

Port Stephens Rural Strategy



Port Stephens Council

February 2011

Port Stephens Council
Port Stephens Rural Strategy

Prepared for Port Stephens Council and the
Department of Planning
by



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Table of Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction	1
1.1 Location and Study Area	2
1.2 Why Prepare a Strategy	4
Chapter 2: Port Stephens Rural Lands Study	5
Chapter 3: Development and Planning Issues	7
Environmental Opportunities and Constraints	1
Chapter 4: Strategy	9
4.1 Vision	9
4.2 Growth Management Philosophy	9
4.3 Conservation and Development Principles	9
4.4 Strategies	11
4.5 Social and Economic Factors	13
4.5.1. Growth Management	13
4.5.2. Land Use Planning	16
4.5.3. Community Services and Quality of Life	21
4.5.4. Economic and Employment Opportunities	22
4.5.5. Infrastructure Requirements	23
4.6 Environmental Opportunities and Constraints	24
4.6.1. Water Catchments	24
4.6.2. Ecological Management and Biodiversity	26
4.6.3. Natural and Working Landscapes	27
4.6.4. Heritage and Culture	27
4.6.5. Natural Hazards	28
Chapter 10: Conclusion	30

List of Maps

Map 1.1: Surrounding LGAs.	2
Map 1.2: Port Stephens LGA showing the location of the settlements.	3
Map 4.1: Settlement Hierarchy	15
Map 4.2: Rural Land Designations	20

List of Figures

Figure 3.1: Issues and Themes for the Growth Management Study	8
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Chapter 1: Introduction

The rural land within the LGA provides an important resource, both for the Local Government Area (LGA) and the wider region. This resource consists of a number of components:

- Productive agriculture
- Rural landscapes
- Towns and villages
- Waterways
- Native vegetation
- Industry
- Community facilities and services
- Cultural heritage

Each of these is important in its own right but it is the sum of them that provides the resource for the future.

The LGA has a resident population of 64,698 persons in 2007. There are 18 settlements ranging in size from Hinton (362) and Seaham (372) to Raymond Terrace at 12,700.

This strategy confines itself to the rural land within the LGA. The rural land is basically all land that is not zoned as urban (Residential, Commercial, Industrial zones etc). The rural parts of the LGA have 12,713 people living in them which represents 21.5% of the total population.

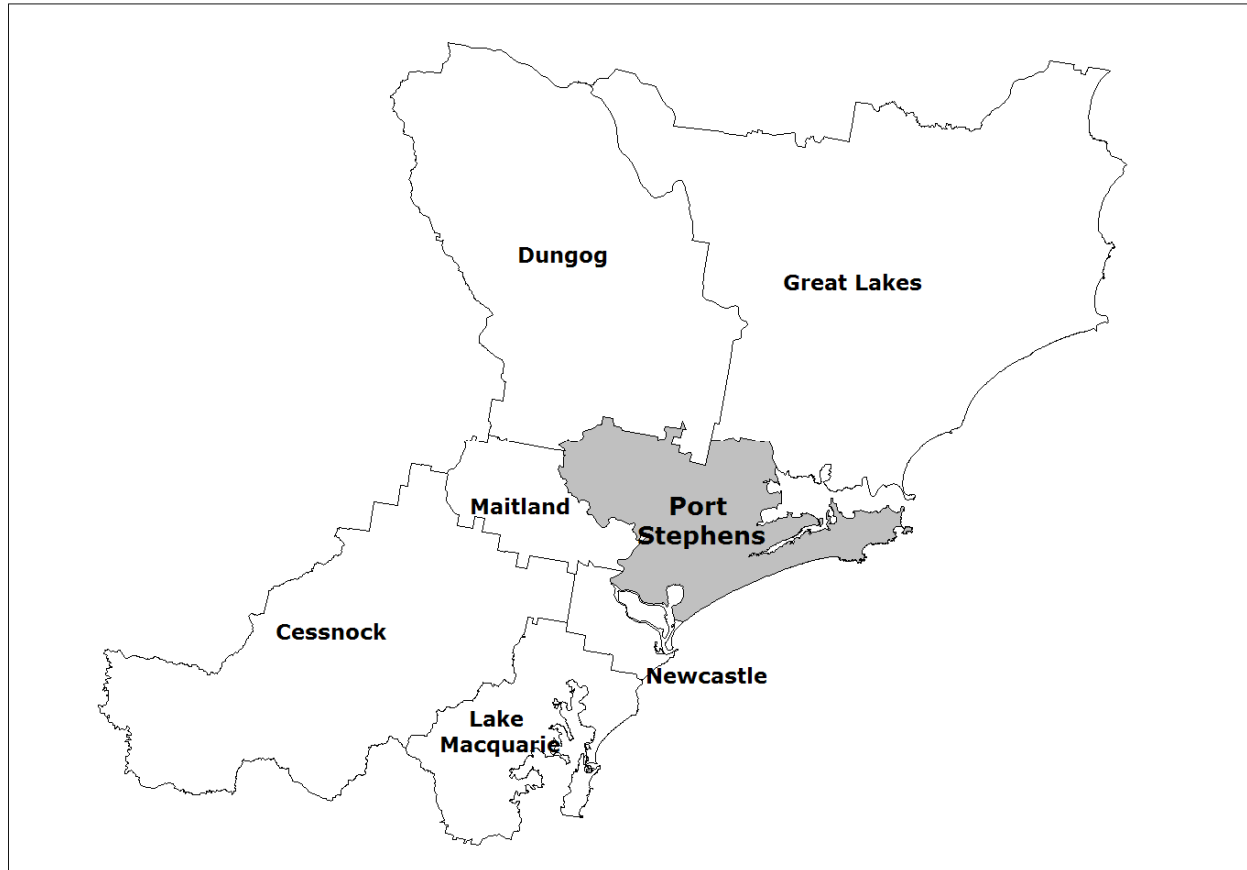
The Port Stephens Rural Strategy has been prepared as an outcome from the Port Stephens Rural Lands Study. The Study provides the details of the rural environment – physical, social and economic. This Strategy will make recommendations for the strategic direction of the rural lands of Port Stephens LGA and how they are to be managed over the next 10 to 20 years. It should be read in conjunction with the Rural Lands Study as the Study provides the background and discussion for the recommendations provided in this document.

The preparation of a strategy enables the Council to address the big picture issues as well as giving an indication about the future direction for the development of an area. It is important to recognise however, that this Strategy gives a direction for further work. It does not rezone any land – it provides an indication of the future land use designations for the area.

The measure of success of a strategy is its implementation by the Council and the acceptance of this by the community. This strategy makes a series of recommendations that will have an impact on the Council's resources. It should be recognised that the Council needs to devote a considerable amount of resources to achieve the outcomes that would be expected by the community if the strategies were to be implemented. Costing of the strategies need to be considered in the context of the Council's Management Plan.

