



Assessment of Contributions Plan No. 15 – Box Hill Precinct (2025)

The Hills Shire Council

Final Report

July 2025

Local Government »

Acknowledgment of Country

IPART acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the lands where we work and live. We pay respect to Elders both past and present.

We recognise the unique cultural and spiritual relationship and celebrate the contributions of First Nations peoples.

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The Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal

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1 Executive Summary

The Hills Shire Council (the council) submitted revised [Contributions Plan No. 15 – Box Hill Precinct \(2025\)](#) (CP15) to IPART for assessment in March 2025. This is the 6th time that IPART has reviewed CP15. We published a [Draft Report](#) on our assessment of CP15 in May 2025. We received [3 submissions](#) on the Draft Report and carefully considered the feedback when preparing this Final Report.

The proposed development covers a net developable area (NDA) of around 691 hectares¹ and is projected to deliver 16,030 dwellings for an additional population of almost 49,000 residents by 2037.² This will increase the demand for transport, stormwater, and open space infrastructure. Demand is also attributable to 115 hectares designated for non-residential development, with an expected generation of almost 30,000 jobs.³

The plan first came into force in 2014 and as of December 2024, approvals have been issued for approximately 74% of the total residential yield within the Box Hill Precinct (about 11,833 residential lots/dwellings approved out of a total of 16,030 anticipated dwellings).⁴ Of these, at least around 6,238 dwellings have been completed.⁵ For non-residential development, 14% has already been developed or has had its development approved.⁶

Across the board, the council's revision of CP15 proposes a 14% increase in contribution rates for the remaining duration of the plan. The total revised cost of the plan is now \$1.14 billion, with a contribution rate of \$77,360 for an average dwelling in the Killarney Chain of Ponds (KCP) sub-precinct and \$64,684 in the Second Ponds Creek (SPC) sub-precinct.⁷ This increase is driven by higher raw costs in the plan's works schedule, primarily from land acquisition costs due to the larger land areas required, indexation, and actual expenditure that is higher than original estimates, while works costs remain largely consistent aside from indexation.

We found that nexus is established between the works required and the new development in the Box Hill Precinct. Due to CP15's funding shortfall, infrastructure delivery has now become tied to priority, with remaining revenue collected and funding to be allocated to the most critical items. The council is exploring ways to deliver the remaining infrastructure through grant funding and other sources. We consider the council's approach and position on delivery timeframes to be practical and reasonable in the circumstances, having regard to the Minister's nominee's previous advice.⁸

The council's net present value (NPV) model has been updated to align with our revised guidance on modelling local infrastructure contributions.⁹ Rather than a purely cost neutral modelling framework, our updated guidance recommends that when plans are reviewed, councils should update their models to maintain accurate apportionment. That is, where infrastructure costs have escalated faster than originally modelled and anticipated, future developments should continue to only contribute their portion of the escalated costs and not the entire escalated costs (the same principle applies if costs have escalated slower). We have validated that escalated costs as part of any funding deficit are not being apportioned to remaining development. We consider the NPV model to be reasonable and in accordance with our technical guidance.

We have made 2 recommendations that would slightly change the costs in CP15 if accepted by the Minister.

Recommendations

- | | | |
|----|---|----|
| 1. | That the council adjusts the works schedule to correct the land costs as shown in Table 7.8. | 31 |
| 2. | That the council increase its land acquisition allowance of 1.5% to 5% of the estimated purchase price of land not yet acquired for the purposes of land acquisition under the <i>Land Acquisition (Just Terms Compensation) Act 1991</i> . | 32 |

If our recommendations are implemented, the total cost of CP15 would decrease by 0.01%, and, as a result of the change in expected timing of revenue and expenditure, some contribution rates would marginally increase while others would decrease. For further detail on the impact of our recommendations, see Section 7.7.

Furthermore, we have found that the apportionment ratios proposed in CP15 are reasonable for all infrastructure categories, and all items included are consistent with the essential works list.

2 Introduction

New development is essential to provide housing for NSW's growing population and more commercial, retail, and industrial space for employment. When development occurs, local councils need to provide additional infrastructure to support both the development and the new community – for example, new roads, stormwater management and open spaces. In NSW, councils can require developers to contribute to the cost of providing that infrastructure.

2.1 IPART's role

Under [section 7.11 of the *Environment Planning and Assessment Act 1979*](#), contributions plans set out the local infrastructure required to meet the demand from new development, and the contributions a council can charge developers to fund the necessary land and works.

Currently, a contributions plan that proposes a level of contributions above a threshold of \$30,000 per lot or dwelling in identified greenfield areas and \$20,000 per dwelling in other areas must be submitted to IPART for review.^a IPART reviews these plans in accordance with its [Terms of Reference](#).

IPART provides its assessment to the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces about whether the plan complies with the essential works list and other criteria set out in the '[IPART review of section 7.11 plans](#)' module as part of the [Section 7.11 contributions practice note](#) (practice note), published by the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure (DPHI).^b The practice note must be read in conjunction with DPHI's [local infrastructure contributions system practice note](#) and [administering contributions practice note](#), which outline the requirements for local councils in preparing and administering their contributions plans.

2.2 Application to IPART

The council submitted CP15 to IPART for assessment on 28 March 2025.^c The council is seeking to charge contributions above the applicable \$30,000 cap per lot/dwelling. This is the 6th time that IPART is reviewing CP15.

^a Under the [Environmental Planning and Assessment \(Local Infrastructure Contributions\) Direction 2012](#).

^b This updated practice note has been recently published by DPHI and supersedes the 2012 Practice Note and 2005 Practice Notes previously referenced in IPART reviews of contributions plans. The updated practice note has not significantly impacted our assessment of CP15, or prior contributions plans assessed by IPART.

^c The version of the publication lodged to IPART for assessment is not dated. When referenced, this report will date CP15 as March 2025 to reflect the date it was submitted to IPART.

2.3 Our assessment of CP15

IPART must review CP15 and provide its assessment to the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces (Minister). The Minister (or the Minister's nominee) may require the council to make changes to the plan. After the council makes any changes and adopts the plan, the council can charge the contributions rate as calculated under the adopted plan.

We assessed CP15 against the practice note criteria summarised as follows:

1. The infrastructure in the plan is on the **essential works list** as identified within the [practice note](#).
2. The proposed infrastructure is reasonable in terms of **nexus** (i.e. there is a connection between the development and demand created).
3. The proposed contribution is based on a **reasonable estimate of the cost** of the proposed infrastructure.
4. The proposed infrastructure can be provided within a **reasonable timeframe**.
5. The proposed contributions are based on a **reasonable apportionment** between:
 - a. existing and new demand for the infrastructure, and
 - b. different types of development that generate new demand for the infrastructure (e.g. different types of residential development such as detached dwellings and multi-unit dwellings, and different land uses such as residential, commercial, and industrial).
6. Council has conducted appropriate **community consultation** in preparing the contributions plan.
7. **Other matters** IPART considers relevant.¹⁰

Our assessment of CP15 involved reviewing the contributions plan and supporting documentation supplied by the council, including the council's application form, works schedule, net present value models, strategic studies and consultant reports, as well as considering previous assessments of the plan. We also made an informal request for further information from the council to assist us in assessing the plan.

This Final Report also considers the submissions we received on our [Draft Report](#).

For more details on our assessment approach, please see our [Information Paper](#).

The remaining sections of this Final Report provide a background of CP15 and our assessment of the plan.

2.4 What we found

We found that CP15 meets all the practice note criteria (see Figure 2.1). We have made recommendations around changes to costs in the plan and we have included indicative contribution rates if our recommendations are accepted by the Minister (see Section 7.7).

Figure 2.1 Summary of our assessment of CP15

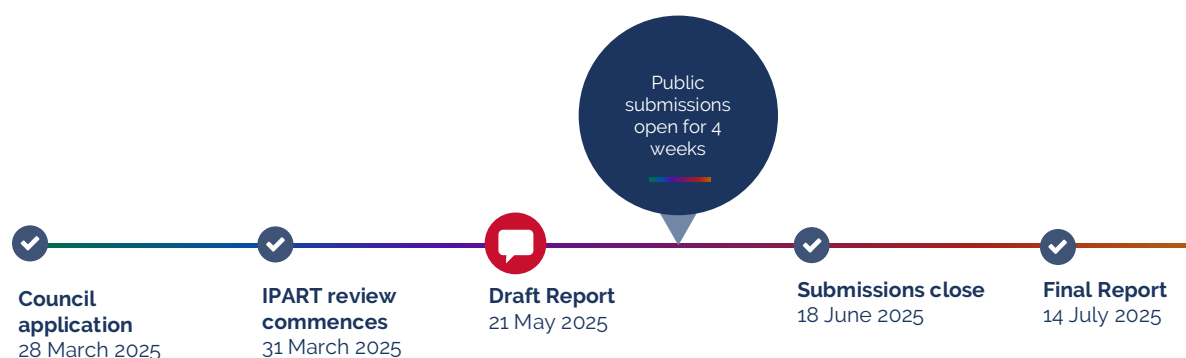
Essential works list	Nexus	Reasonable cost	Reasonable apportionment	Reasonable timeframe	Community liaison and publicity	Other matters
						
Demonstrated	Demonstrated	Demonstrated subject to recommendation	Demonstrated	Demonstrated	Demonstrated	Demonstrated

2.5 Recommendations

1.	That the council adjusts the works schedule to correct the land costs as shown in Table 7.8.	31
2.	That the council increase its land acquisition allowance of 1.5% to 5% of the estimated purchase price of land not yet acquired for the purposes of land acquisition under the <i>Land Acquisition (Just Terms Compensation) Act 1991</i> .	32

2.6 Review timeline

Figure 2.2 Review timeline for CP15

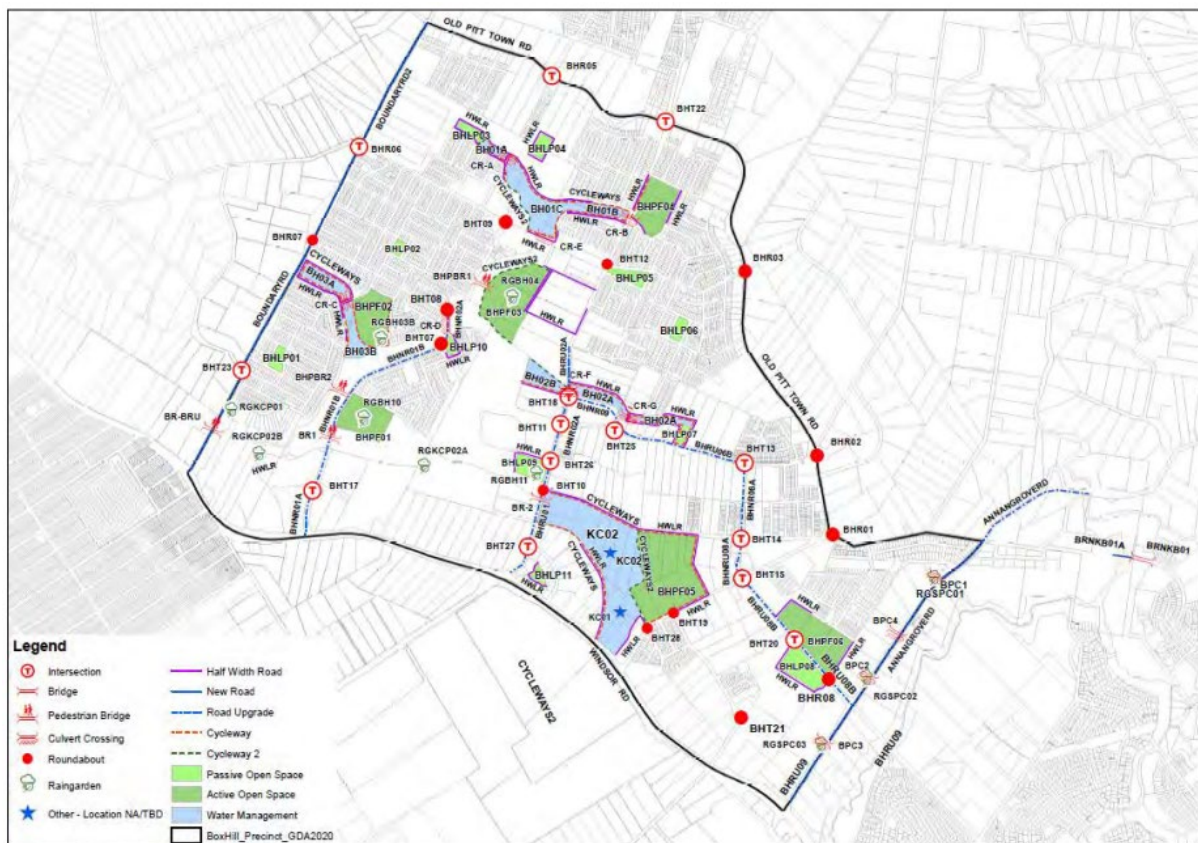


3 Contributions Plan No. 15 – Box Hill Precinct (2025)

3.1 Box Hill land and development

The Box Hill Precinct (the precinct) comprises the residential suburb of Box Hill and the Box Hill Industrial Precinct, located approximately 40 kms north-west of Sydney's CBD. The precinct is part of the North West Growth Area (NWGA),¹¹ and is bounded by Boundary Road to the west, Annangrove Road to the east, Old Pitt Town Road to the north and Windsor Road to the south (see Figure 3.1).

Figure 3.1 Box Hill and Box Hill Industrial Precinct map



Source: The Hills Shire Council, *Ordinary Council Meeting Agenda*, 25 March 2025, p 17.

The precinct's land has been zoned for various uses to support its incoming population, including different forms of residential development, local centres, enterprise corridor, business park, light industrial, infrastructure, recreation, and environmental conservation. To support development in the precinct, CP15 charges contributions for stormwater (referred to as water cycle management), traffic and transport facilities, open space and recreation facilities.

Initially, the precinct was projected to develop around 9,400 dwellings to accommodate an additional 27,998 residents.¹² Since then, the projected development has increased to 16,030 dwellings for an additional 48,956 residents.^{13-d} The council's occupancy rate assumptions are sound, determined using averages of similar residential development occupancy rates in the same local government area.¹⁴ Table 3.1 below provides a summary of the expected residential development and population, broken down by dwelling type.

Table 3.1 Summary of expected residential development and population

Development type	Count	Population
Existing	669	2,275
Dwellings and dual occupancy	11,823	40,229
Integrated housing	277	748
Multi-unit housing – 1 bed	623	1,059
Multi-unit housing – 2 beds	2,196	3,952
Multi-unit housing – 3 beds	747	1,868
Multi-unit housing – 4 beds	355	1,100
Total	16,699 ^a	51,231
Total additional (total minus existing)	16,030	48,956

a. We note that this total is a typographical error, as it should equal 16,690 instead of 16,699.

