

STUDENT RESEARCH

# RESPONDING TO CHANGING DEMAND FOR LOCAL PARK PROVISION: A STUDY ON NSW LOCAL COUNCIL DECISION PROCESSES IN SYDNEY

**SYNOPSIS**

The health and social benefits provided by local parks is well documented. However, less is understood about the constraints of policy and structural mechanisms across government organisations charged with administering their provision. Using COVID-19 lockdowns across Sydney to illustrate the practical value of local parks for urban de-stressing and improving public health, this research examines the challenges to creating local parks in a diverse and densifying global city and explores promising alternative approaches to local park provision.



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**OBJECTIVE**

This research examines barriers and enablers to local park provision across Sydney to see if a consensus emerged regarding the importance of local parks post-pandemic, given the strong community uptake during COVID-19.



**METHODOLOGY**

A qualitative two-round Delphi study and semi-structured interviews were used to gather opinions from urban planning professionals. Secondary public-facing data were used to analyse and model public open space scenarios.



**ESTIMATED RESEARCH LENGTH**

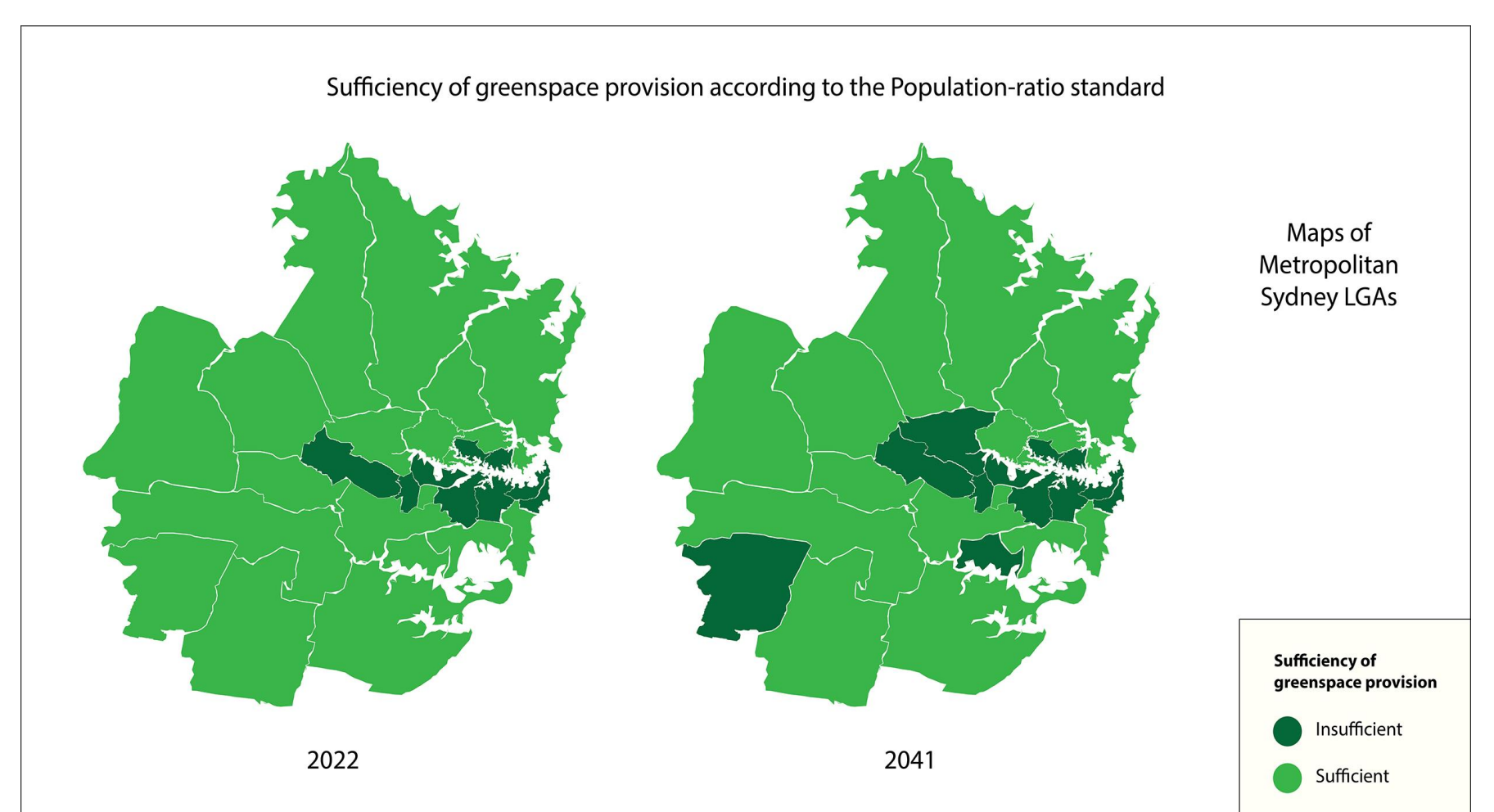
Primary data was collected December 2021 - September 2022. Secondary data analysis uses NSW Department of Planning and Environment (DPE) Common Planning Assumptions projections for the years 2022 – 2041.

