



DISCUSSION PAPER

2003

Mitcham Community Focal Points Framework

April 2004

CITY OF



MITCHAM

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Executive Summary

The *Community Focal Points Study*, forming part of the *Community Needs Assessment Study*, was commissioned by the City of Mitcham as a key product that would identify the role of community focal points in the City and identify options for the implementation of a model across the Council area. **Objectives of the study** are three-fold and include:

- Development of a Community Focal Points Framework for the improved provision and management of community centres, libraries and other facilities as community focal points
- Identification of community focal points for the City of Mitcham
- Identification of options for the future development and management of community focal points for the City of Mitcham

The **structure of the Community Focal Points Study** incorporates six key components:

- Context of the study, including study objectives, definitions and objectives
- Overview of community focal points including trends, roles of focal points and issues facing the City of Mitcham's focal points
- Case studies, including research and opportunities for the City of Mitcham
- Framework options for management and development of focal points for the City of Mitcham
- Assessment of the City of Mitcham's focal points including issues, opportunities and options
- Funding options

A number of **broad trends** have been identified as influencing the provision of Community Focal Points in the course of undertaking the Study. These include:

- increased funding constraints facing local government,
- increased multiple-use and co-location of facilities and services,
- the evolution of libraries in providing greatly extended services beyond traditional lending,
- current benchmarks in the provision of focal points,
- the increasing number of partnership opportunities between government and non-government agencies,
- greater accountability and transparency in the provision of services and management of community facilities,
- increasing emphasis on wellness and proactive health care,
- creation of an identity or icon within the community, and

- increased involvement in social enterprise and self funding.

An analysis of the City of Mitcham's community focal points revealed a number of **issues and relevant trends specific to the City**, which have been incorporated in the recommendations of the study, including:

- the outcomes of the Community Needs Assessment Study,
- low utilisation rates for current community facilities,
- exclusive use of facilities within the City of Mitcham,
- ad hoc management and coordination of community facilities
- current lack of policies and procedures for the management of Mitcham's community facilities

A number of **case studies** were undertaken and indicated a range of outcomes, options, opportunities and trends relevant to the City of Mitcham community focal points, including:

- a move towards larger multiple-use facilities that provide a large range of facilities for a large number of groups and communities, involving improved transport services and rationalisation of buildings,
- increased community and enterprise development,
- a variety of approaches to the provision of facilities and services provided by local government across Australia, often depending on geographical need and individual circumstances,
- the use of 'themes' to provide a market focus to selected facilities, thus creating a community 'icon',
- common use of partnership and fund-sharing arrangements,
- common use of facilities for hire to provide income to off set costs,
- incorporation of private sector involvement, predominately in newer facilities and models,
- reliance on volunteer support as a critical element of community focal points,
- employment of a coordinator(s),
- increased community enterprise opportunities associated with community centres,
- a range of management styles are widely utilised, including independent, outsourcing, partnerships, management committees and the use of 'place managers'
- a general trend away from exclusive use of facilities by community groups, due to the need for Councils to be more open and accountable to its community, the need for inclusivity and cost effectiveness

Three framework options are presented within this Study, namely:

Option 1 – Community hub model, integrating the libraries and community centre facilities

The community hub option would see the development of multi-purpose facilities in the Hills, Mitcham Central and the West, located at or adjacent to existing business, shopping, transport and/or community hubs. The facilities would incorporate library, local history, community and technical (homework and business support) centres, conference & meeting facilities and office accommodation. The facilities would be managed by Council with community input and would require the provision of Community Centre Coordinator/s.

The advantages of Option 1 include integration of the libraries with community centre facilities, reduction of long-term maintenance liabilities, sharing of infrastructure and rationalisation of under-utilised buildings. However, it should be noted that the implementation of Option 1 would require significant expenditure and a long-term implementation timeframe (although cost will be offset in part through the rationalisation of under-utilised facilities).

Option 2 – Single tier centres with independent libraries

The single tier centre with independent libraries option would see the independent continuation of the two libraries located at Blackwood and Mitcham Community Court and the development of five moderate-sized community centres, together with a resources coordinator.

Option 2 would require a moderate level of expenditure and a medium-term implementation time frame given the focus on enhancement of current facilities rather than larger-scale redevelopment of buildings. However, should significant library upgrades be proposed in the medium term, there may be some lost opportunity associated with taking the decision to locate community centres independent of libraries. It may be that Option 2 presents an effective medium-term interim solution as it does not necessarily (if staged and implemented appropriately) undermine the ability to progress to Option 1 in the long term.

Option 3 – Status Quo: maintain existing community facilities with independent libraries

Maintaining the status quo would see continuation of a large number of community facilities and continuation of the 2 independent libraries. Some of the advantages of Option 3 include a low capital investment. However, the current ad hoc arrangement of community facilities does not enable the delivery of efficient or effective community services. In addition, the large volume of existing facilities results in thinly-stretched resources and significant under-utilisation, together with large ongoing maintenance costs.

The following recommendations underpin the development of a Community Focal Point Framework for the City of Mitcham.

- 1. The Mitcham Community Focal Points Framework and Recommendations be reviewed regularly to ensure relevance to changing needs and circumstances, preferably every 2 years but at least every 5 years. (See page 19)**
- 2. The City of Mitcham actively encourage the co-location of groups and services to provide more efficient use of facilities. (See page 19)**

3. The City of Mitcham undertake a review of perceived and real rights to the use of community focal point facilities and develop a policy for appropriate use. (See page 19)
4. The City of Mitcham actively encourage the sharing of facilities and manage exclusive use of facilities appropriately. (See page 19)
5. The City of Mitcham to work with existing service providers to ensure improved co-ordination of services and facilities. (See page 20)
6. The City of Mitcham, upon endorsement of an appropriate Community Focal Points Framework and Recommendations, should prepare a Community Focal Points Management Plan including appropriate policy and procedure(s). (See page 20)
7. It is recommended that Council endorse Option 1 - The Community Hub Model as the preferred framework model and strategic direction. (See page 30)
8. Following consideration by Council and agreement on the preferred framework model the development of a detailed site assessment report and staged implementation plan should be prepared for Council's consideration. The Implementation Plan should provide a staged approach to implementation over a 5-10 year period. (See page 30)
9. The investigation stage to include comprehensive consultation with stakeholders and the wider community regarding the preferred framework model and its implications. (See page 30)
10. Community centres be adapted as multi-use facilities aimed at meeting the needs of a wide range of groups and communities rather than the provision of activities that cater for single-focus groups or residents. (See page 37)
11. A review of Council's community grants program be undertaken with a view towards adding value to and increasing support of non-Council community centres in preference to setting up new and competing Council-owned facilities in the area. Such a review would potentially see an increase in overall funding, identify funding priorities and develop a 3-5 year program. (See page 54)
12. For greatest success of the Mitcham Community Focal Points Framework implementation, a range of funding options should be pursued in order to share the cost over a larger number of agencies. (See page 54)
13. Partnership opportunities should be pursued in a proactive manner at all junctures. Partnership opportunities with other spheres of government, the community and the private sector present the greatest opportunity for achievement of the Mitcham Community Focal Points Framework. (See page 54)

1 Introduction

1.1 Report structure

The structure of the Community Focal Points Study incorporates six key components:

- Context of the study, including study objectives, definitions and objectives
- Overview of Community Focal Points including trends, roles of focal points and issues facing the City of Mitcham's focal points
- Case studies, including research and opportunities for the City of Mitcham
- Assessment of the City of Mitcham's focal points including issues, opportunities and options
- Framework options for management and development of focal points for the City of Mitcham
- Funding options

1.2 Background, objectives and methodology

The City of Mitcham resolved to undertake a Community Needs Assessment Study and a Community Focal Points Study. The two studies have been undertaken concurrently but the Community Focal Points Study is presented as a 'stand alone' product forming part of the Community Needs Assessment Study. The studies have been carried out against the backdrop of consultation on a 2030 vision for the City of Mitcham and alongside a review of information and local history.

Community Needs Assessment Study

The *Community Needs Assessment Study* provides "a research based strategic planning tool for the City of Mitcham through a collaborative and consultative approach with key stakeholders and the Mitcham community"¹. The Study responds to key social needs, target groups and communities and geographic communities and incorporates priorities, directions, strategies and actions to address needs.

The City of Mitcham has established a multi-disciplinary project team of Council staff that oversees the development of the *Community Needs Assessment* and *Community Focal Points Studies*. In addition to the formation of the project team, the Council has undertaken substantial work in the lead up to the *Community Focal Points Study* including a *Youth Focal Points Study*, initial research and analysis, data collection and mapping of focal points. This work has provided a substantial base for the *Community Focal Points Study*.

¹ City of Mitcham Community Needs Assessment Study Proposal; 2003 Janet Gould and Associates

Community Focal Points Study objectives

The *Community Focal Points Study*, forming part of the *Community Needs Assessment Study*, was commissioned by the City of Mitcham as a key product that would identify the role of community focal points in the City and identify options for the implementation of a model across the Council area. Objectives of the study are three-fold and include:

- Development of a **Community Focal Points Framework** for the improved provision and management of community centres, libraries and other facilities as community focal points
- **Identification of community focal points** for the City of Mitcham
- Identification of **options for the future development and management** of community focal points for the City of Mitcham

Community Focal Points Study methodology

In preparing the *Community Focal Points Study* a methodology was agreed and adopted and is presented in Appendix 1. Key elements of the methodology include:

- Review of past and current studies undertaken by the City of Mitcham
- Research and analysis (including case studies and interviews with staff)
- Development of criteria for Mitcham community focal points
- Analysis and mapping of Mitcham community focal points (including site inspection and SWOT analysis)
- Identification of options for Mitcham community focal points, including a framework for future development and management of Mitcham's community focal points and directions for each focal point

Community Focal Points Study outputs

The key outputs of the *Community Focal Points Study*, as contained in this report are:

- Mitcham Community Focal Points Framework
- Mitcham Community Focal Points Directions

Next stages

Following the finalisation of the Community Focal Points Study, consultation with the City of Mitcham community and Elected Membership will need to be undertaken, and a site assessment investigation conducted.

1.3 Definition of a community focal point

The definition of a community focal point may be widely applied to refer to a place that provides the necessary social interaction and support of a community of interest and can include public parks, libraries, cafes, pubs, shopping centres and community centres.

