

# Report

## **Addressing concentrations of disadvantage Auburn case study report**

authored by

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for the

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## **DISCLAIMER**

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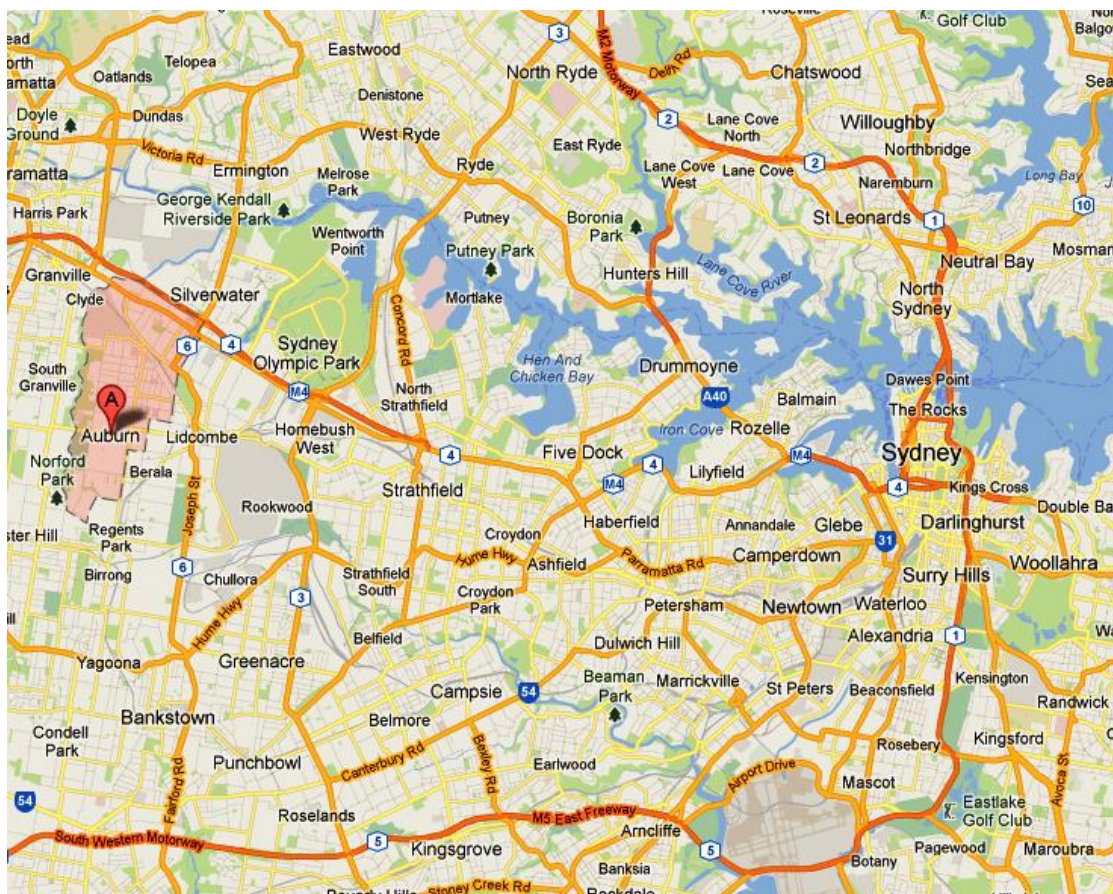
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# 1 INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Case study area overview

Auburn is a middle-ring suburb in Sydney approximately 17 kilometres west of the Sydney CBD (see Figure 1). It is located within the local government area of Auburn and the Level 3 Statistical Area (SA3) of Auburn. In 2011, Auburn suburb had a population of 33 125 residents, comprising almost half of the total population of the Auburn local government area population of 73 738 (and the SA3 population of 74 421).

**Figure 1: Auburn suburb**



Source: Google Maps

One of six case study locations for the current research; it was chosen to represent 'Type 2' disadvantaged suburbs—that is, socio-economically under-privileged areas with a relatively high incidence of two-parent families and overseas movers. This demographic profile tends to be associated with areas containing a high proportion of private rental properties.

For the purposes of case study selection a 'disadvantaged suburb' (DS) is one in which at least 50 per cent of ABS census collector districts are ranked in the lowest decile of the national distribution on the ABS Socio-Economic Index for Areas (SEIFA). In housing market terms, Type 2 DS areas are characterised as 'lower price suburbs' based on property sale prices.

## 1.2 Case study research aims

The case study work was undertaken as part of a larger project looking into concentrations of disadvantage in Australia's major capital cities—Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane. The overall aims of the research are to investigate:

1. How concentrations of social disadvantage are conceptualised, defined and measured?
2. What housing and urban processes contribute to the creation and perpetuation of these patterns?
3. What are the consequences of living in a disadvantaged area for the residents concerned?
4. How can policy-makers and others respond to spatial disadvantage in 'best for people, best for place' terms?

The main objectives of the case study work were to better understand the experience of living in a 'disadvantaged area', to explore the pros and cons of their local area from the resident perspective and to investigate the role that housing, planning and associated interventions may play in either exacerbating or tackling local problems.

Higher level aims included exploring the extent to which urban Australia's 'most disadvantaged areas' are seen as such by local people and whether negative 'neighbourhood effects' are operative. This refers to the possibility that living in a 'poor neighbourhood' can compound the impact of poverty and disadvantage affecting an individual (Atkinson & Kintrea 2001). While such a scenario has been evidenced within the context of North American and European cities (Galster 2009), it remains an open question as to whether the scale and depth of spatially concentrated disadvantage in Australia could give rise to such an outcome.

Also important in the fieldwork was to 'ground truth' or validate the disadvantaged area typology category attributed each case study locality.

## 1.3 Case study methodology

Undertaken May–July 2013, the case study work involved five elements:

- Background analysis of 2001 and 2011 census data on the selected suburb.
- Analysis of media coverage relating to the selected suburb (and, in this instance, the broader Auburn area).
- Document analysis—government and other reports about the selected suburb and surrounding area.
- In-depth interviews with local stakeholders.
- Resident focus group meeting.

Spanning the period 2003–13, the *media analysis* covered the three major metropolitan papers for Sydney—The Australian, The Sydney Morning Herald and The Daily Telegraph—as well as radio (ABC) and television (ABC and SBS) news broadcasts, as well as selected documentaries on commercial TV channels.

*Stakeholder interviewee* selection was to some extent guided according to a standard list of potentially relevant participants (e.g. local council social planner, real estate agent, social housing manager, police representative, support service provider, community group spokesperson). However, it also involved 'snowballing'—that is, being guided by interviewee recommendations as to other potentially appropriate contributors.



In Auburn, seven people were interviewed from five organisations, which can be classified broadly as:

- Local government (1 interview).
- Not for profit housing provider (1 interview).
- Industry/commerce (1 interview).
- NGO community worker / support provider (2 interviews).

Respondent views represented in this report are not attributed to individuals or specific organisations.

The resident focus group involved an ethnically and demographically diverse group of ten local people recruited with the kind assistance of the local council and multiple community groups.

Stakeholder interviews and residents focus group discussions were structured according to master topic guides common to all case studies within the wider project. However, for stakeholder interviews these were necessarily adapted as appropriate to the area of knowledge/responsibility of the interviewees concerned.

## 2 BACKGROUND TO THE AREA

Auburn is notable for the large number of new migrants who move into the area, including refugees and humanitarian entrants. In the five years between 2007 and 2012, over 1500 humanitarian entrants settled in the Auburn LGA (Auburn City Council 2013e). Auburn LGA has been a Refugee Welcome Zone since 2004 (Auburn City Council 2010a). The Refugee Council of Australia defines a refugee welcome zone as 'a local government area which has made a commitment in spirit to welcoming refugees into the community, upholding the human rights of refugees, demonstrating compassion for refugees and enhancing cultural and religious diversity in the community' (Refugee Council of Australia 2013).

Auburn's population is very culturally diverse. At the time of the 2011 census, only 31.9 per cent of the population was born in Australia (compared to 59.9% across the greater metropolitan area), and only 13.5 per cent of the population spoke English at home (compared to 62.2% across the greater metropolitan area). In fact, a higher proportion of Auburn's population spoke Arabic at home (15.6%) than English (see Appendix 1).

Auburn has seen many waves of new migrants since the post-WWII period. Over that time people have been attracted to the area by existing communities already established in the area. Once communities became established, the existing shops, community organisations, places of worship, cultural celebrations and support networks attracted new migrants.

In particular, people are attracted to Auburn because of the large Arabic community, including Arabic businesses and services with Arabic speaking staff (including banking, Centrelink, doctors and medical centres), and Arabic speaking teachers in the schools making it easier for children. The large Auburn Gallipoli Mosque is also an important feature of the area. At the time of the 2011 census, 42.0 per cent of the population of Auburn suburb identified their religious affiliation as Islam (compared to 4.7% across Greater metropolitan Sydney) (see Appendix 1).

However, while there is a significant Arabic presence, Auburn's population is very diverse and includes large populations of Chinese (13.3% of the population) and Indian-born (5.0% of the population), as well as people born in many other countries and regions around the world (see Appendix 1).

Overseas migrants are attracted to Auburn for a number of reasons. It is a very multicultural area, which adds to the vibrancy of the community, and is welcoming to new migrants who see other people from their countries living in the area. There are also many services to support recent migrants in Auburn, including humanitarian entrants and refugees. These include the Torture and Trauma Counselling Service (STARTTS), Settlement Services International, Auburn Diversity Services and other settlement support service providers. As well as the mosque, Auburn also has places of worship for different religious denominations.

Auburn is also a very accessible suburb, with good public transport links to the Sydney CBD and Parramatta. The cost of living in the area is cheaper relative to many other parts of Sydney, with shops and services being more affordable.

Auburn suburb has a very mobile population. In 2011, only 51 per cent of the population lived at the same address as five years previously. An additional 10 per cent lived in the same SA2 and 12 per cent lived elsewhere in Australia. Significantly,

17 per cent of the population lived overseas five years previously<sup>1</sup>. In the words of one interviewee, 'a lot of people come straight from the airport to Auburn' [NGO Community worker/support provider].

According to one interviewee, in the past, people would continue living in Auburn over the long term, but more recently, housing affordability (for both rental and purchase) has declined. In addition, while there is demand for larger family accommodation, older style single dwelling housing has been knocked down and replaced with one and two bedroom apartments. People have been moving out of the area to suburbs further west as a result of these housing constraints [Local government officer]. Indeed, housing affordability is a major issue facing residents of Auburn suburb (see Chapter 6).

People who have left Auburn and settled elsewhere in Sydney often return to Auburn to do their shopping, visit places of worship or use community services. According to interviewees, people often move to Auburn when they first move to Australia and rent properties privately, and then move on to other locations within western Sydney later on, especially Blacktown, Liverpool or Campbelltown, in order to find more affordable properties to purchase [Local government officer, NFP housing provider].

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<sup>1</sup> Figures based on Australian Bureau of Statistics (2011) Basic Community Profile—Auburn State Suburb, Table B39. Balance is 'not stated'.

## 3 PLACES WHERE DISADVANTAGED PEOPLE LIVE

### 3.1 Overview

While Auburn does not suffer from place disadvantage (see Chapter 4), it is certainly a place where disadvantaged people live.

Compared to the population of Greater Metropolitan Sydney as a whole, the population of Auburn suburb is particularly notable for the following (see Table 1):

- Less people speak English at home.
- Less people are born in Australia.
- The median age is younger.
- There are less older people.
- There are more children.
- More people are unemployed.
- Median weekly individual incomes are lower.
- Less people are employed full-time.
- More employed people are employed in low-skilled or low-status jobs.
- More low-income households pay more than 30 per cent of their income in rent.
- More households live in private rental accommodation.
- Less households live in fully-owned or mortgaged properties.

**Table 1: Comparison of key demographics between Auburn suburb and Greater Metropolitan Sydney, 2011**

	Auburn suburb	Greater Metropolitan Sydney
Speak English at home	13.5%	62.2%
Born in Australia	31.9%	59.9%
Median age	29	36
Aged 65 or older	8.3%	12.9%
Aged 0–17	25.7%	22.9%
Unemployed	10.8%	5.7%
Median weekly individual income	\$352	\$619
Employed full-time (% population aged 15 and older)	25.5%	38.3%
Employed people employed in low-skilled/low-status jobs (% population aged 15 and older)	46.1%	28.0%
Low-income households paying more than 30% of income in rent (% of low-income households with weekly household income < \$600)	32.6%	21.0%
Households living in private rental	32.8%	24.6%
Households living in fully-owned or mortgaged properties	50.9%	62.6%

Source: ABS Census 2011

Reflecting some of these demographics, in 2011, the majority of SA1 areas in Auburn suburb were in the lowest quintile of the Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas Index of Relative Socioeconomic Disadvantage (SEIFA IRSD) (see Figure 2). The SEIFA IRSD for the suburb as a whole was 855.4.

### **Typology classification**

In the typology developed for this project, Auburn is classified under typology Type 2: 'high on overseas movers, high on two parent families'. Based on the housing market analysis, Type 2 suburbs are typically 'lower price suburbs' based on property sales.

Auburn is certainly high on overseas movers. Auburn suburb also had a higher proportion of couple family households with children (37.4%) compared to the greater metropolitan area (33.0%) (see Appendix 1).

Properties in Auburn are cheaper to purchase than in many other parts of Sydney. However, the suburb has a higher proportion of private renters (32.8%) than Greater Metropolitan Sydney as a whole (24.6%), and a smaller proportion of owner occupiers (50.9% in Auburn compared with 62.6%). Indeed, in the housing market analysis, Type 2 suburbs were characterised by a high number of private renters. Further, while private rents are cheaper in Auburn than in many other parts of Sydney, they are not affordable for many of the people who live there, with one-third of low-income households spending more than thirty per cent of their income in rent, compared to one-fifth across the greater metropolitan area (see Appendix1). Across the Auburn LGA, housing purchase affordability is also constrained for those on lower incomes living in the area (Commonwealth Government 2009, p.147). Hence many of these lower price property sales may be being made to private investors rather than local residents.