Source: The Hills Shire Council, *Contributions Plan No. 15 – Box Hill Precinct*, March 2025, pp 23-24.

There is also a substantial share of demand for new infrastructure attributable to non-residential development in the precinct. This takes the form of around 115.4 hectares of land area (with around 114.7 hectares of gross floor area) across business park, enterprise corridor, light industrial and local centre land use zones, resulting in 29,197 total jobs.¹⁵

The precinct was rezoned for urban development in May 2013,¹⁶ and the council expects the development to be completed by 2037. As of December 2024, approximately 74% of the residential development and 14% of the non-residential development has been developed or has had its development approved.^{17-e}

3.2 Revision to CP15

IPART completed its first review of the council's initial plan in 2014.¹⁸ The plan was further revised following IPART reviews in 2016, 2018, 2020 and 2024.

The council has updated and exhibited a further revision of CP15. Key updates in CP15 since our last review are:

- indexation of costs for capital items

^d In 2017, the NSW Government revised the yield projection (and the planning framework) to 13,276 from 9,600 dwellings (around 42,483 additional people instead of around 28,000). The council then further updated the yield projection based on development activity to 16,030 dwellings (around 48,956 additional people, see [About the Box Hill Release Area](#), accessed May 2025). Global events such as COVID-19 have also impacted the delivery of infrastructure, leading to delays in construction and price increases.

^e Residential development approved for 36,139 people with approval for 12,817 remaining: $36,139 / (36,139 + 12,817) = 74\%$ (rounded to nearest whole number). 156,339m² of non-residential development approved with 990,781m² remaining: $156,339 / (156,339 + 990,781) = 14\%$ (rounded to nearest whole number).

- indexation of costs for land acquisition
- revised land acquisition extends for existing capital items based on updated designs
- revised timing of revenue and expenditure projections
- reflecting actual expenditure since completion of the last review
- reflecting approvals that have been issued since completion of the last review
- other modelling updates to reflect published IPART guidance
- minor administrative amendments.

The council notes that no change to the overall population projection is expected from the amendments made to the plan.¹⁹

The council's previous review of CP15 sought to address the plan's funding gap by apportioning the remaining cost of the work program to remaining development within the precinct. The Minister's nominee determined that none of the funding shortfall (from already completed or approved development) can be charged to remaining development within the precinct.²⁰ In light of the updated estimate of a \$207 million funding deficit, the council's amendments aim to ensure that the most accurate contributions are collected from remaining development, but do not seek to address or resolve the historical funding gap.²¹ The plan's funding shortfall is discussed further in Sections 11.1 and 11.2.

The post-exhibition plan was submitted to IPART for review on 28 March 2025.^f

3.2.1 Proposed contribution rates

CP15 has calculated contributions based on the relevant apportionment of the total costs of land acquisition, works required to service the development, and plan administration.

We note that the plan includes two drainage catchments (KCP and SPC) which are subject to separate water management contribution rates (see Section 8.1 for more detail). For the KCP sub-precinct, CP15 proposes a maximum contribution rate of \$77,360 and a minimum of \$34,129 for residential development, and \$178 per square metre of gross floor area (GFA) for non-residential development. For the SPC sub-precinct, CP15 proposes a maximum contribution rate of \$64,684 and a minimum of \$28,537 for residential development, and \$158 per square metre of GFA for non-residential development.²²

Table 3.2 below sets out the proposed contribution rates for each development type and sub-precinct. The proposed contribution rates are around the average of the contribution rates in plans that we have recently assessed.

^f The submitted revised CP15 is not dated, as it is likely the council intends to date it once it is adopted following the Minister (or Minister's nominee) provides their advice. For our assessment, we have dated CP15 (2025) as March 2025.

Table 3.2 CP15 proposed contribution rates (\$Jun-24)

Development type	Contribution rate (KCP)	Contribution rate (SPC)
Residential (per lot/dwelling)		
Subdivision, dwelling houses and dual occupancies	77,360	64,684
Integrated housing	61,433	51,366
Senior housing and boarding house rooms	34,129	28,537
Multi-unit housing ^a – 4 beds	70,534	58,976
Multi-unit housing ^a – 3 beds	56,882	47,562
Multi-unit housing ^a – 2 beds	40,955	34,244
Multi-unit housing ^a – 1 bed	38,680	32,342
Non-residential (per m2 of GFA)		
Non-residential development	178	158
Self-storage	101	81
Schools	29	8

a. Multi-unit housing includes studios, secondary dwellings, attached dwellings, multi-dwelling housing, and residential flat buildings.

Note: Rates are rounded to the nearest whole number.

Source: The Hills Shire Council, [Contributions Plan No. 15 – Box Hill Precinct](#), March 2025, pp 9, 11.

4 Assessment of CP15

This section provides our assessment of *Contributions Plan No. 15 – Box Hill Precinct (2025)* submitted by The Hills Shire Council. It includes a summary of our assessment of CP15 against the practice note criteria, broken down by criterion and infrastructure category, and our assessment considerations.

The following chapters set out the details of our assessment.

4.1 Overview of assessment

We assessed CP15 against the criteria in the [practice note](#). For more details on our assessment approach, please see our [Information Paper](#).

We found that CP15 meets all the practice note criteria. In Table 4.1, we present a summary of our assessment of each infrastructure category and issues relating across all categories.

Table 4.1 Summary of our assessment of CP15

Criteria	Stormwater	Transport	Open space	Land	Plan administration
Essential works list	Criteria met	Criteria met	Criteria met	Criteria met	Criteria met
Nexus	Criteria met	Criteria met	Criteria met	Criteria met	Criteria met
Reasonable cost	Criteria met	Criteria met	Criteria met	Criteria met subject to recommendation	Criteria met
Apportionment	Criteria met	Criteria met	Criteria met	Criteria met	Criteria met
Timing	Criteria met	Criteria met	Criteria met	Criteria met	N/A
Community consultation	Criteria met	Criteria met	Criteria met	Criteria met	Criteria met
Other matters	Criteria met	Criteria met	Criteria met	Criteria met	Criteria met

5 Essential works list

5.1 Stormwater

The plan proposes to deliver about \$101 million worth of stormwater works items across the 2 sub-precincts. This includes combined basin and raingarden facilities, single raingarden facilities and bridges, culvert crossings, and a detention basin. In addition, the council proposes to acquire \$120 million of land for stormwater.²³

There are no changes to the land area or infrastructure items for stormwater proposed since we last reviewed CP15. We consider the stormwater items proposed in CP15 meet the essential works list criteria for land and facilities for stormwater management.²⁴

Table 5.1 Stormwater items

Considered as essential works	Not considered as essential works
Land for stormwater management	N/A
Combined basin and raingardens facilities	
Single raingarden facilities	
Culvert crossings	
Gross pollutant traps	

Source: The Hills Shire Council, *Contributions Plan No. 15 – Box Hill Precinct*, March 2025, p 47.

5.2 Transport

The plan proposes to deliver about \$376 million worth of transport works items, including sub-arterial roads, bridge crossings, traffic signals, pedestrian links, cycleways, and bus shelters. To facilitate the works, the council proposes to acquire around \$141 million of land for transport infrastructure.²⁵

We consider the transport items proposed in CP15 meet the essential works list criteria for land and facilities for transport.²⁶ While the works items remain the same, the council has included additional land required for acquisition in this amendment of CP15 (see Section 6.2).

Table 5.2 Transport items

Considered as essential works	Not considered as essential works
Land for transport items	N/A
Upgrades to existing roads	
Main roads	
Vehicular bridge crossings	
Pedestrian/cycleway bridge crossings	
Signalised intersections	
Roundabouts	
Pedestrian paths	

Considered as essential works**Not considered as essential works**

Cycleways

Bus tops

Source: The Hills Shire Council, *Contributions Plan No. 15 – Box Hill Precinct*, March 2025, pp 47, 50.

5.3 Open space

The plan proposes to deliver about \$143 million worth of open space works items along with the acquisition of around \$249 million of land for these items.²⁷ CP15 includes a range of open space facilities, including:

- local parks
- sports fields
- district facilities
- tennis centres
- athletics track
- hockey field
- netball/multipurpose courts.²⁸

We note that, consistent with the Minister's nominee's advice to the council on CP15 (2023),²⁹ the council's revised CP15 does not include the costs for the skate bowl/plaza and pump track/BMX track from open space embellishment costs as these are not on the essential works list.

We consider the open space items proposed in CP15 meet the essential works list criteria for land and facilities for open space and base level embellishment.³⁰

Table 5.3 Open space embellishment items

Base level embellishment items**Not considered as essential works****Passive open space**

Bulk earthworks (site regrading)

N/A

Basic landscaping (plant install, turfing, paved areas, etc.)

Playground equipment

Basic amenities access

Access paths and pathways

Fitness equipment

Tree plantings and beds

Soft fall surfaces

Picnic shelters

Picnic tables

Lighting

Seating

Shade trees

Garbage bins

Base level embellishment items	Not considered as essential works
BBQ facilities	
Drinking fountains	
Bike racks	
Active open space	
Bulk earthworks (site regrading)	N/A
Basic landscaping (plant install, turfing, paved areas, etc.)	
Playground equipment	
Amenities building	
Multipurpose courts	
Double playing fields	
Cricket fields	
Cricket nets	
Athletics facilities	
Spectator seating	
Car parking	
Lighting	
Perimeter fencing	
Drinking fountains	
Garbage bins	

Source: The Hills Shire Council, various supporting open space concept plans; Clouston Associates, *Box Hill Sports and Open Space Concept Plans*, June 2018.

5.4 Plan administration

The council has included plan administration costs in CP15.³¹ We consider that the proposed plan management and administration costs are consistent with the essential works list.³²

6 Nexus

6.1 Stormwater

The stormwater items included in CP15 are unchanged from when we last assessed the plan in 2020 and 2023, and the technical studies relied upon by council to establish nexus remain valid.

Given that the projected population and land area has not changed in this revision of the plan, we do not consider that additional or lesser stormwater infrastructure is required. We consider that nexus is established for the stormwater management works in the plan. We note that this is consistent with the findings of our previous assessments of CP15 (2020³³ and 2023³⁴).

6.2 Transport

Since our last assessment of the plan in 2023, the council has made changes to include revised land acquisition extents for existing capital transport items as a result of further design work.³⁵ The revisions to the property acquisition areas are informed by detailed designs from J. Wyndham Prince³⁶ and The Hills Shire Council in 2024.³⁷ The relevant items and changes for each are outlined in Table 6.1 below:

Table 6.1 Summary of land acquisition updates

Item	Existing land area identified (m ²)	Revised land area (m ²)	Net change in land area (m ²)	Description
BHT15 – Signalisation of The Water Lane/Nelson Road intersection	6,790	6,948	158	Amended land extent along Nelson Road in association with signalised intersection
BHR08 – Roundabout at The Water Lane and Outback Street intersection	0	22	22	New land extent on corner of The Water Lane/ Outback Street in association with roundabout
BRBRU – Bridge on Boundary Road over Killarney Chain of Ponds	0	4,461	4,461	New land extents along Boundary Road to facilitate retaining walls and easement for services
BHT23 – Signalisation of Boundary Road/Brocklebank Street intersection	1,137	2,807	1,670	Additional or amended land extents on corners of Boundary Road/ Brocklebank Street for signalised intersection
BHR06 – Signalisation of Boundary Road/George Street intersection	561	1,697	1,136	Additional or amended land extents on corners of Boundary Road/ George Street for signalised intersection
Boundary Road upgrade	0	5,716	5,716	New land extents along Boundary Road for cutting crest in road and batter

Item	Existing land area identified (m ²)	Revised land area (m ²)	Net change in land area (m ²)	Description
BRNKB01A – Road between Annangrove Road and Edwards Road bridge	20,269	23,283	3,014	Additional or amended land extents along Edwards Road for road/ intersection works
Total	28,757	44,934	16,177	

Source: The Hills Shire Council, *Ordinary Council Meeting Agenda*, 10 December 2024, p 33.

The Box Hill Precinct has been developing rapidly amid changing economic circumstances, which has required CP15 to be adaptable. The council has made regular amendments to the plan since it came into force in 2014.

We expect that revisions to the scope of land acquisition and capital expenditure will continue throughout the life of the plan. These revisions benefit the overall efficacy of the contributions plan, as it ensures, as far as practical, adequate contributions are being collected for the infrastructure required. It also benefits the accuracy of the NPV model used by the council, ensuring that expenditure and timing is as current as possible.

We consider councils to be best placed in determining the required design needs for public infrastructure in their community. Therefore, based on the evidence provided and the context of the plan, we consider that the revised land acquisition extents are reasonable and nexus for transport is established.

6.3 Open space

We consider nexus is established for open space land and embellishment in the plan. We also note that there are no new open space items since our previous assessments in 2020 and 2023.

The nexus for open space infrastructure is established by the *Demographic and Social Infrastructure Assessment: Box Hill and the Box Hill Industrial Precinct* report by Urbis (February 2011) and the council's [Recreation Strategy](#) (2019).³⁸

The overall provision of open space is low at 1.2 hectares per 1,000 people for a forecast total population of 51,231 residents. We also noted this in our assessment of CP15 (2023).³⁹ This is due to the increase in expected additional population that has occurred since the commencement of the plan. However, when accounting for 44.27 hectares of water management areas as part of open space for passive recreation, the overall provision of open space is around 2.1 hectares per 1,000 people.⁴⁰

In addition, the council conducted a review in 2022 of the open space provision and level of service within the Box Hill Precinct due to the increases in expected population over time. It found that, generally, the precinct was well serviced and accessible with most residential development within 400 metres of either open space or water management areas.⁴¹

The council maintains that while there would ultimately be a reduced level of service for the increased expected population, it would be unfeasible and unreasonably impact the contribution rates to provide additional open space, primarily due to the high cost of land, status of development, and limited remaining population from which to recoup additional costs.⁴² We also note that 74% of the residential yield within the precinct has already been approved or developed,⁴³ and there are limited land areas remaining that could be identified for new open space.

6.4 Plan administration

CP15 includes costs for plan preparation and administration activities that are necessary for the facilitation of the contributions plan. The council notes that the preparation, ongoing review, and implementation of this contributions plan requires significant resources. This includes:

- allocation of time from staff from different teams together with professional fees, to prepare and review the plan
- further staff time required to manage the contributions system which includes the calculation and recording of contribution payments, as well as monitoring of development, population, works schedule expenditure and indexation assumptions.⁴⁴

We consider that because these costs arise directly as a result of the development in the areas covered by the plan, it is reasonable that the costs associated with preparing and administering this plan be recouped through section 7.11 contributions, and that nexus is established.

