood suburb		NSW		
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Before 1951	0	0%	0	0%	22	0%	22,421	1%
1951-1960	3	0%	13	1%	76	1%	76,446	3%
1961-1970	15	1%	53	5%	299	4%	168,616	7%
1971-1980	15	1%	96	9%	433	6%	191,168	8%
1981-1990	68	6%	245	24%	1,143	16%	293,664	12%
1991-2000	133	12%	251	24%	1,284	18%	318,404	13%
2001-2010	309	29%	192	19%	1,587	23%	483,109	20%
2011-2020	505	47%	130	13%	1,919	27%	741,109	31%
1 Jan-10 Aug 2021	6	1%	8	1%	27	0%	12,146	1%
Not stated	24	2%	42	4%	203	3%	59,866	3%
Total	1,078		1,030		6,993		2,366,949	
Since 2011	511	47%	138	13%	1,946	28%	753,255	32%

Source: ABS (2022)

Despite their relative recency of arrival (Table A5) and having migrated to Australia mainly from non-English speaking countries (Table A4), most overseas-born residents in Washington Park (73%) and the Riverwood estate (60%) said in 2021 that they either speak English only or speak it very well or well together with other languages (Table A6). The percentage observed in Washington Park was similar to that for the suburb of Riverwood (74%), both of which are much lower than that observed in the state of NSW (90%).

Table A6: Overseas-born residents' level of spoken English proficiency, 2021

Washington Park			Riverwood estate		Riverwood suburb		NSW	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Speak English only	378	24%	501	25%	4,002	31%	5,457,982	68%
Speak other languages and: Speak English very well/well	794	50%	690	35%	5,491	43%	1,805,642	22%
Do not speak English well/at all	333	21%	545	28%	2,445	19%	361,687	4%
English proficiency not stated	15	1%	13	1%	77	1%	19,818	0%
Language proficiency not stated	79	5%	226	11%	767	6%	427,038	5%
Total	1,599		1,975		12,782		8,072,167	
Speak English only, very well or well	1,172	73%	1,191	60%	9,493	74%	7,263,624	90%

Source: ABS (2022)

Table A7: Residents' languages spoken at home, 2021

Washington Park			Riverwood estate		Riverwood suburb		NSW	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
English	378	24%	501	26%	4,002	31%	5,457,982	68%
Mandarin	328	21%	229	12%	1,891	15%	270,685	3%
Cantonese	187	12%	221	11%	1,664	13%	148,943	2%
Arabic	78	5%	380	20%	955	7%	227,243	3%
Nepali	70	4%	4	0%	233	2%	68,148	1%
Urdu	44	3%	4	0%	135	1%	46,618	1%
Indonesian	43	3%	32	2%	313	2%	32,303	0%
Bengali	36	2%	10	1%	131	1%	39,604	0%
Portuguese	30	2%	4	0%	82	1%	30,258	0%
Hindi	30	2%	3	0%	111	1%	80,051	1%
Other	272	17%	308	16%	2,357	18%	1,202,200	15%
Not stated	99	6%	244	13%	883	7%	468,099	6%
Total	1,595		1,940		12,757		8,072,134	
Speak non-English language(s) at home*	1,118	70%	1,195	62%	7,872	62%	2,146,053	27%

Note: The list reflects the top 10 languages spoken at home within Washington Park and the Riverwood estate in 2021.

Note: \* excludes those whose language spoke at home was not stated.

Source: ABS (2022)

The majority of Washington Park residents in 2021 spoke non-English languages at home (70%; Table A7). This percentage is slightly higher than those observed in the Riverwood estate and

suburb (both 62%), and much higher than in NSW (27%). The most common non-English languages spoken in Washington Park were different Chinese dialects (Mandarin and Cantonese); these were also commonly spoken within the Riverwood estate and suburb, with Arabic the second most commonly spoken language (after English) in the Riverwood estate.

There were also stark contrasts in residents' religious affiliation across Washington Park, the Riverwood estate, suburb, and NSW (Table A8). While Christianity was the most commonly state religious affiliation in both Washington Park (29%) and the Riverwood estate (32%), these were lower percentages than compared to the suburb of Riverwood (40%) and the state of NSW as a whole (48%). In contrast, there were higher percentages of residents in Washington Park (12%) and especially in the Riverwood estate (22%) who followed Islam compared to the suburb (11%) and the state (4%). There were, likewise, higher percentages of Hindus in Washington Park (7%) than elsewhere.

*Table A8: Residents' religious affiliation, 2021*

Washington Park			Riverwood estate		Riverwood suburb		NSW	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Christianity	467	29%	629	32%	5,130	40%	3,844,453	48%
Islam	188	12%	438	22%	1,365	11%	349,240	4%
Buddhism	102	6%	176	9%	895	7%	222,770	3%
Hinduism	113	7%	14	1%	401	3%	273,780	3%
Judaism	0	0%	0	0%	14	0%	40,249	0%
Other	621	39%	468	24%	4,026	31%	2,793,331	35%
Not stated	109	7%	236	12%	967	8%	548,340	7%
Total	1,600		1,961		12,798		8,072,163	

Source: ABS (2022)

*Table A9: Household type, 2021*

Washington Park			Riverwood estate		Riverwood suburb		NSW		
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
One family households	Couple family with no children	212	28%	126	13%	967	19%	751,141	25%
	Couple family with children	143	19%	120	12%	1,264	25%	906,395	30%
	One-parent family	70	9%	180	18%	685	13%	306,454	10%
	Other family	4	1%	13	1%	66	1%	33,332	1%
Multi-family household		3	0%	3	0%	150	3%	67,791	2%
Lone person household		236	31%	434	44%	1,441	28%	723,716	24%
Group household		50	7%	15	2%	194	4%	111,646	4%
Visitors only household		9	1%	14	1%	32	1%	35,562	1%
Other non-classifiable household		36	5%	86	9%	279	5%	122,232	4%
Total		763		991		5,078		3,058,269	

Source: ABS (2022)

In 2021, the most common household type on the Riverwood estate was lone persons (44%), which is also the most common household type in Washington Park (31%) and the Riverwood suburb (28%; Table A9). More than one-quarter of resident households in Washington Park were couple only households (28%), the second most common household type, while for the Riverwood estate it was single-parent households (18%). Single-parent households were twice as common on the estate than in the state of NSW (10%) or in Washington Park (9%).

In 2021, the average household size in Washington Park (2.1) and the Riverwood estate (2.0) were relatively small compared to the state (2.6) and suburb average (2.5; Table A10). Reflecting the common household types in these areas, Washington Park households most commonly had two residents (40%), while in the Riverwood estate almost half had only one resident (48%).