## **3.2 Specific groups vulnerable to disadvantage**

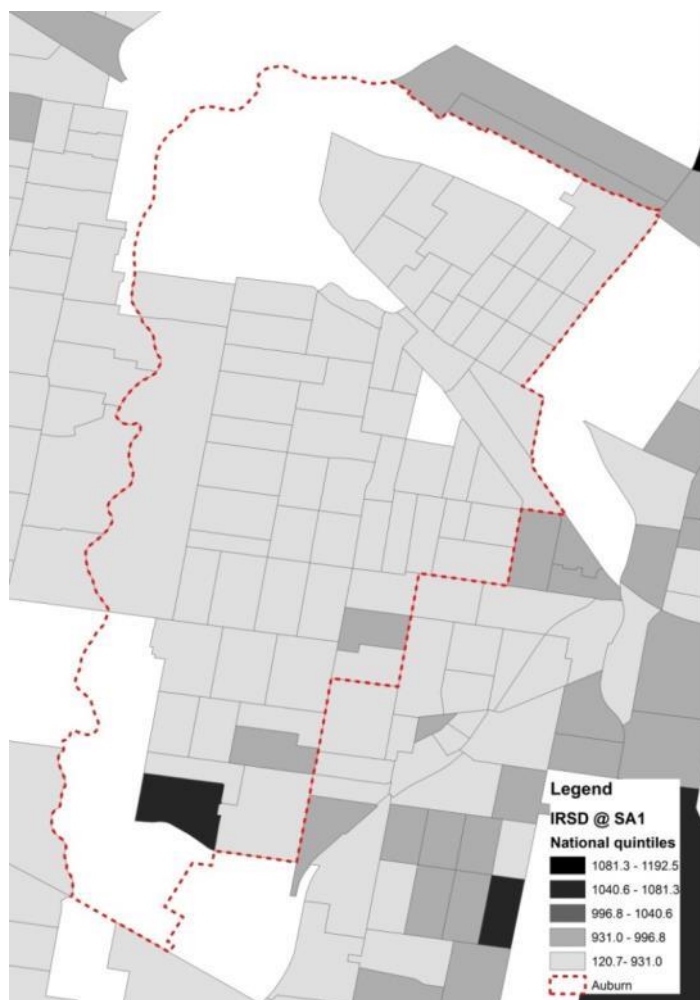
Three sub-groups of the population identified by interviewees, focus group participants and in council documents as particularly disadvantaged in the Auburn area are recent migrants, young people, and some women.

### **3.2.1 Recent migrants**

One interviewee explained that disadvantage in Auburn is often tied to how recently people have arrived from overseas [Local government officer]. The lower socio-economic status of the population is influenced by the low English literacy level of many newly arrived migrants who need support to learn English so that they can find work. As well as language issues, being able to navigate Australian systems, finding out what opportunities and supports are available and dealing with cultural barriers can be difficult. The Auburn City Community Strategic Plan for 2013–23 notes:

Many new arrivals experience multiple disadvantage including poverty, housing stress, previous experiences of trauma, interrupted education experiences, health problems, disability and unemployment which require additional resources to target their complexities of need. (Auburn City Council 2013d, p.21)

**Figure 2: Socio-economic indexes for areas—index of relative socio-economic disadvantage, Auburn SSC, 2011**



### 3.2.2 Youth

Auburn suburb has a relatively young population and there is a high proportion of disengaged young people in Auburn suburb, who are not in school and are not engaged in employment or training. In Auburn suburb, 13.8 per cent of people aged 15–24 in Auburn North and 12.8 per cent in Auburn South were not employed or attending an education institute in 2011. This compared with 8.1 per cent for Greater Sydney. Youth unemployment is also high. In Auburn suburb, 16.9 per cent of 15–24-year olds in the labour force were unemployed in Auburn North and 17.4 per cent in Auburn South. This compared with 12.6 per cent for Greater Sydney (Auburn City Council 2013a, p.9).

According to one interviewee [NGO Community worker/support provider], the main components of disadvantage as they relate to young people in Auburn are:

- High unemployment.
- Not enough money, which can affect their ability to get to school or training if they have insufficient funds for transport.
- Conflict between people from different countries and different religions.
- Family and intergenerational conflict.
- Homelessness.

A range of barriers to employment for young people were identified by agencies and reported in the Auburn Youth Strategy. These included 'language, settlement issues, lack of work experience, job seeking and vocational skills, and a need for more appropriate support provided by employment services' (Auburn City Council 2013a, p.12).

There are few local employment options for young people in the area aside from fast food outlets or their family's business. Those young people who are able to find work often report racism in the workplace and being paid very low salaries 'off the books' [NGO Community worker/support provider].

For those who have not found work, there are many accredited training courses available for young people who want to work in industry or a trade, and Youth Links provides free courses in the area to enable people to return to school to finish Year 10. However, some young people are still unable to find work having completed these training courses:

That's often where the disengagement kicks in. Not because of lack of trying in the first place, but because they've tried and not got what they hoped. [NGO community worker/support provider]

In regards to conflict, racism does not appear to be a major issue for young people. There are some exceptions where conflicts are tied to the country of origin, such as conflicts between Lebanese and Turkish or between North and South Sudanese youth. However, in general conflicts are more likely to occur over religion than ethnicity [NGO Community worker/support provider]. However, while arguments can occur based on religion, religion also plays a positive role in the lives of many young people in Auburn [NGO Community worker/support provider].

Focus group participants and an interviewee [NGO Community worker/support provider] noted that young people in the area tend to socialise with people from lots of different countries and that provides them with a good experience to help them to adapt to change and accept others. In the words of one interviewee 'no one think's it's odd or weird or forbidden to hang out with people from different cultural backgrounds' [NGO Community worker/support provider].

However, two focus group participants noted that their daughters had been regularly bullied growing up in Auburn by boys in their neighbourhood as a result of their religion (Catholic), and the way that they dressed (wearing shorts or not covering their hair). One participant said that her daughter had left the area in part as a result of these experiences.

Also, in some cases, young people might find that they have to keep their associations with people from different backgrounds secret from their parents. For example, if a young person is kicked out of home for being drunk and then stay with a family friend from a different cultural background and their family find out where they're staying, that can cause problems [NGO Community worker/support provider].

Indeed, intergenerational conflict was raised as a key safety consideration in community consultations (Auburn City Council 2013b). A strong culture of community and family is generally a strength of the area and 'there's a feeling that the family and community have your back ... across the many cultures that make up Auburn' [NGO Community worker/support provider]. However, where a young person falls foul of their family, this can cause family tensions that can contribute to a young person being kicked out of home, or moving away from home. Indeed, intergenerational conflict is a major contributor to youth homelessness in the area [NGO Community worker/support provider].

Youth homelessness in Auburn is not necessarily worse than in other parts of Western Sydney. However, youth homelessness has been becoming steadily more of an issue in Auburn and an increasing number of young people have been seeking support as a result of being homeless [NGO Community worker/support provider].

Despite these challenges for young people in the area, there are also a lot of opportunities for young people in Auburn. As well as the availability of various support services and education and training opportunities, there are also many opportunities to participate in arts and creative activities in the area [NGO Community worker/support provider].

### 3.2.3 *Women*

Focus group participants and interviewees also identified some groups of women in the Auburn area as being especially disadvantaged [NGO Community worker/support provider, NFP housing provider]. In particular, this includes:

- Women from non-English speaking backgrounds who remain at home to take care of their children, who can find themselves isolated on arrival in Australia.
- Single parents who can experience some degree of discrimination or persecution through their cultural or ethnic community because of their status as a single mother.
- Women who have arrived in the country on a 204 visa subclass (women at risk).

In these cases, these women are not only disadvantaged in terms of income and employment, but also may be subject to discrimination and victimisation.

In addition to these specific subgroups of disadvantaged women in the area, an important issue was raised in the resident focus groups in regards to the isolation faced by some older women of Anglo background. Focus group participants recognised that there is a need for young people and recent migrants to be supported, but the result of focusing on these groups has been that other sub-groups in the population have been neglected. In particular, they noted that many older Australian-born women in the area feel isolated, as a lot of the services and locations at which they could socialize no longer exist, and many of the services in the area are geared towards younger people and recent arrivals.



## **4 PLACE DISADVANTAGE IN AUBURN**

### **4.1 Contextualising place disadvantage in the area**

This section of the report discusses place disadvantage. The most significant form of place disadvantage in Auburn is the problem of housing affordability and resulting concerns about the quality of available housing, overcrowding and rental stress. These issues are discussed in more detail in Chapter 5. Aside from these problems, Auburn is a relatively advantaged locality in the Greater Metropolitan Sydney area in regards to other place-related factors, including transport, education, health, access to employment and public space.

In the resident focus group, participants were asked what they like about living in Auburn suburb. People said that Auburn is in a good location, close to the train station, with good amenities, parks and medical centres nearby.

One participant noted that the fact that many of the staff working in local shops and services (including doctors) speak other languages means that his family members who do not speak much English can be more independent in the area. There are also a lot of service providers and community organisations in the area.

A recurring concern, however, is that a rapidly increasing population in the area continues to put pressure on existing services and facilities. Between 2001 and 2011, the population of Auburn suburb grew from 26 711 to 33 125 people, a population growth rate of 24 per cent, much higher than the population growth rate for the whole of Greater Metropolitan Sydney of 10 per cent.

Other important considerations raised by focus group participants and interviewees were the way in which the area is perceived, and the nature of community cohesion and fragmentation.

#### **4.1.1 Transport**

Auburn suburb is serviced by the Western Rail Line of NSW's City Rail, and has its own dedicated railway station (Auburn) located at Rawson Street in the northern part of the suburb, although some train services through the area do not stop at Auburn (Auburn City Council 2012a, p.15). It is also well serviced by a mix of government and private bus routes. Its closest major commercial and employment centres are Strathfield to the east and Parramatta to the west, both of which are serviced by the Western Rail Line. Major road corridors also pass through this area. As one interviewee remarked 'the location itself is a key strength [of Auburn]' [Local government officer]. A focus group participant noted that both train and bus services have improved over time in the area.

Despite these transport connections, 57 per cent of residents across the Auburn LGA live in transport disadvantaged areas where facilities and services are difficult to access or unavailable (Auburn City Council 2012a, p.15). In Auburn suburb, transport disadvantage is a problem for residents living in the southern part of the suburb (see Section 4.4).

For those people who do own a car and drive to the train station to commute, parking is very limited and this contributes to the heavy traffic congestion around the CBD of Auburn and on the Eastern side of Auburn Road [Industry/commerce].

#### **4.1.2 Employment**

There are limited employment opportunities in the Auburn LGA for residents of Auburn suburb. While there are employment lands in the LGA, including the Silverwater

commercial area, few residents of Auburn work there. Many people who live in Auburn travel to Parramatta or other parts of Western Sydney for work. Newly arrived migrants living in Auburn tend to get their first jobs doing unskilled labour on a casual basis, which can be anywhere in Sydney [Local government officer]. The good public transport links to the area make this possible.

#### *4.1.3 Education*

Auburn LGA is well-served by both public and private primary schools. However, there is only one public high-school in the area and it is for girls only. This means that boys have to leave the LGA to attend school either in Granville, Homebush Boys School or Birrong Boys School [Local government officer]. A focus group participant also noted that non-Muslim families are often reluctant to send their daughters to the public girls high school as the school has a 'Muslim monoculture'.

Generally interviewees and focus group participants thought that schools in the area were adequate, but one focus group participant noted that some families would not send their children to the local public schools because they were afraid of the bad influence of other students, some of whom can be seen hanging around Auburn station and smoking.

Focus group participants noted that schools in the area are currently under a lot of pressure because of the rapid population increase in the area, and concern was raised that there may not be enough schools to cater for the predicted increase in population.

Auburn's population currently (at the time of the 2011 census) has a young profile, with a median age of 29 (compared to 36 for greater metropolitan Sydney). Auburn also has a higher proportion of school-aged people than the average for Greater Sydney at both primary school age (9.3% of the population aged 5–11 compared to 8.7% for Sydney) and high school age (8.1% of the population aged 12–17 compared to 7.4% for Sydney) (see Appendix 1). Assuming future population increases also include this younger demographic, the pressure on the school system will be greater as a result of population increase than in other areas in Sydney.

#### *4.1.4 Health services*

There are many health services available in Auburn, including medical centres and a hospital. An interviewee [Industry/commerce] and focus group participants noted that there are centres that offer different services and specialties, and often have female doctors and doctors who speak different languages.

However, focus group participants noted that the hospital was under great pressure both from the large population in the area, and the need to assist a large number of patients from non-English-speaking backgrounds who require more assistance, and in some cases culturally-appropriate services from doctors and nurses. Some focus group participants noted that when they have visited the hospital, if another patient has arrived with an interpreter, then they have had their appointments 'bumped' in order to suit the interpreter's availability.

Further adding to the pressure on the hospital, one participant also noted that many of the beds in the hospital are currently closed as they are not funded by the government.

#### *4.1.5 Community services*

There are many community organisations operating in the Auburn area. Focus group participants and interviewees noted that services come to Auburn because the area has a high concentration of disadvantaged people, especially new migrants. There are

too many services to list here, and many services that cater to a particular ethnic group, or a group with particular needs. One organisation with a particularly strong profile in the area is Auburn Diversity Services, which focus group participants commended for having a large number of programs and engaging very well with the community. Focus group participants also noted that council plays an important role in communicating with the many different services in the area (discussed further in Section 6.5) and that Auburn Library provides services and programs for people from a range of different ethnic groups.

Residents of Auburn are able to find out about these services through a range of avenues, including the local free paper, council's community information directory (Auburn City Council 2010b), e-mails from council, fliers distributed by service providers, public noticeboards in the Library and Auburn Diversity Services, and through personal contacts and networks.

#### *4.1.6 Public space*

There are a large number of parks and playgrounds in Auburn suburb. However, some parks are very heavily used because of the population density in the area. For example, Auburn Park, which is a local park surrounded by apartments and Bardell Park, which is a small park in between unit blocks have a lot of pressure placed on them. The grass in Bardell Park had to be replaced with artificial grass because the grass could not be maintained because the park was used so much [Local government officer].

## **4.2 Area perceptions**

Focus group participants agreed that the area is 'dynamic' and 'has a real energy to it', which is influenced by the multicultural and diverse population. Participants said that they enjoyed the cultural diversity of the area, and the fact that it is busy on the streets.