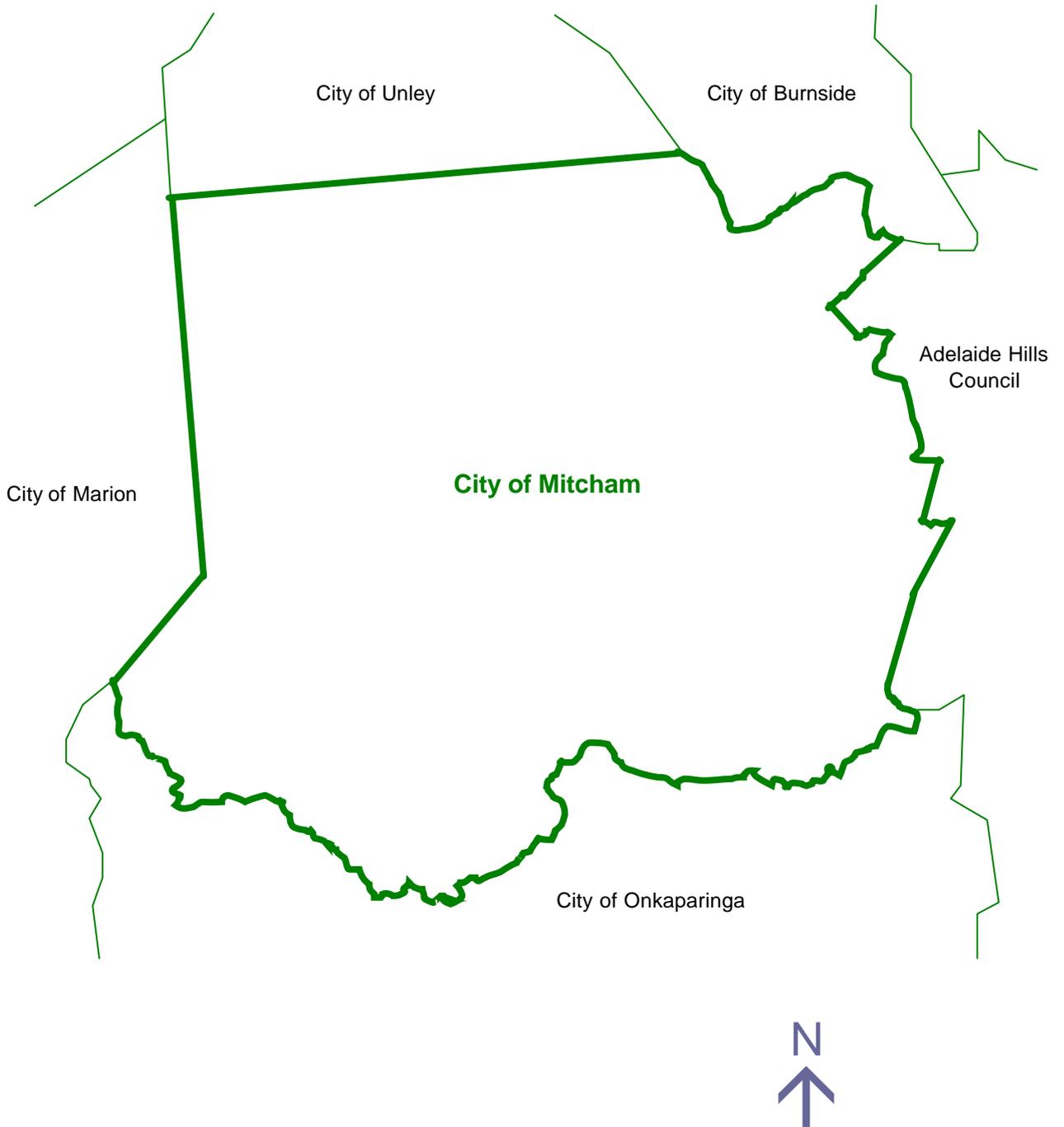
For the purposes of this study, the concept has been explored in this context (refer section 4) but applied to the City of Mitcham as it specifically relates to community centres, civic hubs, neighbourhood houses, libraries and community support facilities. With this definition in mind, community focal points (both existing and potential) for the City of Mitcham have been identified (refer section 5).

1.4 Study area

The study area encompasses the whole of the City of Mitcham and is depicted in *Figure 2.4.1 Study Area*. The population of the City of Mitcham was 59,766 at the time of the 2001 Census², comprising 23,343 people in the Mitcham Hills, 21,862 people in Mitcham West and 15,006 people in Mitcham North-East.

² City of Mitcham Community Needs Assessment Study, 2003 Janet Gould and Associates

Figure 2.4.1 Study Area



2 Context

2.1 What is a community focal point?

The following criteria for community focal points have been formulated from a number of pieces of research, namely The Great Good Place by Ray Oldenburg, *Places not Spaces* edited by Tamara Winikoff, *Better Places Richer Communities* by the Australia Council for the Arts and presentations by ‘thinker in residence’ Charles Landry in his recent visits to Adelaide and via his website www.commedia.org.

Community focal points can be defined as places that provide a focus for community interaction and activity, a “home away from home”³. The importance of community focal points to a local community is embedded in the sense of belonging, support, sociability and empowerment that people feel in such places. Community focal points provide a venue for information, education, interaction and activity and are places where individuals are mentally, spiritually and/or physically supported through a sense of community, mutual support and self worth developed through community involvement. Community focal points can also be places where community leaders are found and/or created. In his recent presentation to the “Adelaide Thinkers in Residence Forum” in June 2003, Charles Landry spoke of “unlocking the talent pool” and finding leaders.

Community focal points can comprise of a range of places including parks and open spaces, plazas, cafés, libraries, shopping centres, pubs and community centres. Increasingly, governments (including local government) and the private sector are seeking to retrofit public spaces dominated by retail and commercial activity to provide community focal points that meet the needs of the community, or as Charles Landry put it at his recent presentation in Adelaide in July 2003, they are “regaining the confidence to bring in the public space and civic heart”.

Within the City of Mitcham a range of important community points exist within shopping centres (eg Mitcham), pubs (eg the Edinburgh), open spaces (eg Belair National Park), recreation facilities (eg AA Bailey Reserve), churches and community centres. Whilst these areas play a critical part in fostering and developing a sense of community, for the purposes of this study, criteria are focused on community focal points as they relate to community centres, hubs, libraries, information centres and houses.

Critical criteria for community focal points as applied throughout this study include:

- A neutral meeting place where people can come and go as they please and feel **comfortable** within
- Ability to **respond to a desire for engagement**, involvement and participation
- A place that provides **conversation and interaction**
- A place that makes people feel like a part of an association or group, a feeling of **belonging**

³ Ray Oldenburg, The Great Good Place, 1989 page 38

- A community focal point should become an **'easy' part of regular life** through timing of services
- Easily **accessible** with regard to location, access to public transport and design
- A community **resource** and a repository for information and referrals
- **Involvement and empowerment** of local communities in the development and management of facilities and services
- A place that is memorable, inspiring, iconic and provides a **sense of local identity**
- Provides acceptance for all members of the community as equals and is **inclusive** rather than exclusive
- A place that is **targeted to needs but flexible**, particularly in response to changing community needs over time
- A place that encourages self and **interdependent assistance**, together with enterprising spirit
- A place that offers a **broad range of facilities** to meet a broad range of community need
- A place that provides **opportunities for multiple use**, co-location of facilities and effective and efficient use of services

2.2 The importance of community centres and hubs as community focal points

Community centres, libraries and neighbourhood houses are important components of community focal points and play numerous roles from the simple (eg hall hire and meeting space) to the complex (eg information, library facilities, referral, activities and support groups).

The role of community centres is acknowledged by Gary Moore of the NSW Government in his address to Cooperative Federation of NSW Conference Dinner - 14 November 2002 in *Community Capacity Building: Facts and Fiction*. Moore explains that "adapting successfully to change, and building resilient neighbourhoods, cities, farms and towns, requires not only the best efforts of governments and vision and behaviour by business, but the active participation of citizens in community life." Moore asserts that a community's capacity relies on (amongst other things) the strength of local networks and the presence and use of community facilities, public amenities and open space. Moore goes on to say that:

"We know that, from various pieces of overseas research:

- *for every \$1 invested in family support, parent education and social development of children, \$7 is saved down the line in less use of welfare, health and justice services*
- *community integration and renewal programs in socially disadvantaged locations result in 50% fewer arrests*

- *preventing a high risk young person from adopting a life of crime saves the community up to \$2 million US*

Local Governments throughout Australia play a lead role (in partnership with or in support to) community centres and houses through funding, coordination and infrastructure in recognition of the importance such places provide in the community. John Murphy of Mornington Peninsula Community Connections, in his paper to the Broken Hill Community Round Table on 29 July 2000 *Empowering Grass-Roots Groups to Strengthen Communities* (page 4), states that, based on his experience working within a community centre, it is clear that there is a desire on the part of individuals to play a role in their communities. The ability to undertake this role as part of a community group “legitimises the views and actions of community people; support can be provided to individuals by other members of the group; and a collective voice is often more effective than a single one”.

Physical infrastructure, places and coordination of community activity, such as that provided by community centres provide a means to bring people together to provide the necessary support and collective voice for a local community.

2.3 Trends relating to community centres as community focal points

A number of trends are evident, through analysis of case studies, review of relevant literature and recent studies. These are outlined briefly below, together with examples where relevant.

Funding constraints

Increased funding constraints associated with tighter budgetary control, increased cost shifting onto local government and increased costs such as insurance and maintenance has led to the need to ensure a wide range of funding options including attraction of private investment (Marion Cultural Centre) and the adoption of community enterprise (eg art sales within the Mitcham Village Arts Centre). In addition, local communities are seeking to pool resources through partnership opportunities and improved management of surplus land (see below).

Multi use and co-location

A trend towards the co-location of community groups in multi-use facilities has stemmed from a number of issues including:

- funding constraints
- the need to address exclusive use of public facilities on equity grounds
- flexibility in service provision over time and across geographic areas
- opportunities for increased community interaction
- more effective use of facilities

The development of larger facilities and centres (eg Goodwood Community Centre) have adopted this principle by providing a range of facilities available to groups and activities on a shared basis. Even within smaller centres, sharing of facilities and co-location of groups is a common trend (eg Fullarton Park Centre) to ensure that facilities are not perceived as exclusive and that maximum efficiencies in their use may be gained.

The future of libraries

Libraries are subject to significant trends associated with technology advance, access to information, the demand for a wider range of facilities including business support and homework centres and the increased role of bookshops. There are significant opportunities for libraries to respond positively to such influences through the broadening of facilities and roles. Examples of such change include the integration of:

- Cafés (eg Burnside Library)
- Play centres and childcare
- Cultural exhibitions and arts centres (Marion Cultural Centre)
- Information services and research facilities (Onkaparinga Libraries)
- Business support services
- Marketing and promotion

The Adelaide City Council is responding to such demands through the development of 'themed' hubs such as a multi-cultural library at the Central Market and a business library at Hutt Street. Such an approach not only responds to geographic communities of interest but provide a basis for marketing and promotion opportunities.

Libraries within the City of Mitcham have the potential to be the catalyst for the creation of multi-use centres driven by the upgrade of library facilities by providing traditional library facilities, community centres, accommodation for community groups, support groups, information and referral and customer service in the one integrated precinct or focal point. In this regard, the City of Mitcham's Library Review (currently under development) is integral in identifying future opportunities for the City's libraries. This concept is also discussed further in this report.

Benchmarks

With regard to benchmarks for the provision of community houses or neighbourhood centres, the Human Services Planning Kit recommends 7,000 to 10,000 per community centre or neighbourhood house. At this rate, the City of Mitcham would provide between 6 and 8 community centres.

However, quality of the centre and the range of facilities provided is of great relevance to the success or otherwise of a community centre network. In particular, geographic relevance to areas of high need is a critical factor in locating community facilities, as is the mobilisation of the community involved and sense of place tying a community to a specific location.

· ***Partnerships***

Partnerships in the development and management of community centres are common throughout Australia. Case studies indicate that joint funding through Federal, State, local governments, other agencies and the community is likely to remain a commonplace feature of community centres. However, increased opportunities for private partnerships in capital development (Marion Cultural Centre) and long-term agreements between local government and not-for-profit agencies in the provision of services (City of Onkaparinga Youth Services Model with Mission Australia) are likely to increase in proportion.

· ***Greater accountability and transparency***

The community demand for greater accountability and transparency in the management of community lands and facilities is a common trend that is likely to lead to a more formal and accountable policy approach to leasing, letting, rent, use arrangements and service provision agreements. Lower exclusive use rates, greater equity in the access to community facilities and greater need for formal agreements are likely outcomes of this trend.

