ATTACHMENTS UNDER SEPARATE COVER

ORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING 25 OCTOBER 2022

PORT STEPHENS
COUNCIL

INDEX

Item No	Attach. No	Attachment Title	Page No
		COUNCIL REPORTS	
1	1	CONSOLIDATED REPORT - INDEPENDENT FINANCIAL ANALYSIS 2022.	4
2	1	2021-2022 ANNUAL FINANCIAL STATEMENTS.	122
3	3	PLANNERS ASSESSMENT REPORT.	233
4	4	PLANNERS ASSESSMENT REPORT.	264
5	1	MEDOWIE PLAN PLAN ENGAGEMENT REPORT.	295
5	2	DRAFT MEDOWIE PLACE PLAN.	363
8	1	DRAFT BOATING AND FISHING INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN.	407
8	2	ENGAGEMENT REPORT.	494

ITEM 1 - ATTACHMENT 1 CONSOLIDATED REPORT - INDEPENDENT FINANCIAL ANALYSIS 2022.

ATTACHMENT 1

PORT STEPHENS COUNCIL

Consolidated Report

Independent Financial Analysis – 2022

New England Education and Research Proprietary Limited
Emeritus Professor Brian Dollery & Professor Joseph Drew

council@portstephens.nsw.gov.au | 02 4988 0255 | PORTSTEPHENS.NSW.GOV.AU

Background

Port Stephens Council has engaged Professor Joseph Drew and Emeritus Professor Brian Dollery of the University of New England to commission four reports to aid in assessing Council's overall financial sustainability and a potential application for a special rate variation.

The Centre for Local Government at UNE is a multi-disciplinary centre for research, consultancy, and education activities to all sectors of Local Government. Of critical importance, Professor Drew has conducted similar reports for Cootamundra-Gundagai Council that were included in their successful 2021-22 SRV and was widely accepted by the community as an independent voice with a level of depth and insight beyond standard practices.

Report 1: Financial Sustainability

- Fifty metrics examined, rigorous empirical work including econometric modelling and data envelopment analysis, concludes that PSC is facing a financial crisis that needs to be addressed.
- While PSC has met its goal for operating ratio in the past, due to the ongoing impacts of COVID-19 this will not be possible in the short or long term. Stemming from the sudden drop-off in Holiday Park revenue, the absence of Airport dividends, and drastically reduced Children Services revenue.
- PSC has become exposed to commercial risks in its struggle to maintain sufficient revenues in addressing its inadequate rate base.
- A Special Rate Variation is recommended to address ongoing financial sustainability.

Report 2: Capacity to Pay

- The report details the insufficiency of rates revenue for PSC in the short to long term.
- Review of rate structure with suggestions to improve both distributive justice and capacity to pay. Concerns with lowering or abolishing base amounts.
- Recommended capacity for a double-digit SRV application size and 3-year length – refer to p105.

Report 3: Efficiency Report

- Results of Data Envelopment Analysis (DEA) show PSC performed close to the typical result being 0.75 (1 being perfectly efficient).
- Confirmation that ratepayers, Councillors and IPART can be assured that PSC provides good value for money.

Recommendations for further improved Efficiency
1. Explicit Measures to Combat Fiscal Illusion – targeted campaign
2. Abolish Ward Structures – 3.4% increase in unit expenditure per additional ward
3. Review Corporate Structure – emphasis on the number of lower-level managers
4. Service Level Review – aligning the current process with a willingness to pay
5. Council Led Internal Efficiencies – deferral of discretionary projects, better procurement process, capture tourist revenue, more appropriate use of carefully tailored fees and charges

Report 4: Debt Capacity

- Previous debt is associated with discretionary projects which exacerbate fiscal illusion.
- Advice that PSC is already close to its debt capacity ceiling. $5.3 million consolidated and special case view (excluding Airport) $20 million.
- Commends prudent financial management exemplified through actions taken to continuously maintain debt at the lowest rates.
- Advice to defer any new debt liabilities until reduced risks and SRV approval. Discouraged financing costs of debt through reserves or the sale of land.

Definition

Fiscal illusion *occurs when local ratepayers do not understand the financial circumstances of their local council and underestimate the true cost of current municipal service provision (p1., Financial Sustainability Report)*

3

Port Stephens Council Financial Sustainability Report

DISCLAIMER

This Report was prepared by Joseph Drew and Brian Dollery on behalf of New England Education and Research Proprietary Limited for the Port Stephens Council.This Report was produced for the Port Stephens Council as a strictly independent Report. The opinions expressed in the Report are thus exclusively the views of its authors and do not necessarily coincide with the views of the Port Stephens Councilor any other body. The information provided in this Report may be reproduced in whole or in part for media review, quotation in literature, or non-commercial purposes, subject to the inclusion of acknowledgement of the source and provided no commercial use or sale of the material occurs.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Financial Sustainability Report paints a rather grim picture of financial sustainability challenges facing Port Stephens Council. Indeed, matters could hardly be more serious. However, it is noteworthy that senior management – especially those involved in financial matters – have done a sterling job. There is thus good reason to believe that their efforts have been pivotal in averting a financial crisis thusfar.

In this Report we recommend a number of measures that should be taken as soon as possible to assure financial sustainability. The consequences of the COVID publicpolicy response are far from over and some of the worst effects, such as inflation, are only now starting to emerge.

Moreover, it is abundantly clear that a special rate variation (SRV) is essential moving forward. The matter is not simply about ensuring adequate revenue receipts(an immediate concern), but it is also a pre-requisite for ongoing financial sustainability and intergenerational equity, as well as a remedy for dispelling dangerous levels of fiscal illusion.

1. INTRODUCTION

Financial sustainability in local government can be defined as the ability to meet the reasonable expectations of current residents in a way that does not put at risk the capacity of future generations to meet their own needs (Drew and Dollery, 2020).

This definition requires current municipal taxpayers to at least fund their share of the consumption of long-lived assets, in addition to the full costs of operational programs. Moreover, it emphasises reasonable expectations and thus cautions against allowing fiscal illusion to develop. Fiscal illusion occurs when local ratepayers do not understand the financial circumstances of their local council and underestimate the true cost of current municipal service provision (Drew, 2021).

At present two New South Wales (NSW) local governments are in administration as a result of their failure to demonstrate financial sustainability. Moreover, a number of other local councils find themselves in a precarious financial position, most notably rural and remote councils, high growth coastal communities, and many of the entities created in the 2016 forced amalgamation program (Drew, 2021). Indeed, past financial failures have not been predicted by regulatory authorities and they also came as an unexpected shock to elected councillors (Drew and Campbell, 2016).

Every local government in NSW ought to be concerned about financial sustainability. Moreover, because budget repair for failed councils involves significant increases to intergovernmental grants derived from a relatively fixed quantum of money, each new failure places additional pressure and risk onto the remainder of the jurisdictional cohort. Furthermore, COVID-19 policy responses have imposed additional costs on local authorities, raised the spectre of a lengthy period of high inflation and interrupted both the predictability and flow of revenue. It is thus prudent to exercise extreme caution with respect to finances at this time, especially in view of the continued uncertain outlook regarding both the problem and the policy response (see Appendix 1).

This Report examines fifty metrics and reflects a combined five decades of scholarly expertise in local government economics and finance. The authors have reviewed relevant council documentation and regulatory policies to inform their judgements. In addition, discussions have been held with key stakeholders and rigorous empirical work (including econometric modelling and data envelopment analysis) has also been conducted to ensure an accurate picture of Port Stephen's financial sustainability is established.

The most reliable comparison – for the purposes of evaluating local government financial sustainability – is Council itself at different time periods. This is because service levels, structures and policies tend to remain fairly constant within the single municipal entity. However, inevitably local government decision-makers wish to gain an understanding regarding how they compare to similar communities. We have thus

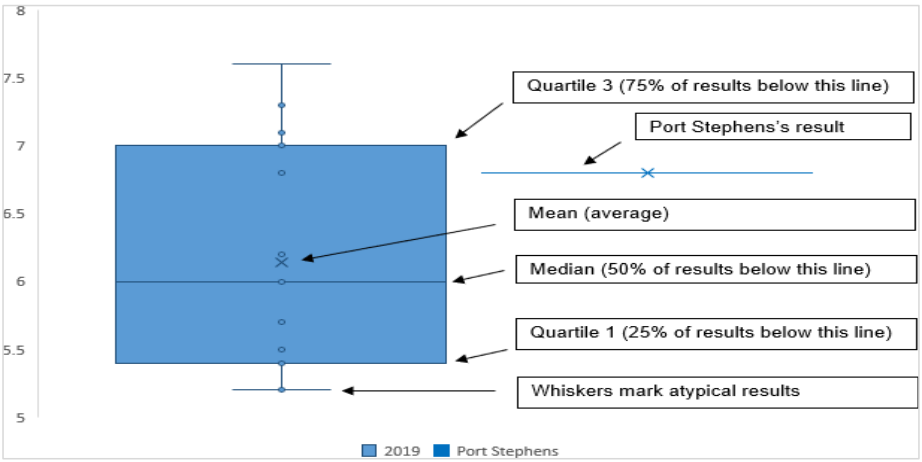
also compared Port Stephens' performance against a group of fourteen peer councils as detailed in Table 1. Peers have been drawn from multiple NSW Office of Local Government (OLG) categories as is appropriate when one wishes to have close comparisons and also acknowledges the chronic flaws in the extant classification system (Drew and Dollery, 2016).

TABLE 1. PEERS USED IN COMPARISONS

OLG 5 Councils	OLG 5 Councils	OLG 4 Councils	OLG 11 Councils
Coffs Harbour	Tweed	Cessnock	Muswellbrook
Newcastle	Maitland	Singleton	
Shoalhaven	Shellharbour	Tamworth	
Lake Macquarie	Wollongong	Wagga Wagga	
Port Macquarie			

Comparative data is presented in box and whisker plots which are the best way to illustrate a particular council's performance relative to its peer group. Figure 1 explains how best to interpret such a plot.

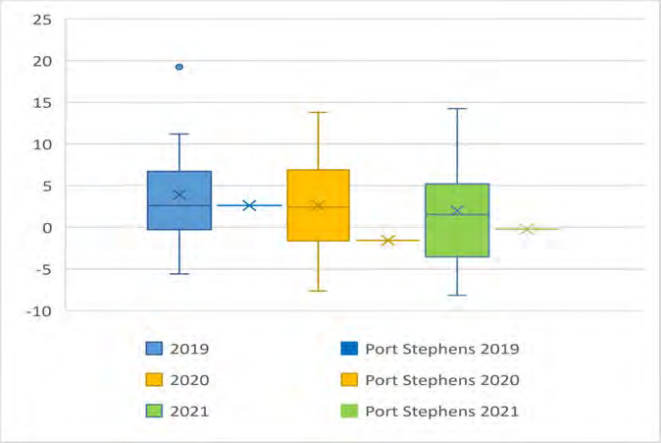
FIGURE 1. INTERPRETING BOX AND WHISKER PLOTS



5

2. ANALYSIS

FIGURE 2. OPERATING PERFORMANCE RATIO



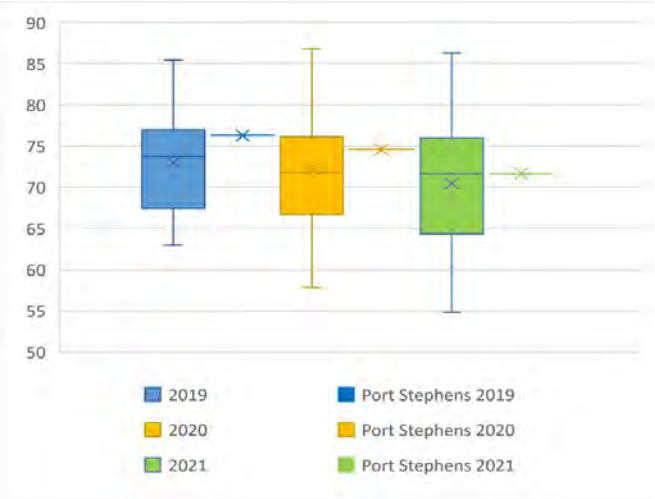
Perhaps the key ratio employed for decision making by councils and regulators alike is the operating ratio. Moreover, the Port Stephens Council's endeavours to keep this ratio above zero were prudent. However, it should be noted these prudent measures counted against it in its 2019-20 application for a Special Rate Variation (SRV)!

Unfortunately placing undue emphasis on a single ratio can tend to obscure important problems and risks associated with financial sustainability (which is why we survey some 49 other metrics in this Report). Historically, Port Stephens has tended to meet its goal of break-even on the operating ratio. However, since the advent of the COVID-19 policy responses, this has not been possible. The reason for this recent shortfall can be attributed largely to the sudden drop-off in commercial receipts, the absence of airport dividends, and drastically reduced services revenue[1].The results from the last few years highlight how exposed Port Stephens has become to commercial risk in its struggle to maintain sufficient revenues despite clearly inadequate taxation receipts.

[1] For 2021 the proportion of total fees and charges attributable to these non-core activities were: childcare (7.48%; $2,671 – all figures provided in thousands of dollars), holiday parks (40.60%; $14,506), and airport partnership (21.87%; $7,816) – in 2019 this was childcare (4.58%; $1,859), holiday parks (27.84%; $11,306), and airport partnerships (41.98%; $17,045).

As we will argue throughout this Report, inadequate taxation receipts have forced Port Stephens Council to take on significant risk which threatens financial sustainability, especially in the face of economic shocks. It is highly likely that furthershocks will occur in the future, either from COVID or some other unrelated problem. Moreover, it is by no means certain that Port Stephens will be able to withstand the impact of these potential imposts, unless significant action is undertaken to mitigate matters.

FIGURE 3. OWN SOURCE RATIO



In Figure 3 we present the own-source ratio which confirms our remarks about the operating results being associated with non-core local government revenues (and hence risk). Unfortunately, during the Fit for the Future program, a lot of uninformed commentary emerged regarding the need for local governments to grow their own-sourced revenue. Appropriate growth in own-source revenue – that is, for core local government services – is desirable because it improves the nexus between the cost of supply and the price paid and hence reduces fiscal illusion (see our observations with respect to the nexus ratio below). However, revenues obtained from non-core local government functions introduce heightened levels of risk and make communities more vulnerable in the face of economic shocks (as is clear from the 2021 financial year data in particular). Moreover, intergovernmental grants are critical for correcting

7

vertical fiscal imbalance[2] and also promoting horizontal fiscal equity[3], but also detract from the own-source revenue. Thus, it is sometimes the case that a high achievement in this metric may indeed be reflective, at least in part,of inadequate grant flows.

As Figure 4 demonstrates, financial assistance grants (FAGs) nominally allocated for the purposes of maintaining road infrastructure are inadequate for Port Stephens' needs. At present the council receives far less per kilometre than the typical peer group member (measured by either the median or the mean with the former being the more reliable statistic). For many years scholars have shown that the grant allocations in NSW – and indeed the whole country – are chaotic and indefensible as well as inconsistent with the clear intent of the enabling legislation (Drew and Dollery, 2014; Drew, 2021). It is notable that the most recent community satisfaction survey at Port Stephens pinpointed high levels of discontent with the road network (45% satisfaction with road maintenance; 68% satisfaction with roadside maintenance) and clearly insufficient grant flows are part of the problem. Moreover, ifgrant flows for roads remain insufficient, then it will be necessary and appropriate to significantly increase taxation receipts [4] (that is to receive an SRV) to ensure that adequate and sustainable maintenance of roads can be assured. Notably the problem with the road component of the FAGs is compounded by real reductions foreshadowed to the Roads to Recovery grants.

[2] Vertical fiscal imbalance refers to the fact that in most federal systems of government, the national government typically collects greater revenues than it requires to discharge its remit. In contrast, because local government has a narrow tax base the opposite is true.

[3] This refers to the desirability of all local governments being able to provide a basic minimum level of localservices. Because some regions are richer than others – and also because different communities exhibit varying levels of need – horizontal equity can rarely be achieved without a specific grant scheme.

[4] Because local roads are public goods (non-excludable and non-rival) the appropriate source of funding is taxation: either direct taxation through levying of rates or increased allocation of tax receipts originating with higher tiers of government (intergovernmental grant allocations).

FIGURE 4. ROAD GRANT PER KILOMETRE

Matters are better for the general component of FAGs, at least in a relative sense. Here the median is the most appropriate comparative statistic because of the skewing associated with the extreme outlier (represented by the dot to the north of the graphs). However, it should be noted that in all likelihood the grants are still insufficient and not at the level that they ought to be set at due to both chaotic methodology and lack of commitment by the higher tier governments to the financialsustainability of rural and high-growth local governments (Drew, 2021).

Moreover, there is considerable uncertainty regarding the level of grant receipts moving forward, because of at least two factors. First, the federal budget is in deep deficit which will inevitably encourage politicians to look for cuts that generate minimum political costs (such as the FAG freeze implemented previously). Second, financial failures of other councils in NSW inevitably result in significant upwards 'adjustments' to FAGs for these councils. Because the total quantum is fixed, this means that the rest of the local authorities in the state jurisdiction receive less than what they would have otherwise received (Drew and Campbell, 2016). Given the riskof further local councils failing over the next few years, it would be optimistic to believe that FAG allocations to Port Stephens will continue to grow in future.

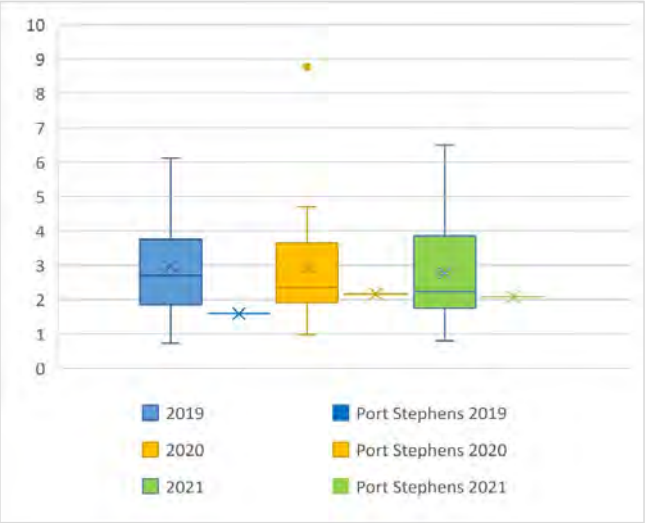
Once again, inadequate grants means that local councils need to respond bysecuring increased taxation receipts (through SRVs).

FIGURE 5. GENERAL COMPONENT OF FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE GRANT PER PERSON

The unrestricted current ratio is a liquidity ratio commonly employed to measure the sustainability of commercial businesses. Unfortunately, regulators have adopted thismetric without considering its appropriateness to the much more lumpy nature of municipal revenue. Unlike commercial businesses that are constantly accruing income from selling products, local government tends to receive most of its money according to quarterly invoices. Thus, meeting the benchmark of 1.50 should not be considered as reason for comfort. Indeed, most of the metrics used in NSW have arbitrary benchmarks and they are also insufficient to fully reflect the state of financial sustainability for a given council. In this regard, it is notable that the metricsdid not predict the last municipal financial failure, which is an obvious cause for concern regarding their fitness for purpose. Put differently, no local government should feel that achieving the benchmark for the liquidity ratio or the other regulatoryratios means that they are necessarily financially sustainable.

Port Stephens has chronically low (and recently declining) liquidity in a relative sense. When combined with its higher risk profile and concomitant susceptibility to economic shock, it is by no means certain that it will be able to pay its bills when theyfall due in the future. While we do not mean to induce unnecessary alarm, there should be no doubt that the situation is serious and warrants urgent attention.

FIGURE 6. UNRESTRICTED CURRENT RATIO



The debt service ratio suggests that Port Stephens has a relatively low capacity to take on additional debt. However, to fully understand this problem, debt capacity modelling will need to be undertaken (see Drew, 2021). We understand that Port Stephens plans to take on more debt to upgrade depots, council buildings and conduct public domain upgrades. We urge caution before doing so and do not consider this ratio (or its arbitrary benchmark) adequate for decision-making purposes. Nor should reliance be made on bank assessments because these institutions have demonstrated in the past that they are largely unconcerned aboutrepayment capacity due to their belief in extant soft budget constraints[5].

We also note that Port Stephens considers debt financing to be an important tool toassure intergenerational equity. However, as demonstrated by Drew (2020; 2021), intergenerational equity can only be achieved when certain strict criteria are observed, including a *quid pro quo* via increases to revenue (such as an SRV) or decreases in expenditure elsewhere in line with the expected consumption of the asset.

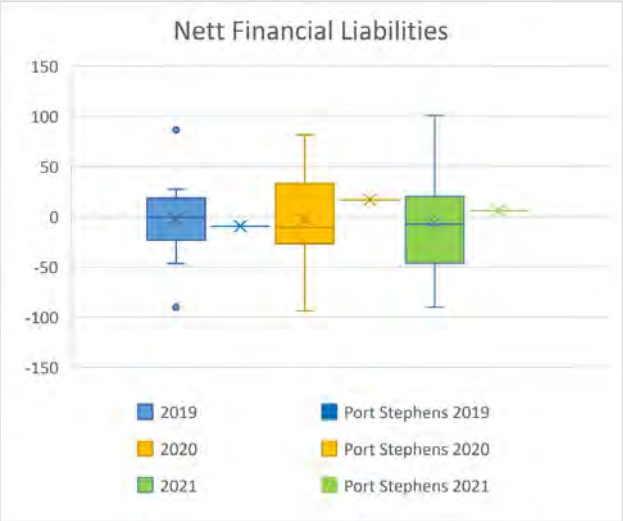
[5] That is, commercial banks understand that there will be a bailout should the council fail (as in the case of Central Darling Shire) (Drew and Campbell, 2016).

FIGURE 7. DEBT SERVICE RATIO

The nett financial liabilities ratio is much better (although still inadequate) at indicating debt capacity because it includes important liabilities (such as non-loanobligations related to staff) neglected by the former metric. This is probably the reason why versions of this metric are preferred by Queensland, South Australian and Western Australian regulatory authorities.

For this ratio a negative result is preferred (and generally expected) because this would mean that relevant assets exceed liabilities. The typical council in the peer group does have a near-zero or negative result as desired. However, the result forPort Stephens has been positive for the last two years. When considered in light ofthe ongoing risk posed by COVID-19 policy, as well as Port Stephens' proposed borrowings, this metric provides solid grounds for concern.

FIGURE 8. NETT FINANCIAL LIABILITIES



Depreciation accruals have been a source of ongoing difficulties for all local governments in Australia. As noted in the scholarly literature, full accrual accountingis problematic for governments because an active market does not exist for most infrastructure assets (and hence there is no reasonable fair market benchmark to judge asset value (Drew, 2020)). Moreover, accurate depreciation accruals are critical to a number of other metrics (especially the asset ratios) and also play an important role in financial sustainability planning.

The aggregate rate of depreciation at Port Stephens is on the low side in a relative sense as indicated by Figure 9. However, we should not jump to the conclusion that depreciation is being under-expensed (because usage rates and climatic conditionsare strong determinants for the accrual). Nonetheless, it does indicate the need for another look at the relevant schedules. If it transpires that depreciation has been under-expensed, then this would mean that the financial sustainability situation at Port Stephens is even more serious than it currently appears. Moreover, inaccuracies in depreciation tend to resolve as losses and gains on disposal which tend to result in unstable and unpredictable operating results.

To assist the process of potential problem identification, we have also disaggregateddata even further according to the four major common classes of depreciable items. This more disaggregated data is presented in Figures 10 through to 13.

FIGURE 9. TOTAL DEPRECIATION OF INFRASTRUCTURE, PROPERTY, PLANT AND EQUIPMENT DEFLATED BY CARRYING AMOUNT

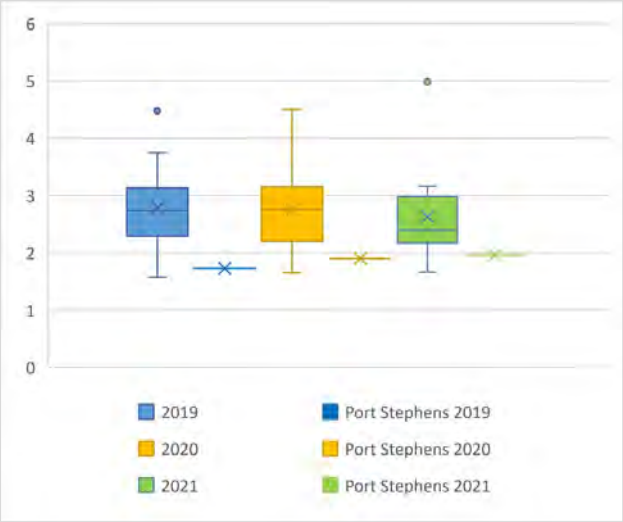
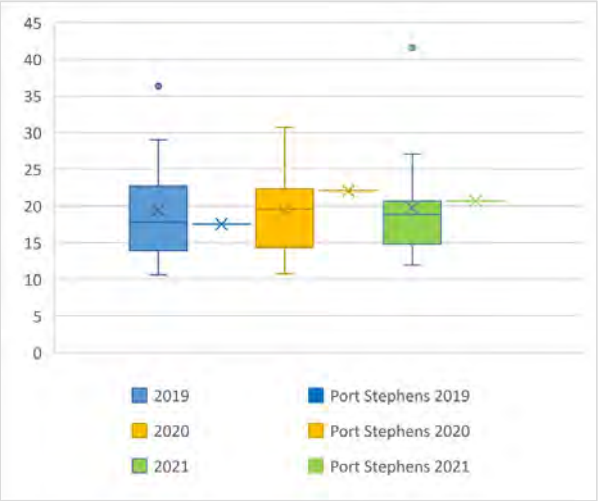


Figure 10 provides a comparison of the rate of depreciation for plant and equipment. It appears that Port Stephens is slightly more aggressive in its observation of this accrual than the peer group. This may mean that plant and equipment is being used more, not lasting as long as might be reasonably expected, or being depreciated too quickly.

FIGURE 10. DEPRECIATION OF PLANT AND EQUIPMENT DEFLATED BY CARRYING AMOUNT



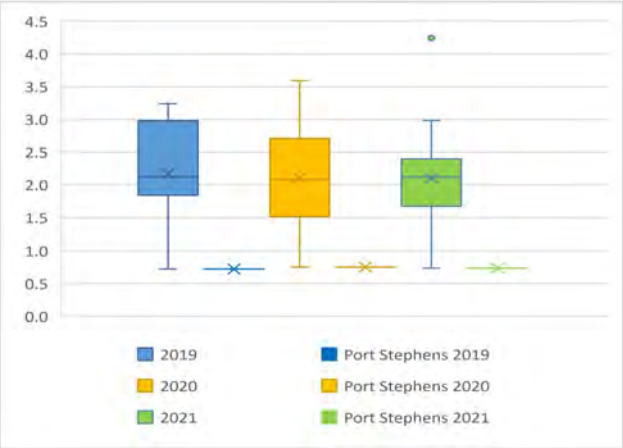
14

Similarly, Port Stephens is depreciating buildings much more aggressively than the rest of the peer group. As we have already noted, there could be good reasons for doing so, but the comparative data suggests the need for a review of the relevant schedules.

FIGURE 11. DEPRECIATION OF BUILDINGS DEFLATED BY CARRYING AMOUNT

Depreciation of transport infrastructure seems concerning in a relative sense. Moreover, when we also consider the citizen dissatisfaction with this class of assets,there could be good reason to review these accruals upwards.

FIGURE 12. DEPRECIATION OF ROADS, BRIDGES AND FOOTPATHS DEFLATED BY CARRYINGAMOUNT



15

In a similar vein, accruals for stormwater seem lower than expected, although we offer some caution in interpreting this particular graph because some local governments do not adequately separate out non-depreciable earthworks.
Nevertheless, drainage asset schedules might warrant some review.

FIGURE 13. DEPRECIATION OF STORMWATER DRAINAGE DEFLATED BY CARRYING AMOUNT

The nexus ratio is designed to measure how much of operational expenditure is covered by fees and charges. The nexus result for Port Stephens Council is quite

high in both an absolute and comparative sense. Ordinarily this would be considered a good thing because it would indicate that the bulk of goods and services were funded by fees and charges as is appropriate for all non-public goods. However, because of the large revenue flows generally produced from Port Stephens' non-core businesses, the ratio seems to suggest cross-subsidisation of local residents by commercial operations of council. Whilst understandable in terms of the incredibly low taxation receipts received at Port Stephens (and the recent denial of an SRV), subsidisation of this kind exposes both local residents and council to significant risk, as demonstrated by the drop in the result for the last two years. Given the continued uncertainty surrounding the pandemic, policy responses to the pandemic and potential inflation, risk of this kind is problematic (see Appendix 1). Moreover, when councils aggressively pursue own-source revenue by operating non-core services this presents a number of other problems. First, it diverts organisational attention away from core functions. Second, it distorts local economies and eliminates much of the existential space for people and businesses. Third, it tends to create a better image of financial sustainability during good business conditions than might be warranted upon closer

inspection (hence the previous rejection of the SRV application). Fourth, and most importantly, it fuels fiscal illusion.

Fiscal illusion occurs when citizens do not understand the true cost of goods and services consumed nor the financial predicament of council. It is clear from the IPART (2020) ruling that fiscal illusion is particularly rife at Port Stephens. This not only contributed to the rejection of the SRV application, but is also a major driver of expenditure moving forward. When people receive a discount price for municipal services – and also think that their local government is in a good financial position – then economic theory predicts that they will demand an excessive quantity and quality of local municipal services. Hence fiscal illusion places financial sustainability in jeopardy.

FIGURE 14. NEXUS

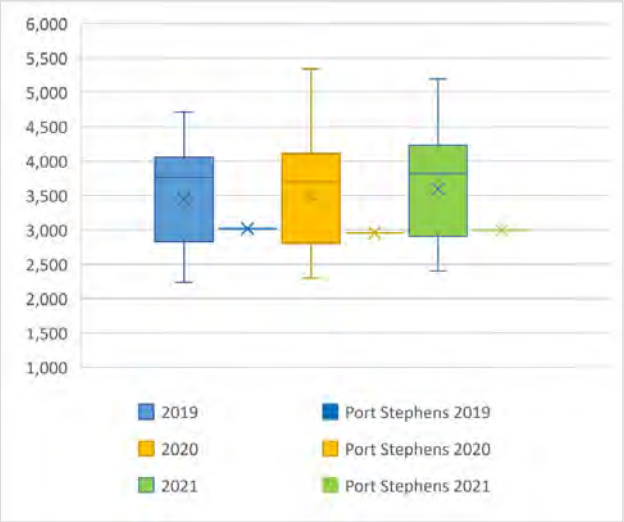
Our observation regarding cross-subsidisation is further illuminated by the rates and annual charges data presented in Figure 15. As can be seen, revenue per assessment is far lower than the typical council in the peer group and generally sits at the very bottom of the second quartile. Moreover, the rather flat progression in this metric over the last three years suggests that fees (as well as local taxes) are being increased according to an index number. This is not a financially sustainable practice.

Fees and charges should generally be set according to supply-side methodology. This means that the fee should be equivalent to the long-run cost of producing one more unit (making provision for capital investment and the like). Clearly it is not possible to carefully review each and every fee each year. However, a schedule should be made so that each fee is reviewed at least once each political term with the emphasis being

placed on ensuring full cost recovery, except for cases where arobust rationale can be articulated for providing a specified subsidy from the common tax pool. Drew (2021) provides detailed instructions for setting fees and annual charges in a sustainable manner.

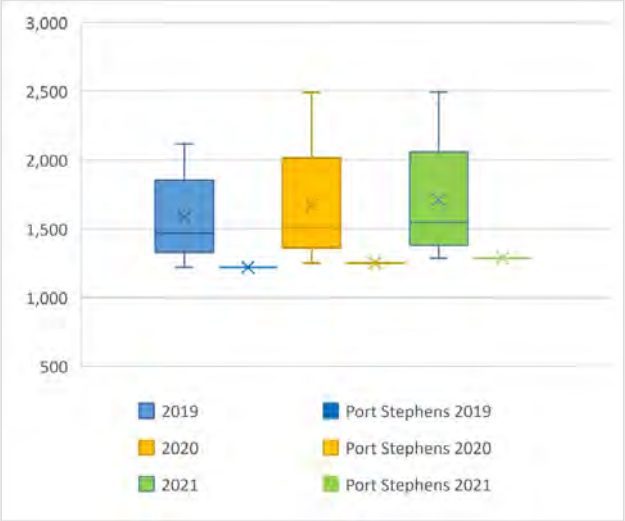
In view of the concerning threat to financial sustainability, as well as the delay to anSRV exacerbated by the COVID-postponed elections, we strongly recommend that Port Stephens reviews as many non-regulated fees and charges as possible for theupcoming operational plan. Other NSW councils we have worked with have been surprised by the discrepancy between extant fees and charges with respect to the actual costs of delivery. Failing to price local services at cost fuels fiscal illusion andalso visits inequity on the broader cohort of local government taxpayers (who are effectively forced to subsidise the consumption of local services by some localresidents (Drew, 2021)).

FIGURE 15. RATES, FEES AND ANNUAL CHARGES PER ASSESSMENT ($)



18

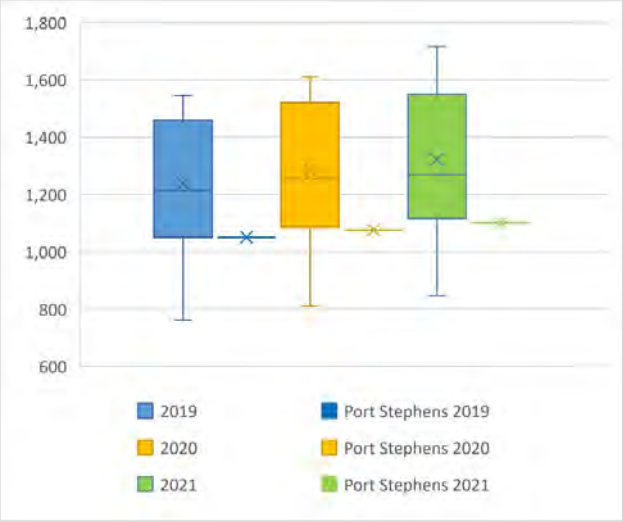
FIGURE 16. TOTAL RATES PER PROPERTY ASSESSMENT ($)



Residential rates in Port Stephens are extremely low on a comparative basis and generally sit in the bottom quartile of the peer group. This suggests that residents have not been paying the full price for the local public services that they consume. Itthus fuels fiscal illusion which explains both the unwillingness to pay (noted by IPART, 2020), as well as the demands for higher levels of services noted in council documentation. It also means that residents are visiting inequity on future taxpayers (because the *quid pro quo* for recent debt has clearly not occurred), which by definition means that matters are not financially sustainable. Put differently, past andplanned borrowings must be serviced through higher taxes or reductions to service levels for there to be any possibility of making the case that the current taxpayers have paid their fair share of long-lived assets consumed.

Only by canny financial management has Port Stephens managed to survive this long with such low residential property tax receipts. However, the risks taken to do so are now made plain.

FIGURE 17. RESIDENTIAL RATES PER ASSESSMENT ($)



Farm rates are also at incredibly low levels but are mitigated in part by the relatively low numbers of this kind of assessment.

FIGURE 18. FARM RATES PER ASSESSMENT ($)

Interestingly, business rates on a per assessment basis at Port Stephens are typical of the cohort (as measured by the median). Given that the challenges of the COVID public policy response fall disproportionately on business, there is thus

a *prima facie* strong case to be made for allocating most of any future SRV to the residential and farm taxpayers. This would exert less stress on the local economy and also serve tobest address the fiscal illusion problem. Further commentary on this question will beprovided in the Capacity to Pay report.

FIGURE 19. BUSINESS RATES PER ASSESSMENT ($)

In Figure 20 we present the rates and charges outstanding data. Port Stephens hasthe best data in the peer group which is far from surprising given the extremely low rates of taxation levied in its local government area. This metric suggests strong capacity to pay a more adequate rate of taxation that is needed to assure financial sustainability, establish intergenerational equity, reduce risk and combat high levels of fiscal illusion. Further information will be provided in the Capacity to Pay report.

FIGURE 20. RATES AND CHARGES OUTSTANDING

Empirical research into local government has demonstrated an important and oft-overlooked link between budget accuracy and technical efficiency (defined by economists as the conversion of inputs (staff and money) into outputs (local government goods and services)) (McQuestin, Noguchi and Drew, 2020). Essentially, higher budget accuracy translates into higher efficiency. In addition, budget accuracy has a clear association with financial sustainability and thus warrants some attention. Generally, council staff at Port Stephens have done a goodjob of predicting revenue, with the understandable exception of 2020 (COVID assistance). This is a further indication of the skill exercised by financial and senior management at the council that have clearly been crucial in surviving, despite significant obstacles (grant and taxation revenues, in particular). It might be noted that a positive result suggests council received more revenue than it had budgeted.

FIGURE 21. DEVIATION FROM BUDGETED REVENUE

Matters were not quite as good on the expenditure side in 2019 and 2020, notwithstanding the understandable and unpredictable blowout in 2020. However, in2021, senior staff have exercised extraordinary cost control. This will have to also bea feature in 2022 and 2023 (until such time as adequate additional revenue can be realised).

FIGURE 22. DEVIATION FROM BUDGETED EXPENDITURE

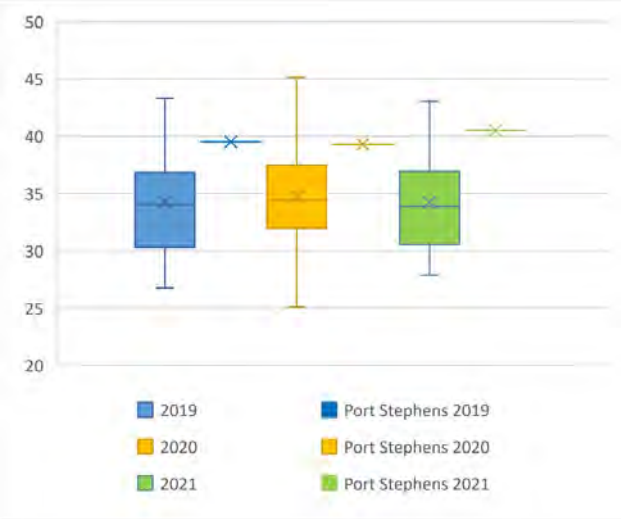
23

Good cost control is also evident with regard to staff expenditure. In a comparative sense, Port Stephens spends slightly less on staff per assessment than its typical peer. We note from council documents that leave entitlements are carefully monitored and staff encouraged to regularly take leave. This practice exerts marginaldownward pressure on staff costs and it should also be extended to long-service leave. It is noteworthy that the gap between typical staff expenditure in the peer group and Port Stephens has closed in the most recent year which suggests that attention should remain on controlling this cost item.

FIGURE 23. STAFF EXPENDITURE PER ASSESSMENT

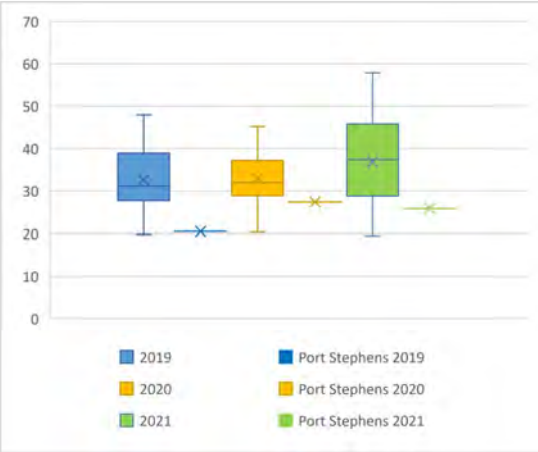
In terms of the proportion of the budget spent on staff, Port Stephens has a much better outcome than its peer group. When we interpret this metric in terms of the average staff expenses per property, it clearly indicates lower than usual material, contract and other expenses. This is yet a further indication of excellent cost control,but it may have implications for service levels in future (especially with respect to maintenance of infrastructure assets as suggested by recent citizen survey results).

FIGURE 24. PROPORTION OF EXPENDITURE ON STAFF



Cash flow is essential to the liquidity of a local government. Generally local governments in Australia have highly positive operating cash flow, very negative investing cash flows and near-to-zero cash flows for financing activities. Port Stephens has consistently recorded much lower operating cash flows than the typical member of its peer group. This should be considered to be a very concerningmatter. Further investigation suggests that insufficient taxation receipts are the majorcause of the problem. This is not a sustainable position going forward, especially when considered in relation to the relatively parlous state of cash holdings (see Figure 31 onwards).

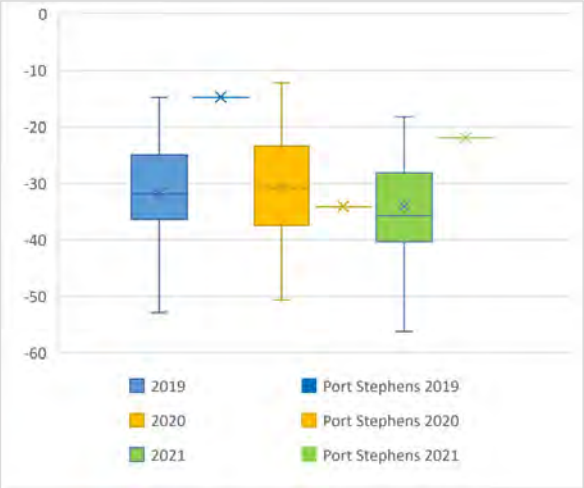
FIGURE 25. OPERATING CASH FLOWS (DEFLATED BY REVENUE)



25

The investing cash flows are not as negative as the typical peer, which suggests that Port Stephens is likely to be under-investing in important community infrastructure. Moreover, we note that forthcoming investments in infrastructure appear to be planned to be funded through debt. As we noted earlier, it is by no means certain that Port Stephens has sufficient debt capacity and we recommend postponing the planned investments. Indeed, Council will need to exercise very careful expenditure controls until additional revenue can be obtained. Port Stephens is thus advised to defer discretionary spending until matters improve. In addition, unless there is eitheran increase in revenue or decrease in other expenditure, then it is quite unlikely thatdebt funding will be defensible in terms of intergenerational equity.

FIGURE 26. INVESTING CASH FLOWS (DEFLATED BY REVENUE)



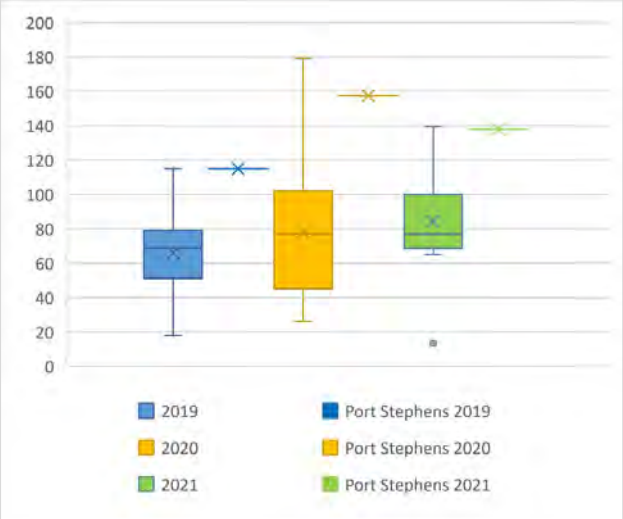
Financing cash flows tend to be lumpy in nature. As we have discussed previously, debt levels are a concern as reflected by the strong inflows from borrowing in 2020.

FIGURE 27. FINANCING CASH FLOWS (DEFLATED BY REVENUE)

A good deal of caution needs to be exercised with respect to the three asset ratios employed in NSW which (taken together) attempt to measure the hard aspects of financial sustainability. Indeed, there is significant scholarly evidence to suggest that the renewals and backlog ratios are extremely unreliable (Drew, 2017; Drew and Grant, 2017; Drew, 2020). Some of the problems stem from ongoing confusion with respect to depreciation. Other problems are caused by the difficulty experienced in defining variables such as 'satisfactory standard', or 'required maintenance'. In addition, definitional drift between years renders intertemporal comparisons also unreliable. Moreover, during *Fit for the Future* a number of the peer councils deliberately distorted data to meet state government benchmarks and this also makes comparisons to the peer group unreliable.

The buildings and infrastructure renewal ratio data presented in Figure 28 should be considered a case in point. The denominator uses unreliable depreciation data whichis associated with a number of problems that we have previously alerted readers of this report to. Indeed, the depreciation rate at Port Stephens seems lower than expected in a relative sense and this will largely explain the results which *prima facie* suggest that Council is consistently spending more on renewals than is required. In view of the fact that IPART (2020) cited infrastructure renewal and backlogs in its decision to reject the previous SRV request it would be prudent to carefully review depreciation schedules as indicated earlier.

FIGURE 28. BUILDINGS AND INFRASTRUCTURE RENEWAL RATIO



The backlog ratio also looks good for Port Stephens Council in a relative sense andon the surface. Here the variable of concern is input as the numerator – estimated cost to bring assets to a satisfactory condition. Accurately recording this data is a problem for most local governments. We strongly suggest that Council construct a comprehensive definition of 'satisfactory', with photographic examples of the kinds of conditions that are deemed to be satisfactory or not, to mitigate the definitional vacuum that exists at a jurisdictional level and also combat definitional drift.

Moreover, in view of the recent citizen satisfaction survey results there might be acase for believing that the Council definition of satisfactory is at odds with the preferences of its citizens. We thus recommend that Port Stephens consider conducting some focus groups to review photographic evidence of infrastructure conditions in order to arrive at a shared understanding on this matter. We suspect that when this activity is completed, Council will be obliged to review this ratio upwards for the next set of financial statements.

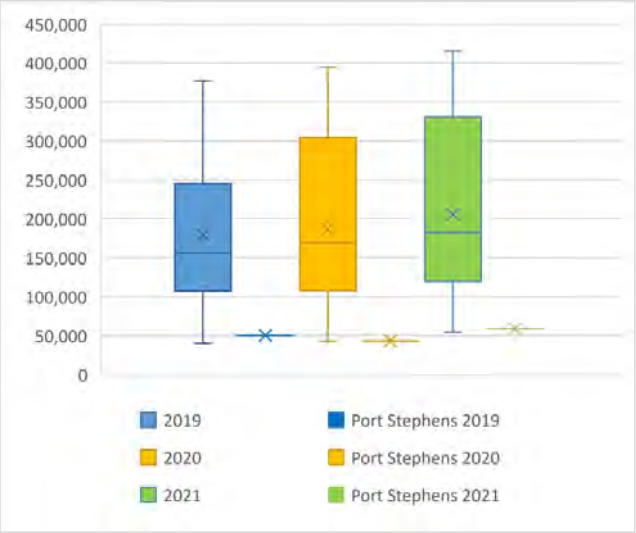
FIGURE 29. INFRASTRUCTURE BACKLOG RATIO

For the asset maintenance ratio the problem resides with the denominator – required asset maintenance – although matters tend to be on a firmer foundation for this input owing to a better evidential base. For this metric Port Stephens is pretty typical of the peer group and there is thus less likely to be a need for significant adjustments to this particular data moving forward.

FIGURE 30. ASSET MAINTENANCE RATIO

We now turn our attention from assets to cash holdings. Figure 31 presents total cash and equivalents data for Port Stephens and its peer group. It is painfully clearthat cash holdings at Port Stephens are at very low levels in a relative sense. It is noteworthy that these figures include both restricted and unrestricted holdings.

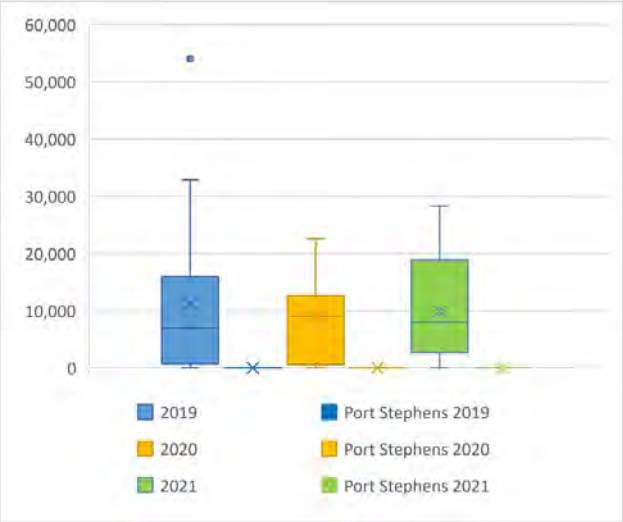
FIGURE 31. TOTAL CASH, CASH EQUIVALENTS AND INVESTMENTS ($000)



In Figure 32, we plot the crucial unrestricted cash position for Ports Stephens Council relative to the peer group. Matters could hardly be more serious in a financial sustainability sense and support our previous prescriptions: (i) the suspension of discretionary spending where practical, (ii) a thorough review of pricing for non-regulated fees and charges to be reflected in the 2022-23 Operational Plan, (iii) deferment of new debt drawdowns until capacity has been measured and (iv) a SRV. Hopefully the Council's non-core operations – such as holiday parks, after school care and the like – will pick up in the new calendar year. However, given the continued uncertainty surrounding the pandemic and attendant public policy responses, it would be prudent to take strong measures as soon as possible.

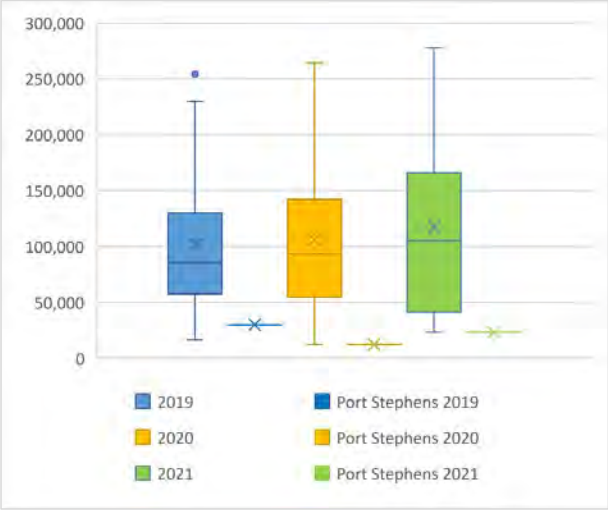
Moreover, the inflation outlook is not good and is compounded further by the disastrous new IPART rate cap methodology (IPART, 2021) which decrees a mere 1.3% increase to rates for next year when the best-case scenario for inflation is likelyto be 3%. This means that the parlous state of unrestricted cash reserves at Port Stephens is even more serious than it might at first appear.

FIGURE 32. TOTAL UNRESTRICTED CASH, CASH EQUIVALENTS AND INVESTMENTS ($000)



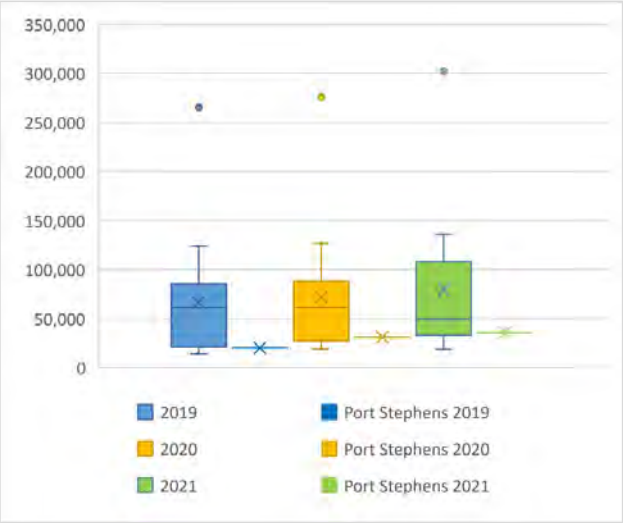
Externally restricted reserves are also at low levels in a relative sense. This does not play a direct part in meeting present liquidity needs, but is important to long-run financial sustainability. The most likely causes for low reserves could be: (i) comparatively low developer contributions, (ii) recent completions of developer fee related projects or (iii) relatively low rates of development. We recommend that developer contribution schedules be reviewed along with the review of fees and charges that Port Stephens needs to conduct early next calendar year.

FIGURE 33. TOTAL EXTERNALLY RESTRICTED CASH, CASH EQUIVALENTS AND INVESTMENTS($000)



Internally restricted reserves provide a little comfort and could be used if the COVID pandemic and public policy conditions do not improve. It is noteworthy that internal reserves are lower than most of the peer group and are a reflection of low revenues, expanding infrastructure and a preference for debt as a means of funding infrastructure. We reiterate our comments regarding the need for current generations to contribute revenue or savings at least in proportion to the consumption of long- lived assets for intergenerational equity to be met. Moreover, the combined message that needs to be understood by councillors arising from our analysis of reserves is that there is simply no money available for any new discretionary programs and projects for some time (probably until at least September 2023 assuming IPART makes the prudent decision on an SRV application that is necessary to assure financial sustainability).

FIGURE 34. TOTAL INTERNALLY RESTRICTED CASH, CASH EQUIVALENTS AND INVESTMENTS($000)

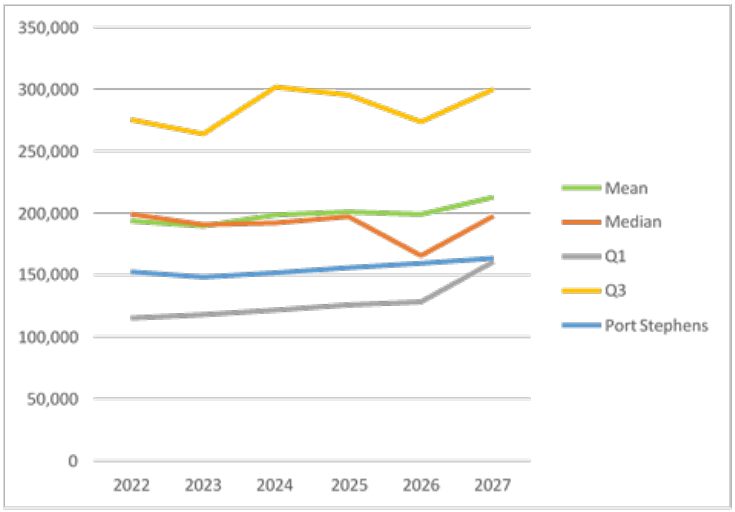


We now turn to a comparative analysis of Long-Term Financial Plans (LTFP). In order to facilitate the maximum number of comparisons we have had to restrict our analysis to the years up to and including 2027. Data cited is for standard scenarios. Moreover, we also note that the Cessnock data is missing from much of the followingwork.

LTFP are inherently unstable and inaccurate. They involve the making of a number of assumptions that might seem reasonable at the time when projections are first made, but can quickly appear rather incongruous with respect to facts on the ground.For example, Port Stephens reasonably assumed a 2% rate cap increase, but IPART (2021) recently advised that the increase for 2022-23 would be just 1.3 percent. In addition, Council predicted that grant revenue would continue to increaseat 2.2% per annum, when the current budgetary plight of higher tier governments suggests the possibility of reductions to the quantum in real terms. Furthermore, the standard model assumes commercial receipts will not be adversely affected by new COVID policy responses, nor impacted by a likely slowing economy in the forward years. The income projections also assume that the airport dividend is reinstated in 2023, which we feel is an optimistic assumption.

Despite these assumptions – which now appear questionable – Port Stephens is expecting revenue to grow quite slowly and remain firmly in the lower half of the second quartile until 2027. This is a concern given what we have already had to sayabout reserves and proposed works.

FIGURE 35. TOTAL INCOME ($000)

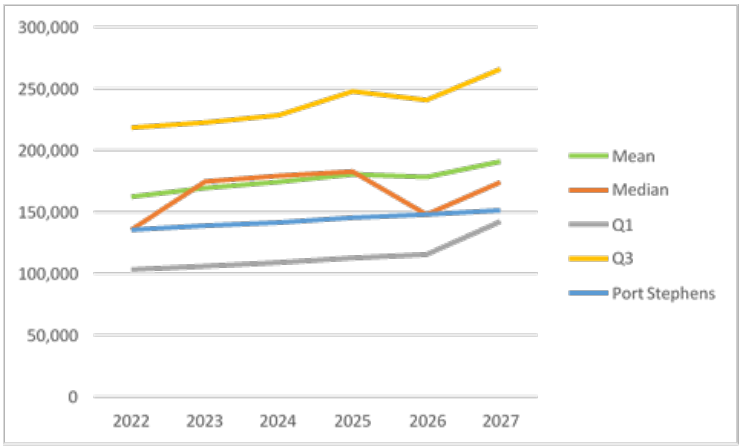


Expenditure assumptions probably also warrant revisiting in the wake of the COVID public policy responses. In particular, it is now clear to almost everyone – except perhaps the members of the Reserve Bank of Australia (RBA) Board – that we are entering a lengthy cycle of elevated inflation. Thus, most of the assumptions regarding increases to wages, contracts and materials look overly optimistic. At the very least these assumed rates of growth should be increased to the top of the RBA target band (3%[6]). However, this would likely prove insufficient given continuing high Producer Price Indices numbers in China and America that are approaching ten percent. In addition, the LTFP assumes no major new capital works in the next ten years which we believe will be difficult to comply with given high rates of development, an incoming new council with many new faces and extant levels of citizen satisfaction (arising from entrenched fiscal illusion). Indeed, the assumption of 150 new rateable properties per year is almost certainly an under-estimate and it must be remembered that on the whole growth in assessments is associated with nett additional expenditure (Drew, 2021).

We thus expect expenditure to actually rise much more steeply than predicted, which is a problem given that it is already forecast to close in on the typical result for the peer group over the next six years or so.

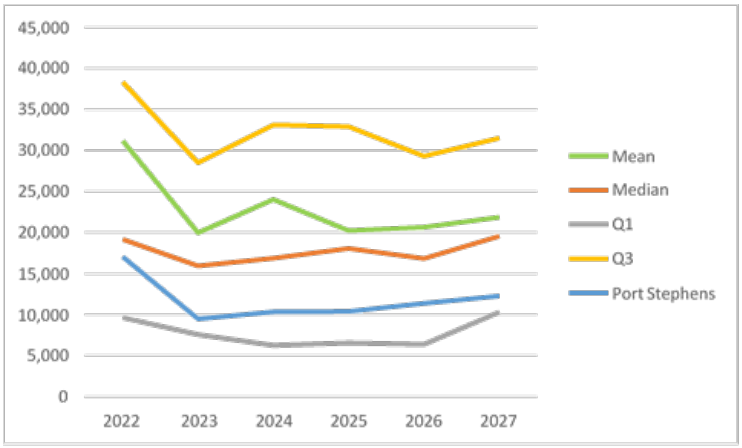
[6] Of course, the timing of the next EBA and expiry of existing contracts will need to be taken into account.

FIGURE 36. TOTAL EXPENDITURE ($000)



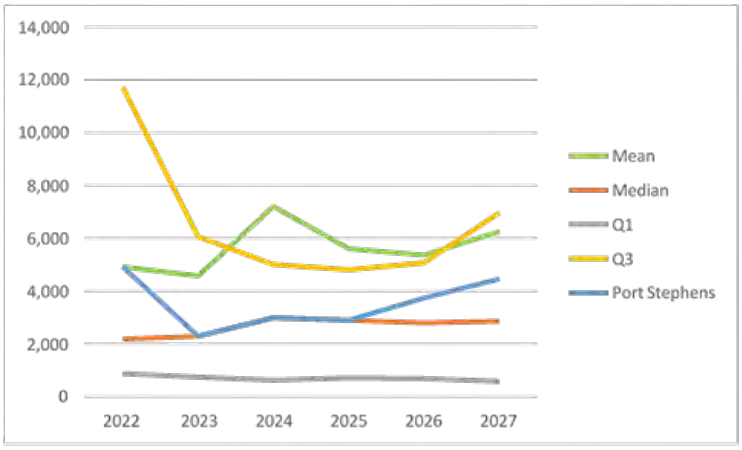
The nett operating result is predicted to improve over time. However, given our reservations regarding forecast predictions, we do not anticipate that this will actually occur unless significant changes to both revenue and expenditure are made. Given the current state of cash holdings – as well as the ongoing uncertainty regarding COVID and associated policy responses – changes that ought to be made to the LTFP are likely to paint a very concerning picture.

FIGURE 37. NETT OPERATING RESULT ($000)



The picture is a little better in a relative sense when capital grants are excluded. However, our reservations regarding the veracity of assumptions means that little comfort should be taken from Figure 38.

FIGURE 38. NETT OPERATING RESULT WITHOUT CAPITAL GRANTS ($000)



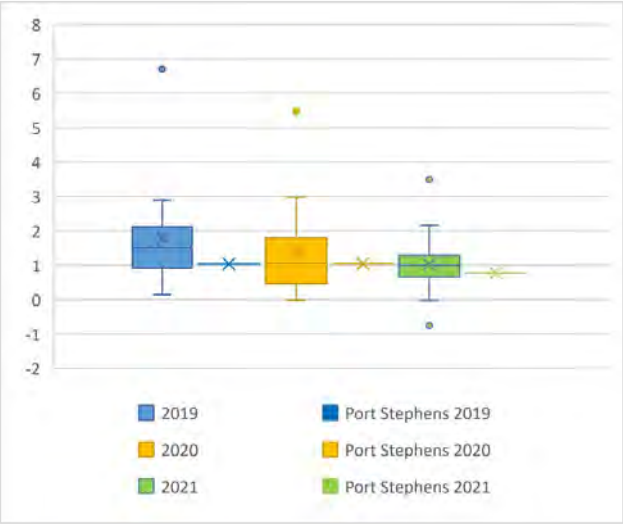
Growth in the number of rates assessments is an important determinant of financial sustainability. Because NSW councils operate under a rate cap regime, growth in assessment numbers contributes comparatively little to revenue (with the main contribution through fees and charges, some of which are regulated or must only be set at cost recovery[7]). Yet new residents bring new demands for services and exert additional pressure on current infrastructure. Growth in assessments thus generally represents a nett negative to financial sustainability in NSW local government (Drew,2021).

Growth at Port Stephens is relatively typical of its peer group, but it should be remembered that the peer group encompasses a number of high growth areas.Moreover, since the advent of COVID more people have chosen to move out ofcapital cities in favour of regional communities. Furthermore, the population in Australia is ageing and people often desire to live in picturesque seaside communities in their retirement years (Drew, 2021).

All of this means that Port Stephens ought to expect even more development in the future, which will undoubtedly place more strain on its already stressed financial condition.

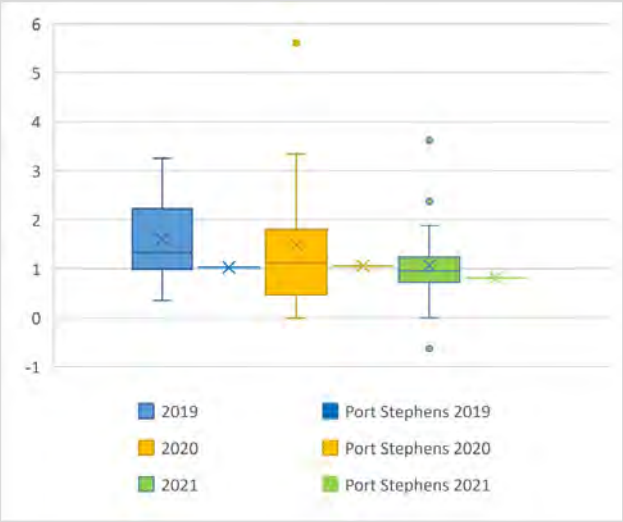
[7] In view of the new IPART methodology population growth may act to increase the cap. However, given theproportion of aged persons moving to Port Stephens it is unlikely that population growth factors will keep pace with growth in expenditure terms (which is driven by both numbers of properties and socio-demographic need).

FIGURE 39. GROWTH IN NUMBER OF ASSESSMENTS



Growth in residential assessments has been relatively strong and is likely to accelerate from 2021 levels.

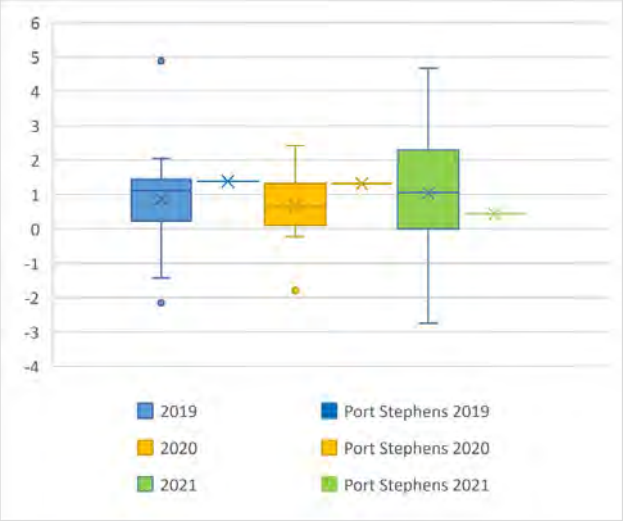
FIGURE 40. GROWTH IN NUMBER OF RESIDENTIAL ASSESSMENTS



However, growth in business assessments has been much slower of late. Many of the businesses in the Port Stephens local government area revolve around the service industry which has been hit particularly hard. Because of continued policy uncertainty related to COVID, business investment is unlikely to grow as fast as

residential investment for the next few years. Indeed, as the immediate post-COVIDboom fades, many economists expect growth to revert back to lower-than-trendlevels. This is not good for the local community, but it may relieve a little of the pressure for spending on Port Stephens Council.

FIGURE 41. GROWTH IN NUMBER OF BUSINESS ASSESSMENTS

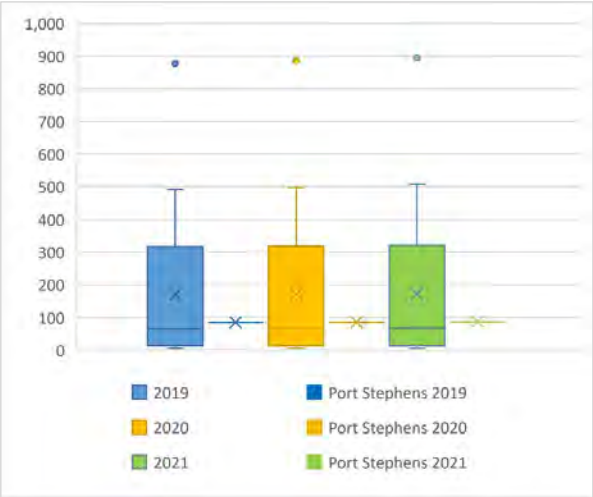


Population growth is slightly above the typical result for the peer group. As a host of econometric studies show, expenditure need is most closely related to growth in assessments as well as socio-demographic factors (which we consider from Figure 44 onwards) (Drew, 2021). However, population growth has become more importantas a result of recent ill-advised changes to the rate cap methodology (IPART, 2021) (see also the video on this topic on the YouTube site 'Professor Joseph Drew's World of Local Government'). Thus, the slightly higher level of growth means that Port Stephens received a slightly higher rate cap (1.3% compared to the 0.7% most councils received), notwithstanding the fact that it is clearly insufficient for the new higher inflation cycle.