Table A10: Household size, 2021

Washington Park			Riverwood estate		Riverwood suburb		NSW	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
One	236	33%	434	48%	1,441	30%	723,716	25%
Two	288	40%	246	27%	1,398	29%	951,414	33%
Three	114	16%	98	11%	805	17%	466,330	16%
Four	61	9%	57	6%	626	13%	455,421	16%
Five	10	1%	34	4%	288	6%	196,481	7%
Six or more	8	1%	28	3%	213	4%	107,110	4%
Total	717		897		4,771		2,900,472	
Average	2.1		2.0		2.5		2.6	

In 2021, the median household weekly income in the state of NSW was \$1,829. Using \$1,999 or less as the closest proxy due to data being available by income bands, there were slightly higher percentages of households in Washington Park (44%), the Riverwood estate (49%) and the suburb of Riverwood (43%) with below median income than in the state of NSW (37%; Table A11). One-fifth of all Riverwood estate households had weekly income of just \$300-\$499 (20%), likely lone person households on social welfare benefits. The median weekly income range in Washington Park and in Riverwood estate in 2021 was \$2,000-\$2,499, compared to \$2,500-\$2,999 for the Riverwood suburb, and \$3,000-\$3,499 for the state of NSW.

Table A11: Household weekly income, 2021

Washington Park			Riverwood estate		Riverwood suburb		NSW	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Negative/Nil	35	3%	49	3%	183	3%	57,397	1%
\$1-\$299	15	1%	74	5%	188	3%	54,497	1%
\$300-\$499	80	8%	314	20%	738	10%	223,856	6%
\$500-\$999	113	11%	207	13%	841	12%	444,927	11%
\$1,000-\$1,499	112	11%	88	6%	630	9%	391,617	10%
\$1,500-\$1,999	106	10%	47	3%	488	7%	309,387	8%
\$2,000-\$2,499	99	10%	17	1%	472	7%	323,980	8%
\$2,500-\$2,999	47	5%	11	1%	265	4%	204,526	5%
\$3,000-\$3,499	37	4%	8	1%	231	3%	187,350	5%
\$3,500-\$3,999	23	2%	8	1%	140	2%	119,928	3%
\$4000 or more	17	2%	4	0%	310	4%	430,009	11%
Not stated	34	3%	82	5%	325	5%	188,543	5%
Total	1,038		1,592		7,208		4,050,914	
Below median*	461	44%	779	49%	3,068	43%	1,481,681	37%

Note: \* Due to banding, household weekly income of \$1,999 or less is used here as a proxy.

Source: ABS (2022)

As an area that has recently experienced major renewal, it was expected that residential mobility within the area would also be high. As such, the majority of households in Washington Park (71%) reported that all residents of their households lived elsewhere in 2016. This is a much higher percentage than compared to the Riverwood estate (20%), suburb (35%) and the state of NSW (39%). In contrast, the majority of Riverwood estate households did not have any residents who relocated since 2016 (70%), and likewise for households in the suburb (55%) and in the state (53%).

*Table A12: Resident mobility, 2021*

	Washington Park		Riverwood estate		Riverwood suburb		NSW	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
All residents in the household aged 5+ had a different address five years ago	512	71%	177	20%	1,673	35%	1,136,536	39%
Some residents aged 5+ had a different address five years ago	28	4%	36	4%	297	6%	163,848	6%
No residents aged 5+ had a different address five years ago	168	23%	618	70%	2,635	55%	1,526,183	53%
At least one resident did not state an address five years ago	10	1%	58	7%	170	4%	73,895	3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>718</b>		<b>889</b>		<b>4,775</b>		<b>2,900,462</b>	

Source: ABS (2022)

As would be expected, the majority of resident households living in the Riverwood estate rent socially (Table A13). While the management of their tenancies was transferred from Housing NSW to SGCH Ltd in 2019, the majority of households that rent socially continue to identify the state housing authority as their landlord (71%), with only 7% noting that they rent from a community housing provider. In contrast, developed as a mixed tenure neighbourhood, the tenure profile of Washington Park is less concentrated on social housing, with only 6% stating they rent publicly and 11% in community housing. The most common tenure in Washington Park is private rental (42%), with owner-occupation relatively less common than in the suburb of Riverwood and in NSW (especially for those owned outright without a mortgage). The proportion of households that rent privately is comparatively higher than that observed in NSW (22%) but not dissimilar to other nearby suburbs with similar levels of density (e.g. Bankstown and Hurstville, where 35% and 37% respectively of households rent privately).

Table A13: Tenure profile, 2021

		Washington Park		Riverwood estate		Riverwood suburb		NSW	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Owned	Outright	27	4%	28	3%	922	18%	926,483	30%
	With a mortgage	190	25%	24	2%	1,105	22%	947,530	31%
Rented, from:	Real estate agent	319	42%	12	1%	1,031	20%	658,827	22%
	State or territory housing authority	48	6%	707	71%	1,115	22%	93,563	3%
	Person not in same h'hold	87	11%	71	7%	231	5%	28,336	1%
	Housing co-op., community or church group	36	5%	3	0%	178	3%	141,090	5%
	Other landlord type	3	0%	3	0%	37	1%	30,662	1%
	Landlord type not stated	4	1%	5	1%	12	0%	5,338	0%
	Other tenure type	8	1%	11	1%	70	1%	58,266	2%
Tenure type not stated		42	5%	126	13%	386	8%	168,171	5%
Total		764		990		5,087		3,058,266	

Source: ABS (2022)

Table A14: Monthly mortgage repayments, 2021

		Washington Park		Riverwood estate		Riverwood suburb		NSW	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Nil repayments		4	2%	0	0%	35	3%	30,159	3%
\$1-\$449		0	0%	0	0%	25	2%	29,641	3%
\$450-\$999		3	2%	14	78%	75	7%	70,200	7%
\$1,000-\$1,399		23	12%	0	0%	86	8%	96,747	10%
\$1,400-\$1,999		56	30%	4	22%	197	18%	161,501	17%
\$2,000-\$2,199		37	20%	0	0%	118	11%	90,191	10%
\$2,200-\$2,599		25	13%	0	0%	90	8%	82,135	9%
\$2,600-\$2,999		13	7%	0	0%	98	9%	80,355	8%
\$3,000-\$3,499		6	3%	0	0%	138	13%	87,813	9%
\$3,500-\$3,999		0	0%	0	0%	49	4%	35,689	4%
\$4,000-\$4,999		0	0%	0	0%	65	6%	58,020	6%
\$5,000 and over		7	4%	0	0%	32	3%	65,631	7%
Not stated		13	7%	0	0%	86	8%	59,445	6%
Total		187		18		1,094		947,527	
Above median*		51	27%	0	0%	472	43%	409,643	43%

Note: \* Due to banding, monthly mortgage of \$2,200 or more is used here as a proxy.

Source: ABS (2022)

With six times as many households in Washington Park who own with a mortgage than outright, to reflect on their on-going housing expenditure in the form of monthly mortgage repayment. In 2021 in NSW, the median monthly mortgage repayment is \$2,167. Using \$2,200 or more as the closest proxy due to data being available by bands rather than dollar figures, around one-quarter of purchasing households in Washington Park (27%) is making above median monthly mortgage repayments. In contrast, the percentage is much higher in the Riverwood suburb and NSW (both 43%). Within the Riverwood estate, there are no purchasing households making above median monthly mortgage repayments. The median monthly mortgage repayment range in Washington Park in 2021 is \$2,000-\$2,199, the same as the state of NSW. The range is marginally higher, at \$2,200-\$2,599 for the Riverwood suburb, but much lower in the Riverwood estate (\$450-\$999). The latter possibly reflect both the relative affordability of homes for purchase within the estate, as well as purchases that were made a long time ago, with households continuing to pay off a comparatively smaller mortgage total.