However, while focus group participants spoke positively about their area, some also spoke about the negative stigma sometimes associated with the area. One focus group participant explained that when her real estate agent told her he had found a property in Auburn that suited her needs, she initially did not want to move to the area because of its poor image, but 'when we actually moved in, the feeling is different than when you think about it from the outside.' Another focus group participant noted that her daughter didn't like to tell people that she was from Auburn because of the stigma associated with the area; while another had been cautioned that he wouldn't find good husbands for his daughters if he continued living in the area.

There was also concern raised by some focus group participants that Auburn, as well as other areas of Western Sydney, is seen as a 'dumping ground' by private companies and the government. Examples given included the quality of food and service in supermarkets in the area, which was seen as inferior to that offered in other parts of Sydney; the level of service in public institutions such as the hospital; plans to establish an industrial recycling area nearby; and the development of poor quality private housing. One participant noted that 'Auburn has traditionally been seen as a bit of a dumping area with industry, and no matter how many people they bring in, there's the idea that Auburn can take it' while another said 'the government isn't looking after the Western Sydney area, they feel that Western Sydney is a dumping area, they can dump rubbish real estate here because no one will question.'

Also related to perceptions of the area was a concern around the impact of media coverage of crime in the area on perceptions of the area. A recent community consultation undertaken in the Auburn LGA found that key safety considerations

raised in the community included perceptions of crime based on media coverage (Auburn City Council 2013b).

Certainly, our review of the coverage given to Auburn by major media outlets found that local crimes in Auburn attracted broader media attention. In Auburn, there was a particular focus on gun crimes, the connection of gun crimes with gangs, and the connection of gangs with Auburn's Muslim population.

In the Community Safety Survey<sup>2</sup>, 63 per cent of residents indicated that they were concerned about crime in their local area and 23 per cent said they had felt at direct risk of becoming a victim of crime. Interestingly, 50 per cent felt that crime had increased and only 8 per cent thought it had decreased but in fact, official crime rates have decreased over the five years to 2013 (Auburn City Council 2013b).

The top ranking crime in Auburn is robbery (of which 75% occurred outdoors). Between 2007–10, Auburn was ranked 1 or 2 of LGAs in NSW for robbery (based on offences per 100 000 people). In 2011 it ranked 5th (Auburn City Council 2013b).

In the Auburn Council Community Satisfaction Study, the issue of the perception of crime was also raised in the four discussion groups held with 45 Auburn residents. This study reported that:

When told that the crime rate is down in Auburn, residents expressed frustration that this is not being communicated and celebrated. It's not news that Auburn is often associated with safety issues, not only for those who live here, but for those living outside of the LGA who in turn refuse to visit. Residents want to feel proud of where they live and therefore want to see the message of lowering crime rates communicated outside of the community as well as within. (Micromex Research 2013)

However, one interviewee [NGO community worker/service provider] noted that while media coverage of Auburn does often focus on a shooting or 'drug bust', with the associated negative stigma, there has also been some positive coverage of Auburn in the media of late, especially on SBS and the ABC, with the Auburn Community Development Network frequently being asked to contribute to media reports.

Interestingly, when asked about their own feelings of safety, as opposed to media portrayals of crime and safety in the area, focus group participants had had different experiences. Most agreed that while the area has become notorious for small-scale criminal players and drug-related syndicates, this criminal activity is targeted and organised rather than random, so ordinary citizens are generally not fearful of being targeted. However, when it came to feeling safe walking in the area at night, people were divided. Some said that they felt safe in the area at night because shops were open and there were people in the streets, while others said that they did not feel safe walking at night. There was agreement that this largely depended on the area, with streets close to the station and shopping centre being well-lit and busy, while other streets are seen as unsafe with one participant noting there are some streets where ambulances will not go without a police escort. Interestingly, some of the longer term residents in the focus groups said that Auburn was improving in this regard, with the area feeling much less safe in the past.

Also of note is the fact that while official crime rates have decreased in the area, only 56 per cent of respondents to the Community Safety Survey who had been victims of crime had reported it to the police (Auburn City Council 2013b, p.12).

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<sup>2</sup> This was a survey with 308 people who live, work or visit the Auburn LGA undertaken by Auburn Council.

### **4.3 Community cohesion and fragmentation**

In general, resident focus group participants and interviewees spoke positively about the community in Auburn.

Focus group participants gave examples of strong ties between neighbours in their neighbourhood, with neighbours borrowing things from each other, providing assistance and giving reciprocal gifts. Another participant noted that there were strong bonds between neighbours and she was made to feel welcome and safe in her neighbourhood, an experience she did not have when living in more expensive suburbs of Sydney previously. However, these experiences were not universal. One participant noted that she had neighbours who did not speak English, making it hard to talk to them, and another participant who lived in an apartment building said that people in the building did not interact much as many had poor English skills. As a result, people in the building would tend to socialise only with others in their language group. The mobility of neighbours was also an important factor in making it more difficult or less desirable to develop relationships, both in apartment buildings with rapid resident turn over, and also in those properties in which recently arrived refugees are housed for six months before moving on.

While there are many events held to bring the Auburn community together (see Section 6.3), some interviewees noted that the Auburn community as a whole is made up of many different sub-communities. In some cases, people interact mainly within their own language and cultural group [Local government officer].

There is also fragmentation within some communities. For example, interviewees noted that the Afghan and Sudanese communities are split according to community divisions in their countries of origin [Local government officer, NGO community worker/support provider].

There are also inter-generational divides in the community, compounded by the fact that a lot of the older population are from an Anglo background and have seen the area change significantly over the past few decades [Focus group discussion, Local government officer]. Focus group participants noted that this had resulted in some older Anglo residents feeling excluded from the broader community and the way that the community has changed over time, with the majority of services and facilities now geared towards migrants and younger people.

### **4.4 Spatial concentrations of disadvantage**

As well as there being particularly notable sub-groups of the population who are more disadvantaged in Auburn, there is also a geographical dimension to disadvantage in the suburb, with some areas of the suburb being more disadvantaged than others. This reflects differences in residential property density and property quality in different parts of the suburb.

There is a geographical divide in Auburn in relation to disadvantage between Auburn North and Auburn South. Auburn North is characterised by apartments and units and a lot of private rental accommodation, while Auburn South is characterised by older single dwelling houses. Because Auburn North provides more affordable rental accommodation, it also houses a higher proportion of disadvantaged people. People often move to Auburn North for a short period of time until they can find somewhere else to live. While there are some long-term residents in Auburn North, it is in general a very transient area [Local government officer].

However, Auburn South suffers from transport disadvantage, which is not a problem experienced by residents in Auburn North. The large botanic garden precinct

(14 hectares) in Auburn South has meant that that area is difficult to access by public transport. The distance from Auburn South to the Auburn CBD is very short in a car, but car ownership in Auburn suburb is lower than in the other suburbs in the Auburn LGA, meaning that some residents in this area find it difficult to travel to the Auburn CBD [Local government officer]. In recognition of this problem, Auburn Council has begun to operate a free loop shuttle bus, which at the time of writing was operating three and a half days a week.

At an even smaller scale, disadvantage is concentrated in some specific apartment developments. For example, one apartment development in Auburn (Auburn Central) is notorious for having many overcrowded apartments in it, and was mentioned by many interviewees. There are some streets between the railway line and the freeway where there are a lot of old and run-down unit blocks that are poorly maintained. This is the area of Auburn where recently arrived refugees are more likely to settle. In contrast, on the other side of the railway line towards Granville, there are better quality properties and there is a lot of expensive real estate in those areas with high rents [Industry/commerce].

## 5 THE ROLE OF HOUSING SYSTEMS AND MARKETS IN CONCENTRATING DISADVANTAGE

A major issue facing residents of Auburn suburb is housing affordability. The desirability of Auburn as a place to live for new migrants means that there is a lot of pressure on the local housing market. In the words of one interviewee 'everyone wants [to live in] Auburn and it's not possible'.

The proportion of low-income households (with weekly household incomes below \$600) in housing stress (i.e. paying more than 30% of their income in rent) in Auburn suburb was 32.6 per cent at the time of the 2011 Census (see Appendix 1), much higher than for the Sydney Greater Metropolitan Area (with 21.0% of low-income households in housing stress). Housing stress is not a recent phenomenon in Auburn. Research carried out using 2006 Centrelink data found that the proportion of people on low incomes in the private rental market in receipt of Commonwealth Rent Assistance who were paying more than 30 per cent of their income in rent in Auburn LGA was 45 per cent (Commonwealth Government 2009, p.147). The same research noted that between 2001 and 2007 the proportion of dwellings affordable for purchase by households in the 40th percentile of median income declined from 14 per cent to 2.2 per cent of households in Auburn LGA, making it 'very difficult for lower income households to purchase housing in the area' (Commonwealth Government 2009, p.147).

Auburn Council's Community Strategic Plan for 2011–21 identifies 'housing affordability, suitability, and quality of development' as a key challenge for the area and notes that 'housing prices and rents are expected to keep rising due to our strategic location on the railway line between the Sydney and Parramatta CBDs' (Auburn City Council 2011a, p.34). The council also recognises:

The composition of our population is constantly changing. Anticipating the types and mix of housing we will need in the future is part of this challenge. (Auburn City Council 2011a, p.34)

The high demand of recent immigrants to settle in Auburn has also put upward pressure on private rents. According to one interviewee [Industry/commerce], average rents in the Auburn area have increased by around 30 per cent in the past five years. This is a significant increase considering that many recently arrived migrants are reliant on Centrelink payments. Five years ago an average two-bedroom unit would have cost \$270–290 per week to rent, now the lower end of the market is \$320–330 [Industry/commerce]. Focus group participants suggested that average rents for a two-bedroom unit in the area were significantly higher than this. A search of the online property search engine *Domain* found two-bedroom units for rent in Auburn suburb ranging from \$350–450 per week (on 16th October 2013). One resident focus group participant noted that when he arrived in Auburn in 2001, there were a lot of empty houses in Auburn available to rent, and it was even possible to negotiate with real estate agents to get the first few weeks of rent for free. Now the situation is quite the opposite.

While Auburn's housing is more affordable than many other parts of Sydney, it remains unaffordable for many of the people living in the area and those who would like to live in the area. Housing affordability and access is a particular concern for single humanitarian entrants who do not have an Australian rental history or a good income. The lack of English proficiency of many humanitarian migrants also means that many are unable to find work and are reliant on Centrelink payments [NGO community worker/service provider].

This means that the most affordable option for single people is to move into shared accommodation. However, it can be difficult to get a property through a real estate agent for a share property as agents will often refuse applications for two single men to share a property for example. When people in this situation do manage to access private rental accommodation, often it is overcrowded, with many people sharing the same property [NGO community worker/service provider]. As one interviewee noted: 'there's a lot of overcrowding in Auburn' [NGO community worker/support provider]. Interviewees noted that it is not uncommon for six to eight single men to be sharing a two-bedroom unit, with some interviewees talking of two-bedroom units with as many as 10–12 people sharing [Local government officer, Industry/commerce]. One interviewee also noted that more university students have been moving into the area in recent years, putting further pressure on the private rental market, and contributing to the overcrowding of properties [NFP housing provider].

Accommodation for single people is a challenge across Sydney. A person on Centrelink payments can afford about \$180 per week maximum in rent, but there is virtually nothing available across Sydney in that price range that is self-contained. In Auburn a self-contained one-bedroom unit costs around \$280–300 per week. This is only just affordable to a couple on Centrelink payments (who can afford \$280 per week) [Industry/commerce].

There are some boarding houses in Auburn, but many people do not want to live in them. In particular, many single people who have come through the asylum seeker pathway, as opposed to overseas posts, and have spent time in detention do not like the idea of sharing [NGO community worker/support provider]. There have been situations where people have leased out their garage to a single person for \$150–180 per week [Industry/commerce]. If people do not want to live in a share-household then they often have no other choice than to live in such unsuitable accommodation. One focus group participant also noted that some properties in the area have been converted into dual occupancy, possibly without council approval, as a result of the demand for housing in the area.

Single humanitarian entrants are not the only groups struggling to find affordable and appropriate accommodation in the area, however. Large families also face difficulties. Large families reliant on Centrelink payments can afford \$340 per week, which is only enough for a two-bedroom unit in the area [Industry/commerce]. This means that it is not uncommon to have families with two adults and five children sharing a two-bedroom property. This also means that people with large families often do not declare all of their children in their applications for rental properties. This situation can also cause significant stress to family members, and can cause families to split up, including when children move out of home prematurely [NGO community worker/service provider].

Overcrowded accommodation can result in stress for people and have a negative impact on their health. Housing affordability is also a source of significant stress and individuals and families who are paying a significant amount of their income on their accommodation must cut back on spending on other household expenses. This often means that families have to cut back on expenses relating to their children's education. The financial pressure and the associated stress in these families can impact on the behaviour and educational achievement of their children, with children doing poorly at school and rebelling against their parents [NGO community worker/service provider].

When they first arrive in the country, humanitarian entrants can access temporary furnished accommodation for six months through providers who hold contracts with the Department of Immigration to provide these services. Most new migrants have a



preference to live in areas where there is already a strong community. At the time of this research, Auburn was the preferred destination for many Iraqi households, as well as some Sudanese and Tamil households. However, given the pressure on housing affordability, many new migrants are not housed in Auburn, but instead in the suburbs of Liverpool, Blacktown, Mount Druitt, St Marys and Penrith where cheaper properties of a higher standard are available [Industry/commerce].

At the end of the six months, these households need to find their own private rental accommodation. There are different agencies that will assist with this, including Resolve FM and Auburn Diversity Services, who can also assist people in applying for a bond loan through Housing NSW. People are only eligible for a bond loan if they meet the affordability thresholds identified by Housing NSW, based on Centrelink payments. This means that in situations where people want to live in Auburn but cannot find a property under the affordability threshold, if they rent a more expensive property then they will not be eligible for a bond loan and must cover the cost of the bond by themselves by using any financial reserves overseas that they can access, or by borrowing from friends and family [Industry/commerce].

Despite the housing affordability constraints in the area, one interviewee noted that many people's expectations about the standard of accommodation they will access are high, with people having unrealistic expectations about what they can afford or be approved for when they first arrive in the area. This can be a particular strain for migrants who have come from a middle class background in their home country. Some people also feel pressure from friends and relatives not to settle for accommodation that they do not consider of high enough standard. Usually these households have to settle for a property that is both smaller and older than they would prefer [NGO community worker/service provider].