FIGURE 42. POPULATION GROWTH

Population density is important because of the potential for economies of density (whereby costs are initially expected to decrease as population density increases).Port Stephens is more-or-less typical of the peer group (according to the median) which means that it is not disadvantaged in relative terms. However, to promote sustainability emphasis should be placed on encouraging in-fill and brownfield development over the much more expensive greenfield options.

FIGURE 43. POPULATION DENSITY



In Figure 44 we plot comparative data for aged pensioners over time. Port Stephens has relatively high levels of aged pensioners even when compared to its peer group which includes a lot of desirable retirement destinations. This is extremely problematic because the mandated pensioner discount is only partially funded by the NSW Government. Moreover, a host of scholarly work shows that pensioners are positively correlated with increased expenditure demand (Drew, 2021). Indeed, the proportion of pensioners should be considered to be a significant threat to financial sustainability (notwithstanding that COVID has left most pensioners in a far better economic position relative to many workers).

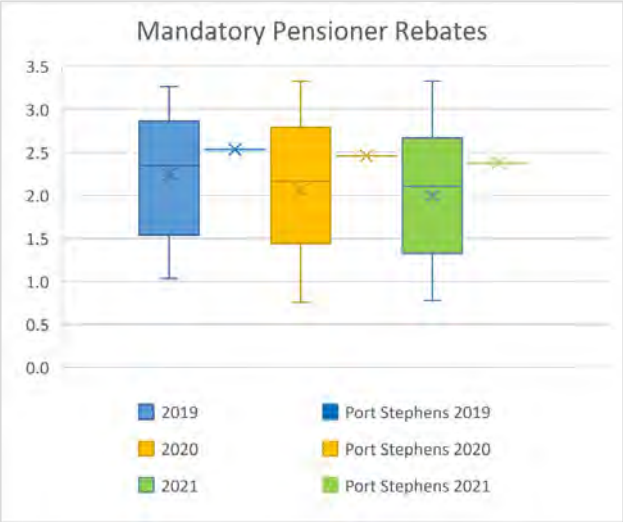
FIGURE 44. AGED PENSION

Moreover, matters are only likely to get worse over coming years. Figure 45 shows the proportion of people likely to retire in the next five years. The numbers are very high for Port Stephens and suggest that even without the large numbers of expectedinternal migrant retirees financial sustainability will get rather more difficult in the near future.

FIGURE 45. PERCENTAGE OF POPULATION AGED 60-64

Figure 46 provides a comparative analysis of the effect of pensioner rebates expressed as a proportion of total collectible rate revenue. As can be seen, this is a weighty problem for Council and yet another reason why a SRV is imperative.

FIGURE 46. PENSIONER REBATE (AS A PROPORTION OF RATE REVENUE)

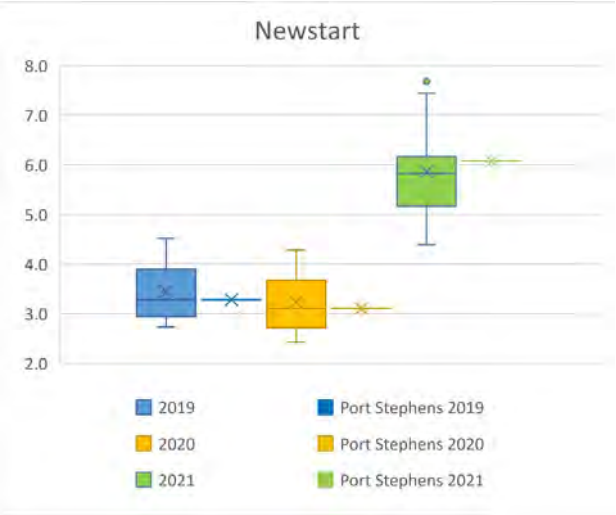


Figures 47 to 49 inclusive present some other data regarding the relative rate of receipt of various welfare payments. Generally Port Stephens is pretty typical of the

peer group and it is thus not under a particular relative disadvantage. However, it is interesting to note the large increase in Newstart and Jobseeker allowance in 2021 (a one year lag applies to this ABS data) which confirms the susceptibility of Port Stephens to shocks to its service industries. This has important implications for revenue receipts, as we have already discussed.

FIGURE 47. DISABILITY SUPPORT PENSION

FIGURE 48. NEWSTART ALLOWANCE/ JOBSEEKER

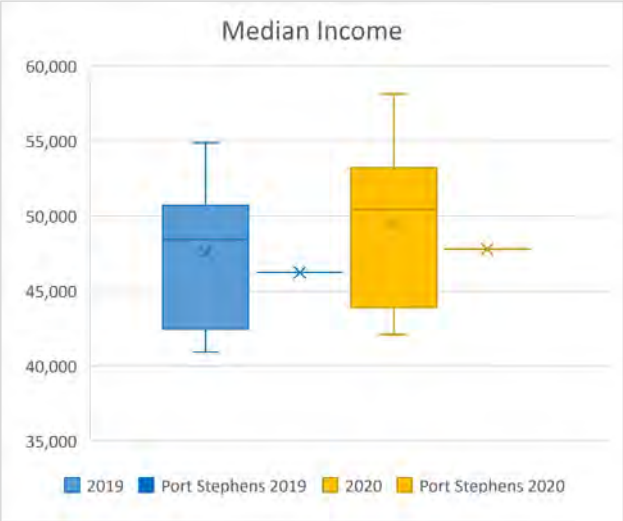


42

FIGURE 49. SINGLE PARENT PENSION

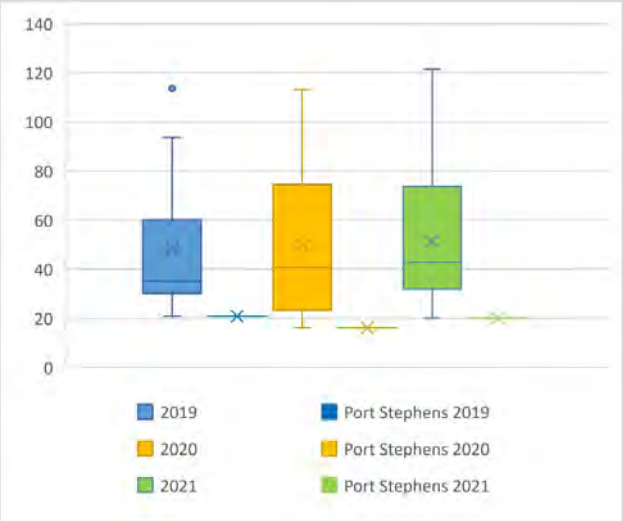
The median employee income is also important because along with other socio-demographic factors (such as the proportion of persons on an aged pension) it is known to drive expenditure higher. Fortunately, in this particular area Port Stephens has not scored highly in a relative sense. This means that the Council will have relatively less pressure (from income earners) for higher expenditure than some of its peers.

FIGURE 50. MEDIAN EMPLOYEE INCOME



The final data that we look at is the cash expense cover ratio (expressed in weeks). Both in a relative and absolute sense matters are very serious. It is thus imperative that an SRV is approved.

FIGURE 51. CASH EXPENSE COVER RATIO (WEEKS)



3. CONCLUSION

As we have stressed throughout this Report, considerable work must be done to ensure ongoing financial sustainability, especially given the significant risks on the horizon. In particular, a SRV is absolutely essential to (i) ensure financial sustainability, (ii) meet intergenerational equity, (iii) dispel fiscal illusion and (iv) collect adequate revenue in a legitimate manner. In our Capacity to Pay Report, we will deal with this matter in detail. Moreover, our Efficiency Report will look at relative technical efficiency and cast further light on where efforts should be concentrated moving forward. Accordingly, the Financial Sustainability Report must be read in concert with the Port Stephens Capacity to Pay Report, the Port Stephens Efficiency Report and the Port Stephens Debt Report.

APPENDIX 1: INFLATION AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

Over the past two years, market economists across the developed world have carefully considered the economic impact of COVID fiscal stimulus packages and associate monetary easing by central banks. During this period, billions of dollars have been injected into the economies of advanced economies by way of fiscal intervention accompanied by substantial quantitative monetary expansion. To date,the net result has been historically low interest rates, promising increases in economic activity and rising Consumer Price Indexes (CPI) and Producer Price Indexes (PPI) across the developed world.

In general, central banks in most advanced countries, including the Reserve Bank ofAustralia (RBA), had ascribed the observed increases in their CPIs and PPIs to various supply shortages arising from COVID lockdowns, constraints on internationaltrade and changes in consumer demand. However, over the past month continued price inflation has seen some major central banks express concern over rising inflation, such as 6.8% in the US, 6% in Germany and 5.1% in the UK in November 2021. This has led several central banks to reduce their stimulatory policies.

For instance, in the UK continued strong aggregate demand, engendered by massive government expenditure financed through borrowing from the Bank of England, has seen an ongoing increase in British inflation. While inflation was 0.7%in early 2021, by November it stood at 5.1%. As a consequence, the Bank of England finally felt obliged to lift interest rates from a record low of 0.1% to 0.25% inearly December. However, this still meant real rates are negative by almost 5%.

Other central banks are also beginning to unwind their COVID stimulus programs and raise interest rates. For example, both the US Federal Reserve and the European Central Bank have moved to tighten monetary policy in response to concerns over inflation. Consumer prices in the US increased by 6.8% in November 2021 over November 2020, the largest increase in almost four decades. In Australia,RBA governor Philip Lowe announced in December that its $4billion per week bond buying program would probably end in February 2022, with inflation edging towards 3%. The RBA now anticipates inflation in 2022 will approximate 3%.

Alongside rising inflation, we have seen most developed economies bounce back interms of economic growth after the initial depressing effects of lockdowns and other COVID measures. In Australia, the RBA forecasts economic growth of about 3% in 2021, 5.5% in 2022 and 2.5% in 2023.

REFERENCES

Drew, J. (2017). Playing for Keeps: Local Government Distortion of Depreciation Accruals in Response to High Stakes Public Policy-Making. *Public Money & Management*, 38(1): 57-64.

Drew, J. (2020). *Reforming Local Government*. Springer Palgrave: Singapore.Drew, J. (2021). *Saving Local Government*. Springer Palgrave: Singapore.

Drew, J. and Campbell, N. (2016). Autopsy of Municipal Failure: The Case of CentralDarling Shire. *Australasian Journal of Regional Science*, 22(1): 81-104.

Drew, J. and Dollery, B. E. (2014). Road to Ruin? Consistency, Transparency and Horizontal Equalisation of Road Grant Allocations in Eastern Mainland Australian States. *Public Administration Quarterly*, 39(3): 517-545.

Drew, J. and Dollery, B. E. (2016). What's In a Name? Assessing the Performance ofLocal Government Classification Systems. *Local Government Studies*, 42(2): 248- 266.

Drew, J. and Dollery, B.E. (2020). Introduction to the Special Edition of Public Administration Quarterly: The Economics and Politics of financial Unsustainability in Local Government. *Public Administration Quarterly*, doi.org/10.37808/paq.44.2.1.

Drew, J. and Grant, B. (2017). Means, Motive and Opportunity: Distortion of Public Policy Making Performance Management Data. *Australian Journal of Public Administration*, 75(1): 237-250.

Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) (2020). *Special VariationIncrease: Port Stephens Council 2019-20*. IPART: Sydney.

Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) (2021). *Rate Peg for NSWCouncils for 2022-23*. IPART: Sydney.

McQuestin, D., Noguchi, M., and Drew, J. (2020). The Association between BudgetInaccuracy and Technical Efficiency in Australian Local Government. *Public Money& Management* (in print).

Port Stephens Council Financial Efficiency Report

DISCLAIMER

This Report was prepared by Joseph Drew and Brian Dollery on behalf of New England Education and Research Proprietary Limited for the Port Stephens Council.This Report was produced for the Port Stephens Council as a strictly independent Report. The opinions expressed in the Report are thus exclusively the views of its authors and do not necessarily coincide with the views of the Port Stephens Councilor any other body. The information provided in this Report may be reproduced in whole or in part for media review, quotation in literature, or non-commercial purposes, subject to the inclusion of acknowledgement of the source and provided no commercial use or sale of the material occurs.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Port Stephens Council Efficiency Report examines various measures of efficiency by which Port Stephens Council is compared with its respective peer group of NSW local councils. Using the standard total expenditure per capita ratio frequently employed by NSW regulatory authorities, we show that Port Stephens compares well with a narrow fourteen-member peer group. However, we argue that this result is misleading due to several problems associated with using the total expenditure per capita ratio as a measure of relative efficiency.

We then employ the operational expenditure per property assessment ratio, which is used in Victorian local government, to assess the relative efficiency of Port Stephens. Port Stephens performs quite well compared to the fourteen-member peer group. However, this ratio is also problematic because it employs a single inputand a single output.

To overcome this problem, we use data envelopment analysis (DEA) since it accommodates multiple inputs and outputs, which can be weighted. Given IPART's concern with 'value for money', in our first DEA we employed tax take as a single input and proxied local government output using five variables. Port Stephens performed close to the median outcome of an expanded sixty-six member peer group.

Given the view by NSW regulatory authorities that efficiency is related to financial sustainability in local government, we conducted an additional DEA using staff and operational expenditure as inputs with the same five outputs over a much longer time period. Compared to its peer group, Port Stephens did not perform well, although its efficiency has improved through time.

We then examine the impact of the various determinants of relative technical efficiency. Population density, the proportion of aged pensioners and increases in unincorporated business income – none of which can be controlled by Council - areall negatively associated with technical efficiency.

The Report concludes by offering five recommendations for improving the relative technical efficiency of Port Stephens Council.

1. INTRODUCTION

The Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) requires New South Wales (NSW) local governments to carefully evaluate their efficiency as part of a Special Rate Variation (SRV) application. Moreover, 'efficiency' played a major role in the recent *Fit for the Future* reforms and formed a major justification for its forced amalgamation program. It is thus clear that NSW local government regulators desire local governments to focus on improving this aspect of municipal performance.

In economics, efficiency deals with the relation between inputs (like labour, capital and land) and either intermediate outputs (such as municipal equipment maintenance) or final outcomes (like local roads resurfaced). Economists have defined three main types of efficiency. Firstly, allocative or economic efficiency occurs when resources are allocated between alternative uses so that community wellbeing is maximised. For example, if a given local council produces the quality and mix of local public goods and services desired by its local community, then it achieves allocative efficiency (Ferguson, 1972). In the local government realm, allocative efficiency is determined by the political process and it falls largely outsidethe direct control of municipal managers.

Secondly, dynamic or intertemporal efficiency can be defined as the achievement of allocative efficiency over time (Ferguson, 1972). In common with allocative efficiency, dynamic efficiency cannot be directly controlled by municipal managers due to exogenous factors, like regulatory burdens and legislative mandates, which are largely determined by state governments.

Thirdly, productive or technical efficiency (sometimes termed x-efficiency) refers to the proficiency by which inputs are converted into outputs (Ferguson, 1972). In local government, inputs include buildings, machinery and staff whereas outputs are specified in terms of proxies due to the extraordinary range of local goods and services produced by local authorities. In this context, a proxy is a variable that attempts to capture the essence of the local service in question. Economists routinely employ proxies because even the most sophisticated modelling cannot include every municipal good and service. Technical efficiency is largely synonymous with value for money. Indeed, in an input orientated[1] consideration of technical efficiency, it is reflective of the reduction in inputs that might be expected for a set level of outputs. Value for money forms the focus of any rate cap regime. It is clear that this is the type of efficiency that IPART ismost concerned about.

It is also probable that efficiency might bear a statistical association with financial sustainability. In this sense, efficiency represents a means through which councils might be expected to improve their financial sustainability (Drew, 2021). Thus, regulatory authorities, such as IPART, will be keen to ensure that municipal operations are as efficient as possible since it is associated with financial sustainability.

[1] There are two orientations that can be used to assess efficiency. An output orientation refers to the additional outputs that might be expected from a given fixed set of inputs. By contrast, an input orientation focusses on the reduction in inputs that might be expected given a fixed set of outputs. Inthe

local government context, scholars have long recognised that the input orientation is the most appropriate because outputs are largely driven by community need and thus fall outside council control.

However, both drivers of the regulatory agency concern for technical efficiency are far from being considered by scholars as apodictic. Indeed, whereas efficiency may be a crude measure of value for money, there is little reason to assume that value for money ought to be the sole consideration in local government decision-making (Drew, Razin and Andrews, 2018). Economists have long argued that competitive markets are the most efficient mechanism for delivering goods and services. However, because most people value public goods and services, which cannot beprovided through markets, democratic governmental entities exist to provide theseservices (Drew, 2021).

Moreover, the proposition that greater technical efficiency might generate superior financial sustainability is only tenuously supported by the empirical literature (Drew, Kortt and Dollery, 2015a). This is not surprising when one contemplates the comparatively marginal differences in relative technical efficiency in a single year against the substantial impact of debt, asset and management decisions over the lifetime of a local government. Accordingly, even radical improvements to technical efficiency are unlikely to materially affect financial sustainability over the short-term.

Not only is the regulatory concern for technical efficiency likely to be over-emphasised relative to its actual importance, but it is also no simple matter to accurately evaluate the association between inputs and outputs. Generally regulatory authorities resort to crude ratios that often mislead end users. As we will show later in this Report, only sophisticated techniques such as intertemporal data envelopment analysis (DEA) can hope to accurately assess relative[2] technical efficiency. Secondly, the absence of a suitable proxy for quality control means that differences in relative technical efficiency can be equally attributed to either (a) lower proficiency with respect to the deployment of inputs or (b) differences in the levels or quality of municipal goods and services.

The remainder of this report is divided into five main parts. In section 2, we present the crude ratio evaluations of efficiency typically used in regulatory contexts. This is done with respect to the fourteen peer local councils of Port Stephens Council used throughout our reports and we explain the problems in relying only on these comparisons. In section 3, we conduct a globally intertemporal data envelopment analysis of tax efficiency; that is, we assess technical efficiency in the way most closely related to value for (tax) money. In section 4, we conduct the standard scholarly local intertemporal analysis of relative technical efficiency. Section 5 focuses on an econometric analysis conducted to identify the determinants of relative technical efficiency and we discuss our results with respect to the particular characteristics of the Port Stephens local government area. We conclude our Report in section 6 with a series of recommendations aimed at improving the matters that form the principal locus of regulatory concern.

[2] Efficiency must be assessed in relative terms – that is, the most defensible approach is to assessefficiency with respect to other similar local governments. Thus we will henceforth refer to relative technical efficiency in this report.

2. RATIO ANALYSIS OF EFFICIENCY

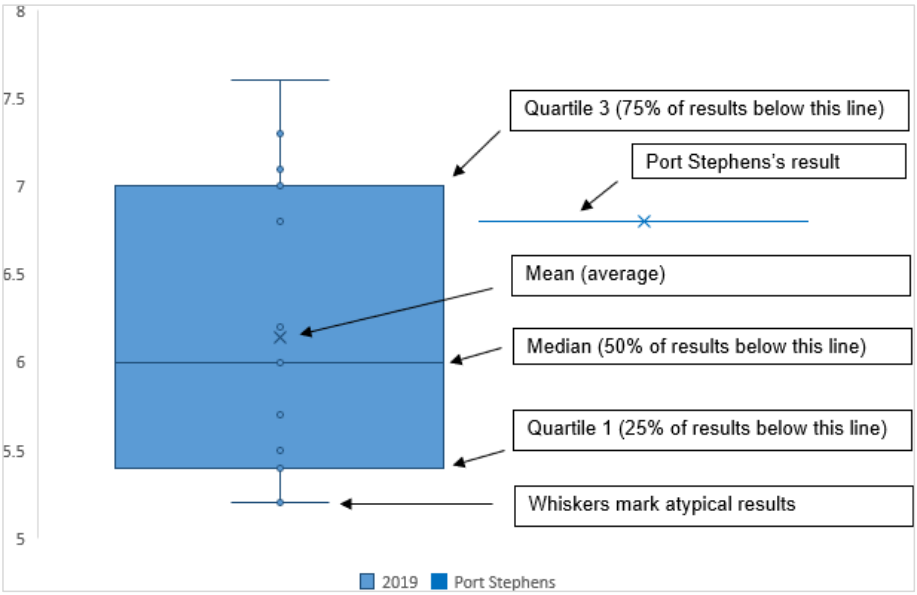
In section 2, we first present comparative data for total expenditure per capita, whichis a ratio that has been used in NSW to evaluate efficiency. Data is presented relative to the fourteen-member council peer group, as used in our other reports andalso detailed in Table 1:

TABLE 1. PEERS USED IN COMPARISONS

OLG 5 Councils	OLG 5 Councils	OLG 4 Councils	OLG 11 Councils
Coffs Harbour	Tweed	Cessnock	Muswellbrook
Newcastle	Maitland	Singleton	
Shoalhaven	Shellharbour	Tamworth	
Lake Macquarie	Wollongong	Wagga Wagga	
Port Macquarie			

The most efficient way of comparing Port Stephens to the peer group is to chart abox and whisker plot. Figure 1 provides details regarding how to interpret these plots:

FIGURE 1. INTERPRETING BOX AND WHISKER PLOTS

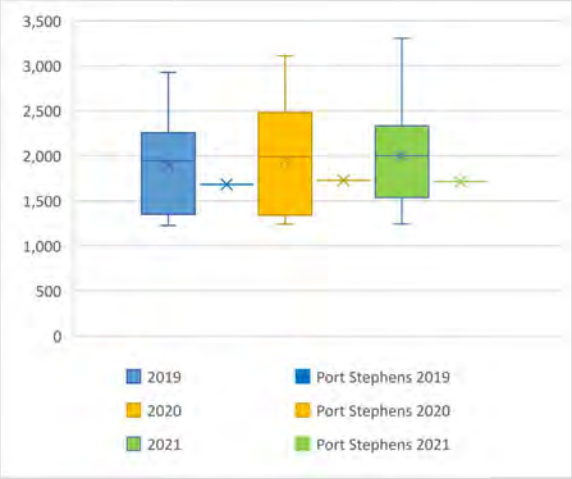


At face value, Figure 2 Operational Expenditure per Capita suggests that the efficiency of Port Stephens relative to the peer group is good; Port Stephens sits at alevel significantly lower than the typical result (as measured by either the mean or the median). In the most recent year it is close to the bottom of the second

quartile.

However, there are a number of problems associated with relying on expenditure per capita data. First, the Australian Bureau of Statistic (ABS) population data is no more than an estimate in intercensal years with expected errors of 2.4 through to 15.6 percent (Drew and Dollery, 2014). Second, the ratio implicitly asks us to accept that most municipal services are delivered to people rather than to properties. Whilst all Australian local government systems have steadily increased 'services to people' relative to 'services to property' over recent decades, this assumption is still not reasonable[3] (Dollery, Wallis and Allan, 2006; Drew, 2021). Indeed, operational expenditure per capita completely ignores outputs associated with the single largest component of Australian local government expenditure (i.e. roads). Moreover, roads are in fact negatively correlated with population size (the relevant Pearson correlation coefficient is negative[4] and equals -0.2531 on a state-wide basis). Third, the ratio implicitly asserts that the cost of providing services to people on farmland is the same as the cost of providing the same services to residential citizens in suburbs[5]. Fourth, operational expenditure per capita ignores the demands of business entirely, which is particularly concerning in local government areas that attract large numbers of tourists (and thus have a relative high number of businessesper capita as in Port Stephens). For all these reasons the operational expenditure per capita data is not a reliablemetric by which to measure relative technical efficiency.

FIGURE 2 OPERATIONAL EXPENDITURE PER CAPITA ($)



[3] In order to defend this assumption it must be demonstrated that the cost of delivering services, such as domestic waste disposal, are closely correlated with the number of occupants in a house. Put differently, it must be shown that the cost of collecting and disposing of solid waste for a household offive is precisely five times more than a household of one person.

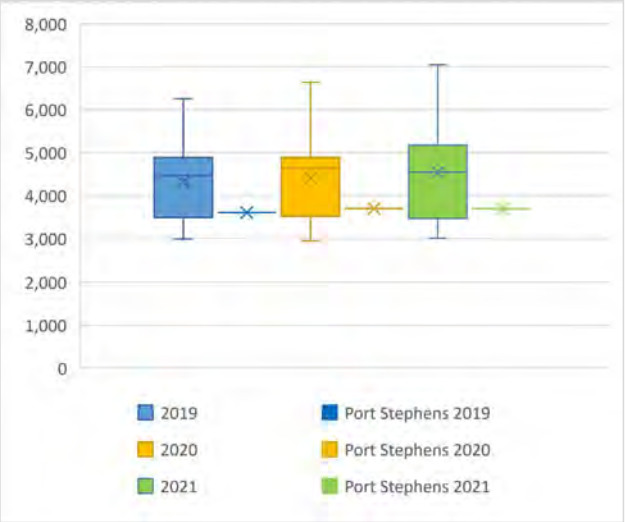
[4] This means that as population increases, road length tends to decrease on an interjurisdictional basis.

[5] It also boldly assumes that these different kinds of people require and receive the same kinds ofservices.

Operational expenditure per property assessment (Figure 3) – as used in jurisdictions such as Victoria – is a much more defensible metric. However, it is stillnot adequate for important decision making because it also (a) neglects outputs associated with the single largest item of local government expenditure (roads) and
(b) implicitly asserts that the cost of servicing residential properties is somehow comparable to the cost of servicing farms or businesses.

It is noteworthy that in a relative sense Port Stephens performs even better with respect to its peer group for the ratio measured on a per assessment basis. The comparative improvement (with respect to the earlier per capita results) is principally driven by the number of persons who inhabit each household, which is lower at Port Stephens than it is for many of the peer councils. In addition, recognising the relatively higher number of generally smaller tourist-orientated businesses at Port Stephens compared to many of its peers also improves its relative performance.

FIGURE 3. OPERATIONAL EXPENDITURE PER PROPERTY ASSESSMENT ($)



The main problem associated with these ratio approaches to measuring relative technical efficiency relates to the limitations implied by using just a single input and single output. The solution to this problem is to employ DEA. DEA is able to accommodate *multiple* inputs *and* outputs and it applies variable weightings to the respective elements to construct an efficient frontier against which the weighted performance of relatively less efficient councils might be compared.

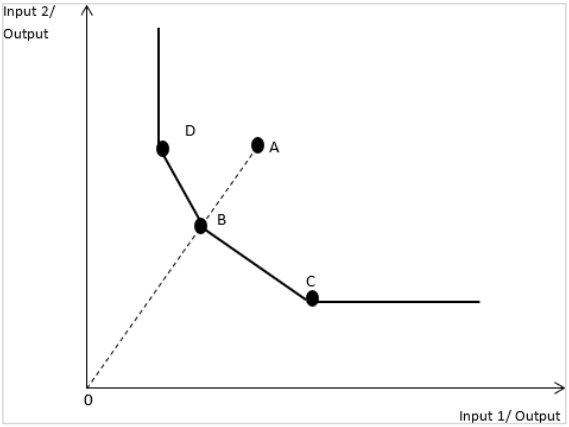
The best way to understand DEA is to consider a graphical illustration. Figure 4 presents a simplified version of an input-orientated DEA where the most efficient councils (D, B and C) envelop the production frontier. Council A is relatively less efficient and lies to the interior of the frontier curve. By measuring the ratio of theradial

distance with respect to the frontier and interior points respectively, it is possible to calculate relative technical efficiency whereby a score of 0 would

represent complete relative inefficiency and 1 perfect efficiency (that is the council would lie on the curve like C, B or D).

Readers requiring further information are referred to the seminal works of Coelli *et al.* (2005) or Cooper, Seiford and Tone (2007).

FIGURE 4. INPUT-ORIENTATED DEA



In section 3, we present a DEA of tax-efficiency. This seems to be the concept that best aligns with IPART's SRV concerns.

3. TAX EFFICIENCY

The value for money proposition that seems to be at the heart of the IPART concern for efficiency is best assessed by a DEA of tax efficiency. In order to undertake this exercise, we used the total tax take as a single input and proxied local government output according to five variables (the number of each type of the three major disaggregated property assessments as well as the length of sealed and unsealed roads respectively[6]). The DEA thus measured the efficiency of the conversion of local property tax funds collected from landowners in Port Stephens with respect to the major outputs of the Port Stephens Council. As we shall see, this specification deals with all of the principal criticisms of the crude ratios that we examined earlier. It also recognises the very different cost structures associated with maintaining sealed and unsealed roads respectively[7]. Consistent with our other work, we consider the broadest classification of NSW local governments, which numbers some sixty-sevencouncils.

[6] Because of its underlying ratio conception, DEA allows scholars to combine quantities measured in different units.

[7] Nunamaker's rule means that the total number of inputs and outputs considered by a given DEA cannot be allowed to exceed one third of the total number of decision-making units (councils) (see Cooper *et al.,* 2007).

A summary of the DEA specification is:

Total taxation take ($'000) → residential (no.) + farm (no.) + business (no.) + sealed roads (km) + unsealed roads (km).

Moreover, it should be noted that the DEA was conducted as a globally intertemporal analysis because we only had four years of data with which to work. Global intertemporal DEAs are suitable for comparisons over time when it can be reasonably assumed that there have been no changes to dynamic efficiency over theperiod of analysis. In addition, it is important for end-users of this Report to understand that we employed a variable returns to scale (VRS) DEA. This means that we controlled for potential size effects on efficiency.

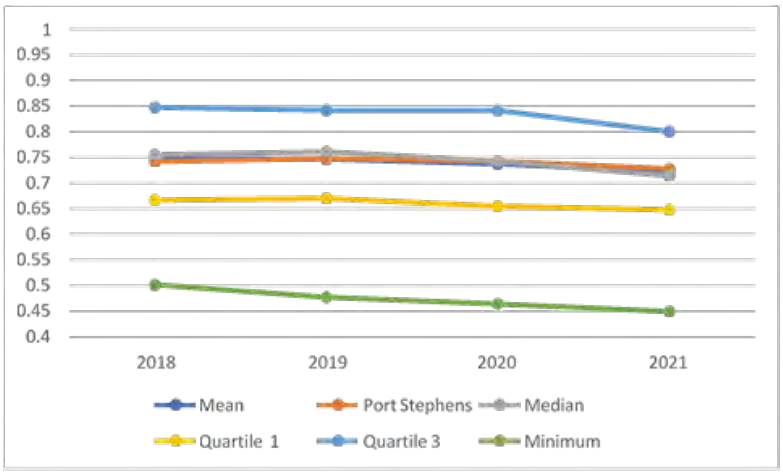
To ensure that our analysis was as robust as possible we bootstrapped results at2,000 replications. Bootstrapping is essentially a probabilistic procedure that provides greater assurance, especially where input data might have gaps.

In Figure 5, we plot the DEA scores for Port Stephens Council for each of the four years, along with suitable measures of central tendency for the sixty-seven councils under analysis. As we shall see, the performance of Port Stephens is close to the typical (both median and mean) result. Moreover, the score attained was consistently at or about 0.75; that is, the efficiency of Port Stephens Council is far closer to perfectly efficient (1) than it is to perfectly inefficient (0).

This robust DEA evidence should provide both the IPART and Port Stephens Council ratepayers with strong assurance that they are indeed getting good value formoney. However, there is always room for improvement and we will discuss some changes that could increase efficiency in the conclusion to this Report. In this regardit should be noted that because there is no consistent state-wide control for quality –such as the citizen satisfaction survey conducted annually for each local council in the Victorian local government system – that it is thus not possible to precisely identify the cause of apparent extant relative inefficiency. One possibility is that what appears to be inefficiency is indeed a reflection of relatively higher service levels at aparticular local government area. This seems to be probable given the entrenched fiscal illusion at Port Stephens that we have considered in our other reports. A second possibility is that the Council is spending more to produce certain goods andservices than its peers, which would be more consistent with a strict understanding of technical efficiency.

FIGURE 5. TAXATION EFFICIENCY, GLOBAL INTERTEMPORAL 2018-2021

10



This DEA has been useful for the purposes of demonstrating sound value for (property tax) funds at Port Stephens Council. However, as we discussed earlier, regulators are also keen for local governments to attain efficiency because they believe it might be translated into stronger financial sustainability over time. To evaluate this proposition it is necessary to conduct an additional DEA with a more standard input specification.

4. STANDARD RELATIVE TECHNICAL EFFICIENCY

The 'standard' DEA specification replaces the single input (total tax take) with two inputs to reflect the specific elements that a local government combines in the production process; staff and operational expenditure (all of the outputs remained unchanged from our earlier specification). Moreover, to ensure that we recognise differences in experience, capacity and productivity of staff, we followed the scholarly precedent of expressing staff as 'staff expenditure' rather than full-time equivalent numbers (FTE) (Drew, Kortt and Dollery, 2015b).

We were able to re-run our DEA over a much longer panel spanning the period 2009 to 2021 inclusive. Because of the longer time involved – whereby it no longer seemed reasonable to assume no changes to dynamic efficiency – we elected to runa locally intertemporal analysis with a two-year window. Local intertemporal analysis is a particular kind of sequential technique that provides much more accurate resultsfor the non-boundary years[8] (albeit at the cost of considerable additional time from the analyst). It should be noted that we used a variable returns to scale (VRS) DEAmodel to control for the potential effects of size on efficiency.

[8] Because boundary years are only analysed once – rather than twice – relatively less certainty can be placed on the 2009 and 2021 data points.

In Figure 6, we plot the DEA scores for Port Stephens for each of the thirteen years, along with suitable measures of central tendency for the sixty-seven councils under

analysis. As can be seen, for a regular DEA aimed at evaluating relative technical efficiency in the production process, Port Stephens does not perform very well.
Overall, the Council had efficiency slightly lower than the first quartile boundary (that is, its relative performance was in the bottom twenty-five percent of local governments).

There are several reasons why Port Stephens Council appears to have done worsein a comparative sense for the DEA than it did in the earlier simple ratio analysis.
Firstly, the DEA has a much larger cohort than the earlier ratio analysis (sixty-six peers rather than fourteen). Second, Port Stephens has a relatively low ratio of roadsper assessment compared to the earlier peer group (which means that a proper analysis of outputs, that includes roads, will be relatively disadvantageous for Port Stephens). Third, the ratio of businesses to residential assessments is relatively higher for Port Stephens Council consistent with its status as a tourist destination.
This is also relatively disadvantageous if more money is spent on business assessments than on residential assessments. For all of these reasons, while theDEA results are disappointing, they are not entirely unexpected.

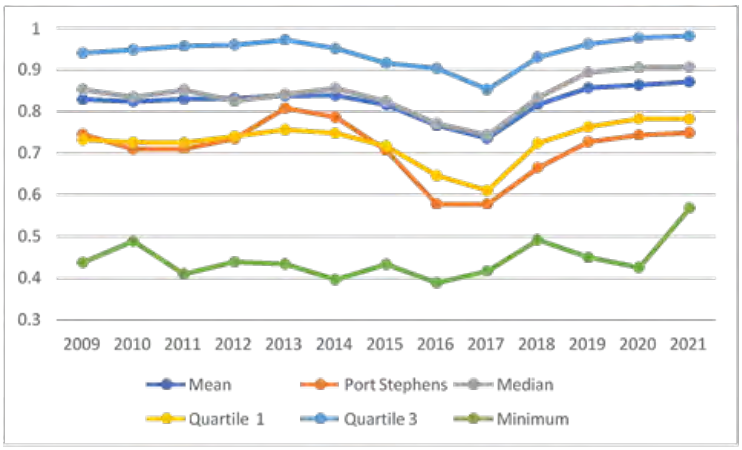
We also note that the standard relative technical efficiency is lower than the previously presented tax efficiency. This is mostly the result of the relatively low taxreceipts that Port Stephens Council receives, although the mix of production factors(i.e. relative combinations of staff and money) is also important.

It should be noted that relative technical efficiency at Port Stephens Council has been improving in recent years reaching a score higher than 0.74 for the past two years. This trend is pleasing and it provides assurance to both the local communityand IPART that Council understands the need to improve its efficiency.

There are two possible explanations for the relative technical efficiency outcomes at Port Stephens; either they represent relatively higher levels of goods or services (see our earlier explanation of the tax efficiency results), or alternatively, it is costingCouncil more to provide services. In the conclusion of this Report, we suggest a number of measures that could improve matters.

FIGURE 6. RELATIVE TECHNICAL EFFICIENCY, LOCAL INTERTEMPORAL, 2009-2021

12



In section 5, we briefly review the determinants of relative technical efficiency with a view to applying it to the circumstances faced by Port Stephens Council.

5. THE DETERMINANTS OF EFFICIENCY

It is important to understand the determinants of efficiency in order to appreciate how much control a council has over its predicament. To investigate this question, scholars generally conduct a secondary regression, using constant returns DEA scores as the regress and. A constant returns DEA is employed (rather than the variable returns employed for our other exercises) because we wish to also test the effect of size on efficiency (and a variable returns to scale (VRS) DEA would confound matters because it already controls for scale effects).

Regression analysis allows econometricians to determine the mean response in a dependent variable with respect to changes to multiple independent variables. We employed an OLS regression model with year dummies because a fixed effects panel regression was not deemed suitable given the results from diagnostic tests.

The econometric analysis that follows can be specified as:

$$\mathbf{T} = \alpha + \beta 1\mathbf{P} + \beta 2\mathbf{X} + \boldsymbol{\mu}.$$

In this specification **T** (the dependent variable) is the constant returns to scale technical efficiency score for each council in each year, **P** is a vector of relevant population data and **X** is a vector of socio-demographic and local government characteristics. Mu (**μ**) is an independent identically distributed random error term. Itshould be noted that natural log transformations were executed where required to correct for skewed distributions, as detailed in Table 2. All standard econometric tests were conducted and the residuals were confirmed to be near-normal in distribution (a critical assumption for valid statistical reasoning). The regression includes the sixty-seven councils that comprise the extended category cohort for NSW for the years 2018 to 2021 inclusive.

TABLE 2. DEFINITIONS AND MEANS OF VARIABLES, 2018-2021

Variable	Definition	Similar Councils
Rates		
CRS TE	Relative technical efficiency,constant returns to scale	0.849
Population		
Lnpop	Natural log of the population for each local government area	11.184
Lnpop2	The square of the logged population	125.741
Lndense	Natural log of population densitydata for each local government area	5.081
Controls		
Median employee income	Median employee income(lagged), divided by 1,000	50.363
Median unincorporated business income	Median unincorporated business income (lagged), divided by 1,000	12.159
Aged (ln)	Proportion of people on an agedpension	2.275
Under 15	Proportion of people under theage of 15	18.23
DSP	Proportion of people on a Disability Support pension	3.286
Newstart (ln)	Proportion of people on a Newstart allowance, logged	0.954
Single (ln)	Proportion of people on a SingleParent pension, logged	-0.329
IPPE (ln)	Natural log of the carrying value of infrastructure in ($'000)	14.148
Year	A dummy variable to control forthe effect of different years	
Amalgamation	A dummy variable to control forwhether or not a council was amalgamated in 2016	

In Table 3, we detail the coefficients and standard errors yielded by our regression analysis. We have not listed the results for coefficients that were not statistically significant or included merely as control variables.

TABLE 3. MULTIPLE REGRESSION RESULTS, 2018-2021 INCLUSIVE

	Extended Cohort
Population (ln)	-0.2366 (0.2415)
Population squared (ln)	0.0125 (0.0108)
Population density (ln)	-0.0189* (0.0077)
Aged (ln)	-0.1229** (0.0368)
Median employee income	-0.0013 (0.0018)
Median unincorporated income	-0.0124** (0.0035)
Additional Controls?	Yes
N	263
Coefficient of Determination	0.2384

+p < 0.10, *p < 0.05, **p < 0.01. Standard errors in parentheses

It is noteworthy that population size was not statistically significant which suggests that scale effects are not as important as many regulatory agencies seem to believe. However, population density is important. Our model suggests that a one percent increase in population density results in a reduction to technical efficiency of approximately 0.0002 units (where technical efficiency lies on a scale between zero and one). This suggests that highly built-up areas tend to cost more to service, probably because of well-known congestion effects.

The proportion of people on an aged pension is also statistically significant (this time at the highest level). The model suggests that a one percent increase to the aged variable is associated with a reduction to technical efficiency in the order of 0.0012 units. This is an important finding given the high proportion of aged pensioners in Port Stephens, as well as projections of likely growth to this demographic in future. Itis also important to recall from our Financial Sustainability Report and Capacity to Pay Report that the pensioner demographic is provided with a partially funded discount on their rates which appears to have entrenched fiscal illusion within this cohort.

Increases in unincorporated business income also appear to be detrimental to technical efficiency. Here the model can be interpreted to suggest that a one percent increase in business income is associated with a 0.00012 reduction to relative technical efficiency.

All three variables that are negatively associated with technical efficiency are largely outside of the control of Council in the short term. However, the size of the associations is relatively modest and should thus mean that measures suggested in

section 6 could still exert a positive and material impact on the efficiency of Port Stephens Council in future.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

There are at least five measures that could be taken to improve relative technical efficiency at Port Stephens Council in response to this Report, which we set out inorder of relative importance:

(1) EXPLICIT MEASURES TO COMBAT FISCAL ILLUSION

A targeted campaign should be implemented to combat entrenched fiscal illusion at Port Stephens Council. Community education is critical, as is the correct pricing of fees and charges, as well as ensuring that adequate taxation is levied in a manner that respects principles of distributive justice and sends appropriate price signals (especially with respect to the level of subsidies provided for merit goods). In addition, reducing informational asymmetries by providing carefully constructed financial sustainability information with rates and charges notices will assist significantly. *Saving Local Government* (Drew, 2021) outlines what is required in considerable detail.

(2) ABOLISH WARD STRUCTURES

The scholarly literature has demonstrated beyond dispute that each additional ward results in significantly lower technical efficiency. Indeed, in a recent study Drew and Dollery (2017) showed that each additional municipal ward was associated with a 3.4% increase in unit expenditure. Moreover, ward structures tend to make planning more complex, complicate the political process and obscure matters with respect to citizen identification with Council. In fact, Place-scores and Place-plans make ward structures rather redundant. We strongly suggest that Council consider removing thisobstacle to future efficiency according to the process outlined in the relevant legislation. Indeed, we recommend that Council establish a working group on this matter and that IPART is duly informed of this initiative as part of the SRV process.

(3) REVIEW OF CORPORATE STRUCTURE

As we noted in our Financial Sustainability Report, Council has done a good job of containing staff costs. However, there may be opportunities for further savings.
Accordingly, the next regular organisational review should place particular emphasis on both the number of lower level managers and also ensuring a sufficient span of control.

(4) SERVICE LEVEL REVIEW

As we have argued, there is good reason to believe that fiscal illusion is a significant problem at Port Stephens. Council thus needs to re-establish a nexus between the price paid in taxation and the level of local services that it funds. We note that Port Stephens documentation refers to the Best Value approach to service level reviews that seeks to match service levels to community willingness to pay. Given the discordance that persists at present, in our view it is important at the next regular service level review to pay even greater attention on conveying to local residents the importance of paying adequate rates, fees and charges for the standard of services

desired. Moreover, the necessity of doing so to ensure intergenerational equity should also be emphasised. Thus, emphasis should be orientated less on what residents would like and more on what they are willing to pay for.

(5) COUNCIL LED INTERNAL EFFICIENCIES

Council management should continue to pursue other efficiencies associated with a range of internal activities. This may include matters such as the deferral of discretionary projects, better procurement practices, a review of community grant schemes, better capture of tourist revenues and more appropriate use of carefully tailored fees and charges. In his *Saving Local Government*, Drew (2021) provides considerable detail as to how to approach these matters.

In conclusion, ratepayers at Port Stephens Council, as well as IPART, can be assured that Council provides good value for money. Moreover, by vigorously pursuing the above recommendations, it should be possible for Council to improve its efficiency even further, notwithstanding the challenges posed by its disadvantageous socio-demographic profile.

REFERENCES

Coelli, T., Rao, D., O'Donnell, C. and Battese, G. (2005). *An Introduction toEfficiency and Productivity Analysis*. Springer: Singapore.

Cooper, W., Seiford, L. and Tone, K. (2007). *Data Envelopment Analysis*. Springer:Singapore.

Dollery, B. E., Wallis, J. L. and Allan, P. (2006). The Debate That Had to Happen ButNever Did: The Changing Role of Australian Local Government. *Australian Journal ofPolitical Science,* 41(4): 553-567.

Drew, J. (2021). *Saving Local Government*. Springer Palgrave: Singapore.

Drew, J. and Dollery B. (2014). Keeping It In-House – Households as an Alternative Proxy for Local Government Output. *Australian Journal of Public Administration*, 73(2): 235-246.

Drew, J. and Dollery, B. (2017). The Price of Democracy? Political Representation Structure and Per Capita Expenditure in Victorian Local Government. *Urban AffairsReview*, 53(3): 522-538.

Drew, J., Kortt, M. and Dollery, B. (2015a). Peas in a Pod: Are Efficient MunicipalitiesAlso Financially Sustainable? *Australian Accounting Review*, 77(26): 122-131.

Drew, J., Kortt, M. and Dollery, B. (2015b). No Aladdin's Cave in New South Wales? Local Government Amalgamation, Scale Economies and Data Envelopment Specification. *Administration & Society*, DOI: 10.1177/0095399715581045.

Drew, J., Razin, E. and Andrews, R. (2018). Rhetoric in Municipal Amalgamations: A Comparative Analysis. *Local Government Studies*, doi:10.1080/03003930.2018.1530657.

Ferguson, C. E. (1972). *Microeconomic Theory.* Richard D. Irwin: Homewood Illinois(Third Edition).

Port Stephens Council

Capacity to Pay Report

DISCLAIMER

This Report was prepared by Joseph Drew and Brian Dollery on behalf of New England Education and Research Proprietary Limited for the Port Stephens Council.This Report was produced for the Port Stephens Council as a strictly independent Report. The opinions expressed in the Report are thus exclusively the views of its authors and do not necessarily coincide with the views of the Port Stephens Councilor any other body. The information provided in this Report may be reproduced in whole or in part for media review, quotation in literature, or non-commercial purposes, subject to the inclusion of acknowledgement of the source and provided no commercial use or sale of the material occurs.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report details the insufficiency of local government taxation revenue for the port stephens local government area. We also review the extant rate structure used by port stephens council and offer suggestions to improve both the distributive justice and capacity to pay aspects of its municipal tax. The centrepiece of this report is a sophisticated multiple regression analysis over a long panel of data that precisely quantifies the extant shortfall in receipts. We conclude the report with an enumeration of the changes to existing tax arrangements that are important to ensure ongoing financial sustainability for port stephens council.

1. INTRODUCTION

Taxation is a critical source of funding to support the provision of local public goods and services as well as subsidise merit goods and goods with positive externalities. Public goods and services are both non-excludable[1] and non-rival[2] in consumption.These items contribute to the common good and it is not practical to levy a fee or charge for their use. They must thus be funded through taxation. By contrast, merit goods embody various desirable attributes and thus may warrant some level of subsidy from the common tax pool to elicit higher levels of consumption (Drew, 2021). Similarly, goods with positive externalities provide benefits to the wider society (beyond those internalised by the user) and may thus be considered worthy of subsidy. The main point to grasp is that taxation is a moral responsibility accruingas a result of one's membership in a community – it is definitely not a fee for service(a common misapprehension that leads to inefficient taxation structures that are difficult to defend in a moral sense; see Drew (2020)).

In Australian local government systems, the tax base is narrow and focussed on landvalue (Dollery, Crase and Johnstone, 2006). Use of unimproved land value has a number of qualities to recommend it, including: (i) relative ease of calculation; (ii) efficiency[3]; (iii) clear liability[4]; and (iv) nexus[5]. In addition, the property tax has a strong moral foundation since it is largely based on unearned wealth created by others (George, 2010). Put differently, the increase in unimproved land value captures just a small fraction of the wealth created for an individual through the efforts of others (for example, through migration, the establishment of new industriesor the construction of new infrastructure). Thus, by paying a land tax one is really returning to the wider community some of the wealth that they have created. In this sense, a land tax is often seen as a tax on unrealised capital gains (Drew, 2020;2021).

In addition, failure to levy sufficient taxation can lead local governments to participatein risky activities, such as attempting to generate commercial revenues to subsidise taxation insufficiency or neglecting to conduct adequate maintenance on local infrastructure. Indeed, excessively low taxation can also encourage the levying of inappropriately high fees and charges for municipal services that are inequitable[7].

[1] It is neither reasonable nor practical to prevent someone from using the good or service, such as local roads.

[2] One person's use of the good or service does not materially affect the capacity of others to use it, as in street lighting.

[3] In the sense that an unimproved land tax tends not to distort economic decision-making.

[4] It is clear who is liable for the tax and it is very difficult for one to avoid one's responsibility (for example, the objective of the tax cannot be moved to a tax haven).

[5] Services at the local government level are still most closely associated with property rather than with people (although in Australian local government the mix is changing over time (Dollery *et al.* 2006)).

[6] Drew (2021) uses the powerful personal budget metaphor to explicate these matters further. In our personal finances, we expect to make sacrifices when we take out debt. We have either to earn more or cut back on costs in other areas.

[7] In this case, users of services are essentially forced to subsidise the moral obligation of taxpayerswho do not consume the fee-attracting item in question.

Moreover, inappropriately low levels of taxation fuel deleterious fiscal illusion. Fiscal illusion occurs when local residents do not understand the true cost of the local government goods and services they consume (Drew, 2020). It tends to result in excessively high levels of consumption as well as high demand for the expansion of local programs and local infrastructure. Fiscal illusion is also likely to result in strong community opposition to perfectly reasonable requests to pay financially sustainablerates of taxation (IPART, 2020). In these instances, careful and clear communicationto local residents is essential.

Taxation at Port Stephens Council is organised around three principal categories consistent with the Local Government Act (1993, NSW): residential, farm business and (non-farm) business. In addition, special consideration has been given to ratepayers affected by the Williamtown contamination. Table 1 – extracted from themost recent Operational Plan – details the rate structure at Port Stephens Council:

Category	Sub-Category	**Ad Valorem Rate c in $**	**Base Amount $**	Base Amount Yield %	Estimated Rate Yield '000s
Residential	n/a	0.2796	394.00	35	$35,789
Residential	Williamtown Primary Zone	0.1398	197.00	39	12
Residential	Williamtown Secondary Zone	0.2097	295.50	41	112
Residential	Williamtown Broader Zone	0.2516	354.60	40	223
Farmland	n/a	0.2796	394.00	21	$840
Farmland	Williamtown Primary Zone	0.1398	197.00	30	6
Farmland	Williamtown Secondary Zone	0.2097	295.50	27	19
Farmland	Williamtown Broader Zone	0.2516	354.60	26	21
Business	n/a	0.7727	1,684.00	35	$9,046
Mining	n/a	0.7727	n/a	n/a	Nil
				Total	**$46,068**

TABLE 1. ORDINARY RATE STRUCTURE

It is noteworthy that the farm business rate has been set at the same level as the residential rate of local government taxation notwithstanding the fact that most farm businesses can export at least some of the tax to the federal government as part of their usual tax affairs. This means that farm businesses in Port Stephens are not paying the same effective rate of taxation as most residential ratepayers (that is, they are receiving an effective discount and hence a subsidy).

Moreover, the rate levied on other (non-farm) business is 2.76 times higher than that paid by farm businesses. It would seem difficult to justify this disparity without resorting to an inappropriate fee-for-service kind of argument. However, it is noteworthy that non-farm businesses also generally have the capacity to export some of their local government taxation burden to the federal government.

Port Stephens makes use of a base rate. The main arguments for using base rates are: (i) that they flatten the disparity between rate assessment notices; (ii) that they ensure that owners of strata title properties or high-density dwellings make a reasonable contribution to the tax pool[8]; and (iii) that they reduce some of the volatility that can arise from revised property valuations. All of these claims are largely correct, but they come at a high cost to the most disadvantaged landowners in the community.

In essence, a base rate has the effect of reducing the size of the *ad valorem* factor. This means that people retain a relatively larger share of the unearned wealth reflected in unimproved land values. Thus, those who enjoy relatively higher increases to their land value will benefit far more, in absolute terms, than those who do not. Indeed, those who have their land value fall are guaranteed in a base rate environment to be the most disadvantaged. A decision must thus be made regarding whether it is reasonable to effectively place more of the burden on the relatively disadvantaged (and hence disturb distributive justice) in order to reduce rate volatilityor ensure strata title and high-density property owners pay a reasonable contribution.If indeed a base rate is retained, then it would be best to link the proportion funded by the base rate to the governance costs of the Council (Drew, 2021), which would probably see it fall considerably.

We have taken the trouble to outline some of the complexity of a land-based taxation system because it seems an opportune time to reflect on the equity and efficiency of these matters as part of the current review of capacity to pay.
The remainder of this Report is set out as follows. In section 2, we conduct a broad overview of Port Stephens taxation rates relative to a peer group of fourteen councils. In section 3, we conduct a more detailed review of residential rates. Section 4 considers business income variables. In section 5, we present robust econometric modelling of the total tax capacity for the Port Stephens local government area. We conclude the Report in section 6 with our recommendations for Council moving forward.

[8] The objective here is to improve distributive justice by ensuring that strata title and high density owners pay more than what they otherwise would. However, in so doing it is inevitable that distributive justice will be eroded for owners of low value property. The best solution would probably be a separate category for high-density dwellings and strata holders, but the legislation does not appear to facilitate this potential remedy.

2. OVERVIEW OF RATES AT PORT STEPHENS COUNCIL AND ITS PEERS

In section 2, we provide a comparative perspective on local government taxes at Port Stephens relative to the fourteen-member peer group also used in our Financial Sustainability Report.

To provide a synoptic relative overview the best option is a box and whisker plot. Figure 1 provides information on how to read the graphs that follow.

FIGURE 1. INTERPRETING BOX AND WHISKER PLOTS

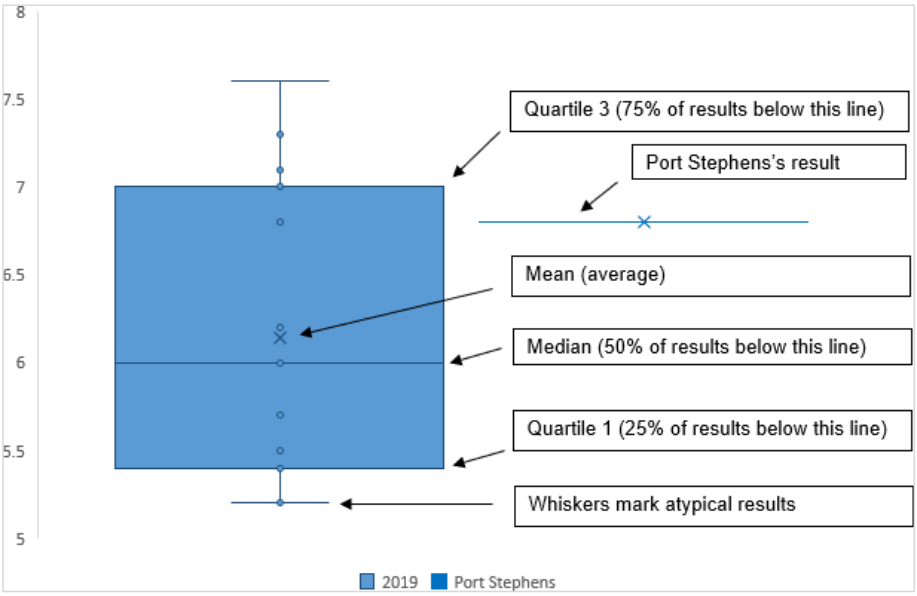
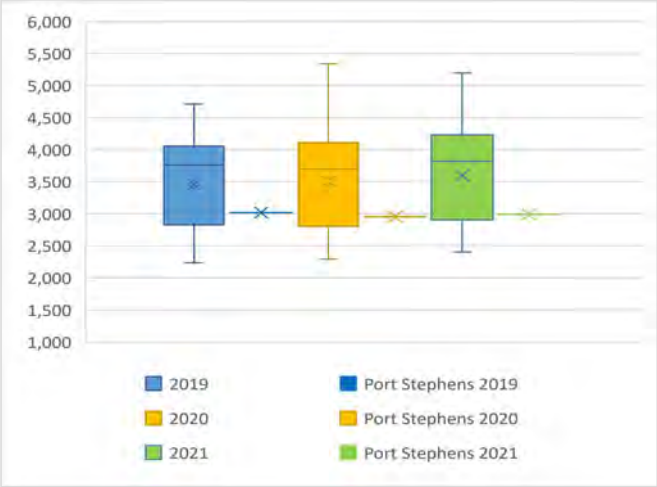


Figure 2 provides details of rates and annual charges on a per assessment basis to allow for reasonable comparisons. As can be seen, Port Stephens has scored close to the bottom of the second quartile in recent years. This does not bode well for revenue sufficiency.

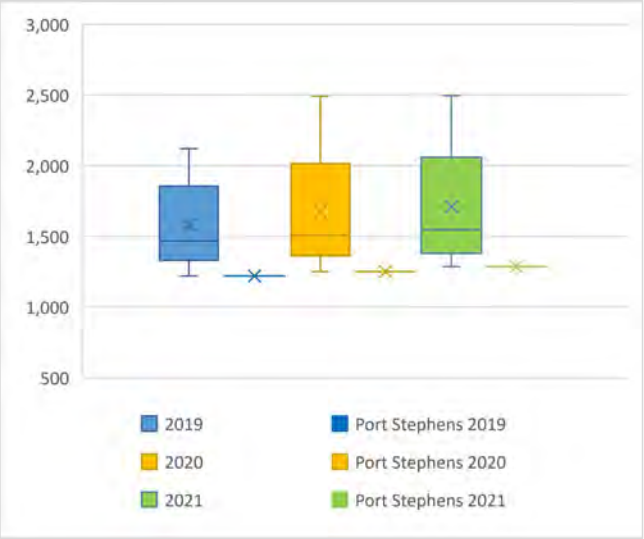
8

FIGURE 2. RATES, FEES AND ANNUAL CHARGES PER ASSESSMENT ($)



Moreover, in Figure 3 we find that total rates on a per property basis are in fact the lowest in the peer group and have been for at least three years. This result seems to support our early suggestion in this Report that taxation insufficiency tends to result in higher fees and annual charges that may both distort price signals and lead to inequities.

FIGURE 3. TOTAL RATES PER PROPERTY ASSESSMENT ($)



Given our brief review of the actual tax rates levied by Port Stephens Council (see Table 1), it is reasonable to suspect that the insufficiency might be centred mainly upon residential and farm tax rates. In Table 2, we provide details of the average tax take (by category) as required by IPART for the purpose of demonstrating capacity for a Special Rate Variation (SRV). It certainly seems that the rate of taxation levied at Port Stephens is well below the typical level for the peer group in both the residential and farm categories, but comparable for business. We will further illustrate the comparative levels in Figure 4, Figure 5 and Figure 6 below.

TABLE 2. COMPARISON OF AVERAGE RATES, 2020-21.

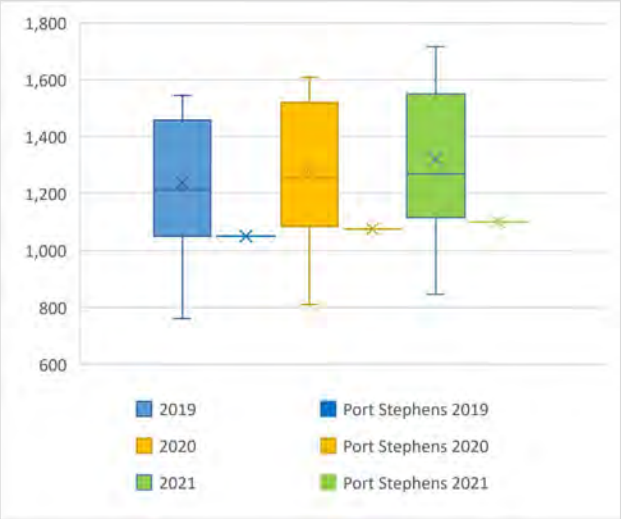
Council	Residential	Farm	Business
Port Stephens	$1,100.75	$1,774.59	$4,602.47
Coffs Harbour	$1,230.47	$2,105.26	$4,101.04
Lake Macquarie	$1,504.59	$2,216.22	$5,022.19
Maitland	$1,715.98	$3,510.67	$7,763.30
Newcastle	$1,597.40	$2,444.44	$12,200.16
Port Macquarie-Hastings	$1,248.97	$2,032.26	$3,817.97
Shellharbour	$1,615.63	$3,324.32	$5,040.24
Shoalhaven	$1,294.17	$2,547.01	$2,169.00
Tweed	$1,473.68	$2,177.05	$2,967.38

Wollongong	$1,549.68	$2,677.69	$11,782.60
Cessnock	$1,269.31	$2,905.26	$3,613.29
Muswellbrook	$846.75	$2,624.45	$1,683.79
Singleton	$1,181.84	$1,992.38	$2,448.12
Tamworth	$1,089.78	$1,968.22	$3,306.11
Wagga Wagga	$1,115.63	$2,802.98	$5,940.43
AVERAGE	$1,322.31	$2,473.52	$5,097.21
STANDARD DEVIATION	244.03	508.85	3196.40
MEDIAN	$1,269.31	$2,444.44	$4,101.04
QUARTILE 1	$1,148.74	$2,068.76	$3,136.75
QUARTILE 3	$1,527.14	$2,740.33	$5,490.33
INTERQUARTILE RANGE	378.40	671.57	2353.59
PORT STEPHENS	$1,100.75	$1,774.59	$4,602.47

Figure 4 further illustrates that the residential rates (on a per assessment basis) applied in Port Stephens are consistently in the lowest quartile in a relative sense. If we assume that current residential ratepayers in the peer group are able to manage their taxation obligations, then the Figure 4 box and whisker plots suggest adequate scope for upward revision.

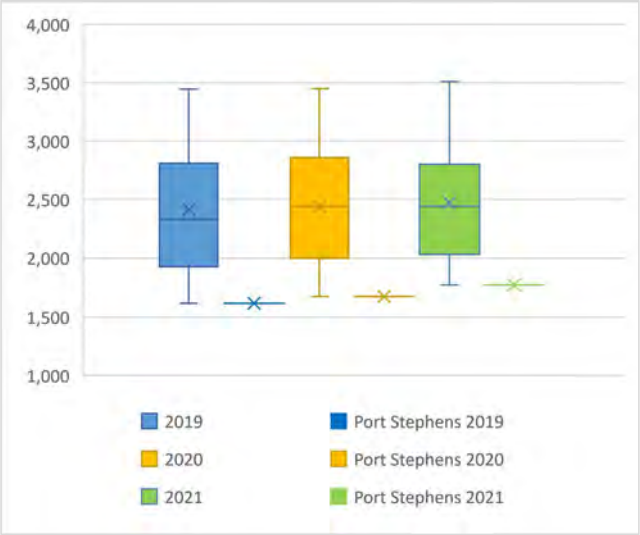
It is noteworthy that relatively low rates of taxation are particularly threatening in the residential category because this is where most of the demand for municipal services manates. It is also where most of the political power resides in the local government area. Given the grim state of affairs painted in our Report on the financial sustainability of Council, it would be prudent to strike a more appropriate level of taxation for this category.

FIGURE 4. RESIDENTIAL RATES PER ASSESSMENT ($)



For farm rates, matters are even worse in a relative sense. Not only is this an important problem for ongoing financial sustainability (albeit mitigated in part by the relatively lower numbers of farm assessments), but it echoes the potential inequity that we noted earlier: most farm businesses have the capacity to export at least some of their local government rates as a tax deduction. This effectively means thatthere is a failure to observe distributive justice with respect to the comparative burden of farm businesses relative to most residential properties.

FIGURE 5. FARM RATES PER ASSESSMENT ($)



Moreover, other (non-farm) business rates per assessment generally reside at or above the typical result for the peer group, as represented by the median. It is curious that other businesses have not received the generous discounts on an appropriate tax rate that the farm businesses have received. This preferential treatment for farm businesses is mostly an artefact of the historical development of Australian local government and cannot be justified without resorting to either historical precedent or to an erroneous services argument (Grant and Drew, 2017).

It might be noted that the relatively typical taxes levied on business at Port Stephens Council means that this category is likely to contribute less to the financial sustainability pressure points (not just with respect to revenue, but also broader matters of intergenerational equity and fiscal illusion).

FIGURE 6. BUSINESS RATES PER ASSESSMENT ($)

Rates and charges outstanding provide an excellent indication of the capacity of various categories of ratepayer to meet their extant obligations. Unsurprisingly, Port Stephens Council consistently has the lowest outstanding rates and charges in the entire peer group. This result confirms that ratepayers are able to meet their obligations as matters stand. If an SRV is indeed approved – and if Council takes the opportunity to reform its rate structure – then it will be important to monitor this ratio in a relative sense in future.

FIGURE 7. RATES AND CHARGES OUTSTANDING

We do not think that average rate levels alone represent a sound basis for assessing capacity. The aforementioned data neglect a broad range of socio-demographic

variables that are clearly salient to the capacity of residential ratepayers to make more adequate contributions to revenue. In the next section, we review some of the important available data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) that has particular relevance to the capacity of the largest part of the rate base (residential assessments).

3. RESIDENTIAL RATE VARIABLES

Office of Local Government Guidelines (2020) require IPART to pay regard to the Socio-Economic Index for Areas (SEIFA). As readers may be aware, while there are four SEIFA indexes produced by the ABS, the NSW Office of Local Government (OLG) focuses on the Index of Relative Socio-Economic Disadvantage.

Indexes are not useful guides for important decision making because the mathematical techniques required to construct them result in important information being conflated. For instance, the relative contributions of the input variables is dependent on the weighting applied to the index. For this reason, we present data for each of the important variables from Figure 9 onwards.

Port Stephens Council has a SEIFA of 6 on both a national and state-wide basis, which is precisely typical (as measured by the median). When the SEIFA scores a higher number it means that the community is relatively less disadvantaged. The most recent census data available at time of writing was 2016.