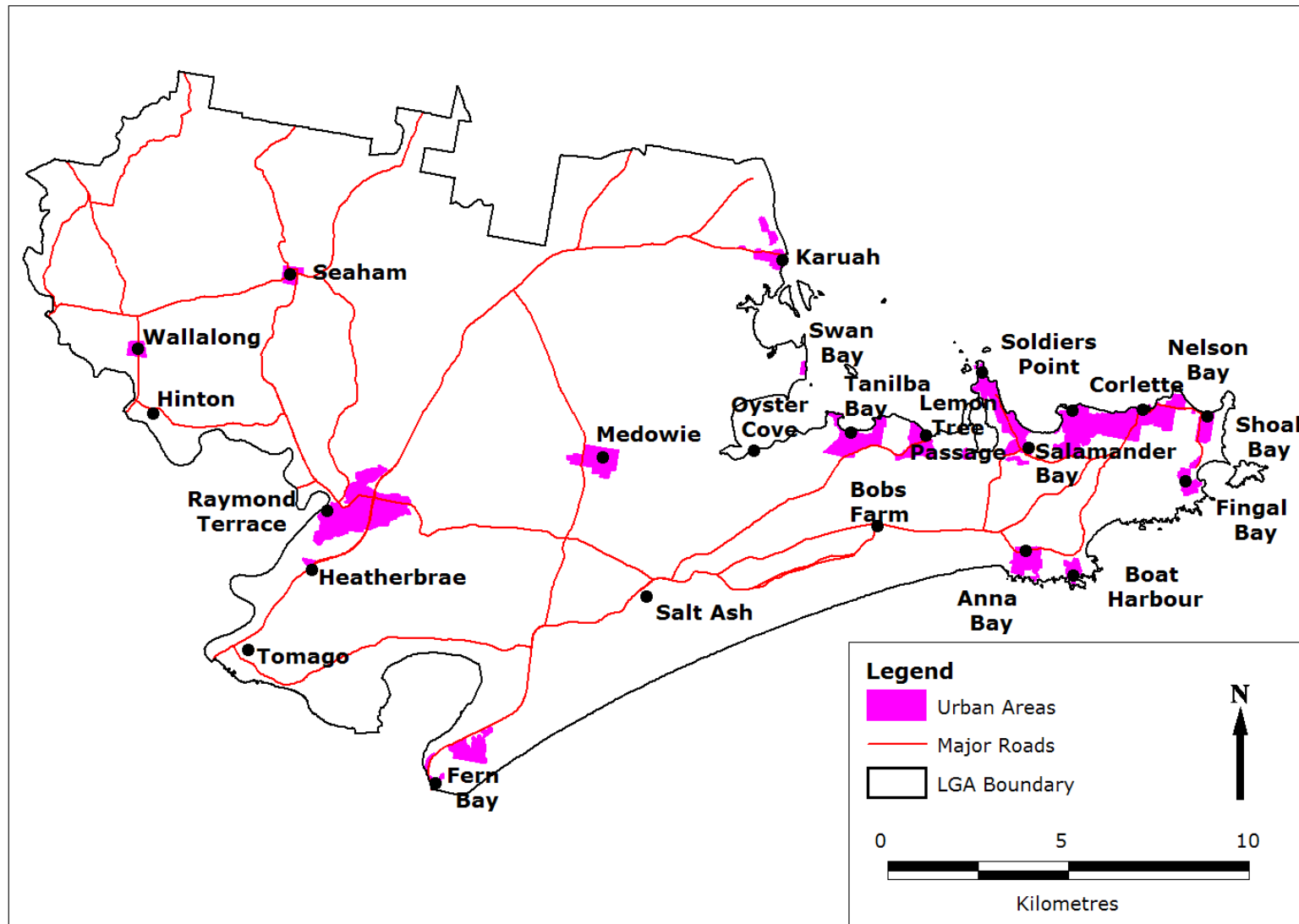
1.1 Location and Study Area

The Port Stephens LGA is located in the Hunter Region of NSW. To the north is Great Lakes and Dungog LGAs with Maitland City Council to the west and Newcastle City Council to the south. Map 1.1 shows the surrounding LGAs.



Map 1.1: Surrounding LGAs.

Map 1.2 shows the Port Stephens LGA and the location of these settlements.



Map 1.2: Port Stephens LGA showing the location of the settlements.

1.2 Why Prepare a Strategy

The preparation of a strategy is a vital component in the future sustainability of the area. It enables the Council to consider all of the aspects of the social, environmental and economic issues that interact and have to be considered for the future of an area. The Strategy is an overarching document that provides the Council with guidance for the future of the area to ensure its sustainability. It also provides a basis for Government Departments and other organisations to plan for the provision of public and private infrastructure and services in the LGA. It will develop a clear statement of principles and a map that will be the strategic direction for growth management outcomes for the rural lands over the next 20 years.

The preparation of a strategy enables the Council and other organisations to address the big picture issues as well as providing a road map for the future direction of the development of an area. It is important to recognise however, that this strategy also gives a direction for further work. It provides a framework and sets the direction for future rezonings that will implement the strategy.

The measure of success of a strategy is its implementation by the Council and the acceptance of this by the community. The strategy will make a series of recommendations that will have an impact on the Council's resources. In an area like Port Stephens, where new urban housing is being produced, a large amount of the resources of the Council is devoted to these areas. Too often in the past, the provision of services and facilities to the rural areas and villages has not kept pace with the urban areas. It should be recognised that the Council needs to devote a considerable amount of resources to achieve the outcomes that would be expected by the community if the strategies were to be implemented. If we are to achieve a sustainable future, this resource imbalance needs to be rectified. Costing of the strategies need to be considered in the context of the Council's Management Plan.

Chapter 2: Port Stephens Rural Lands Study

The Port Stephens Rural Lands Study has been published as a companion to this document and provides the data and issues that affect the rural lands of Port Stephens. It also provides the analysis that has lead to the recommended actions provided in this document.

The Study has 9 chapters as follows:

- Chapter 1: Introduction
- Chapter 2: Planning Policy Framework
- Chapter 3: Environmental and Cultural Characteristics
- Chapter 4: Existing Development Pattern
- Chapter 5: Development and Planning Issues
- Chapter 6: Strategic Environmental Analysis
- Chapter 7: Conclusion

The Study has a section on key issues for the future which sums up the matters that need to be addressed in order to achieve a sustainable future. However, it is the responsibility of all levels of Government as well as the community to work together, not just Port Stephens Council.