Similar housing expenditure on weekly rent for renting households is detailed in Table A15. In 2021, the median weekly rent in NSW is \$420. Using \$424 or less as the closest proxy due to data being available by bands rather than dollar figures, it is noted that the vast majority of renting households in the Riverwood estate have weekly rent below the NSW median (92%). This reflects the higher percentages of households that have relatively low incomes and also those that rent socially, for which the amount of rent is calculated as a percentage of the household income. In contrast, for Washington Park, which is developed as a mixed tenure neighbourhood and as such comprise both private and social renters alongside owner-occupiers. The median weekly rent range in 2021 is, therefore, also higher at \$425-474 (same as the state of NSW), compared to \$150-\$199 in the Riverwood estate, and \$300-\$349 in the suburb of Riverwood. Less than half of the renting households in Washington Park are also paying below median rent (48%), the same percentage as the state.

Table A15: Weekly rent, 2021

Washington Park		Riverwood estate		Riverwood suburb		NSW		
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
\$1-\$99	0	0%	77	10%	103	4%	13,154	1%
\$100-\$149	20	4%	297	37%	486	19%	43,836	5%
\$150-\$199	39	8%	157	19%	311	12%	43,611	5%
\$200-\$249	38	8%	86	11%	202	8%	47,826	5%
\$250-\$299	21	4%	49	6%	122	5%	58,669	6%
\$300-\$349	11	2%	43	5%	121	5%	78,538	8%
\$350-\$399	46	9%	18	2%	147	6%	103,197	11%
\$400-\$424	62	13%	18	2%	166	6%	74,392	8%
\$425-\$474	133	27%	11	1%	266	10%	99,338	10%
\$475-\$524	70	14%	11	1%	228	9%	92,849	10%
\$525-\$644	29	6%	13	2%	252	10%	131,218	14%
\$650-\$749	4	1%	0	0%	51	2%	57,833	6%
\$750-\$849	0	0%	0	0%	16	1%	30,159	3%
\$850-\$949	0	0%	0	0%	8	0%	16,437	2%
\$950 and over	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	31,283	3%
Not stated	13	3%	46	6%	127	5%	35,467	4%
Total	496		807		2,604		957,818	
Below median*	237	48%	745	92%	1,658	64%	463,223	48%

Note: \* Due to banding, weekly rent of \$424 or less is used here as a proxy.

Source: ABS (2022)

In 2021, while most of the state of NSW's residential properties are separate houses (64%), it only comprises one-third of homes in the suburb of Riverwood (36%; Table A16). Such low-density developments are almost completely absent within the Riverwood estate (7%), and non-existent in Washington Park (0%) as it is developed as a mixed tenure, higher-density neighbourhood. As such, all of the homes in Washington Park are apartments in blocks of four storeys or more

(100%). Two-thirds of homes in the Riverwood estate are apartments in three storey blocks (62%), with apartments in blocks of four storeys or more the next most common (18%).

Table A16: Dwelling types, 2021

Washington Park			Riverwood estate		Riverwood suburb		NSW		
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Separate house	0	0%	70	7%	1,982	36%	2,141,161	64%	
Semi-detached	With one storey	0	0%	50	5%	181	3%	174,569	5%
	With two or more storeys	0	0%	23	2%	538	10%	221,117	7%
	In a one or two storey block	0	0%	74	7%	257	5%	168,744	5%
Flat or apartment	In a three storey block	0	0%	657	62%	1,353	25%	201,616	6%
	In a four or more storey block	835	100%	192	18%	1,053	19%	397,278	12%
	Attached to a house	0	0%	0	0%	47	1%	12,750	0%
	Other dwellings	0	0%	0	0%	67	1%	30,677	1%
Not stated	0	0%	0	0%	11	0%	9,874	0%	
Total	835		1,066		5,489		3,357,786		

Source: ABS (2022)

The homes in both Washington Park and the Riverwood estate are relatively small, with median size being two bedrooms, compared to three bedrooms in the suburb of Riverwood and in the state of NSW (Table A17). More than half of the apartments in Washington Park have two bedrooms (56%), with another third only one bedroom (31%), and none having more than three bedrooms. Two-fifths of homes in the Riverwood estate also have two bedrooms (43%), with a quarter having three bedrooms (27%). In contrast, one-third (33%) of homes in NSW have three bedrooms, and another third have four bedrooms or more.

Table A17: Dwelling size, 2021

Washington Park			Riverwood estate		Riverwood suburb		NSW	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
None (includes studio/bedsit)	0	0%	24	2%	94	2%	23,902	1%
One bedroom	238	31%	125	13%	553	11%	196,810	6%
Two bedrooms	423	56%	424	43%	1,684	33%	665,709	22%
Three bedrooms	51	7%	271	27%	1,583	31%	1,015,159	33%
Four bedrooms	0	0%	13	1%	542	11%	748,364	24%
Five bedrooms	0	0%	4	0%	193	4%	195,282	6%
Six bedrooms or more	0	0%	3	0%	47	1%	45,879	2%
Not stated	48	6%	129	13%	396	8%	167,156	5%
Total	762		990		5,089		3,058,266	

Source: ABS (2022)

In 2021, residents of Washington Park were less likely to be attending education than their Riverwood estate, suburb or NSW counterparts (Table A18). Overall, one-quarter of Washington Park residents attend education (24%), compared to almost one-third in the suburb (29%), in NSW (30%), and in the estate (32%). Of those who attend, one-quarter of those from Washington Park are attending university or another tertiary institution, with one-fifth attending primary schools (19%). These are higher percentages than in the Riverwood estate, where less than one-tenth of those attending attended university or other tertiary institutions (9%), and one-sixth attend primary (16%). This partly reflects the age groups of these areas, with one-third of Washington Park residents aged 25-34 (the main university-attending ages).