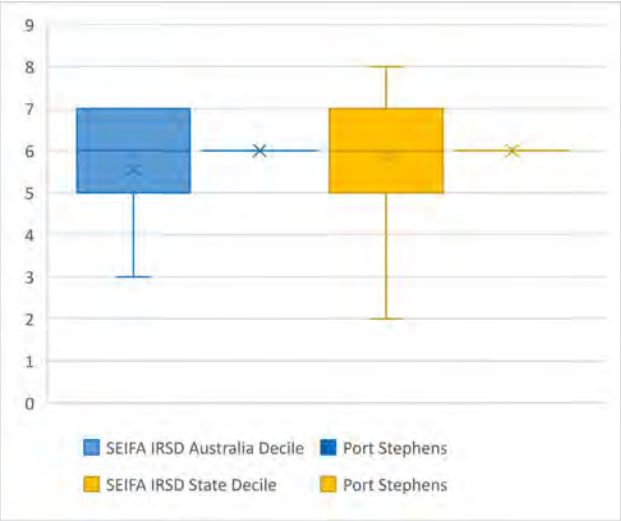
TABLE 3. 2016 CENSUS DATA SOCIO-ECONOMIC INDEXES FOR AREAS (SEIFA)

Council	SEIFAIRSD AustraliaDecile	SEIFAIRSD State Decile
Cessnock	2	3
Coffs Harbour	5	5
Lake Macquarie	8	7
Maitland	7	6
Muswellbrook	3	3
Newcastle	8	7
Port Macquarie	6	6
Port Stephens	6	6
Shellharbour	6	5
Shoalhaven	5	5
Singleton	7	7
Tamworth	5	5
Tweed	6	5
Wagga Wagga	7	7
Wollongong	7	6
Average	5.9	5.5
Standard Deviation	1.6	1.3
Median	6.0	6.0
Quartile 1	5.0	5.0
Quartile 3	7.0	6.5

Interquartile Range	2.0	1.5
Port Stephens	6.0	6.0

In Figure 8, we plot the SEIFA as a visual representation of the data for the peergroup presented in Table 6.

FIGURE 8. SEIFA SCORES, 2016 CENSUS



One of the problems faced by Port Stephens is the high proportion of residents in receipt of an aged pension. As we described in the Financial Sustainability Report, pensioners exert various pressures on financial sustainability. First, the mandated local government tax discount for pensioners is only partly funded by the NSW state government. Second, pensioners are statistically associated with higher levels of local service usage as well as local infrastructure (Drew, 2021). This latter point is reflective of both need (such as footpaths and ramps) and likely fiscal illusion (because pensioners do not pay the full tax price due to their rates discount). In addition, pensioners will almost certainly have a debt bias (a rational preference to fund new infrastructure through debt because they are unlikely to remain taxpayers for the entire term of the outstanding debt), which can erode both financial sustainability and intergenerational equity (Buchanan, 1997).

Moreover, as we explained in the Financial Sustainability Report, matters are likely to deteriorate further in the future due to both internal migration (especially in the wake of COVID-19) and internal demographics (since Port Stephens has a similarly high proportion of persons aged 60-64 and 55-59).
The theory of fiscal federalism deals with financial relations between the different levels of government in a federal system, such as the Australian federation (Oates, 1972; 1999). The decentralisation theorem holds that different governmental functions should be located at different levels of government depending on their characteristics. For example, local governments should provide local public goods

and services, like garbage collection, local roads and local parks, since the optimal provision of this genre of public goods depends on local preferences. By contrast, higher tiers of government, especially the national government, should run those functions of government with a much larger benefit region. For example, income distribution objectives should be pursued by national government given they are based on equity principles that are not spatially constrained.

Under the Australian Constitution, local government falls under state government jurisdictional control. Thus, if state governments oblige local councils to pursue equity objectives, such as offering rate rebates to aged pensioners in NSW local government, then they should pay the full costs involved (Dollery *et al.,* 2006).
However, in practice, NSW Government compensation to NSW local government does not cover the full costs of the pensioner rate rebate scheme (Dollery, Johnsonand Byrnes, 2008). Given its relatively large aged pension cohort, this adversely affects Port Stephens Council.

It should be noted that aged pensions are a relatively reliable income in some contrast to the wages of people in the services industry, casual work or the gig economy. Moreover, aged pensioners were the recipients of multiple stimulus payments as part of the federal government response to COVID. They are thus in aposition better than some to absorb potential increases to local government taxes.

FIGURE 9. AGED PENSION

Figure 10 illustrates the number of people on Newstart or Jobseeker in Port Stephens. It is clear that the economic shock arising from COVID-19 public policy responses was particularly acute in Port Stephens. Recent policy commentary fromthe NSW Government suggests that lockdowns may be past and thus that the jobs lost in 2021 may be recovered. However, it is a matter that decision-makers shouldremain mindful of and it warrants a review of extant hardship policies to ensure thatthey meet the

needs of people whose livelihoods have been adversely affected by COVID policies. It should be noted that a one-year lag applies to this data.

FIGURE 10. NEWSTART ALLOWANCE/JOBSEEKER

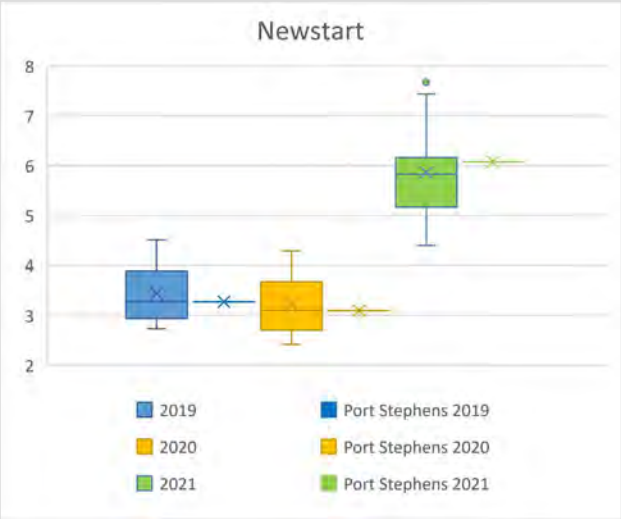


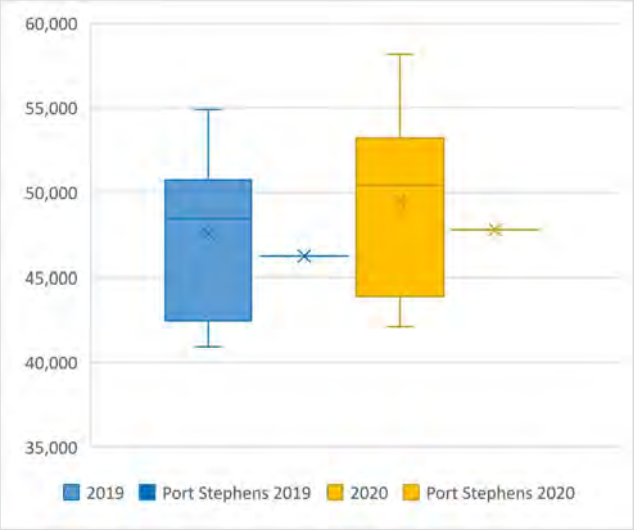
Figure 11 and Figure 12 refer to the proportion of people on disability support and single parent pensions respectively. As can be seen, results for Port Stephens are typical of the peer group and thus do not warrant any particular additional local government policy response.

FIGURE 11. DISABILITY SUPPORT PENSION

FIGURE 12. SINGLE PARENT PENSION

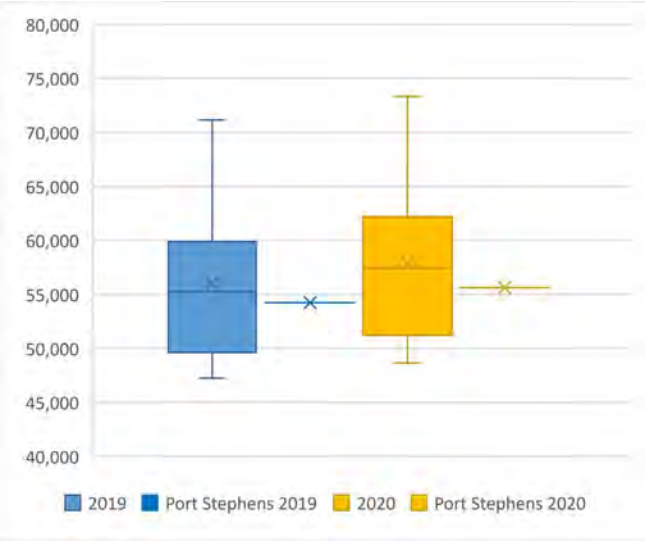
The median wage earned in Port Stephens is relatively low compared to the peer group. This could have implications for capacity to pay, although matters are far from simple (as we will detail in the subsequent four graphs).

FIGURE 13. MEDIAN WAGE-EARNER INCOME



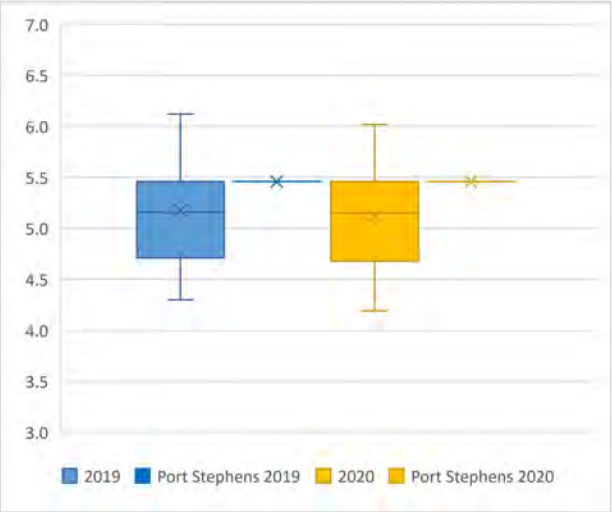
Indeed, when we compare the relative position of mean (average) wage earnings (which improves significantly with respect to the earlier median numbers), it is clear that incomes are skewed to the right. That is, there are clearly a number of high income earners who have pulled the average up.

FIGURE 14. MEAN WAGE-EARNER INCOME



This skewing of income data is reflected in the P80/20 income inequality ratio. This commonly used metric divides the 80th percentile by the 20th percentile and it provides a useful perspective on the spread of incomes in a given local government area. As can be seen in Figure 15, wage inequality is a substantial problem for Port Stephens

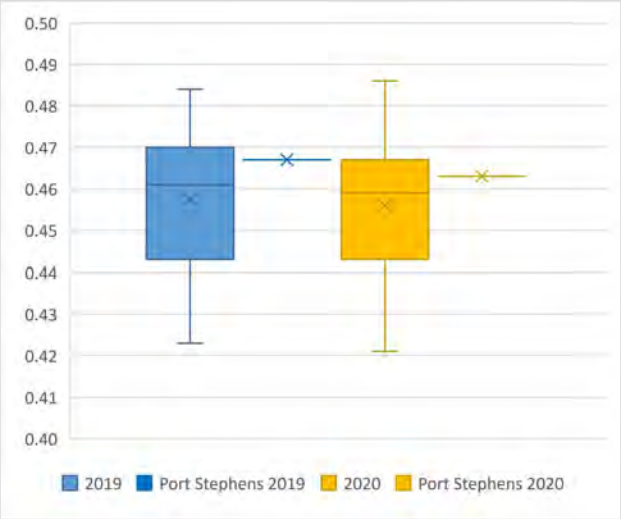
FIGURE 15. P80/20 INCOME INEQUALITY RATIO



Indeed, inequality is further illustrated by Figure 16 that plots the relative results forthe Gini coefficient. Once again, the data clearly indicates high levels of relative income inequality.

In economic analysis, the Gini coefficient is the most common measure of income inequality or wealth inequality within a given spatial area or a defined social group (Baum *et al.,* 2018; Drew and Miyazaki, 2020). The Gini coefficient measures the inequality among values of a frequency distribution, such as levels of income or household wealth. The value of the Gini coefficient thus tells us about the nature of income or wealth distribution. For instance, a Gini coefficient of zero indicates perfect income equality, where everyone has the same income. At the other extreme, a Gini coefficient of one denotes maximum income inequality, where one person accrues all income and the remainder have no income. In practice, Gini coefficients always fall somewhere between zero and one. The higher the absolute value of the Gini coefficient, the greater the degree of income or wealth inequality.

FIGURE 16. GINI COEFFICIENT INCOME INEQUALITY METRIC



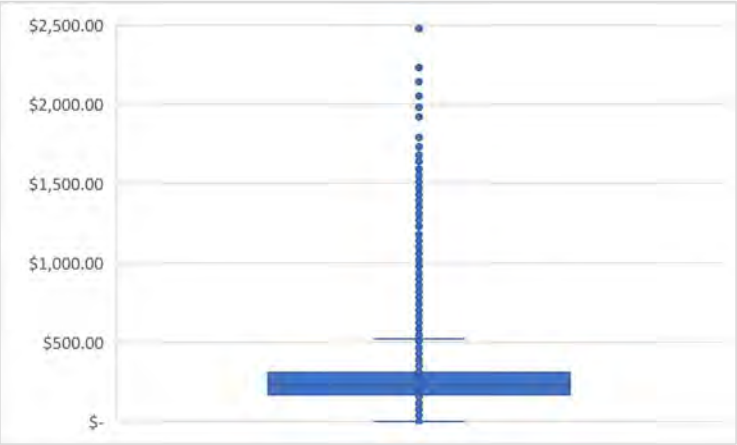
These widely disparate incomes in Port Stephens could be an obstacle to a residential tax increase *if* taxes were distributed evenly. However, under a land taxregime the obligation allocated to each person is instead a reflection of the unimproved land value that they own.

As it turns out, land values in Port Stephens are also extremely skewed (to the right)in distribution. Indeed, to get all of the values onto the same graph we had to truncate land values above $2.5 million. It is reasonable to assume that those who have purchased properties at the higher end of unimproved land values would mostly hail from the high-income cohort (or previously enjoyed high incomes prior toretirement). If this is the case – as seems likely – then the people who will receive the largest local government tax assessments will also generally be the people with the greatest capacity to pay.

Indeed, the high level of skewing in unimproved residential land values provides further argument against the practice of levying a base rate. A base rate in the orderof thirty-five percent reduces the *ad valorem* and hence effectively provides taxationrelief to the people who own the most valuable property in the local government area. Put differently, municipal ratepayers towards the bottom of the distribution in Figure 17 are being asked to pay a higher effective rate of tax (relative to their land value and probably capacity to pay) than those at the top of the distribution (the longtail of dots in Figure 17 in particular).

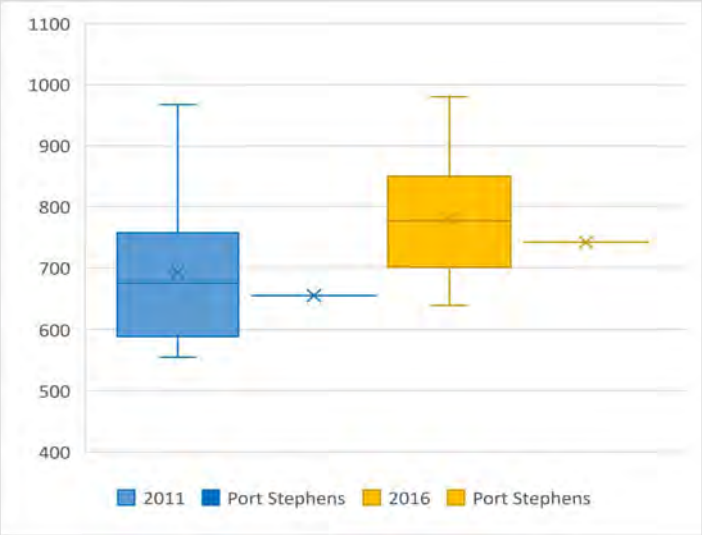
Thus, one way Council could mitigate the effect of a SRV for the lowest capacity to pay residential landowners would be to reduce or eliminate the base rate. This wouldalso better respect principles of distributive justice.

FIGURE 17. DISTRIBUTION OF RESIDENTIAL LAND VALUES (THOUSANDS OF DOLLARS ANDTRUNCATED AT $2,500,000)



A helpful statistic generated by the ABS is the median equivalised household income. This data is adjusted to allow for fair comparisons between households of differing size. Indeed, a comparison with Figure 13 shows a relative convergence on the measures of central tendency, which suggests that there might be more multiple income (including welfare such as aged pensions) households in Port Stephens compared to the peer group. This is important because higher household income is clearly closely associated with improved capacity to pay. It is noteworthy that this data is only provided in census years and the most recent figures have been used inthis Report.

FIGURE 18. MEDIAN EQUIVALISED HOUSEHOLD INCOME

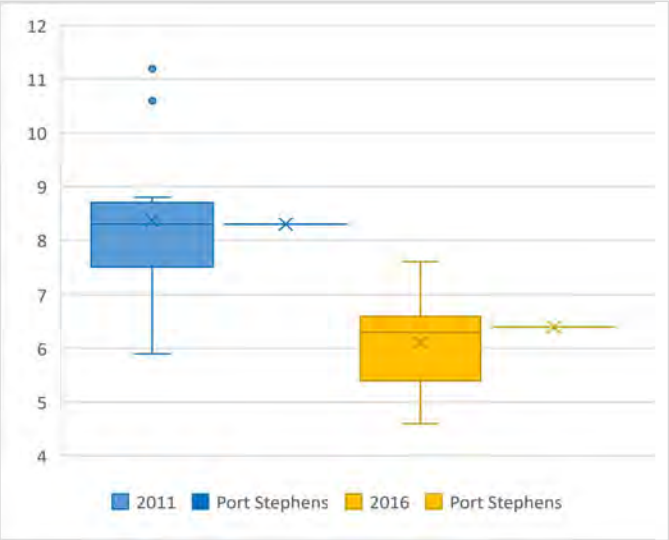


23

Household stress data is also only available in census years. Households are considered stressed when their mortgage repayments exceed thirty percent of household income.

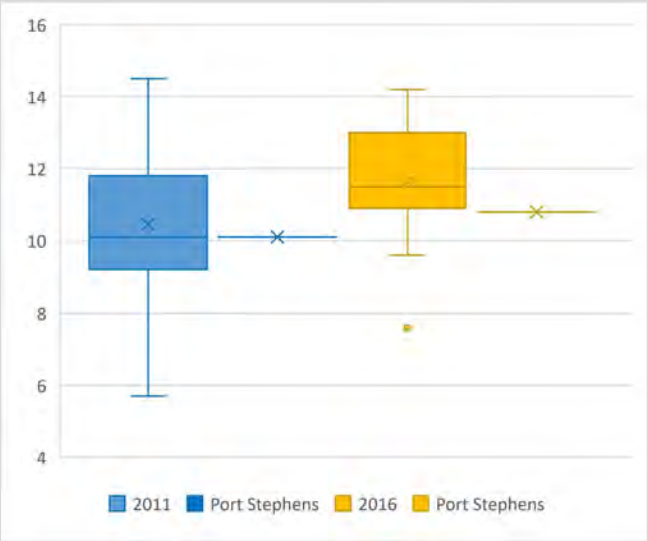
The results for Port Stephens Council are consistent with the stress experienced in the typical peer group council. This suggests that no particular vulnerability exists for people with mortgages in the Port Stephens local government area. Moreover, when interpreting Figure 19 we should be mindful of the relatively low extant local government tax burden, as well as the outstanding rate and fee data (which is the best for the entire peer group).

FIGURE 19. HOUSEHOLD STRESS (MORTGAGE GREATER THAN OR EQUAL TO 30% OFHOUSEHOLD INCOME)



It is also important to consider household stress for those who rent their dwelling. These people do not pay local government taxes directly. However, the rates are likely to be at least partially factored into weekly rental payments by property owners. Household stress for this group was low in a relative sense for the 2016 census and thus does not suggest a need for special arrangements at Port Stephens. Moreover, it should be remembered that a portion of the rate increases for residential rental properties will probably be exported as a deduction on federal taxes. Accordingly, only a portion of the rate increase could be justifiably passed on in new rental agreements.

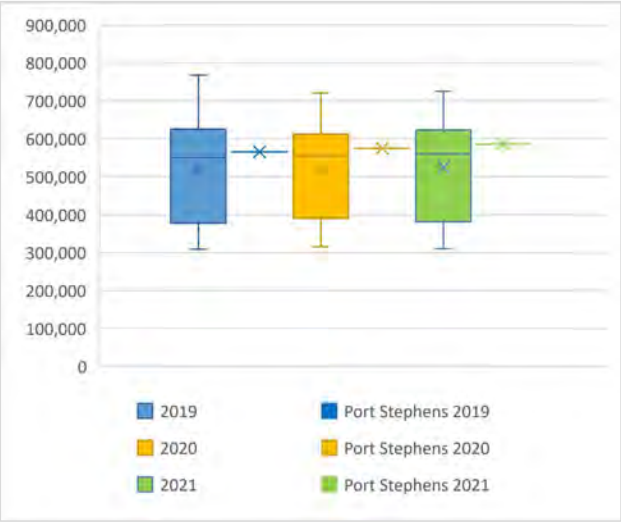
FIGURE 20. HOUSEHOLD STRESS (RENT GREATER THAN OR EQUAL TO 30% OF HOUSEHOLD INCOME)



The underlying determinant of both kinds of household stress is the increase in house prices. In Figure 21, we provide a comparison of the median sales price for Port Stephens relative to the peer group. Prices are slightly elevated compared to the typical council suggesting that stress rates are unlikely to fall in the next census.

Increases to house prices are also a good indication of the size of the unrealised capital gains (or unearned wealth) which the unimproved land tax tries to capture (Drew, 2021). It is clear from Figure 1 that residents are experiencing strong and consistent increases in wealth through the appreciation of their real estate assets (in2018 median house prices increased by $55,000 on previous levels and were followed up by increases of over $10,000 per annum in the next two years). The local government tax regime is designed to claw back a little of this unearned wealth and thus is a particularly morally defensible tax (Drew, 2021). From the figures provided by the ABS, it is clear that only a tiny fraction of unearned wealth is indeed being captured. Indeed, far less is captured than the rate of capital gains tax that applies to non-residential assets.

FIGURE 21. HOUSES (MEDIAN SALES PRICE)



In sum, it is clear that residential ratepayers have the capacity to pay more appropriate levels of taxation. Moreover, capacity to pay could be improved further by reducing the base rate. In Section 5, we will conduct robust modelling to empirically estimate the total tax take that should be expected from a local government that has the demographic and business characteristics of Port StephensCouncil. However, prior to this, we will briefly examine some of the relevant data withrespect to the other major group of local government taxpayers in the area – the non-farm business cohort.

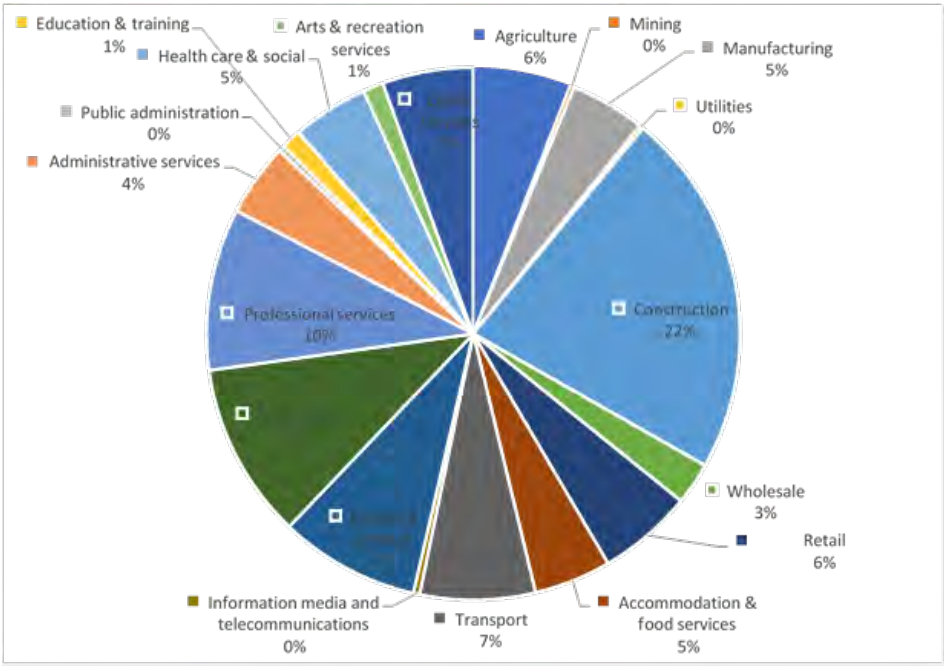
4. BUSINESS INCOME VARIABLES

The public policy response to COVID-19 has placed immense demands on certain kinds of business. Small retailers, food and hospitality, as well as tourist and recreation operators were especially hard hit. However, some other business segments were only marginally affected, including most agriculture except for fruit growing and other labour intensive enterprises. Moreover, some categories of business enterprise even benefitted from COVID policies, such as health and social care.

Figure 22 presents the ABS statistics by business category for 2020. The largest number of enterprises relates to construction (which benefitted from the federal stimulus package), professional services (which probably experienced mixed outcomes depending on the profession) and real estate (that has been the beneficiary of strong demand for non-capital-city assets as well as rental investments). Somewhat surprisingly, accommodation and food services, retail, arts and recreation only represent a relatively small proportion of the Port Stephens business cohort. These businesses experienced significant disruptions and still face further potential obstacles. However, they represent only a small part of the taxpayer category cohort.[9] This suggests that it would be appropriate to develop targeted hardship policies for

the relatively small proportion of affected businesses rather than make concessions to the whole ratepayer category.

FIGURE 22. CATEGORIES OF BUSINESS (2020)

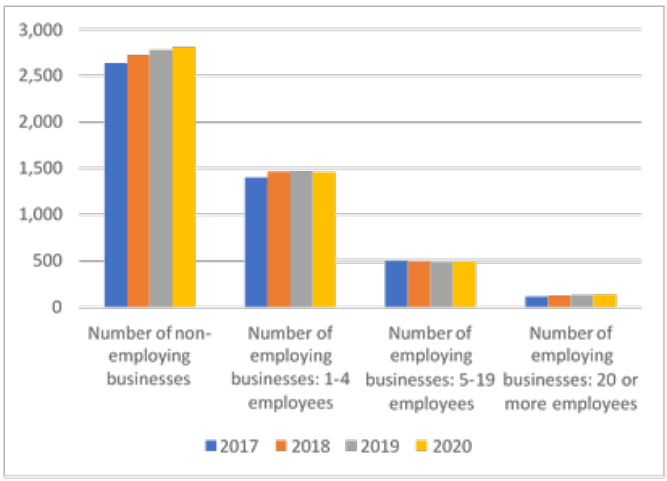


[9] Retail also includes large grocery chains and the like that experienced a boom during the COVID lockdowns.

Indeed, Figure 23 demonstrates that business numbers were largely unaffected bythe

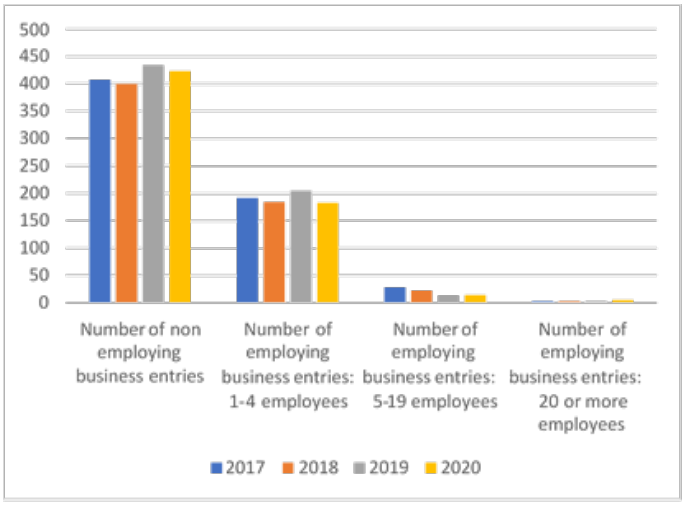
early COVID-19 policy response (although matters might appear to be worse when the 2021 data comes to hand).

FIGURE 23. NUMBER OF BUSINESSES



Moreover, business entries were only marginally reduced in 2020 and were broadly consistent with 2018 numbers.

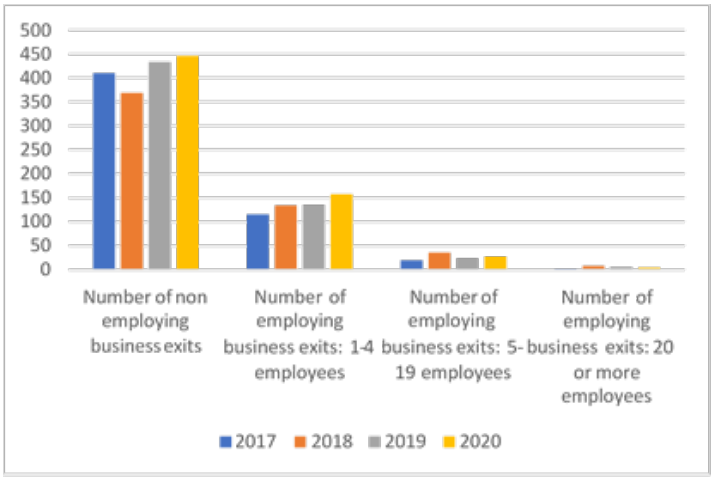
FIGURE 24. BUSINESS ENTRIES



However, business exits were higher in 2020 and were particularly noticeable amongst small businesses (self-employed and those employing fewer than four people). In fact, the bulk of the exits occurred in businesses with a turnover of less than $200,000 (ABS, 2020). Indeed, this data can be used to make an argument

against the extant practice of Port Stephens Council that stipulates a base rate for business. A regime of this kind places a disproportionate burden on small enterprises that are struggling. It would thus be difficult to defend on either moral oreconomic grounds. Moreover, the increase in exits is likely to be located in the industries most exposed to the policy decision-making of the federal and state governments. It would thus be prudent to develop hardship policies to address the specific needs of this category of ratepayer.

FIGURE 25. BUSINESS EXITS



Unfortunately, data are not available for incorporated income associated with large businesses, such as national and multinational enterprises. However, the ABS does provide data on unincorporated business income that can provide us with a sense of relative business conditions. In Table 4, we tabulate the most recent data available (2018). Comparison reveals that Port Stephens' unincorporated business income is typical of the peer group (as measured by the median) and better than average. This further supports arguments against any atypical taxation response for the business category.

TABLE 4. UNINCORPORATED BUSINESS INCOME, 2018

Council	Median Unincorporated Business Income	Mean Unincorporated Business Income
Port Stephens	12165	23008
Coffs Harbour	12188	24483
Lake Macquarie	12849	27614
Maitland	8902	21616
Newcastle	12725	39021
Port Macquarie-Hastings	11630	24414
Shellharbour	12905	22882

Shoalhaven	14064	24180
Tweed	11827	21128
Wollongong	12212	27621
Cessnock	7992	13945
Muswellbrook	1592	6367
Singleton	435	-68
Tamworth	6064	14863
Wagga Wagga	13443	28734
Average	10066.2	21320.53
Standard Deviation	4127.645	9157.521
Median	12165	23008
Quartile 1	8447	17995.5
Quartile 3	12787	26048.5
Interquartile Range	4340	8053
Port Stephens	12165	23008

In sum, we find that the ABS data indicates that business stress is concentrated in a relatively small number of enterprises that have been most exposed to the COVID public policy response. It would thus be appropriate to have tailored hardship provisions designed for this group. Moreover, business conditions appear to be typical in a relative sense and this suggests that typical taxation policies ought to be appropriate. However, we remind readers of the comparatively low rates of taxation paid by residential and farm business landowners in Port Stephens. When considered with respect to the relatively higher than typical (in terms of the median for 2021) local government taxes paid by non-farm businesses, a case could be made to direct most of a potential SRV burden on to the residential and farm business cohorts. This would reduce the gap somewhat, improve distributive justice and introduce less stress to the local economy. Moreover, we note that a base rate applies to business and strongly urge Council to reconsider this aspect of its tax structure since it effectively requires small businesses, who have mostly struggled under COVID, to subsidise the reasonable tax obligations of national and multinational enterprises. Removing this base rate would ensure that the businesses with the strongest capacity to pay must pay their share and hence meet long- established principles of distributive justice (Messner, 1952; Drew, 2021).

The decision around how the taxation burden should be distributed amongst categories of ratepayer is ultimately a political decision. However, the total tax take expected of a local government area with the general characteristics of Port Stephens can be accurately measured using the empirically sophisticated multiple regression analysis. Multiple regression analysis allows us to control for a much broader array of variables known to affect capacity to pay than any financial ratio. Moreover, by using a panel of data (over multiple years) we are able to produce more accurate estimates that take into account changes over time. Indeed, by employing a special technique called fixed-effects multiple regression, we can evencontrol for important time invariant unobserved effects. These latter factors cover those characteristics of the local government area that do not change over time, such as distance to desirable beaches.

5. ECONOMETRIC ANALYSIS OF TOTAL RATE CAPACITY

Regression analysis is the most sophisticated statistical approach available to understand the required tax take of a given local authority. Specifically, regression analysis allows econometricians to determine the mean response of a dependent variable with respect to changes to multiple independent variables. The authors of this Report are experienced applied econometricians with an extensive publication record of work of this kind in all the leading academic journals on local government. Moreover, the body of scholarly work underpinning the theory and practice of econometrics is voluminous. Interested readers are referred to Kennedy (2003) for a synoptic account.

The final model specification that we employ in our analysis can be expressed as follows:

$$\mathbf{T}_{it} = \alpha_i + \beta_1 \mathbf{A}_{it} + \beta_2 \mathbf{I}_{it} + \mu_{it} \qquad t = 1..4$$

Where **T** is the total tax take (that is the sum of all categories of taxation) expected of a local government, **A** is the disaggregated assessment data, **I** is a vector of relevant income data for particular local government areas at specific times and μ is an idiosyncratic error term. The subscript *it* refers to the ith council entity and the tth year. Here we included all sixty-seven councils categorised as broadly similar under the extant federal government classification system[10]. Log transformations were employed to counter skewness when econometric diagnostics tests revealed the need to do so. We also conducted and satisfied all other relevant diagnostic tests. Table 5 provides the definition for each variable as well as summary data.

[10] 2021 financial year data was missing for two of the councils hence the disparity in the *n* figure presented in Table 6. We used appropriate regression techniques to mitigate the very small number of missing data points.

TABLE 5. DEFINITIONS AND MEANS OF VARIABLES, 2018-2021

Variable	Definition	Similar Councils
Rates		
Rates (ln)	Total taxation (rate) take, logged	10.736
Assessments		
Residential (ln)	Number of residential assessments, logged	10.278
Farm	Number of farm assessments, divided by 100	6.729
Business (ln)	Number of business assessments, logged	7.504
Income Controls		
Median employee income	Median employee income (lagged), divided by 1,000	50.363
Median unincorporated business income	Median unincorporated business income (lagged), divided by 1,000	12.159
Aged (ln)	Proportion of people on an aged pension, logged	2.275
DSP	Proportion of people on a disability support pension	3.286
Newstart (ln)	Proportion of people on a Newstart allowance, logged	0.954
Carer	Proportion of people on a carers' pension	1.198
Single (ln)	Proportion of people on a single parent pension, logged	-0.329

In Table 6, we detail the coefficients and standard errors yielded by our fixed-effects regression. These results were used in subsequent calculations to predict the average total tax expected of a council with Port Stephens' characteristics.

TABLE 6. MULTIPLE REGRESSION RESULTS, 2018-2021 INCLUSIVE

	Extended Cohort
Number of residential assessments (ln)	0.889** (0.164)
Number of farm assessments	0.004 (0.012)
Number of business assessments (ln)	0.0.082* (0.035)
Median employee income	0.016** (0.005)
Median unincorporated income	0.011** (0.004)
Welfare receipts	Yes**
n	278
Coefficient of Determination	0.8574

+p < 0.10, *p < 0.05, **p < 0.01. Standard errors in parentheses

In Table 7, we present the shortfall in total tax take (i.e. the difference between the average tax take predicted by the regression and actual total tax take as stated in the relevant audited financial statements). It is noteworthy that the shortfall over the four financial years analysed exceeded $36 million that explains the acute fiscal stress currently experienced by Port Stephens Council. We also provide details of the percentage increase that would have been required for each particular year to ensure that the property taxes levied at Port Stephens were consistent with expectations relative to the wide cohort of similar NSW local governments. The differences between the predictions of the model and the deficiency (suggested in Figure 2 through to Figure 6 inclusive) are reflective of both the broader and more inclusive cohort used for the regression, as well as an additional year of data. This is why scholars tend to use methods, such as regression analysis, which allow for larger cohorts, longer data panels and more input variables. It also explains why we assert that greater reliance should be placed on this econometric evidence.

TABLE 7 EXPECTED TOTAL TAX TAKE PREDICTED BY THE FIXED-EFFECTS REGRESSION,2018-2021 INCLUSIVE

Council	Year	Total Tax Take Shortfall	Suggested Increase
Port Stephens	2018	$ 7,725.48	19.21%
Port Stephens	2019	$ 8,828.92	21.32%
Port Stephens	2020	$ 9,492.72	22.14%
Port Stephens	2021	$10,325.70	23.25%

If the objective was simply to ensure that a satisfactory level of taxation was levied, then the model would suggest permanent increases of *at least* seven percent per annum (above the rate cap) for each of three years. Making these changes over at least three years is unavoidable, given the size of the deficiency. However, doing so means that we will continue to add to the gross shortfall during the transition phase.In addition, the picture for financial sustainability at Port Stephens Council is grim and there is already some repair work to undertake arising from the chronic deficiency in tax receipts over many years.

Accordingly, it is recommended that council apply for an increase at least equivalent to eight percent (8%) above the cap for each of three (3) years.

It should be noted that community engagement may well result in a change to the timing, size and duration of the annual rate increases.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ALLOCATING RATE INCREASES

The empirical evidence that we have presented in this Report clearly demonstrates that existing levels of taxation receipts at Port Stephens are inadequate. This has obvious implications for financial sustainability. It also makes it unlikely that future generations of local taxpayers have been treated fairly. Indeed, residential and farm-business ratepayers have been paying a discount rate of taxation on a broad basket of local public goods and services over an extensive time period. This has clearly led to high levels of fiscal illusion, as evidenced by the community response to the last Port Stephens SRV proposal. This must be addressed in order to ensure the financial capacity of Council to meet local resident expectations.

We recommend an increase to taxation that is equivalent to a permanent increase of eight percent above the rate cap for each of at least three years. The cumulative effect of increases of this nature would pull Council up to around the average level of taxation expected of a local government area that exhibits the income characteristics of Port Stephens Council. It would also assist in recouping some of the $36 million intaxation

receipt shortfall experienced in the last four years alone.

In addition, we recommend that any SRV approved is weighted so that it improves distributive justice between rateable categories. In essence, most of the SRV should fall on residential and farm ratepayers. In particular, farm businesses receive an effective discount on the real tax liability actually realised when compared to residential landowners. Farm businesses also receive a much more substantial tax discount relative to non-farm business.

To improve capacity to pay, base rates should either be eliminated or reduced substantially[11]. We understand the reservations about reducing or eliminating the base rate with respect to strata title and high-density dwellings. However, we also believe that it is important to ensure distributive justice for owners of residential land that has relatively low valuations. Furthermore, the matter is important for capacity to pay reasons, as we have already set out. Matters are much simpler for farmland and business assessments where there are far fewer good reasons to cling to a base rate. We acknowledge that changes to the local government taxation system has political risks and requires community engagement and considerable deliberation.
We thus suggest that Port Stephens Council establishes a working group to consider the matter in detail and that this is duly conveyed to IPART in any SRV application.

It is vital that a SRV is approved in the next round of applications (from November 2022). Indeed, in view of the gravity of the situation it is unfortunate that Council was not able to apply for a SRV in the previous round. Failure to secure a SRV in the next round of applications will place Council's finances in grave jeopardy and visit financial problems on both current and future Port Stephens ratepayers.

[11] Indeed if base rates are retained then they must be based on the actual costs of providing a councilstructure as discussed in Drew (2021) and not on an apparently arbitrary number.

REFERENCES

Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS). (2021). *Data By Regions*. ABS: Canberra.

Baum, S., Flanagan, M., Mitchell, W. and Stimson, R. (2018). Wage inequality across Australian labour market regions. *Australasian Journal of Regional Studies,*24(2), 124-146.

Buchanan, J. (1997). The Balanced Budget Amendment: Clarifying the Arguments. *Public Choice,* 90: 117-138.

Dollery, B. E., Crase, L. and Johnson, A. (2006). *Australian Local GovernmentEconomics,* University of New South Wales Press: Sydney.

Dollery, B. E. Johnson, A. and Byrnes, J. (2008). Cost Shifting in Australian Local Government: An Analysis of the Spatial Impact of Pensioner Rate Concession Rebates in New South Wales. *Australian Geographer,* 39(4), 467-478.

Dollery, B. E., Wallis, J. L. and Allan, P. (2006). The Debate That Had to Happen ButNever Did: The Changing Role of Australian Local Government. *Australian Journal ofPolitical Science,* 41(4), 553-567.

Drew, J. (2020a). *Reforming Local Government*. Springer Palgrave: Singapore.Drew, J. (2021). *Saving Local Government*. Springer Palgrave: Singapore.

Drew, J. and Dollery, B. (2020). Introduction to the Special Edition of Public Administration Quarterly: The Economics and Politics of financial Unsustainability in Local Government. *Public Administration Quarterly*, doi.org/10.37808/paq.44.2.1.

Drew, J. and Miyazaki, M. (2020). The moral justification and practice of intergovernmental equalisation grants to local government–A subsidiarity perspective. *Australian Journal of Public Administration*, doi: 10.1111/1467-8500.12445.

George, H. (2010). *Progress and Poverty*. Robert Schalkenbach Foundation: NewYork.

Grant, B. and Drew, J. (2017). *Local Government in Australia: History, Theory andPublic Policy.* Springer Palgrave: Singapore.

Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) (2020). *Special VariationIncrease: Port Stephens Council 2019-20*. IPART: Sydney.

Kennedy, P. (2003). *A Guide to Econometrics.* MIT Press: Cambridge.

Messner, J. (1952). *Social Ethics: Natural Law in the Modern World*. Transl. J.Doherty. B Herder Book Co: St Louis.

New South Wales Parliament (1993). *Local Government Act.*

Oates, W. E. (1972). *Fiscal federalism.* Harcourt Brace Jovanovich: New York.

Oates, W.E. (1999). An Essay on Fiscal federalism. *Journal of economic Literature*,37(3), 1120-49

Port Stephens Council

Debt Capacity Report

DISCLAIMER

This report was prepared by joseph drew and brian dollery on behalf of new england education and research proprietary limited for the port stephens council. This report was produced for the port stephens council as a strictly independent report. The opinions expressed in the report are thus exclusively the views of its authors and do not necessarily coincide with the views of the port stephens council or any other body. The information provided in this report may be reproduced in whole or in part for media review, quotation in literature, or non-commercial purposes, subject to the inclusion of acknowledgement of the source and provided no commercial use or sale of the material occurs.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Debt Capacity Report paints a bleak picture of the financial sustainability challenges facing Port Stephens Council and the concomitant dangers of exposing Council to further debt. Three analyses of Port Stephens Council debt are presented in this Report: the standard debt service ratio, the nett financial liabilities ratio and more sophisticated econometric modelling results.

We show that the debt servicing capacity ratio is flawed in many respects and represents an unsatisfactory metric. The more robust nett financial liabilities ratio calculated over three financial years demonstrates the parlous debt capacity of Port Stephens Council.

Our econometric model embraces a host of factors impinging on financial sustainability and debt capacity covering four financial years for Port Stephens Council and an expanded cohort of peer councils. The model predicts that Port Stephens Council is already perilously close to its debt capacity ceiling.

The Report concludes by offering several recommendations regarding new and existing debt over the current political term of office for elected councillors.

1. INTRODUCTION

Debt is undoubtedly the most misunderstood aspect of local government finance (Dollery, Crase and Johnson, 2006). In the first place, considerable misapprehension relates to the nature of debt; indeed, many think of it as a source of revenue when it is nothing of the kind (Drew, 2020). Debt is simply a way of bringing forward future revenues and this comes at a cost. For instance, establishing the debt facility will cost money, including interest charges. In addition, bringing forward future revenues means that there is a cost of constrained choices for future generations of local taxpayers arising from the fact that some future revenue has already been committed by earlier generations of taxpayers.

Considerable misunderstanding also surrounds how debt might be used to establish intergenerational equity. The central pillar of intergenerational equity is that it is reasonable for future residents to contribute towards the costs of long-lived assets because they will ultimately yield some benefit from these assets. However, it is not essential that debt be employed for this purpose. Moreover, if debt is used for intergenerational equity purposes, then it is imperative that this be done with the utmost of care, as we shall see.

Attitudes to public debt have altered remarkably since the 1960s. Prior to this time it was generally held that to 'spend borrowed funds on ordinary items for public consumption was, quite simply, beyond the pale of acceptable political behaviour' (Buchanan, 1997, p. 119). Testament to this is a local government handbook from the 1940s that holds that overdrafts and other forms of debt must be fully repaid within a single fiscal year (Selby, 1941).

In large part, local politicians of former times practiced strict moral discipline regarding public debt because they recognised the danger that debt could be misused for political capitalisation purposes and thereby distort democracy. In essence, there was an unwritten agreement between politicians that they would not open the debt bottle and hence risk letting the debt genie out.

A second reason why politicians were reluctant to take on public debt was because they applied the same kind of prudence to public finance as what was then commonly employed with respect to personal finance. For example, President Roosevelt famously remarked that 'any family can for a year spend a little more than it earns…but you and I know that a continuation of that habit means the poorhouse' (cited in Borna and Mantriprgada, 1989). Thus, it was an established principle that public debt should be approached in a manner consistent with how a prudent person could be expected to deal with their personal budget.

Indeed, the personal finance metaphor has much to recommend it to contemporary decision-makers. Attitudes to debt have changed over the last half-century and people are often now more willing to take on loans for both items of enduring benefit as well

as consumption purposes. However, when debt is used to finance consumption, such as holidays, people do expect immediate and significant consequences. For instance, we expect to have to make repayments on the loan almost immediately. It is widely understood that this will require sacrifice, such as reduced spending in other areas.

Drew (2021) has employed this personal budget metaphor, as well as natural law concepts, to establish six rules that should be observed for public debt to be considered morally defensible:

1. Debt must be only taken out for capital expenditure and not operational expenditure.
2. The asset financed through debt must have a long and predictable life.
3. The asset must constitute something that future generations are likely to value
4. Debt must be assumed for good moral reasons.
5. Repayments must at least be equal to the rate of consumption of the asset and be quarantined in future budgets.
6. Repayments must involve sacrifice so that a quid pro quo is established.

Even if these rules are observed, a number of problems persist. These problems include: (i) debt capacity must be precisely known; (ii) often there is no access to suitable debt products where the life of the loan is consistent with the expected life of the asset , such as buildings that might be expected to survive a century or more; (iii) all tiers of government are notoriously inaccurate in forecasting the useful lives of public assets (see, for example, Drew and Dollery, 2015).

The present Report focuses squarely on determining the debt capacity of Port Stephens Council, which is essential for it to remain financially sustainable. The Report is divided into three main parts. In section 2, we extend the personal budget metaphor to demonstrate why existing debt ratios are unsuited to the task of establishing debt capacity. In section 3, we conduct sophisticated econometric modelling to establish the capacity of the Port Stephens Council to sustainably service additional debt. We conclude the Report in section 4 with some brief recommendations to guide decision-makers over the current political term of office for elected councillors.

2. DEBT CAPACITY AND DEBT RATIOS

In New South Wales (NSW) local government, as well as other municipal systems, it is common practice for regulatory authorities to stipulate one or more debt ratios that

[1] Political capitalisation is the conversion of hard capital (money) into votes (Drew, 2021).

[1] By definition, operational expenditure comprises items that are expected to be fully consumed within twelve months. It is not morally defensible to obligate future taxpayers to debt for items that are fully consumed well before they are paid for.

[1] Because we are obligating future citizens to pay for the asset, it must be something that they are likely to want. For example, it would not be reasonable to make them pay for some kind of technology that is likely to become rapidly redundant.

[1] Examples of reasons that are not sound include debt bias (i.e. the rational preference of older decision-makers for debt because they are unlikely to be taxpayers long enough to fully pay it off) and fiscal stimulus (a measure best assigned to central governments that have the requisite tax capacity).

[1] That is, repayments should at least equal the annual accrual of depreciation.

must be reported by local governments. The ratios are usually accompanied by an (apparently) arbitrary benchmark and decision-makers are given to believe that achievement of the benchmark confers some sort of assurance regarding financial sustainability.

Unfortunately, the ratios employed are often not fit for purpose and thus present a real risk of misleading both decision-makers and the local communities they serve. Indeed, the ratios have failed to predict past instances of local government financial failure.

The debt service ratio employed in NSW is an especially poor choice of metric. It has been transplanted from the world of corporate finance with little thought given to its consistency with respect to how local government services public debt. The benchmark is entirely arbitrary and has also been grafted from the corporate world where debt bears a nexus to income generation. For instance, a commercial company might invest in factory equipment that produces goods that sell at a price determined by the market. However, for most local government, the price paid by residents is not associated with market forces and it is constrained by political considerations such as rate caps in NSW. Indeed, if the revenue is not set at an appropriate level – such as when a Special Rate Variation is warranted – then the numerator is invalid and the ratio is near to useless.

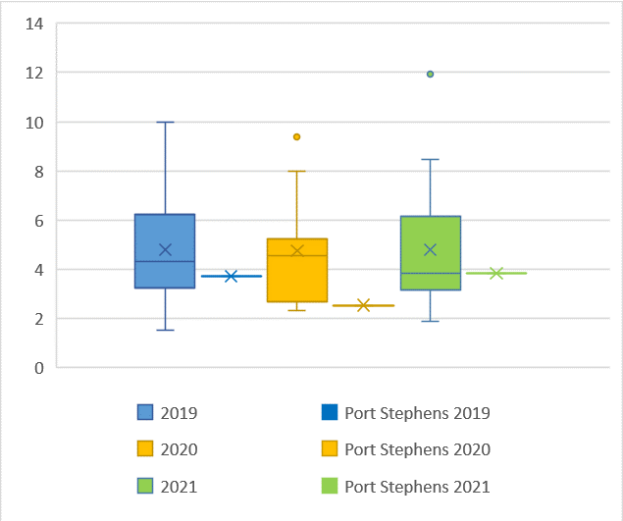
In addition, the debt service ratio is negatively correlated to the making of additional repayments that is both counterintuitive and often counterproductive. Furthermore, the debt service ratio is constrained to just one input and two outputs. Moreover, it is

also exclusively rearward looking and based on just a single year of data (that might be atypical) and thus can only provide shaky guidance at best on what could have occurred over the previous financial year. This is also of little relevance to decision making directed to the future.

In Figure 1, we plot the debt service ratio for Port Stephens Council and its fourteen peer councils (detailed in our earlier reports). As we can see, Port Stephens Council usually performs at a level lower than the typical council in its cohort (but well above the benchmark in most years). However, given our serious concerns regarding the deficiencies in this metric, it would be unwise to place any reliance on Figure 1.

[7] The absence of a suitable debt vehicle means that a local government may be exposed to rate risk at regular intervals when a new loan needs to be negotiated.

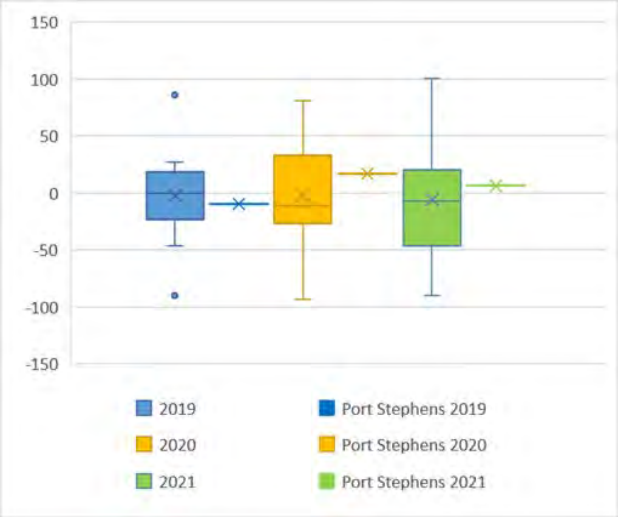
FIGURE 1: DEBT SERVICE RATIO



The nett financial liabilities ratio is a far superior metric. It is widely employed in other local government systems, including in Queensland, South Australia and Western Australia. The nett financial liabilities ratio is better because it includes additional data (total liabilities offset by current assets). However, it is still rearward facing and only reports on a single year of data (that might have been atypical and hence a poor guide to future decision-making).

In Figure 2, we plot Port Stephens Council against its peer group for the last three financial years. For the nett financial liabilities ratio a negative result is the preferred (and typical) outcome. There is thus much reason for concern regarding whether Port Stephens Council has any further capacity for debt (or indeed whether it can comfortably service extant debt) according to its nett financial liabilities ratio.

FIGURE 2: NETT FINANCIAL LIABILITIES



The personal finance metaphor discussed earlier provides a useful guide to the kind of alternative approach that should be adopted to perform a more satisfactory evaluation of debt capacity. If one applies for a loan, two types of information will form the focus of bank deliberations: (i) the number of parties to the loan and (ii) the incomes of the various parties. It follows that similar considerations should also form the focus of a robust empirical investigation of debt capacity. Moreover, to ensure that decision-making is not distorted by data from a single potentially atypical year, it is essential to employ a panel of multi-year data on a broad cohort of local governments.

Accordingly, in section 3 we conduct a random effects econometric analysis of sixty-seven local governments that form the most accommodative relevant category currently in use by regulatory authorities.

3. DEBT CAPACITY MODELLING

Regression analysis is the most sophisticated statistical approach available to understand the debt capacity of a given council (Levine et al., 2013; Ramsay et al., 1988). Specifically, regression analysis allows econometricians to determine the mean response of a dependent variable with respect to changes to multiple independent variables. For the regression that follows, we employed the random effects panel technique (this is the most efficient estimator and it is thus ideal when diagnostic tests allow its use).

The final model specification that we employ in our analysis can be expressed as follows:

$$\mathbf{B}_{it} = \alpha_i + \beta_1 \mathbf{A}_{it} + \beta_2 \mathbf{X}_{it} + \mu_{it} \qquad t = 1..4$$

Where **B** is the total explicit borrowings, **A** is the disaggregated assessment data, **X** is a vector of relevant economic and demographic data for particular local government areas at specific times and **μ** is an idiosyncratic error term. The subscript *it* refers to the ith council entity and the tth year. Here we included all sixty-seven councils categorised as broadly similar under the current Commonwealth Government classification system. Log transformations were employed to counter skewness when econometric diagnostics tests revealed the need to do so. We also conducted and satisfied all other relevant diagnostic tests. Table 1 provides the definition for each variable as well as summary data.

TABLE 1: DEFINITIONS AND MEANS OF VARIABLES, 2018-2021

Variable	Definition	Similar Councils
Debt		
Borrowings	Total explicit borrowings ($'000)	40,785.12
Assessments		
Residential (ln)	Number of residential assessments, logged	10.278
Farm	Number of farm assessments, divided by 100	6.729
Business (ln)	Number of business assessments, logged	7.504
Controls		
Median employee income	Median employee income (lagged), divided by 1,000	50.363
Median unincorporated business income	Median unincorporated business income (lagged), divided by 1,000	12.159
Aged (ln)	Proportion of people on an aged pension, logged	2.275
DSP	Proportion of people on a disability support pension	3.286
Newstart (ln)	Proportion of people on a Newstart allowance, logged	0.954
Carer	Proportion of people on a carers' pension	1.198
Single (ln)	Proportion of people on a single parent pension, logged	-0.329
Total Grants (ln)	The total value of grants, logged	15.521

In Table 2, we present the results of our econometric analysis for the main variables of interest. It is important to remember when interpreting coefficients that the *ceteris paribus* claim is implicit; that is, the variables refer to the mean response holding all other factors constant. As anticipated, the numbers of assessments are key determinants of debt capacity and two of the disaggregated assessment variables were statistically significant at the highest level. This confirms our earlier assertion that a failure to account for the number of borrowers party to a loan is a critical oversight in existing ratio methods.

TABLE 2: MULTIPLE REGRESSION RESULTS, 2018-2021 INCLUSIVE.

	Cohort
Number of residential assessments (ln)	43,541.15** (16,092.22)
Number of farm assessments	2,188.51** (631.97)
Number of business assessments (ln)	-9,566.89 (10,764.16)
Income variables	Yes**
Welfare receipts	Yes**
N	275
Coefficient of determination	0.4535

Standard errors in parentheses.

+ p<0.10, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01

Indeed, we can see that holding all other variables constant, a one percent increase to the number of residential assessments is expected to result in an increase of $435,000 in borrowing capacity. The response predicted by increasing the number of farm assessments is potentially larger, although it must be remembered that the coefficient here has had significant power imputed to it because of the relatively small number of farm assessments typically found in this urban category of local government.

The results from our econometric analysis show that the number of business assessments is negatively associated with debt capacity, ceteris paribus. In this regard, it is important to be mindful of several factors. Firstly, the association between business assessments and debt capacity is not statistically significant. Secondly, the relative size of the effect is small: a one percent increase in business

[1] It should be noted that the typical size of the residential cohort is large. Hence, a one percent increase to residential numbers would generally represent a sizable change.

assessments is associated with just a $96,000 reduction to debt capacity. Thirdly, the ceteris paribus assumption is essential to making sense of the prima facie contrariwise effect; that is, if we hold all other factors constant but increase the number of business assessments significantly, then it is not surprising that there might be a small negative response, because the ratio of businesses to residential assessments will have increased. This is suggestive of a local government area with tourist characteristics. In our other reports on Port Stephens Council, we have already shown that this has important deleterious effects on financial sustainability.

It should also be noted that a number of the control variables were also highly statistically significant. This effect also confirms the importance of taking cognisance of the incomes of the parties to the loan (as detailed in section 2 of this Report).

The main reason for conducting our econometric estimation was to use the coefficients thus determined from four years of panel data to predict the expected capacity to service the debt of a council exhibiting the relevant characteristics of the Port Stephens local government area. It should be noted that the validity of the prediction is based, in part, on the assumption that no major changes occur with respect to important determinants, such as the relative socio-demographic profile of the area. In our Financial Sustainability Report, we have shown that the relative socio-demographic profile of Port Stephens Council may well deteriorate. Should this change, then the predicted capacity of our model would need to be altered (downwards) accordingly.

As it stands, the model predicts that Port Stephens Council is already close to its debt capacity ceiling. Indeed, if we were to rely entirely on the model, then this would suggest that only $5.3 million of additional borrowings could be prudently contemplated. However, there are special considerations that arise from the airport business that warrant further exploration.

In section 4, we explore these considerations further and set out our recommendations in relation to debt for Port Stephens Council over the next councillor term of office.

4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Both the nett financial liabilities ratio and the much more sophisticated econometric analysis suggest that Port Stephens Council has very little additional debt capacity. Because the econometric model considers a broader peer group over a longer panel, as well as including all of the important variables associated with capacity to service debt, greater emphasis should be placed on this latter result. Prima facie this suggests that only an additional $5.3 million of debt could be prudently contemplated. However, debt associated with the Newcastle airport partnership could be considered a special case. If we adopted the special case view, then it suggests debt capacity of just over $20 million.

Given the current COVID-19 situation, future risks (such as increased inflation) and Council's already concerning financial sustainability position, it would be safest to take out no more debt at all, at least until an SRV has been approved. However, we understand that the Port Stephens Council has already adopted resolutions for proposed borrowings of $10 million (for depot and administration building refurbishment) and $5 million (for Nelson Bay) respectively. In view of the special

circumstances associated with the airport partnership – and the apparent imperative to progress with these projects – Council may feel that it is reasonable to proceed according to resolutions already adopted. Nevertheless, we urge extreme caution. Moreover, it is essential to secure a SRV in the order of the magnitude proposed in our Capacity to Pay Report as part of the means for servicing the debt, ensuring intergenerational equity, and also combatting fiscal illusion.

We note that tapping into existing reserves – as a means of avoiding further debt – is not a reasonable option for Port Stephens. Reserves are already at dangerously low levels.

Matters regarding debt capacity should be reassessed shortly after January 2025 . We note that commercial banks may well lend even larger sums of money to Port Stephens Council irrespective of its problematic situation. However, this would be an example of soft budget constraints in action that have often preceded other financial sustainability crises (Drew and Campbell, 2016; Drew, 2021). We thus strongly advise Port Stephens Council to resist commercial bank accommodation of excessive debt and instead adhere to the recommendations laid out above. We also make note of Council's prudent financial management exemplified by recent action to fix outstanding debts at present historically low rates. This is further evidence of the professionalism of the finance team that has allowed Council to survive given its very challenging conditions. We note further that several additional loans have been identified for conversion to fixed rates. We urge Council management to progress these matters as rapidly as practicable. In addition, it may be prudent to consider whether longer fixed terms – if available – are a better long- term proposition, given empirical evidence that inflation tends to be sticky downwards[10].

In our review of existing debt, we noted that much of the debt finance was associated with projects of a discretionary nature. Funding discretionary projects through debt exacerbates fiscal illusion because the local community receives municipal services that they do not fully pay for (Drew, 2021). Moreover, funding discretionary projects through debt also poses particular risks for intergenerational equity because there can be no certainty that the preferences of existing ratepayers will be the same as the preferences of the future ratepayers asked to service the debt in question. Indeed, in the absence of a SRV – or alternatively cuts to

[9] However, even after this passage of time – and assuming that the SRV has been approved and risks mitigated – accumulating greater debt would still involve risk because it reinforces extant problematic levels of fiscal illusion amongst the local community, as established in the Financial Sustainability Report.

[10] There is a small risk that a longer term fixed rate might prove regrettable in the outer years (if rates were to drop again). However, the benefit of making servicing costs more predictable over the near-term – when financial sustainability is being challenged – seems worth the small risk. However, Council is still urged to seriously consider the wider evidence about future likely interest rate movements as part of its decision-making process.

discretionary expenditure elsewhere – it is hard to see how a quid pro quo has been achieved.

As we have noted in our other reports on Port Stephens Council, there is already solid evidence of fiscal illusion, which is a sound reason for applying for a SRV. Secondly, it is imperative to address the declining financial position of Council. We thus urge Council to defer further discretionary projects (especially where debt is contemplated) until an SRV application has been approved and some of the imposing outstanding risks have been mitigated.

REFERENCES

Borna, S. and Mantriprgada, K. (1989). Morality of Public Deficits: A Historical Perspective. Public Budgeting and Finance, Spring 1999: 33-46.

Buchanan, J. (1997). The Balanced Budget Amendment: Clarifying the Arguments. Public Choice, 90: 117-138.

Dollery, B. E., Crase, L. and Johnson, A. (2006). Australian Local Government Economics. University of New South Wales Press: Sydney.

Drew, J. (2021). Saving Local Government. Springer: Singapore.

Drew, J. and Campbell, N. (2016). Autopsy of Municipal Failure: The Case of Central Darling Shire. Australasian Journal of Regional Science, 22(1): 81-104.

Drew, J. and Dollery, B. (2015). Inconsistent Depreciation Practice and Public Policymaking: Local Government Reform in New South Wales. Australian Accounting Review, 25(1): 28-37.

Levine, H., Justice, J. and Scorsone, E. (2013). Handbook of Local Government Fiscal Health. Jones & Bartlett Learning: Burlington.

Ramsay, J., Gritz, T., and Hackbart, M. (1988). State Approaches to Debt Capacity Assessment: A Further Evaluation. International Journal of Public Administration, 11(2): 227-238.

Selby, E. (1941). Local Government Practice. Butterworth and Co.: Sydney

Port Stephens Council

GENERAL PURPOSE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

for the year ended 30 June 2022

"A great lifestyle in a treasured environment"

Port Stephens Council

General Purpose Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2022

Contents | Page

Statement by Councillors and Management 3

Primary Financial Statements:

Income Statement 4
Statement of Comprehensive Income 5
Statement of Financial Position 6
Statement of Changes in Equity 7
Statement of Cash Flows 8

Notes to the Financial Statements 9

Independent Auditor's Reports:

On the Financial Statements (Sect 417 [2]) 92
On the Financial Statements (Sect 417 [3]) 95

Overview

Port Stephens Council is constituted under the Local Government Act 1993 (NSW) and has its principal place of business at:

116 Adelaide Street
Raymond Terrace NSW 2324

Council's guiding principles are detailed in Chapter 3 of the LGA and includes:

- principles applying to the exercise of functions generally by council,
- principles to be applied when making decisions,
- principles of community participation,
- principles of sound financial management, and
- principles for strategic planning relating to the development of an integrated planning and reporting framework.

A description of the nature of Council's operations and its principal activities are provided in Note B1-2.

Through the use of the internet, we have ensured that our reporting is timely, complete and available at minimum cost. All press releases, financial statements and other information are publicly available on our website: www.portstephens.nsw.gov.au.

Port Stephens Council

General Purpose Financial Statements
for the year ended 30 June 2022

Statement by Councillors and Management

Statement by Councillors and Management made pursuant to Section 413(2)(c) of the *Local Government Act 1993* (NSW)

The attached general purpose financial statements have been prepared in accordance with:

- the *Local Government Act 1993* and the regulations made thereunder,
- the Australian Accounting Standards and other pronouncements of the Australian Accounting Standards Board
- the Local Government Code of Accounting Practice and Financial Reporting.

To the best of our knowledge and belief, these statements:

- present fairly the Council's operating result and financial position for the year
- accord with Council's accounting and other records.

We are not aware of any matter that would render these statements false or misleading in any way.

Signed in accordance with a resolution of Council made on 23 August 2022.

[redacted]

Ryan Palmer
Mayor
23 August 2022

[redacted]

Steve Tucker
Councillor
23 August 2022

[redacted]

Tim Crosdale
Acting General Manager
23 August 2022

[redacted]

Tim Hazell
Responsible Accounting Officer
23 August 2022

Page 3

Port Stephens Council

Income Statement

for the year ended 30 June 2022

Original unaudited budget 2022	$ '000	Notes	Actual 2022	Actual 2021
	Income from continuing operations			
66,079	Rates and annual charges	B2-1	**66,278**	63,396
48,272	User charges and fees	B2-2	**42,365**	39,886
3,919	Other revenues	B2-3	**4,852**	4,516
12,214	Grants and contributions provided for operating purposes	B2-4	**17,941**	15,032
12,122	Grants and contributions provided for capital purposes	B2-4	**32,929**	29,992
1,237	Interest and investment income (*)	B2-5	**501**	446
5,054	Other income	B2-6	**5,542**	4,793
3,750	Net gain from the disposal of assets	B4-1	**2,528**	2,349
152,647	**Total income from continuing operations**		**172,936**	160,410
	Expenses from continuing operations			
53,894	Employee benefits and on-costs	B3-1	**52,959**	51,662
47,073	Materials and services	B3-2	**53,040**	50,601
872	Borrowing costs	B3-3	**849**	854
18,247	Depreciation, amortisation and impairment of non-financial assets	B3-4	**18,203**	18,331
15,507	Other expenses	B3-5	**6,103**	6,153
135,593	**Total expenses from continuing operations**		**131,154**	127,601
17,054	**Operating result from continuing operations**		**41,782**	32,809
17,054	Net operating result for the year attributable to Council *		**41,782**	32,809
4,931	**Net operating result for the year before grants and contributions provided for capital purposes**		**8,853**	2,817

The above Income Statement should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

(*) Items have been reclassified in accordance with The Local Government Code of Accounting Practice and Financial Reporting 2021/22.