Single men, who have come to Australia ahead of their families in order to find work and sponsor family members, also often prefer to rent a two-bedroom property when they arrive, so that they do not need to move again once their family arrives, but this is not an affordable option for those reliant on Centrelink payments. These men often find themselves living in a share house situation, sometimes in overcrowded conditions, as discussed above [NGO community worker/service provider]. It is notable that there is a higher proportion of men living in the suburb (52.1%) than women, greater than the metropolitan average (49.2%). The noticeably high population of men in the area was also discussed during the resident focus group.

Existing social networks are also very important in the area in terms of finding accommodation. One interviewee noted that much of the available real estate in Auburn (for either rental or purchase) is not advertised, and is instead rented or sold to family members and friends, rather than through real estate agents. When properties do get passed through real estate agents, some agents will then rent or sell the better properties to their own family and friends [NGO community worker/service provider]. This can make it more difficult for new arrivals into the area, who do not have established social networks, to find an appropriate property.

There is some social housing in the area. In 2008 there were 1177 social housing dwellings in Auburn LGA, making up 3.8 per cent of all housing in Auburn LGA, lower than the average for the greater metropolitan region of 4.8 per cent (Commonwealth Government 2009, p.147). The social housing properties available are insufficient to meet the demand from the existing population and the people moving into the area. One interviewee noted that the waiting list times for the Parramatta/Auburn area for public housing are approximately five years for a one-bedroom apartment and over 10 years for a house [NGO community worker/service provider]. This means that the pressure on the private rental system is strong.

## **6 POLICY INTERVENTIONS TO ADDRESS OR REMEDY DISADVANTAGE**

The majority of policies and programs in place in Auburn to address disadvantage target disadvantaged people in place, as opposed to targeting disadvantaged places. As well as policies and programs targeting disadvantaged people in Auburn, there are also policies and programs that have an impact on housing market disadvantage. A summary of a selection of these policies and programs is provided in Appendix 2.

### **6.1 Conceptualising place focused initiatives**

In this section we adopt Randolph's PFI (place focused initiatives) concept under which such initiatives are defined as policy interventions with spatially focused impacts which are:

- 'aimed at communities of interest ... [disadvantaged] target groups within the population', while also
- distinct from 'mainstream social welfare and economic policies'. (Randolph 2004, p.65)

While their effects are spatially focused, Australian PFIs do not generally conform to the European 'area based' policy model where 'special measures' are formally targeted on a place within a defined boundary (as in the case of, e.g. the UK's New Deal for Communities program (Lawless et al. 2010)). Rather, the place-based impacts of Australian PFIs come about due to the local spatial concentration of relevant target groups. In Randolph's terms therefore PFIs 'operate in places for people'. This means that 'they are primarily aimed at the problems facing groups within [localised] areas rather than the problems associated with living in these areas *per se*' (Randolph 2004, p.65).

While this study has not aimed to catalogue, comprehensively, Auburn PFIs, we have listed those we believe to have been the most important in Appendix 2. The majority of recent interventions in Auburn have been classed as 'for people', while smaller numbers are construed as 'for place' and fewer still 'for housing'.

### **6.2 Initiatives targeted at disadvantaged people in place**

There are many policy interventions in place to address disadvantage in the Auburn LGA.

Auburn Council provides 'a range of targeted programs and services not usually delivered by Local Government', aimed at servicing the complex needs of the community. These include employment programs, community education programs, volunteers programs, lifelong learning programs and specific capacity building initiatives (Auburn City Council 2012a, p.14).

One example is the work council has been undertaking to improve the health of members of the community, which was applauded by members of the resident focus group. Auburn Council is implementing a range of programs to promote a healthy lifestyle amongst residents under the Auburn Healthy Communities Initiative funded by the Department of Health and Ageing, which includes a healthy mums program, try a sport month, Auburn women's swimming program and a Flavours of Auburn program and cookbook (Auburn City Council 2011b, p.33). An interviewee also noted that this initiative also includes a preventative health program for culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) adults at risk of a number of chronic illnesses [Local government officer]. This was considered an important program because Auburn's

residents fare worse than the broader community for many types of health problems, including Type 2 diabetes and heart disease.

### **6.3 Initiatives to promote community cohesion**

Many not-for-profit community organisations that have been established in Auburn to support the social needs of the community. Such support organisations have been in place for the past few decades and have helped to consolidate Auburn as ‘a place of arrival and settlement for people coming to Australia’ [Local government officer]. The social infrastructure in place in Auburn, especially that which assists recent arrivals, was seen as a key strength of the area by many interviewees and focus group participants.

The council has played a supportive role in encouraging community organisations to provide services and run community events through providing funding, resources and coordination assistance. This is in line with the Council’s Cultural Plan (Auburn City Council 2013c), which has a focus on embracing diversity including encouraging collaborations and partnerships through community cultural development (Goal 2) and providing a network of accessible venues and facilities that support cultural activities (Goal 6). It also reflects the first ‘theme’ of the Auburn City Community Strategic Plan: ‘Our community: diverse and inclusive’. The Council’s Operational Plan further elaborates on the ‘diverse and inclusive’ theme:

The community’s top priorities are community pride, community safety and education, employment opportunities, building community harmony, the need for youth facilities and services, and support for new arrivals. Council’s role in community development will involve capacity building, community connection and working in partnership. Our key focus is on actively engaging our community in a wide range of social, economic, cultural, recreational, learning and civic activities. Our community initiatives aim to improve social wellbeing and provide opportunities for people—including newly arrived migrants and refugees—to be actively involved in local community life. (Auburn City Council 2011b, p.32)

A particularly interesting initiative in Auburn is the Auburn Small Community Organisation Network (ACSON), which is a group of small, volunteer run, not-for-profit organisations who do not receive regular funding. ASCON was founded in 2008 with support from Auburn City Council. Small community groups in the area faced difficulty in raising the money to pay for public liability insurance, which is required in order to use community facilities. That prompted the group to organise and try to access common facilities together. ASCON identified the need for an affordable common facility and worked with the local council to identify suitable sites. They were allocated a former women’s rest centre at the back of the library in Regents Park, which was refurbished by council, with the assistance of the Federal government stimulus package. ASCON members can lease the space which is jointly shared by up to 20 community groups who take turns in using the space through a weekly schedule. The development of ASCON has helped to bridge cultural barriers and create a common understanding of unity and purpose for the group [NFP Housing provider].

As well as service provision and the work carried out by community organisations, supported by council, many interviewees and focus group participants spoke of the important role that community events play in Auburn in developing stronger ties within, and especially between, communities in the area. These range from small-scale get-togethers in local parks organised by council, to community-wide festivals such as the annual Auburn Festival (held in September), the Africultures Festival (held in March), Flavours of Auburn Food Festival (October), the Lunar New Year Festival, and the

Pacific Unity Festival<sup>3</sup>. One focus group participant noted that the Auburn Festival brings lots of different community groups together on one day and is very important in order for people to appreciate each other and live in harmony.

## 6.4 Housing market policies to address disadvantage

In regards to housing market policies to address disadvantage, the policies with the most significant impact on the availability of housing in Auburn suburb are metropolitan and sub-regional strategies promoting the development of higher density housing in areas close to public transport, such as Auburn suburb. There is also a particularly interesting initiative in place in Auburn in regards to the provision of affordable housing - the direct provision of affordable housing by council.

### 6.4.1 Provision of new private properties

Policy interventions to address housing affordability in Auburn are largely influenced by state and regional policies in this area. These include:

- State Environmental Planning Policy (Affordable Rental Housing) 2009.
- NSW 2021, the state government's 10-year strategic business plan.
- *Regional Action Plan for Western Sydney and the Blue Mountains*, which provides a geographic-specific focus for the NSW 2021 plan. One priority area is to 'provide more affordable housing options' through maximising land supply for housing, developing policies and strategies that provide affordable housing and planning and improving access to social housing. (NSW Government 2012, p.20)
- The *draft Metropolitan Strategy*, which was identified under NSW 2021 and supersedes the 2010 Metropolitan Plan. This document outlines the broadest strategic planning directions for Sydney.
- The *draft West Central Subregional Strategy*, which supports the metropolitan strategy.

A major focus of these strategies is on increasing housing densities in areas close to public transport through encouraging the development of higher-density (apartment and townhouse) properties through the private housing market thereby increasing housing supply.

The Auburn LGA is earmarked for a significant increase in new residential dwellings. As the Auburn City Council Delivery Program and Operational Plan summarises:

The NSW Government's Metropolitan Strategy proposes an additional 95 500 new dwellings by 2031 in Sydney's West Central Region. The Department of Planning and Infrastructure's West Central Sub-region Draft Strategy (WCDSS) proposes a total of 17 000 additional dwellings for Auburn LGA by 2031. From this total additional dwellings, 6000 dwellings will be provided within the Sydney Olympic Park area (SOP) with 11 000 dwellings to be provided across the rest of the Auburn LGA (Auburn City Council 2011b, p.22).

The impact of these broader metropolitan and sub-regional strategies on the ground in Auburn suburb are evident. Within the private housing market, there is significant activity in Auburn suburb, and many new properties are being built. These new properties are typically being built for the small-scale private investment market, as private rental properties, typically in new apartment developments. In its Community Strategic Plan 2011–21, Auburn Council notes that:

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<sup>3</sup> For a list of community events in Auburn, see

<http://www.auburn.nsw.gov.au/Welcome/whatson/Pages/CommunityEvents.aspx>

Development pressure (particularly for increased building heights and density) will continue to be a challenge for our city and our council. (Auburn City Council 2011a, p.34)

Certainly Auburn suburb is notable for the fact that almost half of all private dwellings (42.5%) in the area are flats, units or apartments, compared to a metropolitan average of 26.4 per cent. Auburn also has a much higher proportion of private renters (32.8% of the population) compared to the greater metropolitan area (24.6%) (see Appendix 1).

Council's response to date has been 'to encourage higher density development in and around town centres' (Auburn City Council 2011a, p.34). Auburn suburb includes the Auburn town centre and as such has been, and will continue to be, a location to accommodate this increased 'development pressure'. In fact, Auburn is typical of many of the middle-ring suburbs in Sydney in this regard, which are experiencing 'locally generated piecemeal market-led reinvestment and renewal' by small-scale developers who are selling properties to small-scale private investors (Randolph & Freestone 2012, p.2557).

Of note in Auburn, in the resident focus group it was noted that there is a perception in the community that some councillors may be involved in the approval of housing developments in which they have a personal interest. This raises concerns over corruption and control over the form and location of new property developments in the area, as well as over the proper supervision of building works and the quality of new developments.

#### *6.4.2 Council provision of affordable housing*

Auburn Council is a direct provider of affordable housing. The council currently provides 76 affordable housing units for seniors. At the time of fieldwork, council were undertaking expressions of interest for a specialist affordable housing provider to develop and manage additional affordable housing units on a site near the botanical gardens. This initiative goes some way towards responding to the extreme housing affordability problem in the area, however there is still significant demand for affordable housing in the area which cannot be met by council alone. In its Delivery Program and Operational Plan, Auburn Council notes that providing affordable housing in the area is a complex task that will require intergovernmental coordination and support:

Addressing the issue of housing affordability in the Auburn LGA is not just a matter of manipulating land use controls to provide a mix of housing types, it also requires strong social policy settings and unified government approaches between state and Federal governments and a cross section of different Agencies including immigration, community services and social services. (Auburn City Council 2011b, p.22)

### **6.5 Factors affecting policy implementation**

Auburn provides a particularly challenging environment in which to design, implement and operationalise policies and programs. This is because the area not only has a population characterised by high rates of disadvantage, but this population is also very diverse, very mobile, and growing rapidly. This has implications for both communication and co-ordination of policies and the provision of services.

#### *6.5.1 Communication and coordination*

Auburn has an extremely diverse population in terms of birthplace, ethnicity, language and religion. For example, one interviewee noted that residents in Auburn come from

126 different countries of origin [Local government officer]. Communication is therefore a significant challenge for all interventions aimed at meeting the economic and social goals of the area. In the words of one interviewee:

There is a fantastic array of support services out there. The issue is whether or not [people] are aware of their existence and whether or not they choose to engage with them [Industry/commerce].

For example, while the council translates council documents into the top four community languages (Arabic, Turkish, Korean and Simplified Chinese—readable by most Mandarin and Cantonese speakers), another 38 per cent of the population speaks another language other than these languages or English<sup>4</sup>. As well as language proficiency, consideration must also be given to the cultural appropriateness of communications.

Indeed the Auburn Council Community Satisfaction Study found that while the services and facilities provided by council were ‘largely performing to expectations’, there was concern about ‘the lack of awareness and ability to inform the community of what council is doing’. This report notes that while communication is a shared challenge for most councils ‘Auburn has the added challenge of trying to reach its multicultural community and to engage with those who do not speak English as their first language’ (Micromex Research 2013). Council now has a strategy of engaging with the community through community leaders, community volunteer organisations and settlement workers to try to reach smaller and emerging communities [Local government officer].

The Satisfaction Study also notes that common ways in which councils communicate, such as newsletters, websites and making documents available at customer service and libraries is not connecting with residents and that ‘residents want some form of direct invitation to get involved.’ Residents also suggested that cultural facilities, health centres and religious facilities were effective places to reach multicultural residents ‘as they are often the main port of call for these residents to participate and engage with the area’ (Micromex Research 2013).

Another challenge is that it is often not practical to bring multiple communities together, where there are conflicts between those communities. This makes engaging as many communities as possible difficult.

In order to communicate with residents and implement strategies to support residents, the council has developed working relationships with the multiple not-for-profit and service agencies operating across the Auburn LGA. This has meant that engagement can occur face-to-face more often. This type of engagement is highly resource intensive, but is also the most effective form of engagement [Local government officer].

The council tries to support the work being undertaken by not-for-profit and community organisations. For example a multi-purpose facility has been built in Auburn North that provides meeting rooms and spaces for community groups to meet and run their programs. The facility has ten bookable spaces that can be used by community groups [Local government officer].

Community groups have also assisted council in providing their own programs, such as the Auburn Healthy Communities Initiatives discussed in Section 6.2. While council

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<sup>4</sup> Calculated from ABS 2011, Basic Community Profile Tables for Auburn local government area (by comparing sum of those who speak Arabic, Turkish, Korean, Mandarin, Cantonese, and English at home with those who speak another language at home, and not stated).

accessed the funds and delivered the services, they were able to engage with the community with the help of a range of community groups [Local government officer].