7 Reasonable cost

Across the board, the council is proposing a 14% increase in residential contribution rates. This increase is driven by higher raw costs in the plan's works schedule, primarily from land acquisition costs due to the larger land areas required and actual expenditure that is higher than original estimates, while works costs remain largely consistent aside from indexation.

In NPV terms, the increase is also attributable to greater average annual growth over 15 years for the model's escalation factors and changes to the anticipated timing of revenue. For example, the 15-year geometric averages for the council's adopted index for:

- land costs have risen from 7.39% to 7.59%
- open space works costs have risen from 2.76% to 3.19%
- transport and stormwater works costs have risen from 3.02% to 3.28%.⁴⁵

A comparison between the current in-force residential contribution rates and post-exhibition contribution rates for each development type is provided in Table 7.1 below. We note that in the council's application form, it applied for contribution rates indexed to FY24/25 dollars.⁴⁶ However, the council's post-exhibition draft of CP15 contains the rates in FY23/24 dollars and, therefore, we will be assessing the rates as shown in the plan.⁴⁷

Table 7.1 Residential contribution rates changes

Land use/sub-precinct	Current rate (\$Jun-24) ^a	Amended rate (\$Jun-24)	Variance (\$)	Variance (%)
KCP sub-precinct				
Dwellings	67,976	77,360	9,384	14%
Integrated housing	53,981	61,433	7,452	14%
Multi-unit – 1 bed	33,988	38,680	4,692	14%
Multi-unit – 2 beds	35,988	40,955	4,968	14%
Multi-unit – 3 beds	49,983	56,882	6,900	14%
Multi-unit – 4+ beds	61,978	70,534	8,556	14%
Senior's housing	29,990	34,129	4,140	14%
SPC sub-precinct				
Dwellings	56,784	64,684	7,900	14%
Integrated housing	45,093	51,366	6,273	14%
Multi-unit – 1 bed	28,392	32,342	3,950	14%
Multi-unit – 2 beds	30,062	34,244	4,182	14%
Multi-unit – 3 beds	41,753	47,562	5,809	14%
Multi-unit – 4+ beds	51,774	58,976	7,203	14%
Senior's housing	25,052	28,537	3,485	14%

a. The current in-force contribution rates have been indexed to FY23/24 dollars for parity with the proposed amended rates, using the same revenue escalation factor of 2.5% that the council uses in its NPV model (which represents the midpoint of the Reserve Bank of Australia's 2-3% inflation target).

Note: Rates are rounded to the nearest whole number.

Source: IPART analysis; The Hills Shire Council, *Contributions Plan No. 15 – Box Hill Precinct*, March 2025, p 9.

Comparatively, the council proposes a lesser increase of around 6-9% in non-residential contribution rates. While the increase is driven by the same factors as the residential rates, the non-residential rates are not impacted by growth in open space costs given these costs are only apportioned to residential development. Similarly, plan administration and transport costs are not apportioned to the contribution rates for schools, and self-storage rates are only charged 48% of the full non-residential transport contribution rate.⁴⁸

A comparison between the current in-force non-residential contribution rates and post-exhibition contribution rates for each development type is shown in Table 7.2 below.

Table 7.2 Non-residential contribution rates changes (\$/m² GFA)

Land use/sub-precinct	Current rate (\$Jun-24) ^a	Amended rate (\$Jun-24)	Variance (\$)	Variance (%)
KCP sub-precinct				
Non-residential	164	178	14	9%
Self-storage	94	101	8	8%
Schools	27	29	2	6%
SPC sub-precinct				
Non-residential	145	158	13	9%
Self-storage	74	81	7	9%
Schools	8	8	1	8%

a. The current in-force contribution rates have been indexed to FY23/24 dollars for parity with the proposed amended rates, using the same revenue escalation rate of 2.5% that the council uses in its NPV model (which represents the midpoint of the Reserve Bank of Australia's 2-3% inflation target).

Note: Rates are rounded to the nearest whole number.

Source: IPART analysis; The Hills Shire Council, *Contributions Plan No. 15 – Box Hill Precinct*, March 2025, pp 10-11.

Table 7.3 below outlines the changes in the plan's work schedule costs by infrastructure category. The council has indicated that this amendment to the plan is intended to ensure that the most up-to-date contributions are collected from remaining development.⁴⁹ Increases to the total cost are driven by increased land acquisition and indexation of land and capital works items.

Table 7.3 Work schedule cost changes (\$Jun-24)

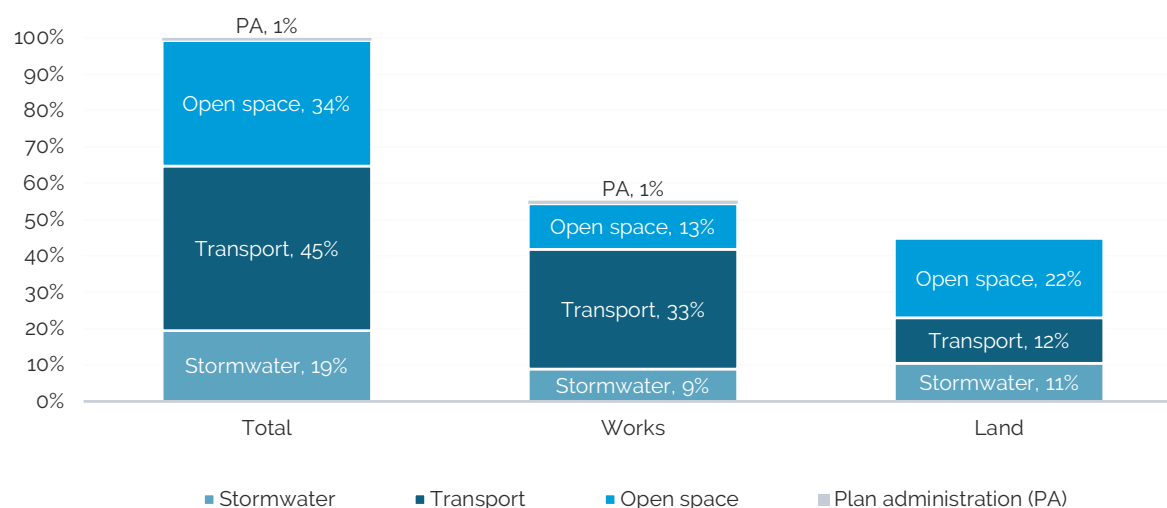
Infrastructure/cost category	Current amount	Amended amount	Variation (\$)	Variation (%)
Open space				
Land	243,209,390	249,085,850	5,876,460	2%
Works	134,148,249	143,332,270	9,184,021	7%
Subtotal	377,357,639	392,418,120	15,060,481	4%
Transport and traffic				
Land	130,748,510	141,183,623	10,435,113	8%
Works	356,257,578	376,220,409	19,962,831	6%
Subtotal	487,006,088	517,404,033	30,397,945	6%
Water management (KCP)				
Land	111,494,464	118,876,826	7,382,362	7%
Works	94,684,221	99,879,615	5,195,394	5%
Subtotal	206,178,686	218,756,441	12,577,755	6%

Infrastructure/cost category	Current amount	Amended amount	Variation (\$)	Variation (%)
Water management (SPC)				
Land	1,420,457	1,452,756	32,299	2%
Works	1,214,711	1,279,895	65,184	5%
Subtotal	2,635,168	2,732,651	97,483	4%
Administration				
Subtotal	8,794,571	9,310,683	516,112	6%
Total	1,081,972,152	1,140,621,927	58,649,775	5%

Source: IPART analysis; The Hills Shire Council, *Contributions Plan No. 15 – Box Hill Precinct*, March 2025, pp 5-6.

Figure 7.1 below displays the proportion of the total costs of CP15 from each infrastructure category, the total costs of works and the total costs of land. Overall, works account for around 55% and land accounts for about 45% of the total cost of CP15.

Figure 7.1 Proportion of CP15 total costs by each infrastructure category



Note: Totals may not equal due to rounding.

Source: IPART analysis; The Hills Shire Council, *Contributions Plan No. 15 – Box Hill Precinct*, March 2025, pp 5-6.

7.1 Stormwater

The total cost of providing stormwater management infrastructure is \$221.5 million, which equates to 19.4% of the total plan value. Land costs are \$120.3 million (10.5% of total CP) and works comprise \$101.2 million (8.9% of total CP). The costs for stormwater management works are shown in Table 7.4.

Table 7.4 Stormwater works items and costs in CP15 (\$Jun-24)

ID	Item description	Cost
CP15KC01	Combined basin, raingardens and drainage structures	19,098,811
CP15KC02	Combined basin, raingardens and drainage structures	18,224,172
CP15BH01A	Combined basin, raingardens and drainage structures	6,597,041

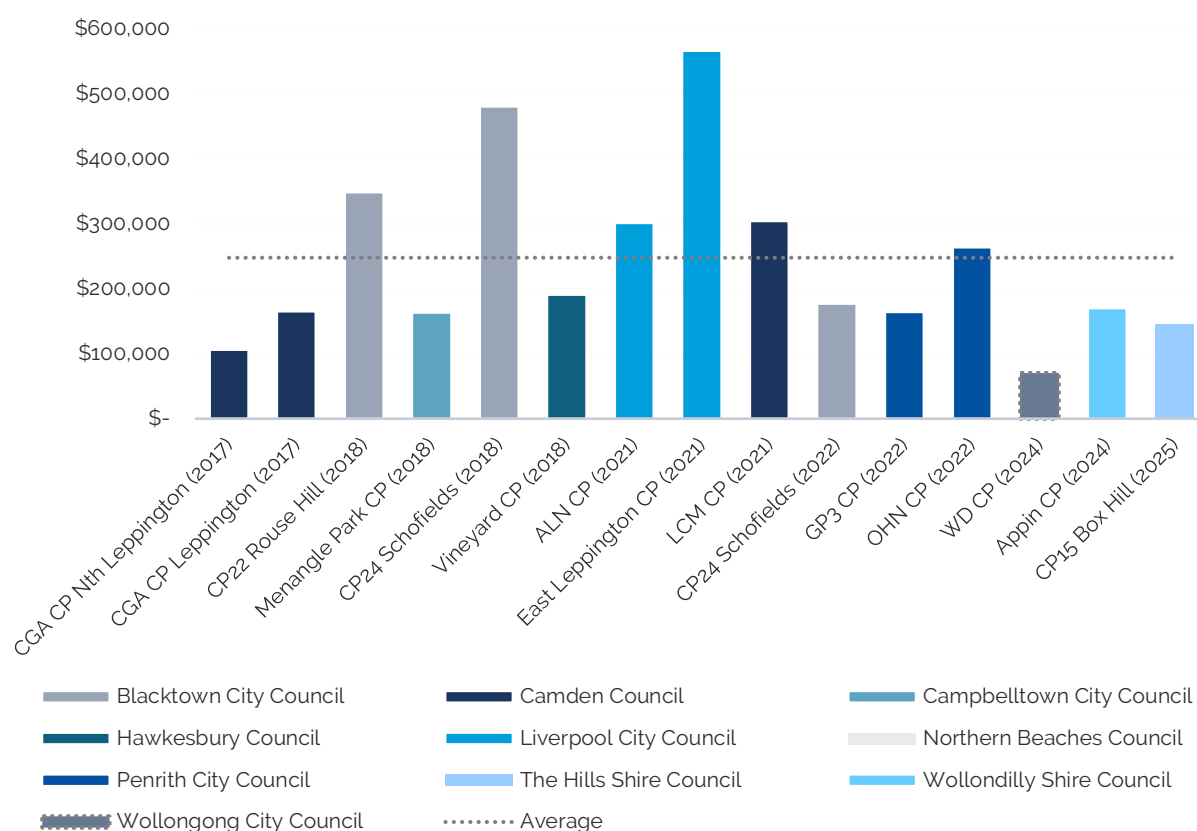
ID	Item description	Cost
CP15BH01B	Combined basin, raingardens and drainage structures	6,032,756
CP15BH01C	Combined basin, raingardens and drainage structures	7,490,024
CP15BH02A	Combined basin, raingardens and drainage structures	3,390,610
CP15BH02B	Combined basin, raingardens and drainage structures	2,260,407
CP15BH03A	Combined basin, raingardens and drainage structures	1,085,547
CP15BH03B	Combined basin, raingardens and drainage structures	6,934,682
CP15RGBH03B	New raingarden associated with Hereford St Reserve - previously formed part of BH03B	2,033,112
CP15RGBH10	Raingarden (in BHPF01)	2,089,078
CP15RGBH11	Raingarden (in BHLPO9)	1,526,995
CP15RGBH04	Raingarden (in BHPF03)	2,115,595
CP15RGKCP01	Raingarden	595,326
CP15RGKCP02A	Raingarden	435,227
CP15RGKCP02B	Raingarden	485,544
CP15RGSPC01	Raingarden (SPC)	303,829
CP15RGSPC02	Raingarden (SPC)	406,975
CP15RGSPC03	Raingarden (SPC)	569,092
CP15CRA	Culvert Crossing A	2,198,335
CP15CRB	Culvert Crossing B	5,649,626
CP15CRC	Culvert Crossing C	1,253,348
CP15CRD	Culvert Crossing D	3,465,484
CP15CRE	Culvert Crossing E	2,198,335
CP15CRF	Culvert Crossing F	2,198,335
CP15CRG	Culvert Crossing G	2,198,335
CP15BPC1	GPT - Bypass Catchment	114,356
CP15BPC2	GPT - Bypass Catchment	47,088
CP15BPC3	GPT - Bypass Catchment	80,722
CP15BPC4	Culvert C4	80,722
Total		101,159,510

Source: The Hills Shire Council, [Contributions Plan No. 15 – Box Hill Precinct](#), March 2025, p 47.

All the stormwater items and costs in the plan are unchanged since we last assessed them in 2023, except for being indexed. To place these costs within a broader context, we have compared the proposed stormwater works costs within CP15 to other recent contributions plans we have assessed. On a cost per hectare of net developable area (NDA) basis, CP15 is 41% lower than the average cost of previously assessed plans, at \$146,438 compared to \$247,541 (Figure 7.2).

We consider that the costs for stormwater management works in CP15 are reasonable.

Figure 7.2 Stormwater works costs per hectare of net developable catchment area (\$Jun-24)



Note: Past contributions plans have been indexed to the base date of CP15 (June 2024). Previous iterations of revised plans have been excluded.