Port Stephens Council

Statement of Comprehensive Income

for the year ended 30 June 2022

$ '000	Notes	2022	2021
Net operating result for the year – from Income Statement		**41,782**	**32,809**
Other comprehensive income:			
Amounts which will not be reclassified subsequently to the operating result			
Gain (loss) on revaluation of infrastructure, property, plant and equipment	C1-8	**93,739**	10,818
Gain (loss) on revaluation of intangible assets	C1-10	**–**	311
Total items which will not be reclassified subsequently to the operating result		**93,739**	11,129
Total other comprehensive income for the year		**93,739**	11,129
Total comprehensive income for the year attributable to Council		**135,521**	43,938

The above Statement of Comprehensive Income should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

Port Stephens Council

Statement of Financial Position

as at 30 June 2022

$ '000	Notes	2022	2021
ASSETS			
Current assets			
Cash and cash equivalents	C1-1	**30,221**	21,542
Investments	C1-2	**17,679**	36,145
Receivables	C1-4	**11,387**	9,673
Inventories	C1-5	**42**	977
Contract assets and contract cost assets	C1-6	**1,086**	577
Non-current assets classified as 'held for sale'	C1-7	**851**	42
Other	C1-11	**1,471**	1,051
Total current assets		**62,737**	70,007
Non-current assets			
Investments	C1-2	**22,652**	1,102
Receivables	C1-4	**153**	160
Inventories	C1-5	**10,617**	10,605
Infrastructure, property, plant and equipment (IPPE)	C1-8	**1,167,153**	1,031,239
Investment property	C1-9	**41,655**	42,295
Intangible assets	C1-10	**3,998**	5,876
Right of use assets	C2-1	**3,060**	3,854
Investments accounted for using the equity method		**–**	431
Other	C1-11	**17**	29
Total non-current assets		**1,249,305**	1,095,591
Total assets		**1,312,042**	1,165,598
LIABILITIES			
Current liabilities			
Payables	C3-1	**19,130**	15,288
Contract liabilities	C3-2	**11,482**	6,339
Lease liabilities	C2-1	**753**	831
Borrowings	C3-3	**2,897**	2,966
Employee benefit provisions	C3-4	**14,737**	15,937
Provisions	C3-5	**–**	331
Total current liabilities		**48,999**	41,692
Non-current liabilities			
Payables	C3-1	**165**	2,922
Lease liabilities	C2-1	**2,544**	3,209
Borrowings	C3-3	**36,515**	29,594
Employee benefit provisions	C3-4	**893**	776
Total non-current liabilities		**40,117**	36,501
Total liabilities		**89,116**	78,193
Net assets		**1,222,926**	1,087,405
EQUITY			
Accumulated surplus	C4-1	**715,162**	673,059
IPPE revaluation reserve	C4-1	**507,764**	414,346
Total equity		**1,222,926**	1,087,405

The above Statement of Financial Position should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

Port Stephens Council

Statement of Changes in Equity

for the year ended 30 June 2022

		2022			2021		
$ '000	Notes	**Accumulated surplus**	**IPPE revaluation reserve**	**Total equity**	Accumulated surplus	IPPE revaluation reserve	Total equity
Opening balance at 1 July		**673,059**	**414,346**	**1,087,405**	640,250	403,217	1,043,467
Opening balance		**673,059**	**414,346**	**1,087,405**	640,250	403,217	1,043,467
Net operating result for the year		**41,782**	**–**	**41,782**	32,809	–	32,809
Net operating result for the period		**41,782**	**–**	**41,782**	32,809	–	32,809
Other comprehensive income							
Gain (loss) on revaluation of infrastructure, property, plant and equipment	C1-8	**–**	**93,739**	**93,739**	–	10,818	10,818
Gain (loss) on revaluation of intangibles		**–**	**–**	**–**	–	311	311
Other comprehensive income		**–**	**93,739**	**93,739**	–	11,129	11,129
Total comprehensive income		**41,782**	**93,739**	**135,521**	32,809	11,129	43,938
Transfers between equity items		**321**	**(321)**	**–**	–	–	–
Closing balance at 30 June		**715,162**	**507,764**	**1,222,926**	673,059	414,346	1,087,405

The above Statement of Changes in Equity should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

Port Stephens Council

Statement of Cash Flows

for the year ended 30 June 2022

Original unaudited budget 2022	$ '000	Notes	Actual 2022	Actual 2021
	Cash flows from operating activities			
	Receipts:			
64,640	Rates and annual charges		**67,055**	62,905
48,272	User charges and fees		**44,452**	43,758
1,237	Interest received		**447**	464
21,735	Grants and contributions		**41,788**	38,863
8,138	Other		**11,734**	10,556
	Payments:			
(52,134)	Payments to employees		**(54,255)**	(52,029)
(47,679)	Payments for materials and services		**(61,640)**	(55,570)
(872)	Borrowing costs		**(849)**	(854)
–	Bonds, deposits and retentions refunded		**(303)**	(198)
(18,633)	Other		**(4,173)**	(6,467)
24,704	**Net cash flows from operating activities**	G1-1	**44,256**	41,428
	Cash flows from investing activities			
	Receipts:			
–	Sale of investments		**62,111**	15,500
–	Sale of investment property		**3,118**	–
3,500	Sale of real estate assets		**5,076**	6,499
250	Proceeds from sale of IPPE		**387**	273
–	Sale of intangible assets		**2,175**	–
	Payments:			
–	Purchase of investments		**(65,741)**	(25,299)
–	Purchase of investment property		**–**	(88)
(27,602)	Payments for IPPE		**(48,467)**	(31,895)
(400)	Purchase of real estate assets		**(115)**	(181)
(400)	Purchase of intangible assets		**(153)**	(138)
(24,652)	**Net cash flows from investing activities**		**(41,609)**	(35,329)
	Cash flows from financing activities			
	Receipts:			
10,000	Proceeds from borrowings		**9,550**	3,000
	Payments:			
(3,380)	Repayment of borrowings		**(2,698)**	(3,287)
(28)	Principal component of lease payments		**(820)**	(795)
6,592	**Net cash flows from financing activities**		**6,032**	(1,082)
6,644	**Net change in cash and cash equivalents**		**8,679**	5,017
21,542	Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of year		**21,542**	16,525
28,186	Cash and cash equivalents at end of year	C1-1	**30,221**	21,542
26,852	plus: Investments on hand at end of year	C1-2	**40,331**	37,247
55,038	Total cash, cash equivalents and investments		**70,552**	58,789

The above Statement of Cash Flows should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

Port Stephens Council

Contents for the notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 30 June 2022

A About Council and these financial statements 11
A1-1 Basis of preparation 11

B Financial Performance 13

B1 Functions or activities 13
B1-1 Functions or activities – income, expenses and assets 13
B1-2 Components of functions or activities 14

B2 Sources of income 15
B2-1 Rates and annual charges 15
B2-2 User charges and fees 16
B2-3 Other revenues 17
B2-4 Grants and contributions 18
B2-5 Interest and investment income (*) 22
B2-6 Other income 23

B3 Costs of providing services 24
B3-1 Employee benefits and on-costs 24
B3-2 Materials and services 25
B3-3 Borrowing costs 26
B3-4 Depreciation, amortisation and impairment of non-financial assets 27
B3-5 Other expenses 28

B4 Gains or losses 29
B4-1 Gain or loss from the disposal, replacement and de-recognition of assets 29

B5 Performance against budget 30
B5-1 Material budget variations 30

C Financial position 32

C1 Assets we manage 32
C1-1 Cash and cash equivalents 32
C1-2 Financial investments 33
C1-3 Restricted and allocated cash, cash equivalents and investments 35
C1-4 Receivables 37
C1-5 Inventories 39
C1-6 Contract assets and Contract cost assets 40
C1-7 Non-current assets classified as held for sale 41
C1-8 Infrastructure, property, plant and equipment 42
C1-9 Investment properties 46
C1-10 Intangible assets 47
C1-11 Other 48

C2 Leasing activities 49
C2-1 Council as a lessee 49
C2-2 Council as a lessor 53

C3 Liabilities of Council 55
C3-1 Payables 55
C3-2 Contract Liabilities 56

Port Stephens Council

Contents for the notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 30 June 2022

C3-3 Borrowings 58
C3-4 Employee benefit provisions 60
C3-5 Provisions 61
C4 Reserves 63
C4-1 Nature and purpose of reserves 63
D Council structure 63
D1 Results by fund 63
D2 Interests in other entities 64
D2-1 Joint Venture 64
D2-2 Interests in joint arrangements 64
D2-3 Interests in associates 65
E Risks and accounting uncertainties 66
E1-1 Risks relating to financial instruments held 66
E2-1 Fair value measurement 69
E3-1 Contingencies 75
F People and relationships 78
F1 Related party disclosures 78
F1-1 Key management personnel (KMP) 78
F1-2 Councillor and Mayoral fees and associated expenses 81
F1-3 Other related parties 82
F2 Other relationships 83
F2-1 Audit fees 83
G Other matters 84
G1-1 Statement of Cash Flows information 84
G2-1 Commitments 85
G3-1 Events occurring after the reporting date 85
G4 Changes from prior year statements 86
G4-1 Changes in accounting policy 86
G4-2 Correction of errors 86
G4-3 Changes in accounting estimates 86
G5 Statement of developer contributions as at 30 June 2022 87
G5-1 Summary of developer contributions 87
G5-2 Developer contributions by plan 88
G6 Statement of performance measures 90
G6-1 Statement of performance measures – consolidated results 90
H Additional Council disclosures (unaudited) 91
H1-1 Council information and contact details 91

A About Council and these financial statements

A1-1 Basis of preparation

These financial statements were authorised for issue by Council on 18 October 2022. Council has the power to amend and reissue these financial statements in cases where critical information is received from public submissions or where the OLG directs Council to amend the financial statements.

The principal accounting policies adopted in the preparation of these consolidated financial statements are set out below.

These policies have been consistently applied to all the years presented, unless otherwise stated.

These general purpose financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards and Australian Accounting Interpretations, the *Local Government Act 1993* (Act) and *Local Government (General) Regulation 2005* (Regulation), and the Local Government Code of Accounting Practice and Financial Reporting.

Council is a not for-profit entity.

The financial statements are presented in Australian dollars and are rounded to the nearest thousand dollars.

Historical cost convention

These financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention, as modified by the revaluation of certain infrastructure, property, plant and equipment and investment property.

Significant accounting estimates and judgements

The preparation of financial statements requires the use of certain critical accounting estimates. It also requires management to exercise its judgement in the process of applying the Council's accounting policies.

Estimates and judgements are continually evaluated and are based on historical experience and other factors, including expectations of future events that may have a financial impact on the Council and that are believed to be reasonable under the circumstances.

Critical accounting estimates and assumptions

Council makes estimates and assumptions concerning the future.

The resulting accounting estimates will, by definition, seldom equal the related actual results.

The estimates and assumptions that have a significant risk of causing a material adjustment to the carrying amounts of assets and liabilities within the next financial year include:

i. estimated fair values of investment property – refer Note C1-9
ii. estimated fair values of infrastructure, property, plant and equipment – refer Note C1-8
iii. estimated tip remediation provisions – refer Note C3-5
iv. employee benefit provisions – refer Note C3-4.

Significant judgements in applying the Council's accounting policies

i. Impairment of receivables – refer Note C1-4.
ii. Determination of whether performance obligations are sufficiently specific and whether the contract is within the scope of AASB 15 *Revenue from Contracts with Customers* and / or AASB 1058 *Income of Not-for-Profit Entities* – refer to Notes B2-2 – B2-4.
iii. Determination of the lease term, discount rate (when not implicit in the lease) and whether an arrangement contains a lease – refer to Note C2-1.

Monies and other assets received by Council

The Consolidated Fund
In accordance with the provisions of Section 409(1) of the Local Government Act 1993 (NSW), all money and property received by Council is held in the Council's Consolidated Fund. Council does not have any money or property that is required to be held in a Trust Fund.

continued on next page ...

A1-1 Basis of preparation (continued)

Goods and Services Tax (GST)

Revenues, expenses and assets are recognised net of the amount of associated GST, unless the GST incurred is not recoverable from the taxation authority. In this case it is recognised as part of the cost of acquisition of the asset or as part of the expense.

Receivables and payables are stated inclusive of the amount of GST receivable or payable. The net amount of GST recoverable from, or payable to the taxation authority is included with other receivables or payables in the Statement of Financial Position.

Cash flows are presented on a gross basis. The GST components of cash flows arising from investing or financing activities that are recoverable from, or payable to, the taxation authority are presented as operating cash flows.

Volunteer services

Income relating to volunteer services can only be recognised where the amount is material, the services would be purchased if they were not donated and the amount of all volunteer services can be reliably measured. Council is not able to reliably satisfy all these aspects therefore no income and corresponding expense has been recognised in the financial statements.

New accounting standards and interpretations issued but not yet effective

Certain new accounting standards and interpretations (ie. pronouncements) have been published by the Australian Accounting Standards Board that are not mandatory for the 30 June 2022 reporting period.

Council has elected not to apply any of these pronouncements in these financial statements before their operative dates.

As at the date of authorisation of these financial statements Council does not consider that any of these new (and still to be applied) standards and interpretations are likely to have a material impact on the Council's future financial statements, financial position, financial performance or cash flows.

New accounting standards adopted during the year

During the year Council adopted all accounting standards and interpretations (as issued by the Australian Accounting Standards Board) which were mandatorily effective from the first time at 30 June 2022.

Those newly adopted standards which had a material impact on Council's reported financial position, financial performance and/or associated financial statement disclosures are further discussed in Note G4-1.

B Financial Performance

B1 Functions or activities

B1-1 Functions or activities – income, expenses and assets

Income, expenses and assets have been directly attr buted to the following functions or activities. Details of those functions or activities are provided in Note B1-2.

	Income		Expenses		Operating result		Grants and contributions		Carrying amount of assets	
$ '000	2022	2021	2022	2021	2022	2021	2022	2021	2022	2021
Functions or activities										
Our Community	**5,735**	6,038	**9,360**	9,912	**(3,625)**	(3,874)	**698**	1,005	**209,221**	180,876
Our Council	**91,055**	88,091	**47,568**	46,188	**43,487**	41,903	**8,154**	8,430	**288,840**	250,233
Our Environment	**23,765**	22,248	**22,614**	21,348	**1,151**	900	**508**	787	**4,358**	4,321
Our Place	**52,381**	44,033	**51,181**	50,153	**1,200**	(6,120)	**41,509**	34,802	**809,624**	730,168
Total functions and activities	**172,936**	160,410	**130,723**	127,601	**42,213**	32,809	**50,870**	45,024	**1,312,042**	1,165,598

B1-2 Components of functions or activities

Details relating to the Council's functions or activities as reported in B1-1 are as follows:

Our Community

Port Stephens is a thriving and strong community respecting diversity and heritage

Children's Services; Community Services; Contract and Services; Library Services.

Community Development and Engagement; Economic Development and Tourism; Strategic Planning; Volunteer Management; Delivery of Council's Financial Assistance Programs.

Management of Aboriginal Places in Port Stephens.

Our Place

Port Stephens is a liveable place supporting local economic growth

Asset Systems; Building and Developer Relations; Building Trades; Civil Assets Planning; Civil Contracts; Civil Projects; Community and Recreation; Community Development and Engagement; Construction; Contract and Services; Design; Emergency Management; Engineering Services; Environmental Health and Compliance; Mechanical and Maintenance Stores; Parks; Planning and Developer Relations; Roads; Roadside and Drainage; Strategic Planning; Survey and Land Information.

Economic Development and Tourism; Development, construction and maintanence of Koala Sanctuary, Hospital and Tourism Facility.

Our Environment

Port Stephens' environment is clean, green, protected and enhanced

Tree Assessment Services; Tree Permit System; Community and Recreation; Rehabilitate, monitor and manage decommissioned landfill sites; Waste Management.

Coastal Management; Community support and advocacy; Deliver Environmental Education and Grant Programs; Develop and implement projects to protect and enhance the local environment; Ecological and Environmental Planning Services; Management and Regulation of Biosecurity Risks; Strategic guidance, current knowledge and best practice advice.

Our Council

Port Stephens Council leads, manages and delivers valued community services in a responsible way

Business Excellence; Citizenship Ceremonies; Commercial Investments; Community Development and Engagement; Corporate Reporting; Corporate Systems and Business Improvement; Customer Relations; Digital and Website; Environmental Management; Facilities Management; Finance; Governance; Holiday Parks; Human Resources; Information and Communication Technologies; Information Services; Liasion with other government agencies; Manage strategic and operational matters; Marketing and Promotions; Public Relations and Marketing; Risk Management; Statutory Property; Support commercial aviation services; Support services for the Mayor, Councillors and senior executive officers; Work Health and Safety.

B2 Sources of income

B2-1 Rates and annual charges

$ '000	Timing	2022	2021
Ordinary rates			
Residential	2	**36,472**	35,441
Farmland	2	**887**	866
Business	2	**8,823**	8,579
Less: pensioner rebates (mandatory)		**(969)**	(1,067)
Rates levied to ratepayers		**45,213**	43,819
Pensioner rate subsidies received	2	**596**	591
Total ordinary rates		**45,809**	44,410
Annual charges			
(pursuant to s.496, s.496A, s.496B, s.501 & s.611)			
Domestic waste management services	2	**16,091**	15,134
Waste management services (non-domestic)	2	**4,671**	4,061
Section 611 charges	2	**11**	11
Less: pensioner rebates (mandatory)		**(557)**	(481)
Annual charges levied		**20,216**	18,725
Pensioner subsidies received:			
– Domestic waste management	2	**253**	261
Total annual charges		**20,469**	18,986
Total rates and annual charges		**66,278**	63,396

Council has used 2021 year valuations provided by the NSW Valuer General in calculating its rates.

Accounting policy
Rates and annual charges are recognised as revenue at the beginning of the rating period to which they relate. Prepaid rates are recognised as a financial liability until the beginning of the rating period.

Pensioner rebates relate to reductions in rates and certain annual charges for eligible pensioners' place of residence in the local government council area that are not subsidised by the NSW Government.

Pensioner rate subsidies are received from the NSW Government to provide a contribution towards the pensioner rebates and are recognised within the underlying revenue item based on their substance.

B2-2 User charges and fees

$ '000	Timing	2022	2021
Specific user charges			
(per s.502 - specific 'actual use' charges)			
Waste management services (non-domestic)	2	**1,916**	1,697
Total specific user charges		**1,916**	1,697
Other user charges and fees			
(i) Fees and charges – statutory and regulatory functions (per s.608)			
Private works – section 67	2	**99**	94
Section 10.7 certificates (EP&A Act)	2	**234**	218
Section 603 certificates	2	**193**	208
Building inspection fees	2	**360**	299
Building services	2	**1,424**	1,036
Shop inspection fees	2	**213**	223
Subdivision fees	2	**302**	380
Total fees and charges – statutory/regulatory		**2,825**	2,458
(ii) Fees and charges – other (incl. general user charges (per s.608))			
Animal control		**(3)**	9
Cemeteries	2	**184**	186
Child care	1	**2,919**	2,671
Holiday parks	1	**12,315**	14,506
Leisure centre	2	**1,627**	1,898
Library		**61**	84
Newcastle airport	2	**10,270**	7,816
Waste disposal tipping fees	2	**369**	426
Transport for NSW works (state roads not controlled by Council)	2	**6,649**	4,892
Parking meters	2	**680**	957
Parks, gardens and other community services		**–**	4
Sewerage management fees	1	**669**	655
Other		**1,436**	1,264
Rental income - other Council properties	2	**448**	363
Total fees and charges – other		**37,624**	35,731
Total other user charges and fees		**40,449**	38,189
Total user charges and fees		**42,365**	39,886
Timing of revenue recognition for user charges and fees			
User charges and fees recognised over time (1)		**15,903**	17,833
User charges and fees recognised at a point in time (2)		**26,462**	22,053
Total user charges and fees		**42,365**	39,886

Accounting policy
Revenue arising from user charges and fees is recognised when or as the performance obligation is completed and the customer receives the benefit of the goods / services being provided.

The performance obligation relates to the specific services which are provided to the customers and generally the payment terms are within 30 days of the provision of the service or in some cases such as caravan parks, the customer is required to pay on arrival or a deposit in advance. There is no material obligation for Council in relation to refunds or returns.

Where an upfront fee is charged such as joining fees for the leisure centre the fee is recognised on a straight-line basis over the expected life of the membership.

Licences granted by Council are all either short-term or low value and all revenue from licences is recognised at the time that the licence is granted rather than over the term of the licence.

B2-3 Other revenues

$ '000	Timing	2022	2021
Ex gratia rates	2	**117**	116
Fines – parking	2	**283**	278
Fines – other	2	**225**	220
Legal fees recovery – rates and charges (extra charges)		**151**	3
Legal fees recovery – other	2	**20**	3
Commissions and agency fees	1	**229**	226
Wage subsidies and incentives	2	**179**	–
Insurance claims recoveries	2	**178**	328
Sales – general	1	**240**	–
Events and promotions	2	**68**	46
Private works	1	**411**	223
Royalties - sand extraction	2	**1,745**	1,406
Other revenue - Newcastle airport partnership	2	**324**	768
Other		**682**	899
Total other revenue		**4,852**	4,516
Timing of revenue recognition for other revenue			
Other revenue recognised over time (1)		**880**	449
Other revenue recognised at a point in time (2)		**3,972**	4,067
Total other revenue		**4,852**	4,516

Accounting policy for other revenue
Where the revenue is earned for the provision of specified goods / services under an enforceable contract, revenue is recognised when or as the obligations are satisfied.

Statutory fees and fines are recognised as revenue when the service has been provided, the payment is received or when the penalty has been applied, whichever occurs first.

Other revenue is recorded when the payment is due, the value of the payment is notified, or the payment is received, whichever occurs first.

B2-4 Grants and contributions

$ '000	Timing	Operating 2022	Operating 2021	Capital 2022	Capital 2021
General purpose grants and non-developer contributions (untied)					
General purpose (untied)					
Current year allocation					
Financial assistance	2	**3,584**	3,232	**–**	–
Payment in advance - future year allocation					
Financial assistance	2	**5,507**	3,459	**–**	–
Amount recognised as income during current year		**9,091**	6,691	**–**	–
Special purpose grants and non-developer contributions (tied)					
Cash contributions					
Previously specific grants:					
Bushfire and emergency services	2	**1,120**	1,106	**–**	–
Child care	1	**364**	631	**–**	–
Environmental programs	1	**484**	619	**23**	90
Floodplain management		**48**	–	**–**	–
Heritage and cultural	1	**29**	18	**–**	–
Library	2	**256**	246	**–**	–
LIRS subsidy	2	**26**	37	**–**	–
Recreation and culture	1	**866**	1,370	**4,120**	1,581
Newcastle airport	1	**–**	–	**586**	2,682
Youth development	1	**78**	116	**–**	–
Street lighting	2	**75**	75	**–**	–
Weed control	1	**75**	233	**–**	–
Transport (roads to recovery)	1	**781**	781	**–**	–
Transport	1	**553**	–	**6,968**	8,442
Other specific grants	1	**23**	67	**235**	25
Previously contributions:					
Drainage	2	**–**	–	**–**	4
Kerb and gutter	2	**–**	–	**–**	40
Natural disaster funding contributions	2	**1,330**	441	**1,080**	155
Recreation and culture	2	**–**	–	**221**	357
Transport for NSW contributions (regional roads, block grant)	2	**1,066**	1,079	**–**	–
Other contributions	2	**360**	293	**–**	–
Environmental projects	2	**–**	26	**–**	–
Risk management	2	**143**	130	**–**	–
Total special purpose grants and non-developer contributions – cash		**7,677**	7,268	**13,233**	13,376
Non-cash contributions					
Bushfire services		**–**	–	**847**	–
Dedications – subdivisions (other than by s7.4 and s7.11 – EP&A Act, s64 of the LGA)	2	**–**	–	**12,563**	8,790
Total other contributions – non-cash		**–**	–	**13,410**	8,790
Total special purpose grants and non-developer contributions (tied)		**7,677**	7,268	**26,643**	22,166
Total grants and non-developer contributions		**16,768**	13,959	**26,643**	22,166
Comprising:					

continued on next page ...

B2-4 Grants and contributions (continued)

$ '000	Timing	Operating 2022	Operating 2021	Capital 2022	Capital 2021
– Commonwealth funding		**11,220**	8,659	**2,017**	4,643
– State funding		**5,553**	5,270	**10,986**	8,333
– Other funding		**(5)**	30	**13,640**	9,190
		16,768	13,959	**26,643**	22,166

Developer contributions

$ '000	Notes	Timing	Operating 2022	Operating 2021	Capital 2022	Capital 2021
Developer contributions: (s7.4 & s7.11 - EP&A Act, s64 of the LGA):	G5					
Cash contributions						
S 7.11 – contributions towards amenities/services		2	**318**	318	**5,721**	7,452
S 7.12 – fixed development consent levies		2	**–**	–	**565**	374
Haulage		2	**855**	755	**–**	–
Total developer contributions – cash			**1,173**	1,073	**6,286**	7,826
Total developer contributions			**1,173**	1,073	**6,286**	7,826
Total contributions			**1,173**	1,073	**6,286**	7,826
Total grants and contributions			**17,941**	15,032	**32,929**	29,992

Timing of revenue recognition for grants and contributions				
Grants and contributions recognised over time (1)	**3,306**	3,834	**11,932**	12,821
Grants and contributions recognised at a point in time (2)	**14,635**	11,198	**20,997**	17,171
Total grants and contributions	**17,941**	15,032	**32,929**	29,992

continued on next page ...

B2-4 Grants and contributions (continued)

Unspent grants and contributions

Certain grants and contributions are obtained by Council on the condition they be spent in a specified manner or in a future period but which are not yet spent in accordance with those conditions are as follows:

$ '000	**Operating 2022**	Operating 2021	**Capital 2022**	Capital 2021
Unspent grants and contributions				
Unspent funds at 1 July	**79**	168	**4,700**	352
Add: capital grants received for the provision of goods and services in a future period (2022)	**1,504**	79	**8,658**	4,700
Less: Funds received in prior year but revenue recognised and funds spent in current year	**(79)**	(168)	**(4,700)**	(352)
Unspent funds at 30 June	**1,504**	79	**8,658**	4,700
Contributions				
Unspent funds at 1 July	**2,267**	2,458	**9,214**	2,072
Add: contributions recognised as revenue in the reporting year but not yet spent in accordance with the conditions	**1,172**	1,074	**6,286**	7,826
Add: contributions received and not recognised as revenue in the current year	**19**	20	**–**	17
Add: Interest	**3**	1	**11**	1
Less: contributions recognised as revenue in previous years that have been spent during the reporting year	**(1,032)**	(1,286)	**(4,013)**	(702)
Unspent contributions at 30 June	**2,429**	2,267	**11,498**	9,214

Accounting policy

Grants and contributions – enforceable agreement with sufficiently specific performance obligations

Grant and contribution revenue from an agreement which is enforceable and contains sufficiently specific performance obligations is recognised as or when control of each performance obligations is transferred.

The performance obligations vary according to the agreement. Payment terms vary depending on the terms of the grant, cash is received upfront for some grants and on the achievement of certain payment milestones for others.

Performance obligations may be satisfied either at a point in time or over time and this is reflected in the revenue recognition pattern. Point in time recognition occurs when the beneficiary obtains control of the goods / services at a single time (e.g. completion of the project when a report / outcome is provided), whereas over time recognition is where the control of the services is ongoing throughout the project (e.g. provision of community health services through the year).

Where control is transferred over time, generally the input methods being either costs or time incurred are deemed to be the most appropriate methods to reflect the transfer of benefit.

Capital grants

Capital grants received by Council under an enforceable contract for the acquisition or construction of infrastructure, property, plant and equipment to identified specifications which will be under Council's control on completion are recognised as revenue as and when the obligation to construct or purchase is completed.

For construction projects, this is generally as the construction progresses in accordance with costs incurred since this is deemed to be the most appropriate measure of the completeness of the construction project.

continued on next page ...

B2-4 Grants and contributions (continued)

For acquisitions of assets, the revenue is recognised when the asset is acquired and controlled by the Council.

Developer contributions

Council has obligations to provide facilities from contribution revenues levied on developers under the provisions of sections 7.4, 7.11 and 7.12 of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* (EP&A Act).

While Council generally incorporates these amounts as part of a Development Consents Order, such developer contributions are only recognised as income upon receipt by Council, due to the possibility that individual development consents may not be acted upon by the applicant and, accordingly, would not be payable to Council.

Developer contributions may only be expended for the purposes for which the contributions were required, but Council may apply contributions according to the priorities established in work schedules for the contribution plan.

Other grants and contributions

Assets, including cash, received from other grants and contributions are recognised at fair value when the asset is received. Council considers whether there are any related liability or equity items associated with the asset which are recognised in accordance with the relevant accounting standard.

Once the assets and liabilities have been recognised then income is recognised for any remaining asset value at the time that the asset is received.

B2-5 Interest and investment income (*)

$ '000	2022	2021
Interest on financial assets		
– Overdue rates and annual charges (incl. special purpose rates)	**159**	100
– Cash and investments	**279**	311
– Newcastle airport	**20**	35
Dividend income (other)	**43**	–
Total interest and investment income (losses)	**501**	446
Interest and investment income is attributable to:		
Unrestricted investments/financial assets:		
General Council cash and investments	**485**	444
Restricted investments/funds – external:		
Development contributions		
– Section 7.11	**16**	2
Total interest and investment income	**501**	446

Accounting policy

Interest income is recognised using the effective interest rate at the date that interest is earned.

Dividends are recognised as income in profit or loss unless the dividend clearly represents a recovery of part of the cost of the investment.

B2-6 Other income

$ '000	Notes	2022	2021
Reversal of revaluation decrements on IPPE previously expensed			
Land assets		**302**	–
Total gross reversal of revaluation decrements on IPPE previously expensed		**302**	–
Total reversal of revaluation decrements on IPPE previously expensed charged to Income Statement	C1-8	**302**	–
Fair value increment on investment properties			
Fair value increment on investment properties		**2,110**	889
Total fair value increment on investment properties	C1-9	**2,110**	889
Fair value increment on investments			
Fair value increment on investments through profit and loss		**–**	596
Total Fair value increment on investments		**–**	596
Rental income			
Investment properties and PPE			
Lease income (excluding variable lease payments not dependent on an index or rate)		**2,931**	2,978
Lease income relating to variable lease payments not dependent on an index or a rate		**199**	330
Total Investment properties		**3,130**	3,308
Total rental income	C2-2	**3,130**	3,308
Total other income		**5,542**	4,793

B3 Costs of providing services

B3-1 Employee benefits and on-costs

$ '000	2022	2021
Salaries and wages	**37,665**	37,580
Salaries and wages – Newcastle airport partnership	**4,002**	3,482
Travel and other allowances	**3,325**	2,895
Employee leave entitlements (ELE)	**8,186**	8,250
Superannuation	**4,878**	4,652
Workers' compensation insurance	**1,875**	1,570
Fringe benefit tax (FBT)	**7**	18
Protective clothing	**140**	170
Corporate uniform	**12**	39
Employee medical assessments	**12**	10
Other	**22**	27
Total employee costs	**60,124**	58,693
Less: capitalised costs	**(7,165)**	(7,031)
Total employee costs expensed	**52,959**	51,662

Accounting policy

Employee benefit expenses are recorded when the service has been provided by the employee.

All employees of the Council are entitled to benefits on retirement, disability or death. Council contributes to various defined benefit plans and defined contribution plans on behalf of its employees.

Contributions to defined contribution plans are recognised as an expense as they become payable. Prepaid contributions are recognised as an asset to the extent that a cash refund or a reduction in the future payments is available.

Council participates in a defined benefit plan under the Local Government Superannuation Scheme, however, sufficient information to account for the plan as a defined benefit is not available and therefore Council accounts for its obligations to defined benefit plans on the same basis as its obligations to defined contribution plans, i.e. as an expense when it becomes payable – refer to Note E3-1 for more information.

B3-2 Materials and services

$ '000	Notes	2022	2021
Raw materials and consumables		**7,244**	7,304
– Waste collection (2019 only) and disposal contract		**8,316**	8,759
– Other contractor and consultancy costs		**19,765**	19,340
Audit Fees	F2-1	**229**	192
Previously other expenses (*):			
Councillor and Mayoral fees and associated expenses	F1-2	**368**	373
Bank charges		**480**	492
Electricity and heating		**1,276**	1,361
Insurance		**2,219**	1,887
Street lighting		**1,045**	892
Telephone and communications		**260**	272
Training costs (other than salaries and wages)		**336**	371
Other expenses		**315**	520
Memberships		**124**	167
Newcastle airport		**5,152**	3,897
Legal expenses:			
– Legal expenses		**493**	460
Expenses from short-term leases		**55**	70
Expenses from leases of low value assets		**20**	7
Expenses from Peppercorn leases		**1**	1
Variable lease expense relating to usage		**5,152**	4,074
Other		**190**	162
Total materials and services		**53,040**	50,601

Accounting policy

Expenses are recorded on an accruals basis as the Council receives the goods or services.

B3-3 Borrowing costs

$ '000	2022	2021
(i) Interest bearing liability costs		
Interest on leases	**125**	135
Interest on overdraft	**37**	38
Interest on loans	**380**	455
Interest – Newcastle Airport	**316**	223
Interest on leases - Newcastle Airport	**–**	14
Total interest bearing liability costs	**858**	865
Less: capitalised costs	**(9)**	(11)
Total interest bearing liability costs expensed	**849**	854
Total borrowing costs expensed	**849**	854

Accounting policy

Borrowing costs incurred for the construction of any qualifying asset are capitalised during the period of time that is required to complete and prepare the asset for its intended use or sale. Other borrowing costs are expensed as incurred.

B3-4 Depreciation, amortisation and impairment of non-financial assets

$ '000	Notes	2022	2021
Depreciation and amortisation			
Plant and equipment		**1,552**	1,882
Office equipment		**422**	359
Furniture and fittings		**39**	27
Land improvements (depreciable)		**104**	93
Infrastructure:	C1-8		
– Buildings – specialised		**4,628**	4,851
– Other structures		**570**	847
– Roads		**2,826**	2,838
– Bridges		**57**	53
– Footpaths		**391**	380
– Car parks		**139**	141
– Stormwater drainage		**753**	732
– Swimming pools		**111**	117
– Other open space/recreational assets		**1,643**	1,620
– Other infrastructure		**650**	370
Right of use assets	C2-1	**871**	858
Other assets:			
– Heritage collections		**2**	2
– Library books		**340**	308
– Newcastle airport		**2,663**	2,445
Intangible assets	C1-10	**442**	408
Total depreciation and amortisation costs		**18,203**	18,331
TOTAL DEPRECIATION, AMORTISATION AND IMPAIRMENT / REVALUATION DECREMENT		**18,203**	18,331

Accounting policy

Depreciation and amortisation

Depreciation and amortisation are calculated using the straight line method to allocate their cost, net of their residual values, over their estimated useful lives.

Impairment of non-financial assets

Council assets held at fair value that are not held primarily for their ability to generate net cash flow, and that are deemed to be specialised, are no longer required to be tested for impairment under AASB 136. This is because these assets are assessed on an annual basis to ensure that the carrying amount is not materially different from fair value and therefore an impairment loss would be captured during this assessment.

Intangible assets that have an indefinite useful life, or are not yet available for use, are tested annually for impairment, or more frequently if events or changes in circumstances indicate that they might be impaired. Other assets that do not meet the criteria above are tested for impairment whenever events or changes in circumstances indicate that the carrying amount may not be recoverable. An impairment loss is recognised for the amount by which the asset's carrying amount exceeds its recoverable amount. The recoverable amount is the higher of an asset's fair value less costs to sell and value in use.

For the purposes of assessing impairment, assets are grouped at the lowest levels for which there are separately identifiable cash inflows that are largely independent of the cash inflows from other assets or groups of assets (cash-generating units). Non-financial assets that suffered an impairment are reviewed for possible reversal of the impairment at each reporting date.

Impairment losses for revalued assets are firstly offset against the amount in the revaluation surplus for the class of asset, with only the excess to be recognised in the Income Statement.

B3-5 Other expenses

$ '000	Notes	2022	2021
Impairment of receivables			
Other		**(6)**	28
Total impairment of receivables	C1-4	**(6)**	28
Net share of interests in joint ventures and associates using the equity method			
Joint ventures		**431**	109
Total net share of interests in joint ventures and associates using the equity method		**431**	109
Other			
Contributions/levies to other levels of government			
– NSW rural fire service levy		**814**	1,048
– Lands department levy (holiday parks)		**406**	485
– Waste levy		**3,673**	3,223
Donations, contributions and assistance to other organisations (Section 356)		**785**	1,053
Rehabilitation and restoration expenses		**–**	207
Total other		**5,678**	6,016
Total other expenses		**6,103**	6,153

Accounting policy

Other expenses are recorded on an accruals basis when Council has an obligation for the expenses.

Impairment expenses are recognised when identified.

B4 Gains or losses

B4-1 Gain or loss from the disposal, replacement and de-recognition of assets

$ '000	Notes	2022	2021
Disposal of Infrastructure, Property, Plant & Equipment (excl. investment property)	C1-8		
Proceeds from disposal – property		**200**	273
Less: carrying amount of property assets sold/written off		**(2,268)**	(2,008)
Gain (or loss) on disposal		**(2,068)**	(1,735)
Newcastle airport partnership	C1-8		
Proceeds from disposal – infrastructure		**10**	–
Less: carrying amount of infrastructure assets sold/written off		**(25)**	(12)
Gain (or loss) on disposal		**(15)**	(12)
Gain (or loss) on disposal of real estate assets held for sale	C1-5		
Proceeds from disposal – real estate assets		**5,076**	6,499
Less: carrying amount of real estate assets sold/written off		**(1,008)**	(2,403)
Gain (or loss) on disposal		**4,068**	4,096
Gain (or loss) on disposal of investment property	C1-9		
Proceeds from disposal – investment property		**3,118**	–
Less: carrying amount of investment property sold/written off		**(2,750)**	–
Gain (or loss) on disposal		**368**	–
Gain (or loss) on disposal of cash and investments	C1-1,C1-2		
Proceeds from disposal/redemptions/maturities – cash and investments		**62,111**	15,500
Less: carrying amount of cash and investments sold/redeemed		**(62,657)**	(15,500)
Gain (or loss) on disposal		**(546)**	–
Gain (or loss) on disposal of non-current assets classified as 'held for sale'	C1-7		
Proceeds from disposal – non-current assets 'held for sale'		**177**	–
Less: carrying amount of 'held for sale' assets sold/written off		**(42)**	–
Gain (or loss) on disposal		**135**	–
Gain (or loss) on disposal of intangible assets	C1-10		
Proceeds from disposal – intangible assets		**2,175**	–
Less: carrying amount of intangible assets sold/written off		**(1,589)**	–
Gain (or loss) on disposal		**586**	–
Net gain (or loss) from disposal of assets		**2,528**	2,349

Accounting policy

Gains and losses on disposals are determined by comparing proceeds with carrying amount. These are included in the Income Statement. The gain or loss on sale of an asset is determined when control of the asset has irrevocably passed to the buyer and the asset is de-recognised.

B5 Performance against budget

B5-1 Material budget variations

Council's original budget was adopted by the Council on 22/06/2021 and is not required to be audited. The original projections on which the budget was based have been affected by a number of factors. These include state and federal government decisions, including new grant programs, changing economic activity, environmental factors, and by decisions made by Council.

While these General Purpose Financial Statements include the original budget adopted by Council, the Act requires Council to review its financial budget on a quarterly basis, so it is able to manage the variation between actuals and budget that invariably occur during the year.

Material variations of more than 10% between original budget and actual results or where the variance is considered material by nature are explained below.

Variation Key: **F** = Favourable budget variation, **U** = Unfavourable budget variation.

$ '000	2022 Budget	2022 Actual	2022 -------- Variance --------		
Revenues					
Rates and annual charges	**66,079**	**66,278**	**199**	**0%**	**F**
User charges and fees	**48,272**	**42,365**	**(5,907)**	**(12)%**	**U**
User charges and fees are lower than the original budget due to the consolidated income from Newcaste Airport being affected by Covid-19.					
Other revenues	**3,919**	**4,852**	**933**	**24%**	**F**
Other revenue is higher than the original budget due to reclassification of revenue from Newcastle Airport.					
Operating grants and contributions	**12,214**	**17,941**	**5,727**	**47%**	**F**
Operating grants and contributions are higher than the orginal budget due to advance payment of the federal assistance grant for the 2023 financial year.					
Capital grants and contributions	**12,122**	**32,929**	**20,807**	**172%**	**F**
Capital grants and contributions are higher than the orginal budget due to Council being succesful with a number of grant applications during the financial year.					
Interest and investment revenue	**1,237**	**501**	**(736)**	**(59)%**	**U**
Interest and investment revenue is lower than the orginal budget due ASX volatility that council is expsoed to through TCorp managed funds. .					
Net gains from disposal of assets	**3,750**	**2,528**	**(1,222)**	**(33)%**	**U**
Net gains from the disposal of assets is higher than the orginal budget due to additional property and bio banking credit sales during the year.					
Other income	**5,054**	**5,542**	**488**	**10%**	**F**
Expenses					
Employee benefits and on-costs	**53,894**	**52,959**	**935**	**2%**	**F**
Materials and services	**47,073**	**53,040**	**(5,967)**	**(13)%**	**U**

continued on next page ...

B5-1 Material budget variations (continued)

$ '000	2022 Budget	2022 Actual	2022 -------- Variance --------		

Materials and services are above the orginal budget due to changes in the NSW Code of Accounting which now requires certain expenditure to be reclassificaed from Other Expenses. Without these changes the actuals compared to budget would be 8% favourable.

Borrowing costs	872	849	23	3%	F
Depreciation, amortisation and impairment of non-financial assets	18,247	18,203	44	0%	F
Other expenses	15,507	6,103	9,404	61%	F

Other Expenses are above the orginal budget due to changes in the NSW Code of Accounting which now requires certain expenditure to be reclassificaed to Materials and Services.

Statement of cash flows

Cash flows from operating activities	24,704	44,256	19,552	79%	F

Cash flows from operating activities are higher than the orginal budget due to Council being succesful with a number of capital grants during the year and the advance payment of the federal assistance grant.

Cash flows from investing activities	(24,652)	(41,609)	(16,957)	69%	U

Cash flows from investing activities are higher than the orginal budget due to Council increasing its spend on I,PPE as a result of being succesful with a number of capital grant applications. In addition Council also sold bio banking credits and land parcels that were not orginally budgted.

Cash flows from financing activities	6,592	6,032	(560)	(8)%	U

C Financial position

C1 Assets we manage

C1-1 Cash and cash equivalents

$ '000	2022	2021
Cash assets		
Cash on hand and at bank	**13,458**	10,526
Cash equivalent assets		
– Deposits at call	**3,003**	3,500
– Managed funds	**–**	7,516
– Short-term deposits	**13,760**	–
Total cash and cash equivalents	**30,221**	21,542

Reconciliation of cash and cash equivalents

Total cash and cash equivalents per Statement of Financial Position	**30,221**	21,542
Balance as per the Statement of Cash Flows	**30,221**	21,542

Accounting policy

For Statement of Cash Flow presentation purposes, cash and cash equivalents include: cash on hand; deposits held at call with financial institutions; other short-term, highly liquid investments with original maturities of three months or less that are readily convertible to known amounts of cash and which are subject to an insignificant risk of changes in value; and bank overdrafts. Bank overdrafts are shown within borrowings in current liabilities on the Statement of Financial Position.

C1-2 Financial investments

$ '000	2022 Current	2022 Non-current	2021 Current	2021 Non-current
Financial assets at fair value through the profit and loss				
Managed funds	–	–	8,992	–
Total	–	–	8,992	–
Financial assets at amortised cost				
Long term deposits	**17,679**	**22,652**	27,153	1,102
Total	**17,679**	**22,652**	27,153	1,102
Total financial investments	**17,679**	**22,652**	36,145	1,102
Total cash assets, cash equivalents and investments	**47,900**	**22,652**	57,687	1,102

Accounting policy

Financial instruments are recognised initially on the date that the Council becomes party to the contractual provisions of the instrument.

On initial recognition, all financial instruments are measured at fair value plus transaction costs (except for instruments measured at fair value through profit or loss where transaction costs are expensed as incurred).

Financial assets

All recognised financial assets are subsequently measured in their entirety at either amortised cost or fair value, depending on the classification of the financial assets.

Classification

On initial recognition, Council classifies its financial assets into the following categories – those measured at:
- amortised cost
- fair value through profit and loss (FVTPL)
- fair value through other comprehensive income – equity instrument (FVOCI-equity)

Financial assets are not reclassified subsequent to their initial recognition.

Amortised cost

Assets measured at amortised cost are financial assets where:
- the business model is to hold assets to collect contractual cash flows, and
- the contractual terms give rise on specified dates to cash flows that are solely payments of principal and interest on the principal amount outstanding.

Council's financial assets measured at amortised cost comprise trade and other receivables,term deposits and cash and cash equivalents in the Statement of Financial Position. Term deposits with an initial term of more than 3 months are classified as investments rather than cash and cash equivalents.

Subsequent to initial recognition, these assets are carried at amortised cost using the effective interest rate method less provision for impairment.

Interest income, impairment and gains or loss on de-recognition are recognised in profit or loss.

Fair value through other comprehensive income – equity instruments

Council has a number of strategic investments in entities over which they do not have significant influence nor control. Council has made an irrevocable election to classify these equity investments as fair value through other comprehensive income as they are not held for trading purposes.

continued on next page ...

C1-2 Financial investments (continued)

These investments are carried at fair value with changes in fair value recognised in other comprehensive income (financial asset reserve). On disposal any balance in the financial asset reserve is transferred to accumulated surplus and is not reclassified to profit or loss.

Other net gains and losses excluding dividends are recognised in Other Comprehensive Income Statement.

Financial assets through profit or loss

All financial assets not classified as measured at amortised cost or fair value through other comprehensive income as described above are measured at fair value through profit or loss.

Net gains or losses, including any interest or dividend income, are recognised in profit or loss.

Council's financial assets measured at fair value through profit or loss comprise investments in FRNs and NCDs in the Statement of Financial Position.

C1-3 Restricted and allocated cash, cash equivalents and investments

$ '000	2022	2021
(a) Externally restricted cash, cash equivalents and investments		
Total cash, cash equivalents and investments	**70,552**	58,789
Cash, cash equivalents and investments not subject to external restrictions	**40,653**	35,674
External restrictions		
External restrictions – included in liabilities		
External restrictions included in cash, cash equivalents and investments above comprise:		
Deposits, retentions and bonds	**731**	1,034
Specific purpose unexpended grants - AASB 1058 (exception & AASB 15)	**9,162**	4,779
External restrictions – included in liabilities	**9,893**	5,813
External restrictions – other		
External restrictions included in cash, cash equivalents and investments above comprise:		
Developer contributions – general	**13,927**	11,481
Specific purpose unexpended grants (recognised as revenue) – general fund	**1,000**	–
Domestic waste management	**3,335**	2,930
Crown reserve	**1,744**	2,891
External restrictions – other	**20,006**	17,302
Total external restrictions	**29,899**	23,115

Cash, cash equivalents and investments subject to external restrictions are those which are only available for specific use by Council due to a restriction placed by legislation or third-party contractual agreement.

continued on next page ...

C1-3 Restricted and allocated cash, cash equivalents and investments (continued)

$ '000	2022	2021
(b) Internal allocations		
Cash, cash equivalents and investments not subject to external restrictions	**40,653**	35,674
Unrestricted and unallocated cash, cash equivalents and investments	**–**	–
Internal allocations		
At 30 June, Council has internally allocated funds to the following:		
Asset rehabilition	**1,704**	1,352
Commercial properties	**1,986**	4,989
Election reserve	**–**	400
Federal assistance grant in advance	**5,507**	3,459
Fleet	**384**	2,410
Newcastle airport partnership	**13,144**	10,542
Other waste services reserve	**250**	183
Parking meters	**125**	178
Section 355C committees	**697**	626
IT Reserve	**–**	380
Emergency & Natural Disaster reserve	**7,000**	–
Unexpended loan funds	**269**	5,000
Repealed funds	**2,830**	5,581
Transport and Environment Reserve	**358**	46
Administration building reserve	**376**	502
Grants Co-contribution	**3,000**	–
Ward funds	**23**	26
Resilience fund	**3,000**	–
Total internal allocations	**40,653**	35,674

Cash, cash equivalents and investments not subject to external restrictions may be internally allocated by resolution or policy of the elected Council.

C1-4 Receivables

$ '000	2022 Current	2022 Non-current	2021 Current	2021 Non-current
Rates and annual charges	**2,636**	**–**	3,413	–
Interest and extra charges	**267**	**–**	202	–
User charges and fees	**647**	**–**	739	–
Miscellaneous debtors	**782**	**–**	328	–
Contributions to works	**31**	**–**	143	–
Accrued revenues				
– Interest on investments	**181**	**–**	192	–
– Other income accruals	**3,815**	**–**	1,515	–
Government grants and subsidies	**3**	**–**	169	–
Net GST receivable	**571**	**–**	558	–
Newcastle airport partnership	**2,457**	**–**	2,549	–
Other debtors	**–**	**153**	–	160
Total	**11,390**	**153**	9,808	160
Less: provision for impairment				
User charges and fees	**(3)**	**–**	(135)	–
Total provision for impairment – receivables	**(3)**	**–**	(135)	–
Total net receivables	**11,387**	**153**	9,673	160

continued on next page ...

C1-4 Receivables (continued)

$ '000	2022	2021
Movement in provision for impairment of receivables		
Balance at the beginning of the year	**135**	370
+ new provisions recognised during the year	**(10)**	137
– amounts already provided for and written off this year	**(122)**	(71)
– amounts written off but not provided for	**–**	(2)
– amounts provided for but recovered during the year	**–**	(291)
– previous impairment losses reversed	**–**	(8)
Balance at the end of the year	**3**	135

Accounting policy

Receivables are included in current assets, except for those with maturities greater than 12 months after the reporting date which are classified as non-current assets.

Receivables are recognised initially at fair value and subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method, less provision for impairment. Receivables are generally due for settlement within 30 days.

Cash flows relating to short-term receivables are not discounted if the effect of discounting is immaterial.

Impairment

Impairment of financial assets measured at amortised cost is recognised on an expected credit loss (ECL) basis.

When determining whether the credit risk of a financial asset has increased significantly since initial recognition, and when estimating ECL, the Council considers reasonable and supportable information that is relevant and available without undue cost or effort. This includes both quantitative and qualitative information and analysis based on Council's historical experience and informed credit assessment, and including forward-looking information. Council uses the simplified approach for trade receivables where the expected lifetime credit losses are recognised on day 1.

When considering the ECL for rates debtors, Council takes into account that unpaid rates represent a charge against the rateable property that will be recovered when the property is next sold. For non-rates debtors, Council uses the presumption that an asset which is more than 30 days past due has seen a significant increase in credit risk.

The Council uses the presentation that a financial asset is in default when:
- the other party is unlikely to pay its credit obligations to the Council in full, without recourse by the Council to actions such as realising security (if any is held) or
- the financial assets (for non-rates debtors) are more than 90 days past due.

Credit losses are measured as the present value of the difference between the cash flows due to the entity in accordance with the contract, and the cash flows expected to be received. This is applied using a probability weighted approach. On initial recognition of the asset, an estimate of the expected credit losses for the next 12 months is recognised. Where the asset has experienced significant increase in credit risk then the lifetime losses are estimated and recognised.

Council uses the simplified approach for trade receivables where the expected lifetime credit losses are recognised on day 1. There has been no change in the estimation techniques or significant assumptions made during the current reporting period.

The Council writes off a trade receivable when there is information indicating that the debtor is in severe financial difficulty and there is no realistic prospect of recovery, e.g. when the debtor has been placed under liquidation or has entered into bankruptcy proceedings, or when the receivables are deemed uncollectable, whichever occurs first. None of the receivables that have been written off are subject to enforcement activity.

Where the Council renegotiates the terms of receivables due from certain customers, the new expected cash flows are discounted at the original effective interest rate and any resulting difference to the carrying value is recognised in profit or loss.

Rates and annual charges outstanding are secured against the property.

C1-5 Inventories

$ '000	2022 Current	2022 Non-current	2021 Current	2021 Non-current
At cost				
Real estate	**42**	**10,617**	977	10,605
Total inventories at cost	**42**	**10,617**	977	10,605
Total inventories	**42**	**10,617**	977	10,605

$ '000	2022 Current	2022 Non-current	2021 Current	2021 Non-current
Real estate development				
Residential	**–**	**2,370**	752	2,324
Industrial/commercial	**42**	**8,247**	225	8,281
Total real estate held for resale	**42**	**10,617**	977	10,605

Accounting policy

Raw materials and stores, work in progress and finished goods

Raw materials and stores, work in progress and finished goods are stated at the lower of cost and net realisable value. Costs are assigned to individual items of inventory on the basis of weighted average costs. Costs of purchased inventory are determined after deducting rebates and discounts. Net realisable value is the estimated selling price in the ordinary course of business less the estimated costs of completion and the estimated costs necessary to make the sale.

Land held for resale

Land held for resale is stated at the lower of cost and net realisable value. Cost is assigned by specific identification and includes the cost of acquisition, and development and borrowing costs during development. When development is completed, borrowing costs and other holding charges are expensed as incurred.

Borrowing costs included in the cost of land held for resale are those costs that would have been avoided if the expenditure on the acquisition and development of the land had not been made. Borrowing costs incurred while active development is interrupted for extended periods are recognised as expenses.

C1-6 Contract assets and Contract cost assets

$ '000	2022 Current	2022 Non-current	2021 Current	2021 Non-current
Contract assets	**1,086**	**–**	577	–
Total contract assets and contract cost assets	**1,086**	**–**	577	–

Contract assets

Work relating to infrastructure grants	**1,086**	**–**	577	–
Total contract assets	**1,086**	**–**	577	–

Accounting policy

Contract assets

Contract assets represent Councils right to payment in exchange for goods or services the Council has transferred to a customer when that right is conditional on something other than the passage of time.

Contract assets arise when the amounts billed to customers are based on the achievement of various milestones established in the contract and therefore the amounts recognised as revenue in a given period do not necessarily coincide with the amounts billed to or certified by the customer. Once an invoice or payment claim is raised or the relevant milestone is reached, Council recognises a receivable.

Impairment of contract assets is assessed using the simplified expected credit loss model where lifetime credit losses are recognised on initial recognition.

Contract cost asset – costs to fulfil a contract

Where costs are incurred to fulfil a contract and these costs are outside the scope of another accounting standard, they are capitalised as contract cost assets if the following criteria are met:

– the costs relate directly to a contract
– the costs generate or enhance resources of Council that will be used to satisfy performance obligations in the future and
– the costs are expected to be recovered.

The capitalised costs are recognised in the Income statement on a systematic basis consistent with the timing of revenue recognition.

Refer to B3-4 for the accounting policy for impairment of contract cost assets.

C1-7 Non-current assets classified as held for sale

$ '000	2022 Current	2022 Non-current	2021 Current	2021 Non-current
Non-current assets held for sale				
Land	**851**	**–**	42	–
Total non-current assets classified as held for sale	**851**	**–**	42	–

44B Squire Street, Fingal Bay, valued at its carrying amount, has been transferred from operational land to non-current assets held for sale in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards.

It is fully expected that the sale of 44B Squire Street, Fingal Bay will be completed within 12 months of 30 June 2022.

Reconciliation of non-current assets held for sale and disposal groups – i.e. discontinued operations

$ '000	2022 Assets 'held for sale'	2021 Assets 'held for sale'
Opening balance	**42**	–
Less: carrying value of assets/operations sold	**(42)**	–
Balance still unsold after 12 months:	**–**	–
Plus new transfers in:		
– Assets held for sale	**851**	42
Closing balance of held for sale non-current assets and operations	**851**	42

Accounting policy

Non-current assets (or disposal groups) are classified as held for sale if their carrying amount will be recovered principally through a sale transaction rather than through continued use and are measured at the lower of their carrying amount and fair value less costs to sell.

Non-current assets (including those that are part of a disposal group) are not depreciated or amortised while they are classified as held for sale.

C1-8 Infrastructure, property, plant and equipment

By aggregated asset class	At 1 July 2021			Asset movements during the reporting period									At 30 June 2022		
$ '000	Gross carrying amount	Accumulated depreciation and impairment	Net carrying amount	Additions renewals [1]	Additions new assets	Carrying value of disposals	Depreciation expense	Impairment reversal (previously in P/L)	Transfers	Tfrs from/(to) 'held for sale' category	Tfrs from/(to) real estate assets (Note C1-5)	Reval increments/ (decrements) to equity (ARR)	Gross carrying amount	Accumulated depreciation and impairment	Net carrying amount
Capital work in progress	14,456	(72)	14,384	1,132	5,933	(638)	–	–	(1,696)	–	–	–	19,116	–	19,116
Plant and equipment	27,113	(17,665)	9,448	1,506	30	(215)	(1,552)	–	–	–	–	–	27,209	(17,993)	9,216
Office equipment	3,498	(2,564)	934	215	76	–	(422)	–	–	–	–	–	3,789	(2,985)	804
Furniture and fittings	1,712	(1,135)	577	–	–	–	(39)	–	–	–	–	–	1,712	(1,173)	539
Land:															
– Operational land	39,061	(573)	38,488	–	3,126	–	–	302	(680)	(853)	–	34,044	74,699	(271)	74,428
– Community land	47,353	–	47,353	–	115	–	–	–	680	–	29	–	48,178	–	48,178
– Crown land	29,223	–	29,223	–	42	(343)	–	–	–	–	–	2,416	31,337	–	31,337
– Land under roads (post 1/7/08)	2,271	–	2,271	–	262	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	2,533	–	2,533
– Newcastle airport	10,126	–	10,126	–	–	–	–	–	10,046	–	213	1,885	22,271	–	22,271
Land improvements – depreciable	10,302	(2,554)	7,748	–	113	–	(104)	–	304	–	–	–	10,719	(2,658)	8,061
Infrastructure:															
– Buildings – specialised	194,920	(91,270)	103,650	2,383	6,333	–	(4,628)	–	1,072	–	–	10,555	224,570	(105,206)	119,364
– Other structures	13,888	(5,559)	8,329	695	–	–	(570)	–	35	–	–	–	14,618	(6,129)	8,489
– Roads	429,541	(53,918)	375,623	11,994	3,855	(1,070)	(2,826)	–	–	–	–	30,880	478,525	(60,067)	418,458
– Bridges	15,061	(2,078)	12,983	1,089	–	–	(57)	–	–	–	–	1,006	17,376	(2,355)	15,021
– Footpaths	71,383	(11,089)	60,294	–	4,011	–	(391)	–	–	–	–	1,740	77,553	(11,899)	65,654
– Car parks	17,076	(2,312)	14,764	25	–	–	(139)	–	–	–	–	1,182	18,415	(2,582)	15,833
– Stormwater drainage	240,464	(27,634)	212,830	1,266	6,328	–	(753)	–	–	–	–	10,031	259,855	(30,153)	229,702
– Swimming pools	4,882	(1,152)	3,730	64	–	–	(111)	–	–	–	–	–	4,946	(1,263)	3,683
– Other open space	35,785	(13,986)	21,799	746	1,007	–	(1,643)	–	48	–	–	–	37,585	(15,629)	21,956
– Other infrastructure	19,547	(7,200)	12,347	8	2,137	–	(650)	–	237	–	–	–	21,929	(7,850)	14,079
Other assets:															
– Heritage collections	237	(79)	158	–	–	–	(2)	–	–	–	–	–	237	(82)	155
– Library books	5,950	(3,979)	1,971	242	–	–	(340)	–	–	–	–	–	6,191	(4,318)	1,873
– Newcastle airport	63,895	(21,686)	42,209	–	6,929	(26)	(2,662)	–	(10,046)	–	–	–	60,481	(24,078)	36,403
Total infrastructure, property, plant and equipment	1,297,744	(266,505)	1,031,239	**21,365**	**40,297**	**(2,292)**	**(16,889)**	**302**	**–**	**(853)**	**242**	**93,739**	**1,463,844**	**(296,691)**	**1,167,153**

(1) Renewals are defined as the replacement of existing assets (as opposed to the acquisition of new assets).

continued on next page ...

C1-8 Infrastructure, property, plant and equipment (continued)

By aggregated asset class	At 1 July 2020			Asset movements during the reporting period								At 30 June 2021		
$ '000	Gross carrying amount	Accumulated depreciation and impairment	Net carrying amount	Additions renewals [1]	Additions new assets	Carrying value of disposals	Depreciation expense	Transfers	Tfrs from/(to) 'held for sale' category	Tfrs from/(to) investment properties	Revaluation increments / (decrements) to equity (ARR)	Gross carrying amount	Accumulated depreciation and impairment	Net carrying amount
Capital work in progress	20,993	(91)	20,902	844	6,003	(229)	–	(13,136)	–	–	–	14,456	(72)	14,384
Plant and equipment	25,406	(15,089)	10,317	77	340	(246)	(1,882)	842	–	–	–	27,113	(17,665)	9,448
Office equipment	3,301	(2,205)	1,096	13	184	–	(359)	–	–	–	–	3,498	(2,564)	934
Furniture and fittings	1,419	(1,108)	311	237	57	–	(27)	–	–	–	–	1,712	(1,135)	577
Land:														
– Operational land	39,704	(573)	39,131	30	972	–	–	(113)	(42)	(1,490)	–	39,061	(573)	38,488
– Community land	42,885	–	42,885	–	40	–	–	113	–	–	4,316	47,353	–	47,353
– Crown land	29,223	–	29,223	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	29,223	–	29,223
– Land under roads (post 1/7/08)	1,985	–	1,985	–	286	–	–	–	–	–	–	2,271	–	2,271
Land improvements – depreciable	9,384	(2,398)	6,986	11	–	–	(93)	844	–	–	–	10,302	(2,554)	7,748
– Newcastle airport	10,126	–	10,126	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	10,126	–	10,126
Infrastructure:														
– Buildings – specialised	194,077	(91,466)	102,611	1,408	254	–	(4,851)	5,325	–	(1,245)	148	194,920	(91,270)	103,650
– Other structures	10,423	(4,776)	5,647	61	775	–	(847)	2,693	–	–	–	13,888	(5,559)	8,329
– Roads	417,927	(52,765)	365,162	7,557	4,124	(1,532)	(2,838)	3,148	–	–	–	429,541	(53,918)	375,623
– Bridges	14,941	(2,024)	12,917	119	–	–	(53)	–	–	–	–	15,061	(2,078)	12,983
– Footpaths	67,815	(10,709)	57,106	2,177	1,178	–	(380)	213	–	–	–	71,383	(11,089)	60,294
– Stormwater drainage	235,581	(26,902)	208,679	1,544	2,961	–	(732)	378	–	–	–	240,464	(27,634)	212,830
– Swimming pools	7,794	(4,690)	3,104	35	–	–	(117)	(792)	–	–	1,500	4,882	(1,152)	3,730
– Other open space	33,853	(12,349)	21,504	1,380	–	–	(1,620)	535	–	–	–	35,785	(13,986)	21,799
– Other infrastructure	11,428	(4,052)	7,376	515	22	–	(370)	(50)	–	–	4,854	19,547	(7,200)	12,347
– Car parks	15,603	(2,171)	13,432	1,473	–	–	(141)	–	–	–	–	17,076	(2,312)	14,764
Other assets:														
– Heritage collections	237	(77)	160	–	–	–	(2)	–	–	–	–	237	(79)	158
– Library books	5,705	(3,671)	2,034	–	246	–	(308)	–	–	–	–	5,950	(3,979)	1,971
– Newcastle airport	58,227	(19,323)	38,904	–	5,762	(12)	(2,445)	–	–	–	–	63,895	(21,686)	42,209
Total infrastructure, property, plant and equipment	1,258,037	(256,439)	1,001,598	17,481	23,204	(2,019)	(17,065)	–	(42)	(2,735)	10,818	1,297,744	(266,505)	1,031,239

(1) Renewals are defined as the replacement of existing assets (as opposed to the acquisition of new assets).

continued on next page ...

C1-8 Infrastructure, property, plant and equipment (continued)

Accounting policy
Initial recognition of infrastructure, property, plant and equipment (IPPE)

IPPE is measured initially at cost. Cost includes the fair value of the consideration given to acquire the asset (net of discounts and rebates) and any directly attributable cost of bringing the asset to working condition for its intended use (inclusive of import duties and taxes.

When infrastructure, property, plant and equipment is acquired by Council at significantly below fair value, the assets are initially recognised at their fair value at acquisition date.

Subsequent costs are included in the asset's carrying amount or recognised as a separate asset, as appropriate, only when it is probable that future economic benefits associated with the item will flow to Council and the cost of the item can be measured reliably. All other repairs and maintenance are charged to the Income Statement during the financial period in which they are incurred.

Useful lives of IPPE

Land is not depreciated. Depreciation on other assets is calculated using the straight-line method to allocate their cost, net of their residual values, over their estimated useful lives as follows:

Plant and equipment	Years	**Other equipment**	Years
Office equipment	5 to 10	Playground equipment	20
Office furniture	10 to 20	Benches, seats etc.	25
Computer equipment	4		
Vehicles	5 to 8	**Buildings**	
Heavy plant/road making equipment	5 to 8	Buildings	15 to 65
Other plant and equipment	5 to 15		
Transportation assets		**Stormwater assets**	
Sealed roads		Drains	80 to 100
- Base	50	Culverts	50 to 80
- Seal	15 to 25	Flood control structures	80 to 100
- Sub-base	100		
Unsealed roads	100	**Other infrastructure assets**	
Bridge concrete	100	Bulk earthworks	20
Bridge other	60 to 100	Swimming pools	50
Kerb, gutter and footpaths	80	Other open space/recreational assets	20
		Other infrastructure	20

The assets' residual values and useful lives are reviewed, and adjusted if appropriate, at each reporting date.

Revaluation model

Infrastructure, property, plant and equipment are held at fair value. Comprehensive valuations are performed at least every five years, however the carrying amount of assets is assessed by Council at each reporting date to confirm that it is not materially different from current fair value.

Increases in the carrying amounts arising on revaluation are credited to the IPPE revaluation reserve. To the extent that the increase reverses a decrease previously recognising profit or loss relating to that asset class, the increase is first recognised as profit or loss. Decreases that reverse previous increases of assets in the same class are first charged against IPPE revaluation reserve to the extent of the remaining reserve attributable to the class; all other decreases are charged to the Income Statement.

Land under roads

Land under roads is land under roadways and road reserves including land under footpaths, nature strips and median strips.

continued on next page ...