Table A18: Education institution residents current attending, 2021

Washington Park		Riverwood estate		Riverwood suburb		NSW		
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Pre-school	25	6%	25	4%	193	5%	167,196	7%
Primary	75	19%	101	16%	820	22%	651,380	27%
Secondary	39	10%	121	20%	689	18%	512,200	21%
Technical or vocational colleges (e.g. TAFE)	52	13%	35	6%	372	10%	207,586	8%
University or other Tertiary Institution	98	25%	58	9%	641	17%	376,027	15%
Other	68	17%	137	22%	843	23%	586,531	24%
Not stated	80	21%	260	42%	874	23%	465,268	19%
Total attending	390		620		3,744		2,453,986	
<i>Total attending as % of total population</i>	<i>24%</i>		<i>32%</i>		<i>29%</i>		<i>30%</i>	

Source: ABS (2022)

Table A19: Highest level of educational qualification achieved, 2021

Washington Park		Riverwood estate		Riverwood suburb		NSW		
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Postgraduate Degree	196	14%	22	1%	677	6%	485,845	7%
Grad. Diploma / Certificate	32	2%	19	1%	147	1%	135,609	2%
Bachelor Degree	345	25%	107	6%	1,848	17%	1,217,048	18%
Adv. Diploma/Diploma	124	9%	98	6%	958	9%	616,322	9%
Certificate III & IV	86	6%	113	7%	987	9%	988,847	15%
Years 10 and above	327	24%	634	37%	3,544	33%	1,865,919	28%
Certificate I & II	0	0%	0	0%	10	0%	5,669	0%
Years 9 and below	76	6%	277	16%	1,028	10%	487,855	7%
Supplementary Codes*	63	5%	114	7%	563	5%	249,079	4%
Not stated	104	8%	309	18%	1,049	10%	549,965	8%
<i>Total</i>	<i>1,353</i>		<i>1,693</i>		<i>10,811</i>		<i>6,602,158</i>	

Note: \* includes those whose level of qualification is inadequately described, or not having any formal qualifications.

Source: ABS (2022)

The residents of Washington Park are relatively well educated in 2021, with one-quarter having a bachelor degree qualification (25%), and another one-seventh having postgraduate degree qualifications (14%). These are much higher percentages compared to the Riverwood estate (6% and 1% respectively), the suburb (17% and 6% respectively), and the state (18% and 7% respectively). In contrast, more than one-third of Riverwood estate residents are high school leavers with Year 10 school qualification or above (37%), with another one-sixth having Year 9 or below levels of qualifications (16%).

Riverwood Public School is the only educational institution located within the Riverwood estate. Since 2019, its total number of enrolments has continued to grow, from 99 students in 2019 to 109 by 2023, peaking at 117 in 2021 (Table A20). The number of full-time equivalent teaching staff also increased over the same period from 10.6 to 12.4. with newer, owner-occupied and privately renting households moving into Washington Park, the student body is also recognised to be of less disadvantaged backgrounds than previously, with continually increasing ICSEA and improving percentile rank. Improvements in advantage is not necessarily reflected in the NAPLAN results, with most scores for Year 3 students declining, though the results for Year 5 students have improved.

*Table A20: NAPLAN results, Riverwood Public School and Hannans Road Public School, 2019-2023*

		Riverwood Public School				Hannans Road Public School			
		2019	2021	2022	2023	2019	2021	2022	2023
Year 3	Reading	373	386	367	381	374	358	375	350
	Writing	415	407	357	402	399	378	382	377
	Spelling	395	411	380	421	380	339	371	382
	Grammar & punctuation	368	402	378	432	405	334	354	363
	Numeracy	340	376	365	374	371	335	356	364
Year 5	Reading	434	437	441	434	452	477	459	427
	Writing	437	461	452	455	449	452	435	399
	Spelling	463	507	492	463	451	477	477	427
	Grammar & punctuation	437	468	460	427	431	483	469	425
	Numeracy	423	451	437	444	440	456	439	407
<i>Total enrolments (P-6)</i>		99	117	113	109	127	122	102	99
<i>Full-time equivalent teaching staff</i>		10.6	11.0	12.1	12.4	12.8	14.8	14.4	14.1
<i>ICSEA*</i>		927	939	949	952	936	936	937	947
<i>ICSEA percentile</i>		15	20	24	25	18	18	20	23

Note: \* is the Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage, an index that reflects on the socioeconomic and locational characteristics of the student body. It is standardised to a median of 1000 and a standard deviation of 100, with advantage indicated by an above-1000 index, and disadvantage indicated by a below-1000 index.

Source: <https://myschool.edu.au/school/41430>, <https://myschool.edu.au/school/41455>

The Hannans Road Public School is located just outside of the Riverwood estate and is another school commonly attended by Washington Park and Riverwood estate residents. Our previous report (Liu et al. 2022) indicate that it more closely met national minimum standards than Riverwood Public School, but by 2023 it was reporting similar results to that of Riverwood Public School (Table A20). This is largely due to improvements of results among Riverwood Public School students made immediately prior to 2019. Unlike Riverwood Public School, there is little change to the socioeconomic and locational backgrounds of Hannans Road Public School's students, with similar ICSEA reported during 2019-2023. While the number of enrolments have dropped from 127 in 2019 to 99 by 2023, Hannans Road Public School remains better resourced than Riverwood Public School, with higher number of full-time equivalent teaching staff.

There are contrasting labour force profiles in 2021 between Washington Park and the Riverwood estate (Table A21). Participation rate, which indicates the percentage of population aged 15 years or older participating in the labour force, is much higher in Washington Park (59.0%) than in the

estate (19.2%). The Washington Park level is also higher than that of the Riverwood suburb (46.5%). Of those in the labour force, more than half of Washington Park residents in the labour force are employed full-time (55%), with another one-fifth employed part-time (20%). In the Riverwood estate, however, only one-quarter of its labour force is employed full-time (25%), while one-third was employed part-time (34%). As a result, the percentages of labour force in these areas who are unemployed and looking for work also differed, and is further reflected by the higher unemployment rate in the Riverwood estate (18.3%) than in Washington Park (7.0%). Both of these unemployment rates are higher than that of NSW (4.9%).

Table A21: Labour force status, 2021

Washington Park			Riverwood estate		Riverwood suburb		NSW		
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Employed:	Full-time*	441	55%	82	25%	2,397	48%	2,136,610	55%
	Part-time#	161	20%	110	34%	1,327	26%	1,151,660	30%
	Away from work	142	18%	75	23%	907	18%	395,888	10%
Unemployed, looking for:	Full-time*	36	5%	35	11%	230	5%	107,837	3%
	Part-time#	20	3%	25	8%	166	3%	82,015	2%
<i>Unemployment rate<sup>^</sup></i>		7.0%		18.3%		7.9%		4.9%	
Total labour force		800		327		5,027		3,874,010	
<i>Participation rate<sup>~</sup></i>		59.0%		19.2%		46.5%		58.7%	
Not in the labour force		484	36%	1,135	67%	4,994	46%	2,341,417	35%
Labour force status not stated		79	6%	235	14%	798	7%	386,728	6%
Total (aged 15+)		1,355		1,705		10,821		6,602,162	

Note: \* determined by having worked 35 or more hours per week. % calculated based on total labour force.

Note: # determined by having worked 35 or fewer hours per week, and includes workers engaged casually and/or in the gig economy. % calculated based on total labour force.

Note: <sup>^</sup> indicates percentage of persons in the labour force aged 15+ who were unemployed.

Note: <sup>~</sup> indicates percentage of persons aged 15+ who were in the labour force (i.e. currently employed, or unemployed but seeking work).

Source: ABS (2022)

Employed workers in Washington Park are most likely professionals (34%) in 2021, followed by clerical and administration workers (15%; Table A22). The percentage of employed, professional workers is much higher than compared to the state of NSW (26%), the suburb of Riverwood (23%), and the Riverwood estate (10%). For the estate, the most common occupation for employed residents in 2021 is community and personal service workers (18%), followed by labourers (16%).