They are as follows:

- *Growth Pressure*. The pressure for growth in the LGA is perhaps the most important issue for the future. There is demand for both rural residential (rural fringe and rural living) and urban lots.
- *Natural Hazards* – Flooding, bushfire and acid sulfate soils are the main natural hazards. There is a need to ensure that dwellings are not built in flood prone areas where they are likely to be inundated by fast flowing flood waters. Bushfire is a major threat and like flooding, houses should not be built in bushfire prone areas. Acid sulfate soils are an issue because of the potential for development to impact on them.
- *Infrastructure* – This is a key issue because there is a need to provide an adequate level of infrastructure to the people living in the rural areas – farmers, rural residential dwellers as well as people living in the small towns and villages. It is noted that some of the villages also do not have adequate levels of infrastructure. There is also a need for a good road system to enable accessibility of the rural residents to the settlements. Settlements also need to have adequate levels of infrastructure. This includes water and sewerage (where practical), electricity and communications as well as health, education and social and recreation services and facilities. This is an issue for the rural lands because it is in the urban settlements where the services are provided. The high number of rural residents makes this even more of an issue.
- *Biodiversity* – in any growing area there is a need to ensure that the biodiversity of the area and its habitat is not impacted on by development. This will mean that development will have to ensure that it has minimal impact on waterways, native vegetation and land degradation.
- *Heritage and Culture* – In any growing area there is a need to ensure that the heritage is conserved – both Aboriginal and European. There also needs to be adequate provision for the continuation of cultural activities.

Port Stephens Rural Strategy

- *Landscape* – The landscape of the area is one of the major drawcards for people wanting to live in the rural parts of Port Stephens – on rural residential lots as well as in the towns. The landscape also generates tourism, development and environmental management issues. Care needs to be taken when locating dwellings and buildings in the landscape because too much of it can destroy the landscape character that attracts so many people.

All of these need to be addressed to allow for the expansion of the economy and provision of social services and facilities. There will also need to be effective governance and leadership.

Chapter 3: Development and Planning Issues

The issues, which have to be considered when we discuss the future of Port Stephens rural lands, can be grouped into two broad headings of:

- Environmental Opportunities and Constraints
- Social and Economic Factors

There are a number of uses and issues which influence the settlement pattern of Port Stephens LGA. The resources necessary to use the land are finite and need to be conserved. There are a number of constraints to the use of the land and the resource.

Underlying all of the issues are the philosophies of Ecologically Sustainable Development (ESD) and Catchment Management. It is shown graphically in figure 3.1. The figure illustrates the interconnectedness of the issues and the fact they all must be considered in relation to each other and cannot be considered in isolation.

ESD embodies the three concepts of:

- Environmental conservation
- Social equity
- Economic prosperity

All three are interrelated and have to be considered as such. The environment in which we live has to be treated carefully so we can ensure it is left in a good state for the future generations. However, for there to be future generations, we must have settlements in which to live – be they urban areas or rural residential use or in houses scattered throughout the countryside. If we are going to live in an area, there also must be a market economy. There is a need to find the balance between these three so we can have a sustainable future and can leave an intact environment to the future generations.

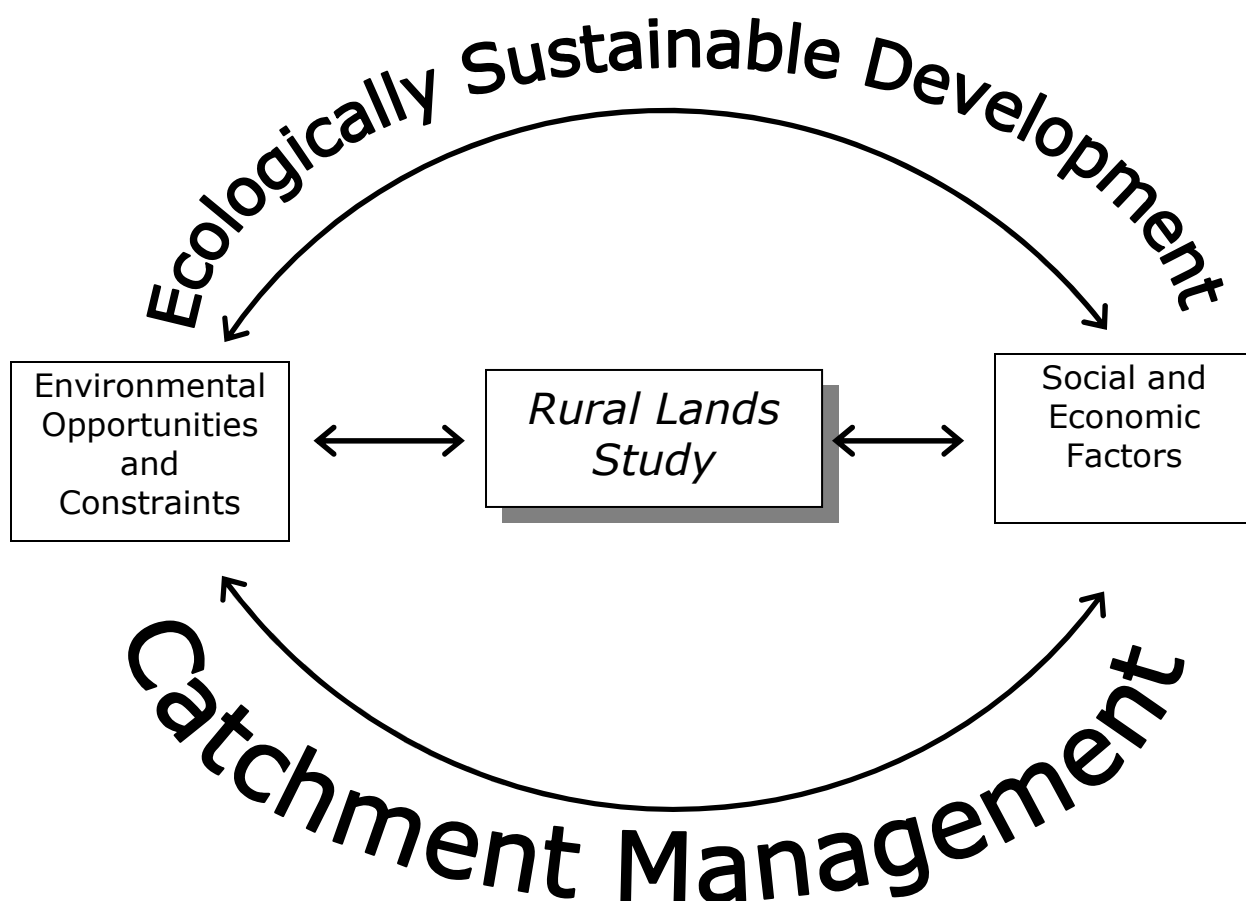


Figure 3.1: Issues and Themes for the Growth Management Study

Source: Sinclair 2002d

The issues to be considered by the Rural Strategy are outlined in detail in Chapter 5 of the Rural Lands Study. They are listed below:

Environmental Opportunities and Constraints

- Climate Change
- Water Catchments
- Native Vegetation and Biodiversity
- Topography
- Soils
- Landscape Character
- Bushfire Hazard
- Flood Prone Land
- Acid Sulfate Soils
- Contaminated Lands
- Weeds

Social and economic factors

- Land Use
- Rural Land Use Conflict
- Rural Residential Development
- Towns and Villages
- Economic Development
- Sustainable Agriculture
- Domestic Effluent Management
- Heritage
- Emerging Social Issues
- Infrastructure

Chapter 4: Strategy

4.1 Vision

A Vision for the LGA is stated in the current Council Plan and it is considered appropriate to adopt it for the Rural Strategy. It is as follows:

"A great lifestyle in a treasured environment"

The Council Plan also outlines a mission statement which provides some more description of the Vision. It is as follows:

Port Stephens Council facilitates a healthy and prosperous community by planning and delivering services that achieve a balanced approach towards social, economic, cultural and environmental considerations through business excellence.