Source: IPART analysis.

7.2 Transport

Transport infrastructure costs in CP15 consist of a total \$517.4 million, with land acquisition costing \$141.2 million (12.4% of total CP) and works costing \$376.2 million (33.0% of total CP). Transport land and works costs encompass 45.4% of the total cost to be met by CP15 development contributions.

Table 7.5 Transport works items and costs in CP15 (\$Jun-24)

ID	Item description	Cost
CP15BHNRO1A	New Main Road - Mt Carmel Road - Windsor Road to Killarney Chain of Ponds	10,562,641
CP15BHNRO1B	New Main Road - Mt Carmel Road - Killarney Chain of Ponds to Gardiner Drive	7,047,883
CP15BHNRO2A	New Main Road - Mt Carmel Road - Gardiner Drive to Brahman Road	10,273,299
CP15BHNRO6A	New Main Road - The Water Lane - Hynds Road to Mason Road	9,059,309
CP15BHNRO9	New Main Road - Mason Road North between Terry Road and Mason Road	4,012,090
CP15BHRU02B	Terry Road Upgrade DESIGN ONLY - Town Centre Road to Mason Road Bypass	229,756

ID	Item description	Cost
CP15BHRU06B	Road Upgrade - Mason Road - Mason Road (north) to The Water Lane	9,296,299
CP15BHRU08A	The Water Lane Upgrade DESIGN ONLY - Hynds Road to Nelson Road	567,000
CP15BOUNDARYRD	Boundary Road Upgrade - Windsor Road to Menin Road	7,330,555
CP15BOUNDARYRD2	Boundary Road Upgrade - Menin Road to Old Pitt Town Road	5,205,674
CP15ANNAGROVERD	Annangrove Road Upgrade - The Water Lane to north of Edwards Road	14,854,849
CP15HWLR	Half-width road construction adjoining non-developable land	38,337,792
CP15BR2	Terry Road over Killarney Chain of Ponds	13,591,345
CP15BRNKBO1	Bridge over Smalls Creek between Ross Place and Edwards Rd	36,531,846
CP15BRNKBO1A	BRNKBO1A approach road between Annangrove Road and bridge	15,622,441
CP15BR1	Mt Carmel Road Bridge over Killarney Chain of Ponds	9,480,354
CP15BRBRU	Boundary Road Upgrade	14,756,082
CP15BHPBR1	Killarney Chain of Ponds Crossing Nth (Mt Carmel Drive to Sunny Hill Parkway)	3,282,482
CP15BHPBR2	Killarney Chain of Ponds Crossing Sth (Longerenong Avenue to Mt Carmel Drive)	2,386,783
CP15BHT06	Windsor Road / Annangrove Road	-
CP15BHT07	Mt Carmel Road / Gardiner Drive	557,557
CP15BHT08	Mt Carmel Road / Brahman Road	557,557
CP15BHT09	Mt Carmel Road / George Street	567,175
CP15BHT10	Terry Road / Hynds Road	3,693,846
CP15BHT11	Terry Road / Mason Road / Gardiner Drive	5,912,856
CP15BHT12	Terry Road / George Street	5,825,124
CP15BHT13	Mason Road / The Water Lane	4,303,663
CP15BHT14	Hynds Road / The Water Lane	7,610,823
CP15BHT15	Nelson Road / The Water Lane	9,161,922
CP15BHT17	Mt Carmel Road / Prosper Street	4,857,803
CP15BHT18	Terry Road/ Mason Road (north) / Settlement Drive	9,510,873
CP15BHT19	Box Road / Nelson Road	761,359
CP15BHT20	Grandhill Parkway / The Water Lane	3,611,208
CP15BHT21	Grandhill Parkway / Box Road	2,297,218
CP15BHT22	Old Pitt Town Road / Terry Road / Fontana Drive - Signals Only	8,894,948
CP15BHT23	Boundary Road/ Commercial Road/ Brocklebank Street	6,878,557
CP15BHT25	Mason Rd (north) / Mason Road/ Centaurus Way	7,004,672
CP15BHT26	Terry Road / McCall Parkway / Rubidea Street	7,569,079
CP15BHT27	Terry Road / Alan Street/ Crossiron Street	13,455,201
CP15BHT28	Nelson Road / Driftwood Street	1,257,048
CP15BHR01	Hynds Road / Nelson Road / Edwards Road	8,032,195
CP15BHR02	Mason Road / Old Pitt Town Road / Nelson Rd	14,754,967
CP15BHR03	George Street / Old Pitt Town Road	3,595,828
CP15BHR05	Mt Carmel Drive / Old Pitt Town Road / Valetta Drive	9,639,508
CP15BHR06	Boundary Road / George Street	7,679,782
CP15BHR07	Boundary Road / Brahman Road	6,835,413
CP15BUSSTOPS	Bus Stop	612,668

ID	Item description	Cost
CP15CYCLEWAYS	Cycleways - standard rate	3,149,548
CP15CYCLEWAYS2	Cycleways - constrained rate	1,555,296
CP15BHR08	The Water Lane / Outback Street	3,648,233
Total		376,220,409

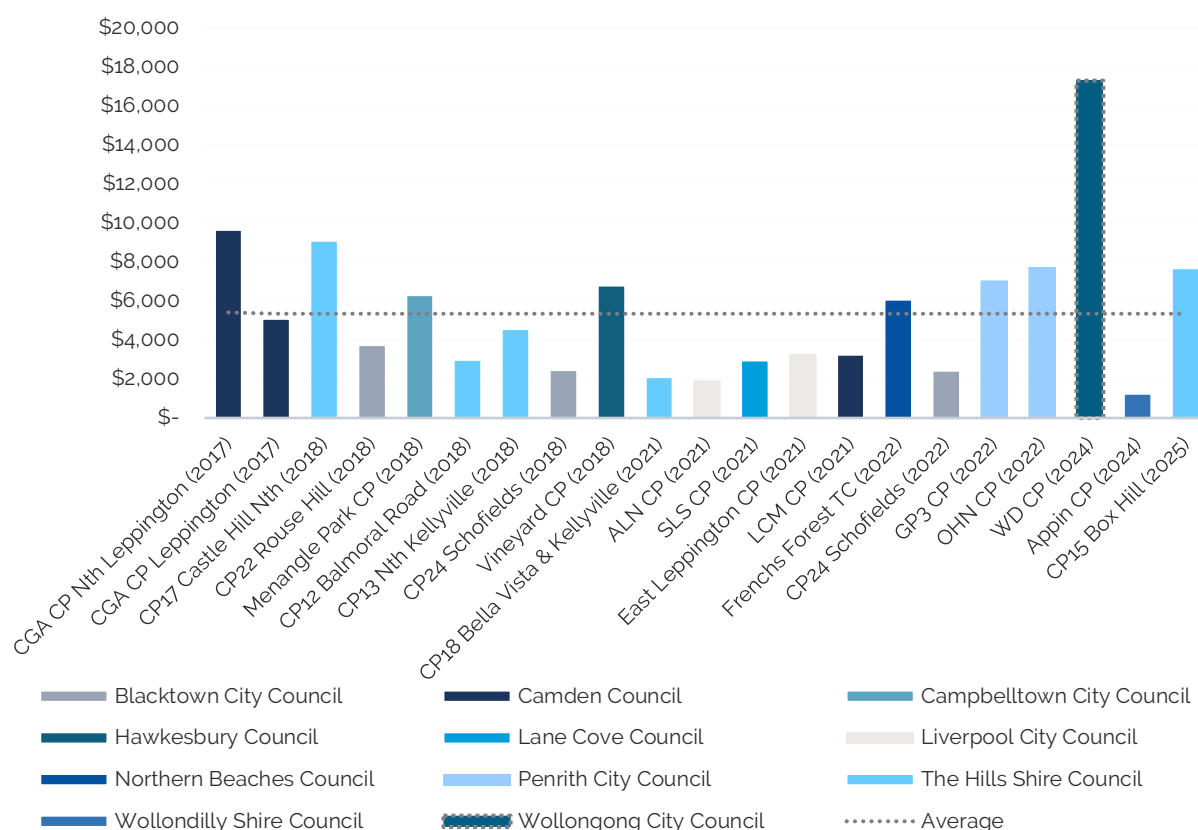
Source: The Hills Shire Council, *Contributions Plan No. 15 – Box Hill Precinct*, March 2025, pp 47, 50.

All the transport items in the plan are unchanged since we last assessed them in 2023. Most of the costs also remain unchanged, except for being indexed. Some costs have increased due to estimates being superseded by tender prices or decreased due to a lesser apportionment to CP15.

To place these costs within a broader context, we have compared the proposed transport works costs on a per person of total additional population basis to other contributions plans we have assessed. On this measure, CP15 is higher than the average cost per person of previously assessed plans (34% above the average, see Figure 7.3).

We consider that the costs for transport works in CP15 are reasonable.

Figure 7.3 Transport works costs per person of total forecasted population (\$Jun-24)



Note: Past contributions plans have been indexed to the base date of CP15 (June 2024). Previous iterations of revised plans have been excluded.

Source: IPART analysis.

7.3 Open space

The total cost of providing open space infrastructure is \$392.4 million, which equates to 34.4% of the total plan value. Land costs are \$249.1 million (21.8% of total CP) and works comprise \$143.3 million (12.6% of total CP). The costs for open space works are shown in Table 7.6.

Table 7.6 Open space works items and costs in CP15 (\$Jun-24)

ID	Item description	Cost
CP15LOCALBHLP01	Hannaford Avenue Reserve	548,489
CP15LOCALBHLP02	Stockhorse Avenue Reserve	878,100
CP15LOCALBHLP03	Hedgewood Drive Reserve	343,773
CP15LOCALBHLP04	Shetland Street Reserve	884,806
CP15LOCALBHLP05	Equinox Drive Reserve	491,648
CP15LOCALBHLP06	Ceres Way Reserve	467,127
CP15LOCALBHLP07	Mason Road Reserve	1,143,670
CP15LOCALBHLP08	Rainforest Street Reserve	4,955,810
CP15LOCALBHLP09	McCall Parkway Reserve	1,314,587
CP15LOCALBHLP10	Settlement Drive Reserve	914,483
CP15LOCALBHLP11	Turnbull Reserve	1,335,140
CP15BHPF01	Playing Fields - Copenhagen Street Reserve	14,946,035
CP15BHPF02	Playing Fields - Hereford Street Reserve	15,013,194
CP15BHPF03	Playing Fields - Sunnyhill Parkway Sports Complex	30,805,005
CP15BHPF04	Playing Fields - Brindle Parkway Reserve	11,800,662
CP15BHPF05	Playing Fields - Anthony Skarratt Sports Complex	34,662,524
CP15BHPF06	Playing Fields - The Water Lane Reserve	22,827,217
Total		143,332,270

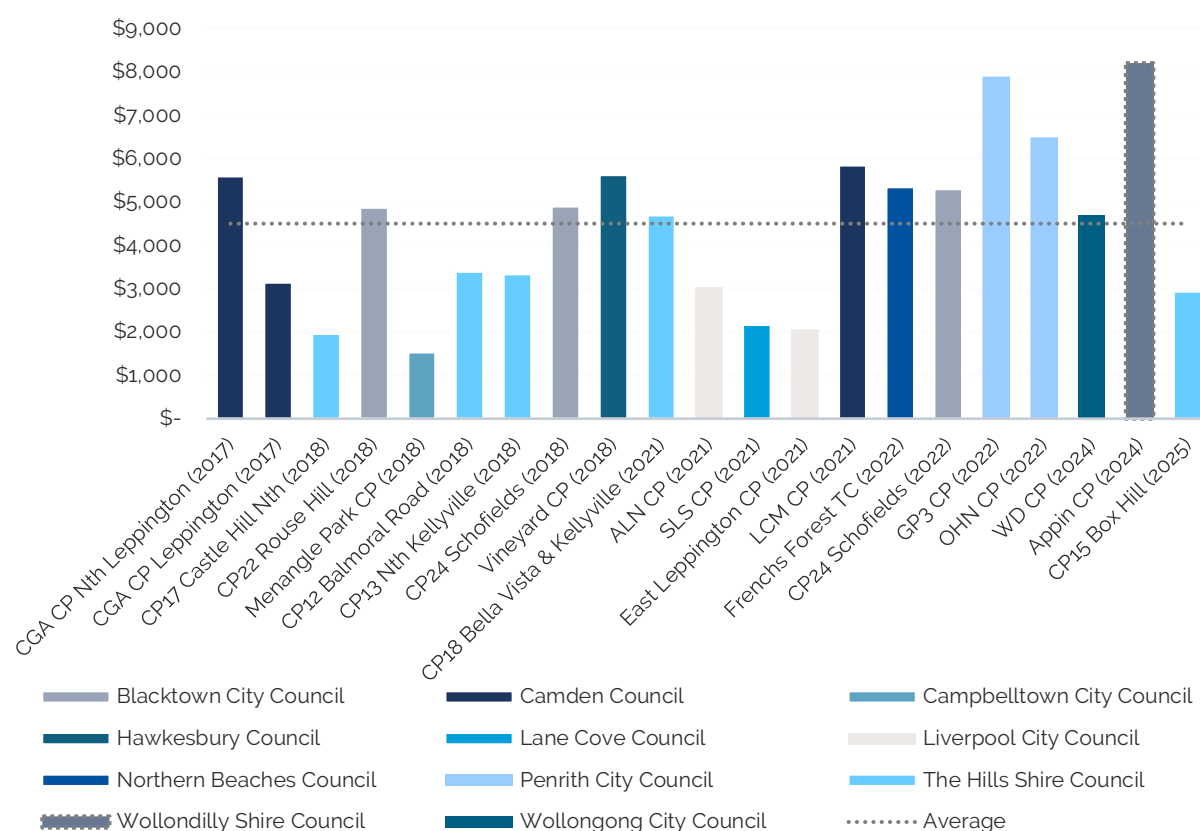
Source: The Hills Shire Council, [Contributions Plan No. 15 – Box Hill Precinct](#), March 2025, p 50.

For Rainforest Street Reserve (item CP15LOCALBHLP08), consistent with our recommendation in our previous review of CP15,⁵⁰ the council removed the \$1.225 million costs for the skate bowl/plaza and pump track/BMX track from open space embellishment costs as these are not on the essential works list.⁵¹ The other open space items in the plan are unchanged since we last assessed them in 2023, as well as the costs except for being indexed.