With such contrasting employment and labour force profile, the modes of how employed workers in Washington Park and the Riverwood estate travel to work also differ greatly (Table A23). In 2021, two-fifths of employed workers in Washington Park worked from home (39%) when only 10% of employed workers in the estate do. This likely accounts for their different occupations, with professionals more likely to (and more likely to be able to) work from home than community and personal service workers and labourers. Likewise, employed workers from the Riverwood estate are also more likely to travel to work as a car driver (39%) than their Washington Park counterparts (26%), likely a reflection of dispersed rather than centralised worksites, such as needing to travel to clients' homes or offices.

Table A22: Occupation, 2021

Washington Park		Riverwood estate		Riverwood suburb		NSW		
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Managers	60	8%	8	3%	407	9%	536,820	15%
Professionals	249	34%	26	10%	1,069	23%	952,131	26%
Technicians and trades workers	73	10%	37	14%	542	12%	436,589	12%
Community and personal service workers	72	10%	49	18%	495	11%	390,779	11%
Clerical and administrative workers	115	15%	31	11%	684	15%	480,612	13%
Sales workers	58	8%	30	11%	449	10%	294,889	8%
Machine operators and drivers	52	7%	35	13%	408	9%	222,186	6%
Labourers	43	6%	44	16%	458	10%	300,966	8%
Inadequately described / Not stated	21	3%	10	4%	130	3%	69,203	2%
Total employed	743		270		4,642		3,684,175	

Source: ABS (2022)

Table A23: Mode of transport taken to work, 2021

Washington Park		Riverwood estate		Riverwood suburb		NSW		
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Car, as driver	193	26%	102	39%	1,531	33%	1,587,613	42%
Car, as passenger	21	3%	11	4%	154	3%	117,143	3%
Public transport, one mode	55	7%	21	8%	326	7%	99,408	3%
Public transport, two modes	21	3%	7	3%	87	2%	24,639	1%
Other (including other mixes)	20	3%	18	7%	217	5%	208,206	6%
Worked at home	296	39%	26	10%	1,432	30%	1,141,467	30%
Walked only	5	1%	7	3%	86	2%	92,368	2%
Away from work	133	18%	64	24%	826	18%	487,646	13%
Method of travel not stated	8	1%	6	2%	37	1%	17,966	0%
Total employed	752		262		4,696		3,776,456	

Source: ABS (2022)

## Appendix 7: Time-series (2016-2021) Census data analysis

This appendix provides a demographic and socioeconomic overview of how the communities of Washington Park and the Riverwood estate have continued to evolve since the completion of the Wave 1 evaluation fieldwork in 2015. It primarily uses time-series data from the Australian Census of Population and Health, covering the period 2016 to 2021. It is complemented by other data sets from the National Skills Commission and the NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research.

As noted in the main report (Table 2), the population of the study area increased by 16% between 2016 and 2021. All of this increase is in the Washington Park area, where new housing units were completed and settled by owner-occupiers and private rentals by 2018. Indeed, since 2016, the population of Washington Park increased by 49%, while the population in the Riverwood estate decreased by 2% (Table A24). Over this same period, the population of the Riverwood estate has continued to age, signified by increasing percentages in the older age groups (55 or older) and decreasing percentages in the younger age groups (34 or younger). In contrast, new Washington Park residents are more likely young families, with significant increases of residents aged 35-44 years (almost tripled, by 184%) and young children 0-14 years (more than doubled, by 104%). Increases in all other age groups, while still notable, are a lot less by comparison.

Table A24: Change in resident age profile, study area, 2016-2021

	Washington Park		Riverwood estate	
	No.	%	No.	%
0-14 years	124	104%	-49	-16%
15-24 years	27	21%	-34	-13%
25-34 years	89	21%	-4	-3%
35-44 years	191	184%	7	4%
45-54 years	17	28%	-52	-19%
55-64 years	9	9%	15	5%
65-74 years	32	52%	27	10%
75 years or older	28	29%	27	10%
Total	524	49%	-43	-2%

Source: ABS (2022)

By number, the largest increase between 2016 and 2021 in Washington Park are individuals who are married (+195, or 42%) and those who have never married (+117, or 33%; Table A25). This somewhat reflects the changes to population age profiles discussed above, that new residents are likely families with young children. In contrast, in the Riverwood estate, the only increases are those who have never married (+2) or widowed (+16, or 9%), again likely reflecting the older age profile as discussed above.

Table A25: Change in resident marital status, study area, 2016-2021

	Washington Park		Riverwood estate	
	No.	%	No.	%
Never married	117	33%	2	0%
Widowed	19	61%	16	9%
Divorced	36	41%	-9	-3%
Separated	7	18%	-8	-7%
Married	195	42%	-12	-2%
Total	374	38%	-11	-1%

Source: ABS (2022)

Across both Washington Park and the Riverwood estate, there are far fewer residents in 2021 who were born in the UK and Ireland than in 2016 (Table A26). There are also fewer Riverwood estate residents who were born in New Zealand and the rest of Oceania, the Middle East and North Africa, and in Australia in 2021 than in 2016. The only notable increases are residents who were born in China and in the rest of Asia. In Washington Park, with significant increase in the overall population, there are a lot more residents who were born in Australia (+221, or 98%), the rest of

Asia (+220, or 127%), or the Middle East and North Africa (+47, or 188%) in 2021 than in 2016. There are, however, marginally fewer residents who were born in China than previously (-39, or -8%).

Table A26: Change in resident birthplace, study area, 2016-2021

	Washington Park		Riverwood estate	
	No.	%	No.	%
Australia	221	98%	-64	-8%
New Zealand & rest of Oceania	3	7%	-17	-26%
UK & Ireland	-4	-44%	-18	-72%
Rest of Europe	-1	-3%	3	3%
China*	-39	-8%	68	23%
Rest of Asia	220	127%	52	31%
Middle East & North Africa	47	188%	-43	-15%
Other/Not stated	77	96%	-24	-8%
Total	524	49%	-43	-2%

Note: \* includes China and the two Special Administrative Regions of Hong Kong and Macau.

Source: ABS (2022)

While there is little change to the top 10 languages spoken in homes in the study area between 2016 and 2021, the number of these languages' speakers changed quite notably (Table A27). There are more residents in Washington Park who speak English at home (+188, or 99%), likewise those who speak Cantonese (+64, or 53%). While Mandarin remains commonly spoken with Washington Park (see Table A7), it is spoken by fewer residents in 2021 than in 2016 (-77, or -19%). There are also more residents who speak Nepali (+59, or 536%) at home in Washington Park than previously. In the Riverwood estate, Arabic is spoken in fewer homes in 2021 than in 2016 (-104, or -21%); there are also fewer residents who speak Greek at home than previously (-20, or -36%).