C1-8 Infrastructure, property, plant and equipment (continued)

Council has elected not to recognise land under roads acquired before 1 July 2008 in accordance with AASB 1051 Land Under Roads.

Land under roads acquired after 1 July 2008 is recognised in accordance with AASB 116 Property, Plant and Equipment.

Crown reserves

Crown reserves under Council's care and control are recognised as assets of the Council. While ownership of the reserves remains with the Crown, Council retains operational control of the reserves and is responsible for their maintenance and use in accordance with the specific purposes to which the reserves are dedicated.

Where the Crown reserves are under a lease arrangement they are accounted for under AASB 16 Leases, refer to Note C2-1.

Improvements on Crown reserves are also recorded as assets, while maintenance costs incurred by Council and revenues relating to the reserves are recognised within Council's Income Statement.

Rural Fire Service assets

Under Section 119 of the *Rural Fire Services Act 1997 (NSW)*, "all firefighting equipment purchased or constructed wholly or from money to the credit of the Fund is to be vested in the council of the area for or on behalf of which the firefighting equipment has been purchased or constructed".

These Rural Fire Service assets are recognised as assets of the Council in these financial statements.

C1-9 Investment properties

$ '000	2022	2021
Owned investment property		
Investment property on hand at fair value	**41,655**	42,295
Total owned investment property	**41,655**	42,295
Owned investment property		
At fair value		
Opening balance at 1 July	**42,295**	37,575
Capitalised subsequent expenditure	**–**	88
Disposals during year	**(2,750)**	–
Net gain/(loss) from fair value adjustments	**2,110**	889
Transfers from/(to) inventories (Note C1-5)	**–**	1,008
Transfers from/(to) owner occupied (Note C1-8)	**–**	2,735
Closing balance at 30 June	**41,655**	42,295

Accounting policy

Investment property, principally comprising freehold office buildings, is held for long-term rental yields and is not occupied by the Council. Changes in fair values are recorded in the Income Statement as part of other income.

C1-10 Intangible assets

Intangible assets are as follows:

$ '000	2022	2021
Software		
Opening values at 1 July		
Gross book value	**3,612**	3,510
Accumulated amortisation	**(3,150)**	(2,858)
Net book value – opening balance	**462**	652
Movements for the year		
Purchases	**153**	103
Amortisation charges	**(320)**	(293)
Closing values at 30 June		
Gross book value	**3,765**	3,612
Accumulated amortisation	**(3,470)**	(3,150)
Total Intangibles– net book value	**295**	462
Right to Operate		
Opening values at 1 July		
Gross book value	**1,882**	1,847
Accumulated amortisation	**(299)**	(183)
Net book value – opening balance	**1,583**	1,664
Movements for the year		
Purchases	**–**	35
Amortisation Charges	**(122)**	(116)
Closing values at 30 June		
Gross book value	**1,872**	1,882
Accumulated amortisation	**(412)**	(299)
Total Right to Operate – net book value	**1,460**	**1,583**
Bio Banking Credits		
Opening values at 1 July		
Gross book value	**3,831**	3,520
Net book value – opening balance	**3,831**	3,520
Movements for the year		
Revaluation	**–**	311
Disposals	**(1,588)**	–
Closing values at 30 June		
Gross book value	**2,243**	3,831
Total BioBanking Credits – net book value	**2,243**	**3,831**
Total intangible assets – net book value	**3,998**	5,876

continued on next page ...

C1-10 Intangible assets (continued)

Accounting policy

IT development and software

Software development costs include only those costs directly attributable to the development phase (including external direct costs of materials and services, direct payroll, and payroll-related costs of employees' time spent on the project) and are only recognised following completion of technical feasibility, and where the Council has an intention and ability to use the asset. Amortisation is calculated on a straight-line basis over periods generally ranging from three to five years.

Bio Banking Credits

Bio banking credits are held at fair value. The carrying amount of assets is assessed by Council at each reporting date to confirm that it is not materially different from current fair value.

Increases in the carrying amounts arsing on revaluation are credited to the revaluation reserve. Decreases that reverse previous increases of assets in the same class are first charged against revaluation reserves directly in equity to the extent of the remaining reserve attributable to the class; all other decreases are charged to the Income Statement.

Bio Banking credits are not depreciated as they are deemed to have indefinite useful life as there is no foreseeable limit to the period over which the asset is expected to generate net cash inflows for the Council. They will exist in perpetuity.

Right to Operate

Fit out costs incurred for the international processing area within the terminal required by the Department of Home Affairs for border security activities required for international flights represents NAP's contractual / legal right to operate international airport services, and is recognised at cost as an intangible asset.

C1-11 Other

Other assets

$ '000	2022 Current	2022 Non-current	2021 Current	2021 Non-current
Prepayments	**1,238**	**–**	860	–
Prepayments - Newcastle airport partnership	**233**	**17**	191	29
Total other assets	**1,471**	**17**	1,051	29

C2 Leasing activities

C2-1 Council as a lessee

Council has leases over a range of assets including land, vehicles, carparks and IT equipment. Information relating to the leases in place and associated balances and transactions is provided below.

Terms and conditions of leases:

Plant and equipment

Council leases vehicles and equipment with lease terms varying from 5 to 10 years and include a renewal option to allow Council to renew for another year at their discretion. The lease contains an annual pricing mechanism based on either fixed increases or CPI movements at each anniversary of the lease inception.

Office and IT equipment

Leases for office and IT equipment are generally for low value assets, except for significant items such as photocopiers. The leases are for between 2 and 3 years with a renewal option of another 3 years, the payments are fixed, however some of the leases include variable payments based on usage.

Other assets - Other

Council leases car parks with lease term of 3 years and include an option to allow Council to renew for another two years at their discretion. The lease contains an annual pricing mechanism based on either fixed increases or CPI movements at each anniversary of the lease inception.

Land

Council leases land for their holiday park, with a lease term of 40 years and no renewal option. The lease contains an annual pricing mechanism based on CPI movements at each anniversary of the lease inception.

Newcastle Airport leases land with a lease term of 81 years and includes 3 renewal options to allow the Airport to renew for another 30 years at their discretion. There are fixed lease payments as well as variable lease payments, the fixed payments increase by CPI at each anniversary of the lease inception and the variable payment is based on a percentage of revenue.

Extension options

Council includes options in some of the leases to provide flexibility and certainty to operations and reduce costs of moving premises; and the extension options are at Council's discretion.

At commencement date and each subsequent reporting date, Council assesses where it is reasonably certain that the extension options will be exercised.

continued on next page ...

C2-1 Council as a lessee (continued)

(a) Right of use assets

$ '000	Plant & Equipment	Newcastle Airport	Office equipment	Other assets - Other	Land - Operational Land	Total
2022						
Opening balance at 1 July	**2,639**	**334**	**282**	**215**	**384**	**3,854**
Adjustments to right-of-use assets due to re-measurement of lease liability	**–**	**6**	**–**	**20**	**54**	**80**
Depreciation charge	**(528)**	**(8)**	**(179)**	**(103)**	**(57)**	**(875)**
Balance at 30 June	**2,111**	**333**	**103**	**131**	**382**	**3,060**
2021						
Opening balance at 1 July	**3,167**	**338**	**462**	**318**	**455**	**4,740**
Adjustments to right-of-use assets due to re-measurement of lease liability	–	–	–	(6)	(22)	(28)
Depreciation charge	(528)	(4)	(179)	(98)	(49)	(858)
Balance at 30 June	2,639	334	282	215	384	3,854

(b) Lease liabilities

$ '000	2022 Current	2022 Non-current	2021 Current	2021 Non-current
Lease liabilities	**752**	**2,194**	830	2,872
Lease liabilities - Newcastle Airport	**1**	**350**	1	337
Total lease liabilities	**753**	**2,544**	831	3,209

(c) (i) The maturity analysis

The maturity analysis of lease liabilities based on contractual undiscounted cash flows and therefore the amounts will not be the same as the recognised lease liability in the statement of Financial Position:

$ '000	< 1 year	1 – 5 years	> 5 years	Total	Total per Statement of Financial Position
2022					
Cash flows	**851**	**2,241**	**1,286**	**4,378**	**3,297**
2021					
Cash flows	953	2,960	1,287	5,200	**4,040**

continued on next page ...

C2-1 Council as a lessee (continued)

(ii) Lease liabilities relating to restricted assets

$ '000	2022 Current	2022 Non-current	2021 Current	2021 Non-current
Externally restricted assets				
Crown reserve	**47**	**370**	43	362
Domestic waste reserve	**526**	**1,744**	500	2,270
Lease liabilities relating to externally restricted assets	**573**	**2,114**	543	2,632
Total lease liabilities relating to restricted assets	**573**	**2,114**	543	2,632
Total lease liabilities relating to unrestricted assets	**180**	**430**	288	577
Total lease liabilities	**753**	**2,544**	831	3,209

continued on next page ...

C2-1 Council as a lessee (continued)

(d) Income Statement

The amounts recognised in the Income Statement relating to leases where Council is a lessee are shown below:

$ '000	2022	2021
Interest on lease liabilities	**125**	149
Variable lease payments based on usage not included in the measurement of lease liabilities	**5,152**	4,074
Depreciation of right of use assets	**871**	858
Expenses relating to short-term leases	**55**	70
Expenses relating to low-value leases	**20**	7
Expenses relating to peppercorn leases	**1**	1
	6,225	5,160

(e) Statement of Cash Flows

Total cash outflow for leases	**6,183**	5,093
	6,183	5,093

(f) Leases at significantly below market value – concessionary / peppercorn leases

Council has a lease at significantly below market for land and buildings which is used to provide emergency facilities.

The lease is for 5 years that require payment of $1,000 per year and include a renewal option to allow Council to renew for up to twice the non-cancellable lease term at their discretion. The lease contains an annual pricing mechanism based on CPI movements at each anniversary of the lease inception. The use of the right-to-use asset is restricted by the lessors to specified community services which Council must provide, these services are detailed in the leases.

Council does not believe that the lease in place is material from a statement of financial position or performance perspective.

Accounting policy

At inception of a contract, Council assesses whether a lease exists – i.e. does the contract convey the right to control the use of an identified asset for a period of time in exchange for consideration?

Council has elected not to separate non-lease components from lease components for any class of asset and has accounted for payments as a single component.

At the lease commencement, Council recognises a right-of-use asset and associated lease liability for the lease term. The lease term includes extension periods where Council believes it is reasonably certain that the option will be exercised.

The right-of-use asset is measured using the cost model where cost on initial recognition comprises: the lease liability, initial direct costs, prepaid lease payments, estimated cost of removal and restoration, less any lease incentives received. The right-of-use is depreciated over the lease term on a straight-line basis and assessed for impairment in accordance with the impairment of asset accounting policy.

The lease liability is initially recognised at the present value of the remaining lease payments at the commencement of the lease. The discount rate is the rate implicit in the lease, however where this cannot be readily determined then the Council's incremental borrowing rate for a similar term with similar security is used.

Subsequent to initial recognition, the lease liability is measured at amortised cost using the effective interest rate method. The lease liability is re-measured when there is a lease modification, or change in estimate of the lease term or index upon which the lease payments are based (e.g. CPI).

continued on next page ...

C2-1 Council as a lessee (continued)

Where the lease liability is re-measured, the right-of-use asset is adjusted to reflect the re-measurement.

Exceptions to lease accounting

Council has applied the exceptions to lease accounting for both short-term leases (i.e. leases with a term of less than or equal to 12 months) and leases of low-value assets. Council recognises the payments associated with these leases as an expense on a straight-line basis over the lease term.

Leases at significantly below market value / concessionary leases

Council has elected to measure the right of use asset arising from the concessionary leases at cost which is based on the associated lease liability at initial recognition.

C2-2 Council as a lessor

Operating leases

Council leases out a number of properties to community groups; these leases have been classified as operating leases for financial reporting purposes and the assets are included in the Statement of Financial Position as:

– investment property – where the asset is held predominantly for rental or capital growth purposes (refer note C1-9)

– property, plant and equipment – where the rental is incidental, or the asset is held to meet Councils service delivery objective (refer note C1-8).

$ '000	2022	2021
(i) Assets held as investment property		
Investment property operating leases relate to the assets held predominately for rental purposes.		
The amounts recognised in the Income Statement relating to operating leases where Council is a lessor are shown below		
Lease income (excluding variable lease payments not dependent on an index or rate)	**2,747**	2,839
Lease income relating to variable lease payments not dependent on an index or a rate	**199**	330
Total income relating to operating leases for investment property assets	**2,946**	3,169
Operating lease expenses		
Direct operating expenses that generated rental income	**578**	539
Total expenses relating to operating leases	**578**	539
Repairs and maintenance: investment property		
Contractual obligations for future repairs and maintenance	**73**	31
Total repairs and maintenance: investment property	**73**	31

continued on next page ...

C2-2 Council as a lessor (continued)

$ '000	2022	2021
(ii) Assets held as property, plant and equipment		
Council provides operating leases on Council buildings for the purpose of service delivery objectives, the table below relates to operating leases on assets disclosed in C1-8.		
Lease income (excluding variable lease payments not dependent on an index or rate)	**184**	139
Total income relating to operating leases for Council assets	**184**	139
Amount of IPPE leased out by Council under operating leases		
Buildings	**6,931**	6,446
Furniture and Fittings	**41**	53
Land - Council Land	**3,479**	1,786
Open Space Other	**171**	187
Other Assets - Carparks	**184**	184
Other Structures	**29**	30
Total amount of IPPE leased out by Council under operating leases	**10,835**	8,686
(iii) Maturity analysis of undiscounted lease payments to be received after reporting date for all operating leases:		
Maturity analysis of future lease income receivable showing the undiscounted lease payments to be received after reporting date for operating leases:		
< 1 year	**2,841**	2,726
1–2 years	**1,787**	2,413
2–3 years	**398**	1,559
3–4 years	**203**	273
4–5 years	**192**	204
> 5 years	**889**	635
Total undiscounted lease payments to be received	**6,310**	7,810

Accounting policy

When Council is a lessor, the lease is classified as either an operating or finance lease at inception date, based on whether substantially all of the risks and rewards incidental to ownership of the asset have been transferred to the lessee. If the risks and rewards have been transferred then the lease is classified as a finance lease, otherwise it is an operating lease.

When Council has a sub-lease over an asset and is the intermediate lessor then the head lease and sub-lease are accounted for separately. The classification of the sub-lease is based on the right-of-use asset which arises from the head lease rather than the useful life of the underlying asset.

If the lease contains lease and non-lease components, the non-lease components are accounted for in accordance with AASB 15 *Revenue from Contracts with Customers*.

The lease income is recognised on a straight-line basis over the lease term for an operating lease and as finance income using amortised cost basis for finance leases.

C3 Liabilities of Council

C3-1 Payables

$ '000	2022 Current	2022 Non-current	2021 Current	2021 Non-current
Goods and services	**4,287**	**–**	6,025	–
Goods and Services - Newcastle Airport Partnership	**6,606**	**165**	3,220	2,922
Accrued expenses:				
– Other expenditure accruals	**5,254**	**–**	3,579	–
Security bonds, deposits and retentions	**731**	**–**	1,034	–
Unclaimed monies	**2**	**–**	2	–
Rates in advance	**1,658**	**–**	1,423	–
Government departments and agencies	**575**	**–**	–	–
Other	**17**	**–**	5	–
Total payables	**19,130**	**165**	15,288	2,922

Current payables not anticipated to be settled within the next twelve months

$ '000	2022	2021
The following liabilities, even though classified as current, are not expected to be settled in the next 12 months.		
Payables – security bonds, deposits and retentions	**396**	396
Total payables	**396**	396

Accounting policy

Council measures all financial liabilities initially at fair value less transaction costs, subsequently financial liabilities are measured at amortised cost using the effective interest rate method.

The financial liabilities of the Council comprise trade payables, bank and other loans and finance lease liabilities.

Payables

These amounts represent liabilities for goods and services provided to the council prior to the end of financial year that are unpaid. The amounts are unsecured and are usually paid within 30 days of recognition.

C3-2 Contract Liabilities

$ '000	Notes	2022 Current	2022 Non-current	2021 Current	2021 Non-current
Grants and contributions received in advance:					
Unexpended capital grants (to construct Council controlled assets)	(i)	**8,658**	**–**	4,635	–
Unexpended operating grants (received prior to performance obligation being satisfied)	(ii)	**504**	**–**	144	–
Total grants received in advance		**9,162**	**–**	4,779	–
User fees and charges received in advance:					
Fees - holiday park deposits	(iii)	**1,969**	**–**	1,337	–
Fees - Newcastle airport	(iii)	**231**	**–**	223	–
Fees - Children's Services		**120**	**–**	–	–
Total user fees and charges received in advance		**2,320**	**–**	1,560	–
Total contract liabilities		**11,482**	**–**	6,339	–

Notes

(i) Council has received funding to construct assets including transport infrastructure, recreation and cultural facilities and other infrastructure. The funds received are under an enforceable contract which require Council to construct an identified asset which will be under Council's control on completion. The revenue is recognised as Council constructs the asset and the contract liability reflects the funding received which cannot yet be recognised as revenue. The revenue is expected to be recognised in the next 12 months.

(ii) The contract liability relates to grants, mostly environmental protection and child care that were received prior to the revenue recognition criteria in AASB 15 being satisfied since the performance obligations are ongoing.

(iii) Fees paid in advance do not meet the definition of a performance obligation and therefore the funds received in advance for holiday park fees and Newcastle airport fees are recorded as a contract liability on receipt and recognised as revenue once the service has been fully delivered.

Revenue recognised that was included in the contract liability balance at the beginning of the period

$ '000	2022	2021
Grants and contributions received in advance:		
Capital grants (to construct Council controlled assets)	**3,494**	892
Operating grants (received prior to performance obligation being satisfied)	**131**	653
Total revenue recognised that was included in the contract liability balance at the beginning of the period	**3,625**	1,545

Accounting policy

Contract liabilities are recorded when consideration is received from a customer / fund provider prior to Council transferring a good or service to the customer, Council presents the funds which exceed revenue recognised as a contract liability.

Where the amounts billed to customers are based on the achievement of various milestones established in the contract, the amounts recognised as revenue in a given period do not necessarily coincide with the amounts billed to or certified by the customer.

continued on next page ...

C3-2 Contract Liabilities (continued)

When a performance obligation is satisfied by transferring a promised good or service to the customer before the customer pays consideration or before the payment is due, Council presents the work in progress as a contract asset, unless the rights to that amount of consideration are unconditional, in which case Council recognises a receivable.

The contract liabilities have arisen on adoption of AASB 15 and AASB 1058. Previously income received in advance was recognised for reciprocal contracts. The increase in a contract liability is primarily due to grants in the scope of AASB 15 and capital grants received by Council to acquire or construct assets which will be under Council's control. Prior to financial year 2020, revenue was recognised on receipt of the funds.

C3-3 Borrowings

$ '000	2022 Current	2022 Non-current	2021 Current	2021 Non-current
Loans – secured [1]	**2,897**	**12,115**	2,966	14,744
Loans – Newcastle airport partnership	**–**	**24,400**	–	14,850
Total borrowings	**2,897**	**36,515**	2,966	29,594

(1) Loans are secured over the general rating income of Council.
Disclosures on liability interest rate risk exposures, fair value disclosures and security can be found in Note E.

(a) Changes in liabilities arising from financing activities

	2021		Non-cash movements				2022
$ '000	Opening Balance	Cash flows	Acquisition	Fair value changes	Acquisition due to change in accounting policy	Other non-cash movement	Closing balance
Loans – secured	17,710	**(2,698)**	**–**	**–**	**–**	**–**	**15,012**
Lease liability (Note C2-1b)	4,040	**(743)**	**–**	**–**	**–**	**–**	**3,297**
Loans – Newcastle airport	14,850	**9,550**	**–**	**–**	**–**	**–**	**24,400**
Total liabilities from financing activities	36,600	**6,109**	**–**	**–**	**–**	**–**	**42,709**

	2020		Non-cash movements				2021
$ '000	Opening Balance	Cash flows	Acquisition	Fair value changes	Acquisition due to change in accounting policy	Other non-cash movement	Closing balance
Loans – secured	20,997	(3,314)	–	–	–	27	17,710
Lease liability (Note C2-1b)	4,863	(823)	–	–	–	–	4,040
Loans – Newcastle airport	11,850	3,000	–	–	–	–	14,850
Total liabilities from financing activities	37,710	(1,137)	–	–	–	27	36,600

(b) Financing arrangements

$ '000	2022	2021
Total facilities		
Bank overdraft facilities [1]	**2,500**	2,500
Credit cards/purchase cards	**1,000**	1,000
Bank loan facilities - Port Stephens Council	**–**	7,500
Bank loan facilities - Newcastle Airport	**50,000**	25,000
Total financing arrangements	**53,500**	36,000
Drawn facilities		
– Credit cards/purchase cards	**5**	414
– Bank loan facilities - Newcastle Airport	**24,400**	14,850
Total drawn financing arrangements	**24,405**	15,264
Undrawn facilities		
– Bank overdraft facilities	**2,500**	2,500
– Credit cards/purchase cards	**995**	586
– Bank loan facilities - Port Stephens Council	**–**	7,500
– Bank loan facilities - Newcastle Airport	**25,600**	10,150
Total undrawn financing arrangements	**29,095**	20,736

continued on next page ...

C3-3 Borrowings (continued)

Additional financing arrangements information

Breaches and defaults

During the current and prior year, there were no defaults or breaches on any of Councils loans.

Security over loans

Loans are secured over the general rating income of Council. Lease liabilities are secured by the underlying leased assets.

(1) The bank overdraft facility may be drawn at any time and may be terminated by the bank if any events of default specified in the contract occur.

Accounting policy

Borrowings are initially recognised at fair value, net of transaction costs incurred. Borrowings are subsequently measured at amortised cost. Any difference between the proceeds (net of transaction costs) and the redemption amount is recognised in the Income Statement over the period of the borrowings using the effective-interest method. Fees paid on the establishment of loan facilities are recognised as transaction costs of the loan to the extent that it is probable that some or all of the facility will be drawn down. In this case, the fee is deferred until the drawdown occurs. To the extent that there is no evidence that it is probable that some or all of the facility will be drawn down, the fee is capitalised as a prepayment for liquidity services and amortised over the period of the facility to which it relates.

Borrowings are removed from the Statement of Financial Position when the obligation specified in the contract is discharged, cancelled or expired. The difference between the carrying amount of a financial liability that has been extinguished or transferred to another party and the consideration paid, including any non-cash assets transferred or liabilities assumed, is recognised in other income or finance cost.

Borrowings are classified as current liabilities unless Council has an unconditional right to defer settlement of the liability for at least 12 months after the reporting date.

C3-4 Employee benefit provisions

$ '000	2022 Current	2022 Non-current	2021 Current	2021 Non-current
Annual leave	**4,477**	**–**	4,349	–
Sick leave	**2,177**	**–**	2,677	–
Long service leave	**7,757**	**893**	8,592	776
Flexi time / RDO leave	**326**	**–**	319	–
Total employee benefit provisions	**14,737**	**893**	15,937	776

Current employee benefit provisions not anticipated to be settled within the next twelve months

$ '000	2022	2021
The following provisions, even though classified as current, are not expected to be settled in the next 12 months.		
Provisions – employees benefits	**8,913**	10,545
	8,913	10,545

Accounting policy

Employee benefit provisions are presented as current liabilities in the Statement of Financial Position if Council does not have an unconditional right to defer settlement for at least 12 months after the reporting date, regardless of when the actual settlement is expected to occur and therefore all annual leave and vested long service leave (or that which vests within 12 months) is presented as current.

Short-term obligations

Liabilities for wages and salaries (including non-monetary benefits, annual leave and accumulating sick leave expected to be wholly settled within 12 months after the end of the period in which the employees render the related service) are recognised in respect of employees' services up to the end of the reporting period and are measured at the amounts expected to be paid when the liabilities are settled. The liability for annual leave and accumulating sick leave is recognised in the provision for employee benefits. All other short-term employee benefit obligations are presented as payables.

Other long-term employee benefit obligations

The liability for long-service leave and annual leave that is not expected to be wholly settled within 12 months after the end of the period in which the employees render the related service is recognised in the provision for employee benefits and measured as the present value of expected future payments to be made in respect of services provided by employees up to the end of the reporting period using the projected unit credit method. Consideration is given to expected future wage and salary levels, experience of employee departures, and periods of service. Expected future payments are discounted using market yields at the end of the reporting period on national government bonds with terms to maturity and currency that match, as closely as possible, the estimated future cash outflows.

On-costs

The employee benefit provisions include the aggregate on-cost liabilities that will arise when payment of current employee benefits is made in future periods. These amounts include superannuation, payroll tax and workers compensation expenses which will be payable upon the future payment of certain leave liabilities which employees are entitled to at the reporting period.

C3-5 Provisions

$ '000	2022 Current	2022 Non-Current	2021 Current	2021 Non-Current
Other provisions				
Other - Commercial concessions				
Newcastle airport partnership	–	–	331	–
Sub-total – other provisions	–	–	331	–
Total provisions	–	–	331	–
Provisions relating to restricted assets				
Newcastle airport partnership	–	–	331	–
Provisions relating to internally restricted assets	–	–	331	–
Total provisions relating to restricted assets	–	–	331	–

Description of and movements in provisions

	Other provisions		
$ '000	Asset remediation	Other Provisions	Net carrying amount
2022			
At beginning of year	–	331	331
Amounts used (payments)	–	(331)	(331)
Total other provisions at end of year	–	–	–
2021			
At beginning of year	263	165	428
Additional provisions	207	166	373
Amounts used (payments)	(470)	–	(470)
Total other provisions at end of year	–	331	331

Nature and purpose of provisions

Asset remediation

Council has a legal/public obligation to make, restore, rehabilitate and reinstate the council tip.

Legal costs provision

Council has a legal obligation to pay legal costs as a result of a past event, it is probable that an outflow of resources embodying economic benefits will be required when legal proceedings are finalised.

Provision for commercial concessions - Newcastle Airport

Newcastle airport has an obligation to pay commercial concessions, mostly rent and fees to its tenants as a result of Covid-19.

Accounting policy

Provisions are recognised when Council has a present legal or constructive obligation as a result of past events, it is probable that an outflow of resources will be required to settle the obligation, and the amount has been reliably estimated.

continued on next page ...

C3-5 Provisions (continued)

Where there are a number of similar obligations, the likelihood that an outflow will be required in settlement is determined by considering the class of obligations as a whole. A provision is recognised even if the likelihood of an outflow with respect to any one item included in the same class of obligations may be small.

Provisions are measured at the present value of management's best estimate of the expenditure required to settle the present obligation at the reporting date. The discount rate used to determine the present value reflects current market assessments of the time value of money and the risks specific to the liability. The increase in the provision due to the passage of time is recognised as borrowing cost.

Asset remediation – tips and quarries

Close-down and restoration costs include the dismantling and demolition of infrastructure, and the removal of residual materials and remediation of disturbed areas. Estimated close-down and restoration costs are provided for in the accounting period when the obligation arising from the related disturbance occurs, whether this occurs during the development or during the operation phase, based on the net present value of estimated future costs. Provisions for close-down and restoration costs do not include any additional obligations which are expected to arise from future disturbance. The cost estimates are calculated annually during the life of the operation to reflect known developments, e.g. updated cost estimates and revisions to the estimated lives of operations, and are subject to formal review at regular intervals.

The ultimate cost of environmental remediation is uncertain and cost estimates can vary in response to many factors, including changes to the relevant legal requirements, the emergence of new restoration techniques, or experience at other locations. The expected timing of expenditure can also change, for example in response to changes in quarry reserves or production rates. As a result, there could be significant adjustments to the provision for close down and restoration and environmental clean-up, which would affect future financial results.

Other movements in the provisions for close-down and restoration costs, including those resulting from new disturbance, updated cost estimates, changes to the estimated lives of operations, and revisions to discount rates, are capitalised within infrastructure, property, plant and equipment. These costs are then depreciated over the lives of the assets to which they relate.

Provision for legal costs

Liabilities for legal costs expected to be wholly settled within 12 months after the end of the reporting date are measured at the amounts expected to be paid when the liabilities are settled.

The obligations are presented as current liabilities in the Statement of Financial Position if the Council does not have an unconditional right to defer settlement for at least 12 months after the reporting date.

Provision for commercial concessions - Newcastle Airport

Liabilities for commercial concessions, that are a result of Covid-19 are expected to be wholly settled within 12 months after the end of the reporting date and are measured at the amounts expected to be paid when the liabilities are settled.

The obligations are presented as current liabilities in the Statement of Financial Position if the Council does not have an unconditional right to defer settlement for at least 12 months after the reporting date.

C4 Reserves

C4-1 Nature and purpose of reserves

IPPE Revaluation reserve

The infrastructure, property, plant and equipment (IPPE) revaluation reserve is used to record increments and decrements in the revaluation of infrastructure, property, plant and equipment.

D Council structure

D1 Results by fund

Council utilises only a general fund for its operations.

D2 Interests in other entities

D2-1 Joint Venture

Consolidated structured entities

Joint Venture - Arrow Collaborative Services Limited (Hunter Councils)

Council has an interest in Arrow Collaborative Services Limited, along with other Member Councils of Hunter Councils. The activities of this organisation are not controlled by any one Council. Arrow Collaborative Services Limited has been established to improve the quality and efficiency of local government service throughout the Hunter Region. One such service is the establishment and provision of a Record Repository Centre for the use of the Member Councils and to outsource this service to other organisations.

This Organisation was established in January 2003 as Hunter Councils Limited after receiving Minister's consent, pursuant to Section 358(1) (a) of the Local Government Act 1993. Arrow Collaborative Services Limited was previously known as Strategic Services Australia Limited. Arrow Collaborative Services Limited has the same year end date as Council.

Council has assessed the fair value of their interest in accordance with AASB 13 Fair Value Measurement and has come to the conclusion that the fair value of the investment is $0 due to the fact that distributions are not allowed and Council can not sell the investment.

	Council's share of net assets	
$ '000	**2022**	2021
Council's share of net assets		
Net share of interests in joint ventures and associates using the equity method		
Joint ventures - Arrow Collaborative Services Limited	**–**	431
Total net share of interests in joint ventures and associates using the equity method	**–**	431

D2-2 Interests in joint arrangements

(i) Joint operations

(a) Council is involved in the following joint operations (JO's)

			Interest in ownership		Interest in voting	
			2022	2021	**2022**	2021
Name of joint operation	**Principal activity**	**Place of business**				
Newcastle Airport Partnership and Newcastle Airport Pty Ltd	Airport Operation	Williamtown	**50%**	50%	**50%**	50%
Greater Newcastle Aerotropolis Partnership & Greater Newcastle Aerotropolis Pty Ltd	Airport Operation	Williamtown	**50%**	50%	**50%**	50%

Council assets employed in the joint operations

$ '000	**2022**	2021
Council's share of assets jointly owned with other partners		
Current assets	**15,834**	13,282

continued on next page ...

D2-2 Interests in joint arrangements (continued)

$ '000	2022	2021
Current liabilities	**(7,321)**	(4,227)
Non current assets	**60,491**	54,300
Non-current liabilities	**(24,951)**	(18,139)
Total net assets employed – Council's share	**44,053**	45,216

Accounting policy for joint arrangements:

AASB 11 Joint Arrangements defines a joint arrangement as an arrangement of which two or more parties have joint control and classifies these arrangements as either joint ventures or joint operations.

The council has determined that it has joint operations and joint ventures.

Joint ventures:

Joint ventures are those joint arrangements, which provide Council with rights to the net assets of the arrangement. Interests in joint ventures are accounted for using the equity method in accordance with AASB 128 Associates and Joint Ventures. Under this method, the investment is initially recognised as cost and the carrying amount is increased or decreased to recognise the Council's share of the profit or loss and other comprehensive income of the investee after the date of acquisition.

If the Council's share of losses of a joint venture equals or exceeds its interest in the joint venture, the Council discontinues recognising its share of further losses.

Council's share in the joint ventures gains or losses arising from transactions between itself and its joint venture are eliminated.

Adjustments are made to the joint ventures accounting policies where they are different from those of Council for the purpose of the consolidated financial statements

Joint operations:

In relation to its joint operations, where the Council has the rights to the individual assets and obligations arising from the arrangement, the Council has recognised:

- its assets, including its share of any assets held jointly
- its liabilities, including its share of any liabilities incurred jointly
- its share of the revenue from the sale of the output by the joint operation
- its expenses, including its share of any expenses incurred jointly.

These figures are incorporated into the relevant line item in the primary statements.

In addition to the joint ventures and associates disclosed individually above, Council has interests in a number of individually immaterial joint ventures and associates that have still been accounted for using the equity method.

E Risks and accounting uncertainties

E1-1 Risks relating to financial instruments held

Council's overall risk management program focuses on the unpredictability of financial markets and seeks to minimise potential adverse effects on the financial performance of Council.

Council's objective is to maximise its return on cash and investments while maintaining an adequate level of liquidity and preserving capital. The finance team manage the cash and investments portfolio with the assistance of independent advisers. Council has an investment policy which complies with s 625 of the Act and the Ministerial Investment Order. The policy is regularly reviewed by Council and a monthly investment report is provided to Council setting out the make-up and performance of the portfolio as required by local government regulations.

Council does not engage in transactions expressed in foreign currencies and is therefore not subject to foreign currency risk.

Financial risk management is carried out by the finance team under policies approved by the Councillors.

The fair value of Receivables, loans, investments and financial liabilities approximates the carrying amount.

The risks associated with the financial instruments held are:
• interest rate risk – the risk that movements in interest rates could affect returns
• liquidity risk – the risk that Council will not be able to pay its debts as and when they fall due
• credit risk – the risk that a contracting entity will not complete its obligations under a financial instrument resulting in a financial loss to Council.

Council manages these risks by diversifying its portfolio and only purchasing investments with high credit ratings or capital guarantees. Council also seeks advice from its independent advisers before placing any cash and investments.

(a) Market risk – interest rate and price risk

$ '000	2022	2021
The impact on the result for the year of a reasonably possible movement in interest rates is shown below. The reasonably possible movements were determined based on historical movements and economic conditions in place at the reporting date.		
It is assumed that the change in interest rates would have been constant throughout the reporting period.		
Impact of a 1% movement in interest rates		
– Equity / Income Statement	**283**	229
Impact of a 10% movement in price of investments		
– Equity / Income Statement	**899**	391

(b) Credit risk

Council's major receivables comprise (i) rates and annual charges and (ii) user charges and fees.

Council manages the credit risk associated with these receivables by monitoring outstanding debt and employing stringent debt recovery procedures. Council also encourages ratepayers to pay their rates by the due date through incentives.

The credit risk for liquid funds and other short-term financial assets is considered negligible, since the counterparties are reputable banks with high quality external credit ratings.

There are no significant concentrations of credit risk, whether through exposure to individual customers, specific industry sectors and/or regions.

The level of outstanding receivables is reported to the financial services section manager on a monthly basis and monitoring of acceptable collection performance is carried out.

continued on next page ...

E1-1 Risks relating to financial instruments held (continued)

Council makes suitable provision for doubtful receivables as required and carries out credit checks on most non-rate debtors.

There are no material receivables that have been subjected to a re-negotiation of repayment terms.

Credit risk profile

Receivables – rates and annual charges

Credit risk on rates and annual charges is minimised by the ability of Council to secure a charge over the land relating to the debts – that is, the land can be sold to recover the debt. Council is also able to charge interest on overdue rates and annual charges at higher than market rates which further encourages the payment of debt.

		overdue rates and annual charges		
$ '000	Not yet overdue	< 5 years	≥ 5 years	Total
2022				
Gross carrying amount	**–**	**2,535**	**101**	**2,636**
2021				
Gross carrying amount	–	3,251	162	3,413

Receivables - non-rates and annual charges and contract assets
Council applies the simplified approach for non-rates and annual charges debtors and contract assets to provide for expected credit losses, which permits the use of the lifetime expected loss provision at inception. To measure the expected credit losses, non-rates and annual charges debtors and contract assets have been grouped based on shared credit risk characteristics and the days past due.

The loss allowance provision is determined as follows. The expected credit losses incorporate forward-looking information.

		Overdue debts				
$ '000	Not yet overdue	0 - 30 days	31 - 60 days	61 - 90 days	> 91 days	Total
2022						
Gross carrying amount	**8,804**	**403**	**120**	**74**	**592**	**9,993**
Expected loss rate (%)	**0.34%**	**0.89%**	**5.33%**	**11.51%**	**13.83%**	**1.30%**
ECL provision	**30**	**4**	**6**	**9**	**82**	**131**
2021						
Gross carrying amount	3,171	1,242	1,103	447	592	6,555
Expected loss rate (%)	0.13%	0.04%	0.06%	2.19%	2.78%	0.48%
ECL provision	4	–	1	10	16	31

(c) Liquidity risk

Payables, lease liabilities and borrowings are subject to liquidity risk – the risk that insufficient funds may be on hand to meet payment obligations as and when they fall due.

Council manages this risk by monitoring its cash flow requirements and liquidity levels and maintaining an adequate cash buffer.

Payment terms can (in extenuating circumstances) also be extended and overdraft facilities utilised as required.

Borrowings are also subject to interest rate risk – the risk that movements in interest rates could adversely affect funding costs and debt servicing requirements. Council manages this risk through diversification of borrowing types, maturities and interest rate structures. The finance team regularly reviews interest rate movements to determine if it would be advantageous to refinance or renegotiate part or all of the loan portfolio.

continued on next page ...

E1-1 Risks relating to financial instruments held (continued)

The timing of cash flows presented in the table below to settle financial liabilities reflects the earliest contractual settlement dates. The timing of expected outflows is not expected to be materially different from contracted cashflows.

The amounts disclosed in the table are the undiscounted contracted cash flows for non-lease liabilities (i.e. principal and interest) and therefore the balances in the table may not equal the balances in the statement of financial position due to the effect of discounting.

$ '000	Weighted average interest rate	Subject to no maturity	payable in: ≤ 1 Year	1 - 5 Years	> 5 Years	Total cash outflows	Actual carrying values
2022							
Payables	**0.00%**	**733**	**18,408**	**165**	**–**	**19,306**	**19,295**
Borrowings	**2.73%**	**–**	**3,323**	**34,821**	**4,106**	**42,250**	**39,412**
Lease liabilities	**0.00%**	**–**	**851**	**2,241**	**1,286**	**4,378**	**3,297**
Total financial liabilities		**733**	**22,582**	**37,227**	**5,392**	**65,934**	**62,004**
2021							
Payables	0.00%	1,036	14,253	2,921	–	18,210	18,210
Borrowings	1.63%	–	3,464	29,262	1,136	33,862	32,560
Lease liabilities	0.00%	–	953	2,960	1,287	5,200	4,040
Total financial liabilities		1,036	18,670	35,143	2,423	57,272	54,810

E2-1 Fair value measurement

The Council measures the following asset and liability classes at fair value on a recurring basis:

– Infrastructure, property, plant and equipment
– Investment property
– Financial assets and liabilities

The fair value of assets and liabilities must be estimated in accordance with various accounting standards for either recognition and measurement requirements or for disclosure purposes.

AASB 13 Fair Value Measurement requires all assets and liabilities measured at fair value to be assigned to a 'level' in the fair value hierarchy as follows:

Level 1: Unadjusted quoted prices in active markets for identical assets or liabilities that the entity can access at the measurement date.

Level 2: Inputs other than quoted prices included within level 1 that are observable for the asset or liability, either directly or indirectly.

Level 3: Inputs for the asset or liability that are not based on observable market data (unobservable inputs).

continued on next page ...

E2-1 Fair value measurement (continued)

		Fair value measurement hierarchy					
		Level 2 Significant observable inputs		Level 3 Significant unobservable inputs		Total	
$ '000	Notes	2022	2021	2022	2021	2022	2021
Recurring fair value measurements							
Financial assets							
Financial investments	C1-2						
At fair value through profit or loss		**–**	8,992	**–**	–	**–**	8,992
Total financial assets		**–**	8,992	**–**	–	**–**	8,992
Investment property	C1-9						
Investment properties held		**41,655**	42,295	**–**	–	**41,655**	42,295
Total investment property		**41,655**	42,295	**–**	–	**41,655**	42,295
Infrastructure, property, plant and equipment	C1-8						
Plant and equipment		**–**	–	**9,216**	9,448	**9,216**	9,448
Office equipment		**–**	–	**804**	934	**804**	934
Furniture and fittings		**–**	–	**539**	577	**539**	577
Land		**96,699**	48,614	**82,048**	78,847	**178,747**	127,461
Land Improvements		**–**	–	**8,061**	7,748	**8,061**	7,748
Buildings – specialised		**–**	–	**119,364**	103,650	**119,364**	103,650
Other Structures		**–**	–	**8,489**	8,329	**8,489**	8,329
Infrastructure		**–**	–	**784,386**	714,370	**784,386**	714,370
Other Assets		**–**	–	**38,431**	44,338	**38,431**	44,338
Total infrastructure, property, plant and equipment		**96,699**	48,614	**1,051,338**	968,241	**1,148,037**	1,016,855
Non-current assets classified as held for sale	C1-7						
Land		**851**	42	**–**	–	**851**	42
Total NCA's classified as held for sale		**851**	42	**–**	–	**851**	42

continued on next page ...

E2-1 Fair value measurement (continued)

During the year, there were no transfers between level 1 and level 2 fair value hierarchies for recurring fair value measurements.

Council's policy for determining transfers between fair value hierarchies is:
- at the date of the event or change in circumstances that casued the transfer.

Valuation techniques

Where Council is unable to derive fair valuations using quoted market prices of identical assets (ie. level 1 inputs) Council instead utilises a spread of both observable inputs (level 2 inputs) and unobservable inputs (level 3 inputs).

The fair valuation techniques Council has employed while utilising level 2 and level 3 inputs are as follows:

Investment property

Council obtains valuations of its investment properties every year or when there are indicators of a change in the carrying value of the asset.

The best evidence of Fair Value is the current price in an active market for similar assets. The following information is used where necessary:

The investment property held by Council has been valued by the valuer using valuation techniques that are appopriate and for which sufficient data was available to measure fair value, maxmising the use of observable inputs namely Level 2 inputs (based on per square metres). The income approach is used to value the investment properties and has not changed from prior years.

Infrastructure, property, plant and equipment (IPPE)

Plant & Equipment, Office Equipment, Furniture & Fittings

Plant & Equipment, Office Equipment and Furniture & Fittings are valued at cost but are disclosed at fair value in the notes. The carrying amount of these assets is assumed to approximate fair value due to the nature of the items. Examples of assets within these classes are as follows:

• Plant and Equipment - Graders, trucks, rollers, tractors and motor vehicles.
• Office Equipment - Computers, photocopiers, calculators etc.
• Furniture & Fittings - Chairs, desks and display boards.

Land

The main components of Land include Community Land, Operational Land & Land Under Roads.

Community Land is based on either the Land Value provided by the Valuer-General or an average unit rate based on the Land Value for similar properties where the Valuer-General did not provide a Land Value having regard to the highest and best use for the land.

Operational Land has been valued at market value, having regard to the “highest and best use”, after identifying all elements that would be taken into account by buyers and sellers in settling the price, including but not limited to:

1.The land’s description and/or dimensions;
2.Planning and other constraints on development; and
3.The potential for alternative use.

Sale prices of comparable land parcels in close proximity were adjusted for differences in key attributes such as size and configuration. The most significant inputs into this valuation approach are price per square metre.
Since extensive professional judgements were required to determine the inputs these assets were classified as having been valued using Level 2 valuation inputs. There has been no change to the valuation techniques during the reporting period.

Land Under Roads was valued in accordance with the Australian Accounting Standard AASB 116 Property, Plant and Equipment, and the Code of Accounting Practice and Financial Reporting.

continued on next page ...

E2-1 Fair value measurement (continued)

Values were determined using valuation of Council's total Land under Roads at the average rate unit of land and applying discounting factors which reflects the restrictions placed on land under roads. This asset class is classified as Level 3 asset as significant inputs used in this methodology are unobservable.

There has been no change to the valuation process during the reporting period.

Buildings - Specialised & Other Structures

The approach estimated the replacement cost of each building and componentising of significant parts with different useful lives and taking into account a range of factors. The unit rates could be supported by market evidence (Level 2 inputs), other inputs (such as estimates of residual value, useful life and asset condition) required extensive professional judgement and impacted significantly on the final determination of fair value.
As such, these assets have been valued using Level 3 inputs. There has been no change to the valuation.

Infrastructure

The main components of infrastructure include Roads, Bridges, Footpaths, Stormwater Drainage, Recreational and open areas.

Roads bridges and footpaths are valued using the cost replacement approach. Valuations for these asset classes were undertaken in-house based on actual costs and assumptions from Council's Engineering Department.
No market based evidence (Level 2) inputs are available therefore Level 3 valuation inputs were used for this asset class. There has been no change to the valuation process during the reporting period.

Assets within this class comprise pits, pipes, open channels, headwalls and various types of water quality devices.

The ‘Cost Approach’ estimated the replacement cost for each asset by componentising the assets into significant parts with different useful lives and taking into account a range of factors. While the unit rates based on linear metres of certain diameter pipes and prices per pit or similar could be supported from market evidence (Level 2) other inputs (such as estimates of pattern of consumption, residual value, asset condition and useful life) required extensive professional judgement and impacted significantly on the final determination of fair value. Additionally due to limitations in the historical records of very long lived assets there is uncertainty regarding the actual design, specifications and dimensions of some assets. There has been no change to the valuation process during the reporting period.

Councils recreational areas and swimming pools have been valued in house by experienced engineering and asset management staff using the cost approach. The approach estimated the replacement cost for each pool by componentising its significant parts.

Other Assets

Other Assets include Other assets in this class includes heritage collections library books, carparks and joint venture operations.

All other asset classes have also been recorded at replacement cost.

While some elements of gross replacement values could be supported from market evidence (Level 2 input) other inputs (such as estimates of pattern of consumption, residual value, asset condition and useful life) required extensive professional judgement and impacted significantly on the final determination of fair value. Therefore, Level 3 is best suited.

There has been no change to the valuation process during the reporting period.

continued on next page ...

E2-1 Fair value measurement (continued)

Fair value measurements using significant unobservable inputs (level 3)

Significant unobservable valuation inputs used (for level 3 asset classes) and their relationship to fair value.

The following table summarises the quantitative information relating to the significant unobservable inputs used in deriving the various level 3 asset class fair values.

	Valuation technique/s	Unobservable inputs
Infrastructure, property, plant and equipment		
Plant & Office Equipment	Cost approach	Current replacement cost of modern equivalent asset, asset condition, useful life and residual value
Furniture & Fittings	Cost approach	Current replacement cost of modern equivalent asset, asset condition, useful life and residual value
Land & Land Improvements	Community Land - land values obtained from the NSW Valuer-General. Crown Land - land values based on the NSW Valuer-General where applicable, otherwise compared to similar properties. Any restrictions on land such as zoning, has been taken into consideration.	Land value, land area
Buildings - Specialised	Cost approach	Unit price
Other Structures	Cost approach	Current replacement cost of modern equivalent asst, asset condition, useful life and residual value
Infrastructure	Cost approach	Current replacement cost of modern equivalent asst, asset condition, useful life and residual value
Other Assets	Cost approach	Current replacement cost of modern equivalent asst, asset condition, useful life and residual value

continued on next page ...

E2-1 Fair value measurement (continued)

A reconciliation of the movements in recurring fair value measurements allocated to Level 3 of the hierarchy is provided below:

	Plant and office equipment		Furniture and fittings		Land and land improvements		Buildings	
$ '000	2022	2021	2022	2021	2022	2021	2022	2021
Opening balance	**10,382**	11,413	**577**	311	**86,595**	81,079	**103,650**	102,611
Transfers from/(to) another asset class	**–**	842	**–**	–	**826**	957	**1,072**	5,325
Purchases	**1,827**	614	**–**	293	**689**	336	**8,716**	1,662
Disposals	**(215)**	(246)	**–**	–	**(343)**	–	**–**	–
Depreciation and impairment	**(1,973)**	(2,241)	**(38)**	(27)	**(104)**	(93)	**(4,628)**	(4,851)
Revaluation increments/decrements	**–**	–	**–**	–	**2,417**	4,316	**10,555**	148
Transfers from/(to) Note C1-9	**–**	–	**–**	–	**29**	–	**–**	(1,245)
Closing balance	**10,021**	10,382	**539**	577	**90,109**	86,595	**119,365**	103,650

	Other structures		Infrastructure		Other assets		Total	
$ '000	2022	2021	2022	2021	2022	2021	2022	2021
Opening balance	**8,329**	5,647	**714,370**	689,280	**44,338**	41,098	**968,241**	**931,439**
Transfers from/(to) another asset class	**35**	2,693	**285**	3,432	**(10,046)**	–	**(7,828)**	**13,249**
Purchases	**695**	836	**32,530**	23,085	**7,171**	6,008	**51,628**	**32,834**
Disposals	**–**	–	**(1,070)**	(1,532)	**(26)**	(12)	**(1,654)**	**(1,790)**
Depreciation and impairment	**(570)**	(847)	**(6,570)**	(6,249)	**(3,004)**	(2,756)	**(16,887)**	**(17,064)**
Revaluation increments/decrements	**–**	–	**44,843**	6,354	**–**	–	**57,815**	**10,818**
Transfers from/(to) Note C1-9	**–**	–	**–**	–	**–**	–	**29**	**(1,245)**
Closing balance	**8,489**	8,329	**784,388**	714,370	**38,433**	44,338	**1,051,344**	**968,241**

Highest and best use

All of Council's non-financial assets are considered as being utilised for their highest and best use.

E3-1 Contingencies

The following assets and liabilities do not qualify for recognition in the Statement of Financial Position, but their knowledge and disclosure is considered relevant to the users of Council's financial report.

LIABILITIES NOT RECOGNISED

1. Guarantees

(i) Defined benefit superannuation contribution plans

Council is party to an Industry Defined Benefit Plan under the Local Government Superannuation Scheme, named The Local Government Superannuation Scheme – Pool B (the Scheme) which is a defined benefit plan that has been deemed to be a 'multi-employer fund' for purposes of AASB119 Employee Benefits for the following reasons:

– Assets are not segregated within the sub-group according to the employees of each sponsoring employer.

– The contribution rates have been the same for all sponsoring employers. That is, contribution rates have not varied for each sponsoring employer according to the experience relating to the employees of that sponsoring employer.

– Benefits for employees of all sponsoring employers are determined according to the same formulae and without regard to the sponsoring employer.

– The same actuarial assumptions are currently used in respect of the employees of each sponsoring employer.

Given the factors above, each sponsoring employer is exposed to the actuarial risks associated with current and former employees of other sponsoring employers, and hence shares in the associated gains and losses (to the extent that they are not borne by members).

Description of the funding arrangements.

Pooled Employers are required to pay future service employer contributions and past service employer contributions to the Fund.

The future service employer contributions were determined using the new entrant rate method under which a contribution rate sufficient to fund the total benefits over the working life-time of a typical new entrant is calculated. The current future service employer contribution rates are:

Division B	1.9 times member contributions for non-180 Point Members; Nil for 180 Point Members*
Division C	2.5% salaries
Division D	1.64 times member contributions

* For 180 Point Members, Employers are required to contribute 7.5% of salaries for the year ending 30 June 2022 (increasing to 8.0% in line with the increase in the Superannuation Guarantee) to these members' accumulation accounts, which are paid in addition to members' defined benefits.

The past service contribution for each Pooled Employer is a share of the total past service contributions of $40.0 million for 1 July 2019 to 31 December 2021 and $20.0 million per annum for 1 January to 31 December 2024, apportioned according to each employer's share of the accrued liabilities as at 30 June 2021. These past service contributions are used to maintain the adequacy of the funding position for the accrued liabilities.

The adequacy of contributions is assessed at each triennial actuarial investigation and monitored annually between triennials.

Description of the extent to which Council can be liable to the plan for other Council's obligations under the terms and conditions of the multi-employer plan

As stated above, each sponsoring employer (Council) is exposed to the actuarial risks associated with current and former employees of other sponsoring employers and hence shares in the associated gains and losses.

However, there is no relief under the Fund's trust deed for employers to walk away from their defined benefit obligations. Under limited circumstances, an employer may withdraw from the plan when there are no active

continued on next page ...

E3-1 Contingencies (continued)

members, on full payment of outstanding additional contributions. There is no provision for allocation of any surplus which may be present at the date of withdrawal of the Council.

There are no specific provisions under the Fund's trust deed dealing with deficits or surplus on wind-up.

There is no provision for allocation of any surplus which may be present at the date of withdrawal of an employer.

The amount of Council employer contributions to the defined benefit section of the Local Government Superannuation Scheme and recognised as an expense for the year ending 30 June 2022 was $426,561 The last valuation of the Scheme was performed by fund actuary, Richard Boyfield, FIAA as at 30 June 2021.

The amount of additional contributions included in the total employer contribution advised above is $343,181. Council's expected contribution to the plan for the next annual reporting period is $162,310.

The estimated employer reserves financial position for the Pooled Employers at 30 June 2022 is:

Employer reserves only *	$millions	Asset Coverage
Assets	2,376.6	
Past Service Liabilities	2,380.7	99.8%
Vested Benefits	2,391.7	99.4%

* excluding other accumulation accounts and reserves in both assets and liabilities.

The share of any funding surplus or deficit that can be attributed to Council is 0.81%.

Council's share of that deficiency cannot be accurately calculated as the Scheme is a mutual arrangement where assets and liabilities are pooled together for all member councils. For this reason, no liability for the deficiency has been recognised in Council's accounts. Council has a possible obligation that may arise should the Scheme require immediate payment to correct the deficiency.

The key economic long term assumptions used to calculate the present value of accrued benefits are:

Investment return	5.5% per annum
Salary inflation *	3.5% per annum
Increase in CPI	2.5% per annum

* Plus promotional increases

The contribution requirements may vary from the current rates if the overall sub-group experience is not in line with the actuarial assumptions in determining the funding program; however, any adjustment to the funding program would be the same for all sponsoring employers in the Pooled Employers group.

Please note that the estimated employer reserves financial position above is a prelimnary calculation, and once all the relevant information has been received by the Funds Actuary, the final end of year review, which will be a triennial actuarial investigation will be completed by December 2022

(ii) Statewide Limited

Council is a member of Statewide Mutual, a mutual pool scheme providing liability insurance to local government.

Membership includes the potential to share in either the net assets or liabilities of the fund depending on its past performance. Council's share of the net assets or liabilities reflects Council's contributions to the pool and the result of insurance claims within each of the fund years.

The future realisation and finalisation of claims incurred but not reported to 30/6 this year may result in future liabilities or benefits as a result of past events that Council will be required to fund or share in respectively.

(iii) StateCover Limited

Council is a member of StateCover Mutual Limited and holds a partly paid share in the entity.

continued on next page ...

E3-1 Contingencies (continued)

StateCover is a company providing workers compensation insurance cover to the NSW local government industry and specifically Council.

Council has a contingent liability to contribute further equity in the event of the erosion of the company's capital base as a result of the company's past performance and/or claims experience or as a result of any increased prudential requirements from APRA.

These future equity contributions would be required to maintain the company's minimum level of net assets in accordance with its licence requirements.

(iv) Other guarantees

Council has provided no other guarantees other than those listed above.

2. Other liabilities

(i) Third party claims

The Council is involved from time to time in various claims incidental to the ordinary course of business including claims for damages relating to its services.

Council believes that it is appropriately covered for all claims through its insurance coverage and does not expect any material liabilities to eventuate.

(ii) Potential land acquisitions due to planning restrictions imposed by Council

Council has classified a number of privately owned land parcels as local open space or bushland.

As a result, where notified in writing by the various owners, Council will be required to purchase these land parcels.

At reporting date, reliable estimates as to the value of any potential liability (and subsequent land asset) from such potential acquisitions has not been possible.

(iii) Legal Matters

Council is dealing with general matters as part of normal operations. No specific disclousre is made as these matters do not represent a significant and probable outflow of resources other than those already provided for.

ASSETS NOT RECOGNISED

(i) Land under roads

As permitted under AASB 1051, Council has elected not to bring to account land under roads that it owned or controlled up to and including 30/6/08.

(ii) Infringement notices/fines

Fines and penalty income, the result of Council issuing infringement notices is followed up and collected by the Infringement Processing Bureau.

Council's revenue recognition policy for such income is to account for it as revenue on receipt.

Accordingly, at year end, there is a potential asset due to Council representing issued but unpaid infringement notices.

Due to the limited information available on the status, value and duration of outstanding notices, Council is unable to determine the value of outstanding income.

F People and relationships

F1 Related party disclosures

F1-1 Key management personnel (KMP)

Key management personnel (KMP) of the council are those persons having the authority and responsibility for planning, directing and controlling the activities of the council, directly or indirectly.

The aggregate amount of KMP compensation included in the Income Statement is:

$ '000	2022	2021
Compensation:		
Short-term benefits	**4,032**	3,762
Post-employment benefits	**360**	311
Termination benefits	**279**	292
Total	**4,671**	4,365

continued on next page ...

F1-1 Key management personnel (KMP) (continued)

Other transactions with KMP and their related parties

Council has determined that transactions at arm's length between KMP and Council as part of Council delivering a public service objective (e.g. access to library or Council swimming pool by KMP) will not be disclosed.

Nature of the transaction $ '000	Ref	Transactions during the year	Outstanding balances including commitments	Terms and conditions	Impairment provision on outstanding balances	Impairment expense
2022						
Director remuneration	1	**69**	**–**		**–**	**–**
Director remuneration	2	**30**	**–**		**–**	**–**
Payment of contributions, annual membership and advertising	3	**441**	**–**		**–**	**–**
Legal services	4	**276**	**–**		**–**	**–**
Tourism services and annual subscription	5	**124**	**–**		**–**	**–**
Sub lease of Council buildings	8	**68**	**–**		**–**	**–**
Supply of goods, contributions, mayoral donation and painting services	9	**130**	**–**		**–**	**–**
Supply of goods	10	**–**	**–**		**–**	**–**
2021						
Director remuneration	1	53	–		–	–
Director remuneration	2	26	–		–	–
Payment of contributions, annual membership and advertising	3	590	–		–	–
Legal services	4	245	1		–	–
Tourism services and annual subscription	5	120	–		–	–
Training service	6	18	–		–	–
Cleaning services	7	23	–		–	–
Sub lease of Council buildings	8	68	–		–	–
Supply of goods, contributions, mayoral donation and painting services	9	299	–		–	–
Supply of goods	10	41	–		–	–

1 Members of Council's KMP is remunerated for the provision of board member services by Newcastle Airport Pty Ltd which Port Stephens Council has a 50% shareholding in

2 Members of Council's KMP is remunerated for the provision of board member services by Greater Newcastle Aerotropolis Pty Ltd which Port Stephens Council has a 50% shareholding in.

continued on next page ...

F1-1 Key management personnel (KMP) (continued)

3	A member of Council's KMP is a board member of Destination Port Stephens (a non profit organisation) which receives an annual contribution from Council towards generating economic activity within the LGA, payments were also made for annual membership and advertising services. The KMP member is not remunerated by Destination Port Stephens for their Directorship
4	Port Stephens Council paid for legal services from Local Government Legal (a division of Arrow Collaborative Services Ltd) which is a joint operation between 11 Hunter Councils. A member of Council's KMP is a Director of Arrow Collaborative Services Ltd and is not remunerated for their Directorship.
5	Port Stephens Council paid for tourism promotion services from Screen Hunter (a division of Arrow Collaborative Services Ltd) which is a joint operation between 11 Hunter Councils and an annual subscription to core funding. A member of Council's KMP is a Director of Arrow Collaborative Services Ltd and is not remunerated for their Directorship
6	Port Stephens Council paid for training services from Local Government Training Solutions (a division of Arrow Collaborative Services Ltd) which is a joint operation between 11 Hunter Councils. A member of Council's KMP is a Director of Arrow Collaborative Services Ltd and is not remunerated for their Directorship.
7	Port Stephens Council purchased cleaning services from Crest Birubi Beach Pty Ltd during the year, a company which has a member of Council's KMP as a director. Amounts were billed based on normal rates for such supplies and were due and payable under normal payment terms following the council's procurement processes.
8	Crest Birubi Beach Pty Ltd (a company which has a former member of Council's KMP as a director) have a sublease with Birubi Point Surf Lifesaving Club in relation to a Council owned building. The rent is based on current market rates and subject to periodic review.
9	Port Stephens Council paid a contribution towards the operating costs of Port Stephens Koala and Wildlife Preservation Society Limited which has 2 members of Council's KMP as a director. In 2021 a mayoral donation and asset maintenance services were also provided.
10	Port Stephens Council purchased products from S & K latham Pty Ltd during the year, a company which has a member of Council's KMP as a director. Amounts were billed based on normal rates for such supplies and were due and payable under normal payment terms following the council's procurement processes.

F1-2 Councillor and Mayoral fees and associated expenses

$ '000	2022	2021
The aggregate amount of Councillor and Mayoral fees and associated expenses included in materials and services expenses in the Income Statement are:		
Mayoral fee	**86**	84
Councillors' fees	**211**	219
Other Councillors' expenses (including Mayor)	**71**	70
Total	**368**	373

F1-3 Other related parties

1 Port Stephens Council is a 50% shareholder in the joint operation of Newcastle Airport Pty Ltd for which it receives an annual dividend from. No dividend was received for the year ended 30 June 2022.

F2 Other relationships

F2-1 Audit fees

$ '000	2022	2021
During the year, the following fees were incurred for services provided by the auditor of Council, related practices and non-related audit firms		
Auditors of the Council - NSW Auditor-General:		
(i) Audit and other assurance services		
Audit and review of financial statements	**91**	81
Remuneration for audit and other assurance services	**91**	81
Total Auditor-General remuneration	**91**	81
Non NSW Auditor-General audit firms		
(i) Audit and other assurance services		
Internal audit services - PKF Lawler	**60**	41
Internal audit services - Newcastle airport partnership	**24**	15
Audit and review of financial statements - Newcastle airport partnership	**54**	55
Remuneration for audit and other assurance services	**138**	111
Total remuneration of non NSW Auditor-General audit firms	**138**	111
Total audit fees	**229**	192

G Other matters

G1-1 Statement of Cash Flows information

(a) Reconciliation of net operating result to cash provided from operating activities

$ '000	2022	2021
Net operating result from Income Statement	**41,782**	32,809
Add / (less) non-cash items:		
Depreciation and amortisation	**18,203**	18,331
(Gain) / loss on disposal of assets	**(2,528)**	(2,349)
Non-cash capital grants and contributions	**(13,410)**	(8,790)
Reversal of prior year IPP&E revaluation decrements / impairment previously costed direct to the P&L	**(302)**	–
Losses/(gains) recognised on fair value re-measurements through the P&L:		
– Investments classified as 'at fair value' or 'held for trading'	**–**	(596)
– Investment property	**(2,110)**	(889)
Share of net (profits)/losses of associates/joint ventures using the equity method	**431**	109
Movements in operating assets and liabilities and other cash items:		
(Increase) / decrease of receivables	**(1,575)**	(1,020)
Increase / (decrease) in provision for impairment of receivables	**(132)**	(235)
(Increase) / decrease of inventories	**–**	157
(Increase) / decrease of other current assets	**(408)**	(97)
(Increase) / decrease of contract asset	**(509)**	(577)
Increase / (decrease) in payables	**(1,738)**	790
Increase / (decrease) in other accrued expenses payable	**1,675**	382
Increase / (decrease) in other liabilities	**1,148**	(130)
Increase / (decrease) in contract liabilities	**5,143**	3,826
Increase / (decrease) in employee benefit provision	**(1,083)**	(196)
Increase / (decrease) in other provisions	**(331)**	(97)
Net cash flows from operating activities	**44,256**	41,428

(b) Non-cash investing and financing activities

Dedicated subdivisions	**12,562**	8,790
RFS assets	**847**	–
Total non-cash investing and financing activities	**13,409**	8,790

(c) Net cash flows attributable to discontinued operations

There are no cash flows that relate to discontinued operations

G2-1 Commitments

Capital commitments (exclusive of GST)

$ '000	2022	2021
Capital expenditure committed for at the reporting date but not recognised in the financial statements as liabilities:		
Property, plant and equipment		
Road and civil infrastructure	**2,529**	1,994
Buildings	**9,132**	1,285
Plant and equipment	**1,644**	676
Newcastle airport	**135,450**	901
Aquatic Structures	**–**	1,505
Other	**89**	564
Total commitments	**148,844**	6,925
These expenditures are payable as follows:		
Within the next year	**69,394**	6,925
Later than one year and not later than 5 years	**79,450**	–
Total payable	**148,844**	6,925

Details of capital commitments
The majority of Councils capital commitments relate to Newcastle Airport upgrades and the Raymond Terrace depot redevelopment.

G3-1 Events occurring after the reporting date

Council is unaware of any material or significant ‘non-adjusting events’ that should be disclosed.

G4 Changes from prior year statements

G4-1 Changes in accounting policy

Voluntary changes in accounting policies

There were no changes in accounting policies for the year ended 30 June 2022.

G4-2 Correction of errors

There were no correction of errors for the year ended 30 June 2022.

G4-3 Changes in accounting estimates

Changes in accounting estimates

There were no changes in accounting estimates for the year ended 30 June 2022.

G5 Statement of developer contributions as at 30 June 2022

G5-1 Summary of developer contributions [1, 2]

$ '000	Opening balance at 1 July 2021	Contributions received during the year: Cash	Contributions received during the year: Non-cash	Interest and investment income earned	Amounts expended	Internal borrowings	Held as restricted asset at 30 June 2022	Cumulative balance of internal borrowings (to)/from
Civic Administration	84	**318**	**–**	**–**	**(243)**	**–**	**159**	**–**
Civic Administration - Works Depot	750	**157**	**–**	**1**	**(866)**	**–**	**42**	**–**
Town Centre Upgrades	324	**259**	**–**	**–**	**–**	**–**	**583**	**–**
Public Open Space, Parks and Reserves	1,332	**845**	**–**	**3**	**(1,600)**	**321**	**901**	**321**
Sports and Leisure Facilities	4,129	**2,080**	**–**	**4**	**(338)**	**(321)**	**5,554**	**(321)**
Community and Cultural Facilities	761	**771**	**–**	**1**	**(191)**	**–**	**1,342**	**–**
Road Works	656	**746**	**–**	**1**	**(72)**	**–**	**1,331**	**–**
Medowie, Traffic and Transport	458	**478**	**–**	**1**	**–**	**(36)**	**901**	**(36)**
Shared Paths	198	**174**	**–**	**–**	**(205)**	**36**	**203**	**36**
Bus Facilities	14	**5**	**–**	**–**	**–**	**–**	**19**	**–**
Fire and Emergency	83	**18**	**–**	**–**	**–**	**–**	**101**	**–**
Flood and Drainage Works	249	**160**	**–**	**–**	**–**	**–**	**409**	**–**
Cross Boundary Contributions	–	**–**	**–**	**–**	**–**	**–**	**–**	**–**
Haulage	2,182	**873**	**–**	**3**	**(789)**	**–**	**2,269**	**–**
Kings Hill Urban Release Area	4	**27**	**–**	**–**	**–**	**–**	**31**	**–**
S7.11 contributions – under a plan	11,224	**6,911**	**–**	**14**	**(4,304)**	**–**	**13,845**	**–**
S7.12 levies – under a plan	257	**565**	**–**	**–**	**(740)**	**–**	**82**	**–**
Total S7.11 and S7.12 revenue under plans	11,481	**7,476**	**–**	**14**	**(5,044)**	**–**	**13,927**	**–**
Fern Bay - Repealed Funds	1,511	**–**	**–**	**2**	**(1,513)**	**–**	**–**	**–**
Total contributions	12,992	**7,476**	**–**	**16**	**(6,557)**	**–**	**13,927**	**–**

(1) Interest is earned according to the opening balance for the year

(2) Total internally levied contributions included in 'Cash' contributions is $18,817

Under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979, Council has significant obligations to provide Section 7.11 (contributions towards provision or improvement of amenities or services) infrastructure in new release areas. It is possible that the funds contributed may be less than the cost of this infrastructure, requiring Council to borrow or use general revenue to fund the difference.