The lessons learnt for policy in Auburn is that engaging directly with the community and then implementing with the community is the most effective approach. This includes engaging directly with residents, but also with not-for-profit organisations. There are a lot of barriers to the participation of Auburn residents in 'traditional' engagement methods such as formal council meetings, or Town Hall style consultations. In response the council has begun to focus on going out into the community to invite people to participate where they are and where they feel comfortable. The response to this approach to communication and participation has been very positive as residents feel included and that they can express themselves and have their voices heard [Local government officer].

In part because of the plethora of service providers in the Auburn area, it can be difficult not only for people who need help to find out about all of the services that are available in the area, but also for service providers to know where they can refer their clients. While council already provides an important role in connecting different service providers and community organisations with each other, and organisations such as Auburn Diversity Services provide a similar role, one interviewee noted that it would be extremely beneficial if an agency were to be set up that provided such a co-ordination role when it came to housing options in the area. That is, if there was a central service that other service providers could contact who would investigate the housing options available in the local area (including crisis accommodation) on behalf of other service providers. This would enable other services to take more of a case-worker approach, rather than spending that time brokering accommodation options. Such a service, provided to service providers, may also reduce the need for support workers to refer their clients to other service providers, and instead develop a supportive relationship with their clients [NGO community worker/support provider].

### *6.5.2 Rapid population change*

Focus group participants noted that it has taken a while for service provision to catch up with changes in the number and diversity of the population in Auburn, but that this is understandable because these changes have been happening so rapidly. Focus group participants noted that both the local and state governments appeared to be working hard to catch up with the need for services, but because different migrant groups come and go from the area, service providers need to be prepared for each new group, but it is hard to predict which group will move to the area next, making planning for service provision difficult.

Another concern mentioned by interviewees was around the nature of State and Federal government funding for council-led service provision. The Auburn LGA (which extends well beyond the suburb of Auburn) has in the past had a poor rating on the SEIFA index, in large part because of the poor SEIFA scores for Auburn suburb, where approximately half of the current LGA population live. This has meant that the council has been able to be quite successful in obtaining State and Federal funding for community initiatives to date. However, there are new development areas in the LGA where significant numbers of apartment developments have been, and are being, built. These areas lie adjacent to the Parramatta River and are attracting more affluent residents. These areas include Wentworth Point, Newington and Sydney Olympic Park. Once these new developments are complete, they will increase the population of Auburn LGA by approximately 30 000 people, and will collectively have a population equal to that of Auburn suburb. A potential impact of these new wealthy areas within the LGA is a dilution of indexes of disadvantage in the area, masking the disadvantage that would still exist within the LGA and potentially impacted on the

success of applications for funding for projects to address disadvantage [Local government officer]. There are also other potential impacts of these new developments for the ability of Auburn Council to service the needs of disadvantaged residents living in Auburn suburb. While the new developments and their residents might benefit the area by attracting services like shopping facilities and better infrastructure, the higher population density of the area will also place increased pressure on existing facilities, including parks and open space.

Auburn Council has been instrumental in providing venues for community activities. However, interviewees noted that there were still insufficient facilities available in the area to meet the demand from community organisations and service providers [NGO community worker/service provider]. The implication of this is that whatever policies are adopted in Auburn to address disadvantage, they will need to be accompanied by the provision of venues and facilities.



## **7 CONCLUSION**

Auburn is a dynamic suburb, experiencing considerable growth and with a very mobile population. It is a relatively advantaged place in terms of access to transport and services and these services and facilities attract a relatively disadvantaged population. The main concern regarding disadvantage in Auburn is housing affordability, especially in the private rental market, as a result of the high demand for housing from people looking to move into the area, which has not been matched either by the supply of private housing or by supply of affordable or social housing. While new properties are needed in the area to meet this demand, there is concern in the community that providing more apartment buildings in the area for private rental will not necessarily improve housing affordability and reduce disadvantage in the area. Indeed, an increase in apartment developments for private rental may lead to greater problems as more people live in private properties with increasing rents, sometimes in overcrowded situations, and in buildings that have not been built to a high standard. The desirability of Auburn as a location for new arrivals to the country and the associated population growth will also continue to put pressure on service provision, with council and other service providers being challenged to keep up with the pace of both population growth and change.

During the course of the research, interviewees and focus group participants were asked how they thought Auburn might change in the near future. Common responses included:

### **7.1 The cultural makeup of the area is likely to change**

In the 1970s, Auburn was a predominantly Turkish area. More recently, there have been more Sudanese and Afghan people arriving in the area. The area has also seen an increase in the Chinese population. These changes in cultural make-up and future flows of people from other locations will have a significant impact on the nature of the suburb.

### **7.2 There will be a lot of private property development in the area**

As a result of the proximity of Auburn to a major train line, and being only one stop away from a major interchange (Lidcombe), Auburn is an attractive location for private housing development. Some interviewees noted that the nature and quality of that new development will depend on whether councillors with development interests dominate the decision-making process in the area. If they do, the concern is that this will result in more high-rises sold to investors and rented out to overcrowded households. Either way, there is likely to be a lot of interest from property speculators as the demand for new properties in the area is high.

### **7.3 The population will continue to increase**

Focus group participants noted that the population of Auburn has increased markedly over the past 15 years, and that this is noticeable from the volume of people in the street, in the shops at the railway station and at the bus stops. Participants expected that the population would continue to increase in the area, in part because of the increase in medium and high-density housing planned in the area. Some interviewees predicted that new migrants would continue moving into the area, and private rents in the area will continue to increase as a result of this demand, resulting in more sharing and overcrowding of accommodation, with associated health implications.

#### **7.4 Auburn will become a popular shopping and services hub for the broader region**

Focus group participants also noted that a lot more people come into Auburn from outside to shop and to eat in the local restaurants than they did in the past. Auburn is geographically central for many people living in Western Sydney and there was agreement that if accessibility to the area via road, and public transport from other areas in Western Sydney were improved; and if the shop fronts were smartened up, then more people would be likely to come into the suburb for food and shopping in the future and Auburn could become a central shopping hub for the region.

Auburn is an area with a lot of potential, which is largely appreciated by its residents. However, if not properly managed and resourced, the benefits of Auburn as a place to live for disadvantaged people may indirectly contribute to the area becoming more disadvantaged as a result of population pressure and population churn.

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## **APPENDICES**

### **Appendix 1: Case study area profile—Auburn**

This document has been prepared as part of a Multi-Year Research Project being undertaken by researchers at the University of New South Wales, the University of Queensland and Swinburne University, funded by the Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute entitled '*Addressing concentrations of disadvantage*'.

Document prepared by City Futures Research Centre, University of New South Wales.

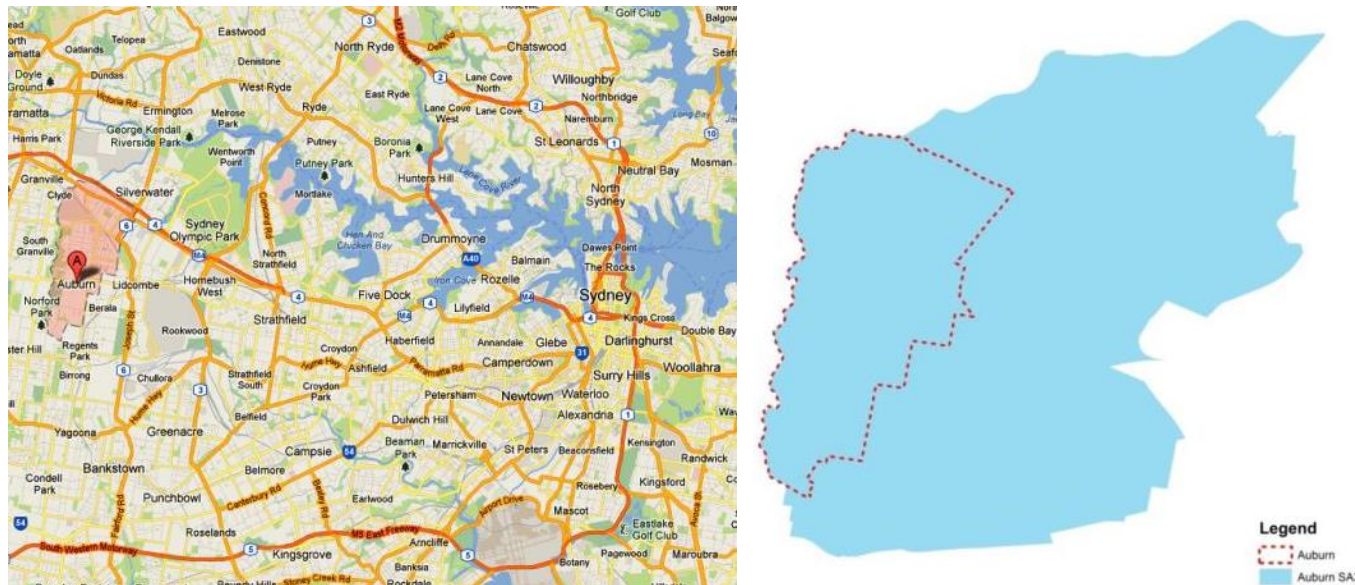
May 2013.

## Case study profile

### Auburn

This series of documents presents a demographic and socio-economic profile of the case study suburbs selected for further qualitative fieldwork to take place. Each document comprises five sections: (1) the disadvantaged typology as identified through an earlier analysis; (2) 2011 Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas, Index of Relative Socio-Economic Disadvantage; (3) a 2011 community profile, which includes main demographic and socio-economic statistics of the target suburb; (4) a time-series analysis of changes to main demographic and socio-economic statistics between 2001 and 2011; and (5) thematic maps highlighting transport connectivity, tenure profile, unemployment rate, low-income households and early school leavers of the target suburb using 2011 Census and other data.

**Figure A1: Map of Auburn suburb**



Source: Google Maps

Auburn is a middle-ring suburb in Sydney, located within the local government area of Auburn and the Level 3 Statistical Area (SA3) of Auburn, approximately 15 kilometres west of the Sydney CBD. In 2011, it had a population of 33 125 residents.

### *Typology*

Type 2: High on overseas movers; high on two-parent families.

Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA)

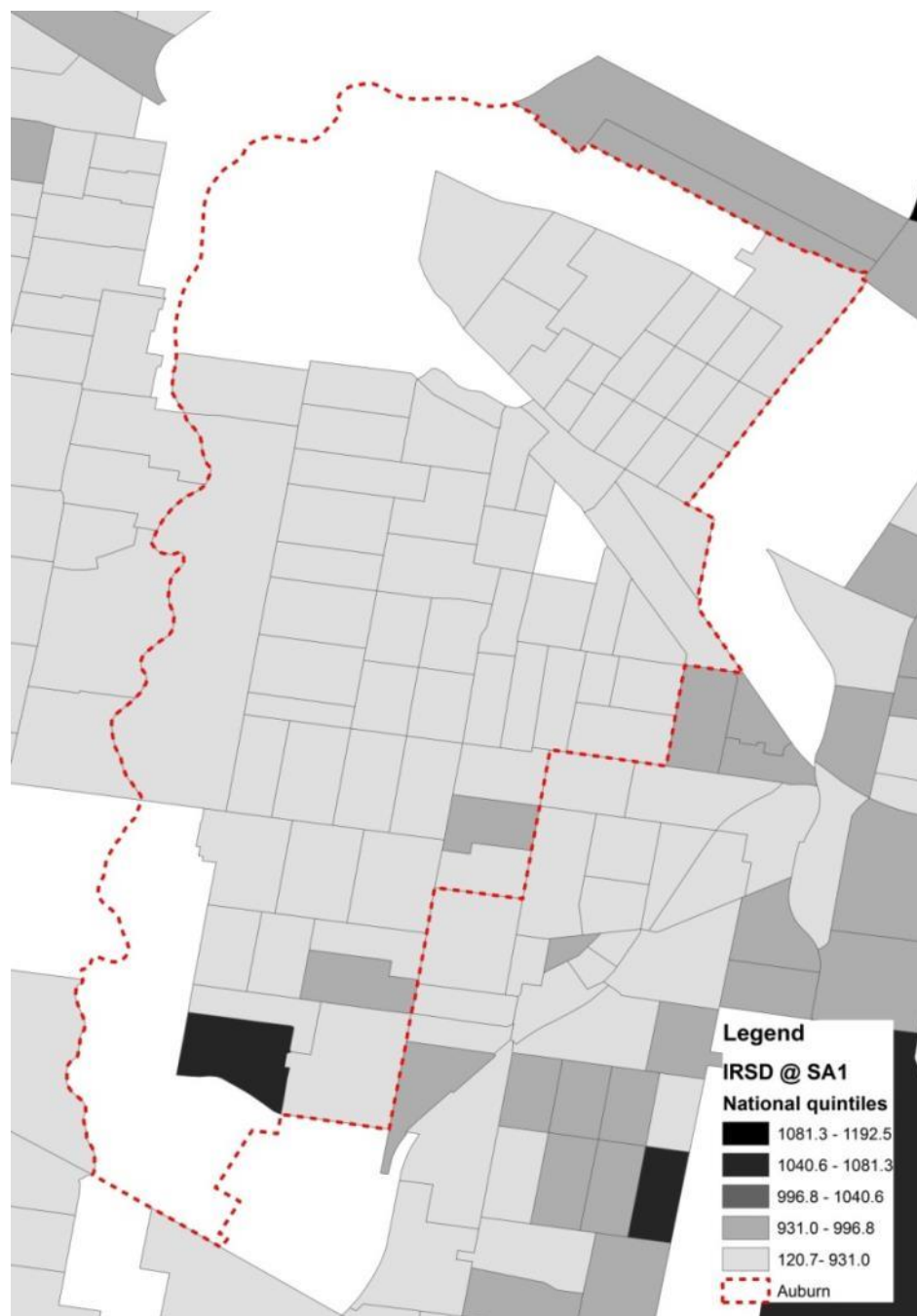
<b>Geography</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>SEIFA IRSD</b>
Statistical Local Area	Auburn (C)	917
State Suburb	Auburn (NSW)	855.4

In 2011, Auburn is a relatively disadvantaged suburb, with the majority of the SA1s in the suburb belonging to the lowest quintile of SEIFA Index of Relative Socioeconomic Disadvantage (IRSD) within Australia.