**REFERENCES**

- Haaland, C., & van Den Bosch, C. K. (2015)
- Office of Local Government NSW (2023)
- NSW Dept. of Planning & Environment (2020)

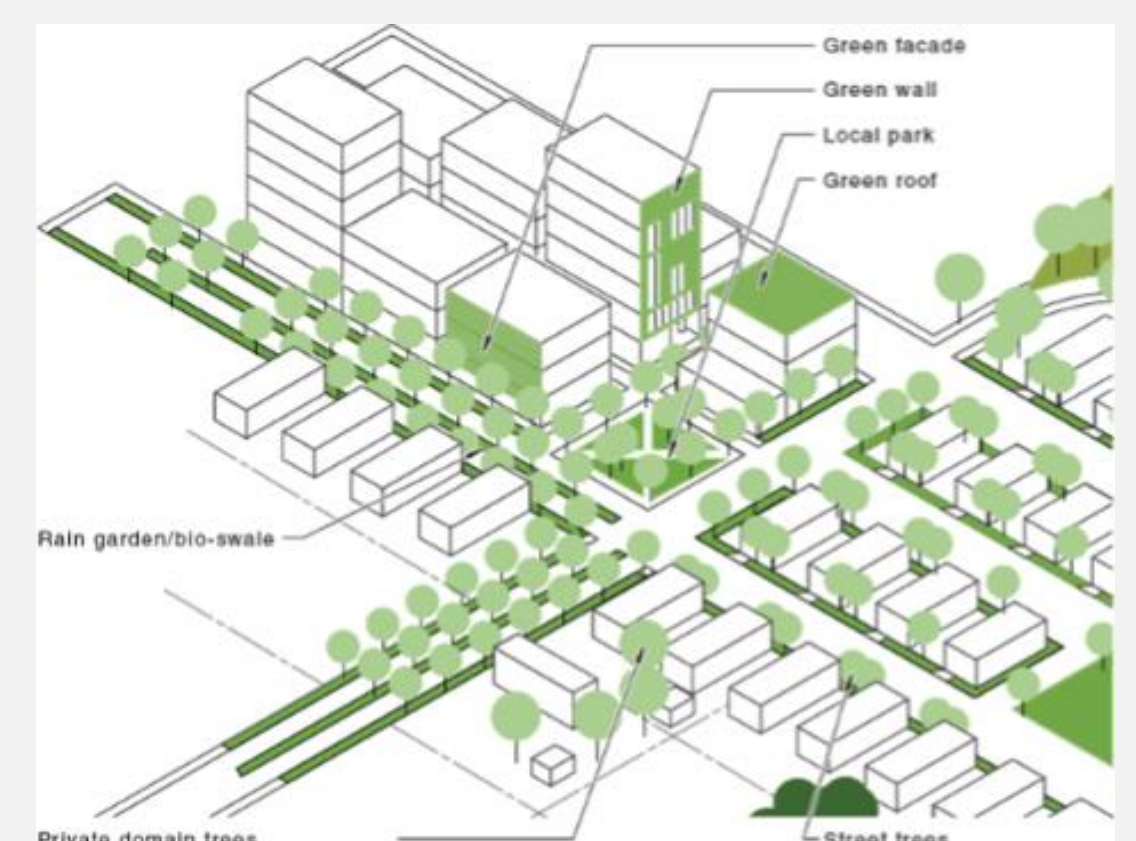
**BACKGROUND**

Local parks provide significant human-centric and biodiversity-based benefits, but populations are growing and public space is shrinking. If the processes used to implement greenspace do not meet scalable expectations, cities will cease to be functional.



**EXPECTED RESEARCH CONTRIBUTION**

This thesis provides a platform for a broader conversation about how we treat and value our local parks from a policy and urban planning perspective. It highlights the rigidity of public policy related to local park provision across Sydney throughout the pandemic. It confirms what we already know; local parks are important, but lack of land availability in highly urbanised areas, lack of funding, reluctance to innovate and problematic benchmark standards are hindering their implementation.



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