· ***Wellness and health***

A focus on wellness and a growth in the health industry is predicted, particularly with the retirement of relatively well-off baby boomers. The role of private and public recreational facilities is likely to increase as a result, as is the role of community centres in the provision of community health services and information. Coupled with this trend is the move towards a more positive approach, promoting 'healthy lifestyles' and good health management. A change in focus to preventative health is likely to lead to significant benefits by reducing the per head demand for traditional health care facilities.

In particular, the Community Needs Assessment Study undertaken by the City of Mitcham revealed a demand for a 'Community Wellbeing Centre' located centrally within the area. Given the demand for such facilities and expected trends, it is recommended that the City of Mitcham investigate such proposals as part of its Community Focal Points Directions and Framework. In addition, there is both a national and state shift in policy to preventative health care and maintenance of wellbeing through such efforts as Active Australia, the Heart Foundation and the Generational Health Review.

· ***Marketing and promotion***

Marketing and promotion of community centres, as well as the creation of an identity or icon is a common feature of new community centres (Marion Cultural Centre, Goodwood Community Centre). Development of a community icon assists in creation of a sense of place, promotes community association with the facility and assists in marketing.

· ***Social enterprise***

Some local community centres concentrate more on social enterprise in a number of cases, often in response to the need to provide self-funding opportunities. Social enterprise activities not only provide a return for the centre/group involved but also achieve social objectives.

Social enterprises are considered to have three common characteristics⁴:

- An **enterprise orientation**. This means they are directly involved in producing goods or providing services and aim to make an operating surplus
- **Explicit social aims** such as job creation, training or provision of services required by the local community. They are accountable to their members and the wider community for their outcomes
- **Social ownership**. Governance is based on participation by stakeholders or trustees and profits from the enterprise are shared amongst the stakeholders or used for community betterment.

Examples of community enterprises within community centres include the Vancouver Community Kitchen that aims to provide social and community building opportunities through food and food preparation. In some cases the produce is sold in community markets or shop fronts such as the Willunga Farmers Market. The annual turnover of the Willunga Farmers Market for example is about \$1 million with money remaining in the region. In addition, centres also offset expenses through hire of facilities.

2.4 Overview of issues facing the City of Mitcham's community focal points

An analysis of the City of Mitcham's community focal points was undertaken in the course of this study through staff interviews, analysis of past and current studies and extensive site inspection. A number of issues and relevant trends were identified through this process and are discussed below.

Community Needs Assessment

The *Mitcham Community Needs Assessment Study* identified seven (7) priority target groups through analysis of the Mitcham community profile and literature review:

- Older people, in particular the frail aged
- People with a disability
- Young people
- Families and young children
- Sole parents, most commonly women
- Men without partners and/or family support
- Indigenous people
- People from diverse cultural backgrounds
- Specific geographical need areas

⁴ www.communitynet.sa.gov.au

Options for the Mitcham Community Focal Points Framework and Recommendations have been developed with these priority target groups in mind. It is considered essential that the future directions and framework applied to the City of Mitcham's community focal points responds directly to the needs of these groups, both with regard to geographic location and management (refer Sections 6 and 7 for recommended options for the Community Focal Points Framework and Directions).

The Mitcham Community Focal Points Framework and Recommendations will need to remain flexible enough to respond to changing needs over time.

RECOMMENDATION: The Mitcham Community Focal Points Framework and Recommendations be reviewed regularly to ensure relevance to changing needs and circumstances, preferably every 2 years but at least every 5 years.

· ***Utilisation***

A City of Mitcham *Community Facilities Utilisation Survey* was undertaken by the City of Mitcham in July 2003. The outcomes are discussed as they relate to specific community focal points in the following sections. However, a review of the outcomes of the survey indicates that the City of Mitcham community facilities:

- Are significantly under utilised with some community facilities being used for just 6 hours a week
- In some cases accommodate limited numbers of users and groups

RECOMMENDATION: The City of Mitcham actively encourage the co-location of groups and services to provide more efficient use of facilities.

· ***Exclusive use of facilities***

A number of community facilities are currently used exclusively by particular groups, or have a perception of being used exclusively. Whilst in some cases it may be appropriate to encourage a particular focus for a community focal point for reasons of targeting or marketing (eg youth, seniors, arts), the City of Mitcham should aim to encourage the sharing of facilities, particularly where facilities are under-utilised. In addition, greater accountability for local governments and an expectation that community land and facilities will be used appropriately, requires a review of historic exclusive use rights.

RECOMMENDATION: The City of Mitcham undertake a review of perceived and real rights to the use of community focal point facilities and develop a policy for appropriate use.

RECOMMENDATION: The City of Mitcham actively encourage the sharing of facilities and manage exclusive use of facilities appropriately.

· ***Management and coordination***

The management of the City of Mitcham's community facilities and focal points is currently undertaken by a mix of Council staff, not-for-profit agencies and the community, with funding from various bodies and in a relatively ad hoc manner.

RECOMMENDATION: The City of Mitcham to work with existing service providers to ensure improved co-ordination of services and facilities.

Framework and Recommendations

The City of Mitcham currently has no framework for the management of its community focal points, either current or future. The outcomes of this study are expected to assist in this regard by providing a set of recommendations for community focal points and Community Focal Points Framework options. However, in addition to this study, once an appropriate model and set of recommendations are endorsed by Council, it is envisaged that there will be a need to develop a Community Focal Points Management Plan and accompanying policy and procedure(s) that would address management arrangements, leasing and agreements, funding and development.

RECOMMENDATION: The City of Mitcham, upon endorsement of an appropriate Community Focal Points Framework and Recommendations, should prepare a Community Focal Points Management Plan including appropriate policy and procedure(s).

3 Case studies

A total of 8 case studies were identified and analysed in the development of options for the Mitcham Community Focal Points Framework and Recommendations for the purpose of identifying current trends and models. Whilst the case studies selected do not necessarily form best practice models for the City of Mitcham's situation, cases were selected to demonstrate a range of options available. The most appropriate model for the City of Mitcham will be one that reflects the unique character of the City and its desired community directions and is likely to reflect a combination of the cases discussed.

3.1 Overview of case studies

City of Unley community centres

With a population of 36,774 and an area of 14 square kilometres, the City of Unley manages and/or supports a total of 5 community focal points (as defined under this study) including:

- a) Fullarton Park Community Centre with two full-time staff
 - one coordinator
 - one administrative officer
 - small library staff, tasked from Unley Central
 - Council maintains the building and infrastructure needs of the facility

- b) Goodwood Community Centre with three staff
 - one full-time coordinator
 - two administrative support staff
 - managed by the Goodwood Community Services Board that also sources funds for other positions, including Staines Baby Development Program, Toy Library, Playgroup and Endeavour Program for examples. These positions are funded from other sources and report to the Board on programs.

- c) Clarence Park Community Centre with three staff
 - one full time coordinator
 - one administrative officer
 - toy library coordinator (10 hours per week)
 - the centre is managed by a Board of Management that oversees programming and overall management of the centre.

- d) Eastwood Community Centre, just over the boarder in the Burnside Council area.
 - Council contributes approximately \$9,000 per annum to Burnside Council to be directed to the Eastwood Centre.

- e) Unley Citizens Centre for Over 50's with four staff members
 - one coordinator full time
 - one administrative officer four days per week
 - one community aide four days per week
 - one cook four days per week

The City of Unley's centres are well publicised, signed and marketed including regular newsletters, websites and council-provided information.

City of Onkaparinga community centres

The City of Onkaparinga, with a population of 151,400 and an area of 54 square kilometres, manages and/or supports a total of 20 community focal points (as defined under this study). The City of Onkaparinga framework focuses on five key areas including community/neighbourhood centres, youth centres, seniors centres, Aboriginal centres and Arts centres. Centres are well publicised, signed and marketed including regular newsletters, websites, events and regularly updated information through Council's Community Information Service. The programs run by the 12 community/neighbourhood centres are managed through the Community South Forum and a coordinator designed to ensure an integrated approach to services across the City. The centres include:

- a) Aldinga Community Centre
 - one Community Development Officer, 30 hours per week, funded by Department Human of Services (DHS)
 - management committee oversees centre programming

- b) Seaford/Moana
 - one Community Development Officer, 27 hours per week

- c) Christies Downs
 - one community Development Officer, 27 hours per week

- d) Hackham West
 - one community Development Officer, 27 hours per week

- e) Woodcroft
 - one community Development Officer, 27 hours per week
- d) Reynella
 - one Community Development Officer, 27 hours per week
- e) Aberfoyle Park
 - one Community Development Officer, 30 hours per week (8 hours DHS funded, 22 hours Council funded)
- f) Corromandel Valley
 - one community Development Officer, 24 hours per week
- g) Elizabeth House - Over 50's Christies Beach
 - one community support worker, 26 hours per week
 - an additional community support worker funded by HACC, 20 hours per week
- h) Wakefield House - Over 50's
 - community support worker, 25 hours per week
 - program officer, respite worker for carers
- i) Karawatha House
 - recently established, a community worker from Christies Beach spends some time there each week

• **City of Adelaide – community centres**

The City of Adelaide has a population of approximately 17,863 comprising 13,000 residents and 4863 visitors in short-term accommodation. In 2002, the City of Adelaide undertook a review of operations, facilities and funding of the North Adelaide Community Centre, Coglein Street and Box Factory Community Centres. The study, *Great Expectations: A Review of the North Adelaide, Box Factory and Coglein Street Community Centres' Funding and Management Models*, revealed the use of three separate models for the management of the centres, namely Outsourced, Independent and Partnership models⁵. The study undertook research of other Capital Cities that demonstrated a range of models depending on the individual circumstances involved. The City of Adelaide concluded that the Adelaide City Council was the only capital city with a mixed model structure for community centre programs. Whilst the partnership and outsourced models were seen to have functioned well, the independent model had not.

⁵ City of Adelaide, 2002; *Great Expectations: A Review of the North Adelaide, Box Factory and Coglein Street Community Centres' Funding and Management Models*

Currently, the City of Adelaide's staffing arrangements for its community and library services include:

- a) Box Factory Community Centre - currently does not have a coordinator/under review.
- b) Coglein Street Community Centre - home of the Migrant Resource Centre/under review.
- c) Hutt Street Community Centre and Library - new service will offer both library services and community facilities. Staffing is still being worked through.
- d) Grote Street Community Centre and Library - dual facility, staffing still to be worked out.
- e) North Terrace Library Service - not a community centre, has library staff only.

City of Marion community centres

The City of Marion Cultural Centre, located in The Domain, Marion, is a recently constructed multi-use centre that houses the Marion library, Domain theatre, meeting spaces, performance and function areas, café, exhibition space and accommodation for community groups with the aim of creating a 'community hub'⁶. The centre is built on the concept of integration and sharing of facilities. It also incorporates independent components run through a partnership of private and public agencies, and coordinated by a Centre Manager. The development of the centre has seen the transfer of groups such as the Red House Group Inc into the Cultural Centre facilities, enabling sharing of improved facilities.

In addition to the Cultural Centre, the City of Marion owns and operates/supports three neighbourhood houses including:

- a) Mitchell Park - employs one administration officer full time
- b) Trott Park - employs one administration officer full time
- c) Glandore Community Centre - Council does not fund a position at this centre
- d) The Cove Youth Service - one full time Youth Services Coordinator and one part-time (0.8) administrative officer employed
- e) Cooina Recreation Centre - one full-time coordinator who oversees all of the above centres and two part-time administrative officers
- f) Marion Youth Centre - Council does not fund any positions

⁶ City of Marion, 2003; www.marion.sa.gov.au

· ***City of Parramatta – place management***

The City of Parramatta in New South Wales, population 143,143, has committed to the development and management of community focal points through 'Place Management' with the aim of creating links between neighbourhood communities and Council. To this end, the City of Parramatta has employed five Place Managers (two Neighbourhood Place Managers, two Primary City Centre Place Managers and one City Centre Place Manager).