A low IRSD signifies the prevalence of the following characteristics:

- low level of income
- high level of unemployment
- high proportion of workers in low-skilled occupation
- low rent
- overcrowding
- high proportion of families with children under 15 and jobless parents
- high proportion of single-parent families
- high number of carless households
- high proportion of non-age-related disability
- poor English proficiency
- high number of separated/divorced residents
- high proportion of households with no or dialup internet connection.

**Figure A2: Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas—Index of Relative Socio-Economic Disadvantage, Auburn SSC, 2011**



Source: 2011 SEIFA IRSD



### *Community profile*

The suburb of Auburn comprises about half of Auburn SA3, and compared to the greater metropolitan area (GMA) of Sydney it had proportionately more male than female residents in 2011. It is also relatively younger (lower median age and higher proportion of children). Its residents have comparatively lower median weekly income than the rest of the SA3 and GMA.

**Table A1: Selected demographic characteristics for Auburn suburb, Auburn SA3 and Greater Metropolitan Sydney, 2011**

	Suburb		SA3		Greater metropolitan area	
Total population	33,124		74,421		4,391,673	
Males	17,261	52.1%	38,567	51.8%	2,162,219	49.2%
Females	15,864	47.9%	35,854	48.2%	2,229,454	50.8%
ATSI	75	0.2%	450	0.6%	54,746	1.2%
Median age	29		31		36	
% aged 0–14 years	7,134	21.5%	14,635	19.7%	843,218	19.2%
% aged 65 or older	2,734	8.3%	6,378	8.6%	564,451	12.9%
% aged 0–4 years	2,751	8.3%	5,692	7.6%	298,900	6.8%
% aged 5–11 years	3,069	9.3%	6,274	8.4%	382,760	8.7%
% aged 12–17 years	2,688	8.1%	5,403	7.3%	325,757	7.4%
% who needed assistance with core activity	1,762	5.3%	3,360	4.5%	192,325	4.4%
Median weekly individual income	\$352		\$420		\$619	

Auburn suburb is culturally diverse with higher proportion of people of non-English backgrounds and people who speak non-English languages at home than the GMA. Non-western religions also dominate the top 5 religious affiliations in the suburb (and SA3).

**Table A2: Ancestry, county of birth, language and religious affiliation for Auburn suburb, Auburn SA3 and Greater Metropolitan Sydney, 2011**

	Suburb			SA3			Greater metropolitan area		
Top 5 ancestries <sup>1</sup>	Chinese	6,753	20.4%	Chinese	16,638	22.4%	English	1,132,105	25.8%
	Turkish	3,739	11.3%	Australian	6,165	8.3%	Australian	1,130,300	25.7%
	Lebanese	3,152	9.5%	English	5,843	7.9%	Irish	365,460	8.3%
	Australian	2,183	6.6%	Lebanese	5,148	6.9%	Chinese	358,064	8.2%
	English	1,830	5.5%	Turkish	4,842	6.5%	Scottish	276,988	6.3%
Top 5 countries of birth	Australia	10,551	31.9%	Australia	26,728	35.9%	Australia	2,632,544	59.9%
	China ^	4,409	13.3%	China ^	8,412	11.3%	England	151,996	3.5%
	Turkey	2,051	6.2%	Vietnam	3,457	4.6%	China ^	148,559	3.4%
	India	1,651	5.0%	South Korea	3,085	4.1%	India	87,873	2.0%
	Lebanon	1,338	4.0%	India	2,659	3.6%	New Zealand	84,949	1.9%
Top 5 languages spoken at home	Arabic	5,184	15.6%	English	15,325	20.6%	English	2,732,448	62.2%
	English	4,457	13.5%	Arabic	7,916	10.6%	Arabic	178,664	4.1%
	Turkish	3,825	11.5%	Cantonese	7,393	9.9%	Mandarin	133,888	3.0%
	Mandarin	3,425	10.3%	Mandarin	6,854	9.2%	Cantonese	132,135	3.0%
	Cantonese	2,695	8.1%	Turkish	4,925	6.6%	Vietnamese	85,028	1.9%
Top 5 religious affiliation	Islam	13,921	42.0%	Islam	18,873	25.4%	Western Catholic	1,208,757	27.5%
	No Religion, nfd	4,023	12.1%	Western Catholic	12,959	17.4%	No Religion, nfd	756,138	17.2%
	Western Catholic	3,883	11.7%	No Religion, nfd	10,662	14.3%	Anglican Church of Australia	707,790	16.1%
	Buddhism	2,369	7.2%	Buddhism	6,870	9.2%	Islam	208,149	4.7%
	Hinduism	1,733	5.2%	Hinduism	3,784	5.1%	Buddhism	180,421	4.1%

^ excludes Taiwan and the Special Administrative regions of Hong Kong and Macau.

<sup>1</sup> based on multiple responses.

**Table A3: Employment and occupation characteristics for Auburn suburb, Auburn SA3 and Greater Metropolitan Sydney, 2011**

	Suburb		SA3		Greater metropolitan area	
% employed full-time <sup>2</sup>	6,622	25.5%	18,827	19.9%	1,358,192	38.3%
% employed part-time	3,656	14.4%	8,313	8.8%	584,773	16.5%
% employed but away from work <sup>2</sup>	936	3.6%	2,020	2.1%	120,300	3.4%
% unemployed <sup>3</sup>	1,352	10.8%	2,743	8.6%	125,588	5.7%
Participation rate <sup>2</sup>	12,566	48.3%	31,903	53.4%	2,188,853	61.7%
% in low-skilled/low status jobs <sup>4</sup>	5,166	46.1%	10,841	37.2%	576,817	28.0%
% youth (15–24) unemployed <sup>5</sup>	387	20.5%	808	16.0%	41,585	18.9%
Managers <sup>4</sup>	714	6.4%	2,778	9.5%	273,916	13.3%
Professional <sup>4</sup>	1,699	15.2%	6,042	20.7%	526,563	25.5%
Technicians and trades workers <sup>4</sup>	1,832	16.3%	4,164	14.3%	251,471	12.2%
Community and personal service workers <sup>4</sup>	1,037	9.2%	2,430	8.3%	182,059	8.8%
Clerical and administrative workers <sup>4</sup>	1,406	12.5%	4,173	14.3%	333,435	16.2%
Sales workers <sup>4</sup>	1,091	9.7%	2,535	8.7%	185,951	9.0%
Machinery operators and drivers <sup>4</sup>	1,208	10.8%	2,371	8.1%	118,136	5.7%
Labourers <sup>4</sup>	1,792	16.0%	3,752	12.9%	151,326	7.3%

<sup>2</sup> % of population aged 15 or older.

<sup>3</sup> number of unemployed persons as % of the total labour force.

<sup>4</sup> % of employed persons aged 15 or older.

<sup>5</sup> % of youths aged 15–24 years in the labour force.

Almost half of Auburn suburb's population aged 15 and older are in the workforce, lower than the rest of the SA3 and the GMA. The suburb, however, has higher proportions of the population employed full- and part-time than the SA3. Compared to the SA3 and the GMA, Auburn suburb has a higher unemployment rate (almost twice Sydney GMA level), though youth unemployment rate is only slightly higher than Sydney GMA level. A higher proportion of employed residents in the suburb are employed in low-skilled/low status occupations and there are lower proportions employed in 'higher status' occupations (managers and professionals) than compared to the SA3 and the GMA.

Lower proportions of Auburn suburb residents did unpaid domestic work or provided unpaid childcare than the SA3 and the GMA. There was also a lower proportion who participated in voluntary work, though a comparable proportion provided unpaid care for a person with disability as in the SA3 and the GMA.

**Table A4: Unpaid work for Auburn suburb, Auburn SA3 and Greater Metropolitan Sydney, 2011**

	Suburb		SA3		Greater metropolitan area	
% who did unpaid domestic work	12,391	37.4%	31,907	42.9%	2,399,830	54.6%
% who provided unpaid child care	5,848	17.7%	13,698	18.4%	969,456	22.1%
% who provided unpaid care for a person with disability	2,758	8.3%	5,985	8.0%	384,705	8.8%
% who did voluntary work	1,998	6.0%	5,731	7.7%	535,281	12.2%

Auburn enjoys relatively good public transport connectivity (see later section) with a railway station and several major bus routes located within the suburb. Relatively high proportions of residents travelled to work/school using public transport than the GMA and a lower proportion used private cars.

**Table A5: Travel to work for Auburn suburb, Auburn SA3 and Greater Metropolitan Sydney, 2011**

	Suburb		SA3		Greater metropolitan area	
% who travelled to work by car <sup>6</sup>	5,896	52.6%	16,361	56.1%	1,200,502	58.2%
% who travelled to work by train <sup>6</sup>	2,563	22.8%	5,941	20.4%	187,759	9.1%
% who travelled to work by bus <sup>6</sup>	92	0.8%	261	0.9%	107,895	5.2%
% who walked to work <sup>6</sup>	442	3.9%	854	2.9%	84,555	4.1%

<sup>6</sup> % of persons 15 or older who travelled to work or school

Lower proportions of Auburn suburb's population aged 15 and older have higher level educational qualifications. This is signified by a lower proportion who left school at Year 12 as well as lower proportions who have vocational or tertiary qualifications. This may be partly the result of a high proportion of the population being born overseas, where the qualification of some of these overseas born residents obtained overseas may not be recognised in Australia.

**Table A6: Educational qualifications for Auburn suburb, Auburn SA3 and Greater Metropolitan Sydney, 2011**

	Suburb		SA3		Greater metropolitan area	
% who left school at Year 10 or before <sup>7</sup>	6,768	20.4%	14,073	23.5%	1,061,520	29.9%
% who left school at Year 12 <sup>7</sup>	13,667	41.3%	33,557	56.1%	1,953,412	55.0%
% with vocational qualification <sup>7</sup>	4,274	12.9%	10,504	17.6%	856,143	24.1%
% with tertiary qualification <sup>7</sup>	4,506	13.6%	12,686	21.2%	856,096	24.1%

<sup>7</sup> % of persons aged 15 or older

The Auburn suburb population has a relatively higher mobility than in the Sydney GMA though only marginally in both the short (last one year) and longer term (last five years). This may be the result of a higher proportion being recently arrived migrants (see Figure A6) and living in private rental accommodation.

**Table A7: Residential mobility for Auburn suburb, Auburn SA3 and Greater Metropolitan Sydney, 2011**

	Suburb		SA3		Greater metropolitan area	
% who lived at different address one year ago <sup>8</sup>	4,792	15.8%	10,991	16.0%	588,905	14.4%
% who lived at different address five years ago <sup>8</sup>	12,269	40.4%	28,155	41.0%	1,522,619	37.2%

<sup>8</sup> % of total population aged five years or older

There were more than 11 000 occupied private dwellings in Auburn suburb in 2011. Housing cost in the suburb is comparatively cheap, with median mortgage repayment and rent lower than in the rest of the SA3 and the Sydney GMA. As a result, the lower housing costs have attracted households with lower income to reside in the area.

The proportion of low-income households that pay more than 30 per cent rent was almost 50 per cent higher than compared to the Sydney GMA.

**Table A8: Housing characteristics for Auburn suburb, Auburn SA3 and Greater Metropolitan Sydney, 2011**

	Suburb		SA3		Greater metropolitan area	
No. of occupied private dwellings	11,366		26,594		1,720,333	
Average household size	2.9		2.8		2.6	
Median monthly mortgage repayment	\$1,800		\$2,000		\$2,167	
Median weekly rent	\$320		\$350		\$351	
% household with weekly income less than \$600	2,478	21.8%	5,063	19.0%	289,974	16.9%
% household with weekly income more than \$3,000	559	4.9%	2,291	8.6%	243,749	14.2%
% low-income household paying more than 30% in rent <sup>9</sup>	808	32.6%	1,557	30.8%	60,879	21.0%

<sup>9</sup> % of low-income households with weekly household income < \$600.

Auburn suburb is a family-oriented area, with higher proportion couple families with children and a relatively small proportion of couple only households. With a higher proportion of overseas-born residents and recently arrived migrants, the proportion of Auburn suburb's households that are other family households (including multi-generation households as well as multi-family households of non-related families) is twice that of the GMA level.

**Table A9: Household type for Auburn suburb, Auburn SA3 and Greater Metropolitan Sydney, 2011**

	Suburb		SA3		Greater metropolitan area	
Couple family household with children	4,251	37.4%	9,525	35.8%	567,149	33.0%
Couple household without children	1,813	16.0%	4,935	18.6%	375,858	21.8%
Single-parent family	1,214	10.7%	2,835	10.7%	186,159	10.8%
Other family household	1,471	12.9%	2,948	11.1%	107,420	6.2%
Lone person household	1,453	12.8%	3,792	14.3%	343,812	20.0%
Group household	539	4.7%	1,132	4.3%	64,949	3.8%

Auburn suburb is one of the more built-up areas of the Sydney GMA, with less than half of the private dwellings being detached houses (compared to almost two-thirds at the GMA level). The proportion of private dwellings that are units/flats/apartments is significantly higher than the Sydney GMA and almost the same as that for detached houses.

**Table A10: Dwelling characteristics for Auburn suburb, Auburn SA3 and Greater Metropolitan Sydney, 2011**

	Suburb		SA3		Greater metropolitan area	
% Detached houses <sup>10</sup>	5,394	47.5%	13,194	49.6%	1,041,856	60.6%
% Semi-detached dwellings <sup>10</sup>	1,072	9.4%	3,177	11.9%	217,779	12.7%
% Unit/flat/apartment <sup>10</sup>	4,828	42.5%	10,076	37.9%	453,716	26.4%
% Other dwelling type <sup>10</sup>	50	0.4%	75	0.3%	9,541	0.6%

<sup>10</sup> % of occupied private dwellings.

Owner-occupancy in Auburn suburb is comparatively lower, with just half of the private dwellings being owner-occupied (with or without mortgages), compared to more than 60 per cent at the GMA level. In contrast, the proportion of private rental is high, with one-third of private households living in private rentals compared to just one-quarter at the Sydney GMA.

**Table A11: Housing tenure for Auburn suburb, Auburn SA3 and Greater Metropolitan Sydney, 2011**

	Suburb		SA3		Greater metropolitan area	
% Fully owned <sup>10</sup>	2,595	22.8%	6,166	23.2%	496,459	28.9%
% Owned with mortgage <sup>10</sup>	3,198	28.1%	8,223	30.9%	579,544	33.7%
% Private rental <sup>10</sup>	3,723	32.8%	8,511	32.0%	423,623	24.6%
% Social rental <sup>10</sup>	521	4.6%	1,033	3.9%	84,648	4.9%
% Other tenure type <sup>10</sup>	328	2.9%	603	2.3%	34,544	2.0%

<sup>10</sup> % of occupied private dwellings.