G5-2 Developer contributions by plan

$ '000	Opening balance at 1 July 2021	Contributions received during the year: Cash	Contributions received during the year: Non-cash	Interest and investment income earned	Amounts expended	Internal borrowings	Held as restricted asset at 30 June 2022	Cumulative balance of internal borrowings (to)/from
CATCHMENT DISTRICT – RAYMOND TERRACE - RURAL								
Town Centre Upgrades	98	**63**	**–**	**–**	**–**	**–**	**161**	**–**
Public Open Space, Parks and Reserves	371	**127**	**–**	**1**	**(54)**	**–**	**445**	**–**
Sports and Leisure Facilities	1,162	**302**	**–**	**1**	**(62)**	**–**	**1,403**	**–**
Community and Cultural Facilities	123	**135**	**–**	**–**	**(63)**	**–**	**195**	**–**
Road Works	37	**169**	**–**	**–**	**(4)**	**–**	**202**	**–**
Shared Paths	37	**65**	**–**	**–**	**(33)**	**–**	**69**	**–**
Bus Facilities	–	**–**	**–**	**–**	**–**	**–**	**–**	**–**
Fire and Emergency	33	**11**	**–**	**–**	**–**	**–**	**44**	**–**
Flood and Drainage Works	15	**12**	**–**	**–**	**–**	**–**	**27**	**–**
Kings Hill Urban Release Area	1	**12**	**–**	**–**	**–**	**–**	**13**	**–**
Total	1,877	**896**	**–**	**2**	**(216)**	**–**	**2,559**	**–**
CATCHMENT DISTRICT – CENTRAL GROWTH CORRIDOR								
Town Centre Upgrades	105	**95**	**–**	**–**	**–**	**–**	**200**	**–**
Public Open Space, Parks and Reserves	516	**654**	**–**	**1**	**(1,491)**	**321**	**1**	**321**
Sports and Leisure Facilities	1,606	**1,685**	**–**	**2**	**(213)**	**(321)**	**2,759**	**(321)**
Community and Cultural Facilities	100	**589**	**–**	**–**	**(63)**	**–**	**626**	**–**
Road Works	338	**470**	**–**	**1**	**(68)**	**–**	**741**	**–**
Medowie, Traffic and Transport	458	**478**	**–**	**1**	**–**	**(36)**	**901**	**(36)**
Shared Paths	21	**15**	**–**	**–**	**(72)**	**36**	**–**	**36**
Bus Facilities	1	**1**	**–**	**–**	**–**	**–**	**2**	**–**
Flood and Drainage Works	113	**102**	**–**	**–**	**–**	**–**	**215**	**–**
Kings Hill Urban Release Area	2	**7**	**–**	**–**	**–**	**–**	**9**	**–**
Total	3,260	**4,096**	**–**	**5**	**(1,907)**	**–**	**5,454**	**–**
CATCHMENT DISTRICT – TOMAREE								
Town Centre Upgrades	92	**88**	**–**	**–**	**–**	**–**	**180**	**–**
Public Open Space, Parks and Reserves	386	**63**	**–**	**1**	**(55)**	**–**	**395**	**–**
Sports and Leisure Facilities	1,163	**87**	**–**	**1**	**(63)**	**–**	**1,188**	**–**
Community and Cultural Facilities	538	**45**	**–**	**1**	**(63)**	**–**	**521**	**–**
Road Works	281	**97**	**–**	**–**	**–**	**–**	**378**	**–**

continued on next page ...

G5-2 Developer contributions by plan (continued)

$ '000	Opening balance at 1 July 2021	Contributions received during the year		Interest and investment income earned	Amounts expended	Internal borrowings	Held as restricted asset at 30 June 2022	Cumulative balance of internal borrowings (to)/from
		Cash	Non-cash					
Shared Paths	75	83	–	–	(100)	–	58	–
Bus Facilities	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Fire and Emergency	50	7	–	–	–	–	57	–
Flood and Drainage Works	121	46	–	–	–	–	167	–
Kings Hill Urban Release Area	1	7	–	–	–	–	8	–
Total	2,707	523	–	3	(281)	–	2,952	–
CATCHMENT DISTRICT – FERN BAY								
Town Centre Upgrades	29	13	–	–	–	–	42	–
Public Open Space, Parks and Reserves	59	1	–	–	–	–	60	–
Sports and Leisure Facilities	198	6	–	–	–	–	204	–
Community and Cultural Facilities	–	2	–	–	(2)	–	–	–
Shared Paths	65	11	–	–	–	–	76	–
Road Works	–	10	–	–	–	–	10	–
Bus Facilities	13	4	–	–	–	–	17	–
Kings Hill Urban Release Area	–	1	–	–	–	–	1	–
Fern Bay - Repealed Funds	1,511	–	–	2	(1,513)	–	–	–
Total	1,875	48	–	2	(1,515)	–	410	–
CATCHMENT DISTRICT – SHIRE WIDE								
Haulage	2,182	873	–	3	(789)	–	2,269	–
Civic Administration	84	318	–	–	(243)	–	159	–
Civic Administration - Works Depot	750	157	–	1	(866)	–	42	–
Total	3,016	1,348	–	4	(1,898)	–	2,470	–

S7.12 Levies – under a plan

S7.12 LEVIES – UNDER A PLAN								
Section 7.12	257	565	–	–	(740)	–	82	–
Total	257	565	–	–	(740)	–	82	–

G6 Statement of performance measures

G6-1 Statement of performance measures – consolidated results

$ '000	Amounts 2022	Indicator 2022	Indicators 2021	Indicators 2020	Benchmark
1. Operating performance ratio					
Total continuing operating revenue excluding capital grants and contributions less operating expenses [1, 2]	**4,338**	**3.21%**	(0.22)%	(1.56)%	> 0.00%
Total continuing operating revenue excluding capital grants and contributions [1]	**135,067**				
2. Own source operating revenue ratio [3]					
Total continuing operating revenue excluding all grants and contributions [1]	**117,126**	**69.72%**	71.63%	74.57%	> 60.00%
Total continuing operating revenue [1]	**167,996**				
3. Unrestricted current ratio					
Current assets less all external restrictions	**54,819**	**2.60x**	2.08x	2.17x	> 1.50x
Current liabilities less specific purpose liabilities	**21,121**				
4. Debt service cover ratio					
Operating result before capital excluding interest and depreciation/impairment/amortisation [1]	**23,390**	**5.36x**	3.83x	2.53x	> 2.00x
Principal repayments (Statement of Cash Flows) plus borrowing costs (Income Statement)	**4,367**				
5. Rates and annual charges outstanding percentage [3]					
Rates and annual charges outstanding	**1,245**	**1.77%**	3.29%	3.05%	< 10.00%
Rates and annual charges collectable	**70,203**				
6. Cash expense cover ratio					
Current year's cash and cash equivalents plus all term deposits	**70,552**	**6.79 mths**	5.01 mths	4.03 mths	> 3.00 mths
Monthly payments from cash flow of operating and financing activities	**10,395**				

(1) Excludes fair value increments on investment properties, reversal of revaluation decrements, reversal of impairment losses on receivables, net gain on sale of assets and net share of interests in joint ventures and associates using the equity method and includes pensioner rate subsidies

(2) Excludes impairment/revaluation decrements of IPPE, fair value decrements on investment properties, net loss on disposal of assets and net loss on share of interests in joint ventures and associates using the equity method

(3) Reclassification has occurred on comparative figures for this line item

End of the audited financial statements

H Additional Council disclosures (unaudited)

H1-1 Council information and contact details

Principal place of business:
116 Adelaide Street
Raymond Terrace NSW 2324

Contact details

Mailing Address:
PO Box 42
Raymond Terrace NSW 2324

Opening hours:
8:30am - 5:00pm
Monday to Friday

Telephone: 02 4988 0255
Facsimile: 02 4988 0130

Internet: www.portstephens.nsw.gov.au
Email: council@portstephens.nsw.gov.au

Officers
General Manager
Tim Crosdale

Responsible Accounting Officer
Tim Hazell

Public Officer
Tony Wickham

Auditors
The Audit Office of New South Wales
Level 19, Tower 2 Darling Park, 201 Sussex St,
Sydney NSW 2000

Elected members
Mayor
Ryan Palmer

Councillors
Cr Leah Anderson
Cr Glen Dunkley
Cr Matthew Bailey
Cr Chris Doohan
Cr Steve Tucker
Cr Jason Wells
Cr Peter Kafer
Cr Peter Francis
Cr Giacomo Arnott

Other information
ABN: 16 744 377 876

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

Report on the general purpose financial statements

Port Stephens Council

To the Councillors of Port Stephens Council

Opinion

I have audited the accompanying financial statements of Port Stephens Council (the Council), which comprise the Statement by Councillors and Management, the Income Statement and Statement of Comprehensive Income for the year ended 30 June 2022, the Statement of Financial Position as at 30 June 2022, the Statement of Changes in Equity and Statement of Cash Flows for the year then ended and notes comprising a summary of significant accounting policies and other explanatory information. The financial statements include the consolidated financial statements of the Council and the entities it controlled at the year's end or from time to time during the year.

In my opinion:

- the Council's accounting records have been kept in accordance with the requirements of the *Local Government Act 1993*, Chapter 13, Part 3, Division 2 (the Division)
- the financial statements:
  - have been prepared, in all material respects, in accordance with the requirements of this Division
  - are consistent with the Council's accounting records
  - present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the Council as at 30 June 2022, and of its financial performance and its cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards
- all information relevant to the conduct of the audit has been obtained
- no material deficiencies in the accounting records or financial statements have come to light during the audit.

My opinion should be read in conjunction with the rest of this report.

Basis for Opinion

I conducted my audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. My responsibilities under the standards are described in the 'Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements' section of my report.

I am independent of the Council in accordance with the requirements of the:

- Australian Auditing Standards
- Accounting Professional and Ethical Standards Board's APES 110 'Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants (including Independence Standards)' (APES 110).

I have fulfilled my other ethical responsibilities in accordance with APES 110.

Level 19, Darling Park Tower 2, 201 Sussex Street, Sydney NSW 2000
GPO Box 12, Sydney NSW 2001 | t 02 9275 7101 | mail@audit.nsw.gov.au | audit.nsw.gov.au

Parliament promotes independence by ensuring the Auditor-General and the Audit Office of New South Wales are not compromised in their roles by:

- providing that only Parliament, and not the executive government, can remove an Auditor-General
- mandating the Auditor-General as auditor of councils
- precluding the Auditor-General from providing non-audit services.

I believe the audit evidence I have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my audit opinion.

Other Information

The Council's annual report for the year ended 30 June 2022 includes other information in addition to the financial statements and my Independent Auditor's Report thereon. The Councillors are responsible for the other information. At the date of this Independent Auditor's Report, the other information I have received comprise the Special Schedules (the Schedules).

My opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information. Accordingly, I do not express any form of assurance conclusion on the other information. However, as required by the *Local Government Act 1993*, I have separately expressed an opinion on the Special Schedule - Permissible income for general rates.

In connection with my audit of the financial statements, my responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or my knowledge obtained in the audit, or otherwise appears to be materially misstated.

If, based on the work I have performed, I conclude there is a material misstatement of the other information, I must report that fact.

I have nothing to report in this regard.

The Councillors' Responsibilities for the Financial Statements

The Councillors are responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards and the *Local Government Act 1993*, and for such internal control as the Councillors determine is necessary to enable the preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the Councillors are responsible for assessing the Council's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting.

Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements

My objectives are to:

- obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error
- issue an Independent Auditor's Report including my opinion.

Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but does not guarantee an audit conducted in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards will always detect material misstatements. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error. Misstatements are considered material if, individually or in aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions users take based on the financial statements.

A description of my responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located at the Auditing and Assurance Standards Board website at: www.auasb.gov.au/auditors_responsibilities/ar3.pdf. The description forms part of my auditor's report.

The scope of my audit does not include, nor provide assurance:

- that the Council carried out its activities effectively, efficiently and economically
- on the Original Budget information included in the Income Statement, Statement of Cash Flows, and Note B5-1 Material budget variations
- on the Special Schedules. A separate opinion has been provided on Special Schedule - Permissible income for general rates
- about the security and controls over the electronic publication of the audited financial statements on any website where they may be presented
- about any other information which may have been hyperlinked to/from the financial statements.

Furqan Yousuf
Delegate of the Auditor-General for New South Wales

7 October 2022
SYDNEY

Cr Ryan Palmer
Mayor
Port Stephens Council
PO Box 42
RAYMOND TERRACE NSW 2324

Contact: Furqan Yousuf
Phone no: 02 9275 7470
Our ref: D2220145/1779

7 October 2022

Dear Mayor

Report on the Conduct of the Audit

for the year ended 30 June 2022

Port Stephens Council

I have audited the general purpose financial statements (GPFS) of the Port Stephens Council (the Council) for the year ended 30 June 2022 as required by section 415 of the *Local Government Act 1993* (the Act).

I expressed an unmodified opinion on the Council's GPFS.

This Report on the Conduct of the Audit (the Report) for the Council for the year ended 30 June 2022 is issued in accordance with section 417 of the Act. This Report should be read in conjunction with my audit opinion on the GPFS issued under section 417(2) of the Act.

INCOME STATEMENT

Operating result

	2022 $m	2021 $m	Variance %
Rates and annual charges revenue	66.3	63.4	4.6
Grants and contributions revenue	50.9	45.0	13.1
Operating result from continuing operations	41.8	32.8	27.4
Net operating result before capital grants and contributions	8.9	2.8	218

Level 19, Darling Park Tower 2, 201 Sussex Street, Sydney NSW 2000
GPO Box 12, Sydney NSW 2001 | t 02 9275 7101 | mail@audit.nsw.gov.au | audit.nsw.gov.au

Rates and annual charges revenue ($66.3 million) increased by $2.9 million (4.6 per cent) in 2021–22 mainly due to:

- annual rate peg increase applied to ordinary rates (2.0 per cent)
- increase of $1.0 million in domestic waste management services revenue.

Grants and contributions revenue ($50.9 million) increased by $5.9 million (13.1 per cent) in 2021-22 mainly due to $3.8 million increase in revenue from non-cash asset dedications and $0.8 million increase in revenue from bushfire services contributions.

The Council's operating result from continuing operations ($41.8 million including depreciation and amortisation expense of $18.2 million) was $9.0 million higher than the 2020–21 result. The net operating result before capital grants and contributions ($8.9 million) was $6.1 million higher than the 2020-21 result. These results were mainly attributable to increase in revenue from rates and annual charges and grants and contributions, as explained above.

STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS

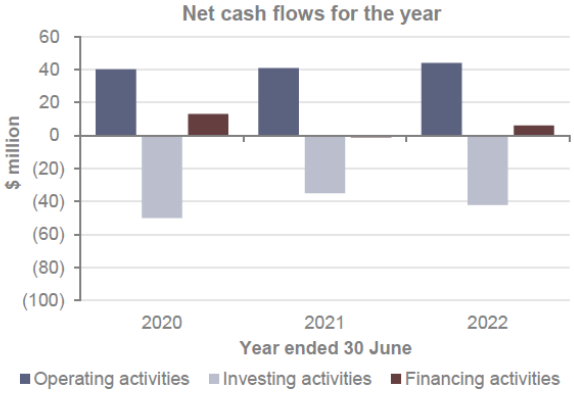
The Statement of Cash Flows illustrates the flow of cash and cash equivalents moving in and out of Council during the year.

The increase in cash provided from operating activities is mainly due to increase in rates and annual charges and grants and contributions received during the year.

The increase in cash used in investing activities is mainly due to higher payments for purchases of infrastructure, property, plant and equipment.

The increase in cash provided from financing activities is due to increased borrowings during the year.

The Council's cash and cash equivalent balances at 30 June 2022 was $30.2 million (2021: $21.5 million). The net cash flow for the year was an increase of $8.7 million.



FINANCIAL POSITION

Cash and investments

Cash and investments	2022	2021	Commentary
	$m	$m	
Total cash, cash equivalents and investments	**70.6**	**58.8**	• Cash and investments increased by $11.8 million. • Externally restricted cash and investments are restricted in their use by externally imposed requirements. Council's externally restricted cash and investments have increased mainly due to increase in available cash balance relating to developer contributions and specific purpose unexpended grants. • Internally restricted cash and investments are due to Council policy or decisions to restrict funds for forward plans including strategic capital projects. The increase is mainly due to an increase in balances relating to the Emergency & Natural Disaster reserve.
Restricted and allocated cash, cash equivalents and investments:			
• External restrictions	29.9	23.1	
• Internal allocations	40.7	35.7	

Debt

The Council has $39.4 million of borrowings as at 30 June 2022 (2021: $32.6 million).

The Council has an accumulated drawdown facility limit of $53.5 million as at 30 June 2022 (2021: $36.0 million), of which $50.0 million pertains to the Newcastle Airport Partnership joint venture. As at 30 June 2022, $29.1 million of the total facility remains unutilised.

PERFORMANCE

Performance measures

The following section provides an overview of the Council's performance against the performance measures and performance benchmarks set by the Office of Local Government (OLG) within the Department of Planning and Environment.

Operating performance ratio

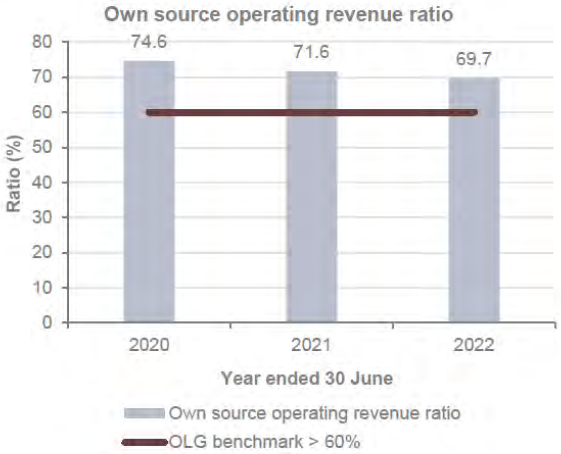
The Council met the OLG benchmark for the current reporting period.

The 'operating performance ratio' measures how well council contained operating expenditure within operating revenue (excluding capital grants and contributions, fair value adjustments, and reversal of revaluation decrements). The benchmark set by OLG is greater than zero per cent.

Own source operating revenue ratio

The Council met the OLG benchmark for the current reporting period.

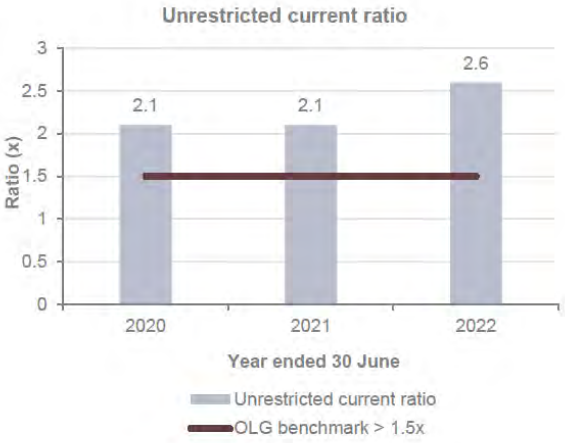
The 'own source operating revenue ratio' measures council's fiscal flexibility and the degree to which it relies on external funding sources such as operating grants and contributions. The benchmark set by OLG is greater than 60 per cent.



Unrestricted current ratio

The Council met the OLG benchmark for the current reporting period.

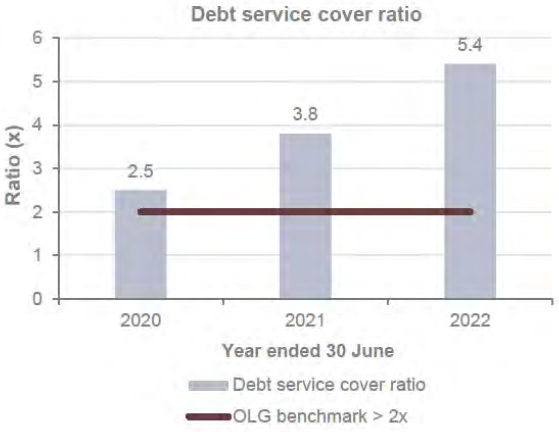
The 'unrestricted current ratio' is specific to local government and represents council's ability to meet its short-term obligations as they fall due. The benchmark set by OLG is greater than 1.5 times.



Debt service cover ratio

The Council met the OLG benchmark for the current reporting period.

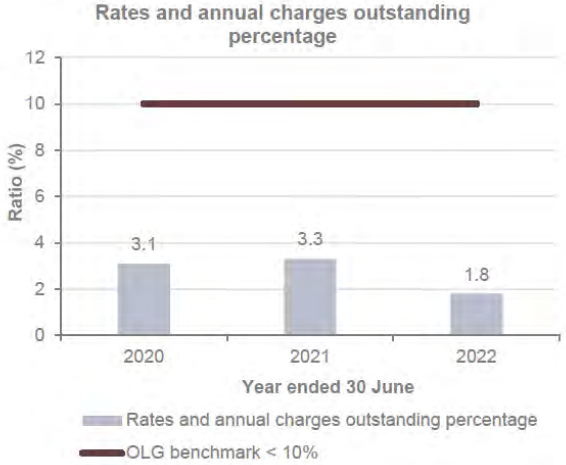
The 'debt service cover ratio' measures the operating cash to service debt including interest, principal and lease payments. The benchmark set by OLG is greater than two times.



Rates and annual charges outstanding percentage

The Council met the OLG benchmark for the current reporting period.

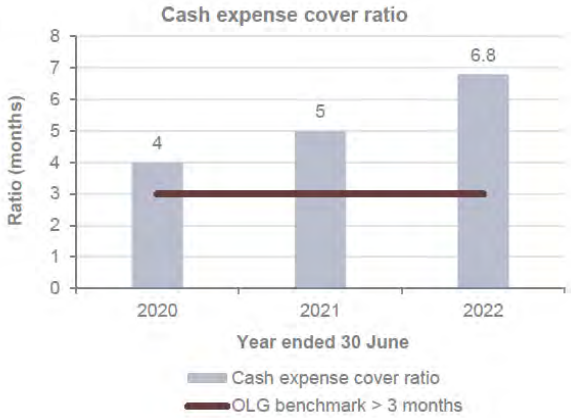
The 'rates and annual charges outstanding percentage' assesses the impact of uncollected rates and annual charges on council's liquidity and the adequacy of debt recovery efforts. The benchmark set by OLG is less than 10 per cent for regional and rural councils.



Cash expense cover ratio

The Council met the OLG benchmark for the current reporting period.

This liquidity ratio indicates the number of months the council can continue paying for its immediate expenses without additional cash inflow. The benchmark set by OLG is greater than three months.



Infrastructure, property, plant and equipment renewals

Council reported asset renewals of $20.2 million in 2021-22 ($16.6 million in 2020-21). Significant renewals included:

- road renewals of $12.0 million ($7.8 million in 2020-21)
- buildings - specialised renewals of $2.4 million ($1.4 million in 2020-21).

OTHER MATTERS

Legislative compliance

My audit procedures did not identify any instances of non-compliance with legislative requirements or a material deficiency in the Council's accounting records or financial statements.

The Council's:

- accounting records were maintained in a manner and form to allow the GPFS to be prepared and effectively audited
- staff provided all accounting records and information relevant to the audit.

Furqan Yousuf
Delegate of the Auditor-General for New South Wales

cc: Mr Tim Crosdale, General Manager
Mr Ben Niland, Chair of Audit and Risk Committee

Port Stephens Council

SPECIAL SCHEDULES
for the year ended 30 June 2022

"A great lifestyle in a treasured environment"

Port Stephens Council

Special Schedules
for the year ended 30 June 2022

Contents Page

Special Schedules:

Permissible income for general rates 3
Report on infrastructure assets as at 30 June 2022 7

Port Stephens Council

Permissible income for general rates

$ '000	Notes	Calculation 2021/22	**Calculation 2022/23**
Notional general income calculation [1]			
Last year notional general income yield	a	45,065	**46,296**
Plus or minus adjustments [2]	b	385	**452**
Notional general income	c = a + b	**45,450**	**46,748**
Permissible income calculation			
Or rate peg percentage	e	2.00%	**2.50%**
Or plus rate peg amount	i = e x (c + g)	909	**1,169**
Sub-total	k = (c + g + h + i + j)	**46,359**	**47,917**
Plus (or minus) last year's carry forward total	l	–	**56**
Less valuation objections claimed in the previous year	m	(7)	**–**
Sub-total	n = (l + m)	**(7)**	**56**
Total permissible income	o = k + n	46,352	**47,973**
Less notional general income yield	p	46,296	**47,913**
Catch-up or (excess) result	q = o – p	**56**	**60**
Carry forward to next year [6]	t = q + r + s	**56**	**60**

Notes

(1) The notional general income will not reconcile with rate income in the financial statements in the corresponding year. The statements are reported on an accrual accounting basis which include amounts that relate to prior years' rates income.

(2) Adjustments account for changes in the number of assessments and any increase or decrease in land value occurring during the year. The adjustments are called 'supplementary valuations' as defined in the *Valuation of Land Act 1916 (NSW).*

(6) Carry-forward amounts which are in excess (an amount that exceeds the permissible income) require Ministerial approval by order published in the *NSW Government Gazette* in accordance with section 512 of the Act. The OLG will extract these amounts from Council's Permiss ble income for general rates Statement in the financial data return (FDR) to administer this process.

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

Special Schedule – Permissible income for general rates

Port Stephens Council

To the Councillors of Port Stephens Council

Opinion

I have audited the accompanying Special Schedule – Permissible income for general rates (the Schedule) of Port Stephens Council (the Council) for the year ending 30 June 2023.

In my opinion, the Schedule is prepared, in all material respects in accordance with the requirements of the Local Government Code of Accounting Practice and Financial Reporting 2021–22 (LG Code) and is in accordance with the books and records of the Council.

My opinion should be read in conjunction with the rest of this report.

Basis for Opinion

I conducted my audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. My responsibilities under the standards are described in the 'Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Schedule' section of my report.

I am independent of the Council in accordance with the requirements of the:

- Australian Auditing Standards
- Accounting Professional and Ethical Standards Board's APES 110 'Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants (including Independence Standards)' (APES 110).

I have fulfilled my other ethical responsibilities in accordance with APES 110.

Parliament promotes independence by ensuring the Auditor-General and the Audit Office of New South Wales are not compromised in their roles by:

- providing that only Parliament, and not the executive government, can remove an Auditor-General
- mandating the Auditor-General as auditor of councils
- precluding the Auditor-General from providing non-audit services.

I believe that the audit evidence I have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my audit opinion.

Emphasis of Matter - Basis of Accounting

Without modifying my opinion, I draw attention to the special purpose framework used to prepare the Schedule. The Schedule has been prepared for the purpose of fulfilling the Council's reporting obligations under the LG Code. As a result, the Schedule may not be suitable for another purpose.

Level 19, Darling Park Tower 2, 201 Sussex Street, Sydney NSW 2000
GPO Box 12, Sydney NSW 2001 | t 02 9275 7101 | mail@audit.nsw.gov.au | audit.nsw.gov.au

Other Information

The Council's annual report for the year ended 30 June 2022 includes other information in addition to the Schedule and my Independent Auditor's Report thereon. The Councillors are responsible for the other information. At the date of this Independent Auditor's Report, the other information I have received comprise the general purpose financial statements.

My opinion on the Schedule does not cover the other information. Accordingly, I do not express any form of assurance conclusion on the other information. However, as required by the *Local Government Act 1993*, I have separately expressed an opinion on the general purpose financial statements.

In connection with my audit of the Schedule, my responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the Schedule or my knowledge obtained in the audit, or otherwise appears to be materially misstated.

If, based on the work I have performed, I conclude there is a material misstatement of the other information, I must report that fact.

I have nothing to report in this regard.

The Councillors' Responsibilities for the Schedule

The Councillors are responsible for the preparation of the Schedule in accordance with the LG Code. The Councillors' responsibility also includes such internal control as the Councillors determine is necessary to enable the preparation of the Schedule that is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the Schedule, the Councillors are responsible for assessing the Council's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting.

Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Schedule

My objectives are to:

- obtain reasonable assurance whether the Schedule as a whole is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error
- issue an Independent Auditor's Report including my opinion.

Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but does not guarantee an audit conducted in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards will always detect material misstatements. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error. Misstatements are considered material if, individually or in aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions users take based on the Schedule.

A description of my responsibilities for the audit of the Schedule is located at the Auditing and Assurance Standards Board website at: www.auasb.gov.au/auditors_responsibilities/ar8.pdf. The description forms part of my auditor's report.

The scope of my audit does not include, nor provide assurance:

- that the Council carried out its activities effectively, efficiently and economically
- about the security and controls over the electronic publication of the audited Schedule on any website where it may be presented
- about any other information which may have been hyperlinked to/from the Schedule.

Furqan Yousuf
Delegate of the Auditor-General for New South Wales

7 October 2022
SYDNEY

Port Stephens Council

Report on infrastructure assets as at 30 June 2022

Asset Class	Asset Category	Estimated cost to bring assets to satisfactory standard $ '000	Estimated cost to bring to the agreed level of service set by Council $ '000	2021/22 Required maintenance [a] $ '000	2021/22 Actual maintenance $ '000	Net carrying amount $ '000	Gross replacement cost (GRC) $ '000	Assets in condition as a percentage of gross replacement cost 1	2	3	4	5
Buildings	Buildings	1,516	1,516	2,879	2,868	119,364	224,570	18.6%	28.2%	42.8%	9.7%	0.7%
	Sub-total	**1,516**	**1,516**	**2,879**	**2,868**	**119,364**	**224,570**	**18.6%**	**28.2%**	**42.8%**	**9.7%**	**0.7%**
Other structures	Other structures	–	–	230	221	8,489	20,307	1.7%	53.8%	44.0%	0.4%	0.1%
	Sub-total	**–**	**–**	**230**	**221**	**8,489**	**20,307**	**1.7%**	**53.8%**	**44.0%**	**0.4%**	**0.1%**
Roads	Sealed roads	11,192	11,192	5,514	5,199	345,115	390,997	55.3%	27.5%	12.6%	3.9%	0.7%
	Unsealed roads	–	–	720	611	9,543	10,820	6.4%	41.4%	42.5%	9.6%	0.1%
	Bridges	–	–	14	–	15,021	17,376	41.8%	49.5%	0.0%	0.0%	8.7%
	Footpaths	437	437	227	222	65,654	75,003	23.9%	21.3%	48.5%	6.3%	0.0%
	Other road assets	526	526	2,418	2,457	79,632	92,666	24.1%	55.6%	17.2%	2.8%	0.3%
	Sub-total	**12,155**	**12,155**	**8,893**	**8,489**	**514,965**	**586,862**	**45.1%**	**32.1%**	**18.1%**	**4.0%**	**0.8%**
Stormwater drainage	Stormwater drainage	646	646	1,280	1,260	229,702	248,196	27.4%	69.4%	2.5%	0.6%	0.1%
	Sub-total	**646**	**646**	**1,280**	**1,260**	**229,702**	**248,196**	**27.4%**	**69.4%**	**2.5%**	**0.6%**	**0.1%**
Open space / recreational assets	Swimming pools	–	–	175	164	3,683	6,643	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%
	Open space	319	319	3,255	3,238	21,956	33,454	6.4%	41.0%	42.9%	9.0%	0.7%
	Sub-total	**319**	**319**	**3,430**	**3,402**	**25,639**	**40,097**	**5.3%**	**34.2%**	**52.4%**	**7.5%**	**0.6%**
Other infrastructure assets	Other	940	940	343	325	14,079	17,864	15.0%	45.0%	26.0%	12.0%	2.0%
	Sub-total	**940**	**940**	**343**	**325**	**14,079**	**17,864**	**15.0%**	**45.0%**	**26.0%**	**12.0%**	**2.0%**
	Total – all assets	**15,576**	**15,576**	**17,055**	**16,565**	**912,238**	**1,137,896**	**33.3%**	**40.1%**	**21.4%**	**4.6%**	**0.6%**

(a) Required maintenance is the amount identified in Council's asset management plans.

Infrastructure asset condition assessment 'key'

#	Condition	Integrated planning and reporting (IP&R) description
1	Excellent/very good	No work required (normal maintenance)

continued on next page ...

Port Stephens Council

Report on infrastructure assets as at 30 June 2022 (continued)

2	**Good**	Only minor maintenance work required
3	**Satisfactory**	Maintenance work required
4	**Poor**	Renewal required
5	**Very poor**	Urgent renewal/upgrading required

Port Stephens Council

Report on infrastructure assets as at 30 June 2022

Infrastructure asset performance indicators (consolidated) *

$ '000	Amounts 2022	Indicator 2022	Indicators 2021	Indicators 2020	Benchmark
Buildings and infrastructure renewals ratio					
Asset renewals [1] / Depreciation, amortisation and impairment	19,402 / 11,629	**166.84%**	137.78%	157.37%	>= 100.00%
Infrastructure backlog ratio					
Estimated cost to bring assets to a satisfactory standard / Net carrying amount of infrastructure assets	15,576 / 915,522	**1.70%**	1.72%	1.69%	< 2.00%
Asset maintenance ratio					
Actual asset maintenance / Required asset maintenance	16,565 / 17,055	**97.13%**	97.09%	98.93%	> 100.00%
Cost to bring assets to agreed service level					
Estimated cost to bring assets to an agreed service level set by Council / Gross replacement cost	15,576 / 1,137,896	**1.37%**	1.40%	1.38%	

(*) All asset performance indicators are calculated using classes identified in the previous table.

(1) Asset renewals represent the replacement and/or refurbishment of existing assets to an equivalent capacity/performance as opposed to the acquisition of new assets (or the refurbishment of old assets) that increases capacity/performance.

Page 9

Port Stephens Council
Holiday Parks and Investment Property Report
Financial Year 2021/2022

Holiday Parks		Operating Income	Operating Expenditure	EBITDA (3)	Net Yield % (1)	Notes
Fingal Bay	Crown	4,253,599	3,446,367	807,232	6%	
Halifax	Crown	2,771,600	2,144,771	626,829	7%	
Shoal Bay	Crown	1,067,096	795,765	271,330		
	Council	1,981,749	1,477,850	503,899	5%	
		3,048,845	2,273,615	775,230		
Thou Walla	Council	905,870	902,241	3,629	0%	
Koala Sanctuary	Council	1,759,744	2,214,895	(455,151)	-4%	5

Investment Property		Operating Income	Operating Expenditure	EBITDA (3)	Net Yield % (1)	Notes
	Total	2,986,249	617,232	2,369,017	6%	2

Newcastle Airport		Operating Income	Operating Expenditure	EBITDA (3)	Net Yield % (4)	Notes
	Total	11,200,477	12,356,897	- 1,156,421	-2%	6

Notes

1 Net Yield = EBITDA/Capital
2 Councils policy on the required return on capital in commercial property investments is between 7-9%. This years returns have been affected by COVID-19
3 EBITDA used as the numerator for Return on Investment calculation in accordance with Crown Lands reporting
4 Net Yield = Net Profit/Capital
5 Payment in arrears has been made for Crown Lease on land
6 Due to the financial impacts of COVID-19, no dividend was paid by the Newcastle Airport Partnership to Council.

S4.55(1A) MODIFICATION APPLICATION ASSESSMENT REPORT

APPLICATION DETAILS

Modification application no.	16-2007-15-6
Development description	Caravan Park (81 long term sites, 75 short term sites)
Modification description	S4.55(1A) modification to approved Caravan Park – internal layout changes, reduction in yield to 111 long term sites, maintain 2 short term sites and other changes to site infrastructure
Applicant	Sungenia Landco Management Pty Limited
Date of lodgement	20/05/2022

Modification proposal

The application proposes to modify the approved caravan park under DA 16-2007-15-5, which approved 115 sites comprising 113 long term sites and 2 short terms sites. The modification seeks to amend conditions of consent and the approved plans. The modifications sought are as follows:

- Deletion of condition 1.1 of the consent, which required the plans to be updated to remove sites 104, 112, 113 and 114.
- Internal layout changes including the relocation of the north-western perimeter road, relocation of the stormwater basin situated in the north-western corner of the development area and an adjustment to the road alignment to widen the corridor for Koala passage between the dam to facilitate koala habitat retention.
- Reduction of the approved yield by 2 sites as a result of adjustments to the location and dimensions of various long term sites within the development footprint, resulting in a total of 111 long term sites and the maintenance of 2 short term sites (113 sites in total).
- Adjustments to staging as demonstrated in Figure 2.
- Minor adjustment to the location of the sewer pump station position to provide an improved pathway for koala movements.
- Amendments to temporary community facility and open space, refer to Figures 5 and 6.
- Deletion of LPG gas storage area in northern portion of site.
- Adjustment to maintenance shed to function as both a maintenance shed and community workshop (mens shed) for use by residents.
- Adjustment to site entry arrangements: forecourt area; boom gates; and car parking areas. The amendments are shown in Figure 4.
- Amendments to approved entry signage, refer to Figures 7 and 8.
- Ecological restoration of area impacted by Vegetation Management Plan.

16-2007-15-6

- Modifications to Conditions 70, 75 and 90 which relate to lighting, swimming pool access and mosquito management. This is discussed further below.

The approved master plan is shown in Figure 1 and the proposed amended master plan in Figure 2, which demonstrates the proposed layout changes.

The applicant has requested Conditions 70, 75 and 90 be amended. Condition 70 currently notes that low downward light is to be used on site to ensure that there is no unreasonable impact on native fauna. The applicant has requested the condition be modified to make the site entry exempt from this requirement. This is requested to enable minor up-lighting of front entry walls.

Condition 75 relates to the swimming pool and requires that a rope be affixed and left dangling at least 1m into the pool to allow for koala to escape. The applicant has requested this be condition be deleted on the basis that Condition 74 requires the installation of pool fencing that prevents access of koalas to the swimming pool area.

Condition 90(a) currently requires a public education display being a sandwich board sign be displayed at peak mosquito periods. The applicant has requested this be amended to include the display of a mosquito education display on a community notice board.

Condition 90(b) currently requires that a staff member or representative be trained in mosquito biology and is to be responsible for customer and visitor education. The applicant has requested that this condition be deleted given it is not practical to implement.

Council staff are supportive of the proposed amendments to conditions with the exception of Condition 70, which is detailed in this report.

The conditions of consent proposed to be modified have been discussed in further detail below.

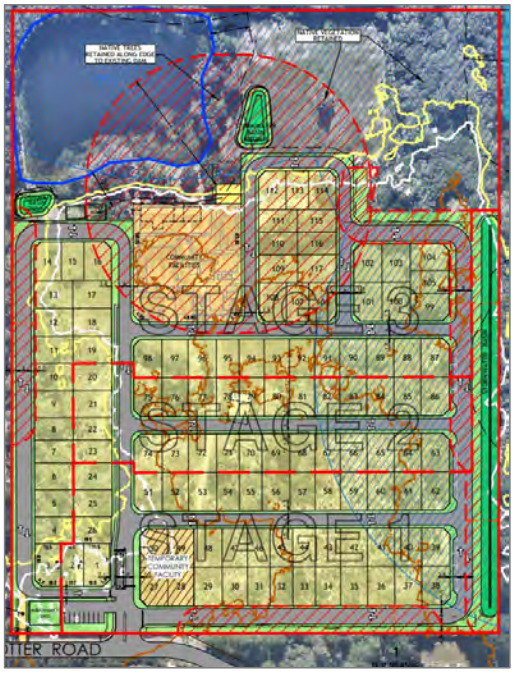


Figure 1. Approved site plan under DA 16-2007-15-5

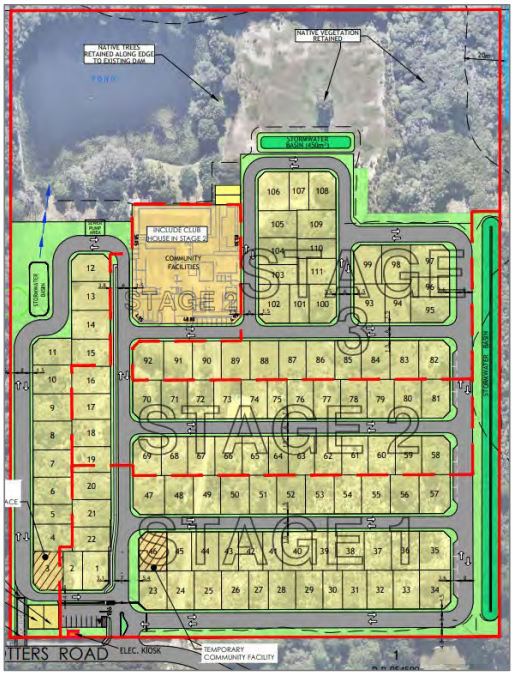


Figure 2. Proposed site plan

16-2007-15-6

Figure 3. Approved access

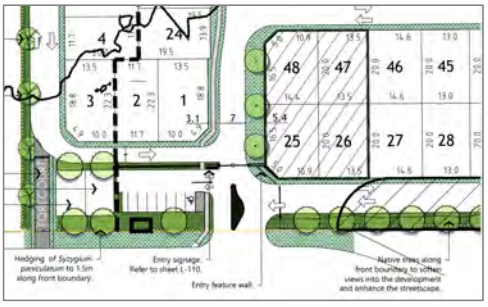


Figure 4. Proposed modified access

Figure 5. Approved temporary community facility

Figure 6. Proposed amended location of temporary community facility

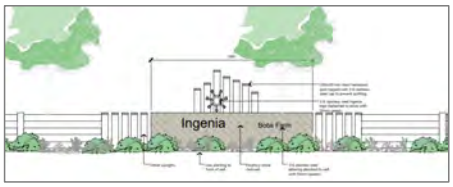


Figure 7. Approved entry signage

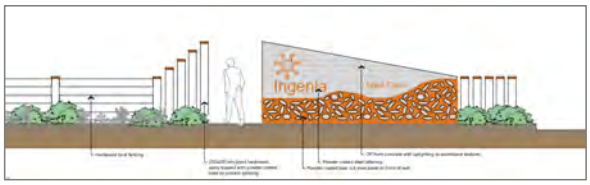


Figure 8. Proposed entry signage

Site Description

The subject site is legally identified as Lot 2 DP 954600, is rectangular in shape and with an area of approximately 8.09ha. The site contains a large dam, which was created as a result of historic sand mining activities. The site previously contained two dwellings and a farm shed, which have recently been demolished. The site contains substantial vegetation, which is mapped as containing preferred koala habitat and endangered ecological communities.

The site is zoned RU2 Rural Landscape and rural residences are located to the west and east. To the south is an approved caravan park, comprising 196 long term sites, known as the Sunrise over 55s lifestyle community. A wetland is located to the north and north east of the site.

Site History

The site has historically been used as a rutile and sand mine. A large dam located in the north east of the site remains as a result of previous mining activity. The site is used for rural residential purposes and had previously contained two dwellings that have since been demolished.

The original DA for a caravan park was approved on the 21st of February 2008, comprising of 156 sites, including 81 Long-Term Sites and 75 Short-Term Sites.

This development consent has subsequently been modified three times under Section 4.55 (formerly Section 96) of the Environmental Planning & Assessment Act 1979, as follows:

- DA-16-2007-15-3 – Section 96(1A) Application for the modification of Staging and Addition of Fifteen (15) Sites and Car Wash - Approved on 22nd November 2011.
- DA-16-2007-15-4 – Section 4.55(1) Application to correct an administrative error to consent - Approved on 29th April 2019.
- DA 16-2007-15-5 – Section 4.55(2) Application to amend lot layout and internal road network, reduce total number of sites to 119, amend short term sites to long term, new community facilities and additional dwelling sites – Approved by Council 26 October 2021.

DA16-2007-15-2 was a Section 96(1A) Application to amend the internal site layout and configuration, however was withdrawn prior to determination.

16-2007-15-6

PROPERTY DETAILS

Property address	16 Trotter Road BOBS FARM
Lot and DP	LOT: 2 DP: 954600
Zoning	RU2 RURAL LANDSCAPE
Site constraints that affect the modification	Bushfire Prone Land – Vegetation Category 1 and 3 Koala Habitat – Preferred, 50m buffer over cleared, link over cleared and mainly cleared. Endangered Ecological Communities – Swamp Sclerophyll Forest Biodiversity Values Mapping Coastal Management - Proximity to Coastal Wetlands, Coastal Environment and Coastal Use Combined Corridor Map – Core habitat, local link, landscape habitat link NSW Wildlife Atlas – koala Flood Prone Land LEP Wetlands

ASSESSMENT SUMMARY

Designated Development	The application is not designated development
Integrated Development	The application does require additional approvals listed under s.4.46 of the EP&A Act
Concurrence	The application does not require the concurrence of another body

Internal Referrals

The proposed modification was referred to the following internal specialist staff. The comments of the listed staff have been used to carry out the assessment against the S4.15 Matters for Consideration below.

Development Engineer – Given the proposed modification includes amendments to the design and location of stormwater basins and access arrangements, the application was referred to Council's Development Engineer for assessment. The proposed amendments were supported by Council's Development Engineer noting that existing Condition 106B (proposed 106C) remained relevant.

Development Contributions – Supported with amended conditions.

Natural Systems – The application was referred to Council's Natural Systems team for comment. Council's Natural Systems team supported the majority of the proposed modification noting that the amendments result in the retainment of habitat connectivity between the development area

and the dam. Natural Systems however did not support the amendment to condition 70, which would allow for minor up-lighting at the sites entry. This was not supported on the basis that a roadside corridor of native vegetation exists on the opposite side of the road to the site and that the 'National Light Pollution Guidelines for Wildlife Including Marine Turtles, Seabirds and Migratory Shorebirds' (Commonwealth of Australia 2020) strongly advises against the use of up-lighting due to impacts on fauna. The other proposed modifications were supported subject to conditions. The conditions have been included within the recommended conditions of consent.

Environmental Health – The proposal seeks to use the approved maintenance shed as a community workshop/men's shed which is located within 10m of the boundaries including those of internal neighbouring sites. This is inconsistent with Section 88(1) of the Local Government (Manufactured Home Estates, Caravan Parks, Camping Grounds and Moveable Dwellings) Regulation 2021. However, Section 88(2) allows a concession to the 10m setback control as long as Council is satisfied that the community building will be properly screened, fenced, enclosed or otherwise treated to reduce noise and amenity impacts. Council's Environmental Health Officer therefore requested that an Acoustic Impact Assessment be provided to understand the potential impacts of the community building (workshop) location and any mitigation measures required. An Acoustic Impact Assessment was provided to Council prepared by Spectrum Acoustics. The acoustic assessment was assessed by Council's Environmental Health officer and ultimately the modification was supported subject to conditions which have been included in the recommended conditions of consent. Further discussion regarding noise impacts and the acoustic assessment is included in the assessment against the Regulation and Chapter B3 of the Port Stephens Development Control Plan (DCP).

External Referrals

The proposed modification was referred to the following external agencies in accordance with clause 109 of the regulations:

Rural Fire Service (RFS) – The application was referred to the NSW Rural Fire Service (RFS) for a modified Bushfire Safety Authority (BSA), as the application is for a Special Fire Protection Purpose (Caravan Park) and is therefore considered integrated development per the Rural Fires Act 1997. A modified Bushfire Safety Authority was not received within the statutory timeframes. In the BSA issued for DA 16-2007-15-5, the RFS advised that in the event of minor amendments to the approved plans, Council may use its discretion to determine whether the minor amendment warrants further assessment by the NSW RFS. Given the minor amendments to the approved development, minor changes to the Asset Protection Zone (APZ) and the lapsing of the statutory timeframes, Council officers have utilised discretion and do not believe further assessment by the RFS is warranted and that the existing BSA is still relevant to the proposed development.

Department of Planning and Environmental – Water (DPE Water) – The application was referred to DPE Water as integrated development under the Water Management Act 2000 as the proposed amendments to the master plan are within proximity to a coastal wetland and watercourse. Updated General Terms of Approval (GTAs) were not received within the statutory timeframe. Given the modifications are minor in nature it is considered that the existing GTAs are still relevant.

Transport for New South Wales (TfNSW) – The original application was sent Roads and Maritime Services (now Transport for NSW (TfNSW)) for comment. Accordingly, the proposed modification was sent to TfNSW for further comment. In response, TfNSW raised no objection and provided no requirements for the proposed development as it is was considered there will be no significant impact on the nearby classified (State) road network, being Nelson Bay Road.

MODIFICATIONS INVOLVING MINIMAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT – S4.55(1A)

S4.55(1A)(a) – Minimal Environmental Impact

The proposal is considered to be of minimal environmental impact as:

- The proposal does not result in any additional vegetation removal but rather seeks to improve environmental outcomes through widening the movement corridor between the northern development footprint and the south western portion of the dam to facilitate improved koala movement opportunities.
- Conditions are recommended to be included on the consent, which requires the salvaging of preferred koala feed tree saplings from the development site and the retention of preferred koala feed trees within the location of the two short term sites where possible, contributing to improved environmental outcomes.
- The proposed workshop/men's shed will not result in adverse amenity impacts subject to recommended conditions regarding construction and operational matters.

S4.55(1A)(b) – Substantially The Same Development

The development as modified is substantially the same as the approved development for the following reasons:

- The proposed modification generally maintains the same development footprint as approved with minor amendments to the north-western corner of the development site through the relocation the stormwater basin and sewer pump southward to widen the movement corridor to facilitate improved koala movement opportunities and retain additional vegetation.
- The land use will remain unchanged as previously approved (caravan park).
- The proposal will continue to provide both long term and two short term sites.
- The footprint of the approved maintenance shed remains unchanged despite its proposed use as a community workshop in addition to the maintenance shed use.
- The proposal seeks to reduce the number of sites from the approved 115 to 113, which are to be located within largely the same footprint as previously approved.

On this basis, the application is considered substantially the same.

S4.55(1A)(c) – Notification

The application has been notified from 26 May 2022 – 9 June 2022 in accordance with Councils Community Participation Plan.

S4.55(1A)(d) – Submissions

The matters raised in the submissions objecting to the development are discussed in the table below:

Objection	Comments
The submission noted appreciation for the modification that allows for further retention of koala feed and habitat trees noting that the design amendment creates a better koala	Noted.

16-2007-15-6

Objection	Comments
corridor. The objection sought clarification on the proposed fencing. It was noted that the plans indicate that use of steel palisade fencing and rural post and timber rail fencing around the site. The submissions noted that confirmation was needed that fencing on site does not obstruct the koala/wildlife corridor. The submissions requested that short term sites be constructed in a way that minimises the impact to surrounding vegetation to enable the corridor.	Condition 62A relates to fencing and was recommended to be amended by Council's Natural Systems team to note that boundary fencing as shown in the approved landscape plan can be installed along the southern boundary (frontage to Trotters Road), along the western boundary in line with Lots 3 – 11, and along the eastern boundary alongside the stormwater basin. The remainder of the site is required to use koala friendly fencing, which includes an open post and rail or post and wire fence. The conditions note that any alternative fencing proposed must be agreed in consultation with Council's Natural Systems team. The amended conditions have been included in the recommended conditions. All trees within the short term sites are to be maintained in accordance with APZ requirements and the Planning for Bushfire Protection 2019. Notwithstanding, a condition has been recommended to be included on the consent noting that the Eucalyptus tereticornis trees within the location of the two short term sites should be retained where possible.
Concern was raised over the impervious area resulting from the proposed development which was noted to exceed Council's DCP requirements. It was noted that the increased impervious area may increase flood risk to neighbouring properties and threat to the wetlands buffer. The submissions noted errors within reports submitted with the DA including within the drainage plan.	The impervious area is decreasing as a result of the proposed modification to reduce the required clearing. When assessing a modification application, Council can only consider matters that directly relate to the items being modified and cannot undertake a reassessment of the existing approvals in place. The original DA was granted consent prior to the current DCP and respective stormwater requirements. Flooding has been assessed by Council under previous DAs. Flooding impacts are not expected to be exacerbated as a result of the proposed modifications. The stormwater design is required to be designed to include stormwater quality improvement devices to ensure no impacts to the nearby wetland. The modified stormwater

16-2007-15-6

Objection	Comments
	plans have been assessed and supported by Council's Development Engineering team.
The submission suggested that the APZ is also incorrect.	The application was referred to the Rural Fire Service (RFS). As noted previously, the RFS did not respond to Council within the statutory timeframes. The approval issued by the RFS under DA 16-2007-15-5 advised that in the event of minor amendments to the approved plans, Council may use its discretion to determine whether the minor amendment warrants further assessment by the NSW RFS. Given the minor amendments to the approved development, including only minor changes to the Asset Protection Zone (APZ) and the lapsing of the statutory timeframes, Council officers have utilised discretion and do not believe further assessment by the RFS is warranted and that the RFS approval is still relevant to the proposed development. Furthermore, when assessing any application, the RFS review the proposal to ensure it complies with standards regarding setbacks, provision of water supply and other matters considered to be necessary to protect persons, property or the environment from danger that may arise from a bush fire including asset protection zones. As noted above, the RFS assessed the previous modification application and issued General Terms Approval satisfied all items of the Planning for Bushfire Policy 2019 were achieved.
The submissions noted that the plans associated with the development should be reviewed by a fully qualified independent body.	Councils internal specialist staff and external agencies where required review and assess the lodged documentation.
It was noted that the palisade fencing should be made to be koala friendly to ensure koala can utilise the corridor.	As previously noted, Condition 62A relates to fencing and was recommended to be amended by Council's Natural Systems team to note that the fencing as shown in the approved landscape plan can be installed along the southern boundary (frontage to

16-2007-15-6

Objection	Comments
	Trotters Road), along the western boundary in line with Lots 3 – 11, and along the eastern boundary alongside the stormwater basin. The remainder of the site is required to use koala friendly fencing, which includes an open post and rail or post and wire fence. This includes the fencing adjacent to the corridor. The amended conditions has been included in the recommended conditions.

S4.55(3) – S4.15(1) Assessment

s4.15(1)(a)(i) – The provisions of any EPI

The application is consistent with the provision of the PSLEP 2013 and all relevant SEPPs applicable to the proposal.

State Environmental Planning Policy (Resilience and Hazards) 2021

Chapter 2 Coastal Management

The subject land is located with the Coastal Environment Area, Coastal Use Area and land within the proximity area of a coastal wetland.

The application seeks to modify the approved stormwater basin location and size as well as reduce the amount of clearing required to facilitate the proposal and was therefore referred to Council's Natural Systems and Development Engineering sections. It was concluded that the proposed modifications will not impact the biophysical or ecological integrity of the adjacent wetland, nor is it considered to impact the quality/quantity of the surface and ground water flows to and from the respective wetland areas.

The proposed amendments are not considered likely to further impact the coastal environment area, nor the coastal use area, but rather improve outcomes given further vegetation is being retained as a result of the modifications. It is therefore considered that the proposal is consistent with the Chapter 2 of this SEPP.

Chapter 4 Remediation of Land

Section 4.66 of this policy requires the consent authority to consider whether land is contaminated, is in a suitable state despite contamination, or requires remediation to be made suitable for the proposed development.

The site has historically been used for rutile and sand mining, established during the 1960s. The site has also been used to support a residential dwelling and a tea tree plantation since 1980. The previous modification (16-2007-15-5) was supported by a Preliminary Site Investigation (PSI) to investigate potential contamination of the site. The proposal was supported by Council officers subject to conditions, which were included on the consent and remain in the recommended conditions.

The proposal does not seek to extend the building footprint beyond the approved area and therefore further investigation regarding contamination are not required. It is considered that current conditions imposed on the consent address contamination on site.

State Environmental Planning Policy (Housing) 2021

Part 9 Caravan Parks

On 26 November 2021, State Environmental Planning Policy (Housing) 2021 (Housing SEPP) commenced, which consolidated a number of housing related State Environmental Planning Policies, including State Environmental Planning Policy No 21 – Caravan Parks (SEPP 21).

Section 133 of this policy outlines matters to be considered by Council prior to granting development consent. An assessment against these matters is provided below:

Clause	Comment
(a) whether, because of its location or character, the land concerned is particularly suitable for use as a caravan park for tourists or for long-term residence,	The development was approved under DA 16-2007-15-5 with 115 sites including 113 long terms sites and 2 short term sites. The proposal seeks to reduce the yield to 111 long term sites and maintain the 2 short term sites. As previously assessed under the original application, the land is considered to be appropriate for long-term residences.
(b) whether there is adequate provision for tourist accommodation in the locality of that land, and whether existing or potential tourist accommodation will be displaced by the use of sites for long-term residence,	There is no known shortage of tourist accommodation within the locality. The proposal seeks to retain the approved two short terms sites.
(c) whether there is adequate low-cost housing, or land available for low-cost housing, in that locality	Under the modification, the development would continue to provide long term sites, potentially suitable for housing purposes. The development provides a positive contribution to the local housing mix.
(d) whether necessary community facilities and services are available within the caravan park to which the development application relates or in the locality (or both), and whether those facilities and services are reasonably accessible to the occupants of the caravan park	The approved development included a number of community facilities including a swimming pool, bowling green, recreational hall, gym, library, theatre room, kitchen, lounge and BBQ facilities. These facilities will remain unchanged by the modification. The modification also seeks to allow for the use of the already approved maintenance shed as a community workshop as well providing further community facilities for the development. Access to all facilities and services will be maintained within the site.
(e) any relevant guidelines issued by the Director, and	N/A

Clause	Comment
(f) the provisions of the Local Government (Caravan Parks and Camping Grounds) Transitional Regulation 1993.	This regulation is repealed and was in effect from 1 July 1993 to 31 August 1995.

State Environmental Planning Policy (Biodiversity and Conservation) 2021

Chapter 4 Koala Habitat Protection 2021

Chapter 4 of this policy aims to encourage the conservation and management of areas of natural vegetation that provide habitat for koalas to support a permanent free-living population over their present range and reverse the current trend of koala population decline. The site is mapped as containing preferred koala habitat.

The proposed modifications seek to improve outcomes for koala habitat and corridors on the site through amendments to the approved design, these amendments include:

- Relocation of the stormwater basin and sewer pump southward to widen the movement corridor between the development and dam. To facilitate this relocation, three (3) sites are proposed to be removed and the perimeter road realigned. These amendments also result in the retention of a koala use tree previously approved for removal.
- In the corridor all non-native trees are proposed to be removed and replaced by preferred koala tree species as per the Port Stephens Council Koala Plan of Management.

The proposed modifications have been supported by Council's Natural Systems team subject to new and amended conditions which have been put it in the recommended conditions of consent.

s4.15(1)(a)(ii) – Any Draft EPI

		Notes (what draft EPI if needed and comments where not compliant)
	☒ There are no draft EPI's that are relevant to the proposed development	
	☐ A draft EPI is relevant to the proposed development however the application is consistent with the aims and objectives of the document.	

s4.15(1)(a)(iii) – Port Stephens Development Control Plan 2014

Chapter	Compliant	Notes (where needed or if not compliant)
B	☒ General Controls	**B2 Natural Resources** The application largely seeks to improve environmental outcomes and retain additional vegetation to improve the habitat corridor to what had previously been approved. Council's Natural Systems team supported the proposed

16-2007-15-6

		modification noting that the amendments result in the retainment of habitat connectivity between the development area and the dam. Notwithstanding the above, Council's Natural Systems did not support the amendment to condition 70, which would allow for minor up-lighting at the sites entry. This was not supported on the basis that a roadside corridor of native vegetation exists on the opposite side of the road to the site and that the 'National Light Pollution Guidelines for Wildlife Including Marine Turtles, Seabirds and Migratory Shorebirds' (Commonwealth of Australia 2020) strongly advises against the use of up-lighting due to impacts on fauna. Overall, the proposed modification is considered to be consistent with Section B2 of the DCP. **B3 Environmental Management** <u>B3.C Noise</u> The proposal seeks to use the approved maintenance shed as a community workshop/men's shed, which is located within 10m of the boundaries including those of internal neighbouring sites. An Acoustic Impact Assessment prepared by Spectrum Acoustics was provided to Council, which found that the noise generated from the proposed workshop could be mitigated through construction techniques (steel cladding, laminated glass for windows and innerskin of sound check plaster board) as well as operational techniques including operating hours and closure of any doors along the northern, southern and eastern facades whilst power tools are being utilised. Conditions have been recommended to address the mitigation measures noted within the Acoustic Impact Assessment. Further discussion regarding noise impacts and the acoustic assessment is included in the assessment against the Local Government (Manufactured Home Estates, Caravan Parks, Camping Grounds and Moveable Dwellings) Regulation 2021 below. **B4 Drainage and Water Quality** Given the proposal seeks to relocate the

		approved stormwater basin and amend their sizing, the application was required to be assessed against Chapter B4 and was referred to Council Development Engineer for assessment. The proposed amendments were supported by Council's Development Engineer noting that existing Condition 106B (proposed 106C) remains relevant. **B8 Road Network and Parking** The proposal seeks to amend the approved access to the site and reduce the number of long term sites from 113 to 111 sites. It is noted however, that the proposal was previously assessed as containing 117 long term sites with this being number being reduced through a condition imposed by Council. Council's Traffic Engineer reviewed the proposal and raised no concerns with the proposed modifications noting there will be no significant impact on the local road network. Visitor car parking provided remains unchanged by the proposed modifications.
C	☐ Development Types	N/A
D	☐ Specific Areas	N/A

s4.15(1)(a)(iiia) – Any planning agreement or draft planning agreement entered into under section 93F

	Notes (where needed)
☒ There are no planning agreements that have been entered into under section 7.4 relevant to the proposed development.	

s4.15(1)(a)(iv) – The regulations

Local Government (Manufactured Home Estates, Caravan Parks, Camping Grounds and Moveable Dwellings) Regulation 2021

The Local Government (Manufactured Home Estates, Caravan Parks, Camping Grounds & Moveable Dwellings) Regulation 2021 (LG Regulations) contains standards for Caravan Parks. Clause 71 of the regulations state that Council must not grant an approval to operate a caravan park or camping ground, under the Local Government Act 1993 (LG Act) unless it is satisfied that it will be designed, constructed, maintained and operated in accordance with the relevant requirements of Subdivisions 1–8 of Division 3 of the LG Regulation.

The relevant matters relate to the design and operation of the site. A Section 68 approval cannot be granted to an operation that is inconsistent with the approved development, therefore,

consideration has been given to the relevant provisions of the LG Regulations for the purposes of DA assessment.

Part 3 Caravan parks, camping grounds and moveable dwellings

Division 3 Caravan Parks and Camping Grounds

Subdivision 2 Setbacks

Section 88 requires any community building to be setback 10 metres from the caravan park boundary or a dwelling site boundary (unless appropriately screened, which in this case a setback of 3-5 metres applies).

The proposal seeks to use the approved maintenance shed as a community workshop/men's shed, which is located within 10m of the boundaries including those of internal neighbouring sites. This is inconsistent with Section 88(1). However, as noted above, Section 88(2) allows a concession to the 10m setback control as long as Council is satisfied that the community building will be properly screened, fenced, enclosed or otherwise treated to reduce noise and amenity impacts.

An Acoustic Impact Assessment was prepared by Spectrum Acoustics to enable Council to understand the potential impacts of the community building (workshop) location and any mitigation measures required. The Acoustic Impact Assessment found that the noise generated from the proposed workshop could be mitigated through construction techniques (steel cladding, laminated glass for windows and innerskin of soundcheck plaster board) as well as operational techniques including operating hours and closure of any doors along the northern, southern and eastern facades whilst power tools are being utilised.

Conditions have been recommended noting that the community building (workshop) must be constructed in accordance with the minimum construction requirements detailed within the Acoustic Assessment Report, condition of operating hours and that all doors and windows along the northern, southern and eastern facades to remain closed when shed is in use.

The acoustic assessment was assessed by Council's Environmental Health officer and ultimately the location of the proposed workshop was supported.

s4.15(1)(b) – The likely impacts of the development

	Notes (where needed)
☒ Social and Economic Environment: There would be beneficial impacts as a result of the development.	The proposed modification will continue to provide long term sites for residency, which will have ongoing positive impacts on the local economy and housing demands.
☒ Built Environment: The proposed development would not cause harm to the existing character.	The proposed modifications will not cause harm to the existing character of the area. The proposed amendments to the entry signage are considered minor in nature and appropriate in identifying the site.
☒ Natural Environment: There are no adverse impacts expected as a result of the proposed development and appropriate conditions have been added.	The proposed modification will result in the retainment of habitat connectivity between the development area and the dam resulting in improved environmental outcomes. The new and modified recommended conditions require

	salvaging of existing saplings on the site for replanting, the retainment of koala feed trees within the short terms sites where possible and clarity regarding the use of koala friendly fencing.

s4.15(1)(c) – The suitability of the site

The site suitability considerations assessed under the original application remain unchanged as a result of the proposed modification. The modification improves ecological outcomes and the site remains suitable for the proposed development.

s4.15(1)(d) – Any submissions

Consideration of submissions has been given against section S4.55(2)(d) above

s4.15(1)(e) – The public interest

The proposed modification is considered to be in the public interest as it seeks consent for minor design amendments that result in improvements to ecological outcomes through the reduction of vegetation clearing.

Further, the development will continue to provide long term sites to service the needs of the locality community which is considered to be in the public interest.