The role of Place Managers within the City of Parramatta is to work closely with community including residents, businesses, service providers, state and local government and Council with the aim of strengthening neighbourhood communities, coordinating services and service enhancements and implementing on-ground works that address community need.

· ***City of Melbourne – community hub***

The Community Hub in the City of Melbourne (population 52,117) is a joint venture with the Centre for Adult Education. The Hub will aim to meet the learning, creative and community interaction needs of Melbourne's business and residential populations and will centre around a new library. The facility will be multi-use and will incorporate meeting rooms, a student-operated café, arts space and learning facilities. The staffing requirements are still in the process of being worked through as the centre is due to open in May 2004.

· ***City of Whitehorse community centres***

The City of Whitehorse in Victoria owns and manages a total of nine community centres and neighbourhood houses. In a simple framework, the centres cater for a range of community education, support groups and social programs. Council offers fixed funding amounts to the nine centres/houses in the form of administrative assistance and programming monies. Salaries are paid by DHS and the Education Department.

· ***Shire of Yarra Ranges community centres***

With a population of 143,000, the Shire of the Yarra Ranges in Victoria owns and supports a total of 12 community houses, neighbourhood houses or living and learning centres. The centres are owned by the Council and operated by a coordinator under community-based committees, funded by partnership arrangements between local and state government and other agencies. The 12 centres are currently being reviewed with the aim to develop a more equitable funding model. The recommended model would see each centre receive a baseline figure of \$10,000 each from Council, together with a DHS salary. Each centre would also be able to apply for program monies from Council. Another recommendation from the review will encourage the 12 centres to cooperate and develop shared objectives as a collective, to apply for state and federal government grants.

3.2 Outcomes of case studies

The case studies indicated a number of outcomes and trends relevant to the City of Mitcham community focal points and are discussed below.

- ***Facilities and services***

- The case studies investigated indicated a move towards larger multiple-use facilities that provide a large range of facilities for a large number of groups and communities. Sharing of facilities and greater interaction between groups are outcomes of such an approach.
- The realities of maintenance costs and difficulties in providing high quality facilities for a large number of centres has led to greater centralisation of facilities, coupled with 'outreach' services and improved transport. Such an approach has seen the rationalisation of under-utilised centres in favour of improved access and higher quality services.
- Community and enterprise development can be seen to replace traditional service provision in many of the case studies, indicating a move away from direct community services to greater support for community-based initiatives and enterprises that deliver community outcomes.
- The range of facilities and services provided by local government vary from basic and traditional community education and childcare to community based enterprise, support services and multi-use facilities.
- The range of facilities and services provided by centres depends on the geographic location and the need of local neighbourhoods, indicating a 'tailoring' to geographic communities of need.
- Investigation of the case studies indicated a common focus on particular areas or aspects of community need depending on demographic and locational factors. The most common focus areas included cultural and arts centres, libraries, youth centres and senior citizens. Whilst much can be gained from the co-location of facilities and groups, in some cases there is marketing and tourism value to be gained through more single-focused centres.

- ***Funding and resourcing***

- Partnership arrangements were a common feature of all case studies investigated. In most cases, partnership arrangements featured a mix of local and state government funding, community and volunteer support and a range of other not-for-profit and agency funding.
- Facility hire for events, occasions and parties were commonly used by the case study centres to provide additional funding.

- Private sector involvement was a feature of many of the newer facilities and models. In particular, the multi-use facilities and centres integrated a facility in the form of a café, restaurant or conference centre, owned and operated by the private sector. Rent, room or facility hire and, in some cases contribution to the set up costs associated with room hire, provided ongoing funding for the centre.
- Volunteer support is a critical element of community focal points, encouraging community development and self-management
- Most community centres employed a coordinator on a full-time, part-time or volunteer basis. In some cases, smaller centres were managed through the coordinator of a larger centre, or hub
- Community enterprise is becoming a more common feature of community focal points in a manner that enables self-sufficiency. Enterprise may consist of markets, cafés, product sales or hire of facilities and facilitates funding opportunities that meet social objectives

Management models

It is evident through an analysis of the management models adopted by the case studies that a range of management styles are widely utilised. Management features include:

- **Independent.** The Glandore Community Centre, City of Marion, until recently was set up as an independent management committee funded by a trust. Councils can sometimes provide assistance grants or in-kind support.
- **Outsourced.** Paid for by local government or a mix of agencies, the outsourced model features an external agency providing the agreed range of services under contract and to specified performance agreements. A relevant example is the youth services model adopted by the City of Onkaparinga.
- **Partnership.** Utilising a mix of public, private, agency and community resources, partnership models are common. Partnerships may consist of more traditional forms of funding or, in recent cases such as the Marion Cultural Centre, may involve partnerships with private developers that may assist in capital funding and/or ongoing maintenance costs.
- **Management Committee.** Encompassing a number of representatives from the community, Council and other funding agencies if applicable, a management committee provides the opportunity for local communities to move towards self-sufficiency and achieve empowerment.
- **Place Managers.** Used by the City of Parramatta, Place Managers ensure that the network of community focal points and their services are relevant to the needs of the particular geographic community. Such a feature can provide direct support for community capacity building and place making.

- **Exclusivity.** There is generally a trend away from exclusive use of facilities by community groups due to the need for Councils to be more open and accountable to its community, the need to ensure that community facilities are inclusive of all groups and that none are unfairly disadvantaged, and the need to ensure cost effectiveness of facilities through multiple-use and sharing.

Combinations of the above features are a characteristic of most case studies explored. Figures 5.2.1, 5.2.2 and 5.2.3 show examples of management model frameworks including Outsourced Services with Hub Network, Simple Network and Hub Network. The selection of management options and/or a range of options is dependent on a number of factors including:

- the need (or otherwise) to present a clear marketing 'brand' to meet a particular target audience (eg youth)
- the desire (or otherwise) to outsource specific components of the services
- the ability of other agencies to provide services more effectively than local government
- the availability (or otherwise) of funding opportunities
- the ability (or otherwise) of the community and/or agencies to meet community needs independently
- the complexity or size of the community focal point network and the need to coordinate services across a geographical area
- The need to respond directly to, and regularly review, community need within a particular geographic neighbourhood

Figure 5.2.1 Example of **OUTSOURCED SERVICES WITH HUB NETWORK** (eg Onkaparinga young people Community Focal Points Framework)

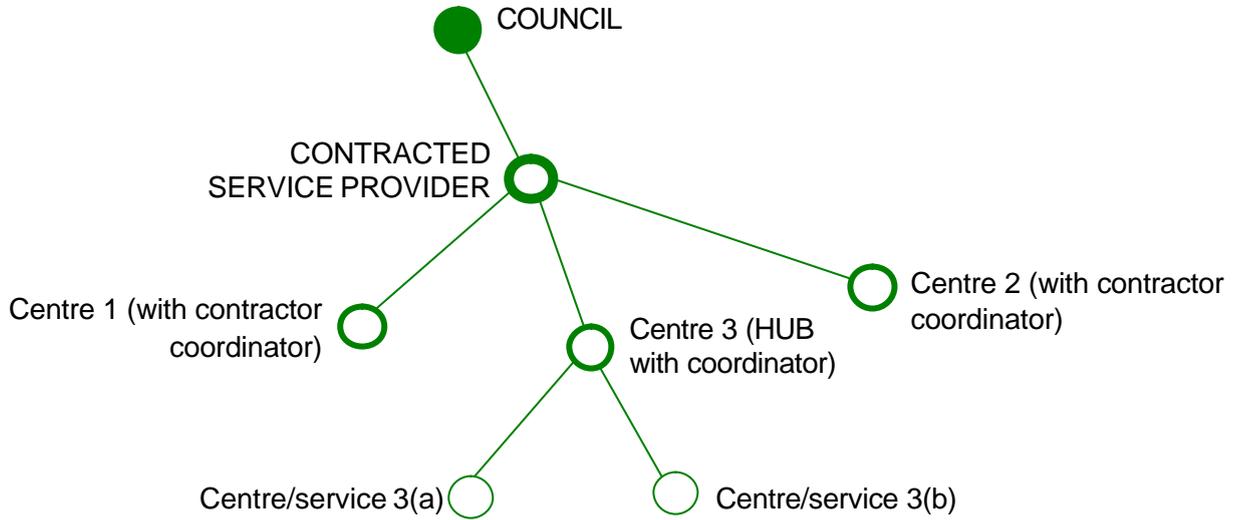


Figure 5.2.2 Example of **SIMPLE NETWORK** (eg Unley Community Focal Points Framework)

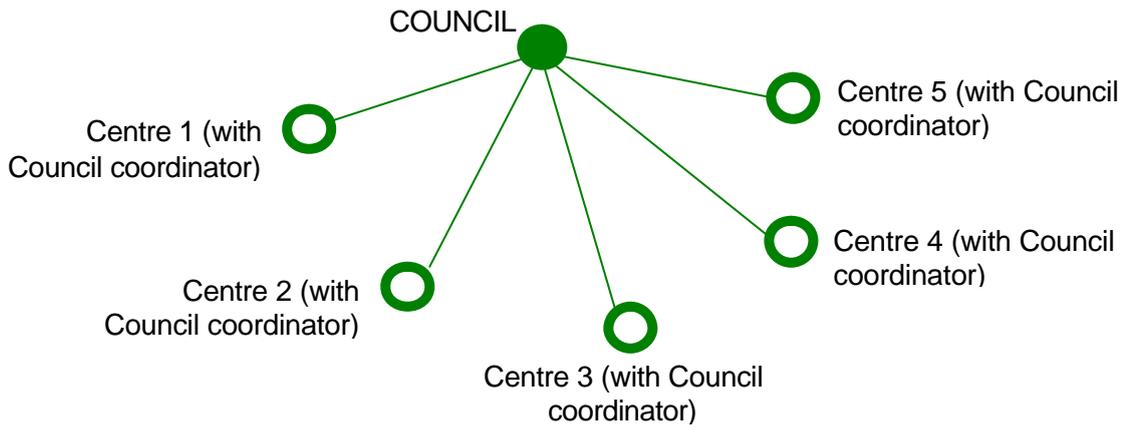
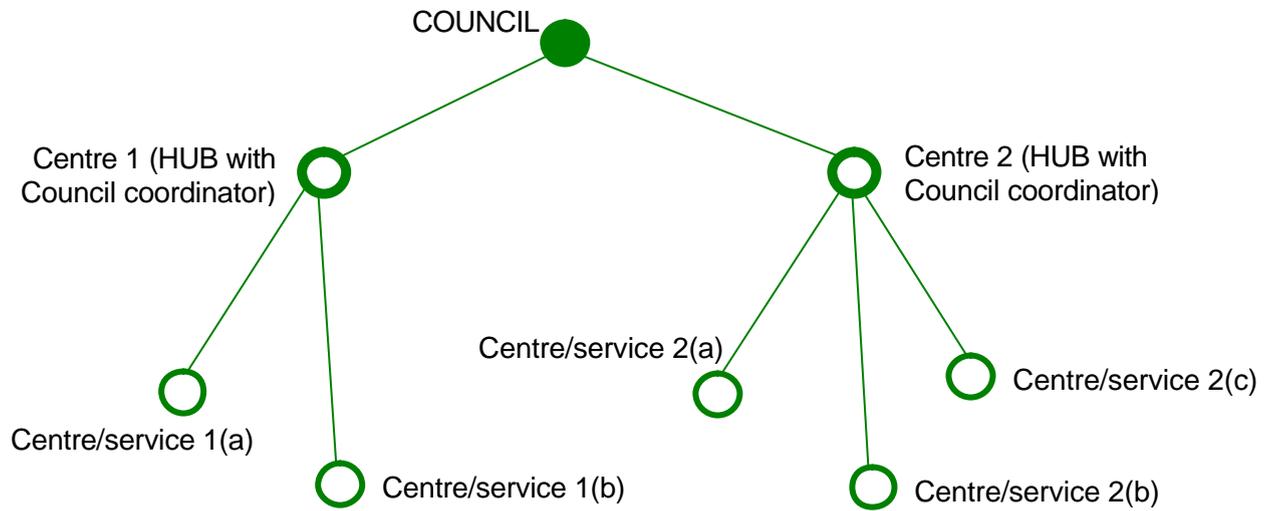


Figure 5.2.3 Example of **HUB NETWORK**



4 Mitcham Community Focal Point Framework Options

Three framework options are presented and are described in the following pages, including more detailed comments on the specific implications for facilities, sites and precincts, depending on the option chosen. The options are as follows:

Option 1 – Community hub model, integrating the libraries and community centre facilities

Option 2 – Single tier centres with independent libraries

Option 3 – Status Quo, maintaining existing community facilities with independent libraries

RECOMMENDATION: It is recommended that Council endorse Option 1 - The Community Hub Model as the preferred framework model and strategic direction.