To place these costs within a broader context, we have compared the proposed open space works costs within CP15 to other recent contributions plans we have assessed. On a cost per person basis, CP15 is 35% lower than the average cost of previously assessed plans, at \$2,928 per person compared to \$4,500 per person (Figure 7.4). On a cost per hectare of NDA basis, CP15 is 37% lower than the average cost of previously assessed plans.

We consider that the costs for open space works in CP15 are reasonable.

Figure 7.4 Open space works costs per person of total forecasted population (\$Jun-24)



Note: Past contributions plans have been indexed to the base date of CP15 (June 2024). Previous iterations of revised plans have been excluded.

Source: IPART analysis.

7.4 Land

Due to indexation, additional required land acquisition, and the reflection of actual expenditure, CP15 includes almost \$73 million more in land acquisition costs than it did when it was submitted for its last review in 2023.⁹ We consider this reasonable, noting the difficulty in forecasting land values over a time of considerable cost escalation particularly in growth areas.

We identified anomalies between the actual values included in the CP15 (2023) works schedule and the CP15 (2025) works schedule, which should presumably not be different if costs are marked as 'actual' costs. The escalation cannot be attributable to applying the Consumer Price Index (CPI) for costs already incurred, as it is greater than movements in CPI. The council has advised that the works schedule from CP15 (2023) contains erroneous values for certain land acquisition actual costs.⁵² We requested information from the council to clarify which values were errors and the reasons for substantial increases for certain items.

⁹ CP15 (2023) included a total of around \$438 million in land acquisition costs and CP15 (2025) includes about \$511 million.

The council has provided an explanation of each of the changes we questioned.⁵³ Some items in the work schedule were erroneously allocated to the wrong cost centre due to an incorrect code being used at the time of acquisition. Some land items were reallocated to a different item ID in the work schedule. Some land items comprise multiple separate acquisitions from different landowners, so 'actuals' will increase as the individual land packages are acquired. Some land items have been allocated to separate cost codes in the work schedule, e.g. one for constrained land and another for unconstrained land, where previously these were included as a single item in the work schedule. Some items in the work schedule have been coded under a single item ID upon acquisition rather than under the IDs set out in the work schedule. Ultimately, the costs in question are valid but have been administratively mislabelled.

Other changes relate to greater land acquisition area and indexation of costs. Having regard to the council's explanations of the updated land acquisition costs, we consider the costs are reasonable following the corrections detailed in Section 7.4.1.

Table 7.7 below shows the items with the highest percentage changes between CP15 (2023)'s original estimates and actual costs, and CP15 (2025)'s actual costs.

Table 7.7 Summary of high changes in land costs

ID	Land area	CP15 (2023) cost (\$)	CP15 (2025) cost (\$)	% change
CP15BH03C1003	1,504m ² of drainage land	450 ^a	1,693,957	376335
CP15BHPF02003	1,148m ² of open space land	100 ^a	119,395	119295
CP15BH03A1002	599m ² of drainage land	78,516 ^b	3,365,206	4186
CP15BH03C1002	14,318m ² of drainage land	606 ^a	3,501	478
CP15BH01A1007	7,199m ² of drainage land	941,681 ^b	3,249,275	245
CP15BHT13001	80m ² of roads and transport land	78,631 ^b	212,554	170
CP15BHLPO6002	Undefined m ² of open space land	2,932,007 ^a	4,338,405	48
CP15BHNRO2A1001	2,156m ² of roads and transport land	1,149,863 ^b	1,640,904	43
CP15BHR02002	501m ² of roads and transport land	327,389 ^b	424,262	30
CP15BHRU091003	966m ² of roads and transport land	115,895 ^a	90,233	28
CP15BHPF06002	26,679m ² of open space land	3,092,321 ^a	3,971,763	28
CP15KC02004	16,352m ² of drainage land	2,400,114 ^a	3,054,491	27
CP15BH02A1008	1,900m ² of drainage land	929,928 ^a	1,160,593	25
CP15BHLPO7002	5,852m ² of open space land	2,944,907 ^a	3,675,381	25
CP15KC02002	22,597m ² of drainage land	3,162,974 ^a	3,938,933	25
CP15BHPF05011	19,721m ² of open space land	6,364,342 ^a	7,925,556	25
CP15BHPF06003	30,548m ² of open space land	12,134,76 ^a	15,111,421	25
CP15BH01A1009	313m ² of drainage land	1,487,656 ^a	1,852,577	25
CP15BHRU091004	977m ² of roads and transport land	375,438 ^a	467,533	25

a. Costs were included as actuals in the CP15 (2023) works schedule.

b. Costs were included as estimates in the CP15 (2023) works schedule.

Note: This table does not include changes in land costs due to a greater acquisition area and does not visualise land costs with percentage changes below 25%.

Source: IPART analysis; The Hills Shire Council, *Contributions Plan No. 15 – Box Hill Precinct (2023)*, Works Schedule; The Hills Shire Council, *Contributions Plan No. 15 – Box Hill Precinct (2025)*, Works Schedule.

7.4.1 Land cost corrections

In its [submission](#) to our [Draft Report](#), the council corrected some of the anomalies in land costs identified above.⁵⁴ In line with the explanations provided prior to our Draft Report outlined in Section 7.4, the council found that some actual values are associated with incorrect land item codes within the works schedule. In some cases, this resulted in duplication of the value across multiple codes. In its submission, the council included a rectification of these issues which resulted in the deletion of one item code and reallocation across 6 other item codes as set out in Table 7.8 below. The council also included an updated work schedule and updated NPV models addressing these changes. We have validated these adjustments and recommend that they are made to reflect the correct land values for CP15.

Table 7.8 Corrections to CP15 land costs

ID	Draft plan (\$)	Revised value (\$)	Variation (\$)	Council comment
CP15BH03A1001	8,483,177	5,428,265	- 3,054,912	Updated to actual costs
CP15BH03A1002	3,365,206	78,509	- 3,286,697	Actual costs moved to CP15BH03A1001
CP15BH03C1002	3,501	629	- 2,872	Actual costs moved to CP15BH03A1001
CP15BH03C1003	1,693,957	549	- 1,693,408	Actual costs moved to CP15BH03A1001
CP15BHNRO2A1002	451,172	0	- 451,172	Item not required as costs included in CP15BHNRO2A1001
CP15BHPFO2001	255,454	219,355	- 36,099	Updated to actual costs
CP15BHPFO2003	119,395	122	- 119,273	Actual costs moved to CP15BHPFO2001
Total	14,371,861	5,727,429	- 8,644,432	

Note: Costs are rounded to the nearest whole number.

Source: The Hills Shire Council, [submission to CP15 \(2025\) Draft Report](#), June 2025, p 1.

Recommendation



1. That the council adjusts the works schedule to correct the land costs as shown in Table 7.8.

7.4.2 Land acquisition allowance

Under the [Land Acquisition \(Just Terms Compensation\) Act 1991](#) (LA Act), there are costs that councils are liable for as part of the land acquisition process. This includes special values, any loss attributable to severance, any loss attributable to disturbance, and the disadvantage resulting from relocation, appointment of an independent valuer, and Valuer General review.

To date, the council's approach to land acquisition values has been to include actual costs for just terms compensation as part of a subsequent review of the plan. This is because these costs cannot be accurately determined until the conclusion of the matter. This approach is in line with our preference that just terms compensation costs included in contributions plans are based on fixed costs.⁵⁵

The council currently includes a 1.5% allowance for fees and charged related to land acquisition, which does not factor in costs under the LA Act. In its [submission](#) to our [Draft Report](#), the council notes that there is a high likelihood of just terms compensation costs being incurred for remaining land acquisitions, particularly due to ongoing issues and difficulties negotiating with particular landowners. Additionally, the council notes that land ownership is fragmented within the Box Hill Precinct. This could lead to a greater proportion of negotiation and compensation costs for land acquisition.

Therefore, the council requested that its existing land acquisition allowance of 1.5% be increased to 5% to account for just terms compensation costs.⁵⁶ In our recent assessments of Appin Growth Area (2024)⁵⁷ and West Dapto (2024),⁵⁸ we recommended that the councils include a land acquisition allowance as it would be prudent to manage the risk of inadequate funding for land acquisition costs. We consider this to be an appropriate method of reasonably capturing just terms compensation costs ahead of time where necessary.

In relation to CP15, we consider that an increased land acquisitions allowance (from 1.5% to 5%) is reasonable. This is the same allowance used by Wollondilly Shire Council for Appin Growth Area and is a reasonable contingency for the council's expected just terms compensation costs for future land acquisitions. Therefore, we recommend that the council increase its land acquisition allowance from 1.5% to 5% of the estimated purchase price of land not yet acquired for the purposes of just terms compensation costs. Actual costs, if any, should replace any allowance estimates following the finalisation of any land acquisition processes.

Recommendation



2. That the council increase its land acquisition allowance of 1.5% to 5% of the estimated purchase price of land not yet acquired for the purposes of land acquisition under the *Land Acquisition (Just Terms Compensation) Act 1991*.

7.5 Plan administration

CP15 includes a plan preparation and administration cost of \$9.3 million. This is based on 1.5% of the total works costs, which the council notes to be consistent with IPART's recommended approach.⁵⁹

We consider the plan administration costs included in CP15 (2025) to be reasonable.

7.6 Indexation

As part of the council's revision to CP15, costs for capital items and land acquisition have been indexed and minor typographical amendments have been made. These are typographical corrections and changes to contributions rates that reflect variations in adopted index figures. Such changes would be permitted without the council needing to adopt a new contributions plan⁶⁰ and we have no concerns with them.

The council has continued to use previously adopted Australian Bureau of Statistics' (ABS) [Producer Price Indexes](#) (PPI) for transport, stormwater, and open space capital works.^h The council has also continued to index costs that are already incurred by the ABS Consumer Price Index – (All groups) for Sydney. Both approaches are in accordance with our guidance on indexation.⁶¹

However, we note that the council has used CoreLogic's [Unimproved Land Value Index – Hawkesbury, The Hills Shire \(North West Growth Area\)](#) for land acquisition costs, which was not adopted in prior iterations of the plan. Previously, the council used the ABS [Established House Price Index](#) (EPHI) for Sydney. This change is in line with our last review of CP15, where we recommended that the council 'should review the method or index used to value land next time the plan is reviewed', due to publication of the EPHI having ceased in 2021 and the need for an escalation method that would best reflect changes in prices.⁶²

We note that this does alter the underlying methodology of the council's adopted land value index (LVI). The ABS EPHI measured the price change in all established detached houses on their own block of land,⁶³ while the unimproved LVI measures the estimated value of the underlying land which a property is built upon. This excludes any improvements on the land, such as the dwelling itself and other structures (e.g. swimming pools and carports), and is distinct from the market value of the property, which accounts for both improvements and unimproved land.⁶⁴

Despite the change in indexation methodology, we do not expect significant changes in the escalation of land acquisition costs. This is largely attributed to the closely aligned average annual growth of the EPHI and CoreLogic's LVI over a 15-year period (7.39% from 2006 to 2021 and 7.59% from 2009 to 2024 respectively). Regardless, any significant changes in escalation are likely valid, given that the adopted CoreLogic LVI covers CP15's geographic boundary, and, in turn, may provide the most price reflective solution for market observation that is available to the council.

Furthermore, CoreLogic's measure has been used by other councils in previously assessed contributions plans, in the absence of other usable or available LVIs. This includes Blacktown City Council's engagement of CoreLogic to produce and publish the quarterly unimproved LVI for the North West Growth Area,⁶⁵ and Wollondilly Shire Council's use of the unimproved LVI for Greater Sydney.⁶⁶

^h For open space, Non-Residential Building Construction Index for NSW and for transport and stormwater, Road and Bridge Construction Index for NSW.

We consider the change in adopted land value index to be reasonable, as CoreLogic's is readily accessible, tailored to the land to which CP15 applies, and underpinned by a reliable hedonic model.ⁱ

7.6.1 Concerns with indexation

In its [submission](#) to our [Draft Report](#), Colliers International Engineering and Design NSW (CED) on behalf of The Hills of Carmel argued that the costs for some capital works items included in this revision of CP15 have been indexed incorrectly.⁶⁷ In our draft assessment, we had validated the council's cost escalation for works items and found them to be reasonable. We have provided additional information on how costs have been indexed by the council and responded to concerns raised by CED's in their submission in Table 7.9.

We note that CED included this concern in its submission to the council's exhibition of its draft plan, and the council provided a response in its report for the Ordinary Meeting on 25 March 2025.⁶⁸

Table 7.9 CED cost comparison of capital works with IPART comments

ID/Item description	Existing CP15 work cost (\$)	Proposed CP15 work cost (\$)	Difference (%)	IPART comment
CP15BH03B - Combined basin, raingardens and drainage structures	6,119,785	6,934,682	13.3	The council's expenditure for this item ended in FY2019, with an actual value of \$5,778,071. The council has indexed this cost by CPI from its base date to FY2024. We have reviewed the indexation calculation and agree the cost indexation is correct. ^a
CP15BHNRO1B - New Main Road - Mt Carmel Road - Killarney Chain of Ponds to Gardiner Drive	6,219,683	7,047,883	13.3	The council's expenditure for this item ended in FY2019, with an actual value of \$5,872,391. The council has indexed this cost by CPI from its base date to FY2024. We have reviewed the indexation calculation and agree the cost indexation is correct. ^a
CP15BHT07 - Roundabout - Mt Carmel Road / Gardiner Drive	492,039	557,557	13.3	The council's expenditure for this item ended in FY2019, with an actual value of \$464,564. The council has indexed this cost by CPI from its base date to FY2024. We have reviewed the indexation calculation and agree the cost indexation is correct. ^a
CP15BHT08 - Roundabout - Mt Carmel Road / Brahman Road	492,039	557,557	13.3	As above. ^a

ⁱ The pricing of a good in a hedonic model is determined by the characteristics of both the good and its surrounding environment.

ID/Item description	Existing CP15 work cost (\$)	Proposed CP15 work cost (\$)	Difference (%)	IPART comment
CP15BHT22 - Old Pitt Town Road / Terry Road / Fontana Drive - Signals Only	7,970,559	8,894,948	11.6	The council received a cost estimate for this item in August 2022 and, following our recommendation from our most recent review of the plan, was permitted by the Minister's nominee to further increase the estimate based on an updated costing to the cost now in CP15. ⁶⁹ The council has indexed this cost by the ABS PPI for transport works, not CPI, from its base date to FY2024. We have reviewed the indexation calculation and agree the cost indexation is correct.

a. CPI factor from FY2019 to FY2024 is based on the average change year on year, where FY2019 = Jun-2019, 115.9 and FY2024 = Jun-2024, 139.1. Calculation = actual value x (139.1/115.9).

