

Your Port

Summer 2026

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Photo: Destination NSW

Mayor's Message: Leah Anderson



Welcome to 2026! I've loved seeing our community come together over the Summer months, from wonderful family-friendly events and programs hosted in our libraries and public spaces, right through to celebrating the New Year with the spectacular d'Albora Port Stephens New Year's Eve Fireworks in Nelson Bay. With so many visitors choosing Port Stephens for their holidays, it's been wonderful to see our cafes, restaurants, accommodation providers and tour operators buzzing with activity.

As we enter 2026, I've been reflecting on what we achieved last year and the work still ahead. The natural disasters of 2025 might feel like a distant memory for some, but the recovery work continues every day. We're working closely with the State Government to secure the funding needed to repair our damaged roads. This process takes time, as we conduct inspections and wait for water levels to recede. The funding we seek is crucial for restoring our roads to their pre-disaster conditions. As claims are approved, we appreciate your patience and support during this recovery process.

Alongside this recovery work on our roads, we're staying focused on delivering housing. Last year, we approved enough new homes to meet state housing targets, including doubling approvals for higher-density housing

like dual occupancies (two homes on one lot). We've also introduced measures to help lower costs for developers building affordable rental housing, and are progressing plans to deliver new homes on Council-owned land. All of this helps bring a wider range of housing options closer to our town centres.

As we focus on driving investment into Port Stephens and attracting infill development, we'll continue pushing for critical infrastructure to support our growing community's needs. Investment in roads, drainage and pathways remains a priority throughout 2026.

Another exciting milestone was the opening of the new international terminal at Newcastle Airport, connecting us to new destinations like Perth, Hobart, and Bali. Connectivity is expanding further, with services to Singapore commencing in March 2026 via a convenient 90-minute stopover in Bali, and new direct flight paths to London, Paris, and Johannesburg, all accessible via Perth.

I truly believe it's so much more than just an airport. It's a major driver of our regional economy, boosting tourism, opening doors for new business and creating jobs. I'm looking forward to seeing the benefits continue to grow this year.

As we move forward into this promising new year, I encourage you to stay up to date by subscribing to our monthly e-newsletter, Your Port, on our website.

Thank you for your continued support and engagement in making Port Stephens a better place to live, work, and invest.

Leah Anderson, Mayor of Port Stephens

Delivering for Port Stephens



Road maintenance trial

As part of our commitment to improving our local roads, in December we conducted a trial of four semi-permanent pothole repair products on sections of Medowie Road and Lemon Tree Passage Road. These roads are vital transport links for our residents, workers, and visitors and have long been a concern due to frequent pavement failures and potholes, worsened by ongoing wet weather.

This trial aims to tackle persistent issues by testing more durable, cost-effective solutions for high-traffic areas. The products, some of which can be applied in the rain, have been used successfully by other Councils. While they may have a higher upfront cost, we expect they will lead to longer term savings, minimising delays, and reducing wear and tear on vehicles, and ultimately improving safety and service for the community.

We'll closely monitor and evaluate the performance of these products over the next 12 months, using the insights gained to shape our future road maintenance strategies. To stay updated on our progress and learn more about our road maintenance initiatives, please visit our Roads Hub at pscouncil.info/roads-hub



Making housing more affordable

We've been working on ways to make housing more affordable in Port Stephens by implementing actions from our Local Housing Strategy. Our updated Development Control Plan, a rulebook for building in Port Stephens, has reviewed controls for all housing types to find cost savings, make it easier to prepare simple housing applications and speeds up approvals. There's also a new online version, designed to help you find information easily and apply faster.

We've also endorsed an amendment to the Local Infrastructure Contributions Plan, which outlines how we fund local infrastructure through new development. We've reduced contribution costs for people building Affordable Rental Housing projects, encouraging developments in this vital category.

Learn more about our Local Housing Strategy at pscouncil.info/local-housing-strategy



Protecting our coastline

The Port Stephens coastline is vital for our lifestyle, tourism, and environment. To protect these natural assets and our community from coastal hazards, we've developed the Coastal Management Program (CMP). The CMP covers key areas from Fingal Bay to Stockton Beach and includes the inner and outer ports around Soldiers Point. With NSW Government certification secured, we're eligible for funding to implement 67 actions.

At Shoal Bay and Corlette Beach, we have installed sandbags, planted native vegetation, and relocated sand to prevent erosion and strengthen the natural shoreline. Additionally, we have upgraded the stormwater outlet at Corlette Beach, both to reduce erosion and to enhance public safety. Our ongoing commitment to biodiversity is reflected in continuous efforts to safeguard local marine life and improve water quality, ensuring a healthier environment for both people and nature.