RECOMMENDATION: Following consideration by Council and agreement on the preferred framework model the development of a detailed site assessment report and staged implementation plan should be prepared for Council's consideration. The Implementation Plan should provide a staged approach to implementation over a 5-10 year period.

RECOMMENDATION: The investigation stage to include comprehensive consultation with stakeholders and the wider community regarding the preferred framework model and its implications.

OPTION 1: COMMUNITY HUB MODEL

Description	Possible Locations	Advantages of Option 1	Disadvantages of Option 1
<p>The community hub option would see the development of 3 multi-purpose community facilities located at or adjacent to existing business, shopping, transport, and/or community hubs in Mitcham Central, the Hills and in the West.</p> <p>Such facilities would incorporate library, local history, community and technical (homework and business support) centres, conference & meeting facilities & office accommodation.</p> <p>Options for the West would include development of a smaller joint-use facility in partnership with Marion Council and/or outreach partnerships with existing service providers.</p> <p>Centres managed by City of Mitcham with community involvement and employment of Coordinator staff.</p> <p>In addition, a Community Arts & Cultural Centre at either Mitcham Village or the Railway Precinct. This centre could be managed by the community with a grant to the management committee to employ a part-time coordinator.</p> <p>Development of two Youth Centres within the Blackwood Recreation Centre (via leasee) and in St Marys (run by external agency with support from Council, incorporating events, youth enterprise opportunities, cafe and support programs).</p>	<p>Mitcham Central</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mitcham Community Court Precinct • Mitcham Railway Precinct • Mitcham Village Arts & Crafts Precinct • Civic Centre Precinct <p>Hills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current Blackwood Library Site • Blackwood Over 50s Centre Precinct <p>West</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Castle Plaza Precinct • Pasadena High School • St Marys Precinct <p>Youth Centres in Blackwood & Mitcham West</p> <p>Arts & Cultural Centre at either Mitcham Village or Railway Precinct.</p>	<p>Enables community need to be more effectively addressed.</p> <p>Acts as a catalyst for redesigning precinct areas as attractive social, cultural & shopping hubs.</p> <p>Integrates library & community facilities.</p> <p>Reduces long-term maintenance liabilities.</p> <p>Facilitates sharing of infrastructure & rationalisation of under-utilised buildings.</p>	<p>Significant expenditure</p> <p>Long-term implementation timeframe.</p> <p>May require land acquisition.</p>

OPTION 2: SINGLE TIER CENTRES

Description	Possible Locations	Advantages of Option 2	Disadvantages of Option 2
<p>The single tier centre option would see the independent continuation of the two libraries located at Blackwood & Mitcham and the development of three community centres in the Hills, Mitcham Central and the West.</p> <p>The development of community centres would involve the refurbishment of existing community facilities in the Hills and Mitcham Central. Options for the West would include a partnership with an existing service provider or the refurbishment and staffing of an existing community facility.</p> <p>The community centres in the Hills and Mitcham Central would be managed by the City of Mitcham with community involvement and would require a full time Coordinator (shared half-time). The West partnership would require a funding agreement to be drawn up with an existing service provider and/or a part-time coordinator provided.</p> <p>Development of two Youth Centres within the Blackwood Recreation Centre (via lease) and in St Marys (run by an external agency with support from Council, incorporating events, youth enterprise opportunities, cafe and support programs).</p>	<p>Mitcham Central</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mitcham Over 50s Club (existing club hours retained) • Mitcham Community Centre <p>Hills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blackwood Over 50s Centre (existing club hours retained) • Blackwood Memorial Hall • Belair Community Centre <p>West</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pasadena High School • St Marys precinct (eg a current service provider) <p>Youth Centres in Blackwood & Mitcham West</p>	<p>Increased usage of existing facilities.</p> <p>Moderate level of expenditure & a medium-term implementation time frame given the focus on enhancement of current facilities rather than larger-scale redevelopment of buildings.</p> <p>Presents an effective medium-term interim solution as it does not necessarily (if staged and implemented appropriately) undermine the ability to progress to Option 1 in the long term.</p> <p>Possible development of more economic uses for 'surplus' facilities/assets.</p>	<p>No social hubs or focal points created.</p> <p>The need for essential library upgrades remain.</p> <p>Possible upgrades required for existing community centres.</p>

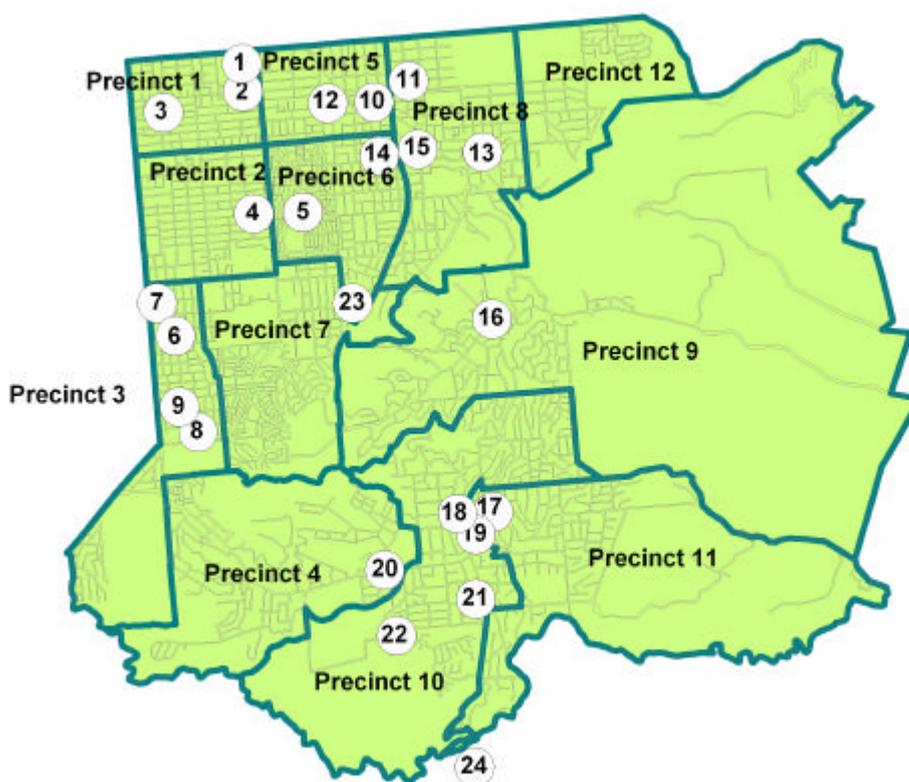
OPTION 3: STATUS QUO

Description	Possible Locations	Advantages of Option 3	Disadvantages of Option 3
<p>Maintaining the status quo would see continuation of a large number of community facilities and continuation of the two independent libraries.</p> <p>Centres managed by a range of existing management models.</p>	<p>See Section 5 for complete list.</p>	<p>Low capital investment.</p>	<p>No social hubs or focal points created.</p> <p>Current ad hoc arrangement of community facilities does not enable the delivery of efficient or effective community services.</p> <p>Retention of a large volume of existing facilities results in thinly-stretched resources and significant under-utilisation.</p> <p>The need for essential library upgrades remain.</p> <p>Large ongoing maintenance costs.</p>

5 Mitcham community focal points

5.1 Community focal points under assessment

The following community focal points (24) have been addressed through this study:



- | | | | |
|----|---|----|--|
| 1 | Sophia – Cabra | 13 | Mitcham Village |
| 2 | Westbourne Park Memorial Hall and Senior Citizens | 14 | Mitcham Railway Station Precinct |
| 3 | AA Bailey Reserve | 15 | City of Mitcham Civic Centre |
| 4 | Colonel Light Gardens Uniting Church | 16 | Belair Community Centre |
| 5 | Colonel Light Gardens (RSL, Senior Citizens Centre, Institute, Mortlock Park) | 17 | Blackwood Library |
| 6 | St Marys Baptist Community Centre | 18 | Blackwood 50+ Club |
| 7 | Picket Fence Community Centre | 19 | Blackwood Memorial Hall |
| 8 | Southlands Community Centre | 20 | Blackwood Rec Centre, Karinya Reserve Skate Park |
| 9 | St Marys Oval | 21 | Bellevue Heights Baptist Church |
| 10 | Mitcham Community Court | 22 | Blackwood Football Club |
| 11 | Kingswood Oval, Mitcham Girls High Gym and Performing Arts | 23 | Balyana Conference Centre and Vocational Rehabilitation Centre |
| 12 | Price Memorial Oval | 24 | Coromandel Valley Community Centre |

5.2 Proposed Community Focal Point Opportunities

The following section examines a range of opportunities for building focal points for community interaction at existing facilities and locations in the City of Mitcham. In most cases several opportunities are identified and discussed for each location. Where appropriate the opportunities associated with individual sites are referenced to the three framework options or models for the creation of community focal points (namely the Community Hub, Single Tier Centres and Status Quo options).

CENTRAL

· ***Mitcham Community Court (Map reference 10) – COUNCIL OWNED***

The Mitcham Community Court represents one of the more exciting opportunities for the development of a major Community Focal Point due to its location, visibility, current co-location of facilities and services (albeit in an ad hoc arrangement), strong community involvement and appealing setting.

There are significant opportunities through the redevelopment of the site, either in conjunction with an upgrade of the library facilities (subject to costs and the impending library review) or independent of any library upgrade.