### *Time-series profile*

The 2001 data was aggregated using data downloaded at Collection District (CD) level. Thirty-eight CDs were aggregated: 1340101, 1340106, 1340107, 1340108, 1340109, 1340110, 1340111, 1340112, 1340114, 1340401, 1340402, 1340409, 1340410, 1340501, 1340502, 1340503, 1340504, 1340505, 1340506, 1340507, 1340508, 1340509, 1340510, 1340511, 1340512, 1340513, 1340601, 1340602, 1340603, 1340604, 1340606, 1340608, 1340609, 1340610, 1340611, 1340701, 1340702 and 1340710.

Between 2001 and 2011, the population of Auburn suburb increased by more than 6000 people, an increase of almost one-quarter since 2001. This is 2.5 times the Sydney GMA growth rate (9.9%) over the same period. Unlike the Sydney GMA, Auburn suburb has not been ageing, with a lower proportion of residents aged 65 and older in 2011 than in 2001.



**Table A12: Selected demographic characteristics for Auburn suburb, Auburn SA3 and Greater Metropolitan Sydney, 2001 and 2011**

	Suburb					Greater metropolitan area						
	2001			2011		2001			2011			
Total population	26,711			33,125		3,997,321			4,391,673			
Median age	Data not available			29		Data not available			36			
% ATSI	38	0.3%		76	0.2%	38,749	1.0%		54,746	1.2%		
% aged 0–14 years	6,381	23.9%		7,129	21.5%	798,826	20.0%		843,218	19.2%		
% aged 65 or older	2,731	10.2%		2,751	8.3%	469,176	11.7%		564,451	12.9%		
% aged 0–4 years	2,306	8.6%		2,754	8.3%	265,175	6.6%		298,900	6.8%		
% aged 5–11 years	2,884	10.8%		3,065	9.3%	377,011	9.4%		382,760	8.7%		
% aged 12–17 years	2,447	9.2%		2,684	8.1%	316,759	7.9%		325,757	7.4%		
Top 5 countries of birth *	Australia	9,873	36.9%	Australia	10,551	31.9%	Australia	245,4424	62.2%	Australia	2,632,544	59.9%
	China ^	2,194	8.2%	China ^	4,409	13.3%	The UK	18,3991	4.7%	England	151,996	3.5%
	Turkey	1,964	7.3%	Turkey	2,051	6.2%	China ^	82,029	2.1%	China ^	148,559	3.4%
	Lebanon	1,572	5.9%	India	1,651	5.0%	New Zealand	81,963	2.1%	India	87,873	2.0%
	Viet Nam	940	3.5%	Lebanon	1,338	4.0%	Viet Nam	61,423	1.6%	New Zealand	84,949	1.9%
Top 5 languages spoken at home #	English	5,331	19.9%	Arabic	5,184	15.6%	English	2,625,386	66.5%	English	2,732,448	62.2%
	Arabic	5,207	19.5%	English	4,457	13.5%	Arabic	142,453	3.6%	Arabic	178,664	4.1%
	Turkish	3,295	12.3%	Turkish	3,825	11.5%	Cantonese	116,341	2.9%	Mandarin	133,888	3.0%
	Cantonese	2,508	9.4%	Mandarin	3,425	10.3%	Greek	83,915	2.1%	Cantonese	132,135	3.0%
	Mandarin	1,254	4.7%	Cantonese	2,695	8.1%	Italian	79,612	2.0%	Vietnamese	85,028	1.9%

\* the number of countries listed in the 2001 Census tables represents the 31 most common birthplaces across Australia only.

^ excludes Taiwan and the Special Administrative regions of Hong Kong and Macau.

# the number of languages listed in the 2001 Census tables represents the 34 most common languages spoken at home across Australia only.

The cultural makeup of Auburn suburb has not changed significantly since 2011, with the top three birthplaces remaining consistent since this time. The number of overseas-born residents, however, has increased, with Australia-born residents now comprising less than one-third of the suburb's population, about half that of the GMA level. While top 5 languages spoken at home have remained the same in 2011 as in 2001, the proportion who speak English at home dropped (as did the proportion who speak Arabic), indicating that the language profile of Auburn suburb has diversified to now include a wider number of language groups.

Lower proportions of Auburn suburb's population (aged 15 and older) participated in the labour force or were employed full time in 2011 than in 2001. This is in direct contrast to the rest of the Sydney GMA where proportions of these variables have remained consistent throughout this period. The lower participation rate may be due to the suburb's higher proportion of recently arrived migrants who may have restrictions on employment attached to their entry visas. While the proportion of employed persons employed in low-skilled/low-status jobs halved between 2001 and 2011, this proportion is still higher than compared to the Sydney GMA.

**Table A13: Selected employment characteristics for Auburn suburb, Auburn SA3 and Greater Metropolitan Sydney, 2001 and 2011**

	Suburb				Greater metropolitan area			
	2001		2011		2001		2011	
% employed full-time <sup>2</sup>	5,443	27.1%	6,623	20.0%	1,227,661	39.0%	1,358,192	38.3%
% employed part-time <sup>2</sup>	2,235	11.1%	3,657	11.0%	532,740	16.9%	584,773	16.5%
% employed by away from work <sup>2</sup>	<i>Data not available</i>		936	2.8%	<i>Data not available</i>		120,300	3.4%
% unemployed <sup>3</sup>	1,421	14.9%	1,353	10.8%	118,134	6.1%	125,588	5.7%
Participation rate <sup>2</sup>	9,563	47.6%	12,569	37.9%	1,934,359	61.4%	2,188,853	61.7%
% in low-skilled/low status jobs <sup>4</sup>	5,826	71.2%	4,091	36.5%	1,016,115	55.9%	576,817	28.0%
% youth (15–24) unemployed <sup>5</sup>	414	21.1%	388	20.5%	37,083	10.9%	41,585	18.9%

<sup>2</sup> % of population aged 15 or older.

<sup>3</sup> number of unemployed persons as % of the total labour force.

<sup>4</sup> % of employed persons aged 15 or older.

<sup>5</sup> % of youths aged 15–24 years in the labour force.

Like the rest of the GMA, residents of Auburn suburb are now staying in school longer (lower proportions with Year 10 qualifications or below) than in 2001. While the proportions of those who attained Year 12 or tertiary qualifications have increased, these are still lower than the wider GMA levels.

**Table A14: Educational qualifications for Auburn suburb, Auburn SA3 and Greater Metropolitan Sydney, 2001 and 2011**

	Suburb				Greater metropolitan area			
	2001		2011		2001		2011	
% who left school at Year 10 or before <sup>7</sup>	6,743	33.5%	6,768	20.4%	1,164,309	37.0%	1,061,520	29.9%
% who left school at Year 12 <sup>7</sup>	7,804	38.8%	13,667	41.3%	1,397,689	44.4%	1,953,412	55.0%
% with vocational qualification <sup>7</sup>	3,007	15.0%	4,274	12.9%	698,790	43.2%	856,143	24.1%
% with tertiary qualification <sup>7</sup>	2,020	10.0%	4,506	13.6%	518,839	32.1%	856,096	24.1%

<sup>7</sup> % of persons aged 15 or older.

More than 3000 new occupied dwellings were built in Auburn suburb during 2001–11 (+40.0%), at twice the rate as the rest of the Sydney GMA (19.6%). Residential mobility in the suburb has also increased during this period, though only marginally.

**Table A15: Housing characteristics for Auburn suburb, Auburn SA3 and Greater Metropolitan Sydney, 2001 and 2011**

	Suburb				Greater metropolitan area			
	2001		2011		2001		2011	
No. of occupied private dwellings	8,093		11,352		1,438,394		1,720,333	
Average household size	3.3		2.9		2.8		2.6	
% at same address five years ago <sup>8</sup>	11,981	44.9%	15,352	50.5%	1,925,868	48.2%	2,319,489	56.7%
% at different address five years ago <sup>8</sup>	10,337	38.7%	12,269	40.4%	1,551,851	38.8%	1,522,619	37.2%
% balance <sup>8</sup>	4,393	16.4%	2,753	9.1%	254,427	6.4%	250,665	6.1%

<sup>8</sup> % of total population aged five years or older.

Couple families with children continue to dominate Auburn suburb although to a lesser extent than in 2001. Gains were seen in other family households, having increased nearly sevenfold in number during 2001–11 and fivefold in proportion.

**Table A16: Household characteristics for Auburn suburb, Auburn SA3 and Greater Metropolitan Sydney, 2001 and 2011**

	Suburb				Greater metropolitan area			
	2001		2011		2001		2011	
Couple family household with children	3,735	48.8%	4,251	37.4%	516,969	37.8%	567,149	33.0%
Couple household without children	1,432	18.7%	1,813	16.0%	332,080	24.3%	375,858	21.8%
Single-parent family household	889	11.6%	1,214	10.7%	154,133	11.3%	186,159	10.8%
Other family household	190	2.5%	1,471	13.0%	21,259	1.6%	107,420	6.2%
Lone person household	1,299	17.0%	1,453	12.8%	305,672	22.4%	343,812	20.0%
Group household	390	5.1%	539	4.7%	59,243	4.3%	64,949	3.8%

There was significant growth in higher density dwellings in Auburn suburb during 2001–11, increasing their share from one-third to more than two-fifths. The increase was far more rapid than compared to the GMA level.

**Table A17: Dwelling characteristics for Auburn suburb, Auburn SA3 and Greater Metropolitan Sydney, 2001 and 2011**

	Suburb				Greater metropolitan area			
	2001		2011		2001		2011	
% Detached houses <sup>10</sup>	4,563	56.5%	5,394	47.5%	907,195	63.1%	1,041,856	60.6%
% Semi-detached dwellings <sup>10</sup>	621	7.7%	1,072	9.4%	162,320	11.3%	217,779	12.7%
% Unit/flat/apartment <sup>10</sup>	2,800	34.6%	4,828	42.5%	343,518	23.9%	453,716	26.4%
% Other dwelling type <sup>10</sup>	20	0.2%	50	0.4%	11,896	0.8%	9,541	0.6%

<sup>10</sup> % of occupied private dwellings.

The proportion of private dwellings in Auburn suburb fully owned by their occupiers almost halved during 2001–11, a quicker rate than the GMA level. In contrast, the rate of private dwellings under mortgage more than doubled. These indicate that housing cost in Auburn suburb was relatively affordable in 2001 but has since increased significantly.

**Table A18: Tenure for Auburn suburb, Auburn SA3 and Greater Metropolitan Sydney, 2001 and 2011**

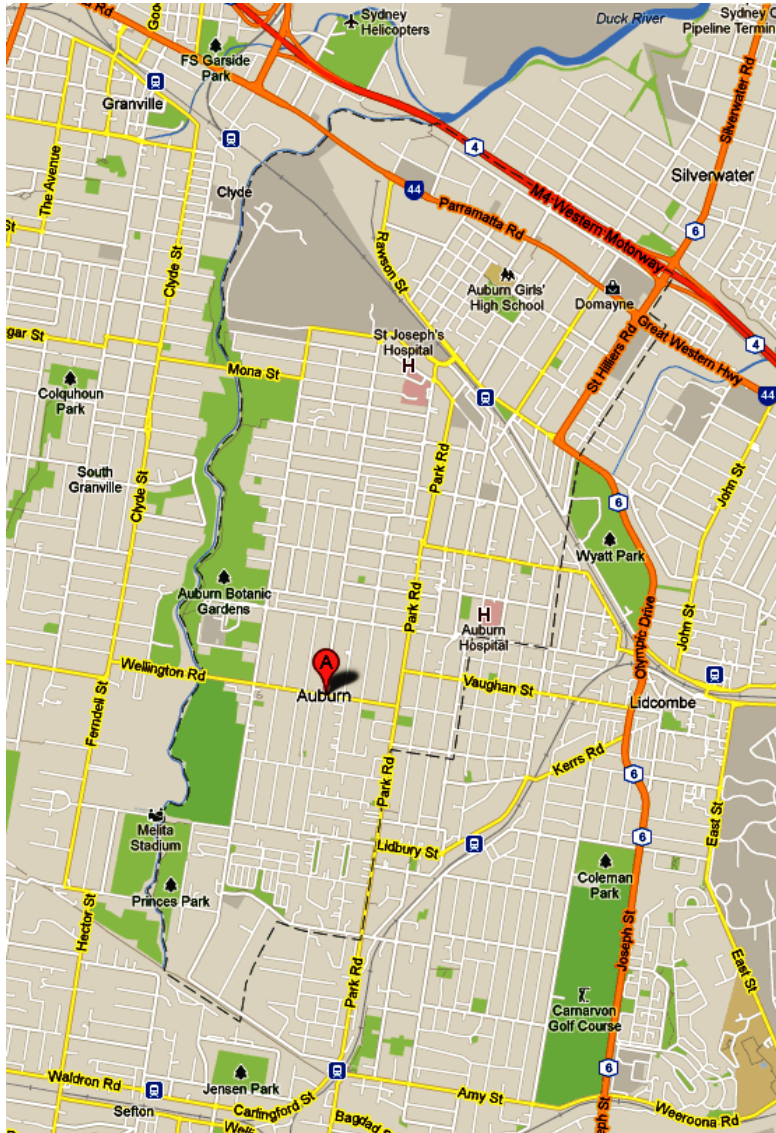
	Suburb				Greater metropolitan area			
	2001		2011		2001		2011	
% Fully owned <sup>10</sup>	3,106	38.4%	2,595	22.9%	561,232	39.0%	496,459	28.9%
% Owned with mortgage <sup>10</sup>	1,109	13.7%	3,198	28.2%	329,158	22.9%	579,544	33.7%
% Private rental <sup>10</sup>	2,565	31.7%	3,890	34.3%	338,945	23.6%	423,623	24.6%
% Social rental <sup>10</sup>	320	4.0%	521	4.6%	72,724	5.1%	84,648	4.9%
% Other tenure type <sup>10</sup>	197	2.4%	84	0.7%	38,913	2.7%	34,544	2.0%

<sup>10</sup> % of occupied private dwellings.