The preparation of a set of specific strategies for the rural lands will help to achieve the stated vision and mission of the Council.

This Vision can be achieved by the adoption of the growth management philosophy, development principles, objectives, implementation strategies and policy actions that have been provided in this document.

4.2 Growth Management Philosophy

Growth Management is the mechanism by which the growth of an area can be managed. It has to consider the rural and urban areas. The growth management philosophy should consider the broader policy framework of plans and policies affecting land use. It also must consider Ecologically Sustainable Development and Catchment Management.

The growth management philosophy for the rural lands is as follows:

- Limit expansion to the towns which have the capacity for growth;
- Encourage a wide range of agricultural and other complementary rural uses such as tourism having regard to environmental impact.
- Ensure that communities have an adequate level of facilities and services to ensure a good quality of life for all residents
- Embody the concepts of:
 - Ecologically Sustainable Development
 - Catchment Management, including the Actions in the Hunter and Central Rivers Catchment Action Plan.

4.3 Conservation and Development Principles

When considering the preparation of a strategy for the future, it is necessary to outline a series of principles under which development should take place. These are intended to be used by Council when it is considering development applications and proposals for the rezoning of land. They are set out below and are grouped into categories that match the categories for the strategies outlined later in this Chapter.

Growth Management

- Embody the concepts of Ecologically Sustainable Development;
- Recognise the impact of climate change on the future settlement pattern and rural lands of the LGA;
- Provide a choice of living opportunities and types of settlement;
- Establish and adhere to a settlement hierarchy;
- Limit expansion to those settlements that have the capacity for growth;
- Avoid development in areas of conservation significance;

Land Use Planning

- Develop a land use framework that provides certainty for the residents;
- Allow for there to be flexibility in the implementation of land use policies;
- Ensure that current and future agriculture is not compromised by fragmentation of rural land
- Ensure that there are sufficient land stocks to meet the residential needs of the community;

Community Services and Quality of Life

- Ensure that people living in rural areas and settlements have access to an appropriate level of community services and facilities

Economic Growth

- Provide for a diversity of employment opportunities which capitalise on the economic strengths of Port Stephens;
- Develop strategies to retain the existing businesses;
- Ensure that the current diversity of economic activity continues;
- Build on the industry sectors that have been identified as the drivers of the future economy;
- Encourage a wide range of agricultural and other complementary rural uses such as tourism having regard to environmental impact;
- Target job opportunities and education that allows for the retention of young people in the community;

Infrastructure

- Ensure that there is appropriate infrastructure provided to the people living in the towns and villages as outlined in the settlement hierarchy as well as the rural areas;
- Plan for population growth to minimise the impact of development on the road system;
- Ensure that where necessary, adequate upgrading of roads, recreation and community facilities occurs in association with development;
- Coordinate with the relevant Government Authorities to ensure provision of Police, Ambulance, Health and Education services and facilities in association with development;
- Ensure that there is adequate transport infrastructure (road and rail) to transport the commodities produced in the LGA to markets.

Water Catchments

- Embody the concept of Catchment Management, including the actions in the Hunter – Central Rivers Catchment Action Plan.
- Protect the water quality of the Hunter and Williams Rivers and their tributaries;
- Where possible, improve the water quality of rivers, creeks and other water bodies;

Ecological Management and Biodiversity

- Enhance and maintain the ecological integrity of the LGA and region;
- Protect and conserve the biodiversity of the region;
- Ensure that habitat of flora and fauna is conserved;

Scenic Landscapes

- Protect the integrity of both working and natural landscapes;
- Ensure that development has regard to the natural values and features;

Heritage

- Identify and preserve the heritage and culture of Port Stephens LGA

Natural Hazards

- Recognise the impact of natural hazards on the future settlement pattern and rural land uses.
- Recognise the impact of climate change on natural hazards and that it can exacerbate some impacts.

4.4 Strategies

The strategies listed below outline the matters that need to be considered when looking at the future of the rural lands. They incorporate objectives, implementation strategies and policy actions.

The strategies have been grouped into the two categories outlined in Chapter 3 and are as follows:

Social and Economic Factors	Environmental Opportunities and Constraints
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Growth Management▪ Land Use Planning▪ Community Services and Quality of Life▪ Economic Growth▪ Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Water Catchments▪ Ecological Management and Biodiversity▪ Scenic Landscapes▪ Heritage and Culture▪ Natural Hazards

The implementation strategies contained in this section expand on the objectives and state how they are to be achieved and point towards the policy and actions that are

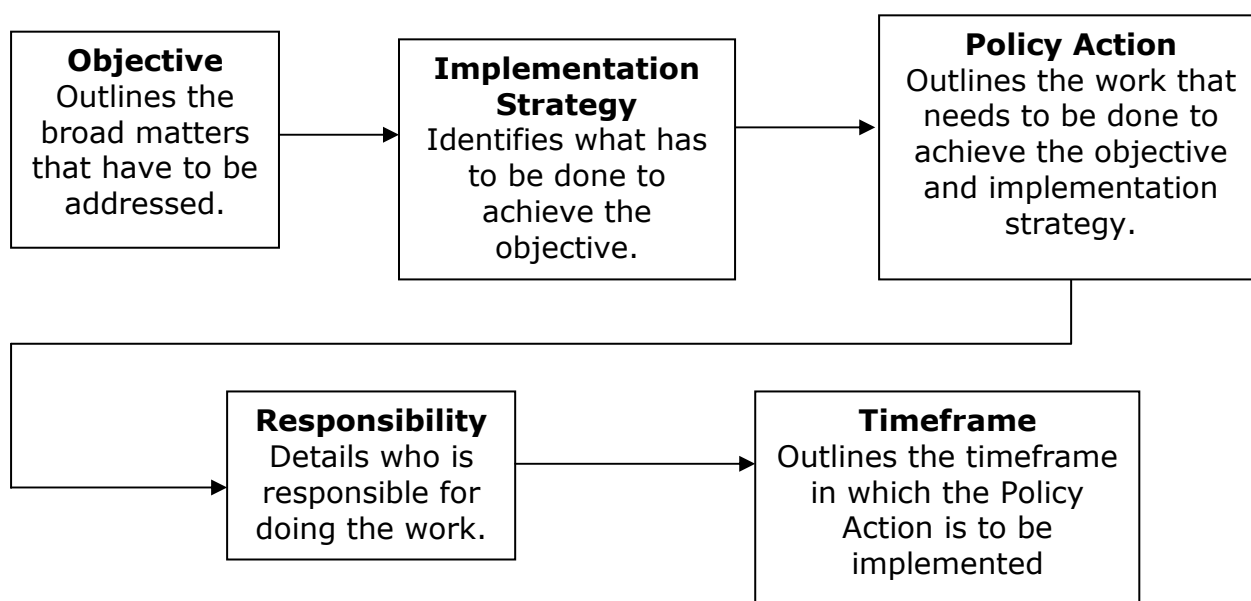
Port Stephens Rural Strategy

required to carry out the strategy. The policy actions outline the detail of the strategies and provide an indication of what work is required.