MODIFIED CONDITIONS

Existing condition
1.1 Prior to the issue of any Construction Certificate, the Concept masterplan, dwg. 240060-DA-001-E, Version Q, prepared by ADW Johnson and dated 2/09/2021 is to be amended to remove sites 104, 112, 113 and 114 from the area outside the development footprint approved under DA 16-2007-15-3.
Modified condition
1.1 CONDITION DELETED UNDER DA 16-2007-15-6.
Comment: Condition no longer required as the proposed amendments result in the widening of the movement corridor between the northern development footprint and the south western portion of the dam to facilitate improved koala movement opportunities.
Existing condition
12B. **Prior to the issue of any Construction Certificate or commencement of use** of the relevant stage, whichever occurs first, a monetary contribution is to be paid to Council pursuant to section 4.17(1) of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979,* Section 7.11 of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*, and Council's Section 94 Contribution Plan towards the provision of the following public facilities: Stage One **41 LONG TERM SITES**

Facility	Per lot/dwelling	Total
Civic Administration	$178.00	$7,298.00
Public Open Space, Parks and Reserves	$968.00	$39,688.00
Sports and Leisure Facilities	$2,281.00	$93,521.00
Cultural and Community Facilities	$1,147.00	$47,027.00
Road Works	$432.00	$17,712.00
Fire & Emergency Services	$70.00	$2,870.00
	Total	$208,116.00

Stage Two

28 LONG TERM SITES		
Facility	**Per lot/dwelling**	**Total**
Civic Administration	$178.00	$4,984.00
Public Open Space, Parks and Reserves	$968.00	$27,104.00
Sports and Leisure Facilities	$2,281.00	$63,868.00
Cultural and Community Facilities	$1,147.00	$32,116.00
Road Works	$432.00	$12,096.00
Fire & Emergency Services	$70.00	$1,960.00
	Total	$142,128.00

Stage Three

47 LONG TERM SITES		
Facility	**Per lot/dwelling**	**Total**
Civic Administration	$178.00	$8,366.00
Public Open Space, Parks and Reserves	$968.00	$45,496.00
Sports and Leisure Facilities	$2,281.00	$107,207.00
Cultural and Community Facilities	$1,147.00	$53,909.00
Road Works	$432.00	$20,304.00
Fire & Emergency Services	$70.00	$3,290.00
	Total	$238,572.00

2 SHORT TERM SITES		
Facility	**Per lot/dwelling**	**Total**
Civic Administration	$178.00	$356.00

16-2007-15-6

Public Open Space, Parks and Reserves	$968.00	$1,936.00
Sports and Leisure Facilities	$2,281.00	$4,562.00
Cultural and Community Facilities	$0.00	$0.00
Road Works	$216.00	$432.00
Fire & Emergency Services	$70.00	$140.00
	Total	$7,426.00

Note: The amount of contribution payable under this condition has been calculated at the time of determination and in accordance with the Port Stephens Section 94 Contributions Plan. The contribution amount is valid for twelve months from the consent date. Should payment take place after twelve months the contribution shall be INDEXED at the time of actual payment in accordance with movement in the Consumer Price Index as published by the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

Modified condition

12C. **Prior to the issue of any Construction Certificate or commencement of use** of the relevant stage, whichever occurs first, a monetary contribution is to be paid to Council pursuant to section 4.17(1) of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979,* Section 7.11 of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*, and Council's Section 94 Contribution Plan towards the provision of the following public facilities:

Stage One

40 LONG TERM SITES		
Facility	**Per lot/dwelling**	**Total**
Civic Administration	$178.00	$7,120.00
Public Open Space, Parks and Reserves	$968.00	$38,720.00
Sports and Leisure Facilities	$2,281.00	$91,240.00
Cultural and Community Facilities	$1,147.00	$45,880.00
Road Works	$432.00	$17,280.00
Fire & Emergency Services	$70.00	$2,800.00
	Total	**$203,040.00**

Stage Two

28 LONG TERM SITES		
Facility	**Per lot/dwelling**	**Total**
Civic Administration	$178.00	$4,984.00

16-2007-15-6

Public Open Space, Parks and Reserves	$968.00	$27,104.00
Sports and Leisure Facilities	$2,281.00	$63,868.00
Cultural and Community Facilities	$1,147.00	$32,116.00
Road Works	$432.00	$12,096.00
Fire & Emergency Services	$70.00	$1,960.00
	Total	**$142,128.00**

Stage Three

43 LONG TERM SITES		
Facility	**Per lot/dwelling**	**Total**
Civic Administration	$178.00	$7,654.00
Public Open Space, Parks and Reserves	$968.00	$41,624.00
Sports and Leisure Facilities	$2,281.00	$98,083.00
Cultural and Community Facilities	$1,147.00	$49,321.00
Road Works	$432.00	$18,576.00
Fire & Emergency Services	$70.00	$3,010.00
	Total	**$218,268.00**

2 SHORT TERM SITES		
Facility	**Per lot/dwelling**	**Total**
Civic Administration	$178.00	$356.00
Public Open Space, Parks and Reserves	$968.00	$1,936.00
Sports and Leisure Facilities	$2,281.00	$4,562.00
Cultural and Community Facilities	$0.00	$0.00
Road Works	$216.00	$432.00
Fire & Emergency Services	$70.00	$140.00
	Total	$7,426.00

Note: The amount of contribution payable under this condition has been calculated at the time of determination and in accordance with the Port Stephens Section 94 Contributions Plan. The contribution amount is valid for twelve months from the consent date. Should payment take place after twelve months the contribution shall be INDEXED at the time of actual payment in accordance with movement in the Consumer Price Index as published by the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

Comment: Contributions updated to reflect the modified number of sites and the amended

staging.
Existing condition
27. Tree clearing shall be carried out in accordance with Council's Tree Preservation Order. The development consent and construction certificate must be issued before it is possible to remove any trees within 3m of any approved building, as measured horizontally from the building wall to the outside trunk of the tree. Tree clearing for the vehicle driveway or any other purpose requires separate approval under the Tree Preservation Order. A copy of the Tree Preservation Order is attached.
Modified condition
27. CONDITION DELETED UNDER DA 16-2007-15-6.
Comment: Condition has been replaced with modified Condition 72.1A.
New Condition
55.1. All doors and windows along the northern, southern and eastern facades of the workshop/mens shed are to remain closed when shed is in use.
New Condition
55.2. The workshop/mens shed is only to operate between the hours of 8:00am – 6:00pm, 7 days a week. Tools and machinery should not be operated every day or for long continuous periods.
Existing Condition
56B. Landscaping shall be carried out in accordance with the approved Landscape Plan prepared by Mara Consulting and dated 3 September 2021 (Drawing Number: 2112, Revision F, Sheet L100 to L110). The landscape designer must provide a compliance certificate to the Principal Certifying Authority certifying that the landscaping has been carried out in accordance with the approved plan and as amended by conditions of consent, prior to the issue of any Occupation Certificate. Where Council is not the Principal Certifying Authority, a copy of the certificate must be provided for Council's records.
Modified Condition
56C. Landscaping shall be carried out in accordance with the approved Landscape Plan prepared by Mara Consulting and dated 19 July 2022 (Job No.: 2112, Revision I, Sheet L100 to L110). The landscape designer must provide a compliance certificate to the Principal Certifying Authority certifying that the landscaping has been carried out in accordance with the approved plan and as amended by conditions of consent, prior to the issue of any Occupation Certificate. Where Council is not the Principal Certifying Authority, a copy of the certificate must be provided for Council's records.
Comment: Condition has been amended to reflect the updated landscaping plan.
Existing Condition

58B. Tree plantings and fencing is to be carried out in accordance with the Landscape Plan prepared by Mara Consulting and dated 3 September 2021 (Drawing Number: 2112, Revision F, Sheet L100 to L110).

Modified Condition

58C. Tree plantings and fencing is to be carried out in accordance with the Landscape Plan prepared by Mara Consulting and dated 19 July 2022 (Job No: 2112, Revision I, Sheet L100 to L110) and the conditions of consent.

Comment:

Condition has been amended to reflect the updated landscaping plan.

Existing Condition

60A. The approved landscape plan prepared by Mara Consulting and dated 3 September 2021 (Drawing Number: 2112, Revision F, Sheet L100 to L110), is to be amended to include the following:

a. Additional hedge planting on along the southern (front) boundary, with a species that reaches a minimum mature height of 1.5 metres.

The amended plans are to be submitted to Council for approval, **prior to the issue of any Construction Certificate**.

Modified Condition

60B. The approved landscape plan prepared by Mara Consulting and dated 19 July 2022 (Drawing Number: 2112, Revision I, Sheet L100 to L110), is to be amended to include the following:

a. Additional hedge planting on along the southern (front) boundary, with a species that reaches a minimum mature height of 1.5 metres.

The amended plans are to be submitted to Council for approval, **prior to the issue of any Construction Certificate**.

Comment:

Condition has been amended to reflect the updated landscaping plan.

Existing Condition

62A. Fencing within the area to the north of the northern most perimeter road, must not compromise the potential for safe movement of koalas across the site. Suitable fencing may include:

a. open post and rail or post and wire fencing (no barbed wire on the bottom strand) and must be a minimum of 200 mm above ground level that would allow koalas to move underneath; or

b. a koala friendly alternative as agreed in consultation with Council's natural resources team.

Fencing around the developed areas to the south of the northern most perimeter road must include measures to deter Koala movement through the development.

16-2007-15-6

Modified Condition

62B. Fencing must not compromise the potential for safe movement of koalas across the site. The fencing as shown in the approved landscape plan can be installed along the southern boundary (frontage to Trotters Road), along the western boundary in line with Lots 3 – 11, and along the eastern boundary alongside the stormwater basin. This fencing must be rural timber style fencing as identified in on Sheet L-108 of the approved landscaping plan prepared by Mara Consulting, dated 19 July 2022. The remainder of the site must use koala friendly fencing, including:

a. open post and rail or post and wire fencing (no barbed wire on the bottom strand) and must be a minimum of 200 mm above ground level that would allow koalas to move underneath; or

b. a koala friendly alternative as agreed in consultation with Council's Natural Systems team.

Comment:

Condition has been amended to provide clarity on approved fencing and improve koala movements across the site.

Existing Condition

63.1 Construction of the development must comply with the recommendations of the 'Biodiversity Assessment' Version 2, prepared by MJD Environmental, dated March 2021 detailed as follows:

a. Demarcate subject site boundary with visible flicker tape of temporary fencing to ensure no impacts occur to retained vegetation adjacent to the site.
b. All contractors will be specifically advised of the designated work area.
c. All construction vehicles/machinery are to use the designated access from main roads. Speeds will be limited to reduce the potential of fauna strike and to reduce dust generation;
d. Prior to the commencement of any vegetation removal, a preclearance survey will be conducted by the Project Ecologist to identify any areas containing significant habitat features. During the pre-clearance survey, any significant habitat features or trees that are known to have resident fauna present and all hollow-bearing trees will be:
   i. Marked around the trunk of the tree at approximately 1.5 metres high with a 'H' marked several sides of the trunk using fluorescent spray marking paint; and/ or
   ii. Marked with highly visible flagging tape.
e. Tree removal is to be strictly limited to the subject site.
f. Any mulch generated from the removal of vegetation on Site is to be reused on Site.
g. Felled trees must be stockpiled and processed within marked clearing boundaries.
h. Any fauna is handled appropriately, including the relocation of any arboreal mammals in accordance with PSC Technical Specification – Trees (PSC 2014);

Natural hollows of a suitable size and configuration should be salvaged and reinstalled in retained areas of vegetation in the Subject Site where possible to provide ongoing arboreal habitat opportunities for local fauna PSC Technical Specification - Nest Boxes (PSC 2014).

16-2007-15-6

Modified Condition
63.1A Construction of the development must comply with the recommendations of the 'Biodiversity Assessment' Version 2, prepared by MJD Environmental, dated March 2021 detailed as follows: i. Demarcate subject site boundary with visible flicker tape of temporary fencing to ensure no impacts occur to retained vegetation adjacent to the site. j. All contractors will be specifically advised of the designated work area. k. All construction vehicles/machinery are to use the designated access from main roads. Speeds will be limited to reduce the potential of fauna strike and to reduce dust generation; l. Prior to the commencement of any vegetation removal, a preclearance survey will be conducted by the Project Ecologist to identify any areas containing significant habitat features. During the pre-clearance survey, any significant habitat features or trees that are known to have resident fauna present and all hollow-bearing trees will be: iii. Marked around the trunk of the tree at approximately 1.5 metres high with a 'H' marked several sides of the trunk using fluorescent spray marking paint; and/ or iv. Marked with highly visible flagging tape. m. Tree removal is to be strictly limited to the subject site. n. Any mulch generated from the removal of vegetation on Site is to be reused on Site. o. Felled trees must be stockpiled and processed within marked clearing boundaries. p. Any fauna is handled appropriately, including the relocation of any arboreal mammals in accordance with PSC Technical Specification – Vegetation (PSC 2014); Natural hollows of a suitable size and configuration should be salvaged and reinstalled in retained areas of vegetation in the Subject Site where possible to provide ongoing arboreal habitat opportunities for local fauna PSC Technical Specification - Nest Boxes (PSC 2014).
Comment: Condition has been amended to reference the correct technical specification.
New Condition
63.2 All hollows identified during the pre-clearance survey shall be replaced with nest boxes (built to a standard consistent with the PSC Technical Specification - Nest Boxes (PSC 2014) at a ratio of 1:1. Nest boxes must be installed within retained native vegetation on site prior to the removal of any hollow bearing trees.
Existing Condition
65A. A minimum of eighty (80) mature koala feed trees, i.e. Eucalyptus tereticornis, Eucalyptus robusta or Eucalyptus parramattensis shall be planted within the 100 m coastal wetland buffer area. All compensatory plantings are to have a minimum pot size of 200L.

Page 23 of 31

	Documentary evidence of koala feed tree planting must be provided to and approved by Council prior to the issue of any Occupation Certificate.
Modified Condition	
65B.	A minimum of eighty (80) mature koala feed trees, (i.e. Eucalyptus tereticornis, Eucalyptus robusta or Eucalyptus parramattensis), and any salvageable saplings from the development site shall be planted within the 100 m coastal wetland buffer area. All mature compensatory plantings are to have a minimum pot size of 200L. Documentary evidence of koala feed tree planting must be provided to and approved by Council prior to the issue of any Occupation Certificate.
Comment: Condition has been amended to require that any salvageable saplings from the development site be replanted.	
Existing Condition	
71.	A Weed Management Plan shall be prepared to manage the on-going maintenance of the open space area in the western portion of the property, i.e. the wetland buffer area. This management plan shall include bush regeneration methods and techniques that ensure that this area is effectively managed in perpetuity.
Modified Condition	
71A.	A Vegetation Management Plan shall be prepared and approved by Council's Natural Systems team. The approved plan shall be implemented to manage and maintain the open space area in the northern portion of the property, i.e. the wetland buffer area. This management plan shall include a planting plan in accordance with Condition 65B, and prescribe bush regeneration methods and techniques to ensure that the area is effectively managed in perpetuity.
Comment: Condition has been amended to provide clarity on what is required from the Vegetation Management Plan.	
Existing Condition	
72.1	No vegetation or natural landscape features other than that authorised for removal / pruning by this Consent must be disturbed, damaged or removed. No additional works or access/parking routes transecting the protected vegetation must be undertaken without Council Approval. All approved landscaping works are to be maintained in perpetuity. Where landscape plantings die, replacement plantings of the same species are to be implemented.

16-2007-15-6

Modified Condition
72.1A The removal of existing vegetation is not to occur until the issue of the Construction Certificate. No vegetation or natural landscape features other than that authorised for removal / pruning by this Consent must be disturbed, damaged or removed. No additional works or access/parking routes transecting the protected vegetation must be undertaken without Council Approval. All approved landscaping works are to be maintained in perpetuity. Where landscape plantings or koala feed tree plantings die, replacement plantings of the same species are to be implemented.
Comment: First line has been added to replace condition 27.
New Condition
72.2 The Eucalyptus tereticornis trees within the location of the two short term sites shall be retained where possible. Any excavations associated with construction of the adjacent road shall be undertaken under the supervision and guidance of an Australian Qualification Framework Level 5 Arborist.

16-2007-15-6

New Condition
72.3 **Vegetation Management Plan** - Monitoring reports in accordance with the approved Vegetation Management Plan must be prepared and submitted to Council.
New Condition
72.4 **Maintenance of Nest Boxes** - All installed Nest Boxes must be maintained for a period of 5 years. If any nest box is damaged, it is to be replaced.
Existing Condition
75. A rope of 50mm or greater in diameter shall be affixed and left dangling at least 1m into the swimming pool to allow koalas to escape.
Modified Condition
75. CONDITION DELETED UNDER DA 16-2007-15-6.
Comment: Condition 75 was requested to be deleted by the applicant as condition 74 of the consent requires that pool fencing be constructed of a material that prevents the access of koalas into this area, to reduce the potential of drowning. The deletion of this condition was supported by Council's Natural Systems team.
Existing Condition
90. Mosquito Management shall be performed in accordance with the details submitted with the application dated 26 September 2007. Management techniques shall include: a. A Public Education Display, being a sandwich board type warning sign displayed at peak mosquito periods, as well as printed fact sheets detailing effective personal prevention techniques. b. A staff member/representative employed by the development that is available to the residents that is trained in mosquito biology. The person shall be responsible for customer/visitor education. c. Methods to minimise water holding areas on the property (please note that no works are authorised in protected wetland areas without approvals from the relevant authorities). d. The preparation of an on-site manua1/ management plan that involves the continual assessment of the vulnerability of occupants to exposure and the potential duration and seasonality of exposure. This document shall also contain a planning and management response (i.e. education, warnings, monitoring of on-site breeding etc.) These measures shall be implemented prior to the issue of any Occupation Certificate.
Modified Condition
90A. Mosquito Management shall be performed in accordance with the details submitted with the application dated 26 September 2007. Management techniques shall include:

a. A Public Education Display, being a notification of a community notice board or sandwich board type warning sign displayed at peak mosquito periods, as well as printed fact sheets detailing effective personal prevention techniques. b. CONDITION DELETED UNDER DA 16-2007-15-6. c. Methods to minimise water holding areas on the property (please note that no works are authorised in protected wetland areas without approvals from the relevant authorities). d. The preparation of an on-site manual/ management plan that involves the continual assessment of the vulnerability of occupants to exposure and the potential duration and seasonality of exposure. This document shall also contain a planning and management response (i.e. education, warnings, monitoring of on-site breeding etc.) These measures shall be implemented prior to the issue of any Occupation Certificate.
Comment: The applicant requested that Council amend Condition 90 by accepting the display of the mosquito warning sign on a community notice board. The applicant also requested that point (b) of the condition be deleted as it was not considered practical for implementation. The amendment to the condition was supported by Council's Natural Systems team.
New Condition
98.1 The maintenance shed/work shop must be constructed in accordance with the recommendations of the Noise Assessment prepared by Spectrum Acoustics dated July 2022, project no. 212220R.
New Condition
105.1. Prior to the issue of a Construction Certificate, the stormwater management plan must be updated in accordance with the approved architectural plans and the Stormwater Management Plan – Addendum #1 letter prepared by Torque Project dated 13 May 2022.

16-2007-15-6

Existing Condition
106B. Detailed stormwater drainage plans, DRAINS model and MUSIC model must be prepared by a qualified Engineer in accordance with the approved Stormwater Management Plan, Issue B, prepared by ADW Johnson and dated 4 June 2021, Council's Infrastructure Specifications and the current Australian Rainfall and Runoff guidelines using the Hydrologic Soil Mapping data for Port Stephens (available from Council). The detailed plans must also include the following information in order to comply with the PSC DCP: a. Additional onsite infiltration to reduce the volume and discharge of stormwater leaving the site to reduce impacts to the downstream wetland. The plans must demonstrate how the quantity of water and means of discharge is managed to mimic the existing environment and not concentrate flows. b. The drainage strategy must incorporate the external catchment contributing runoff through this development. A catchment plan must be submitted at CC stage which includes the external catchment which contributes runoff and allowance must be made within the internal drainage system to incorporate the runoff from the external catchment. c. Detailed basin cross sections and long sections and comprehensive DRAINS and MUSIC models are to be submitted at CC stage to reflect the approved strategy. These models must comprehensively reflect the proposed design. d. The bio-retention basin design must be informed by a groundwater assessment to consider rises in groundwater level. Details demonstrating compliance must be provided to the Certifying Authority, **Prior to the issue of a Construction Certificate for Each Stage**.
Modified Condition
106C. Detailed stormwater drainage plans, DRAINS model and MUSIC model must be prepared by a qualified Engineer in accordance with the approved Stormwater Management Plan, Issue B, prepared by ADW Johnson and dated 4 June 2021 and the Stormwater Management Plan – Addendum #1 letter prepared by Torque Project dated 13 May 2022, Council's Infrastructure Specifications and the current Australian Rainfall and Runoff guidelines using the Hydrologic Soil Mapping data for Port Stephens (available from Council). The detailed plans must also include the following information in order to comply with the PSC DCP: a. Additional onsite infiltration to reduce the volume and discharge of stormwater leaving the site to reduce impacts to the downstream wetland. The plans must demonstrate how the quantity of water and means of discharge is managed to mimic the existing environment and not concentrate flows. b. The drainage strategy must incorporate the external catchment contributing runoff through this development. A catchment plan must be submitted at CC stage which includes the external catchment which contributes runoff and allowance must be made within the internal drainage system to incorporate the runoff from the external catchment. c. Detailed basin cross sections and long sections and comprehensive DRAINS and MUSIC models are to be submitted at CC stage to reflect the approved

strategy. These models must comprehensively reflect the proposed design.

d. The bio-retention basin design must be informed by a groundwater assessment to consider rises in groundwater level.

Details demonstrating compliance must be provided to the Certifying Authority, **Prior to the issue of a Construction Certificate for Each Stage**.

Comment:

Condition has been updated to reference amended plans.

Existing Condition

132A. The development must be carried out in accordance with the plans and documentation listed below and endorsed with Council's stamp, except where amended by other conditions of this consent or as noted in red by Council on the approved plans:

Plan/Doc.Title	Plan Ref. No	Sheet.	Date	Drawn By
Concept Masterplan	240060-DA-001-E, Version Q	1 Sheet	2 September 2021	ADW Johnson
Landscape Plans (9 sheets)	Rev F	L-100 – L110	3 September 2021	Mara Consulting
Western Boundary Perimeter Road – Sites 3-14	TP144-001 Rev A	1 Sheet	2 September 2021	Torque Projects
Trotter Road Caravan Park Modification Concept Engineering Lot 2 D.P. 954600 DA 16-2007-15-4	240060 Issue No. B	001, 002, 1101, 102, 211,231, 232, 233, 501, 701, 801 and 802	4 June 2021	ADW Johnson
Temporary Clubhouse siting	Issue A	01	5 March 2021	MB
Ground Floor Plan (Temporary Clubhouse)	20L000AA Rev A	1 of 8	25 January 2021	Ingenia
Community Building Plans (7 sheets)	21-0008 Issue B	DA-A1-0-02, DA-A1-2-01, DA-A1-2-02, DA-A1-6-01, DA-A2-1-01, DA-A2-1-02	2 March 2021	Arqus Design

Maintenance Shed	Issue A	01	5 March 2021	Ingenia Lifestyle

Document Title	Prepared by	Date
Stormwater Management Plan (Issue B)	ADW Johnson	4 June 2021

In the event of any inconsistency between conditions of this consent and the drawings/documents referred to above, the conditions of this consent prevail. If there is any inconsistency between the plans and documentation referred to above the most recent document shall prevail to the extent of any inconsistency.

Modified Condition

132B. The development must be carried out in accordance with the plans and documentation listed below and endorsed with Council's stamp, except where amended by other conditions of this consent or as noted in red by Council on the approved plans:

Plan/Doc.Title	Plan Ref. No	Sheet.	Date	Drawn By
Concept Masterplan	240060-DA-002-F, Version F	1 Sheet	6 July 2022	ADW Johnson
Landscape Plans	Rev I	L-100 – L110	19 July 2022	Mara Consulting
~~Trotter Road Caravan Park Modification Concept Engineering Lot 2 D.P. 954600 DA 16-2007-15-4~~	~~240060 Issue No. B~~	~~001, 002, 1101, 102, 211,231, 232, 233, 501, 701, 801 and 802~~	~~4 June 2021~~	~~ADW Johnson~~
Temporary Clubhouse siting	Issue A	01	5 March 2021	MB
Ground Floor Plan (Temporary Clubhouse)	20L000AA Rev A	1 of 8	25 January 2021	Ingenia
Community Building Plans (7 sheets)	21-0008 Issue B	DA-A1-0-02, DA-A1-2-01, DA-A1-2-02, DA-A1-6-01, DA-A2-1-01, DA-A2-1-02	2 March 2021	Arqus Design

16-2007-15-6

Maintenance Shed	Issue A	01	5 March 2021	Ingenia Lifestyle

Document Title	Prepared by	Date
Stormwater Management Plan (Issue B)	ADW Johnson	4 June 2021
Stormwater Management Plan – Addendum #1 letter	Torque Project	13 May 2022

In the event of any inconsistency between conditions of this consent and the drawings/documents referred to above, the conditions of this consent prevail. If there is any inconsistency between the plans and documentation referred to above the most recent document shall prevail to the extent of any inconsistency.

Comment:

Condition has been updated to reflect amended plans.

DETERMINATION

The modification application is recommended to be approved by Council, subject to the amended conditions as shown above.

DEVELOPMENT ASSESSMENT REPORT

APPLICATION REFERENCES

Application Number	16-2021-921-1
Development Description	Seniors housing - 38 single storey self-contained dwellings with communal facilities
Applicant	LE MOTTEE GROUP PTY LIMITED
Land owner	MACKA'S DEVELOPMENTS PTY LTD
Date of Lodgement	27/10/2021
Value of Works	$15,844,277.00
Submissions	2

PROPERTY DETAILS

Property Address	1085 Lemon Tree Passage Road TANILBA BAY
Lot and DP	LOT: 452 DP: 1181515
88B Restrictions on Title	The subject site has a restriction on the use restricting vehicular access from the lot to Lemon Tree Passage Road. The development proposes vehicular access from Yallimbah Avenue and is therefore not inconsistent with the restriction.
Current Use	Vacant
Zoning	RE2 PRIVATE RECREATION
Site Constraints	Acid Sulfate Soils – Class 4 Koala Habitat – Clear and Other Flood Prone Land – PMF Wetland
State Environmental Planning Policies	State Environmental Planning Policy (Resilience of Hazards) 2021 State Environmental Planning Policy (Housing for Seniors or People with a Disability) 2004 State Environmental Planning Policy (Building Sustainability Index: BASIX) 2008 State Environmental Planning Policy (Biodiversity and Conservation) 2021

PROPOSAL

The application seeks consent for the construction 38 single storey self-contained dwellings for seniors housing including communal facilities and associated works (refer to Figure 1).

The proposed dwellings consist of 34 x two bedroom attached dwellings and 4 x three bedroom detached dwellings. All dwellings are proposed to be provided with a single car garage, private open space, bathroom, laundry and open plan living and dining. Three bedroom dwellings will be provided with an ensuite. Figures 2 and 3 below illustrate the typical floor plan for each dwelling layout.

The communal facility includes an outdoor pool, bowling green, dining and barbeque areas (refer to Figure 4).

Vehicular access to the site is proposed to be provided from Yallimbah Avenue. Each dwelling will be accessed via a private driveway from the internal loop road.

The proposal includes earthworks in the form of fill and the construction of retaining walls to satisfy flooding and stormwater requirements for the site. Retaining walls are proposed to be located along the permitter of the site with varying heights from 0.37m to 1.2m. The boundary fencing is proposed to be located directly above the retaining walls in some portions and stepped back in others to allow landscape screening to be installed. The terraced retaining walls with stepped back fencing and landscape plantings are located along portions of the western, eastern and southern boundaries.

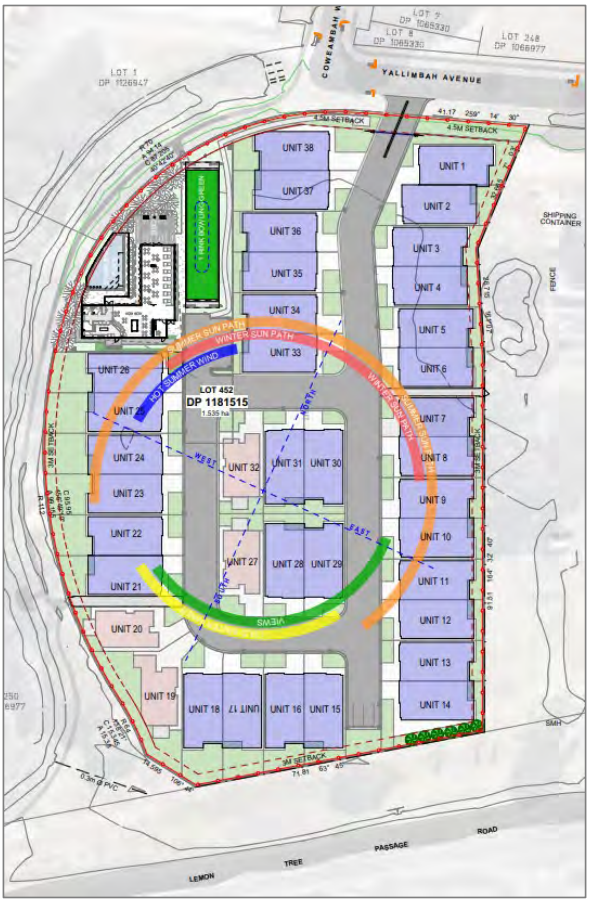


Figure 1. Proposed Site Plan

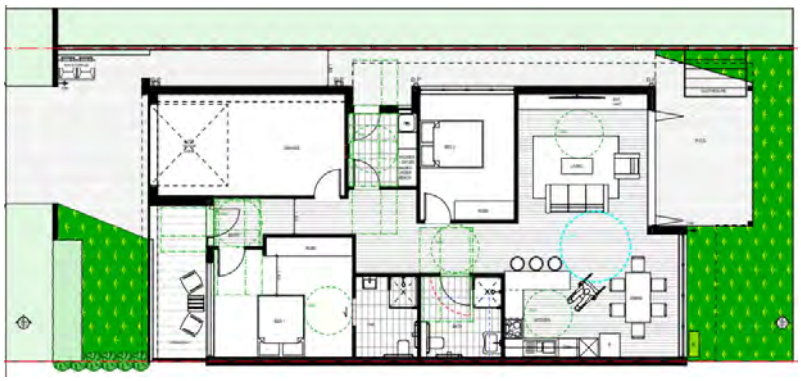


Figure 2. Two bedroom dwelling floor plan

Figure 3. Three bedroom dwelling floor plan

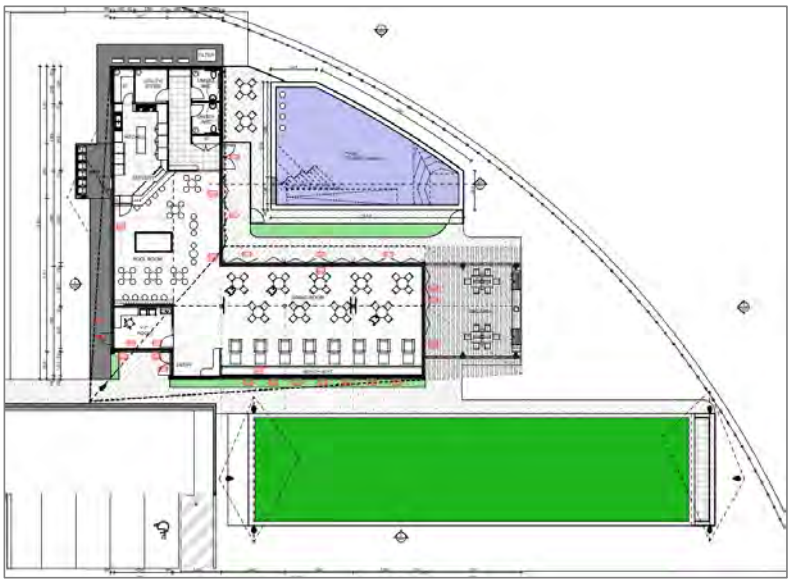


Figure 4. Proposed communal facility

SITE DESCRIPTION

The subject site is legally described as Lot 452 DP 1181515 and generally known as 1085 Lemon Tree Passage Road, Tanilba Bay. The site has a relatively flat topography and is vacant of any structures (refer to Figure 5). The site is largely maintained grass land with some small trees and shrubs located on the sites boundaries and in the north.

The site is surrounded by a mixture of land uses including the Tilligerry RSL existing directly to the east, Lemon Tree Passage Road Drainage Reserve to the west, residential dwellings the north across Yallimbah Avenue and a rural/residential property to the south across Lemon Tree Passage Road. Beyond the sites immediate vicinity is the Tanilba Bay commercial centre to the west and residential land to the north and east.

Figure 5. Aerial view of the site

SITE HISTORY

The subject site previously formed part of the lot to the east, which contains the Tilligerry RSL. A development application (DA) for a boundary adjustment (16-2011-749-1) was granted consent in May 2012 which created the subject lot.

All applications prior to this date relate to the existing RSL. The proposal is not considered likely to be inconsistent or conflict with the existing approvals.

SITE INSPECTION

A site inspection was carried out on 27 November 2021.

The subject site can be seen in Figures 6-12 below:

Figure 6. Site from Yallimbah Avenue

Figure 7. Site from Lemon Tree Passage Road

Figure 8. Vegetation located along the sites western boundary

Figure 9. RSL Club located to the east of the site and approximate location of proposed access

Figure 10. Existing pedestrian pathway running along the west of the site from Yallimbah Avenue to Lemon Tree Passage Road

Figure 11. Existing broken pedestrian pathway along Coweambah Way (directly to the sites north)

Figure 12. Pedestrian pathway located along Pershing Place to the shops, conditioned pathway along Coweambah Way to be connected to this pathway

PLANNING ASSESSMENT

The application was assessed, and comments provided, by the following external agencies and internal specialist staff:

Internal

Development Engineer – The application was referred to Council's Development Engineer to comment on traffic, flooding and stormwater. No concerns were raised from a traffic perspective, noting additional pathway connections from the site to local facilities would be provided. The requirement for these connections form part of a recommended conditions of consent to ensure compliance with the Seniors Living SEPP.

In regard to flooding, a flood impact assessment was requested given the site is within a flood planning area and fill is required to achieve the required finished floor levels. A flood impact assessment was provided by the applicant, which investigated mitigation measures to reduce potential flood impacts on and off site. Council's Development Engineer supported the mitigation measures proposed, which now form part of the recommended conditions. Council's Development Engineer also reviewed the proposed stormwater management plan and associated models. It was found that the proposed stormwater design could meet Council stormwater quality requirements and that the post-development flow rates equalled the predevelopment flow rate for all storm events up to and including the 1% annual exceedance probability (AEP) storm event. It was also concluded that the proposed development achieves the relevant stormwater quality

controls. The stormwater management plan was therefore supported by Council's Development Engineer and has been recommended to form part of the stamped plans.

Waste Management – The application was referred to Council's Waste Management Officer for comment. It was found that each dwelling had sufficient space allocated for bin storage to cater for the expected waste requirements. However, additional information was requested on whether the application was to be serviced by Council or a private contractor. The applicant confirmed that the dwellings will be serviced via a private contractor and will be required to bring waste bins to the kerbside of the internal road network. Subsequently, the application was supported from a waste perspective.

Natural Systems – The application was referred to Council's Natural Systems team for comment. It was concluded that the vegetation proposed for removal on the site is not of ecological significance and that no habitat features were present. Further, it was found that Koalas would be unlikely to be impacted by the proposed development given the site is already largely cleared of vegetation and does not form part of any corridor. The proposal was therefore supported subject to conditions. These conditions have been included within the recommended conditions of consent.

Development Contributions – Section 7.11 contributions are applicable for the proposal. A condition to this effect has been recommended.

Building Surveyor – The application was referred to Council's Building Surveyor for review. It was found that the plans submitted demonstrate compliance with the BCA can be achieved. The application was therefore supported subject to conditions.

Environmental Health – The application was referred to Council's Environmental Health Officer for review. Given the proposal seeks to connect to reticulated sewer and does not propose to provide a food premise, the DA was supported unconditionally. No concerns were raised regarding noise.

External

Ausgrid – Given the sites proximity to Ausgrid assets, the application was referred to Ausgrid for comment. Ausgrid noted that the development is required to submit an application for connection and noted the sites proximity to the underground electricity network on Lemon Tree Passage Road. The Ausgrid referral noted conditions associated with development near Ausgrid assets. Advice notes have been included within the recommended conditions which address Ausgrids referral.

Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979

Section 4.46 - Integrated development

Section 4.46 EP&A Act provides that development is integrated development if in order to be carried out, the development requires development consent and one or more other approvals. The proposed development does not trigger integrated development.

Section 4.14 – Consultation and development consent (certain bushfire prone land)

The subject site is not mapped as being bushfire prone land.

Section 4.15 - Matters for consideration

The proposal has been assessed under the relevant matters for consideration detailed in Section 4.15 of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 (EP&A Act).

Section 4.15(a)(i) - any environmental planning instrument

An assessment has been undertaken against each of the applicable environmental planning instruments (EPI's), as follows:

State Environmental Planning Policy (Building Sustainability Index: BASIX) 2004

State Environmental Planning Policy (Building Sustainability Index: BASIX) 2004 (SEPP BASIX) was enacted to ensure that dwellings are designed to utilise less potable water and to minimise greenhouse gas emissions by setting energy and water reduction targets for residential houses and units.

A valid BASIX certificate has been submitted with the development application (certificate no. 1234794M, dated 13 October 2021) which demonstrates that the water, thermal comfort and energy requirements for the proposal have been achieved. The proposal is considered to satisfy the relevant provisions of SEPP BASIX.

State Environmental Planning Policy (Resilience and Hazards) 2021

Chapter 4 Remediation of Land

Section 4.6 of Chapter 4 of the Resilience and Hazards SEPP requires the consent authority to consider whether land is contaminated, is in a suitable state despite contamination, or requires remediation to be made suitable for the proposed development.

A preliminary site investigation (PSI) report has been prepared for the site by Douglas Partners. The PSI found that there that was evidence on the site of potentially contaminating activities including site filling, possible pesticide/herbicide application for weed control, the potential for historical opportunistic dumping on the site and possible groundwater impact from the services station to the sites west. As such, a preliminary ground assessment comprising subsurface investigation and analysis of a limited number of selected samples from five test pits and five boreholes and two surface water sample locations was undertaken by Douglas Partners.

The subsurface investigation indicated that the fill material on site is generally limited to the immediate vicinity of the cricket pitch and the encroaching fill mound along the southern site boundary. Potential fill was also identified in the eastern portion of the site. The fill material observed typically comprised silty sand, clay and sandy gravel. The testing found that the fill was generally absent of gross contamination. Notwithstanding, contaminant concentrations within the soils tested were found to be within the adopted human health and ecological investigation levels for the proposed use.

The ground water on site was also tested to confirm if hydrocarbons were present from the service station to the east. The results demonstrated that the ground water on site was not impacted.

Overall, the PSI concluded that the site is suitable for residential development with respect to site contamination.

Additionally, it is noted that the NSW list of contaminated sites and list of notified sites published by the EPA does not identify the site as being contaminated, nor has previous record of contamination in Council's system. The land is also not within an investigation area, there are no records of potentially contaminating activities occurring on the site, and the proposed use for seniors housing is not listed as a possible contaminating use, per Table 1 of the Guidelines.

Given the above, the proposed development is considered to satisfy the requirements of Chapter 4 of the Resilience and Hazards SEPP.

State Environmental Planning Policy (Biodiversity and Conservation) 2021

Chapter 2 Vegetation in Non-Rural Areas

Chapter 2 Vegetation in Non-Rural Areas of the Biodiversity and Conservation SEPP aims to protect the biodiversity values and preserve the amenity and other vegetation in non-rural areas of the State. The chapter works in conjunction with the Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016 and the Local Land Services Amendment Act 2016 to create a framework for the regulation of clearing of native vegetation in NSW.

Part 2.3 of the chapter contains provisions similar to those contained in the former (now repealed) clause 5.9 of Port Stephens Local Environmental Plan 2013 and provides that Council's Development Control Plan can make declarations with regards to certain matters. The chapter further provides that Council may issue a permit for tree removal.

The development application seeks consent for the removal of 12 trees. The trees were not observed to contain any hollows, nests or significant habitat and therefore have been supported for removal by Council's Natural Systems team. The application proposes adequate replacement vegetation and plantings throughout the site.

The proposal is therefore considered to be consistent with this policy.

Chapter 4 Koala Habitat Protection 2021

This policy aims to encourage the conservation and management of areas of natural vegetation that provide habitat for koalas to support a permanent free-living population over their present range and reverse the current trend of koala population decline.

The site is mapped as being clear of habitat on Council's Koala Habitat Planning Map. The site is largely vacant of any significant vegetation with 12 trees proposed for removal. Following a site inspection from Council's Natural Systems Officer, the trees proposed for removal were found to not constitute Koala habitat and were therefore supported for removal.

The proposal is therefore considered to be consistent with the Comprehensive Koala Plan of Management and Chapter 4 of the SEPP.

State Environmental Planning Policy (Planning Systems) 2021- Chapter 2 State and Regional Development)

The proposal does not exceed any of the relevant CIV thresholds within the SEPP for state significant or regional development. Accordingly, the proposal is classified as local development with the consent authority being Port Stephens Council.

State Environmental Planning Policy (Housing for seniors or People with a Disability) 2004

On 26 November 2021, State Environmental Planning Policy (Housing) 2021 (Housing SEPP) commenced, which consolidated a number of housing related State Environmental Planning Policies, including State Environmental Planning Policy (Housing for seniors or People with a Disability) 2004 (Seniors Living SEPP).

Despite the commencement of the new Housing SEPP, savings provisions apply to this application in accordance with Schedule 7 of the Housing SEPP, given the subject development application was made prior to the commencement of the Housing SEPP, the provisions of the now repealed Seniors Living SEPP continue to apply. The development has therefore been assessed against the provisions of the former Seniors Living SEPP.

Chapter 1 Preliminary

4 Land to which Policy applies

Section 4 of the Seniors Living SEPP outlines land to which the policy applies. It states that the policy applies to land within New South Wales (NSW) that is land zoned primarily for urban purposes or land that adjoins land zoned primarily for urban purposes, but only if—

(a) development for the purpose of any of the following is permitted on the land—

(i) dwelling-houses,

(ii) residential flat buildings,

(iii) hospitals,

(iv) development of a kind identified in respect of land zoned as special uses, including (but not limited to) churches, convents, educational establishments, schools and seminaries, or

(b) the land is being used for the purposes of an existing registered club.

Health services facilities are permissible with consent in the RE2 Private Recreation zone. Hospitals are a type of health services facility and therefore are a permissible land use. Accordingly, the Seniors Living SEPP is applicable to the proposal.

The applicant initially lodged a Site Compatibility Certificate (SCC) application with the NSW Department of Planning and Environment (DPE) who subsequently requested that the SCC application be withdrawn as DPE considered the subject land, which is zoned RE2 Private Recreation, can be considered, in the circumstances, to be land zoned primarily for urban purposes given the zone's objectives, permitted land uses and its geographical features. In this situation a SCC is not required under State Environmental Planning Policy (Housing for Seniors or People with a Disability) 2004 (SEPP) given the land is not used for the purposes of an existing registered club and therefore cannot rely on clause 4(1)(b) of the SEPP which would require a SCC.

Based on this advice from DPE, the proposed development is therefore considered permissible in accordance with the Seniors Living SEPP and the design provisions of the SEPP are applicable.

Chapter 2 – Key Concepts

Two key concepts listed under this clause are relevant to the proposal, including 'self-contained dwellings' and 'in-fill self-care housing'.

The proposal includes 38 self-contained dwellings. A *self-contained dwelling* is:

"a dwelling or part of a building (other than a hostel), whether attached to another dwelling or not, housing seniors or people with a disability, where private facilities for significant cooking, sleeping and washing are included in the dwelling or part of the building, but where clothes washing facilities or other facilities for use in connection with the dwelling or part of the building may be provided on a shared basis."

The proposed dwellings are consistent with this definition however, each dwelling is provided with laundry facilities.

The proposal can also be characterised as in-fill self-care housing. *In-fill self-care housing* is:

"seniors housing on land zoned primarily for urban purposes that consists of 2 or more self-contained dwellings where none of the following services are provided on site as part of the development: meals, cleaning services, personal care, nursing care."

The proposed development is located on land zoned RE2 – Private Recreation, which can be considered land zoned primarily for urban purposes, given the zone objectives, permitted land uses and its geographical features. Therefore, the proposal is consistent with this definition.

Chapter 3 – Development for Seniors Housing

Part 1A – Site Compatibility Certificates

24 Site compatibility certificates required for certain development applications

The proposal has been determined to not require a site compatibility certificate (SCC) as the site is zoned primarily for urban purposes, is not a special uses zone, does not contain an existing registered club and does not have a floor space ratio that requires consent under clause 24 of this policy.

It is noted that applicant lodged an SCC application with DPE who requested that the SCC application be withdrawn as the site was considered to be zoned primarily for urban purposes and

does not contain a registered club. As a result, DPE advised that an SCC was not required under with the Seniors Living SEPP and advising the applicant to lodge a DA directly with Council.

Part 2- Site-related requirements

Clause 26 – Location and access to facilities

A consent authority must not consent to a development application made pursuant to this Chapter unless the consent authority is satisfied, by written evidence, that residents of the proposed development will have access that complies with subclause (2) to:

(a) shops, bank service providers and other retail and commercial services that residents may reasonably require, and
(b) community services and recreation facilities, and
(c) the practice of a general medical practitioner.

Subclause (2) provides that if facilities and services referred to in subclause (1) are located at a distance of not more than 400 metres from the site of the proposed development that is a distance accessible by means of a suitable access pathway and the overall average gradient for the pathway is no more than 1:14.

The site is located approximately 300m from the Tanilba Bay commercial centre, which provides a number of services such as a medical centre and commercial premises, which is considered suitable for the purpose of Clause 26 of the SEPP.

The commercial centre is accessible via a pedestrian pathway along Coweambah Way, Pershing Place and President Wilson Walk. Portions of this route currently provide a pedestrian pathway. However, the pathway is required to be made continuous to comply with this clause of the policy. As such, a condition has been recommended that requires the pathway to be upgraded to allow pedestrian access from the development site to the Tanilba Bay commercial centre.

It is also noted that the site is within proximity to two bus stops located to the sites south east on Lemon Tree Passage Road. One bus stop is located on the northern side of Lemon Tree Passage Road and the other is on the southern side of Lemon Tree Passage Road. The bus stops are approximately 67m and 74m from the sites boundary respectively.

The stops are serviced by the 137 and 138 bus routes. Both routes travel along President Wilson Walk, which has a bus stop on either side. The bus stops that are serviced are within the vicinity of shops, bank service providers and other retail and commercial services that residents may reasonably require, community services and recreation facilities, and the practice of a general medical practitioner. These routes also travel to Medowie, Raymond Terrace and Lemon Tree Passage. Both route 137 and 138 provide multiple services a day during daylight hours from Monday to Friday.

Clause 27 – Bushfire prone land

The site is not bushfire prone land.

Clause 28 – Water and sewer

The site has appropriate access to reticulated sewer and water. The proposal intends to connect each dwelling to these services in accordance with Hunter Water requirements. A condition has been recommended that requires the applicant to obtain a Section 50 Application from Hunter Water prior to the issue of an Occupation Certificate.

Clause 29 - Consent authority to consider certain site compatibility criteria for development applications to which clause 24 does not apply

Clause 24 of this policy does not apply to the proposal. Therefore, in accordance with this clause, Clause 25 (5) (b) (i), (iii) and (v) must be taken into consideration.

Clause 25(5)(b)(i) requires that the proposed developments compatibility with the natural environment and existing and approved uses within the sites vicinity is taken into consideration.

The proposal is considered to be compatible with the natural environment in that the site is predominately characterised by managed grass land, which has is not considered to be native grass. To facilitate the proposed development 12 trees that have been planted on the site require removal. It was observed that these trees do not contain any hollows, nest or other significant habitat features and were therefore supported for removal by Council's Natural Systems team. The application proposes adequate replacement vegetation throughout the site. Additionally, there are no significant natural hazards with respect to flooding or bushfire.

With regard to water quality, a stormwater management plan has been provided to Council for assessment which demonstrates that the proposed development can comply with Council stormwater quality requirements. The stormwater management plans will form part of the stamped plans set.

The proposal is also considered to be compatible with existing and approved uses within the sites vicinity. The site is surrounded by a mixture of land uses with residential lands existing to the north and further to the east, the Tilligerry RSL to the direct east and the Tanilba Bay town centre to the west. The proposal will complement the existing and approved uses within the sites vicinity.

Clause 25(b)(iii) requires that the services and infrastructure available are able to meet the demands arising from the development. The site is within close proximity to the Tanilba Bay town centre, which provides the required services noted within Clause 26. These services are considered to be of the capacity to meet the demand arising from the development. Further, as previously noted public transport options are available within the sites vicinity which provide transport to other nearby commercial centres.

Clause 25(b)(v) requires that the impact of bulk, scale, built form and character of the proposed development is taken into consideration in regard to existing uses, approved uses, and future uses of land within the vicinity of the development. The proposed single storey dwellings are considered to be consistent with the bulk, scale and built form of surrounding development in that each dwelling is single storey, which is consistent with surrounding development within the sites vicinity. The height of the dwellings is below the 9m maximum Local Environmental Plan (LEP) height limit on surrounding sites.

Furthermore, in regard to the retaining walls and boundary fencing proposed, design treatment measures have been incorporated to address the potential visual impacts on the surrounding built environment. The design measures include stepped back fencing and the inclusion of landscape treatment above retaining walls to provide screening and softening of the development interface to reduce potential impacts of bulk and scale.

The community facility proposed has also been designed to be consistent with the bulk and scale of surrounding development, whilst also being located within the north western corner of the site to ensure it does not dominate the streetscape.

Further, the proposed development has been designed to be consistent with Council's Development Control Plan (DCP) setback requirements ensuring compliance with the desired character of the area.

The proposed development has appropriately taken into consideration existing, approved and future uses within the sites vicinity. The Tilligerry RSL exists directly to the sites east. The development responded to this through providing each dwelling with appropriate setbacks from the shared boundary as well as boundary landscaping and 1.8m lapped timber fencing to ensure amenity and noise impacts are limited from the adjoining RSL. Residential dwellings and residential land exist to the sites north and rural residential lands to the south. As noted, the

development has been designed to respond to the existing character of the area providing a single storey built form.

Part 3 Design Requirements

Division 1 General

Clause 30 – Site analysis

The application includes a site analysis within the architectural plans and accompanying Statement of Environmental Effects, which contains the necessary information to satisfactorily address the requirements of this clause.

Clause 31 – Design of in-fill self-care housing

The proposal is 'in-fill self-care housing as outlined against Chapter 2 above.

In accordance with Clause 31, '*Design of In-fill Self-care Housing the provision of the Seniors Living Policy: Urban Design Guidelines for Infill Development published by the Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources'* (now known as DPE) are to be considered. This policy has been considered in conjunction with the relevant clauses of SEPP Seniors Housing as follows:

- Improving neighbourhood fit - The Policy informs discussion against Clause 33 and 30 of the *SEPP.*
- Improving site planning and design. The Policy informs discussion against Clause 32 and 34 of the *SEPP.*
- Reducing impacts on streetscape. The Policy informs discussion against Clause 33 and 34 of the *SEPP.*
- Reducing impacts on neighbourhood properties. The Policy informs discussion against Clause 33 and 34 of the *SEPP.*
- Improving internal site amenity. The Policy informs discussion against Clause 32, 37 and 38 of the *SEPP.*

The design has considered the above guidelines. The proposed development is considered to be appropriately located and designed with regard to the Design of In-fill Self-care Housing policy and principles.

Clause 32 – Design of residential development

This clause requires that a consent authority must not consent to a development application made pursuant to this Chapter unless the consent authority is satisfied that the proposed development demonstrates that adequate regard has been given to the principles set out in Division 2.

The application has been assessed against Division 2 of the SEPP below and found to appropriately respond to the design principles.

Clause 33 – Neighbourhood amenity and streetscape

The proposed development is considered to be consistent with the existing streetscape and will maintain existing amenity.

- The dwellings proposed are all single storey, which is consistent with surrounding development within the sites vicinity. The height of the dwellings are below the 9m maximum LEP height limit on surrounding sites. The community facility building is also below the 9m height limit and has been located within the north western corner of the site where a vegetation buffer exists, and will therefore not dominate the streetscape.
- The proposed development will activate a currently vacant unused site, which will positively contribute to the streetscape.

- Reasonable neighbourhood amenity is maintained as the setbacks proposed are generally consistent with the Council's Development Control Plan (DCP) requirements, the height of structures as noted above is below surrounding sites LEP height limits, vegetation surrounding the sites borders is proposed to be maintained with additional landscaping, all of which will provide visual interest and screening to the proposed development.

Clause 34 – Visual and acoustic privacy

In considering the potential visual and acoustic privacy impacts from the proposal, a number of design elements were incorporated into the design of the proposed development. Design incorporations included:

- Retaining vegetation existing where possible along the sites boundaries to provide a visual buffer to the development, as well as provide privacy for surrounding land uses and future residents.
- Providing new landscaping throughout the site including along boundaries, which will contribute to visual screening and creating a green outlook, particularly along the two road frontages and around the communal facilities.
- Dwellings with frontage to Lemon Tree Passage Road have been appropriately setback to reduce potential noise impacts for future residents.
- All boundary fencing is proposed to be lapped timber fencing providing both visual and acoustic privacy to future residents.

Clause 35 – Solar access and design for climate

Given the single storey nature of the dwellings, the private opens space and living areas are able to receive appropriate sunlight with the living areas having direct access to the outdoor private open space.

Clause 36 – Stormwater

A stormwater management plan was submitted with the application and includes adequate quality and quantity controls as required by Councils policy. The stormwater drainage plan has been assessed as being consistent with the Infrastructure Specification and a condition of consent has been included in the consent requiring the provision of detailed engineering plans, prior to the issue of a construction certificate.

Clause 37 – Crime prevention

A Social Impact Assessment (SIA) prepared by LeMottee Group dated 14 September 2021 was submitted with the application. The SIA addressed crime prevention and the measures proposed to reduce any potential crime. The development is proposed to be fit with 24 hour CCTV surveillance along with access control to the site through the use of sliding entry gates with remote access. Further, the SIA noted that surveillance from surrounding land uses including passers-by on Lemon Tree Passage Road and Yallimbah Avenue will provide positive passive surveillance. Further, it is considered that the design of development enforces territorial reinforcement through the proposed boundary fencing, access gate and site signage.

Clause 38 – Accessibility

The site has appropriate pedestrian links from the site that provide access to local facilities. The commercial centre is accessible via a pedestrian pathway which connects to the pedestrian pathway along Coweambah Way, Pershing Place and President Wilson Walk. Currently only some portions of this route provide a continuous pedestrian pathway. The pathway is therefore required to be made continuous to ensure appropriate access to local facilities is provided. As such, a condition has been recommended that requires the pathway to be made continuous.

39 – Waste Management

Each dwelling has been provided with an appropriate space for bin storage. A private contractor will provide waste management services including the offer of recycling services. A condition of consent has been recommended requiring that a waste management service is organised with a private contractor.

Part 4 Development standards to be complied with

Clause 40 – Development standards – minimum sizes and building height

The site is compliant with this clause in that:

- The site size is 15,350m^2 exceeding the 1000m^2 requirement.
- The site frontage at the building line is approximately 57m exceeding the 20m requirement.

The proposal is not located in a residential zone where residential flat buildings are not permitted and therefore the maximum 8m building height in this section does not apply. Notwithstanding, the community centre is 4.38m in height and the maximum dwelling height is 5.5m, which is below the 8m. No building is no more than 2 storeys.

Clause 41- Standards for hostels and self-contained dwellings

Clause 41 provides that a consent authority must not consent to a development application made to carry out development for the purpose of a self-contained dwelling unless the proposed development complies with the standards specified in Schedule 3 for such development. A detailed assessment against Schedule 3 is provided below.

Schedule 3 – Standards concerning accessibility and useability for hostels and self-contained dwellings

The application includes a Disability Access Report (DAR) prepared by Lindsay Perry Access, reference no. LP_21226 and dated 27 August 2021. The access report includes assessment against the requirements of Schedule 3 and confirms compliance with the requirements will be achieved subject to further detailed design as part of the construction certificate drawings.

A condition of consent is included requiring the requirements of Schedule 3 be complied with.

Part 5 Development on land adjoining land zoned primarily for urban purposes

The proposed development is located on land zoned RE2 – Private Recreation, which can be considered land zoned primarily for urban purposes based on advice from DPE, given the zone objectives and permitted land uses. Therefore, Part 5 does not apply.

Part 6 Development for vertical villages

The proposal does not include any vertical villages, therefore Part 5 does not apply.

Part 7 Development standards that cannot be used as grounds to refuse consent

Clause 50 – standards that cannot be used to refuse development consent for self-contained dwellings.

A consent authority must not refuse consent to a development application made pursuant to this Chapter for the carrying out of development for the purpose of a self-contained dwelling (including in-fill self-care housing and serviced self-care housing) on any of the following grounds:

(a) **building height:** if all proposed buildings are 8 metres or less in height (and regardless of any other standard specified by another	Compliant – The community centre is 4.38m in height and the maximum dwelling height is 5.5m, which is below the 8m. No building is no

environmental planning instrument limiting development to 2 storeys),	more than 2 storeys.
(b) **density and scale:** if the density and scale of the buildings when expressed as a floor space ratio is 0.5:1 or less,	The proposal has an FSR of 0.36:1 and is therefore compliant.
(c) **landscaped area:** if: (i) in the case of a development application made by a social housing provider—a minimum 35 square metres of landscaped area per dwelling is provided, or (ii) in any other case—a minimum of 30% of the area of the site is to be landscaped,	Compliant – 35.3% of site is landscaped exceeding the 30% minimum.
(d) **Deep soil zones:** if, in relation to that part of the site (being the site, not only of that particular development, but also of any other associated development to which this Policy applies) that is not built on, paved or otherwise sealed, there is soil of a sufficient depth to support the growth of trees and shrubs on an area of not less than 15% of the area of the site (the deep soil zone). Two-thirds of the deep soil zone should preferably be located at the rear of the site and each area forming part of the zone should have a minimum dimension of 3 metres,	The deep soil zone equates to 17.8% of the site area therefore exceeding the 15% requirement. The landscaping is located throughout the site rather than at the rear. Given the site has two road frontage it is considered that this is appropriate.
(e) **solar access:** if living rooms and private open spaces for a minimum of 70% of the dwellings of the development receive a minimum of 3 hours direct sunlight between 9am and 3pm in mid-winter,	Given the single storey nature of the dwellings proposed, living rooms and private opens spaces will receive a minimum of 3 hours direct sunlight between 9am and 3pm in mid-winter.
(f) **private open space for in-fill self-care housing:** if: (i) in the case of a single storey dwelling or a dwelling that is located, wholly or in part, on the ground floor of a multi-storey building, not less than 15 square metres of private open space per dwelling is provided and, of this open space, one area is not less than 3 metres wide and 3 metres long and is accessible from a living area located on the ground floor, and (ii) in the case of any other dwelling, there is a balcony with an area of not less than 10 square metres (or 6 square metres for a 1 bedroom dwelling), that is not less than 2 metres in either length or depth and that is accessible from a living area, Note.	Each dwelling type proposed has a POS area that exceeds 15m^2. The rear POS of each dwelling type is directly accessed from living areas and have an area that is no less than 3m wide.

The open space needs to be accessible only by a continuous accessible path of travel (within the meaning of AS 1428.1) if the dwelling itself is an accessible one. See Division 4 of Part 4.	
(g) (Repealed)	
(h) **parking:** if at least the following is provided: (i) 0.5 car spaces for each bedroom where the development application is made by a person other than a social housing provider, or (ii) 1 car space for each 5 dwellings where the development application is made by, or is made by a person jointly with, a social housing provider.	Each dwelling is provided with 1 car parking space. 34 of the 38 units are two bedroom dwellings with 1 parking space provided to each unit, therefore compliant with the parking requirement. Four of the dwellings are three bedroom dwellings. Each of these dwelling have availability for stacked parking on the driveway in addition to the 1 car space garage, therefore this arrangement is suitable to cater for parking demand and considered compliant.

Port Stephens Local Environmental Plan 2013 (LEP)

Clause 2.3 – Zone Objectives and Land Use Table

The proposed development is defined as a seniors housing (self-contained), which is not permissible with consent in the RE2 Private Recreation Zone. Notwithstanding, the proposed development is permissible under the Seniors Living SEPP as previously discussed in this report.

The proposal is considered to be consistent with the objectives of the zone in that the proposal seeks to allow for a compatible land use on a currently vacant site that does adversely impact the natural environment.

Clause 4.3 – Height of Buildings

The subject site does not have a maximum height of buildings in accordance with the PSLEP 2013. The dwellings and community facility are single storey having a maximum height 5.5m. As noted previously, surrounding land has a maximum height of buildings of 9m. The development is therefore considered to be consistent with surrounding built form, the desired future character of the area as well as the clause objectives.

Clause 5.10 – Heritage conservation

The site has not been identified as an LEP heritage listed item nor is it within a conservation area or within proximity to an item of significance.

An Aboriginal Heritage Information Management System (AHIMS) search dated 31 August 2021 was provided with the application, which found 2 Aboriginal sites within a 200m radius of the development site. One is located to the sites south at 1096 Lemon Tree Passage Road, Mallabula. The other is located to the sites east on Reliance Boulevarde.

No items were identified on the subject site. Given the sites previous use for recreational purposes, containing managed turf and being largely vacant of vegetation, it is considered unlikely that the site would contain Aboriginal items of heritage significance. Regardless, a standard

condition of consent has been recommended which includes measures to be undertaken in the event an Aboriginal artefact is unexpectedly encountered during construction.

Clause 5.21 – Flood Planning

The proposed development is located on land mapped as being Flood Planning Area. The flood hazard category on the site is low hazard flood fringe to the north and low hazard flood storage to the south.

The flood planning level relevant to the land is 8.7m AHD. In order to achieve a finished floor level (FFL) for each dwelling of 8.7m AHD, the site is required to be filled. A Flood Impact Assessment (FIA) was prepared by Torrent Consulting dated 12 March 2022, which assessed on and off site impacts of the proposed site filling. It was found that the filling required would result in negligible offsite impacts to flood velocities given the nature of flooding at the site is static backwater storage. However, the assessment noted that filling the site would result in an increase to the peak flood levels within adjacent flood storage areas. Given the likely off site impacts, the FIA investigated mitigation options which involved the provision of additional cross-drainage under Lemon Tree Passage Road to augment the existing 1200mm by 450mm box culvert. The FIA found that duplication of the existing box culvert would reduce the upstream flood level to one that is lower than the existing condition with upstream peak flood levels being maintained.

The mitigation measures proposed within the FIA were supported by Council's Development Engineer. Therefore, a condition has been recommended requiring that the applicant upgrade the box culvert as recommended in the FIA.

Clause 7.1 – Acid Sulfate Soils

The subject land is mapped as containing potential Class 4 acid sulfate soils. The proposed development requires excavation below 2m from the natural ground level for the construction of the outdoor pool. As such, a condition has been recommended requiring a geotechnical assessment of the site be undertaken prior to the commencement of works.

Clause 7.2 – Earthworks

The application proposes earthworks in the form of fill on the site to comply with Council's DCP flooding controls in addition to managing stormwater. The existing ground level on the site is a 7.65m AHD in the south and increases to 8.23m AHD in the north. The proposed fill will raise the ground level to 8.90m AHD in the south and 8.78m AHD in the north. Retaining walls are proposed along perimeter of the site to retain the proposed fill.

The proposal includes earthworks in the form of fill and the construction of retaining walls to satisfy flooding and stormwater requirements for the site. Retaining walls are proposed to be located along the permitter of the site with varying heights from 0.37m to 1.2m. The boundary fencing is proposed to be located directly above the retaining walls in some portions and stepped back in others to allow landscape screening to be installed. The terraced retaining walls with stepped back fencing and landscape plantings are located along portions of the western, eastern and southern boundaries as identified on the submitted landscape plans.

Given the design measures, the proposed earthworks are not anticipated to result in any unacceptable impacts on the subject site, adjoining land, or any public place.

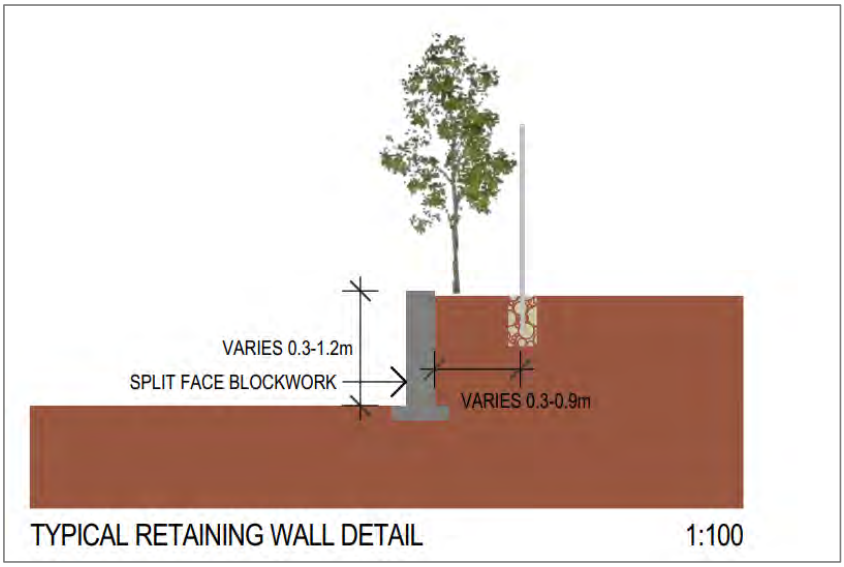


Figure 13. Typical retaining wall details with boundary fencing setback and landscaping provided

Clause 7.6 – Essential Services

The subject site is serviced by reticulated water, electricity and sewer. In addition, the application has demonstrated that stormwater drainage resulting from roof and hard stand areas can be catered for in accordance with Councils requirements. The subject land also proposes direct access to Yallimbah Avenue, meeting the requirements of this clause.

Clause 7.8 – Drinking Water Catchments

The site has not been identified as being located within a drinking water catchment.

Clause 7.9 – Wetlands

The land to the sites east, which is the Lemon Tree Passage Road Drainage Reserve is mapped as a wetland. Council's Natural Systems section reviewed the proposed development and found that the development will not have an adverse impact on the flora and fauna of the wetland, including either native and migratory species, or the characteristics of the ground or surface water subject to proposal being compliant with Council stormwater quality requirements.

Section 4.15(a)(ii) - any draft environmental planning instrument that is or has been placed on public exhibition

There are no draft EPI's relevant to the proposed development.

Section 4.15(a)(iii) – any development control plan

Port Stephens Development Control Plan 2014

The Port Stephens Development Control Plan 2014 (DCP) is applicable to the proposed development and has been assessed below.

Chapter B1 – Tree Management

The application seeks consent for the removal of 12 trees. The trees were not observed to contain any hollows, nests or significant habitat and therefore have been supported for report by Council's Natural Systems team. The application proposes replacement vegetation throughout the site.