The development of a community focal point at Mitcham Community Court would require:

- investment in a Concept Plan/Framework for the site
- community involvement and participation (including community identification of community enterprise ideas and upgrade design)
- amalgamation and co-location of groups into a consolidated group of buildings
- integration of open space development and walking trails
- coordination of car parking, access arrangements and other infrastructure

Further opportunities include:

Opportunity A

Library upgrade driven multi purpose facility (Framework Option 1 - Community Hub)

Development of a major multi-purpose community focal point would integrate upgraded **library facilities** including a new/substantially upgraded building incorporating:

- **library garden** (option to relocate the sensory garden to integrate with the library, facilitating outdoor library use)
- **Information centre** and referral service
- Office facilities and **business support**, including conference hire
- **Accommodation space** for community groups
- **Upgrade of facilities** for over 50s club, child care/kindergarten, bowling club, RSL, Meals on Wheels and integration with the library building where practicable
- The provision of facilities for **agency outreach services**
- The incorporation of a **Community Wellness Centre**, including a focus for health activities and programs. Such a focus would provide a marketing 'angle' in addition to specialised facilities and equipment, potentially attracting private enterprise involvement
- Investigate opportunities to facilitate **community enterprise** initiatives including community kitchen facilities, weekend market space, community café (potentially run by a community group or local school)

Opportunity A would also involve:

- Maintenance and protection of **heritage character** through conservation planning
- **Rationalisation of buildings** where appropriate, particularly where degraded, to facilitate co-location of groups, improve access to and efficient use of upgraded facilities and improve parkland settings
- **Funding** through sale of land and/or lease of facilities (eg the Railway Precinct)
- **Opportunities to incorporate staff** relocation from the Mitcham Civic Offices to relieve the strain on current accommodation

Opportunity B **Development of a Community Centre incorporating the development of a new (or substantially upgraded) facility (Framework Option 2- Single Tier Centres)**

Development of a community centre as a community focal point would involve the redevelopment and/or significant upgrade to an existing building on the site, including upgrade of the Senior Citizens Centre or Library buildings, with the library relocated to an alternative location (eg Railway Precinct) or the development of a new building independent to the library. This option would incorporate all the services highlighted in Option A (with the exception of the library services) and would involve protection of **heritage character** and **rationalisation of buildings** where appropriate (as with Opportunity A).

Option B could also include **opportunities to incorporate staff** relocation from the Mitcham Civic Offices to relieve the strain on current accommodation.

Opportunity C **Development of a Community Centre with minimal upgrade to an existing facility (Framework Option 2 - Single Tier Centres)**

Development of a community centre as a community focal point with minimal facility upgrade (such as upgrade of existing senior citizens centre) would not achieve all the objectives of multi-use, efficient use of resources and would continue to 'stretch' Council funding capacity over a large number of buildings and sites. However, options to co-locate groups and undertake minor upgrades to facilities may still be explored.

Option C presents the lowest capital outlay (although it would be expected to deliver continued high maintenance costs in the long term).

RECOMMENDATION: that community centres be adapted as multi-use facilities aimed at meeting the needs of a wide range of groups and communities rather than the provision of activities that cater for single-focus groups or residents.

• ***Kingswood Oval, Mitcham Girls High (Map reference 11) – COUNCIL/COMMUNITY OWNED***

Kingswood Oval and Mitcham Girls High School Community Focal Point currently accommodates formal sporting groups including football and cricket. It is well used and is a Community Focal Point with a recreation, education and social focus. The Oval incorporates dining, bar and kitchen facilities.

Opportunity A Acknowledge Kingswood Oval and Mitcham Girls High School Community Focal Point as a minor Community Focal Point, retaining its recreational and educational focus (**Framework Option 3 - Status Quo**).

Opportunity B Acknowledge Kingswood Oval and Mitcham Girls High School Community Focal Point as a minor Community Focal Point, retaining its recreational and educational focus and exploring opportunities to share facilities with other groups and the community generally, particularly within the school out of school hours (**Framework Option 3 - Status Quo**).

• ***Mitcham Village (Map reference 13) – COUNCIL/CHURCH OWNED***

The Mitcham Village site currently accommodates the Mitcham Institute, the Mitcham Village Arts Centre, the former SES building and the Mitcham Uniting Church. The Mitcham Uniting Church has indicated its desire to work flexibly with Council in developing a plan for the Mitcham Village precinct.

Three opportunities are presented for the Mitcham Village:

Opportunity A Develop the Village as a Community Focal Point with an Arts & Cultural Centre focus. Such a focus would include expansion of the range of facilities and opportunities offered by the site (eg performance arts, music, drama, visual art events, craft fairs, markets and exhibitions) as well as expansion into the SES site (**Framework Option 2 - Single Tier Centres**).

The MVAC centre has submitted a proposal to Council seeking to expand activities into the SES site. In addition, the Uniting Church adjacent to the SES has indicated its interest in working with Council to integrate the property with future Council plans.

There is also an opportunity to encourage the redevelopment of adjacent shops into alfresco cafes or other interactive community/commercial facilities

Accordingly, the potential exists to prepare a concept plan for this precinct that removes barriers and integrates the existing sites ie Uniting Church, SES site, Institute Hall, MVAC Centre, car park and adjacent shops for the purpose of establishing a cultural/arts hub in Mitcham. This should include consideration of the optimum scale, configuration and rationalisation of the site complementary to other focal points in Mitcham Central and identification of the means of achieving integrated management across the resulting site.

Retention of the village feel and historic character will be the key to the success of any redevelopment of the site, as will early community involvement.

Opportunity B Relocate the MVAC to the Railway Precinct should the arts centre be considered preferable in that location.

Ensuring the protection of important heritage buildings (through encumbrances and heritage guidelines), redevelop the site, including the SES site for high quality aged residential development, potentially as a package with adjacent sites including the Uniting Church site.

Consideration has been given to MVAC's proposal to expand their activities into the SES site. However, given this report's recommendations to establish a network of community hubs in Mitcham, it is considered that (in the case of Opportunity B) the SES site should be sold in order to fund the development of community hubs.

Retention of the village feel and historic character will be the key to the success of any redevelopment of the site, as will early community involvement.

Relocation to the Railway Precinct has the advantage of providing the Arts Centre with a higher profile, being located on a major transport route.

Opportunity C Retention of the existing functions and activities associated with the MVAC Centre and Institute Hall contained within the current site and facilities (**Framework Option 3 - Status Quo**).

Opportunity C would provide for the SES site to be sold in order to fund the development of community hubs. The Uniting Church should be consulted in this regard given their stated interest in the possible sale of their site.

• **Price Memorial Oval (Map reference 12) – COUNCIL OWNED**

The Price Memorial Oval Community Focal Point currently accommodates formal sporting groups including football, lawn bowls, tennis, croquet and cricket. It is moderately well used and is a Community Focal Point with a recreation and social focus. The Oval incorporates dining, bar and kitchen facilities.

Opportunity A Acknowledge Price Memorial Oval Community Focal Point as a minor Community Focal Point, retaining its recreational focus (**Framework Option 3 - Status Quo**).

Opportunity B Acknowledge Price Memorial Oval Community Focal Point as a minor Community Focal Point, retaining its recreational focus and exploring opportunities to share facilities with other groups and the community generally (**Framework Option 3 - Status Quo**).

· **Mitcham Railway Station Precinct (Map reference 14) – COUNCIL OWNED**

The Mitcham Railway Station Precinct offers some significant opportunities for redevelopment. Currently however, community facilities on the site are subject to disrepair and occupational health, safety and public liability issues. Significant refurbishment and investment of funding would be required if this facility were to be retained and used exclusively as a community centre.

Options include:

Opportunity A **Residential Development** - Relocation of the current services and groups located in the community facilities to the Mitcham Community Court and sale of the site for development of a state of the art heritage and environmentally sustainable residential development.

The precinct presents one of the most significant and exciting opportunities to provide a demonstration project for well-designed higher density development along a major transport route.

Coupled with heritage conservation and walks, the Railway Precinct could provide an example of good transit-oriented-design of significance throughout the Metropolitan area.

Opportunity B **Cultural Precinct** - Relocation of the current services located within the community facilities to the Mitcham Community Court and redevelopment of the buildings to accommodate an Arts Centre, incorporating relocation of the Mitcham Village Arts and Crafts centre and redevelopment of the Mitcham Village for the purpose of good quality aged housing. This option would include a wide range of facilities and opportunities offered (eg performance arts, music, drama, visual art events and exhibitions). It is anticipated that such a centre could provide a hub for community-based arts throughout the area (**Framework Option 1 - Community Hub with Cultural Theme**).

Opportunity C **Multi-purpose Community Hub** - Redevelop and refurbish the Railway Precinct as a community hub for a wide range of community, cultural, educational and recreational pursuits (**Framework Option 1 - Community Hub**).

This proposal would include relocating the Mitcham Library to the Railway Precinct. Purpose built, multi-functional facilities that provide accommodation for a wide range of library, history, community, educational and recreational services and programs could be integrated into the design. The design of the precinct should embrace the protection of heritage buildings, integrate the railway buildings and garden and create a dynamic hub for community interaction.

This proposal could also include the relocation of the Mitcham Village Arts and Crafts centre so as to concentrate community activity.

· **Civic Centre Precinct (Map reference 15) – COUNCIL OWNED**

The City of Mitcham Civic Centre precinct offers opportunities for redevelopment. Expansion of the Civic Centre to include library and community centre facilities would be possible if car parking were located elsewhere such as in the Railway Precinct. Opportunities also exist to expand either to the south or the north (eg closing Newark Road). Options include:

Opportunity A Creation of a **major multi-purpose community focal point** in the 'heart' of the Mitcham shopping business centre has the potential to create a significant focal point for community interaction (**refer Framework option 1**). The expansion of the Civic Centre to accommodate a multi-purpose community and library facility would integrate library and community centre services as well as governance and customer service functions. In essence a 'one-stop-shop' approach to business and community facilities and services, incorporating:

- library and community centre facilities
- information centre and referral service
- office facilities and business support including conference hire
- accommodation space for community groups
- the provision of facilities for agency outreach services
- integration with existing civic, shopping and business services

Opportunity A could also involve:

- Funding through sale of land and /or lease of facilities (eg the Railway Precinct).
- Creation of car parking facilities in other adjacent locations such as the Railway Precinct or current residential properties.

Opportunity B Creation of a **purpose built community centre facility** within land currently used as a car park to the east or south of the current Civic Centre (**refer Framework option 2**) incorporating:

- information centre and referral service
- office facilities and business support including conference hire
- accommodation space for community groups
- the provision of facilities for agency outreach services

Opportunity B could also involve:

- Funding through sale of land and /or lease of facilities eg the Railway Precinct.
- Creation of car parking facilities in other adjacent locations such as the Railway Precinct or current residential properties.

HILLS

• **Current Blackwood Library site (Map reference 17) – COUNCIL OWNED**

The current Blackwood Library site offers the potential to be developed as a significant multi-purpose Community Focal Point serving the hills area due to its high visibility, accessibility and location within a major centre. However, it should be noted that there are significant constraints associated with the size and topography of the site that may constrain its future use.

There are significant opportunities through the redevelopment of the site, either in conjunction with an upgrade of the library facilities (subject to costs and the impending library review) or independent of any library upgrade.

The development of a community focal point in the current Blackwood Library site would require:

- investment in a Concept Plan/Framework for the site
- community involvement and participation (including community identification of community enterprise ideas and upgrade design)
- addressing the occupation health and safety issues associated with the site
- improved access arrangements and other infrastructure

Further options include:

Opportunity A **Library upgrade driven multi purpose facility (refer Framework Option 1 - Community Hub)**

Development of a major multi-purpose community focal point would integrate upgraded **library facilities** including a new multi-storey building incorporating:

- **Information centre** and referral service
- Office facilities and **business support**, including conference hire
- **Accommodation space** for community groups
- **Relocation of Senior Citizens club** from Young Street to improved accommodation and facilities within the new building
- **Co-location of groups** currently making use of the Memorial Hall including immunisation, support groups and arts groups. It is expected that groups that require the large space offered by the Memorial Hall would remain (eg dance, fitness etc) if appropriate space cannot be accommodated within the new facility
- The provision of facilities for **agency outreach services**
- The potential incorporation of an **Environmental Community Action Centre** to meet the needs of active environment groups (eg bushcare, landcare, catchment care) in the hills and providing information services and a repository for environmental information. In addition, proximity to extensive recreational activities makes the Blackwood area ideal for parallels with tourism and recreational activities.