Table A27: Change in languages spoken at home, study area, 2016-2021

	Washington Park		Riverwood estate	
	No.	%	No.	%
English	188	99%	-21	-4%
Mandarin	-77	-19%	47	26%
Arabic	38	95%	-104	-21%
Cantonese	65	53%	30	16%
Vietnamese	18	257%	2	2%
Indonesian	20	87%	2	7%
Nepali	59	536%	4	n/a*
Spanish	-3	-16%	6	23%
Greek	-5	-38%	-20	-36%
Urdu	22	100%	1	33%

Note: The list reflects the top 10 languages spoken at home within Washington Park and the Riverwood estate in 2021.

Note: \* There were no Nepali speakers living in the Riverwood estate in 2016. As such, a change percentage could not be calculated.

Source: ABS (2022)

The educational qualification of new residents in Washington Park is somewhat different to those who have been living in the area (and in the Riverwood estate) since before 2016 (Table A29). The arrival of the new residents sees greater numbers of those who have post-school and/or tertiary level qualifications such as degrees and diplomas. This is especially the case for those with bachelor degree qualifications, an increase of 111 residents (or 47%) with such qualifications between 2016 and 2021. In the Riverwood estate, there are fewer people who said they have lower level qualifications (school leavers and Certificate I and II achievements) in 2021 than in 2016; although this increase is not counterbalanced commensurably by more residents with higher levels of qualifications, reflecting an overall decline in the estate's population.

Table A28: Change in highest level of educational qualification achieved, study area, 2016-2021

	Washington Park		Riverwood estate	
	No.	%	No.	%
Postgraduate Degree	41	26%	-1	-4%
Graduate Diploma / Certificate	29	967%	11	138%
Bachelor Degree	111	47%	12	13%
Advanced Diploma/Diploma	36	41%	-9	-8%
Certificate III & IV	30	54%	-1	-1%
Years 10 and above	73	29%	35	6%
Certificate I & II	0	n/a*	-3	-100%
Years 9 and below	18	31%	-38	-12%
Supplementary Codes#	12	24%	-20	-15%
Not stated	39	60%	-10	-3%
Total	389	40%	-24	-1%

Note: \* There were no resident with Certificate I & II qualification living in Washington Park in 2016. As such, a change percentage could not be calculated.

Note: # includes those whose level of qualification is inadequately described, or not having any formal qualifications.

Source: ABS (2022)

Of the new residents in Washington Park, the majority are in the labour force. This is notable in the higher number of residents who are employed in 2021 than in 2016, as well as fewer people who are unemployed but looking for part-time work. There are, however, also an extra 130 residents in Washington Park who said they were not in the labour force (i.e. retired or otherwise not working and not looking for work). This change in labour force profile is different to that of the Riverwood estate, with fewer residents of the estate employed (full-time or part-time) and unemployed (looking for full-time or part-time work). There were also 68 more residents in the estate who are not in the labour force in 2021 than in 2016, although this is equivalent to just a 6% increase since 2016.

Table A29: Change in labour force status, study area, 2016-2021

	Washington Park		Riverwood estate		
	No.	%	No.	%	
Employed	Full-time*	84	24%	-60	-42%
	Part-time#	46	40%	-40	-27%
	Away from work	112	373%	38	103%
Unemployed, looking for:	Full-time*	16	80%	-28	-44%
	Part-time#	-13	-39%	-16	-39%
Not in the labour force	130	37%	68	6%	
Not stated	31	65%	28	14%	
Total	406	42%	-10	-1%	

Note: \* determined by having worked 35 or more hours per week. % calculated based on total labour force.

Note: # determined by having worked 35 or fewer hours per week, and includes workers engaged casually and/or in the gig economy. % calculated based on total labour force.

Source: ABS (2022)

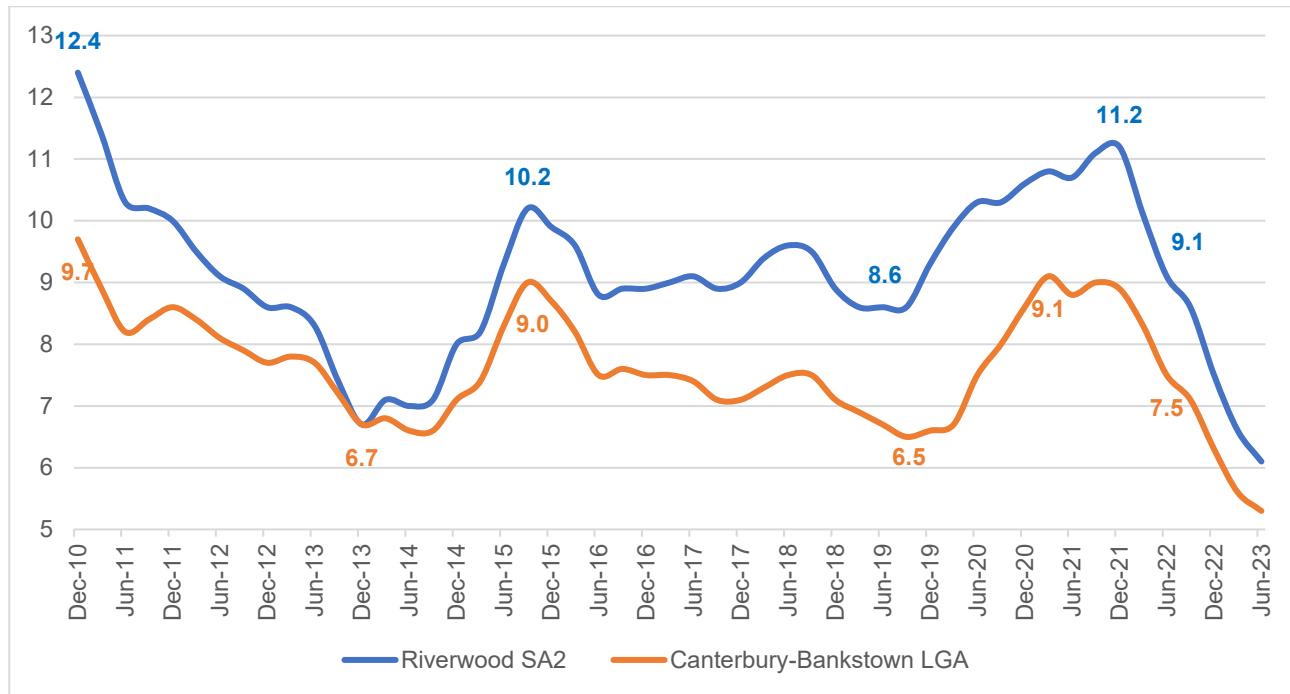
In lieu of data specific to Washington Park, the Riverwood estate or the suburb not published by the National Skills Commission (2022) on smoothed unemployment rate<sup>3</sup>, data on the Riverwood SA2 and Canterbury-Bankstown LGA are included in Figure A5 instead as the closest proxies of the local labour market conditions.