Source: IPART analysis; Colliers International Engineering and Design NSW, [submission to CP15 \(2025\) Draft Report](#), June 2025, pp 6-7; The Hills Shire Council, [Contributions Plan No. 15 – Box Hill Precinct](#), March 2025, pp 45-50; The Hills Shire Council, [Contributions Plan No. 15 – Box Hill Precinct \(2025\)](#), Works Schedule.

7.7 Impact of recommendations on costs and contribution rates

Table 7.10, Table 7.11 and Table 7.12 below include the final costs, residential contribution rates and non-residential contribution rates respectively for CP15 if our recommendations are accepted by the Minister.

While the corrections to land costs removed around \$8.6 million from the plan, the increased land acquisition allowance of 5% results in the recommended total cost similar to the costs in the council's application. Overall, our recommendations reduce the plan's total cost by \$115,649 which represents a -0.01% percentage change.

Table 7.10 Impact of recommendations on costs (\$Jun-24)

Infrastructure	Cost lodged to IPART (\$)	Cost with IPART recommendations (\$)	Variation (\$)	Variation (%)
Open space				
Land	249,085,850	\$251,820,578	\$2,734,728	1.10%
Works	143,332,270	\$143,332,270	\$0	0.00%
Subtotal	392,418,120	\$395,152,849	\$2,734,729	0.70%
Transport and traffic				
Land	141,183,623	\$144,744,579	\$3,560,956	2.52%
Works	376,220,409	\$376,220,409	\$0	0.00%
Subtotal	517,404,033	\$520,964,988	\$3,560,955	0.69%
Water management (KCP)				
Land	118,876,826	\$112,445,775	-\$6,431,051	-5.41%
Works	99,879,615	\$99,879,615	\$0	0.00%
Subtotal	218,756,441	\$212,325,390	-\$6,431,051	-2.94%
Water management (SPC)				
Land	1,452,756	\$1,472,474	\$19,718	1.36%
Works	1,279,895	\$1,279,895	\$0	0.00%
Subtotal	2,732,651	\$2,752,369	\$19,718	0.72%

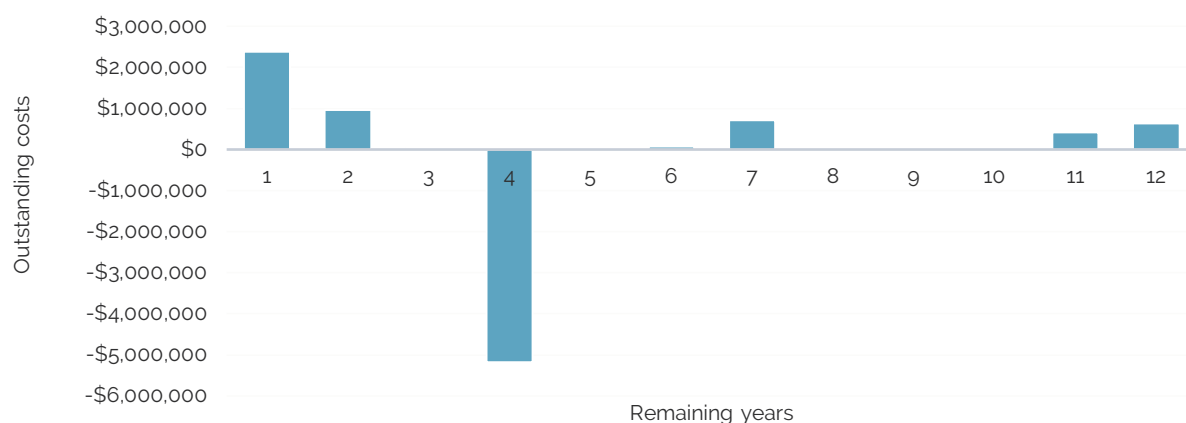
Infrastructure	Cost lodged to IPART (\$)	Cost with IPART recommendations (\$)	Variation (\$)	Variation (%)
Administration	9,310,683	\$9,310,683	\$0	0.00%
Total	1,140,621,927	\$1,140,506,278	-\$115,649	-0.01%

Source: IPART analysis; The Hills Shire Council, *Contributions Plan No. 15 – Box Hill Precinct*, March 2025, pp 5-6; The Hills Shire Council, *Contributions Plan No. 15 – Box Hill Precinct (2025)*, Works Schedule (final via submission).

Despite a small reduction in total cost, there have been slight increases in some contribution rates. This is because the land cost reallocations shown in Table 7.8 have affected the expected cash flows in the council's NPV model, impacting the anticipated timing of expenditure and revenue. The net effect of the timing changes is an overall decrease in the NPV of costs.

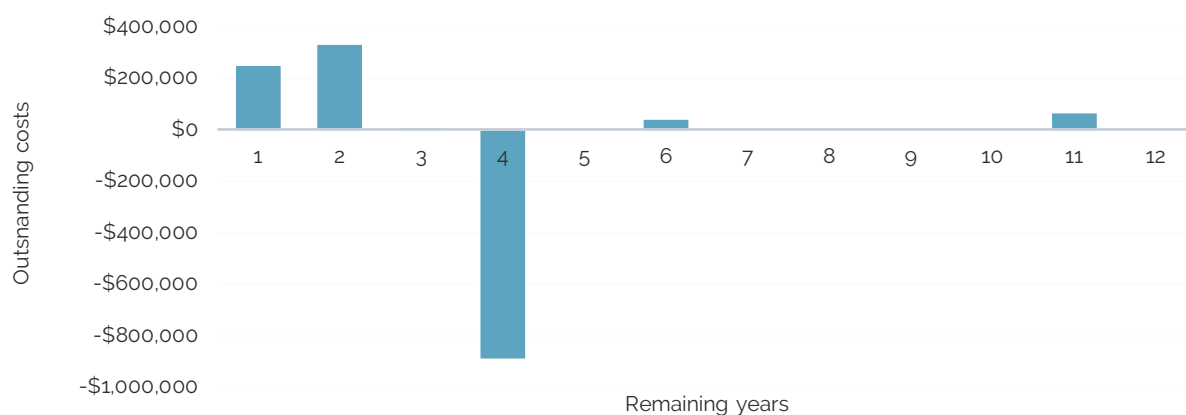
The changes in land costs have also been reallocated differently between residential and non-residential development. As a result, the residential costs went up around \$50,000 in NPV terms (Figure 7.5) and the non-residential costs went down by a greater amount of about \$191,000 in NPV terms (Figure 7.6). This has caused an increase in residential contribution rates, while non-residential contribution rates have decreased overall.

Figure 7.5 Change in present value of residential costs by year



Source: IPART analysis.

Figure 7.6 Change in present value of non-residential costs by year



Source: IPART analysis.

We consider the council's contribution rates that would be in-force if the Minister accepts our recommendations to be reasonable.

For the KCP sub-precinct, the maximum contribution rate would be \$77,388 and the minimum would be \$38,694 for residential development, and \$178.02 per square metre of gross floor area (GFA) for non-residential development. For the SPC sub-precinct, the maximum contribution rate would be \$65,358 and the minimum would be \$32,679 for residential development, and \$158.51 per square metre of GFA for non-residential development.

Table 7.11 Impact of recommendations on residential contribution rates (\$Jun-24)

Land use/sub-precinct	Contribution rate lodged to IPART	Contribution rate with IPART recommendations	Variation (%)
KCP sub-precinct			
Dwellings	77,360	77,388	0.04
Integrated housing	61,433	61,455	0.04
Multi-unit – 1 bed	38,680	34,142	0.04
Multi-unit – 2 beds	40,955	70,560	0.04
Multi-unit – 3 beds	56,882	56,903	0.04
Multi-unit – 4+ beds	70,534	40,970	0.04
Senior's housing	34,129	38,694	0.04
SPC sub-precinct			
Dwellings	64,684	65,358	1.04
Integrated housing	51,366	51,902	1.04
Multi-unit – 1 bed	32,342	28,834	1.04
Multi-unit – 2 beds	34,244	59,591	1.04
Multi-unit – 3 beds	47,562	48,057	1.04
Multi-unit – 4+ beds	58,976	34,601	1.04
Senior's housing	28,537	32,679	1.04

Note: Rates are rounded to the nearest whole number.

Source: IPART analysis; The Hills Shire Council, *Contributions Plan No. 15 – Box Hill Precinct*, March 2025, p 9; The Hills Shire Council, *Contributions Plan No. 15 – Box Hill Precinct*, Resi NPV FY24 (final via submission).

Table 7.12 Impact of recommendations on non-residential contribution rates (\$Jun-24/m² GFA)

Land use/sub-precinct	Contribution rate lodged to IPART	Contribution rate with IPART recommendations	Variation (%)
KCP sub-precinct			
Non-residential	178.44	178.02	-0.24%
Self-storage	101.41	100.69	-0.71%
Schools	28.80	27.81	-3.42%
SPC sub-precinct			
Non-residential	157.88	158.51	0.40%
Self-storage	80.85	81.18	0.41%
Schools	8.24	8.31	0.83%

Source: IPART analysis; The Hills Shire Council, *Contributions Plan No. 15 – Box Hill Precinct*, March 2025, pp 10-11; The Hills Shire Council, *Contributions Plan No. 15 – Box Hill Precinct*, Non-Resi NPV FY24 (final via submission).

8 Apportionment

8.1 Stormwater

We consider that the apportionment of stormwater management infrastructure in CP15 is reasonable.

CP15 has 2 catchment areas within the precinct. The major stormwater catchment in the precinct is the Killarney Chain of Ponds catchment, with a net catchment area of 635.35 hectares. The precinct also includes the Second Ponds Creek catchment, with a net catchment area of 55.45 hectares.⁷⁰ The council's approach is unchanged since our previous assessment of CP15.

CP15 apportions stormwater management works and land between the Killarney Chain of Ponds and Second Ponds Creek catchments based on the location of the works. Killarney Chain of Ponds catchment has \$218.8 million, and Second Ponds Creek has \$2.7 million apportioned for stormwater management works and land.⁷¹

The plan then further apportions costs between residential and non-residential development, with the apportionment of costs based on the proportion of land within each catchment area that is zoned for residential or non-residential purposes.

For the Killarney Chain of Ponds catchment, 88% of developable land is zoned for residential purposes and 12% for non-residential purposes. For Second Ponds Creek catchment, 42% of the developable land is zoned for residential purposes, and 58% of the developable land is zoned for non-residential purposes.⁷²

8.2 Transport

We consider that the apportionment of transport and traffic facilities in CP15 is generally reasonable.

The council apportioned the cost of providing transport and traffic facilities on all development within the precinct. The cost of providing transport facilities is further apportioned based on the projected demand for each individual traffic infrastructure item generated by either the residential or non-residential development, where relevant, both within the precinct and neighbouring areas with contribution plans.⁷³

Outside of precinct level apportionment, we consider the council's separate approaches for the northern bridge connection (in line with our previous recommendation), Annangrove Road upgrade, Boundary Road upgrade, and Old Pitt Town Road intersections are reasonable.

For Boundary Road in particular, we note that the council has updated the apportionment to be 70% to the Box Hill Precinct, with the remainder apportioned to Hawkesbury City Council's *Vineyard Precinct Section 7.11 Contributions Plan*. This is in accordance with our last review of CP15 (2023), where we recommended that the council update the apportionment of Boundary Road related items to 70% based on updated traffic modelling.⁷⁴

Self-storage

Self-storage developments were a new category of development for CP15 in 2023. The council applied a reduced transport contribution for self-storage developments on the basis that these types of developments typically generate less traffic than other forms of non-residential development.

The council estimates that self-storage developments generate 48% of the traffic generated by other forms of non-residential development and have levied 48% of the full non-residential contribution rate. The council notes that the discount will only apply for the self-storage component of any development application.⁷⁵ We consider this a reasonable approach. We note this conclusion is consistent with our previous review of CP15.⁷⁶

8.3 Open space

CP15 apportions all open space land and embellishment costs to the residential population within the precinct. This is on the basis that the need to provide open space is generated by the residential development of the Box Hill Precinct.⁷⁷

CP15 apportions open space infrastructure to residential development on a per person basis. This is the same approach the council took in our previous assessments of the plan in 2020⁷⁸ and 2023.⁷⁹ We consider that this approach to apportionment of open space infrastructure in CP15 is reasonable.

8.4 Plan administration

CP15 (2025) apportions the cost for plan administration to both residential (82%) and non-residential development (18%).⁸⁰ Costs are then further apportioned amongst residential development on a per-person basis and non-residential development on a per square metre of gross floor area (GFA) basis.

We consider that this approach to apportionment of plan administration in CP15 (2025) is reasonable.

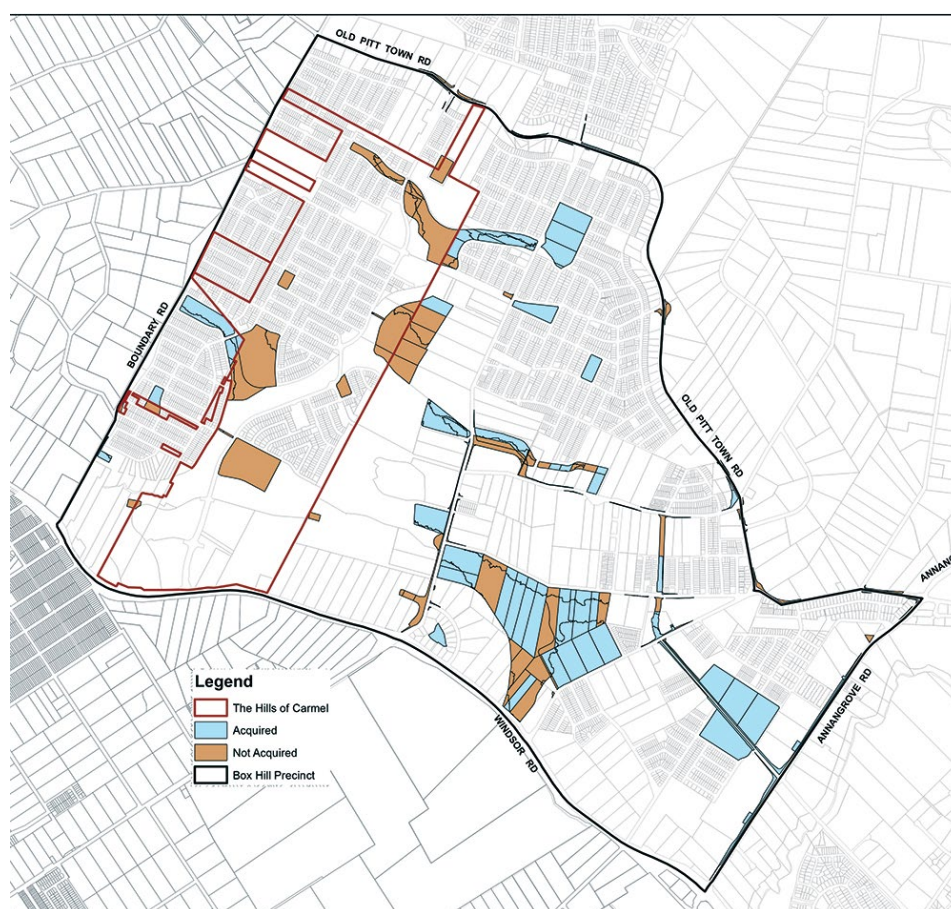
9 Timing

At the time of the council's application, 74% of the residential development in CP15 has been approved or developed.⁸¹ At this same time, 11% of the \$620.7 million of capital works expenditure has taken place and 43% of total land acquisition costs have been incurred.⁸²

The council notes that it has been focused on purchasing the land required for parks, roads, and drainage infrastructure, as it needs to own the land to finalise designs and seek regulatory approvals to commence any work. This has further delayed the progression of capital works, as purchasing all the land needed to accommodate infrastructure within a new release area can be challenging, particularly when it involves many individual landowners who may or may not be ready to sell. The council notes that, as in all precincts, different landowners have different time horizons and expectations, and sometimes it can take time for the parties to agree.⁸³

As of August 2024, the council has spent more than \$222 million on purchasing over 53% of the land areas required within the precinct.⁸⁴ Figure 9.1 below illustrates the land that has been acquired by way of purchase as of August 2024 (shaded in blue). The areas of the land shaded in orange are yet to be acquired.