This Section is laid out so that it is easy to identify what actions are required for the strategies. The following chart shows how it is to be read.

The timeframe has been selected to allow them to be built into the State and Local political processes and are broken into three sections:

- *short term* which is nought to two years,
- *medium term* which is two to five years, and
- *long-term* which is five years and beyond.



4.5 Social and Economic Factors

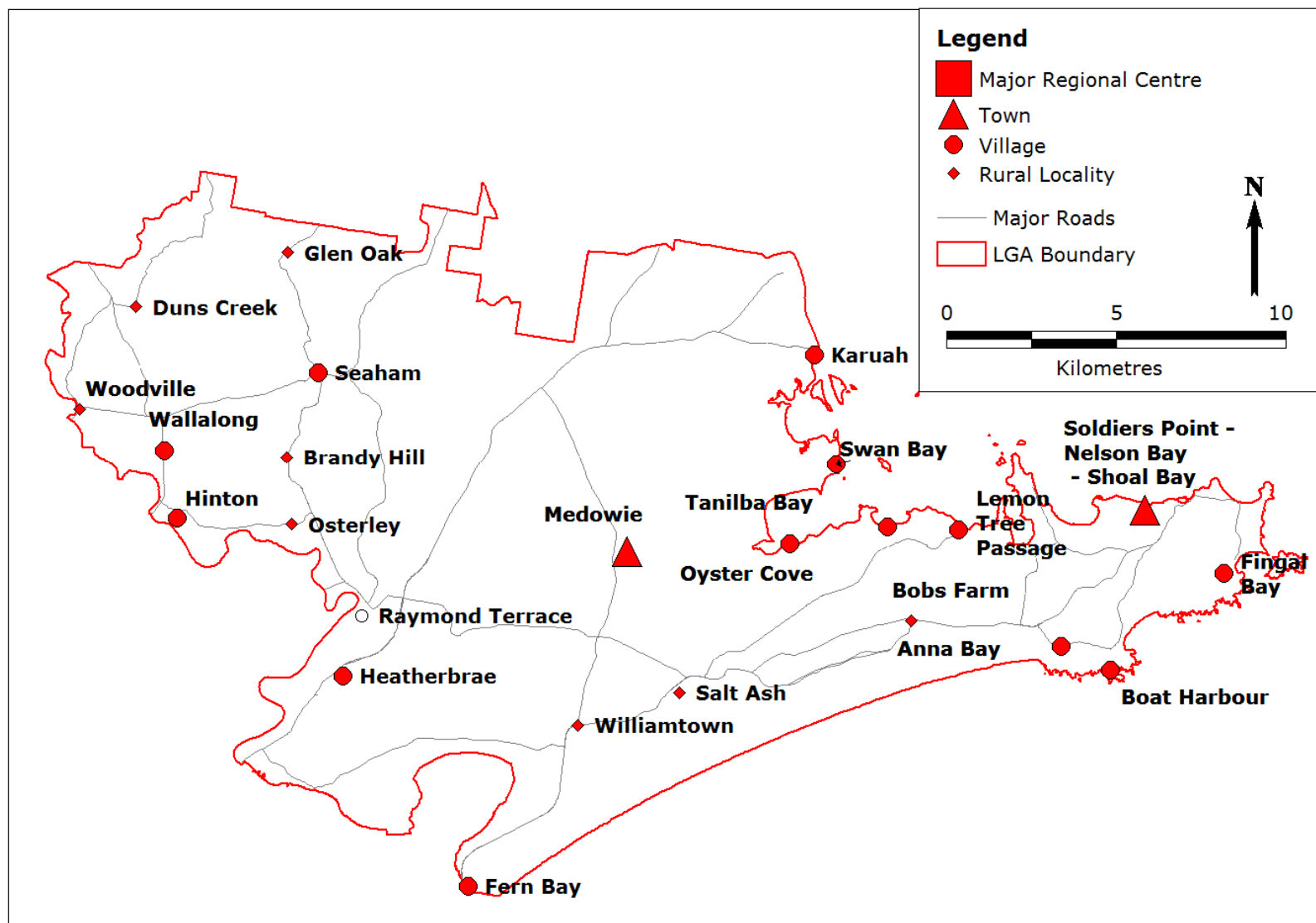
4.5.1. Growth Management

Objective: Provide for coordinated and effective and sustainable growth the economic, social and environmental aspects of the LGA.

<i>Implementation Strategy</i>	<i>Policy Action</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>Time-frame</i>
1. Promote a balanced approach to growth that provides for sustainable growth management.	1.1 Adopt the growth management philosophy and development principles outlined in section 4.2 and 4.3 of this document	Council	Short term and ongoing
2. Acknowledge that Climate Change may have positive and negative impacts on the LGA	2.1 Form a partnership with the Department of Environment, Climate Change & Water and the Hunter-Central Rivers CMA to prepare some educational documents about the impacts of climate change on the LGA.	Council, DECCW and HCR CMA	
3. Prepare a hierarchy of settlements.	<p>3.1 Adopt the settlement hierarchy outlined in section 6.3.1 of Rural Lands Study which is shown on map 4.1 and as outlined below:</p> <p><i>Regional City:</i> Newcastle <i>Major Regional Centre:</i> Raymond Terrace <i>Town:</i> Anna Bay, Medowie, Soldiers Point Salamander Bay, Nelson Bay, Tanilba Bay <i>Village:</i> Boat Harbour, Fern Bay, Corlette Fingal Bay, Heatherbrae, Hinton, Karuah, Lemon Tree Passage,</p>	Council and Government Agencies	Short to medium term

Port Stephens Rural Strategy

Implementation Strategy	Policy Action	Responsibility	Time-frame
	<p>Oyster Cove, Seaham, Shoal Bay Swan Bay, Wallalong Bobs Farm, Brandy Hill, Duns Creek, Glen Oak, Iona, Osterley, Williamtown, Woodville</p> <p><i>Rural Locality."</i></p> <p>3.2 Allow for the growth and future development of the towns and villages.</p> <p>3.3 Provide for rural residential development only in areas that have adequate access to services and facilities.</p> <p>3.4 Provide a mix of housing opportunities which includes urban, rural residential and farm housing.</p> <p>3.5 Ensure that any rural residential development is located as close as possible to the nearest urban area.</p> <p>3.6 Ensure that any rural residential development is not located on land that is subject to flood inundation in the 1% AEP flood.</p>		
4. Provide for the economic, social and cultural growth and in particular, maintain and enhance rural job opportunities.	4.1 Prepare Strategies for the economic and social growth in Port Stephens.	Council	Short Term