It is notable that, since at least the December quarter 2010, the Riverwood SA2 has persistently maintained higher smoothed unemployment rates than the Canterbury-Bankstown LGA. The only exception is December quarter 2013, when it enjoyed the same level of smoothed unemployment rate as the LGA (6.7%). The fluctuations observed in the Riverwood SA2 are also more variable than those in the LGA, especially in periods of tough labour market conditions (e.g. December

<sup>3</sup> Smoothed unemployment rate is the average level of unemployment of the preceding four quarters (i.e. 12 months) to provide a rolling reflection of changes to labour market conditions. It removes seasonal variability (e.g. additional casual or short-term employment over the Christmas holiday period) to provide a more considered reflection of labour market conditions.

quarter 2010, December quarter 2021), when the gaps become even more pronounced. This indicates the employment of residents of the SA2 may be more precarious and vulnerable than that of LGA's such as casual and short-term work or in the gig economy.

Figure A5: Changes in smoothed unemployment rate, Riverwood SA2 and Canterbury-Bankstown LGA, December 2010-June 2022



Source: National Skills Commission (2022)

The contrast in employment precarity and vulnerability between residents of Washington Park and the Riverwood estate is further highlighted in changes to the occupation of these residents between 2016 and 2021 (Table A31). In addition to an overall decline in the number of employed workers in the Riverwood estate, the only observed increase is for clerical and administrative workers. In contrast, the new residents moving into Washington Park are more likely to be in higher level occupations such as professionals (+99, or 66%), and managers (+12, or 25%). There are also more technicians and trades workers (+33, or 83%) who may be running their own businesses.

Table A30: Change in resident (aged 15+) occupation, study area, 2016-2021

	Washington Park		Riverwood estate	
	No.	%	No.	%
Managers	12	25%	-8	-50%
Professionals	99	66%	-12	-32%
Technicians and Trades Workers	33	83%	-9	-20%
Community and Personal Service Workers	18	33%	-7	-13%
Clerical and Administrative Workers	36	46%	10	48%
Sales Workers	4	7%	-14	-32%
Machinery Operators and Drivers	23	79%	-8	-19%
Labourers	7	19%	-10	-19%
Inadequately described / Not stated	0	0%	-3	-23%
Total (aged 15+)	234	46%	-68	-20%

Washington Park is deliberately renewed as a mixed tenure neighbourhood, and as such would have a very different tenure profile in 2021 compared to the Riverwood estate (Table A13). The changes are especially stark between 2016 and 2021, with fewer publicly renting households (-42, or -47%) whose tenancy may have been transferred to be managed by SGCH Ltd in 2019. The

increase in the number of households renting from a community housing provider during this period (57, or 190%) reflects this transfer and the delivery of additional, new social housing units in the neighbourhood. This transfer of management is also observed in the Riverwood estate, where during 2016-201 there are 56 fewer publicly renting households (-7%) but 50 more households that rent from a community housing provider (238%).

Of the other newer households moving in Washington Park, there are more who rent privately (+148, or 87%) than owner-occupiers (whether outright, +11, or 69%; or with a mortgage, +65, or 52%). This highlights that the newer apartments have predominantly been purchased (at least initially) as investment properties. While in Australia there are generally higher proportions of apartments that are rented privately than other housing types, the proportion of privately rented apartments in Washington Park is comparatively higher than average.

There is little change in the number of households of other tenure in the Riverwood estate, except for 10 extra owner-occupied households that own with a mortgage (71%).

*Table A31: Change in tenure profile, study area, 2016-2021*

		Washington Park		Riverwood estate	
		No.	%	No.	%
Owned	Outright	11	69%	-3	-10%
	With a mortgage	65	52%	10	71%
Rented, from:	Real estate agent	148	87%	2	20%
	State or territory housing authority	-42	-47%	-56	-7%
	Community housing provider <sup>#</sup>	57	190%	50	238%
	Person not in same household	10	38%	-3	-50%
	Other landlord type	3	n/a*	0	0%
	Landlord type not stated	4	n/a*	-4	-44%
Other tenure type		1	14%	-2	-15%
Tenure type not stated		12	40%	16	15%
Total		269	54%	10	1%

Note: \* There were no resident households in Washington Park that noted having other landlord types or did not state their landlord type in 2016. As such, a change percentage could not be calculated.

Note: <sup>#</sup> Before the 2021 Census, this category was called 'Housing co-operative, community or church group'. The Census Dictionary (ABS 2021) notes the 2021 update is a rewording of the category only and any time-series comparisons remain compatible.

Source: ABS (2022)

*Table A32: Change in social housing tenancies, study area, 2016/17-2022/23*

	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
No tenancies*	272	287	287	287	287	287	287
Average tenure length							6.4
Vacancy rate	2%	1%	2%	1%	1%	2%	1%
Tenancy turnover %	12%	11%	15%	8%	11%	14%	12%
Requested transfers (no.)							11
Requested transfers (%)							4%
> 2 weeks arrears <sup>^</sup>	20	31	33	23	25	29	37
< 2 weeks arrears <sup>^</sup>	14	12	12	11	16	9	10

Note: \* includes two affordable housing tenancies since April 2018.

Note: <sup>^</sup> totals taken on last rent run of each financial year.

Source: SGCH Ltd

Data provided by SGCH Ltd provides a reflection on social tenancies within the study area has changed. It shows that the last of the new social housing units were delivered during 2017/18, with vacancy rate remaining low since the renewal began in 2010/11. While around 11% tenancies in the study area are turned over to new tenancies every year, it was noted that, for the renewed area of Washington Park, around half the social housing residents who moved in when it was first completed in 2014 remain living in the same dwellings, with most of those who have exited having moved into retirement homes or passed on. It was clear that social housing residents consider Washington Park and the Riverwood estate a nice community to live in, with the number who requests transfers out of the area remaining low, at 4% of less, since 2011/2012. The average length of tenancies has, consequently, increased significantly, from 0.4 years when Washington Park was first completed in 2013/14, to 6.4 years in 2022/23. The number of tenancies who accrue rent arrears, however, has gradually increased. This was especially so for households with arrears of 2 weeks or more.

The completion and settlement of the new private apartment blocks in Washington Park in 2018 is reflected in the time-series Census data, with 324 more occupied apartment units in blocks with four storeys or more in 2021 than in 2016 (Table A33). The 10 fewer apartment units in three-story blocks may be an outcome of the ABS' randomisation measures, as there were not three-story apartment blocks in Washington Park prior to the renewal. There are also minimal change to dwelling types in the Riverwood estate, single-digit adjustments that may be the result of households moving out of the area (therefore, resulting in fewer occupied dwellings) as well as the randomisation measures.

Table A33: Change in dwelling types, study area, 2016-2021

		Washington Park		Riverwood estate	
		No.	%	No.	%
Separate house		0	n/a*	-2	-3%
Semi-detached, row or terrace house, townhouse etc.	With one storey	0	n/a*	-5	-9%
	With two or more storeys	0	n/a*	-1	-4%
Flat or apartment	In a one or two storey block	0	n/a*	-1	-1%
	In a three storey block	-10	-100%	6	1%
	In a four or more storey block	324	63%	-1	-1%
	Attached to a house	0	n/a*	0	n/a#
Other dwellings		0	n/a*	0	n/a#
Not stated		0	n/a*	0	n/a#
Total		314	60%	-4	0%

Note: \* There were no resident households in Washington Park living in these dwelling types in 2016. As such, a change percentage could not be calculated.