Figure 9.1 Box Hill Precinct land acquisition status map



Source: The Hills Shire Council, [Box Hill Release Area](#), accessed April 2025.

The council has acquired most of the land necessary for recreational facilities in Box Hill, except for land within The Hills of Carmel development area, which is outlined in red for reference. The council states that this is primarily due to unsuccessful negotiations with the developer of The Hills of Carmel, in addition to a lack of available funds.⁸⁵

Furthermore, the council has previously indicated that the delays in delivering infrastructure have been due to several factors. This included changes in State Environmental Planning Policies, capping of contributions,^j uncertainty regarding designs and funding availability, the unprecedented rate of development and market conditions, COVID-19, difficulties in negotiating land acquisitions, out-of-sequence development and increase in population projections.⁸⁶ These challenges have been further compounded by CP15's significant funding shortfall, which will place additional burdens on achieving the delivery of infrastructure in a reasonable timeframe.

As part of the council's approach to addressing the funding gap in CP15, it has proactively identified items which could be delayed pending resolution of funding issues. This is intended for items where sufficient grant funding cannot be obtained, and to ensure that the council does not commit money to projects which it is unable to fund.⁸⁷ Items that may be delayed (or ultimately not delivered) have been identified by the council and are shown in Table 9.1 below.

While the council notes that it would be an 'extremely unfortunate outcome for the Box Hill community, particularly given that IPART's assessment concluded that there is adequate nexus for all infrastructure listed within the plan',⁸⁸ the council's approach is in line with final advice from the Minister's nominee following our review of CP15 (2023). The Minister's nominee advised that, in light of the funding shortfall, an option is for the council to 'reconsider the local infrastructure to be provided in the release area.'⁸⁹

Table 9.1 Items that may be delayed (\$Jun-24)

ID	Item description	Category	Cost (millions)
BOUNDARY RD AND BOUNDARY RD 2	Boundary Road Mid-blocks	Capital	11.9
BRNKB01A and BRNKB01	Ross Place Bridge	Capital	49.5
BHPF01	Copenhagen Street Reserve Sportsground	Land and capital	20.9
BHPF02	Hereford Street Reserve Sportsground	Land and capital	23.14
BHLP01	Hannaforde Avenue Reserve (Part not yet acquired)	Land	2.35
RGKCP02B	Raingarden	Land and capital	0.8
BHLP10	Settlement Drive Reserve	Land and capital	4.5
BHLP04	Shetland Parkway Reserve	Land and capital	7.1
HWLR	Half Width Local Road – Adjoining Shetland Parkway Reserve	Land and capital	2.87
BHPF03	Part of Sunny Hill Parkway Sports Complex (southern lots)	Land	2.3
BH01A and BH01C	Northern Drainage Basin BH01 (Including Land Not Yet Acquired)	Land not yet acquired and capital	39.21

^j Of the total additional dwellings of 16,030 for the precinct, approximately 7,500 (47%) received approvals with a capped contribution rate, noting some of these were \$30,000/\$35,000/\$40,000 per dwelling as the NSW Government transitioned from maximum contributions for specified contributions plans.

ID	Item description	Category	Cost (millions)
HWLR	Half Width Local Road – Adjoining Drainage Basin BH01	Land and capital	6.43
HWRL	Half Width Roads south of future Terry Road K-12 School.	Land and capital	2.4
CP15BHPBR1	Pedestrian Bridge – Killarney Chain of Ponds Crossing North (Mt Carmel Drive to Sunny Hill Parkway)	Land and capital	3.18
BHNR06A	New Main Road – The Water Lane – Hynds Road to Mason Road (Reduced Scope)	Capital	3.86
CP15LOCALBHLP11	Turnbull Reserve Embellishment	Capital	1.25
Total			181.69

Note: For the funding gap that remains, the sum of the council's identified items to delay are intended to be equivalent to the total sum of the shortfall.

Source: The Hills Shire Council, [Ordinary Council Meeting Agenda](#), 10 December 2024, pp 28-29.

We note that the council's revised timing of revenue and expenditure projections as part of this amendment of CP15 has not altered the timing for residential development but has for non-residential development (Table 9.2).⁹⁰ This indicates that there may have been less approvals than the council's previous development path expected for non-residential development. Given CP15's expenditure occurs on a pro-rata basis in accordance with the precinct's development timetable, we do not expect this change to result in mistimed or further delayed infrastructure relative to when it will be needed.

Table 9.2 Development timetable comparison

Year	Previous % of residential development	Unchanged % of residential development	Previous % of non-residential development	Amended % of non-residential development
0-5	21	21	0	0
6-10	48	48	21	11
11-15	14	14	32	32
16-20	12	12	34	42
21-27	5	5	13	15
Total	100	100	100	100

Source: The Hills Shire Council, [Contributions Plan No. 15 – Box Hill Precinct](#), March 2025, p 7.

The council has advised that significant income shortfall and a negative cashflow position has necessitated that the council prioritise land acquisitions for the delivery of the most critical infrastructure in the precinct. Despite uncertain timeframes for delivery, the council continues to plan for the rollout of infrastructure within the precinct as expediently as possible within the constraints of funding and land availability.⁹¹

In its [submission](#) to our [Draft Report](#), Box Hill and Nelson Progress Association (BHNPA) expressed concerns around the council's provision of infrastructure within a reasonable timeframe, given the potential for items to be delayed.⁹² BHNPA objected to the council's shift from committing to deliver all items in the plan within its 27-year timeframe, to prioritising and delivering certain items as sufficient funding becomes available. We acknowledge BHNPA's concerns and the impacts that untimely provision of infrastructure may have for residents, developers, or the council.

However, as noted above, in response to our last review of CP15, the Minister's nominee advised the council that the options for the council to recoup the shortfall from existing development included reconsidering the local infrastructure to be provided by the council, as well as seeking a special rate variation or additional grant funding. In light of the significant funding shortfall that the council is facing, we consider the council's approach and position on delivery timeframes to be practical and reasonable in the circumstances and consistent with the Minister's nominee's previous advice.

10 Community consultation

The draft of this revision to CP15 and its supporting material were placed on public exhibition from 17 December 2024 to 5 February 2025. Notification of the exhibition was placed on the council's website and notification letters were sent to 6,164 affected landowners, which are all landowners identified in the council's records within the CP15 land area.

The council noted that due to the time critical nature of the project, the plan was required to be exhibited over the December/January holiday period. In acknowledgement of this, the council extended the exhibition period to provide additional time for the community to consider the proposed amendments and make a submission.⁹³

During the exhibition period, 12 submissions were received from landowners/residents within the precinct, a developer and its consultant, and a community organisation. Relevant takeaways from the submissions include:

- broad concerns regarding the delay or deferral of infrastructure and an insufficient level of service for residents due to the funding shortfall
- general sensitivity around the council's strategy for addressing the funding shortfall and escalation of costs, with mentions of development feasibility being hindered.

The council noted the amendments made following the exhibition period were minor corrections or administrative changes.⁹⁴

We consider that there has been reasonable community consultation. The council issued adequate notification to landowners, provided a reasonable timeframe for submissions, and comprehensively addressed the submissions received in its report for the Ordinary Meeting on 25 March 2025.

11 Other matters

11.1 NPV model updates

The council has amended its NPV model to reflect our updated guidance⁹⁵ and up-to-date assumptions. This includes:

- updating indexation assumptions for FY23/24 to arrive at the current 15-year geometric average
- updating the discount rate to IPART's August 2024 published rate⁹⁶
- updating the development path to reflect actual approvals up to August 2024
- accounting for approvals at the current rates during the process of IPART's review (up to December 2025)
- setting contribution rates to not equate the present value of total expenditure to the present value of total revenue over the full life of the precinct
 - achieved by reducing the opening cash balance (FY23/24) to match the financial statement, with an offsetting adjustment in FY41 to reflect potential alternative funding to ensure the historical shortfall is not charged to future population.⁹⁷

Aside from these changes, the model remains the same from our last review of CP15.

Indexation and discount rate

The amendments related to indexation and the discount rate do not present any concerns. The council has simply updated the indexation period and the nominal discount rate used (August 2024 update) to reflect the base date of this version of the plan.

The council has included a fixed revenue escalation rate of 2.5% in the model's calculation, which represents the midpoint of the Reserve Bank of Australia's 2-3% inflation target. The council has advised that it applies 2.5% for revenue escalation in all its NPV models.⁹⁸ This is consistent with IPART's recommended approach outlined in our Technical Paper – *Modelling local infrastructure contributions in a present value framework*.^k

Reflecting and accounting for approvals

It is expected that the model's development path will require regular updating to reflect additional actual approvals, given that the last review of CP15 began in April 2023 and the plan is over a decade underway. We support this update as it helps to actively ensure that the timing of expected revenue is current and accurate.

^k Section 3.4 of our [Technical Paper](#) states that in a nominal model, a council must make an assumption about how it will adjust contribution rates over time. IPART recommends that councils using a nominal approach assume an escalation factor of 2.5%, which is the midpoint of the RBA's target range for inflation.

It is also prudent for the council to account for further approvals at the current in-force rates for the expected duration of IPART's review (until December 2025, although we expect our review to take less time than is projected by the council).

NPV methodology

Previously, the council's NPV methodology sought to ensure a \$0 end of plan balance. Applying this condition to maintain neutrality of costs and revenue was central to the apportionment issue of CP15 (2023). This was because the council intended to include actual revenue from previous years' lesser or capped rates, resulting in higher contribution rates for the remaining years of development to achieve cost neutrality.

Following our last review of CP15⁹⁹ and the subsequent final advice from the Minister's nominee,¹⁰⁰ this approach to the NPV framework was not endorsed. We updated our technical guidance on modelling local infrastructure contributions to reflect the position of the Minister's nominee, which now states:

Councils should not equate the present value of total expenditure to the present value of total revenue over the full life of the precinct, as this risks over (or under) charging future development. Rather, the purpose of reviewing a contributions plan which uses the NPV approach is not to achieve cost neutrality.¹⁰¹

Rather than a purely cost neutral modelling framework, our updated guidance recommends that when plans are reviewed, councils should update their models to maintain accurate apportionment. That is, where infrastructure costs have escalated faster than originally modelled and anticipated, future developments should continue to only contribute their portion of the escalated costs and not the entire escalated costs (the same principle applies if costs have escalated slower).

To validate that the council's model aligns with our guidance, we compared the revenue that would have been earned from those who have already paid if they had been charged the contribution rates proposed in this version of the plan (about \$567 million), to the revenue that was actually paid by these people (about \$360 million). This leads to a gap of around \$207 million, which will remain if the proposed contribution rates are charged.

Table 11.1 below shows a summary of the council's funding shortfall under the revised NPV model proposed in CP15 (2025).

Table 11.1 Funding shortfall under amended NPV model (\$Jun24)

Cost/revenue	Residential	Non-residential	Total
Total cost	(995,209,410)	(186,455,614)	(1,181,665,024)
Actual revenue to date	352,846,823	7,590,042	360,436,865
Unpaid approved revenue (prior to Aug 2024)	167,326,807	7,425,064	174,751,871
Future revenue from contributions under old rate (approvals Aug 2024 – Dec 2025)	29,374,624	15,088,813	44,463,438
Future revenue from contributions under new rate (approvals from Dec 2025)	246,251,933	149,248,701	395,500,634
Shortfall (total cost less revenues)	(199,409,223)	(7,102,993)	(206,512,216)

Source: The Hills Shire Council, *Contributions Plan No. 15 – Box Hill Precinct*, Resi and Non-Resi NPV FY24, March 2025.

Overall, we consider that the amendments made to the council's NPV model are reasonable and in accordance with our technical guidance.

11.2 Previous assessments of CP15

CP15 initially came into force in 2014 and is planned to conclude in 2037. We received CP15 (2025) in March 2025. We have previously assessed the plan 5 times, completing reviews in December 2014,¹⁰² March 2016,¹⁰³ October 2018,¹⁰⁴ October 2020,¹⁰⁵ and April 2024.¹⁰⁶ Outcomes of these reviews have been considered in the assessment of CP15 (2025).

IPART's most recent assessment of CP15

In our review of CP15 (2023), which we finalised in April 2024, the plan included a \$172 million funding gap which had accumulated since development first commenced at Box Hill. The council sought to allocate the entire funding gap to the remaining 29% of development in the precinct.¹⁰⁷ This was the first council we were aware of proposing to carry forward a significant funding shortfall to future developers.

IPART decided to recommend allocating the funding gap in proportion to the remaining development, recommending allocating 29% of the funding gap (around \$50 million) to CP15.¹⁰⁸

The Minister's nominee did not agree with IPART's recommendation and directed that none of the funding gap relating to previous development should be allocated to the remaining development.¹⁰⁹ Our Final Report also made recommendations that the practice notes be updated to provide greater clarity to both councils and IPART regarding risk management, funding gap recoupment, and apportionment of any funding gap or surplus.¹¹⁰ Since our Draft Report of our assessment of CP15 (2025), DPHI has updated its [practice notes](#).