Map 4.1: Settlement Hierarchy

4.5.2. Land Use Planning

Objective: Develop a land use framework that will give a level of certainty to the people who live in the Port Stephens LGA

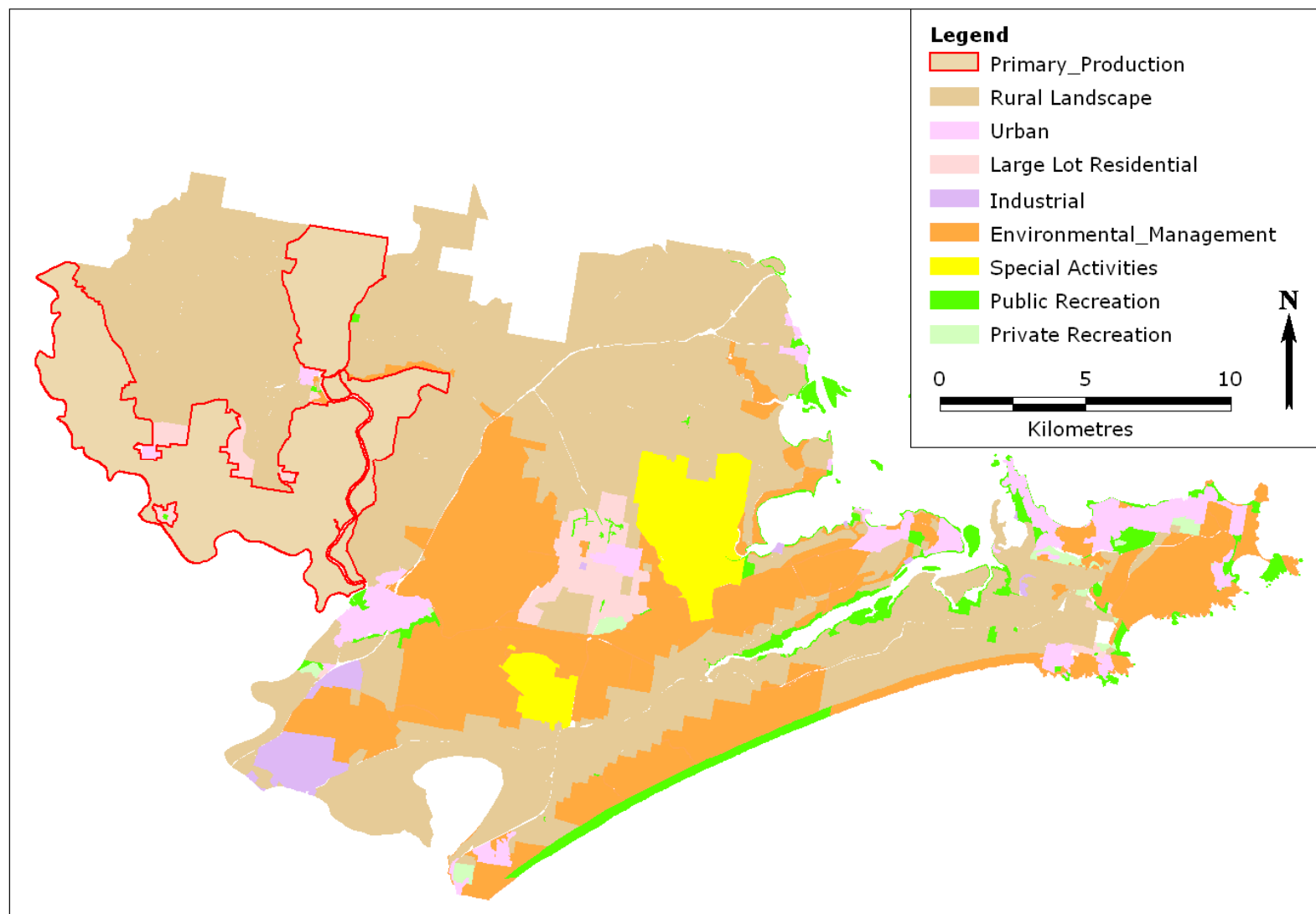
Implementation Strategy	Policy Action	Responsibility	Time-frame
1. Develop a new suite of land use designations.	<p>1.1. Adopt the following land use designations as outlined on map 4.2:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Primary Production ▪ Rural Landscape ▪ Village ▪ Large Lot Residential ▪ Urban ▪ Industrial ▪ Environmental Management ▪ Special Activities ▪ Public Recreation ▪ Private Recreation <p>1.2 Prepare a draft LEP to formalise these as statutory zones, in accordance with the Standard Instrument LEP.</p>	Council and Department of Planning	Short term
2. Include in each land use designation a set of desired future character statements which will provide the basis for the objectives of each zone.	<p>2.1. Prepare a set of desired future character statements for each of the land use designations which address the following matters:</p> <p>2.1.1. <i>Primary Production</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To encourage sustainable primary industry production by maintaining and enhancing the natural resource base. ▪ To encourage diversity in primary industry enterprises and systems appropriate for the area. 	Council	Short term

<i>Implementation Strategy</i>	<i>Policy Action</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>Time-frame</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To minimise the fragmentation and alienation of resource lands. ▪ To minimise conflict between land uses within the zone and land uses within adjoining zones. ▪ To protect and enhance native vegetation and the quality of existing waterways and water resources. ▪ To ensure that development does not: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ generate significant additional traffic, or create or increase a condition of ribbon development on any road, relative to the capacity and safety of the road, and ⇒ create unreasonable or uneconomic demands for the provision or extension of public amenities or services. ▪ To ensure that development has proper regard to the environmental constraints of land and minimises any off and on site impacts on biodiversity, water resources and natural landforms.. <p><i>2.1.2. Rural Landscape</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To encourage sustainable primary industry production by maintaining and enhancing the natural resource base. ▪ To maintain the rural landscape character of the land. ▪ To provide for a range of compatible land uses, including extensive agriculture. ▪ To protect and enhance native vegetation and the quality of existing waterways and water resources. ▪ To ensure that development does not: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ generate significant additional traffic, or create or increase a condition of ribbon 		

<i>Implementation Strategy</i>	<i>Policy Action</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>Time-frame</i>
	<p>development on any road, relative to the capacity and safety of the road, and</p> <p>⇒ create unreasonable or uneconomic demands for the provision or extension of public amenities or services.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To ensure that development has proper regard to the environmental constraints of land and minimises any off and on site impacts on biodiversity, water resources and natural landforms. <p><i>2.1.3. Large Lot Residential</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To provide residential housing in a rural setting while preserving, and minimising impacts on, environmentally sensitive locations and scenic quality. ▪ To ensure that large residential allotments do not hinder the proper and orderly development of urban areas in the future. ▪ To ensure that development in the area does not unreasonably increase the demand for public services or public facilities. ▪ To minimise conflict between land uses within the zone and land uses within adjoining zones. ▪ To ensure that development has proper regard to the environmental constraints of land and minimises any off and on site impacts on biodiversity, water resources and natural landforms. 		