### *Thematic mapping*

The following section highlights socio-economic differences within Auburn suburb graphically. All variables are mapped at the SA1 level. The legends indicate the quintiles of each variable at the Sydney GMA level, allowing for metropolitan-wide comparison.

**Figure A3: Auburn SSC, 2011**



Source: Google Maps

## Community profile in detail

Figure A4: Population distribution, Auburn SSC, 2011



Source: ABS 2011 Census, TableBuilder Pro

A large number of SA1 in Auburn suburb fell in the top quintile of population concentration in Sydney GMA, where more than 516 people resided in 2011. This reflects the high proportion of higher density dwellings (units/flats/apartments) in the suburb. Only a small number of SA1s did not contain any population, notably the commercial and industrial areas immediately north and south of Parramatta Road.

**Figure A5: Proportion of low-income households in rental stress\*, Auburn SSC, 2011**



\* Number of low-income households with weekly income less than \$600 and paying weekly rent of \$180 or more, as a percentage of all low-income households.

Note: Due to data randomisation, cells with anomalous results were deleted prior to mapping. These SA1s appear blank in the map.

Source: ABS 2011 Census, TableBuilder Pro

While housing cost in Auburn suburb is relatively low compared to Sydney GMA, a considerable number of low-income households still experience rental stress. These are especially concentrated in the north-eastern part of the suburb, where higher density dwellings dominate. A large number of SA1s north of the railway station fell into the highest Sydney GWA quintile in terms of low-income households experiencing rental stress.



**Figure A6: Proportion of population who are recently arrived overseas born residents (since 2006), Auburn SSC, 2011**



Source: ABS 2011 Census, TableBuilder Pro

The eastern half of the suburb is dominated by recently arrived migrants, with the majority of these SA1s having proportions in the highest quintile at the Sydney GMA level. The SA1s in the north eastern part of the suburb especially enjoy transport connectivity (Auburn rail station, Parramatta Road and M4 Motorway). These areas also have concentrations of higher density, lower-rent properties.

**Figure A7: Proportion of households that are couple families with children, Auburn SSC, 2011**

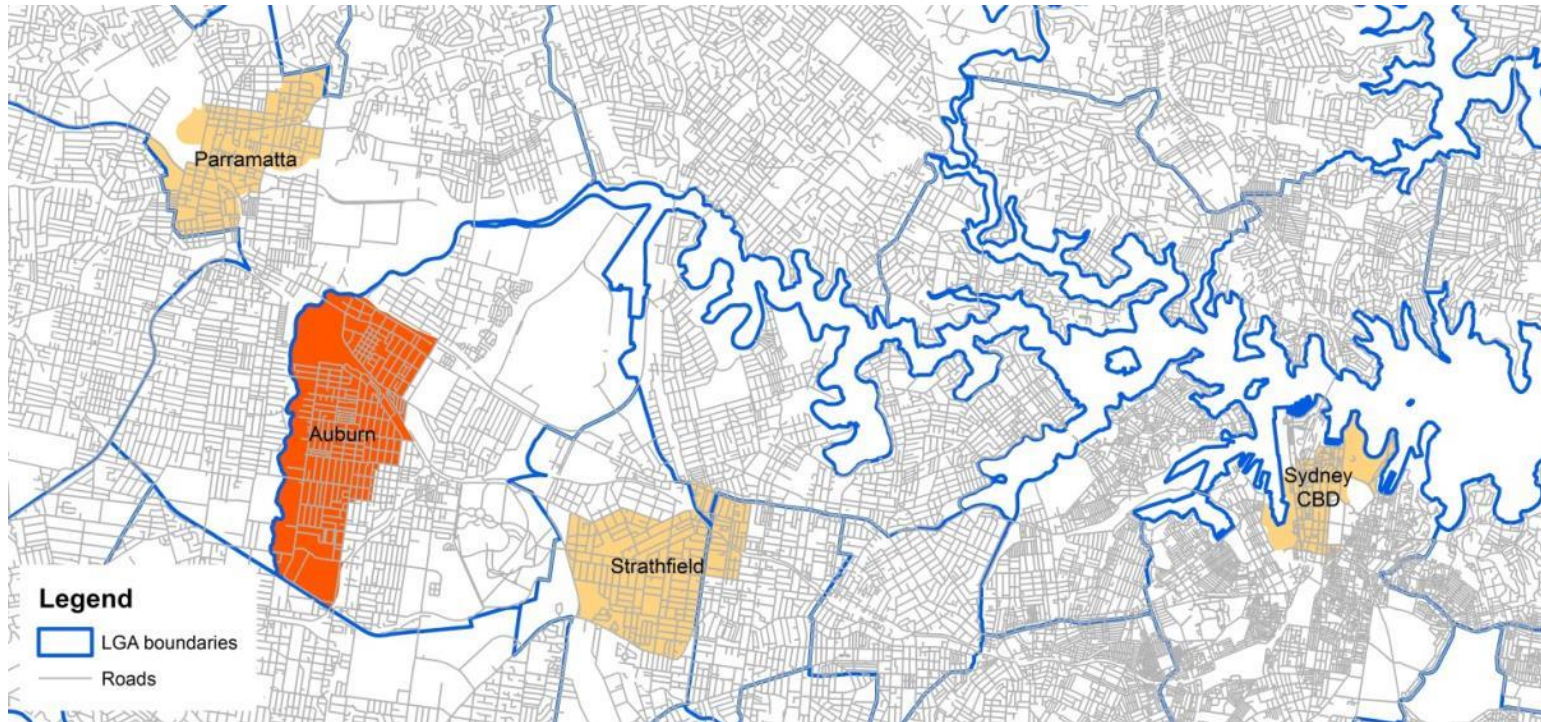


Source: ABS 2011 Census, TableBuilder Pro

Couple families with children are found throughout the suburb but are more common in the middle of the suburb (along Wellington Rd and Chiswick Rd) where detached houses dominate the area. Only a few SA1s fell into the highest quintile at the Sydney GMA level, with more in the second-highest quintile.

## Transport connectivity

**Figure A8: Auburn and surrounding commercial and employment centres**



Auburn suburb is serviced by the Western Rail Line of NSW's City Rail, and has its own dedicated railway station (Auburn) located at Rawson Street in the northern part of the suburb. It is also well serviced by a mix of government and private bus routes. Its closest major commercial and employment centres are Strathfield to the east and Parramatta to the west, both of which are serviced by the Western Rail Line.

Despite connection to major road infrastructure (Great Western Highway/Parramatta Rd and M4 Motorway), car connectivity to the Sydney CBD during the AM and PM peaks is poor, with average travel and waiting time at over two hours in the AM peak and over 100 minutes in the PM peak. During these peak periods, public transport (especially through rail) to the Sydney CBD is a quicker option. In contrast, car travel

during AM and PM peak to the nearby commercial and employment centres of Strathfield and Parramatta is far quicker than via public transport, with travel using public transport on average taking twice as long as private cars.

**Table A19: Travel time to major commercial and employment centres from Auburn**

	To	Total travel time		From	Total travel time
Car (AM peak)	Sydney CBD	123.3		Sydney CBD	104.3
	Strathfield	42.0	Car (PM peak)	Strathfield	37.5
	Parramatta	35.0		Parramatta	32.3
Public transport (AM)	Sydney CBD	92.3		Sydney CBD	97.6
	Strathfield	83.9	Public transport (PM)	Strathfield	90.2
	Parramatta	80.9		Parramatta	78.4

Source: 2011 Households Travel Survey data, as adapted by Dr Peter Rickwood

## Tenure profile

Figure A9: Proportion of households in fully owned homes, Auburn SSC, 2011



Source: ABS 2011 Census, TableBuilder Pro

There were relatively low levels of full ownership throughout Auburn suburb in 2011, with only four SA1s falling in the highest quintile at the Sydney GMA level were more than 40 per cent of private dwellings were fully owned. The majority fell in the two lowest quintiles, where full ownership accounted for less than one-quarter of all private dwellings.



**Figure A10: Proportion of households in mortgaged homes, Auburn SSC, 2011**



Source: ABS 2011 Census, TableBuilder Pro

The proportion of owner-occupiers that have mortgages was low compared to the Sydney GMA level, with only one SA1 falling in the highest quintile. Like full ownership, the majority of SA1s fell in the two lowest quintiles, where ownership with mortgage accounted for less than 28.4 per cent of all occupied private dwellings. These SA1s are more likely found in the north-eastern part of the suburb where newer, higher density dwellings are found.

**Figure A11: Proportion of households in private rental, Auburn SSC, 2011**



Source: ABS 2011 Census, TableBuilder Pro

Private rental comprises a significant proportion of occupied private dwellings in Auburn suburb, and these are more highly concentrated in the north-eastern part of the suburb (where proportions of full ownership and ownership with mortgaged are low) and correspond with areas with higher density dwellings, areas with good transport connectivity, and areas with high proportions of recently arrived migrants.

Figure A12: Proportion of households in social rental, Auburn SSC, 2011



Source: ABS 2011 Census, TableBuilder Pro

Social housing is sparsely scattered throughout Auburn suburb, with the majority of the SA1s in the suburb not having any social housing at all. Areas of concentration include the Northcote Estate along Alphonsus and Perry Ways and the eastern end of Wellington Road.



## Unemployment rate

Figure A13: Proportion of population (15+) who are unemployed, Auburn SSC, 2011



Source: ABS 2011 Census, TableBuilder Pro

While the overall unemployment rate for the suburb is low in 2011, there were concentrations of unemployed within the suburb. A large number of the SA1s in the north-eastern part of the suburb had unemployment rate in the highest quintile at the Sydney GMA level, with only very few in the two lowest quintiles.

Figure A14: Concentrations of low-income households



Source: ABS 2011 Census, TableBuilder Pro

Low-income households with weekly income less than \$600 are found throughout Auburn suburb, with a large number of SA1s falling in the highest quintile at the Sydney GMA level, where more than 22.5 per cent of households were classified as having low income. These SA1s were most likely those along the Western Rail Line in the north, though can also be found in the southern part of the suburb.

## Early school leavers

Figure A15: Proportion of population who left school at Year 10 or before, Auburn SSC, 2011



Source: ABS 2011 Census, TableBuilder Pro

Auburn suburb has relatively lower levels of early school leavers (at Year 10 or before) than compared to the Sydney GMA, with the majority of the suburb falling in the two lowest quintiles at the GMA level, where less than one-fifth had Year 10 qualifications or below.

## Appendix 2: Selected policy interventions to address disadvantage in Auburn

Table A20: Selected policy interventions to address disadvantage in Auburn

Intervention	Objective(s)	Funding body / partners	Scale / location	Current or past	For people	For place	Housing
Auburn Healthy Communities Initiative & Health and Wellbeing Policy	To deliver effective community-based physical activity and healthy eating programs and develop local policies that support healthy lifestyle behaviours. To create a community in which all members of the community can attain optimum health and thereby redress the poor health outcomes of Auburn City.	Australian Government Department of Health	Auburn LGA	2011–14 Current	x		
Auburn Community Events Calendar (Auburn Festival and other area festivals)	To promote community cohesion	Auburn Council	Auburn LGA	Current	x		
Auburn Cultural Plan	To create a distinctive, connected, inclusive and culturally engaging Auburn. To address the changing needs and aspirations of the diverse community in a sustainable and coordinated way	Auburn Council	Auburn LGA	2007–15	x		
Auburn City Community Strategic Plan, Delivery Program and Operational Plan	Promotes capacity building, community connection and working in partnership. To improve social wellbeing and provide opportunities for people to be actively involved in community life. [The community strategic plan, delivery program, operational plan and resourcing strategy together form council's integrated planning framework.]	Auburn Council	Auburn LGA	2013–23	x	x	x
Community Engagement Strategy	To ensure a consistent and ongoing program of engagement with the community about planning for Auburn City's future. Includes ensuring that 'hard to reach' groups and involved in the development, implementation and review of council policies, plans and projects.	Auburn Council	Auburn LGA	Current	x	x	x

Intervention	Objective(s)	Funding body / partners	Scale / location	Current or past	For people	For place	Housing
Auburn Crime Prevention Plan	To make residents and visitors in Auburn safer through strategies designed to reduce and prevent crime.	Auburn Council	Auburn LGA	2013–16	x		
Auburn Youth Strategy	To address the needs, expectations and aspirations of local young people and ensure young people are consulted and serviced in a more coordinated manner. To ensure young people actively participate in the planning and implementation of projects that affect their lives.	Auburn Council	Auburn LGA	2013–16			
Auburn Community Access Plan	To ensure people with a disability have full and equal access to the facilities, programs, services and information that council provides on an equitable basis without facing discrimination or barriers.	Auburn Council	Auburn LGA	2013–17	x		
Auburn Positive Ageing Strategy	To assist council and its partners to plan for, and address the needs of, current and future generations of older people living in Auburn City, improving services and responding to the needs of older people over the next 10 years.	Auburn Council	Auburn LGA	2013–23	x	x	x
Regional Action Plan for Western Sydney and the Blue Mountains	Provides a geographic-specific focus for the NSW 2021 Plan. Priority areas include improving access to essential health and family and community services to disadvantaged groups and encouraging greater community participation. Also prioritises the provision of 'more affordable housing options' through maximising land supply for housing, developing policies and strategies that provide affordable housing and planning and improving access to social housing.	NSW State Government	Western Sydney	2012–21	x	x	x
Self-care units for seniors & Seniors Units for Independent Living Policy	76 self-care units for the aged to provide affordable and accessible accommodation for those who need it. To provide eligible, senior residents with fair and equitable access to affordable rental accommodation.	Auburn Council	Auburn suburb	Current			x
Access & Equity	To ensure that council complies with current legislation and provides accessible and inclusive services, facilities and	Auburn	Auburn	Current			

<b>Intervention</b>	<b>Objective(s)</b>	<b>Funding body / partners</b>	<b>Scale / location</b>	<b>Current or past</b>	<b>For people</b>	<b>For place</b>	<b>Housing</b>
Policy	resources to the community.	Council	LGA				
Regional Homelessness Action Plan	Informed by a state-wide strategy. Four priorities in the greater Western Subregion are: 1) access to long-term affordable housing; 2) young people; 3) permanent supported accommodation for people exiting institutions; 4) sustaining tenancies with a focus on Aboriginal tenants.		Greater Western Sydney	2010–14			

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