We updated IPART's guidance to councils to note that no shortfalls from existing developments should be apportioned to future development. Our Technical Paper, [Modelling local infrastructure contributions in a present value framework](#), was updated in August 2024 and provides clarity for councils on this approach.

In its [submission](#) to our [Draft Report](#), the council stated that despite our updated guidance, its view remains that funding shortfalls should be recouped from development within the precinct.¹¹¹

11.3 Other issues raised by stakeholders

In response to our Draft Report, stakeholders raised issues with details of CP15. The concerns and questions raised are included below, along with our responses.

NSW Government grants

CED on behalf of The Hills of Carmel argued that Accelerated Infrastructure Fund (AIF) grants received for specific CP15 items should be used to reduce/offset the value of those items.¹¹² CED also raised this issue in our previous review of CP15. In the council's submission to our review of CP15 (2023), it noted that:

AIF, LIGS [Local Infrastructure Growth Scheme] funding and WIK [works-in-kind] contributions are in satisfaction of some of the unreceived income associated with approved development within the Precinct, not in addition to the income projected from this population. Accordingly, accounting for AIF, LIGS and WIK as income in addition to a full income projection from the 48,956 population is erroneously double counting this income.¹¹³

The council includes AIF grants it received for infrastructure items as income for CP15, which offsets the cost of these items in the plan. This means that an AIF grant for a particular item reduces the contributions revenue required for that item. As a result, contribution rates have decreased in the past when AIF grants that the council has received have been included in the plan's income.¹¹⁴ For example, during our review of CP15 (2023), \$8.23 million of AIF funding was announced for Boundary Road Bridge transport item (BRBRU) after the plan had been submitted.¹¹⁵ In our Final Report for CP15 (2023), we recommended that the council update the plan to include the income of \$8.23 million to reflect the agreed Accelerated Infrastructure funding for the transport item BRBRU.¹¹⁶

We have reviewed how grant funding has been included in the council's modelling and consider that the plan is not seeking to fund costs already funded by grants. Rather, the council is using grant funding to reduce CP15's funding deficit and decrease the likelihood of delays in delivering infrastructure included in the plan. This is in line with the Minister's nominee's advice following our last review of CP15, where one of the options noted for recouping the plan's funding shortfall was to seek additional grant funding.¹¹⁷

As we did in our previous review of CP15, we consider the council's treatment of grant funding in its contributions modelling to be reasonable. We also note that CED included this concern in its submission to the council's exhibition of its draft plan and the council has provided a response.¹¹⁸

Disproportionate impact to non-residential development

CED on behalf of The Hills of Carmel stated that CP15's cost escalation disproportionately impacts non-residential development and represents an unreasonable apportionment of costs, given significantly less non-residential development has been approved in comparison to residential.¹¹⁹

We have reviewed the council's approach to apportionment and we consider that it reflects a reasonable apportionment of costs between the types of development. The apportionment of the plan's infrastructure costs between residential and non-residential development has not changed in this revision of the plan. The amendment to CP15's non-residential contribution rates reflect the revised costings and indexation for the infrastructure in the plan. We also note that CED included this concern in its submission to the council's exhibition of its draft plan and the council has provided a response.¹²⁰

Value of items in voluntary planning agreement

In respect to The Hills of Carmel voluntary planning agreement (VPA), CED on behalf of The Hills of Carmel identified some items that have been delivered/credited at a lower value than reflected in this amendment of CP15.¹²¹

CED raised this concern in our last review of CP15, and we asked the council why the costs for some items under the VPA have increased. The council advised that in 2021, the VPA was subject to a dispute regarding how item values and associated contribution offsets/reimbursements are calculated. Based on the outcome of this dispute, the indexed values of items under the VPA are higher than what is currently assumed within CP15.¹²²

The costs reflect the indexed value of the items in accordance with the provisions of the VPA. The council has advised that this is calculated by multiplying the base cost (as at December 2018 when the VPA was executed) by the indexation formula within the VPA for 5 years, being the point at which the item (for the purpose of offsets and reimbursements) was fully exhausted by the developer. Based on its works schedule for CP15, the council has then indexed the values by CPI from the dates when actual expenditure finished for each item, which is in line with standard contributions plan practice (see Section 7.6). We note that any dispute regarding a VPA between a developer and the council is a matter for the two parties to resolve.

We have provided clarification below regarding specific items that CED has highlighted, where the land cost between actual VPA value and amended value included in CP15 is substantial.

- Land for a new main road (Mt Carmel Road, Windsor Road to Killarney Chain of Ponds – item code BHNRO1A):
 - CED is including the cost for a portion of land allocated to this new main road (CP15BHNRO1A1003) in its cost comparison, which accounts for close to an additional \$1 million. As per the council's works schedule, this additional amount is not included under The Hills of Carmel VPA. Therefore, the difference would be significantly less and in line with the council's advice above.
- Land for a new main road (Mt Carmel Road, Gardiner Drive to Brahman Road – item code BHNRO2A):
 - CED is including the cost for a portion of land allocated to this new main road (CP15BHNRO2A1002) in its cost comparison. The council has agreed that it has allocated this item incorrectly. We have made a recommendation for this cost to be amended, which will remove it from CP15's total value as per Table 7.8 if the Minister accepts our recommendations. Therefore, the difference would be significantly less in line with the council's advice above.

The works schedule tables included in CP15¹²³ do not split out land acquisition values in the same way that the council's works schedule files do, which can make it difficult for readers to account for the land item codes that form the totals reflected in the plan.

We have reviewed the council's calculations for the costs of items under The Hills of Carmel VPA. We consider the calculations to be reasonable. This is the same view we formed during our last review of CP15. We also note that CED included this concern in its submission to the council's exhibition of its draft plan and the council has provided a response.¹²⁴

Concerns with some transport items

CED on behalf of The Hills of Carmel engaged a traffic consultant to review traffic requirements for Box Hill Business Park, which suggested the design requirements and costs for certain transport works could be reduced.¹²⁵ We note that the council changed the scope of transport items in previous revisions to reflect updated traffic modelling, which we found nexus established for and reasonable. We consider the council to be best placed for planning decisions, such as upgrading roundabouts to signalised intersections based on the council's analysis of traffic volumes. As noted in Section 6.2, we consider nexus for transport items in this iteration of CP15 to be established.

We do note that the council is undertaking a review of infrastructure needs for the Box Hill Business Park, which may result in adjustments to the indicative road layout and intersection treatments.¹²⁶ Any further changes to transport infrastructure in the plan will require the council to amend and submit CP15 to IPART for review.

11.4 Assessment against clause 212 of the EP&A Regulation

We have determined that CP15 contains the information required by clause 212 of the EP&A Regulation.¹²⁷ This clause requires the inclusion of certain information in a contributions plan for the purpose of establishing scope and location.

A summary of our assessment of CP15 against the EP&A Regulation is provided in Table 11.2.

Table 11.2 Assessment against clause 212 of the EP&A Regulation

Subsection	Requirement	Location in plan
1(a)	Purpose of the plan.	Section 2.4
1(b)	Land to which the plan applies.	Section 2.3
1(c)	The relationship between the expected types of development in the area to which the plan applies and the demand for additional public amenities and public services to meet the expected development.	Section 3
1(d)	The formulas to be used for determining the development contributions required for different categories of public amenities and public services.	Section 2.20
1(e)	The development contribution rates for different types of development, as specified in a schedule to the plan.	Section 1, Table 12, Table 13
1(f)	A map showing the specific public amenities and public services that will be provided by the council.	Figure 3

Subsection	Requirement	Location in plan
1(g)	A works schedule that contains an estimate of the cost and staging of the public amenities and public services, whether by reference to dates or thresholds.	Table 10
1(h)	If the plan authorises monetary development contributions or development levies paid for different purposes to be pooled and applied progressively for the different purposes—the priorities for the expenditure of the development contributions or development levies, by reference to a works schedule.	Section 2.18
3	A contributions plan must contain information about the council's policy about the following— (a) the timing of the payment of monetary development contributions, (b) development levies, (c) the imposition of development contribution conditions or development levy conditions that allow deferred or periodic payment.	Sections 2.11, 2.12, 2.15, 2.16
4	A contributions plan that provides for the imposition of development contribution conditions or development levy conditions in relation to the issue of a complying development certificate must provide that monetary payments in accordance with the conditions must be made before the commencement of the building work or subdivision work authorised by the certificate	Section 2.13, 2.14
5	In determining the development contribution rates for different types of development, the council must take into consideration the conditions that may be imposed under the Act, section 4.17(6)(b) or the Local Government Act 1993 , section 97(1)(b).	Sections 2.9, 2.10
6	A contributions plan may authorise monetary development contributions or development levies paid for different purposes to be pooled and applied progressively for the different purposes only if the council is satisfied that the pooling and progressive application will not unreasonably prejudice the carrying into effect, within a reasonable time, of the purposes for which the money was originally paid.	Section 2.18

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- ³ The Hills Shire Council, *Contributions Plan No. 15 – Box Hill Precinct*, March 2025, p 24.
- ⁴ The Hills Shire Council, *Application for Assessment – Contributions Plan No. 15 – Box Hill Precinct*, March 2025, pp 4-5.
- ⁵ The Hills Shire Council, *Box Hill Release Area*, accessed April 2025.
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- ⁷ The Hills Shire Council, *Contributions Plan No. 15 – Box Hill Precinct*, March 2025, pp 5-6, 9.
- ⁸ NSW Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure, *Box Hill Precinct – Letter to The Hills Shire Council*, 9 July 2024, p 1.
- ⁹ IPART, *Modelling local infrastructure contributions in a present value framework*, Technical Paper, August 2024.
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- ¹¹ NSW Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure, *North West Growth Area*, accessed April 2025.
- ¹² The Hills Shire Council, *Contributions Plan No. 15 – Box Hill Precinct*, August 2014, p 18.
- ¹³ The Hills Shire Council, *Contributions Plan No. 15 – Box Hill Precinct*, March 2025, pp 23-24.
- ¹⁴ The Hills Shire Council, *Contributions Plan No. 15 – Box Hill Precinct*, March 2025, p 23.
- ¹⁵ The Hills Shire Council, *Contributions Plan No. 15 – Box Hill Precinct*, March 2025, p 26.
- ¹⁶ NSW Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure, *Box Hill and Box Hill Industrial*, accessed April 2025.
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- ²⁰ NSW Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure, *Box Hill Precinct – Letter to The Hills Shire Council*, 9 July 2024, p 1.
- ²¹ The Hills Shire Council, *Ordinary Council Meeting Agenda*, 25 March 2025, p 15.
- ²² The Hills Shire Council, *Contributions Plan No. 15 – Box Hill Precinct*, March 2025, pp 9, 11.
- ²³ The Hills Shire Council, *Contributions Plan No. 15 – Box Hill Precinct*, March 2025, pp 5-6.
- ²⁴ NSW Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure, *Section 7.11 contributions practice note – IPART review of section 7.11 plans*, accessed June 2025.
- ²⁵ The Hills Shire Council, *Contributions Plan No. 15 – Box Hill Precinct*, March 2025, p 5.
- ²⁶ NSW Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure, *Section 7.11 contributions practice note – IPART review of section 7.11 plans*, accessed June 2025.
- ²⁷ The Hills Shire Council, *Contributions Plan No. 15 – Box Hill Precinct*, March 2025, p 5.
- ²⁸ The Hills Shire Council, *Contributions Plan No. 15 – Box Hill Precinct*, March 2025, pp 28-29.
- ²⁹ NSW Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure, *Box Hill Precinct – Letter to The Hills Shire Council*, 9 July 2024, p 3.
- ³⁰ NSW Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure, *Section 7.11 contributions practice note – IPART review of section 7.11 plans*, accessed June 2025.
- ³¹ The Hills Shire Council, *Contributions Plan No. 15 – Box Hill Precinct*, March 2025, p 41.
- ³² NSW Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure, *Section 7.11 contributions practice note – IPART review of section 7.11 plans*, accessed June 2025.
- ³³ IPART, *Assessment of Contributions Plan No. 15 – Box Hill Precinct (2020)*, Final Report, October 2020, p 51.
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- ³⁶ J. Wyndham Prince, *the Water Lane Upgrade between Annangrove Road and Nelson Road – Property Acquisition Layout Plan*, January 2024.
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- ⁴⁰ The Hills Shire Council, *Contributions Plan No. 15 – Box Hill Precinct*, March 2025, p 29.
- ⁴¹ The Hills Shire Council, *Briefing Note – Box Hill Open Space Review*, 2022, p 4.
- ⁴² The Hills Shire Council, *Contributions Plan No. 15 – Box Hill Precinct*, March 2025, p 29.
- ⁴³ The Hills Shire Council, *Application for Assessment – Contributions Plan No. 15 – Box Hill Precinct*, March 2025, p 4.
- ⁴⁴ The Hills Shire Council, *Contributions Plan No. 15 – Box Hill Precinct*, March 2025, p 41.
- ⁴⁵ The Hills Shire Council, *Contributions Plan No. 15 – Box Hill Precinct*, Resi and Non-Resi NPV FY24, March 2025.
- ⁴⁶ The Hills Shire Council, *Application for Assessment – Contributions Plan No. 15 – Box Hill Precinct*, March 2025, p 3.
- ⁴⁷ The Hills Shire Council, *Contributions Plan No. 15 – Box Hill Precinct*, March 2025, pp 9, 11.
- ⁴⁸ The Hills Shire Council, *Contributions Plan No. 15 – Box Hill Precinct*, March 2025, p 11.
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- ⁵¹ The Hills Shire Council, *Contributions Plan No. 15 – Box Hill Precinct*, Works Schedule, March 2025.
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- ⁵⁴ The Hills Shire Council, *submission to CP15 (2025) Draft Report*, June 2025, p 1.
- ⁵⁵ IPART, *IPART assessment of local infrastructure contributions plans*, Information Paper, April 2025, pp 25-26.
- ⁵⁶ The Hills Shire Council, *submission to CP15 (2025) Draft Report*, June 2025, p 2.
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- 59 The Hills Shire Council, *Contributions Plan No. 15 – Box Hill Precinct*, March 2025, p 41.
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- 79 IPART, *Assessment of Contributions Plan No. 15 – Box Hill Precinct (2023)*, Final Report, April 2024, p 22.
- 80 The Hills Shire Council, *Application for Assessment – Contributions Plan No. 15 – Box Hill Precinct*, March 2025, p 17.
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- 97 The Hills Shire Council, *Ordinary Council Meeting Agenda*, 25 March 2025, p 140.
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