

INTRODUCTION

Strategies help guide and inform Council's program and activity implementation.

They assist Council in identifying the needs of the community and explore solutions to address these factors.

An end of Strategy review was conducted for the Children and Families Strategy 2018–2021.

The review aimed to capture key findings and outcomes to provide parents, residents, and professionals within the Camden Local Government Area (LGA) with the following:

- A snapshot of the strategy outcomes achieved;
- The key highlights across the 4-year period; and
- Any challenges faced.



BACKGROUND

In 2018, Camden Council developed and released the first Children and Families Strategy 2018–2021 with the aim being to enhance the Camden LGA to be the best place for children to live, learn and grow.

Camden Council identified the need to strengthen the community services, activities, events, and information provided to enhance the lives of Camden families and children.

The Strategy has six key strategic priorities; Voice, Learning and Development, Connect, Wellbeing, Safe, Informed and Empowered, that is further broken down by 46 strategic actions. The actions are accompanied by measurements of success and strategy outcomes for each priority.

This strategy was developed following community consultation with children, families, parents/carers and local service providers within the Camden LGA. These consultations highlighted needs within the community as well as common themes.



25.3% of the Camden population is comprised of 0-14 year old individuals.



Family households make up 84.5% of the Camden population.



There are 122 playgrounds in Camden LGA well used by the community.



There are 28 playgroups in Camden LGA, with a mix of independently lead and organisation lead playgroups.



There are over 5,000 junior library members.

WAY FORWARD

Community input is important to Camden Council as it assists in identifying the needs of the community and encourages a collaborative approach between Council, its residents and local service providers.

Input from children, parents/carers and service providers from the Camden LGA will help develop the Children and Families Strategy 2023–2027.

After publishing the review of the Children and Families Strategy 2018–2021, a survey will go live on the Your Voice Camden platform (yourvoice.camden.nsw.gov.au) for parents and carers to provide input and feedback.

Children can also share their thoughts and ideas through creative writing and drawing activities.

HIGHLIGHTS & ACHIEVEMENTS

Across the six strategic priorities, 46 strategic actions further breakdown how Council endeavoured to achieve the desired outcomes.

The graph below highlights the success of the strategic outcomes achieved.



A total of 63% of strategic actions that were achieved had a positive impact on Camden children and families.



PRIORITY 1: VOICE – CHILDREN HAVE A VOICE AND ARE HEARD IN THEIR COMMUNITY

- A video was recorded by young carer, Kyla, who shared her experience as living life as a young carer.
- Children's voices were heard to help assist in strategic planning by engaging children in consultation.
- The Camden Kids website was updated and maintained as a platform to hear children's voices as well as sharing information relating to children that affects them.
- **'Camden Kids' was viewed more than 61,363 times between 2018 to 2021!**

PRIORITY 2: LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT – ALL CHILDREN FROM BIRTH THROUGH TO PRIMARY SCHOOL AGE HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO ENHANCE THEIR DEVELOPMENT AND LEARNING

- Over 5,000 junior members of Camden Libraries.
- Consistently high attendance rates at children's library services, such as Storytime.
- Paint the Town REaD committee consistently met six times annually.
- Over eight book lists were created and shared with the community. Book boxes were also donated to local businesses to have in their waiting rooms for children.
- Approximately 300 second-hand books shared to local community service providers and charities.
- Total of 28 playgroups in Camden. Information shared regularly with community to promote importance of parents connecting and children have opportunity to learn through play.



PRIORITY 3: CONNECT – CAMDEN LGA IS A CHILD-FRIENDLY PLACE WHERE CHILDREN AND FAMILIES ARE CONNECTED TO THEIR LOCAL COMMUNITY

- 28% increase in playgrounds developed, with a current total of 122 available for public use.
- Addition of two water play spaces in Camden LGA.
- National Families Week events held annually including children and families yoga, child restraint fitting day, tween silent disco, parent workshop on cyber safety, online cooking competition, and play days.
- Camden Kids directory added in 2019 including information on services, supports, education, health and recreation provided for families. This service connects families and children to local services and supports.

PRIORITY 4: WELLBEING – FAMILIES ARE HEALTHY AND WELL BALANCED EMOTIONALLY, PHYSICALLY AND MENTALLY

- 61,250 Active Kids vouchers created in Camden LGA.
- Families and children accessed and utilised recreational facilities (bike track, sporting fields and playgrounds).
- Promoting local school holiday programs via Camden Kids website and eNewsletter as well as Children and Family Services Network, to engage children in physical activity and creative outlets.
- Partnered with NSW Health to promote a healthy kid's food campaign, 'Cooking with Kids'.
- Families Week programs focused on key themes of safety, wellbeing, connection and health.

PRIORITY 5: SAFE – CHILDREN ARE AND FEEL SAFE AT HOME AND IN THEIR COMMUNITY

- Safe Series workshops provided for early childcare educators in 2020 and 2021 to enhance local sectors response to child wellbeing and protection needs.
- Maintained zero drowning deaths recorded in Camden LGA between 2017-2019. Promoting first lap vouchers and swimming lesson incentives in partnership with The Y (Mount Annan Leisure Centre) to encourage every child in Camden to know water safety.
- Approximately 1,680 child seats fitted/checked during the Child Restraint Fitting Days held throughout the four-year period.



PRIORITY 6: INFORMED & EMPOWERED – FAMILIES HAVE ACCESSIBLE AND ACCURATE INFORMATION TO MAKE INFORMED DECISIONS

- Camden Kids has proved to be a platform that reaches families and service providers across the Camden LGA, with information that assists in making informed decisions.
- Camden Kids eNewsletter currently has approximately 400 subscribers and continues to grow, with an average of four new subscribers a week.
- Upgrades made to the website in 2019 saw the addition of 'news' and 'what's on' sections, to inform local families on relevant topics and events or activities happening across the LGA. Since 2015, 375 events/activities have been promoted on Camden Kids.



CHALLENGES

The impact of COVID-19 throughout 2020–2021 saw changes in how children and families conducted their daily activities.

This overall change to daily life meant more activities, programs and events were moved online rather than face to face delivery.

We adapted and continued to service, support and connect with children and families through:

Online Events and Activities

- Library Storytime videos.
- Providing book lists and borrowing guides to be utilised for Camden Libraries.
- Collaboration with Western Sydney University and South Western Sydney Local Health District to host a speech and language development webinar.

- Local playgroups providing online platform for parents to connect.
- Promoting local community service providers access to webinars such as Karitane and EACH.

Camden Kids

- A useful platform used during lockdown, prompting accessible support and services.
- Connecting with families through the Camden Kids eNewsletter to disseminate information on local supports and services as well as relevant topics.
- Local families and service providers can connect with Council's Community Project Officer through Camden Kids to make enquiries on relevant matters.

RECOMMENDATIONS & LOOKING FORWARD

- Updating Council's reporting and reviewing process of community programs, with intention to provide biannual 'scorecards' that show our progress against strategic actions.
- Continue to increase the profile of 'Camden Kids' in the community to increase traffic and subscribers.
- Community consultation will help Council develop the subsequent Children and Families Strategy 2023-2027, to reflect the needs of the families of Camden LGA.
- Explore unmet strategic actions and determine if these remain a priority for the families of Camden.
- Delivery of programs and activities consistently throughout the year for children and families.
- Continue to work collaboratively with community organisations to facilitate Camden to be a place where children can grow, learn, be safe and healthy.



**Have a question, feedback
or would like to learn more
about the Children and
Families Strategy?**

Contact Council's Children and
Families Community Project
Officer on (02) 4654 7777 or email
camden.kids@camden.nsw.gov.au.