• **Current Blackwood Library site (Map reference 17) – COUNCIL OWNED**

- Investigate opportunities to facilitate **community enterprise** initiatives including community kitchen facilities, weekend market space (potentially located off site due to site constraints), community café (potentially run by a community group or local school)

Any upgrade of the current library facility would need to address current issues associated with occupational health and safety, access and site limitations. It should be noted that the site has a number of constraints associated with it including topography and size. Such constraints may significantly limit flexibility, design, car parking and access and may either eliminate this option or require innovative design solutions (including split and multi-storey level) in order to achieve desired objectives. It is therefore recommended that further investigations be undertaken (including detailed site analysis, site planning and master planning).

Opportunity A could be subsidised by the sale of the current senior citizens building for quality residential or commercial development (refer Blackwood 50+ Club). Further funding opportunities arise through an option to sell the under-utilised Belair Community Centre facility for quality residential / health centre / commercial activity.

Opportunity B

Maintenance of the library as a stand alone facility (refer Framework Option 2 - Single Tier Centre)

In the event that a multi-functional facility was not possible due to cost constraints, Option B would seek to retain the library in its current (or upgraded) form as a stand alone facility.

In this option, an alternative community centre would be recommended at the senior citizens site, Young Street, and would incorporate all the services highlighted in Option A (with the exception of the library services). Funding for the upgrade of the Young Street site could be obtained through the sale of the Belair Community Centre.

However, without the development of a major hub at the Blackwood Central Site, the Belair Community Centre may be required at a later date to provide additional services as pressures are placed on the Blackwood site due to increased population in the Blackwood Park area (although some of this demand may be directed to the south to Coromandel Community Centre). Additional analysis would be recommended in this regard should this option be considered further.

· **Current Blackwood Library site (Map reference 17) – COUNCIL OWNED**

Opportunity C **Relocation of Library facility to Senior Citizens site and redevelop current library site for commercial/residential purposes**

Option C would include the relocation of library facilities to the Young Street Senior Citizens site (requiring co-location of facilities with the Senior Citizens).

Option C could involve the closure of Young Street, building across the closed road, and clearly defining a walkway and link from the car park on Sheperds Hill Road to the shopping and community facilities.

The current library site would be sold to the market either for commercial purposes or medium density quality residential development (or a mix of both) to fund the relocation.

Whilst the Blackwood Library represents a constrained site, the Waite Reserve/Senior Citizens Club site has greater physical constraints that may prove difficult to overcome. Option C would require significant investigation to ensure that physical constraints could be managed appropriately.

The cost of relocation, whilst offset to some degree, by sale of the current library site, could prove prohibitive.

Opportunity D There is potential to undertake further investigations into the feasibility of undertaking negotiations with Coles (through land swaps and/or sales) to **redevelop land currently occupied by car parking for a community centre/ hub**. Such an opportunity, whilst requiring the greatest investment of time and effort could provide the greatest dividend with regard to a significant, well located and adequate site. Shared car parking arrangements (either undercroft or tiered would add to the enhancement of both uses and vastly improved access arrangements. Such an option would be funded through the sale and/or lease of current library facilities.

· ***Belair Community Centre (Map reference 16) – COUNCIL OWNED***

The Belair Community Centre is badly under-utilised despite being located in a highly visual location. Two options exist:

- Opportunity A Sale of centre for good quality housing, commercial or health service development to contribute to costs of the redevelopment of the Blackwood Central multi-use facility. Should the multi-use facility be endorsed, current services could be relocated to new and improved facilities.
- Opportunity B Should the multi-use facility not go ahead within the Blackwood Central area, it is envisaged that such a facility may require retention as a community centre depending on demand and usability. Depending on demand, management options for this scenario may include management through the proposed Blackwood Community Centre or separate coordination.

· ***Blackwood 50+ Club (Map reference 18) – COUNCIL OWNED***

The Blackwood 50+ Club site is a physically constrained site located in close proximity to the business activities of the Blackwood Shopping Centre. Services provided include carpet bowls, groups, meetings and discussions and the facility is used moderately well and are in demand by other local community groups.

Any redevelopment option would need to fully take into account the needs of older adults including the existing user group.

- Opportunity A **Relocation** of Blackwood 50+ Club to improved facilities associated with the proposed multi-purpose facility at the current Blackwood Library site (**Framework Option 1 - Community Hub**).

Sale of site for commercial development to assist with the funding of the current Blackwood library site redevelopment. Ensure that sale/development accords with future strategies for the Blackwood Centre including accessibility and linkages.

- Opportunity B **Redevelopment** of the Blackwood 50+ Club site as a Community Centre in the event that the multi-purpose facility at the current Blackwood Library site is not feasible. The redevelopment of the site would likely involve a multi-story development and/or undercroft parking (**Framework Option 2 - Single Tier Centre**).

There are also opportunities to further the development of the Blackwood Shopping Centre, improving linkages and increasing the usability of the site through land swap arrangements (Foodland or Coles) and/or sale of parcels of land.

- **Blackwood Memorial Hall (Map reference 19) – OWNED BY BLACKWOOD & DISTRICT WAR MEMORIAL HALL**

The Blackwood Memorial Hall, managed independently of Council, offers a range of social, community enterprise, educational, health and recreation opportunities for the Blackwood area. There are options to:

Opportunity A **Retain Hall for hire** and use by groups and activities that require larger space. Manage through new multi-use facility at current Blackwood Library site or the proposed Blackwood Community Centre at the Senior Citizens site (depending on option).

Investigate opportunities to relocate appropriate groups to multi-purpose facility at current Blackwood Library site for access to improved facilities, if appropriate.

Investigate opportunities to further expand the range of community enterprise initiatives associated with the businesses within the Blackwood Retail Centre.

Opportunity B **Sale of Hall** for commercial/business/community use. This option would require further investigation and an expression of interest process to identify potential groups or businesses interested in making use of the facility. Clarification would need to be sought on the use of the proceeds to meet appropriate community aspirations consistent with the objectives of the Trust.

Opportunity C Investigate opportunities for **alternative uses** including interpretive/information centres (tourism, environmental, history or business promotion). Such a use would require the development of a feasibility study and/or expressions of interest process to ensure long-term viability and compatibility of the site. Option C could incorporate either Council or private ownership.

- **Blackwood West (Map reference 20) – COMMUNITY OWNED**

The new Recreation Centre currently being developed in the grounds of the Blackwood High School has the potential to be developed further as a Youth Centre for the Hills area. The Blackwood High School Performing Arts Centre is adjacent to the Recreation Centre and the Karinya Skate Park is also nearby. Accordingly, this area could well serve as a focal point for youth related activities (ie a Youth Precinct).

- Opportunity A Develop the Blackwood West Community Precinct into a **focal point for Youth, (Framework Option 1 - Community Hub with Youth Focus)** providing services and opportunities for:
- sport and recreation
 - social activities
 - music and events, including music and events management
 - youth café
 - support services and groups
 - youth skills development
 - youth enterprise

• ***Bellevue Heights Baptist Church (Map reference 21) – COMMUNITY OWNED***

The Bellevue Heights Community Focal Point (formerly the Blackwood recreation centre) provides a range of fitness, health, youth, music, social and counselling services to the Blackwood and Coromandel Valley area. The Centre is wholly owned by the Baptist Church.

- Opportunity A Acknowledge the importance of the Church in its provision of essential services and build into future community needs planning **(Framework Option 3 - Status Quo)**.

- Opportunity B Investigate opportunities for sharing of facilities and coordination of services with the proposed Youth Centre at Blackwood West, potentially with involvement on the Youth Centre Management Committee. Where services overlap or where there are gaps, investigate the opportunity to adopt formal agreements/funding arrangements to provide a coordinated approach to service provision within the area **(Framework Option 2 - Single Tier Centre)**.

• ***Blackwood Football Club (Map reference 22) – COUNCIL OWNED***

The Blackwood Football Club Community Focal Point currently accommodates formal sporting groups including football and cricket and the Probus Club. It is moderately well used and is a Community Focal Point with a recreation and social focus. The Oval incorporates dining, bar and kitchen facilities.

- Opportunity A Acknowledge Blackwood Football Club Community Focal Point as a minor Community Focal Point, retaining its recreational and educational focus **(Framework Option 3 - Status Quo)**.

- Opportunity B Acknowledge Blackwood Football Club Community Focal Point as a minor Community Focal Point, retaining its recreational focus and exploring opportunities to share facilities with other groups and the community generally, particularly for music and recreation events **(Framework Option 2 - Single Tier Centre)**.

- **Coromandel Community Centre (Map reference 24)- OWNED BY CITY OF ONKAPARINGA**

The Coromandel Community Centre is located just outside of the outer limits of Mitcham in the City of Onkaparinga. The Coromandel Community Centre is owned and staffed by the Onkaparinga Council. Mitcham Council has supported the centre in the past through a series of small Community Development Grants.

- Opportunity A As the population of Craighburn expands towards the southern boarder with Onkaparinga, acknowledge the Coromandel Community Centre as a minor Community Focal Point for Mitcham Hills residents and develop a partnership with the City of Onkaparinga for the management and funding of the centre **(Framework Option 2 - Single Tier Centre)**.
- Opportunity B Acknowledge the Coromandel Community Centre as a minor Community Focal Point and continue to provide small grants towards the cost of programs and activities supported by Mitcham residents **(Framework Option 3 - Status Quo)**.

WEST

- **Westbourne Park Senior Citizens Centre (Map reference 2) – COUNCIL OWNED**

The Westbourne Park site offers the potential to be developed for a Community Centre in one of the existing 2 buildings currently located within the area. The site is conveniently located on a major access route, adjacent a major shopping centre and an oval, with adequate parking and access arrangements. The Centre would be expected to serve the Clarence Gardens, Cumberland Park and Westbourne Park area. Regardless of whether Framework options 1, 2 or 3 are considered suitable, the redevelopment and revitalisation of the Westbourne Park Community Focal Point as a community centre is considered appropriate, given its favourable location and accessibility. The centre has experienced a reduction in attendance and expansion and increased flexibility of services in this location (beyond senior services alone) is expected to revitalise this centre.

Options include:

- Opportunity A Opportunity A would consist of a community centre amalgamating current uses on the site within the Senior Citizens building (**Framework Option 2 - Single Tier Centre**). The option would incorporate:
- **Information centre** and referral service
 - Minor **office facilities**
 - **Improved accommodation space** for the Senior Citizens
 - Incorporation of uses that would see the redevelopment of a more **inclusive community centre** for all community need groups
 - **Shared office facilities** for the kindergym, dancing and fitness and other groups with the Memorial Hall to be used for activities requiring larger space
 - Coordinated facilities for **support groups** and services
 - The provision of facilities for **agency outreach services**
 - Investigate opportunities to facilitate **community enterprise** initiatives including community kitchen facilities, weekend market space adjacent the oval, community café (potentially run by a community group or local school)
 - Investigate **opportunities to share facilities** with nearby church, Sophia services, school and Guides

The facilities offered at Westborne Park would be coordinated through the Mitcham Multi-Use Hub as community facilities for hire/use.

- Opportunity B Would involve the **sale and/or lease** for business, retail or other commercial activity. However, given the opportunities for a community hub (associated with its favourable location and good access) it is considered that this option would require further investment in the Colonel Light Gardens hub and the Clarence Park (Unley Council) hub to offset potential gaps in the City of Mitcham Community Focal Point network.