Port Stephens Rural Strategy

<i>Implementation Strategy</i>	<i>Policy Action</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>Time-frame</i>
3. Identify minimum lot sizes that will enable the continuation of the use of the land for agriculture.	3.1. Adopt a minimum lot size for subdivision and dwelling houses of 20 ha in the Rural Landscape Designation and 40 ha in the Primary Production Designation.	Council	Short term
4. Prepare management guidelines for truck depots within the rural lands	4.1. Prepare development controls to manage truck parking on rural land and to limit this to one truck and two pieces of plant.		
5. Ensure that there is adequate provision for tourist facilities	5.1. Provide for tourist accommodation in urban areas ensuring that they do not detract from the amenity of the area. 5.2. Provide for tourist accommodation for small-scale bed and breakfast accommodation and tourism activities in Rural designations which are consistent with the environmental capacity of the area.	Council	
6. Prepare management guidelines for land uses in the LGA.	6.1. Prepare a Development Control Plan to provide effective and appropriate land use management guidelines for rural and urban land.	Council	Short term



Map 4.2: Rural Land Designations

4.5.3. Community Services and Quality of Life

Objective: Ensure that residents have adequate access to and equity for the provision of services and facilities.

<i>Implementation Strategy</i>	<i>Policy Action</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>Time-frame</i>
1 Assess the adequacy of the services and facilities provided to the people who live in the rural areas of Port Stephens LGA.	1.1 Carry out a survey and consultation program with the people living in rural areas to ascertain their needs. This is to be done in conjunction with the Social Plan.	Council and State Government	Short to medium term
2 Improve the delivery of services and facilities to provide for an adequate quality of life for the residents	2.1 Improve the amount of aged accommodation, public transport, youth employment opportunities.	Council and State Government	Short to medium term
3 Recognise and support the cultural diversity of Port Stephens LGA .	3.1 Develop plans to ensure that the cultural diversity of the Port Stephens LGA is preserved and fostered.	Council	Short to medium term
4 Monitor the provision of services and facilities for the people who live in rural areas to ensure that they are receiving adequate level of service.	4.1 Prepare a set of Quality of life indicators which can be measured and used to assess the level of service provided to the people of rural areas. This is to be done in conjunction with the Social Plan.	Council and State Government	Short to medium term

4.5.4. Economic and Employment Opportunities

Objective: To provide for economic development opportunities that is in keeping with the character of Port Stephens LGA

<i>Implementation Strategy</i>	<i>Policy Action</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>Time-frame</i>
1 Prepare an Economic Development Strategy LGA incorporating rural land uses.	1.1 Focus economic development on the key sectors of Tourism and Agriculture.	Council	Short Term
2 Facilitate a wider tourism focus for the rural lands	2.1 Implement the recommendations outlined in section 6.6 of the Rural Lands Study	Council	Short term and ongoing
3 Collaborate with local organisations to develop a plan for the future economic prosperity of the LGA	3.1 Liaise with the local community business groups to identify common issues that can be pursued together	Council	Short Term and ongoing
4 Continue to promote and support the existing businesses	4.1 In conjunction with Regional Business Enterprise services and local Chambers of Commerce advise the existing businesses of relevant opportunities and provide updates on best business practices, funding opportunities, etc. 4.2 Encourage the Chambers of Commerce to investigate adopting the Economic Gardening concept.	Council, and Government Agencies	Ongoing

4.5.5. Infrastructure Requirements

Objective: Provide an adequate level of infrastructure for the people who live and work in the Port Stephens LGA.

<i>Implementation Strategy</i>	<i>Policy Action</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>Time-frame</i>
1 Provide development only in areas that have adequate road access	1.1 Prepare a plan to ensure that there is adequate levels of access to each of the villages and towns with the Regional and Major Regional Centres in the settlement hierarchy.	Council	Short term and ongoing
2 Ensure that development does not have a detrimental impact on the safe operations of the State Highways within the LGA	2.1 Adopt the 5 Principles for Managing land uses along the highways as outlined in chapter 5 of the Rural Lands Study.	Council and RTA	Short term and ongoing
3 Ensure that there are adequate Community facilities to house the required level of social services.	3.1 Develop and implement action plans for the rural villages and centres to ensure that the appropriate levels of infrastructure are provided.	Council and Government Agencies	Short to medium term
4 Ensure that Recreation facilities are adequate to serve the needs of the residents of rural areas.	4.1 Develop and implement action plans for the rural villages and centres to ensure that the appropriate levels of infrastructure are provided.	Council and Government Agencies	Short to medium term

4.6 Environmental Opportunities and Constraints

4.6.1. Water Catchments

Objective: To ensure that the quality of surrounding waterways is not adversely affected by development.

Implementation Strategy	Policy Action	Responsibility	Time-frame
1. Consider the cumulative impact of development on the catchment.	1.1 Establish a set of Catchment Health Indicators by which the cumulative impact of development can be measured and managed.	Council and, CMA and DECCW	Short Term
2. Work in partnership with the State Government Agencies to ensure that the catchments of the LGA remain sustainable	2.1 Implement, where practicable, the relevant actions of the Hunter-Central Rivers Catchment Action Plan. 2.2 Work with State Agencies to undertake education activities with rural landholders to improve the water quality of runoff from agricultural areas	Council, CMA and Industry and Investment	Short to medium term
3. Ensure new development is located so it does not have a detrimental impact on nearby watercourses.	3.1 Establish a development control that requires development to be located an appropriate distance from waterways and develop means of protecting riparian zones. 3.2 Establish a development control relating to the protection of buffers to wetlands. 3.3 Maintain adequate groundcover on Council managed land. 3.4 Ensure that aquatic habitat is adequately conserved.	Council	On-going
5 Ensure that the most appropriate sewage disposal system is provided for all land in the rural and urban areas	5.1 Adopt a policy of not permitting subdivision of rural land less than 1 ha unless it can be connected to a reticulated sewerage system.	Council	Short to medium term

Port Stephens Rural Strategy

<i>Implementation Strategy</i>	<i>Policy Action</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>Time-frame</i>
6. Ensure development does not increase the sedimentation load in surrounding water bodies.	6.1 All development is to utilise best management practices for soil and water management on the site.	Council and CMA	On-going
7. Ensure new development is located so it does not have a detrimental impact on nearby watercourses.	7.1 All development to be located an appropriate distance from waterways and develop means of protecting riparian zones.	Council	On-going
8. Ensure Domestic and other forms of Effluent Disposal does not have a detrimental impact on water quality.	8.1 On-site effluent disposal is to be in accordance with a DCP dealing with On-site Sewage Management and the NSW Environment and Health Protection Guidelines for On-site Sewage Management for Single Households.	Council	On-going

4.6.2. Ecological Management and Biodiversity

Objective: To ensure that the ecological integrity of the rural lands are enhanced and maintained.