Note: # There were no resident households in the rest of the estate living in these dwelling types in 2016. As such, a change percentage could not be calculated.

Note: \* There were no resident households throughout the estates living in these dwelling types in 2016. As such, a change percentage could not be calculated.

Source: ABS (2022)

With the completion of the private apartment blocks, there are many more two-bedroom dwellings (148, or 54%) as well as one-bedroom dwellings (85, or 56%) in Washington Park in 2021 than in 2016 (Table A34). Again, the decrease in dwellings with no bedrooms in Washington Park during this period may also be the outcome of randomisation measures, as the bedsit units that occupied the site prior to renewal were demolished prior to the 2016 Census. Within the Riverwood estate, there are also few changes to dwelling size, with more two-bedroom dwellings occupied in 2021 than 2016, and the same amount fewer no-bedroom dwellings in 2021 than in 2016.

Table A34: Change in dwelling size, study area, 2016-2021

	Washington Park		Riverwood estate	
	No.	%	No.	%
None (includes bedsitters)	-3	-100%	-14	-37%
One bedroom	85	56%	-1	-1%
Two bedrooms	148	54%	14	3%
Three bedrooms	17	50%	5	2%
Four bedrooms	0	n/a*	-1	-7%
Five bedrooms	0	n/a*	-4	-50%
Six bedrooms or more	0	n/a*	3	n/a#
Not stated	15	45%	9	8%
Total	262	53%	11	1%

Note: \* There were no resident households in Washington Park living in these dwelling sizes in 2016. As such, a change percentage could not be calculated.

Note: # There were no resident households in the rest of the estate living in dwellings with six bedrooms or more in 2016. As such, a change percentage could not be calculated.

Note: \* There were no resident households throughout the estates living in these dwellings with six bedrooms or more in 2016. As such, a change percentage could not be calculated.

Source: ABS (2022)

The overall households size in Washington Park and the Riverwood estate is shrinking. This is highlighted by the increase in two- and three-person households in the Riverwood estate, and decreases in households with more number of residents (as well as those with only one resident; Table A35). Newer households in Washington Park are also relatively small, likewise with more one-, two- and three-person households, and fewer five-person households, in 2021 than in 2016.

Table A35: Change in household size, study area, 2016-2021

	Washington Park		Riverwood estate	
	No.	%	No.	%
One person	100	74%	-18	-4%
Two persons	91	46%	13	6%
Three persons	33	41%	5	5%
Four persons	22	56%	-1	-2%
Five persons	-9	-47%	-7	-17%
Six persons	5	167%	5	26%
Seven persons	0	n/a*	-8	-100%
Eight or more persons	0	n/a*	4	n/a#
Total	242	51%	-7	-1%

Note: \* There were no resident households in Washington Park living in these household sizes in 2016. As such, a change percentage could not be calculated.

Note: # There were no resident households in the rest of the estate living in households with eight residents or more in 2016. As such, a change percentage could not be calculated.

Note: \* There were no resident households throughout the estates living in households with eight residents or more in 2016. As such, a change percentage could not be calculated.

Source: ABS (2022)

The shrinking of household size described above (Table A35) is reflected in the changes to household type in the neighbourhood also. In Washington Park, there are a lot more lone person households (100, or 74%) in 2021 than in 2016; there are also twice as many couple families with children (72, or 101%). Couple households with no children (55, or 35%) and one-parent family households (34, or 94%) are other household types with notable increase. There is less change in household types within the Riverwood estate, only notably fewer lone person households (-18, or -4%) and group households (-7, or -32%), and increases in one-parent family households (9, or 5%) and couple families with children (6, or 5%).

Table A36: Change in household type, study area, 2016-2021

	Washington Park		Riverwood estate		
	No.	%	No.	%	
One family household:	Couple family with no children	55	35%	0	0%
	Couple family with children	72	101%	6	5%
	One-parent family	34	94%	9	5%
	Other family	-5	-56%	0	0%
Multi-family household	-6	-67%	-4	-57%	
Lone person household	100	74%	-18	-4%	
Group household	6	14%	-7	-32%	
Visitors only household	4	80%	7	100%	
Other household	15	71%	19	28%	
Total	275	56%	12	1%	

Source: ABS (2022)

Improvement in safety is a key deliverable of estate renewal programs in Australia and worldwide. Recorded crime statistics sourced from the NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research (BOCSAR) is included here as proxies of changes to crime and safety. In lieu of data specific to Washington Park, the Riverwood estate or the suburb not published by BOCSAR, statistics for the Canterbury-Bankstown LGA is instead included. Statistics for the state of NSW is include for context.

Table A37: Change in recorded crime (major offences), Canterbury-Bankstown LGA and NSW, 2018-2022

Offence type	Canterbury-Bankstown		NSW	
	24-month trend <sup>^^</sup>	60-month trend <sup>^^</sup>	24-month trend <sup>^^</sup>	60-month trend <sup>^^</sup>
Murder <sup>^</sup>	nc**	nc**	Stable	-5.6%
Domestic violence related assault	Stable	4.4%	Stable	3.0%
Non-domestic violence related assault	23.2%	Stable	Stable	Stable
Sexual assault	Stable	Stable	Stable	7.0%
Sexual touching, sexual act and other sexual offences	Stable	Stable	Stable	Stable
Robbery	Stable	-9.7%	Stable	-7.5%
Break and enter dwelling	Stable	-8.1%	Stable	-8.4%
Break and enter non-dwelling	66.4%	-2.8%	Stable	-7.8%
Motor vehicle theft	Stable	-3.6%	17.0%	-1.6%
Steal from motor vehicle	Stable	-5.9%	Stable	-8.1%
Steal from retail store	Stable	Stable	23.7%	-2.7%
Other stealing offences	Stable	-7.3%	Stable	-8.7%
Malicious damage to property	Stable	-5.9%	Stable	-4.7%

Note: <sup>^</sup> For murder and manslaughter, the data are counts of recorded victims, not criminal incidents.

Note: <sup>^^</sup> The trend test used was a two-tailed Kendall's rank-order correlation test with a 0.05 level of significance. For the 24-month trend the annual percentage change is provided if the trend was significant. For the 60-month trend the average annual percentage change is provided if the trend was significant.

\*\* Trend information is not calculated (nc) if at least one 12-month period in the selected timeframe had less than 20 incidents.

Source: BOCSAR (2023)

Between the calendar years 2018 and 2022, it can be observed that, there are downward trends in the LGA for most of the major offences reported (Table A37), meaning fewer incidences of these recorded crimes. This is especially so for the 60-month trend analysis, and that the improvements are more so in the LGA than the NSW state-wide trend. The only exceptions are for domestic violence related assault, where it increased more so in the LGA over 60 months than in NSW; and non -domestic violence related assaults break and enter non-dwelling, where their rates increased

quite significantly over 24 months when it remained stable state-wide. The rates of motor vehicle thefts and steal from retail store over 24 months, and sexual assaults over 60 months, have remained stable within the LGA while they increased state-wide.