· **Colonel Light Gardens Senior Citizens Centre (Map reference 5) OWNED BY RSL**

The Colonel Light Gardens Senior Citizens Centre site offers the potential to be developed for satellite Community Centre functions within the existing Community RSL and Senior Citizens Centre. The facilities would be expected to serve the Colonel Light Gardens, Daw Park and Panorama North areas.

Opportunity A Would consist of a community facility amalgamating current uses on the site within the Senior Citizens/RSL building (**Framework Option 2 - Single Tier Centre**). Currently underutilised, sharing of facilities at this site and accommodating a wider range of services would deliver benefits associated with improved efficiency, improved facilities for groups, greater impetus for upgrading facilities and a more inclusive site. It is understood that the current users of the site are keen to upgrade external appearances to increase popularity of the centre.

The option would incorporate:

- **Information centre**
- Minor **office facilities**
- **Accommodation space** for the Senior Citizens/RSL within facilities that cater for a wider range of groups and community needs
- **Shared office facilities** for other groups, with the Institute to be used for activities requiring larger space
- Coordinated facilities for **support groups** and services
- The provision of facilities for **agency outreach services**
- Investigate opportunities to facilitate **community enterprise** initiatives including community kitchen facilities, weekend market space adjacent the oval

Investigate **opportunities to share facilities** with nearby churches, Guides, Scouts, schools, particularly the services offered by the Colonel Light Gardens Uniting Church.

The facilities offered at Colonel Light Gardens would be coordinated through the Mitcham Central Hub as community facilities for hire/use and/or to provide outreach programs and activities.

· **Sophia – Cabra Community Centre (Map reference 1) COMMUNITY OWNED**

Sophia currently provides significant personal development and support services to women.

Opportunity A Support Sophia Cabra through promotion of activities, referrals and where appropriate community grants and other support (**Framework Option 3 - Status Quo**).

· **St Marys Baptist Community Centre (Map reference 6) – COMMUNITY OWNED**

The St Marys Baptist Community Centre provides significant services to young people in the Edwardstown, St Marys, Melrose Park and surrounding areas, including recreation, café, social areas and other facilities. In addition, the centre provides a wide range of services to other groups and is highly patronised. The Centre is wholly owned by the Baptist Church.

- Opportunity A Acknowledge the importance of the Centre in its provision of essential facilities and build into future community needs planning (**Framework Option 3 - Status Quo**).
- Opportunity B Adopt the Centre as a City of Mitcham Community Centre, incorporating a Youth Centre as part of its Framework (Options 1 or 2) to be run and managed by the Baptist Church with support from the City of Mitcham (**Framework Option 1 and 2**).
- Opportunity C Investigate opportunities for formalised agreements/funding negotiation via an outsourced contract arrangement with a service provider to meet gaps in current service provision for young people in the area (**Framework Options 1 and 2**) in negotiation with the Baptist Church. Centre to be acknowledged as an important outsourced/independent Youth Centre and Community Centre.

· **AA Bailey Reserve (Map reference 3) – COUNCIL OWNED**

AA Bailey Reserve currently accommodates formal sporting groups including Rugby Union, lawn bowls and soccer. It is well used and is a Community Focal Point with a recreation and social focus. The reserve incorporates dining, bar and kitchen facilities.

- Opportunity A Acknowledge AA Bailey Reserve as a Community Focal Point, retaining its recreational focus (**Framework Option 3 - Status Quo**).
- Opportunity B Acknowledge AA Bailey Reserve as a Community Focal Point, retaining its recreational focus and exploring opportunities to share facilities with other groups and the community generally (**Framework Option 2 - Single Tier Centre**).

· **Colonel Light Gardens Uniting Church (Map reference 4) – COMMUNITY OWNED**

The Colonel Light Gardens Community Focal Point provides a range of fitness, health, education, social and counselling services to the Colonel Light Gardens and Daw Park area. The Centre is wholly owned by the Uniting Church.

- Opportunity A Acknowledge the importance of the Church in its provision of essential services and build into future community needs planning (**Framework Option 3 - Status Quo**).

Opportunity B Investigate opportunities for sharing of facilities and coordination of services with the Colonel Light Gardens Senior Citizens Club, potentially via the Mitcham Community Forum. Where services overlap or where there are gaps, investigate the opportunity to adopt formal agreements/funding arrangements to provide a coordinated approach to service provision within the area (**Framework Option 2 - Single Tier Centre**).

· ***Picket Fence Community Centre (Map reference 7) – COMMUNITY OWNED***

The Picket Fence Community Centre provides an extensive range of childcare, social, fitness, craft, support, community meals, community gardens and op shop to the St Marys, Edwardstown, Pasedena and Clovelly Park area. The Centre is wholly owned by the Anglican Church.

Opportunity A Acknowledge the importance of the Centre in its provision of essential services and build into future community needs planning (**Framework Option 3 - Status Quo**).

Opportunity B Acknowledge the Centre as a City of Mitcham Centre within its Framework. Investigate opportunities for sharing of facilities and coordination of services within the area (**Framework Option 2 - Single Tier Centre**).

Ensure a coordinated approach to the provision of services within the City of Mitcham provided by government and non-government agencies including Picket Fence, Southlands, St Marys Community Centre, Balyana, Inner Southern Community Health Service etc.

Investigate options to further enhance services at the Centre to meet the needs of the area. Where services overlap with other services, or where there are gaps, investigate the opportunity to adopt formal agreements/funding arrangements to provide a coordinated approach to service provision within the area.

· ***Southlands Christian Community Centre (Map reference 8) – COMMUNITY OWNED***

The Southlands Community Focal Point provides an extensive range of services, including childcare, social, fitness, drop in, food cooperative, counselling to the St Marys, Edwardstown, Pasedena and Clovelly Park area. The Centre is wholly owned by the Church.

Opportunity A Acknowledge the importance of the Centre in its provision of essential services and build into future community needs planning (**Framework Option 3 - Status Quo**).

Opportunity B Acknowledge the Centre as a City of Mitcham Centre within its Framework. Investigate opportunities for sharing of facilities and coordination of services within the area (**Framework Option 2 - Single Tier Centre**).

Ensure a coordinated approach to the provision of services within the City of Mitcham provided by government and non-government agencies including Picket Fence, Southlands, St Marys Community Centre, Balyana, Inner Southern Community Health Service etc.

Investigate options to further enhance services at the Centre to meet the needs of the area. Where services overlap with other services, or where there are gaps, investigate the opportunity to adopt formal agreements/funding arrangements to provide a coordinated approach to service provision within the area.

· ***St Marys Oval (Map reference 9) – COUNCIL OWNED***

St Marys Oval currently accommodates formal sporting groups including football and cricket. It is moderately used and is a Community Focal Point with a recreation and social focus. The Oval incorporates dining, bar and kitchen facilities.

Opportunity A Acknowledge St Marys Oval as a minor Community Focal Point, retaining its recreational focus (**Framework Option 3 - Status Quo**).

Opportunity B Acknowledge St Marys Oval as a minor Community Focal Point, retaining its recreational focus and exploring opportunities to share facilities with other groups and the community generally (**Framework Option 2 - Single Tier Centre**).

· ***Balyana Residential and Conference Centre and Bedford Industries Incorporated (Map reference 23) – COMMUNITY OWNED***

The Balyana and Bedford Industries create a focal point for people with an intellectual disability and provide an extensive range of rehabilitative services, conference centre and disability support. The Centre is wholly privately owned.

Opportunity A Acknowledge the importance of the Centre in its provision of essential services and build into future community needs planning (**Framework Option 3 - Status Quo**).

Opportunity B Acknowledge the Centre as a City of Mitcham Community Centre within its Framework. Investigate opportunities for sharing of facilities and coordination of services within the area, potentially through the Mitcham Community Forum and community grants (**Framework Option 2 - Single Tier Centre**).

6 Funding options

Traditionally local government and not-for-profit agencies have carried the majority of costs associated with community focal points (including community houses and neighbourhood centres). The City of Mitcham is no exception with the majority of existing focal points being funded either via the Council or through agencies such as the church and volunteer agencies.

Costs are associated primarily with capital improvements and ongoing operational costs associated with management. A range of options exist for the funding of community focal points from local government, state government, federal government, the private sector and the community.

RECOMMENDATION: A review of Council's community grants program be undertaken with a view towards adding value to and increasing support of non-Council community centres in preference to setting up new and competing Council-owned facilities in the area. Such a review would potentially see an increase in overall funding, identify funding priorities and develop a 3-5 year program.

RECOMMENDATION: For greatest success of the Mitcham Community Focal Points Framework implementation, a range of funding options should be pursued in order to share the cost over a larger number of agencies.

RECOMMENDATION: Partnership opportunities should be pursued in a proactive manner at all junctures. Partnership opportunities with other spheres of government, the community and the private sector present the greatest opportunity for achievement of the Mitcham Community Focal Points Framework

In addition to funding opportunities, there are also significant gains to be made through the development and support of community focal points (eg through reduced crime rates and reduced dependence on non-preventative health care). It is widely acknowledged that investment in proactive community care and support will result in dividends to the community through reduced expenditure in other areas.

6.1 Local Government

Local Government is faced with increasing competition for funding across the areas of infrastructure, community, regulatory services, waste management, recreation and urban form. In the face of increasing cost shifting across spheres of government, increased community demand and expectation for services and increasing pressures on infrastructure, local governments are forced to develop more innovative ways of managing funding implications. Options for funding through local government include:

- **Use of funds from sale of surplus land to fund community services.** Such an option presents itself as a major opportunity to the City of Mitcham but care must be taken to ensure that long-term objectives for land are not compromised by its sale and potential change in use. In this regard, Council must ensure that conditions are placed on land at its sale to ensure that future development accords with strategic and community directions.

- **Use of funds from development of surplus land to fund critical community services.** The role of Council as a developer must be carefully considered in this regard. Whilst some Councils have undertaken direct development of land, Councils are not traditionally well placed to develop land itself for monetary return.
- **Realignment of budgetary funding from other areas.** Such an option would require the prioritisation of funding across the full spectrum of Council services. Other alternatives include loan funding (a valid option for spreading the cost of capital improvements over several generations) and increased rates in response to greater community expectation.

6.2 State and Federal Governments

A range of state and federal government funding opportunities exist with regard to community focal points and service provision through a number of programs relating to community education, community support, self help groups and referral programs. It is recommended that funding options be pursued in the implementation of the study.

6.3 Private Sector

Involvement of the private sector requires some form of financial return from the facility. When undertaken in partnership with private features such as cafés, retail components and/or conference management, significant contributions to capital costs and/or ongoing maintenance and management may be achieved. It is recommended that significant private sector involvement be sought in the development of options that include the development of multi-use hubs at Blackwood and Mitcham.

6.4 Community enterprise

One step on from involvement of the private sector is the involvement of the community in various forms of community enterprise. In particular, governments at all levels are supporting and funding community enterprise initiatives as a new move away from direct service provision to “a focus on self-help, working together, creating opportunities for mutual benefit and supporting communities to build their own wealth”⁷.

Significant examples of such community enterprise can already be seen across the City of Mitcham in St Marys Baptist Centre café, hire of facilities, retail shops at Southlands Community Centre and the op shop at Picket Fence Community Centre.

Future enterprise activities should be encouraged as enabling self-help and sufficiency whilst meeting social development goals. Future opportunities could include:

- cafés and restaurants
- function centres and hire of facilities
- community markets
- community kitchens and sale of produce
- retail sales, including arts and crafts, op shops and sale of manufactured items
- recycling initiatives that refine waste materials for retail sale
- tourism operations including heritage tours and guided walks

⁷ Social Enterprise in Australia, 2002, page 6

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