Implementation Strategy	Policy Action	Responsibility	Time-frame
1 Recognise and understand the biodiversity values of the rural lands of the LGA.	1.1 Prepare plans linking core areas of remnant vegetation to facilitate species migration. 1.2 Establish a land use and management approach consistent with State, regional, local biodiversity goals. 1.3 Consider the implementation of environment protection zones and other measures to protect significant biodiversity areas.	Council and Government Agencies in partnership with the community	Short term and ongoing
2 Preserve the existing biodiversity habitat on private lands throughout rural areas.	2.1 Identify and protect significant areas of native vegetation.	Council	Short term
3 Encourage the State Government to continue to investigate and identify the biodiversity values of Port Stephens LGA	3.1 Implement actions in the NSW Government Biodiversity Strategy and Australian Local Government Biodiversity Strategy that relate to the Port Stephens LGA	Government Agencies in partnership with the community	Short term and ongoing
4 Increase awareness and involvement in identifying, protecting and enhancing biodiversity.	4.1 Prepare guidelines for tree / vegetation evaluation including use of the 7 part test for significance under the provisions of the Threatened Species Conservation Act (for DA Assessment).	Council and Government Agencies	Short term and ongoing
5 Increase awareness and compliance with weed management strategies	5 Continue to enforce the Noxious Weeds Act and implement weed management programs	Council and Government Agencies	

4.6.3. Natural and Working Landscapes

Objective: Ensure that development has a minimal impact on the natural and modified scenic landscape of Port Stephens LGA

Implementation Strategy	Policy Action	Responsibility	Time-frame
1 Incorporate the preservation of landscape into a development control plan for the LGA .	1.1 Ensure that dwelling houses in rural areas are classified as local development under the provisions of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act. 1.2 Develop guidelines for the siting and design of buildings in the rural landscape.	Council	Short term and ongoing

4.6.4. Heritage and Culture

Objective: To preserve the rural heritage and culture of Port Stephens LGA.

Implementation Strategy	Policy Action	Responsibility	Time-frame
1. Ensure that the heritage resources of Port Stephens LGA are protected	1.1 Implement the recommendations of the Heritage Study.		
2. Protect and enhance the recognised heritage values.	1.2 Prepare guidelines to ensure that the heritage values of the landscape are preserved and not harmed by development and incorporate these into a LEP and / or DCP.	Council	Short term
3. Conserve the Aboriginal Heritage significance of Port Stephens LGA	1.3 Ensure adequate provisions are in the LEP to protect Aboriginal Heritage.	Council	Short term
4. Promote and support the rural culture of the LGA	1.4 Publish information on heritage items and include in community and tourist information 1.5 Support cultural and tourist activities which	Council	Short term

Port Stephens Rural Strategy

Implementation Strategy	Policy Action	Responsibility	Time-frame
	promote rural heritage eg local shows, agricultural days, heritage tourist trails etc		
5. Provide incentives to protect the heritage values.	1.6 Encourage landowners to carry out a heritage curtilage study and conservation plans of historic homesteads including homestead gardens.	Council	

4.6.5. Natural Hazards

Objective: Recognise the impact of natural hazards on future land use and settlement.

Implementation Strategy	Policy Action	Responsibility	Time-frame
1. Consider the impact of climate change on the environment of the LGA.	1.1 Liaise with the CMA and other Government agencies to address the possible responses to climate change on water demand, energy requirements and the cost of living in the LGA in the future.	Council, CMA and Government Agencies	Short term and ongoing
2. Ensure bush fire risk is considered in all future settlement areas.	2.1 Ensure that all future rezoning of land adheres to the principles of Planning for Bushfire Protection 2006. 2.2 Provide information on the Bushfire regulations covering Port Stephens LGA. 2.3 Provide information on the Emergency Services Disaster Management and Response Plan.	Council and Government Agencies	Short term
3. Ensure that land degradation is minimised.	3.1 Do not allow development to occur on land where vegetation clearing will result in unacceptable levels of erosion. 3.2 Ensure developers and residents are aware of best land management practices for maintenance of ground cover and thus	Council and Government Agencies	

Port Stephens Rural Strategy

Implementation Strategy	Policy Action	Responsibility	Time-frame
	minimising erosion.		
4. Minimise the potential of acid sulfate soils to cause a hazard	4.1 Ensure that development avoids areas of potential acid sulfate soils.	Council and Government Agencies	
5. Identify the flooding of land as a constraint to future development.	5.1 Ensure that localised flooding is taken into account when assessing DAs for dwellings that have access over watercourses. 5.2 Identify flood prone lands within the LGA and particularly those areas where flooding poses a significant risk to new development or productive land management. 5.3 Identify areas where flooding could be exacerbated by inappropriate development in the locality or upstream. 5.4 Provide information on the Emergency Services Disaster Management and Response Plan.	Council and Government Agencies	

Chapter 10: Conclusion

Port Stephens LGA is located in the Hunter Region of New South Wales. It has a mixture of coastal and inland areas. The LGA is predominantly rural, with expanding urban areas and some industrial and commercial land uses as well as a significant number of rural residential uses. There is a large military base which also shares some infrastructure with the rapidly expanding Newcastle Airport. The land area of the LGA is 850.085 square kilometres, with a significant proportion of the area being National Park, State Forest and nature reserves. The main industries are tourism, agriculture, manufacturing, fishing and oyster farming. Settlement is based in the township of Raymond Terrace, several townships around the port/peninsulas, in the villages of Karuah and Medowie and in many rural localities.

The rural land within the LGA provides an important resource, both for the LGA and the wider region. This resource consists of a number of components:

- Productive agriculture
- Rural landscapes
- Towns and villages
- Waterways
- Native vegetation
- Industry
- Community facilities and services
- Cultural heritage

There is a need to plan for the future of the rural lands of LGA to ensure that it is conserved for future generations and so that the environmental, social and economic issues can all be addressed to achieve a balanced and sustainable future.

This Strategy provides the outcomes and recommendations taken from the Port Stephens Rural Lands Study which has been separately published as a companion document to this.

A growth management philosophy has been outlined which reinforces the desire to remain sustainable. A set of development principles have been prepared to guide future development to ensure that it achieves the balance between a productive economy, social sustainability and minimising environmental impacts. The strategies prepared canvas the areas of social and economic factors and environmental opportunities and constraints within the local government area.

It is now necessary for the Council to implement the strategies outlined in this document so that development in the LGA can be sustainable into the future and the LGA lands continue to make a positive contribution to the identity and social, environmental and economic sustainability of Port Stephens LGA.