Learn more at pscouncil.info/CMP2025

Shoal Bay FOOD & WINE FESTIVAL

Saturday 14 March 2026

Photo: Megann Evans Photography

SPONSORS

- NSW GOVERNMENT
- feel new south wales
- airbnb
- SHOAL BAY Come alive
- SHOAL BAY COUNTRY CLUB
- PORT STEPHENS COUNCIL
- PORT STEPHENS Incredible by Nature

Have your say



Every voice has value

We want you to get involved, find out information and have your say about important issues and projects in Port Stephens. Subscribe to our Have Your Say page to be the first to hear about our latest opportunities to provide your input pscouncil.info/have-your-say-subscribe



Community participation in planning proposals improved

We're excited to announce the adoption of our new Community Participation Plan (CPP). This Plan is an easy-to-use guide on how to engage with planning decisions. Thanks to the efforts of our Communication and Engagement Advisory Group, which consists of local community members and Councillors, this updated plan now encourages community input on planning proposals before they are officially submitted to Council. It also ensures broader community notification when a proposal is lodged through our website and local newspapers.

The updates are a significant achievement for our advisory group, which has advocated for increased transparency and community engagement in the planning process. To learn more about how you can participate in planning proposals, visit pscouncil.info/community-participation-plan



Medowie Town Centre Master Plan on Public Exhibition

Last year, we engaged with the Medowie community to develop a Master Plan for the Medowie Town Centre. The Master Plan, an action from the earlier Medowie Place Plan, will guide the development of land in this rapidly growing suburb to ensure it meets the needs of local residents.

The draft plan will be on public exhibition early this year until February 20, 2026. We encourage you to review the document and share your feedback to help shape the future of Medowie's Town Centre.

Have your say at pscouncil.info/public-exhibitions

Major projects – pscouncil.info/major-projects-works



COMPLETE

Shoal Bay Car Park, Shoal Bay

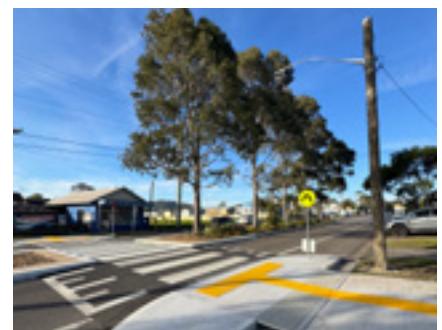
Formalisation and upgrade of existing carpark, with asphalt surface.
\$2.06M total current project budget.



IN PROGRESS

East Seaham Rd, East Seaham

Road realignment and pavement reconstruction of 3.1km length.
\$7.18M total current project budget.



SCHEDULED

Tarean Road, Karuah

Road pavement rehabilitation of 550m length from Tall Trees Road intersection. \$1.32M total current project budget.

Enriching our environment



Become a Koala Sanctuary Ambassador

The Port Stephens Koala Sanctuary is seeking volunteer ambassadors to enhance the visitor experience. As an ambassador, you'll welcome guests, share inspiring stories, lead guided tours on the Skywalk, and foster community connections to koala conservation. This is a fantastic opportunity to express your love for Port Stephens and help create unforgettable memories for visitors. With flexible hours, great working conditions, and a supportive team, volunteering at the Sanctuary is both rewarding and fulfilling. No prior experience is required, as we provide comprehensive training and ongoing support.

Join us in making a difference – become a Koala Sanctuary Ambassador today! Visit pscouncil.info/psks-ambassador



Don't forget to apply!

Applications are opening soon for several Port Stephens Council funding programs. These opportunities support a range of community initiatives, including projects that empower local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, provide support for community groups, enhance public spaces, and offer scholarships for women in our community. Mark these opening dates in your calendar:

Tuesday 13 January 2026

- International Womens Day Scholarship

Sunday 1 February 2026

- Aboriginal Project Fund (Round 2)
- Community Support Fund (Round 2)
- Vibrant Spaces Fund (Round 2)

Visit pscouncil.info/grants-funding-and-scholarships to apply!

Take 3 For the Sea



Plastic problem workshop and community beach clean-up

Saturday 21 February from 9am to 12:30pm at Birubi Beach, Anna Bay

Take 3 For the Sea is a hands-on event that aims to combat pollution in our waterways.

Learn more and reserve your spot at pscouncil.info/take-3-for-the-sea



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Disclaimer: This newsletter has been prepared by Port Stephens Council from information available as at Monday 5 January 2026. Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information herein, however Port Stephens Council accepts no responsibility for any consequences resulting from misdescription or inadvertent errors.

IT'S ON!

Key dates for your diary

January

Compost and worm farm workshop
17 January at Medowie Community Centre

Free NSW EPA Chemical CleanOut event
31 January at Council Administration Building, Raymond Terrace

February

Evening of conversation and cake with Reece Hignell – Cake Boi
12 February at Raymond Terrace Library and 13 February at Tomaree Library

Learn programming with Kids Crew sphero mini bots
19 February at Raymond Terrace and Tomaree Libraries

Take 3 For the Sea: plastic problem workshop and community beach clean up
21 February at Birubi Beach, Anna Bay

Compost and worm farm workshop
28 February at Fern Bay Community Hall

March

Shoal Bay Food and Wine Festival
14 March at Shoal Bay

Mattress and tyre drop off day
21 March at Salamander Bay

April

Mattress and tyre drop off day
11 April at Raymond Terrace

Find out what's on near you at pscouncil.info/events



Be bushfire ready

Bushfire is a part of life in NSW, so you need to live bushfire ready. That means knowing your risk and having a plan for what to do during a fire. Make your plan online in as little as five minutes at myfireplan.com.au