Chapter B2 – Natural Resources

The site is located within proximity to LEP mapped wetlands with the drainage reserve to the sites west being a mapped wetland. Natural Systems reviewed the proposed development and found that the development will not have an adverse impact on the flora and fauna of the wetland, including either native and migratory species, or the characteristics of the ground or surface water subject to proposal being compliant with Council stormwater quality requirements.

The site is mapped as being mainly cleared of koala habitat. The site is largely cleared and characterised by managed grass land, which was found to be exotic. The 12 trees proposed for removal are not considered to contain any habitat features or constitute Koala feed trees. The proposal is therefore not considered likely to result in any adverse impacts to the natural environment.

Chapter B3 – Environmental Management

Acid Sulfate Soils

The objective of this DCP Chapter is to ensure that developments do not disturb, expose or drain Acid Sulfate Soils (ASS) and cause environmental damage. As detailed within the clause 7.1 discussion above, the proposed development could be undertaken, subject to conditions of consent, without resulting in adverse impact to ASS. In this regard the development is consistent with the objective and requirements of the DCP.

Noise

The dwellings are appropriately setback from the Tilligerry RSL club to the east and Lemon Tree Passage Road to the south, which are considered potentially noise generating sources. Further, all boundary fences proposed are 1.8m lapped timber fences which will reduce potential noise impacts for future residents. The dwellings are proposed to be located within the vicinity of the community facility also have lapped timer fencing that will assist with noise control.

The noise impacts of the development during construction could be limited through conditions of consent which limit construction work hours and mitigate noise derived from ventilation and air conditioning systems.

Subject to the recommended conditions, the application is considered satisfactory in regards to noise management.

Earthworks

As discussed at clause 7.2 above the proposed development involves earthworks through the introduction of fill as well as for the construction of the pool. The impacts of the proposed earthworks can be mitigated through the recommended conditions of consent. The proposal is therefore consistent with requirements outlined in Council's DCP relating to earthworks.

Chapter B4 – Drainage and Water Quality

A stormwater management plan was submitted with the application and includes adequate quality and quantity controls as required by Councils policy. The stormwater drainage plan has been assessed as being consistent with the Infrastructure Specification. The stormwater plans demonstrate that the post-development flow rates equalled the predevelopment flow rate for all storm events up to and including the 1% annual exceedance probability (AEP) storm event.
A condition of consent has been recommended requiring the provision of detailed engineering plans, prior to the issue of a construction certificate.

Chapter B5 – Flooding

The subject land is mapped as being within the Flood Planning Area. The flood hazard category on the site is low hazard flood fringe to the north and low hazard flood storage to the south.

In accordance with Chapter B5 of the DCP, residential accommodation is suitable within low hazard flood fringe and low hazard flood storage areas subject to development controls. The proposed development is considered to be consistent with the controls within Chapter B5 of the DCP in that the development proposes to fill the site to ensure that that the FFL meets the flood planning level (FPL) of 8.7m AHD. Further, conditions have been recommended to address requirements associated with fencing and electrical features in flood prone areas.

As discussed against Clause 5.21 of the LEP above, a Flood Impact Assessment (FIA) was provided with the application which assessed on and off site impacts of the proposed site filling as per the DCP requirements. The FIA investigated mitigation measures to reduce potential flood impacts on and off site which Council's Development Engineer supported. These mitigation measures form part of a recommended condition of consent.

Chapter B8 – Road Network and Parking

Traffic

A Traffic Impact Assessment (TIA) was prepared for the proposal by SECA Solution dated 5 August 2020. The TIA concluded that the proposed development would have a minor and acceptable impact upon the local road network. The assessment noted that the intersection of Reliance Boulevarde and Lemon Tree Passage Road, which will provide an access route to the development, has adequate capacity to cater for the additional traffic demands associated with the proposed development.

Council's Traffic Engineer reviewed the proposal and supported the proposal from a traffic perspective.

Access

The proposed access is located on Yallimbah Avenue allowing for entry and exit movements. The access will be controlled via remote controlled sliding gates. The TIA found that sight distances and visibility for the site access met the relevant Australian Standard and was suitable for the site and proposed development.

Council's Traffic Engineer raised no concern with the proposed access. It was noted however, that additional path connections to the adjoining footpath network and to local facilities should be provided. Given this is a requirement of the Seniors Living SEPP, a condition has been recommended to this regard.

Car Parking

The DCP references the Seniors Living SEPP with regard to car parking. As previously noted, the car parking required under the SEPP is 0.5 car spaces for each bedroom. The proposed development includes 34 x 2 bedroom dwellings and 4 x 3 bedroom dwellings. All dwellings are provided with a single car garage meaning the 2 bedroom dwellings are compliant with the SEPP requirements. The 3 bedroom dwellings also have a single car garage but have larger access driveways to cater for stacked parking. The proposal is therefore considered to be consistent with the SEPP car parking requirements.

Chapter C – Development Types

The proposed development is defined a Seniors Housing and therefore the provisions of chapter C5 are applicable. Given the proposal also includes retaining walls, Chapter C8 also applies.

Chapter C5 – Multi-dwelling housing or Seniors Housing

Reference	Control	Assessment
Objective C5.A	**Landscaping** • To enhance the appearance and amenity of developments through the	The proposal provides generous landscaping throughout the site equating to 35% of the total site area. The landscaping proposed

Requirement C5.1-C5.3	retention and/or planting of large and medium sized trees. • To encourage landscaping between buildings for screening. • To ensure landscaped areas are consolidated and maintainable spaces that contribute to the open space structure of the area. • To add value and quality of life for residents and occupants within a development in terms of privacy, outlook, views and recreational opportunities. • To reduce energy consumption through microclimate regulation • To reduce air borne pollution by reducing the heat island effect • To intercept stormwater to reduce stormwater runoff	along the Yallimbah Avenue frontage will positively contribute to the streetscape by providing visual interest and creating a clear delineation of the sites boundaries and access points. Landscaping proposed on the sites frontage to Lemon Tree Passage Road will ensure no adverse visual impacts occur from this view point. Each dwelling is proposed with appropriate landscaping within the internal street frontage as well as within the rear setback, which consists of boundary plantings providing screening and increase amenity of future residents whilst adding value to the private open spaces of the dwellings and therefore quality of life for residents. The community facility has been designed with ample landscape spaces providing visual interest and shading within the site but also providing a buffer from the external boundary as well as boundaries with dwellings within the development site.
Objective C5.B Requirement C5.4-C5.5	**Height** • To ensure building height is appropriate for the context and character of the area. • To ensure building heights reflect the hierarchy of centres and land use structure. • To ensure ceiling heights achieve sufficient ventilation and daylight access. • To ensure ceiling heights increase the sense of space and provides for well-proportioned rooms. • To ensure ceiling heights contribute to the flexibility of building use over the life of the building.	There is no height limit for the site under the LEP. The dwellings and community facility are single storey having a maximum height 5.5m, which is consistent with the DCP requirement of a maximum of 8m. The minimum floor to ceiling height for each dwelling is 2.7m exceeding the DCP minimum of 2.4m.
Objective C5.C Requirement C5.6-C5.18	**Setbacks** • To ensure development provides continuity and consistency to the public domain. • To ensure adequate space between buildings to enable effective landscaping. • To alleviate impacts on amenity including privacy, solar access, acoustic control and natural ventilation. • To reduce the visual bulk of buildings from the street. • To maintain the rhythm and built form on the street.	The site is setback 4.5m from Yallimbah Avenue, which is considered to be the sites front setback and is therefore compliant. Given the maximum building height is 5.5m, the side setbacks are required to be 0.9m to the side boundaries. On average a 3m setback has been provided to the east and west boundaries which exceeds the 0.9m requirement. There are small encroachments proposed to the 3m, but nothing that is less than 0.9m to the boundaries. A 3m rear setback is required by the DCP. The rear setback in this instance is the southern boundary with Lemon Tree Passage

		Road. A 3m rear setback has been provided along the sites rear boundary with exception to a minor encroachment on Unit 15 where its south eastern corner is setback 2.7m from the boundary therefore representing at 0.3m variation. Given the variation only relates to the south eastern corner of the dwelling and is minor in nature, it is considered acceptable.
Objective C5.D Requirement C5.19-5.21	**Natural Ventilation** • To ensure all habitable rooms are naturally ventilated. • To ensure a comfortable indoor environment is created for residents.	Each habitable room includes a window, supporting adequate natural ventilation. Doors opening to the rear private open spaces are bi-folding doors, maximising ventilation opportunities.
Objective C5.E Requirement C5.22-C5.32	**Streetscape and Privacy** • To ensure development activates streetscape to provide passive surveillance and privacy	Each dwelling has been designed with direct and legible pedestrian access from the internal road network to the front entry being compliant with the DCP. Each entry door is located under a covered veranda area and is therefore compliant. Each dwelling has been designed to avoid noise sources with internal fencing between each dwelling also being lapped timber fencing. The development has adopted a modern colour scheme that is considered appropriate for proposal and context of the surround built form. Each dwelling presents as a separate dwelling.
Objective C5.F Requirement C5.33-C5.36	**Noise** • To minimise noise transfer through the siting of buildings and building layout • To ensure noise impacts are mitigated within units through layout and acoustic treatments	It is considered that the development has been appropriately designed to address potential noise generating sources. The two bedroom dwellings have been designed to attach to one other dwelling. The design allows for appropriate insulation.
Objective C5.G Requirement C5.37-5.41	**Car Parking and Garages** • To ensure car parking caters for anticipated vehicle movements to and from the development and does not adversely impact on building articulation. • To ensure vehicular access has minimal impacts on neighbouring dwellings. • To ensure that vehicular access points and parking is safe and convenient for residents, visitors and	All driveways are considered to be of an appropriate width. The proposed garages have varying setbacks with the maximum being 11m and the minimum being 4m from the street frontage. The dwellings where the setback is between 4m-5m are all two bedroom dwellings, which have provided sufficient car parking as per the Seniors Housing SEPP. Given this, the reduce garage setback is considered to be acceptable.

	service providers.	
Objective C5.H Requirement C5.42-C5.47	**Private Open Space** • To ensure private open space with solar access is provided to allow the opportunity for passive and active outdoor recreation	Two bedroom dwellings are provided with private open space (POS) with an area of 16.16m^2 with dimensions exceeding the 4m x 4m requirements. The POS is accessed from internal living areas and is located within the rear setback. The three bedroom dwellings have a POS of 22.92m^2. When including the turfed back yard this increases significantly and complies with the DCP requirement of 25m^2. The dimensions exceed 4m x 4x and the POS is accessed via internal living area. Given the location of the site, not all dwellings are able to achieve of POS having a northerly aspect. This is acceptable as it is considered that each dwelling will be provided with appropriate solar access. It is noted that the DCP allows for seniors a housing development to have a reduced POS of 9m^2. However, the proposal complies with the higher POS requirements for residential dwellings.
Objective C5.I Requirement C5.48-C5.54	**Site Facilities and services** • To ensure development provides appropriate facilities and services in the most appropriate site location	The proposal includes adequate provision of site services and facilities. A condition of consent has been recommended requiring the appropriate placement and enclosure of air conditioning units to avoid noise impacts to dwellings. Space for waste storage is provided separately for each dwelling. A stone faced wall fronting Yallimbah Avenue will have letterboxes set within for each dwelling. Clothes drying is available within the POS of each dwelling. Essential services are provided underground. Sufficient internal storage is provided to each dwelling with 5m^2 provided for the two bedroom dwellings and 4m^2 for three bedroom dwellings plus storage space within garages.
Objective C5.J Requirement C5.55-5.58	**Additional Requirements for Seniors Housing** • To establish additional requirements for seniors housing development • To ensure development for seniors	The development provides a communal facility within the north west corner which has an outdoor pool, bowling green, VP room (doctors room), fully equipped kitchen and dining and barbeque areas.

	housing provides adequate area for communal open space • To provide communal open space within seniors housing development that is accessible from dwellings and promotes interaction between residents • To allow a merits based assessment of communal open space dependant on the quality of facilities, accessibility, furniture, and landscaping and feature elements • To ensure adequate community facilities are provided for residents in seniors housing development	Given the large size of the lot, a merits based approach for the size of the community facilities has been assessed on a merits basis and deemed acceptable. The community facilities are clearly identifiable and designed to be easily accessed by residents. Six dwellings share a boundary with the community facility providing appropriate passive surveillance.

Chapter C8 – ancillary structures

Reference	Control	Assessment
C8.15 – C8.17	Retaining walls are: • Maximum height of 1m • Masonry construction within 0.9m of the property boundary when greater than 0.6m in height. • Retaining walls are wholly contained within the site.	Fill is required to ensure that the site achieves the required finished floor level, being the flooding planning level. As such, retaining walls are proposed along the permitter of the site to retain the proposed fill. The retaining walls vary in height from 0.37m to 1.2m in height and therefore a minor variation is proposed to the maximum retaining wall height control of 1m (0.2m). The proposed retaining walls only exceed 1m in height in the south-eastern corner of the site. Landscaping is proposed on top of these retaining walls to provide screening and reduce the bulk and scale of the wall as demonstrated in Figure 14 below. **Figure 14.** Landscaping proposed along south eastern boundary between fencing and retaining wall

		The proposed retaining walls are located within 0.9m of the boundary and are greater than 0.6m in some areas and are therefore required to be of masonry construction. The retaining walls are proposed to be constructed of split face blocks and therefore compliant with this control. The proposed retaining walls are located wholly within the site as shown on the submitted plans. A condition has been recommended to ensure all retaining walls are constructed within the site boundaries.

Section 4.15(1)(a)(iv) the regulations (to the extent that they prescribe matters for the purposes of this paragraph)

There are no matters within the regulations that are relevant to the determination of the application.

Section 4.15 (1)(b) the likely impacts of that development, including environmental impacts on both the natural and built environments, and social and economic impacts in the locality

Social and Economic Impacts

The proposal will provide for additional seniors housing accommodation in the locality to service the needs of the community, and satisfy the housing demand of the ageing population.

The construction of the proposed development will provide employment opportunities in the locality and support the local building and development industries. This will have direct monetary input to the local economy, and the increased number of residents in the locality will provide ongoing economic input through daily living activities.

There are no anticipated adverse social or economic impacts as a result of the proposed development.

Impacts on the Built Environment

The proposal has been designed to comprise a single storey built form that is generally consistent with surrounding residential development in the area. The proposal will provide an attractive landscaped street frontage to Lemon Tree Passage Road and Yallimbah Avenue, creating an improved streetscape condition. The development has incorporated landscaping throughout the site and along the site boundaries to improve the visual quality of the development. It is considered that the proposal aligns with the character and built form of the area.

Impacts on the Natural Environment

The proposed development includes appropriate water quantity and quality control devices to reduce the impact of the development on the natural environment particularly the adjacent wetland/basin. The existing site is clear of any significant natural habitat or native vegetation and there are no anticipated adverse impacts on the natural environment.

Section 4.15(1)(c) the suitability of the site for the development

The subject site is currently vacant of any structures and significant habitat and has been designed to be generally compliant with the Seniors Living SEPP, the LEP and DCP. The site is located within close vicinity to the commercial centre as well as public transport to service the needs of future residents.

Section 4.15(1)(d) any submissions made in accordance with this act or the regulations

Public Submissions

The application was exhibited from 9 November 2021 to 23 November 2021 in accordance with the provisions of the Port Stephens Council Community e Engagement Strategy. On receipt of amended plans, the application was re-notified from 12 September 2022 until 26 September 2022.

Two submissions were received during the exhibition periods. The matters raised during the exhibition period have been detailed in the table below.

Comment	Council response
Permissibility Permissibility of the site was questioned with the submissions noting that housing developments are not permissible within the RE2 zoning as per the PSLEP 2013. The submissions notes that the proposal cannot rely on the Seniors Living SEPP for permissibility.	Seniors housing is not permissible with the RE2 Private Recreation zone, however, is considered to be permissible under the Seniors Living SEPP. Section 4 of the Seniors Living SEPP states that the policy applies to land that and zoned primarily for urban purposes only if: (a) development for the purpose of any of the following is permitted on the land— (i) dwelling-houses, (ii) residential flat buildings, (iii) **hospitals**, (iv) development of a kind identified in respect of land zoned as special uses, including (but not limited to) churches, convents, educational establishments, schools and seminaries, or (b) the land is being used for the purposes of an existing registered club. As noted elsewhere in this report, health services facilities are permissible with consent in the RE2 Private Recreation zone. Hospitals are a type of health services facility and therefore are permissible. The applicant lodged a Site Compatibility Certificate (SCC) application with NSW DPE who requested that the SCC application be withdrawn as the Department of Planning and Environment (DPE) considered the site was zoned primarily for urban purposes given the zone's objectives, permitted land uses and its geographical features. The proposed development is therefore permissible as per Section 4 of the Seniors Living SEPP.
The submission noted that Council cannot determine the proposal until a Site Compatibility Certificate (SCC) is obtained from the Department of Planning and Environment (DPE). Noting that Council must reject the application until an SCC is obtained.	As above, the applicant lodged an SCC application with the DPE. The SCC application was subsequently withdrawn as DPE considered the site to be zoned for urban purposes and therefore concluded an SCC is not required.

Noise Concern was raised over potential impact on the Tilligerry RSL and Sports Club operations which exist to the development sites east. The submission noted that the building, particularly the outdoor dining spaces have been designed to orientate towards to the development site to reduce potential noise impacts on existing residential properties in vicinity of the club. It was also noted that the proposed development would result in dwellings being located within 40m of the clubs outdoor seating and that it would therefore be impossible for the club to continue existing use of outdoor areas whilst complying with the OLGE Noise Policy. The submission notes that the club is entitled to develop its premise on the basis that the adjacent land zoning would prevent construction of dwellings. It was recommended that should the development be approved, noise mitigation measures should be provided.	All boundary fences proposed are 1.8m lapped timber fences which have acoustic attenuating properties that will reduce potential noise impacts for future residents. In addition, on average a 3m setback has been provided to the east boundaries, which exceeds the 0.9m DCP requirement. Given the above, it is considered appropriate noise mitigation measures have been incorporated into the design to reduce potential impacts on future residents. As previously noted, the proposed use is permissible under the Seniors Living SEPP and the site can be permitted to be developed for the proposed use.
Stormwater Concern was raised regarding the flat site and its flood prone nature. It was noted that the proposal may cause substantial impact to the existing stormwater systems and may cause overland flow of excess water onto the club property, potentially causing inundation.	The site has been identified as being flood prone land. A Flood Impact Assessment (FIA) was prepared for the proposal which assessed on and off site impacts of the proposed site filling. It was found that the filling required would result in negligible impacts to flood velocities given the nature of flooding at the site is static backwater storage. However, the assessment noted that filling the site would result in an increase to the peak flood levels within adjacent flood storage areas. Given the likely off site impacts, the FIA investigated mitigation options which involved the provision of additional cross-drainage under Lemon Tree Passage Road to augment the existing 1200 mm by 450 mm box culvert. The FIA found that duplication of the existing box culvert would reduce the upstream flood level to one that is lower than the existing condition with upstream peak flood levels being maintained. A condition has been recommended requiring the upgrade of the box culvert to occur. In regard to stormwater, the plans provided to Council demonstrate the post-development flow rates equal the predevelopment flow rate for all storm events up to and including the 1% annual exceedance probability (AEP) storm event. Furthermore, stormwater quality measures have also been addressed satisfactorily.

Submission noted support of the DA.	Noted.

Section 4.15(1)(e) the public interest

The proposal provides for additional seniors housing in the Tanilba Bay locality to service the needs of the community, and satisfy housing demand of an ageing population. The proposed development has been appropriately designed to positively contribute the built environment and avoid adverse impacts to the amenity of adjoining land.

The construction of the proposed development will provide employment opportunities, having direct monetary input to the local economy. The increased number of residents in the locality will provide ongoing economic input through daily living activities.

There are no adverse impacts anticipated to occur to the natural environment.

The proposal is consistent with the relevant environmental planning instruments and is considered to be in the public interest.

Section 7.11 – Contribution towards provision or improvement of amenities or services (developer contributions)

Section 7.11 contributions are applicable for the proposal and a condition has been recommended. It is noted that the Council's local infrastructure contributions (LIC) plan offers a 50% discount to seniors housing. The recommended condition has contributions levied at this rate.

DETERMINATION

The application is recommended to be approved by Council, subject to the recommended conditions of consent.

Medowie Place Plan Engagement Report

Planning for your place

September 2022

PORT STEPHENS COUNCIL

Contents

	Page
1. Summary	2
2. Engagement methods	4
3. Key engagement findings	5
Appendices	10
Appendix A: Liveability Index survey	11
Appendix B: Town Centre survey	13
Appendix C: Workshop 1 (Sept 2021	18
Appendix D: Workshop 2 (Sept 2021)	29
Appendix E: Workshop 3 (June 2022)	37
Appendix F: School workshops (Aug 2022)	48
Appendix G: Check-In survey (Aug 2022)	59

1. Summary

Place Plans are a new way of planning for the growth of the unique towns and villages across Port Stephens. Place Plans provide a filter on the Port Stephens Local Strategic Planning Statement and other strategic documents to create actions which improve the liveability and wellbeing of our communities.

Place plans use a 'bottom-up' approach and collect the shared ideas and aspirations of communities through a 4 phase engagement approach:

Phase 1 Liveability Index survey and Town Centre survey (Sept 2020)

Phase 2 Workshops with local residents and businesses to set priorities and a vision for Medowie (Nov 2021).
Additional workshops were held with students from 2 Medowie schools to investigate opportunities for a town centre expansion at 38 Ferodale Road (June and August 2022).

Phase 3 A check-in survey on the draft place plan actions and concept plan for the town centre expansion site sought feedback from Phase 2 (Aug 2022) workshop participants.

Phase 4 The draft Medowie Place Plan will be available during public exhibition for community comment (Nov 2022)

What the community told us

The top priorities identified in the Liveability Index for Medowie included:

1. Evidence of recent public investment (roads, parks, schools)
2. Quality of public space (footpaths, verges, parks)
3. Walking/jogging/bike paths that connect housing to communal amenity (shops, parks)
4. General condition of public open space (street trees, footpaths, parks).
5. Sense of neighbourhood safety (from crime, traffic, pollution)
6. Protection of the natural environment
7. Elements of natural environment (natural features, views, vegetation, topography, water, wildlife)

The community workshops explored the survey results in more detail and generated ideas for future actions, such as the improvement of the town centre, creating streets that give pedestrians priority over cars, and enhancing the character of Medowie as a 'place of tall trees'.

Other opportunities include the creation of a new regional park with a play space and the protection of key habitat and wildlife corridors. Ideas for place activation included running a farmers market, organising an outdoor cinema event, or creating a public mural.

Observations

The Medowie workshops were a very positive experience for both participants and staff. The residents were supportive of the place plan process and were very interested in working together to implement actions of the future plan.

There was a high level of enthusiasm from the Medowie Place Plan workshop participants and strong support for community led initiatives. This follows on from the strong engagement and support provided by the Medowie community as part of the recent Medowie 7 Day Makeover.

How to use this Engagement Report

This Engagement Report includes a complete overview of all survey and workshop outcomes and informs the Medowie Place Plan.

This report continues to provide a rich source of information for creating a more attractive Medowie town centre. It includes ideas and inspiration for activities that can lift community wellbeing.

The appendices to this report provide detailed information.

2. Engagement methods

ENGAGEMENT METHODS		
ACTIVITY	**DESCRIPTION**	**STATS**
Phase 1 **Liveability Index reports**	Liveability Index survey	345 surveys completed by Medowie residents
	Town Centre survey - Ferodale Road, Medowie	119 surveys completed
Phase 2 **Community Workshops** 	Workshops investigated the outcomes of the Liveability Index survey to provide more detail and exploring ideas and solutions.	
	Workshop 1: 12 September 2021	24
	Workshop 2: 19 September 2021	23
	Workshop 3 (face to face): 8 June 2022	23
	Workshop 3 (online): 9 June 2022	11
	Workshop 3 (school students 1): 8 August 2022	8
	Workshop 3 (school students 2): 8 August 2022	28
	Total workshop attendancees	**117**
Phase 3 **Medowie Place Plan check-in survey**	People who attended at least one of the previous workshops had the opportunity to respond to a short survey to confirm the direction of the draft place plan and proide feedback on the draft concept plan for the town centre expansion site at 38 Ferodale Rd (August 2022).	There were **38** visitors to the survey site, with **14** complete surveys submitted.

3. Key engagement findings

This chapter provides a brief overview of the key findings of the various engagement activities that guide the Medowie Place Plan. Detailed information about the methodology used and community responses are available in the appendices.

Phase 1 – Liveability Index and town centre surveys

Liveability Index survey

In September 2020, Council undertook the first Port Stephens wide liveability survey. About 345 people from Medowie completed the survey and told us what they value about their place and how it is performing. This data was used as the basis for the first workshop series held in September 2021.

The Liveability Index survey shows that the top five values for Medowie are:

1. Elements of the natural environment (natural features, views, vegetation, topography, water wildlife).
2. Locally owned and operated business.
3. Sense of neighbourhood safety (from crime, traffic, pollution).
4. General condition of public open space (street trees, footpaths, parks)
5. Local businesses that provide for daily needs (grocery stores, pharmacy, banks).

The top priorities identified in the liveability index for Medowie included:

1. Evidence of recent public investment (roads, parks, schools)
2. Quality of public space (footpaths, verges, parks)
3. Walking/jogging/bike paths that connect housing to communal amenity (shops, parks)
4. General condition of public open space (street trees, footpaths, parks)
5. Sense of neighbourhood safety (from crime, traffic, pollution)
6. Protection of the natural environment
7. Elements of natural environment (natural features, views, vegetation, topography, water, wildlife)

For more detail, see **Appendix A**.

Note: a more recent analysis of the data in Sept 2022 resulted in a minor reduction in the number of priorities. However, the Medowie Place Plan has responded to the full set of priorities as listed the above.

Town Centre survey (Ferodale Road near the Community Hall)

Council conducted a site-specific town centre survey at Ferodale Road, between Peppertree Road and Medowie Road (April 2021). This survey received 119 responses and some of the priorities identified include:

- Things to do in the evening (like shopping, dining, and entertainment)
- Maintenance of public spaces and street furniture
- Cleanliness of public space
- Walking paths that connect to other places
- Ease of walking around (including crossing the street, moving between destinations)
- Elements of the natural environment (like views, vegetation, topography, and water)

For more detail, see **Appendix B**.

Phase 2 – Community workshop findings

A series of workshops were held in 2021 and 2022 to offer community, businesses, community groups, and key stakeholders the opportunity to share their insights and vision for Medowie.

Workshop 1 and 2 findings

Workshops 1 and 2 were undertaken in an online environment during lockdown. Considering the circumstances, attendance at both workshops was excellent, with 47 and 34 attendees respectively.

The workshops aimed to get a better understanding of the Liveability Index survey outcomes for Medowie. Discussions with workshop attendees provided more detail about the values and priority areas identified.

Some of the key findings include:

- Create more safe pathways and better connections for pedestrians and cyclists between neighbourhoods and to surrounding areas.
- Create additional or improved public recreation spaces for all ages and abilities.
- Improve and utilise opportunities for bushwalking and mountain biking.
- Investigate opportunities for a new quality public place, like a town square, for people to meet.
- More opportunities for outdoor music or entertainment like a festival.
- Make outdoor spaces more attractive and convenient with additional seating, lighting, public art, and signage.

Workshop 2 attendees produced a series of Action Plans based on quick win and big picture ideas:

Quick Wins	Big Picture
Run food truck nights	Develop a community garden
Implement a local park run	Run a farmers market
Street library in Bower playground	Develop a Regional Play Space
Shade trees along new Medowie Road path	More shared paths around Medowie

For more detail on workshops 1 and 2, see **Appendices C and D**.

Workshop 3 findings

Workshop 3 focussed on the site at 38 Ferodale Road, which is critical for the ongoing development of the town centre. Face-to-face and online workshops were offered, with 23 and 11 people attending respectively.

Major themes considered were Community and Recreation, Movement and Place, and the Town Centre expansion site.

Some key points from this workshop are:

- The site could include retail premises, housing, tourist accommodation, pathways, recreation and play spaces, and a meeting place for Medowie.
- Retail space should be catering for small-scale businesses like boutique shops, cafes, and restaurants.
- A town square should be included and offer space for activities.
- The village/rural character of Medowie should be protected and development should fit in.
- Pedestrian priority, a pedestrian friendly environment, and walkability is important. Paths should connect various point within the town centre.
- The western part of the site could be considered for future conservation.
- Many ideas were provided for play spaces, a potential skate park, an outdoor recreation area and embellishments like seating, lighting, shelters.

Detailed information is included in **Appendix E.**

School workshop findings

School workshops were held at Medowie Public School (8 students) and Catherine McAuley Catholic College (28 students) in August 2022. It was very beneficial for the development of the place plan to be able to speak directly with young people because:

- A very limited number of young people were engaged through the Liveability Index survey.
- Young people may be reluctant to participate in workshops with adults.
- It is not always possible to approach school-aged children via schools due to a busy curriculum.

The workshop encouraged students to think about the needs of various users of the town centre and the opportunities offered by the town centre expansion site (38 Ferodale Road). They used this information to create a plan/design for the site. The topics they considered were movement, playing, shopping, housing, environment, and community facilities.

Some key points that they raised include:

Things to Do – Students had a strong interest in more things to do, like swimming pools, dog parks, events, outdoor cinemas, massive shopping centres, and large shopping chains.

Landmarks – A strong emphasis on landmarks generated ideas like fountains, a Ferris wheel, and roller coasters.

Some suggestions confirmed the findings from previous workshops, including libraries, outdoor cinemas, outdoor gyms, murals and public art, and moving around safely.

Some novel ideas suggested by students include:

- Community gardens and community fruit trees
- Possum houses
- Fenced dog off lead areas including dog a swimming pool
- Petting zoo

> "When you think about Medowie, you don't normally think pretty, but we are here to change that by adding a landmark to Medowie (the Fountain) in a large open space. Mostly because Medowie is very claustrophobic."
>
> Student – Catherine McAuley Catholic College

Interestingly, playgrounds and skate parks received less attention from the students than may have been expected.

See **Appendix F** for some of the plans created by students.

Phase 3 – Check-in survey

People who attended at least one of the workshops about the Medowie Place Plan had the opportunity to respond to a short survey to confirm the direction of the draft place plan.

A draft concept plan for the town centre expansion site and draft place plan actions were provided for this purpose (August 2022). The survey was completed by 14 people.

The survey showed overall high levels of support for both the draft concept plan (84.6%) and each of the draft actions.

For full details, see **Appendix G**.

Appendices

Appendix A: Liveability Index survey

Appendix B: Town Centre survey

Appendix C: Workshop 1 (Sept 2021)

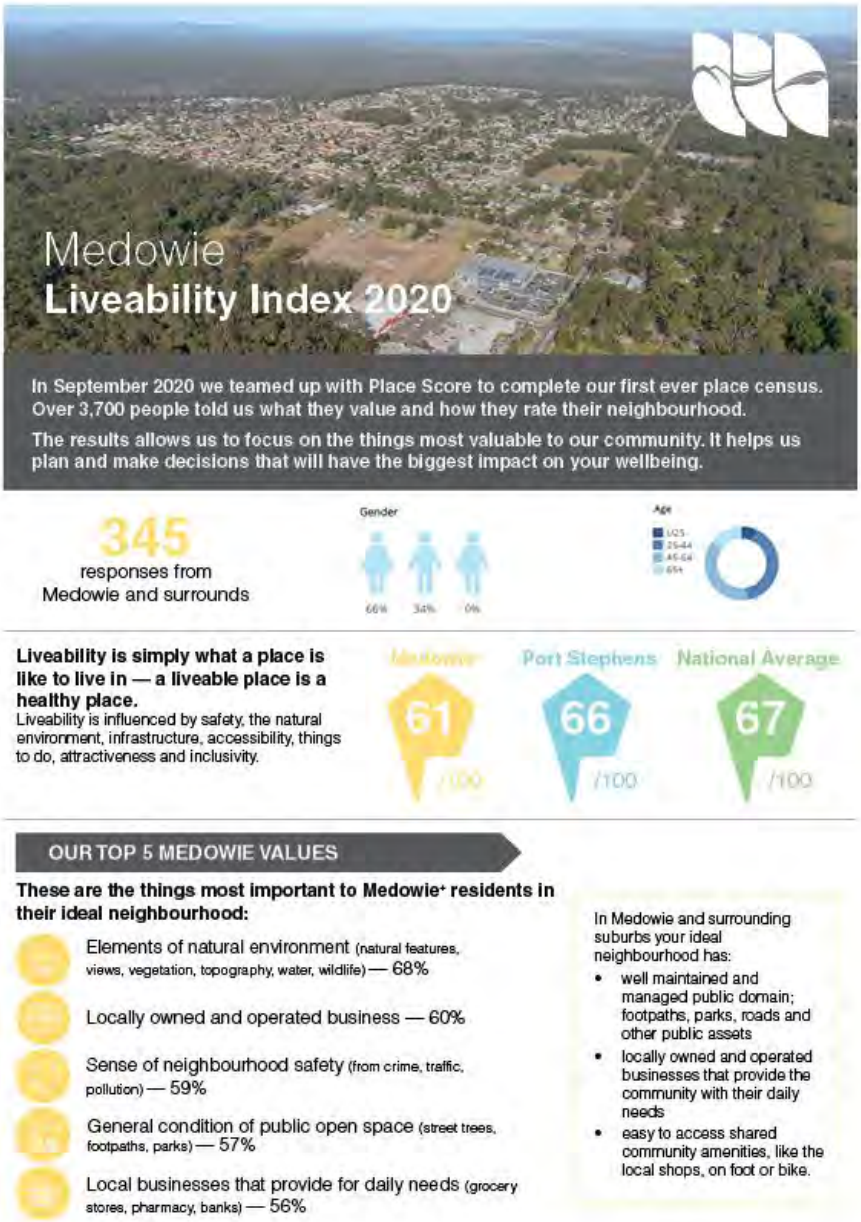
Appendix D: Workshop 2 (Sept 2021)

Appendix E: Workshop 3 (June 2022)

Appendix F: Check-In survey (Aug 2022)

Appendix G: School workshops (Aug 2022)

Appendix A - Liveability Index survey



OUR STRENGTHS

These are the things you care about most and say are performing well. We must continue to celebrate and protect these.

- Local businesses that provide for daily needs (grocery stores, pharmacy, banks)
- Sense of personal safety (for all ages, genders, day or night)
- Locally owned and operated businesses

OUR LIVEABILITY PRIORITIES

These are the things most important to you and are underperforming. We must work to improve these.

- Evidence of recent public investment (roads, parks, schools)
- Quality of public space (footpaths, verges, parks)
- Walking/jogging/bike paths that connect housing to communal amenity (shops, parks)
- General condition of public open space (street trees, footpaths, parks)
- Sense of neighbourhood safety (from crime, traffic, pollution)
- Protection of the natural environment
- Elements of natural environment (natural features, views, vegetation, topography, water, wildlife)
- Things to do in the evening (bars, dining, cinema, live music)
- Evidence of Council/government management (signage, street cleaners)
- Access and safety of walking, cycling and/or public transport (signage, paths, lighting)
- Spaces suitable for play (from toddlers to teens)
- Local education opportunities (from elementary to adult education)
- Spaces suitable for specific activities or special interests (entertainment, exercise, dog park, BBQs)
- Sustainable urban design (water sensitive design, transport-oriented design, building design, density)
- Amount of public space (footpaths, verges, parks)
- Landmarks, special features or meeting places

PLACESCORE PORT STEPHENS COUNCIL

For more information go to
PORTSTEPHENS.NSW.GOV.AU

Appendix B – Town Centre survey

MAXIMISE YOUR IMPACT

This Impact Maximiser Report helps you increase the impact of your place experience and community values data collected via Place Score's PX Assessment and Care Factor tools. It provides place-specific strengths and weaknesses that can help improve the performance of your mainstreet.

In April 2021, Place Score conducted a PX (Place Experience) Assessment of Ferodale Road (btw Peppertree Rd and Medowie Rd) and a Town Centre Care Factor (CF) survey in Medowie for Port Stephens Council.

Your community identified the mainstreet to be performing well in terms of:

- Grocery and fresh food businesses
- Welcoming to all people
- Car accessibility and parking

On the other hand, the following areas were highlighted as not performing as well:

- Amenities and facilities
- Free and comfortable group seating
- Public art, community art, water or light feature

Please note - In the following sections of the report 'Ferodale Road' refers to the section of Ferodale Road between Peppertree Road and Medowie Road.

ABOUT FERODALE ROAD

Ferodale Road is a two way double lane road which serves as an access to a cluster of eateries and supermarkets. It has a divider towards Medowie Road which slows down the traffic coming in from the highway. There is lush greenery with trees on both sides of the road along with wide footpaths.

To either side are Medowie Community Centre, Woolworths, a park, a large car park and some terrace housing. The road also features a bus stop and public toilets, both located nearby the community centre.

At the time of the assessment, Ferodale Road was mostly used by Woolworths customers as a way to exit the centre and access Medowie Road. There was also limited pedestrian activity along the road, with most users driving into the commercial area.

58

FERODALE RD, OFFERS A RELATIVELY LOW PLACE EXPERIENCE, WITH A PX SCORE 6 POINTS LOWER THAN THE 2021 NATIONAL BENCHMARK AVERAGE STREET PX OF 66/100.[1]

PLACE STRENGTHS AND PRIORITIES

Your Strengths and Priorities are determined by aggregating community values against the current performance of your street.

- High CF + High PX Score = Strength
- High CF + Low PX Score = Priority
- Mid to low CF + Low PX Score = For consideration

CF	STRENGTHS
	Vegetation and natural elements (street trees, planting, water etc.)
	Welcoming to all people
	General condition of vegetation, street trees and other planting
	Sense of safety (for all ages, genders, day/night etc.)
	Overall look and visual character of the area

CF	IMPROVEMENT PRIORITIES
	Things to do in the evening (shopping, dining, entertainment etc.)
	Maintenance of public spaces and street furniture
	Cleanliness of public space
	Walking paths that connect to other places
	Ease of walking around (including crossing the street, moving between destinations)
	Elements of the natural environment (views, vegetation, topography, water etc.)

CF	FOR CONSIDERATION
	Local history, heritage buildings or features
	Outdoor restaurant, cafe and/or bar seating

LEGEND

- Strengths (Protect and build upon these attributes)
- Improvement Priorities (Focus on improving these attributes)
- For Consideration (Focus on improving these attributes AFTER all priorities have been addressed)

Notes: 1. National average score used in 0.1 (April 2021). 2. More custom items can be found in appendix

PLACESCORE

HOW DOES FERODALE ROAD COMPARE?

Ferodale Road is performing below the National Benchmark average. Its main point of difference is car accessibility and fresh food businesses. Most other aspects of place are either performing similarly or below the national average.

Understanding your strengths and weaknesses compared to the National Benchmark can help you plan to build on your competitive advantage or improve areas that are under performing.

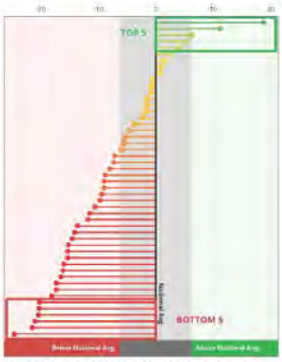
PX SCORES

- 66 National
- 64 Market St, Newcastle
- 60 Ferodale Rd, Medowie
- 58 Hunter St, Newcastle
- 49 Burton St, Vincentia
- 46 Kinghorne St, Nowra

BEST AND WORST PERFORMING ATTRIBUTES

TOP 5 ATTRIBUTES COMPARED TO THE NATIONAL AVERAGE	DIFFERENCE FROM NATIONAL AVERAGE
Car accessibility and parking	+18.7%
Grocery and fresh food businesses	+11.2%
Businesses that reflect the local community and values	+6.2%
Vegetation and natural elements (street trees, planting, water etc.)	+5.3%
Evidence of recent public investment (new planting, paving, street furniture etc.)	+4.0%

BOTTOM 5 ATTRIBUTES COMPARED TO THE NATIONAL AVERAGE	DIFFERENCE FROM NATIONAL AVERAGE
Free and comfortable group seating	-24.6%
Street furniture (including benches, bins, lights etc.)	-21.5%
Interesting things to look at (people, shops, views etc.)	-21.0%
Free and comfortable places to sit alone	-20.4%
Amenities and facilities (toilets, water fountains, parents room etc.)	-20.3%



PX score of the 50 attributes on Ferodale Rd compared with Place Score's National Benchmark

PLACESCORE

ABOUT YOUR DATA

This section includes a summary of your Care Factor survey and Street PX Assessment data. This includes your community's values, the performance of your main street, how it compares to other places in Australia, the strengths and priorities for your mainstreet.

Place Score offers two sophisticated data collection tools: Care Factor (CF) survey and Place Experience (PX) Assessment.

Like a 'place census', Care Factor captures what your community really values, while PX Assessments measure the community's lived place experience.

Together, they help you identify what is important, how the place is performing, and what the focus of change should be. An attribute with a high CF but a low PX should be a priority for investment as it will have the most positive impact on the most amount of people.

ABOUT YOUR PLACE SCORE DATA

Two types of Place Score data have been used to develop the recommendations in this report.

Data source	n=
Town Centre Care Factor (CF)	119
Street Place Experience (PX) Assessment	62

Your Town Centre Care Factor (CF)

- Collected face to face on 23 and 24 April 2021
- 119 respondents: 52 men, 66 women and 1 different identity

Your Street PX Assessment

- Collected face to face on 23 and 24 April 2021
- 62 respondents: 26 men and 36 women

To support the development of this Impact Makeover Report, Place Score has also commissioned Google Maps (2021).

THE FIVE DIMENSIONS OF GREAT PLACES

The 50 Place Score attributes have been defined as a result of extensive investigation of community, academic and commercial research to identify the factors that contribute to place experience. We group them under five key place dimensions.

LOOK & FUNCTION
The physical characteristics of the area - how it looks and works, its buildings, public space and vegetation

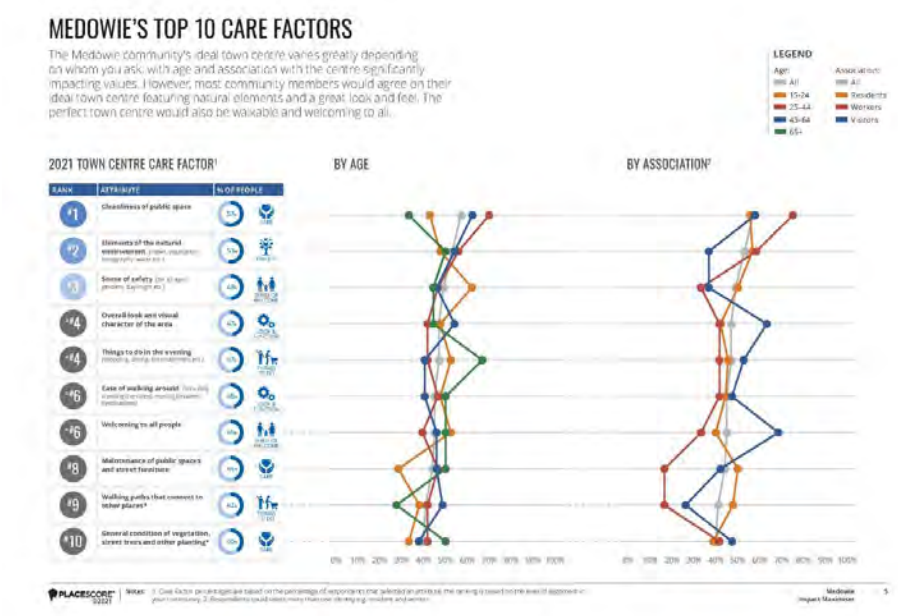
SENSE OF WELCOME
Whether the place is inviting to a range of people regardless of age, income, gender, ethnicity or interests

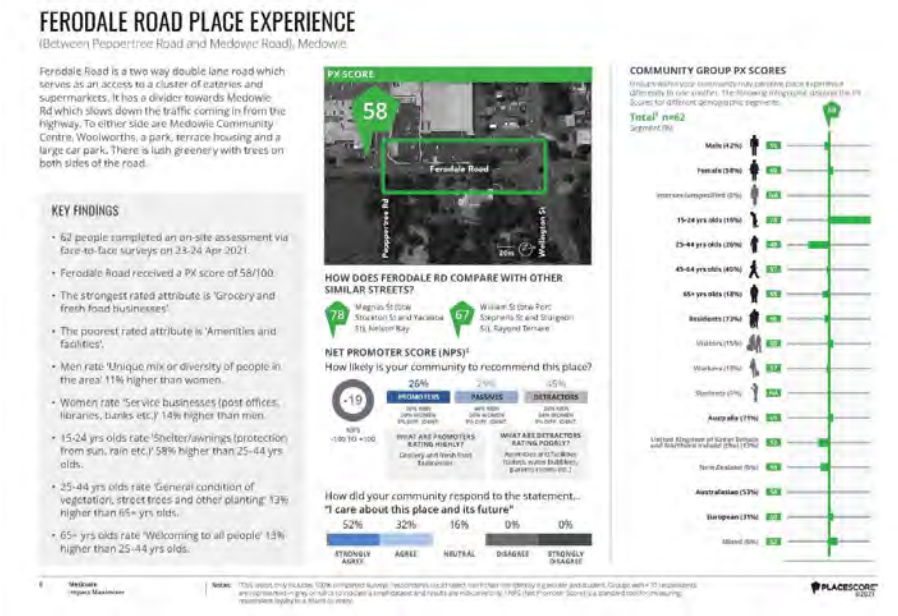
THINGS TO DO
Activities, events and the invitation to spend time in the place that might lead to a smile, a nod or even a new friend

UNIQUENESS
Things that make the area interesting, special or unique - these could be physical, social, cultural or economic aspects of the place

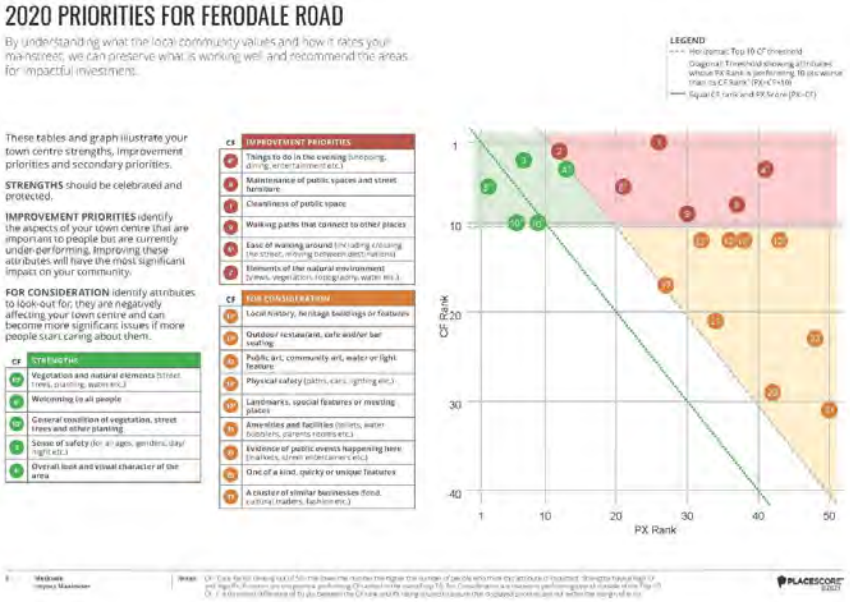
CARE
How well the area is managed, maintained and whether improvements are being made - it considers care, pride and both personal and financial investment

PLACESCORE


MEDOWIE'S TOP 10 CARE FACTORS
The Medowie community's ideal town centre varies greatly depending on whom you ask, with age and association with the centre significantly impacting values. However, most community members would agree on their ideal town centre featuring natural elements and a great look and feel. The perfect town centre would also be walkable and welcoming to all.
LEGEND
2021 TOWN CENTRE CARE FACTOR
BY AGE
BY ASSOCIATION


FERODALE ROAD PLACE EXPERIENCE
(Between Pepperitree Road and Medowie Road), Medowie
Ferodale Road is a two way double lane road which serves as an access to a cluster of eateries and supermarkets. It has a divider towards Medowie Rd which slows down the traffic coming in from the highway. To either side are Medowie Community Centre, Woolworths, a park, terrace housing and a large car park. There is lush greenery with trees on both sides of the road.
KEY FINDINGS
• 62 people completed an on-site assessment via face-to-face surveys on 23-24 Apr 2021.
• Ferodale Road received a PX score of 58/100.
• The strongest rated attribute is 'Grocery and fresh food businesses'.
• The poorest rated attribute is 'Amenities and facilities'.
• Men rate 'Unique mix or diversity of people in the area' 11% higher than women.
• Women rate 'Service businesses (post offices, libraries, banks etc.)' 14% higher than men.
• 15-24 yrs olds rate 'Shelter/awnings (protection from sun, rain etc.)' 58% higher than 25-44 yrs olds.
• 25-44 yrs olds rate 'General condition of vegetation, street trees and other planting' 13% higher than 65+ yrs olds.
• 65+ yrs olds rate 'Welcoming to all people' 13% higher than 25-44 yrs olds.
PX SCORE
58
Ferodale Road
Pepperitree Rd
Wellington St
HOW DOES FERODALE RD COMPARE WITH OTHER SIMILAR STREETS?
78
Magnus St (Site)
Stockton St and Yacaaba St, Nelson Bay
67
William St (Site Port)
Stephens St and Stringybark St, Raymond Terrace
NET PROMOTER SCORE (NPS)
How likely is your community to recommend this place?
-19
26%
29%
45%
PROMOTERS
PASSIVES
DETRACTORS
WHAT ARE PROMOTERS RATING HIGHLY?
WHAT ARE DETRACTORS RATING POORLY?
How did your community respond to the statement...
"I care about this place and its future"
52%
32%
16%
0%
0%
STRONGLY AGREE
AGREE
NEUTRAL
DISAGREE
STRONGLY DISAGREE
COMMUNITY GROUP PX SCORES
Total n=62
Male (42%)
Female (58%)
15-24 yrs olds (19%)
25-44 yrs olds (26%)
45-64 yrs olds (40%)
65+ yrs olds (14%)
Residents (72%)
Visitors (15%)
Workers (13%)
Australia (71%)
Australasian (53%)
European (31%)
Mixed (6%)
PLACESCORE

A town centre's PX Score is a number between 0 and 100 which measures your community's experience of that place. Here we drill down into the individual place attributes which contribute positively and negatively to place experience. The three strongest and poorest attributes under each place dimension are listed. Each attribute score is shown as a number between 0 and 10.
STRONGEST PERFORMING (SCORE/10)
POOREST PERFORMING (SCORE/10)
LOOK & FUNCTION
12 /20
The physical characteristics of the area - how it looks and works, its buildings, public space and vegetation
Vegetation and natural elements
7.3
Physical comfort
6.8
Overall look and visual character of the area
6.6
Street furniture
4.6
Shelter/awnings
4.3
Physical safety
3.4
SENSE OF WELCOME
13 /20
Whether the place inviting to a range of people regardless of age, income, gender, ethnicity or interests
Grocery and fresh food businesses
7.8
Welcoming to all people
7.4
Car accessibility and parking
7.3
Amenities and facilities
3.6
Diversity of price points
3.4
Service businesses
3.2
THINGS TO DO
10 /20
Activities, events and the invitation to spend time in the place that might lead to a smile, a nod or even a new friend
Evidence of community activity
5.3
Space for group activities or gatherings
5.3
Walking paths that connect to other places
5.1
Free and comfortable group seating
3.9
Things to do in the evening
4.5
Free and comfortable places to sit alone
4.5
UNIQUENESS
10 /20
Things that make the area interesting, special or unique - these could be physical, social, cultural or economic aspects of the place
Elements of the natural environment
6.1
Uniqueness or diversity of people in the area
5.9
A cluster of similar businesses
5.1
Public art, community art, water or light feature
3.9
Unusual or unique businesses/shops
4.5
Unusual or unique buildings or public space design
4.5
CARE
13 /20
How well the area is managed, maintained and whether improvements are being made - it considers care, pride and both personal and financial investment
Interaction with local/ other people in the area
7.3
General condition of businesses and shopfronts
7.1
General condition of vegetation, street trees and other planting
6.8
Maintenance of public spaces and street furniture
5.5
Shop window dressing
5.5
Cleanliness of public space
5.5
PLACESCORE
Medowie
Impact Maximiser


2020 PRIORITIES FOR FERODALE ROAD
By understanding what the local community values and how it rates your mainstreet, we can preserve what is working well and recommend the areas for impactful investment.
LEGEND
These tables and graph illustrate your town centre strengths, improvement priorities and secondary priorities.
STRENGTHS should be celebrated and protected.
IMPROVEMENT PRIORITIES identify the aspects of your town centre that are important to people but are currently under-performing. Improving these attributes will have the most significant impact on your community.
FOR CONSIDERATION identify attributes to look-out for, they are negatively affecting your town centre and can become more significant issues if more people start caring about them.
CF
STRENGTHS
Vegetation and natural elements (street trees, planting, water etc.)
Welcoming to all people
General condition of vegetation, street trees and other planting
Sense of safety (for all ages, genders, day/night etc.)
Overall look and visual character of the area
CF
IMPROVEMENT PRIORITIES
Things to do in the evening (sleeping, dining, entertainment etc.)
Maintenance of public spaces and street furniture
Cleanliness of public space
Walking paths that connect to other places
Ease of walking around (including crossing the street, moving between destinations)
Elements of the natural environment (trees, vegetation, hiding paths, water etc.)
CF
FOR CONSIDERATION
Local history, heritage buildings or features
Outdoor restaurant, cafe and/or bar seating
Public art, community art, water or light feature
Physical safety (paths, cars, lighting etc.)
Landmarks, special features or meeting places
Amenities and facilities (toilets, water fountains, parents rooms etc.)
Evidence of public events happening here (markets, street entertainers etc.)
One of a kind, quirky or unique features
A cluster of similar businesses (food, cultural, traders, fashion etc.)
CF Rank
PX Rank
1
10
20
30
40
50
PLACESCORE

PLACE SCORE
LEVEL 5, SUITE 1-2, 2-12 FOVEAUX STREET, SURRY HILLS, NSW, 2010, AUSTRALIA
PLACESCORE.ORG
ABN 19 610 823 286
T: +61 2 8021 7027
TEMPLATE V.0.74

Appendix C - Workshop 1 (Sept 2021)

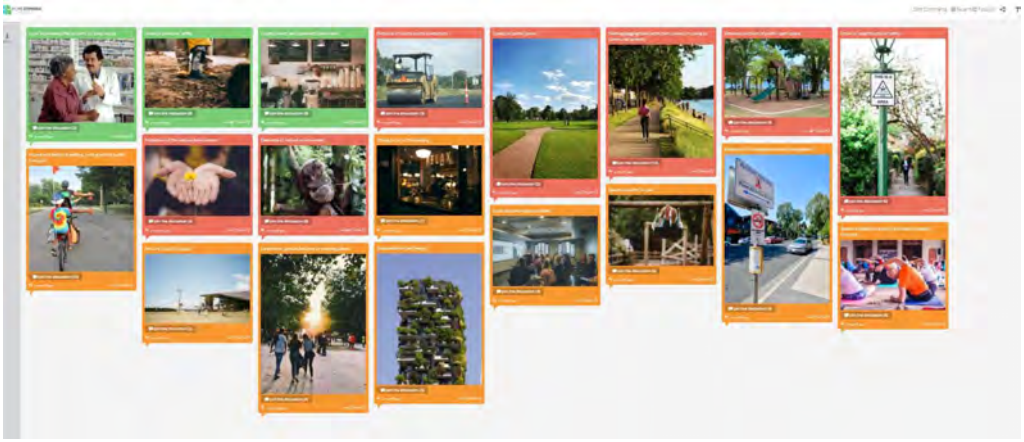
Workshop 1 was held with local residents, businesses and representatives from community groups and organisations to set priorities and a vision for Medowie. The results of the Liveability Index (**Appendix A**) were the starting point for discussion. The following activities were undertaken.

Activity: What is your place plan?

Online engagement tool (Miro) was used to help create a fun and engaging workshop activity designed to build confidence in the online environment.

Activity: Testing the Liveability Index values for Medowie

Online engagement tool, Social pinpoint, was used to help capture and focus a 'deep dive' into the Liveability Index findings for Medowie. The exercise was designed to explore what the attributes mean to different people.



The following table is a summary of the activity. There were 104 comments received.

It should be noted that many of the participant comments were adjusted and uplifted to focus on the broader attribute, rather than on specifics. For example, if someone had commented, 'More rubbish bins – especially before Maccas opens' this has been uplifted to 'Well maintained public spaces with more seating and no rubbish'. This process ensures similar comments are grouped and key priorities are more easily highlighted.

It should also be noted that some of the Liveability attributes are very similar – these have been aligned into the following table to best highlight the similar attributes and comments and are not in the order of priorities as presented in the Liveability Index data findings for Medowie in 2020 (see **Appendix A**).

Some of the key findings are:

- Create more safe pathways and better connections for pedestrians and cyclists between neighbourhoods and to surrounding areas.
- Create additional or improved public recreation spaces for all ages and abilities.
- Improve and utilise opportunities for bushwalking and mountain biking.
- Investigate opportunities for a new quality public place, like a town square, for people to meet.
- More opportunities for outdoor music or entertainment like a festival.
- Make outdoor spaces more attractive and convenient with additional seating, lighting, public art, and signage.

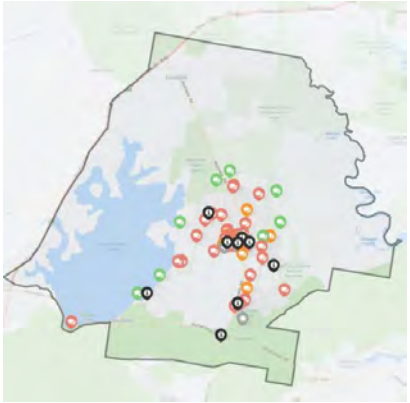
Type	Liveability attribute	What does this mean to me? Why is it important to me?	Comment count
STRENGTHS	Local business that provides for daily needs	Everyday shopping/grocery needs are met however more shopping and/or service options would generally be welcomed	5
	Locally owned and operated businesses	Support unique local business in Medowie esp. based in food production	3
	Sense of personal safety	Need adequate street lights and pathing to access facilities	2
		Comfortable with personal safety in Medowie	1
HIGH PRIORITIES	Sense of neighbourhood safety	Better street and path lighting and use of CCTV	5
		Knowing who your neighbours are	1
	General condition of public open space	Well maintained public spaces with more seating and no rubbish	6
		More park equipment options to suit various users ie., young children or those who would like exercise and relaxation	4
	Quality of public space	Seating and outdoor gym equipment along Medowie Road shared paths to make one long park	6
		Activation of existing areas i.e. Park Run	1
	Evidence of recent public investment	Quality installations required	1
		Improved entrance to Medowie at Richardson Road roundabout, suburb signage and consider public art element	3
	Protection of the natural environment	Wildlife is in decline whilst feral animals are increasing including domestic cats	3
		More expectation on developers to provide green spaces and retain natural bushland where possible	2
		More environmental education opportunities (including waste, Landcare, Ngioka model)	3
	Elements of the natural environment	Nearby bushland (Hunter Water/State Forest) to be able to be used for bushwalking and mountain biking	3
		Medowie means place of tall trees and should be kept as such	1

Type	Liveability attribute	What does this mean to me? Why is it important to me?	Comment count
	Walking/jogging/bike paths that connect housing to communal amenity	New and improved pathways are needed to provide safe connection between nearby suburbs and key features i.e. Medowie to RAAF base; Medowie to Raymond Terrace along Richardson Road, Medowie to Fern Bay and Stockton; and between schools, shops and housing.	14
SECONDARY PRIORITIES	Access and safety of walking, cycling and/or public transport	School children (Wirrenda) and pre-school (Kindlebark) unable to walk to and from school safely	4
		More bus shelters and more direct bus connections – getting to the University can take 2-3 hours	3
		Pedestrian crossings across Ferodale and Medowie Roads	2
		Improved safety of parking options at Wirreanda and Grahamstown Dam walk	2
		Trucks along Medowie Road should use the highway not Medowie Road as a short cut	1
	Evidence of Council/government management	More frequent mowing of nature strips and laneways	2
		More kerbing to remove open drains	1
		Better response to maintenance requests	1
	Things to do in the evening	Live outdoor music or entertainment opportunities e.g. outdoor cinema or festival	4
		More takeaway food options	1
		General comment regarding tension between 'things to do' and potential future development	1
	Spaces suitable for specific activities or special interests	Family activity options to include teenagers such as swimming pool, cinema, bowling alley, regular events	3
		Retiree activities i.e. Men's shed, senior programs	2
		More family support or adult education program opportunities i.e. WEA, My Time support	1
	Spaces suitable for play	Potential access to Grahamstown Dam for kayaking and non motorised water sports	1
		Fenced playground	1
		Upgrade to Finnan Park (HWC) to include disability friendly equipment	1
	Local education options	Public high school required	2
	Sustainable urban design	Ensure future developments meets environmental goals	1
		Better future planning of paths are required for future developments	2
	Amount of public space	Lack of public space.	2

Type	Liveability attribute	What does this mean to me? Why is it important to me?	Comment count
	Landmarks, special features of meeting places	Town square for teenagers to 'hang out' – mobile phone charging options	2

Activity: 'Mapping your priorities'

This exercise focused on people mapping specific areas to a liveability priority.



There were 69 responses received and some of the key themes are as follows:

- Lack of safe pathways connections with 30 related comments.
- Additional/enhance existing public recreation spaces and opportunities including bushwalking and mountain biking opportunities with 23 related comments.
- No town square or quality central place for people to meet and/or community space in general with 8 related comments.

The full overview of comments and suggestions is included in the tables below.

Theme 1: Lack of safe pathways connections (30 comments)		
#	Comment	Pin type
Priority Medowie Road path completion		
1	Think the path [Medowie Road] is great and can't wait for this little missing link [Silverwattle to Ferodale] to be completed.	Celebrate and protect
2	Safety for walking - not enough lighting, whole length of Medowie Road.	High Priority
3	Glad to hear this is happening!	Information
4	Pedestrian crossing required. Footpaths are great but nothing to connect them from where they end on one side of the street and where they start on the other side of the street.	High Priority

	Theme 1: Lack of safe pathways connections (30 comments)	
#	Comment	Pin type
5	They are currently extending the shared path from Ferodale to Silverwattle Drive, reducing the amount of crossings	High Priority
6	Lack of safe footpaths – Priority between Ferodale and Medowie Road	High Priority
Priority around schools		
7	Footpaths connections to school [Wirreanda]	High Priority
8	Fix up this area [Wirreanda] to make parking for the school - making it safer for children with ride to school initiatives - to also include space for people with a disability to park. People are being injured due to looseness of the gravel. Needs a whole approach.	High Priority
9	There is no footpath or safe walking area through this stretch. I often see pedestrians come off the Medowie Road new pathway and turn onto Brocklesbury Rd and just walk on the street. Due to the proximity to the main road it is a particularly dangerous section of road for pedestrians. This section of road also connects to the public school and due to the lack of pathway forces children to ride all the way to Ferodale road to get to Wirreanda or risk it taking the shorter route.	High Priority
10	Pathway connections between Medowie Public School and Christian School to be improved.	High Priority
11	Terrifying along Abundance Road with kids walking from Medowie public school. Needs pathway along here.	High Priority
12	Also terrifying along here for school children [Kirrang and Wilga Rd] pathway improvements and pathway connections between Medowie Public School and Christian School to be improved.	High Priority
13	No footpath [Kirrang Drive] connecting to the school [Medowie Public] Better connection for all schools with pathways. Also connect sporting fields to school	High Priority
14	Extend existing pathway along Waropara Road in this section between Christian School and Kula Road.	High Priority
15	I wonder if a short term solution could be an on-road bike lane separated with a barrier similar to the new lane on Hunter St Newcastle?	High Priority
Priority around town centre connectedness		
16	Footpath connections from residential to town centre- lack of: conflict between pedestrians and cars	High Priority
17	Town centre/walking paths/parks- rubbish	High Priority
18	A pedestrian crossing somewhere along Ferodale Road would be great. It's a very busy road and is difficult to cross safely.	High Priority
19	Rethink this whole commercial area. Complete dogs breakfast at present. Start with a centre, incorporate pedestrian areas and green space. Radiate connectivity from here so people can access without driving. green space trails to avoid roads and link the N/S/W/E of Medowie	High Priority

	Theme 1: Lack of safe pathways connections (30 comments)	
#	Comment	Pin type
20	Agreed. If you want to park at woolies (generally the place where you would buy the most items) it is not safe or convenient to get to the post office or chemist or even the butcher. Need to prioritise safe pedestrian access	High Priority
21	Consider a walking pathway that takes people through the bush area to the town centre. A walk through designated green corridor rather than all pathways and recreation on a busy road	Med. priority
22	Adding to others comments about pathing - we need to create footpaths or shared paths along bus routes to alleviate conflicts between pedestrians and transport and connect housing to the shared path infrastructure Council has provided. In particular, areas where the school buses travel. Picture of bus routes included.	High Priority
23	Dangerous at the sporting fields, Ditch should be a footpath. Cars parked here - often bogged and need to be pulled out. Lots of cars and existing parking at oval is not sufficient. Dangerous with kids.	High Priority
24	Connections to soccer/ Medowie social/ school	High Priority
Priority around connection to other suburbs/areas		
25	Link Medowie Road path to the RAAF base / Airport	High Priority
26	Bike connection to airport via RAAF base is missing.	Med. Priority
27	Consideration even to link further with those that commute to work into Newcastle. Newcastle/Lake Mac have FAR FAR superior safe cycleways and connectivity to public transport. Need to have a safe cycle access to Fern Bay, where city of Newcastle have provided safe access to the ferry wharf	High Priority
Other		
28	The pathway should connect to the town center to allow cyclist, runners and walkers to be able to travel to Finnan Park	High Priority
29	The pathway already connects to the town center (Fairlands then Ferodale - more important pathing required elsewhere)	High Priority
30	This is a dangerous location [South Street/Boyd Blvd] given the speed of the traffic, lack of lighting, a makeshift gutter and often sodden soil. Walking the dogs around this corner or riding bikes is dangerous. There is no safe place to walk on the edge of the road when turning up Boyd ave. Cars come from both directions at a higher speed because of the rural setting of the properties to the north. When walking the South street / James Road / Medowie raod loop this is the most dangerous corner.	High Priority

#	Theme 2: More/enhance existing public recreation areas including unlocking bushwalking/mountain biking opportunities (23 comments) Comment	Pin type
Unlocking bushwalking/mountain biking opportunities		
1	Preserve/ protect natural area- bike riding, bushwalking opportunities	Celebrate and protect
2	Wonderful bushwalks are present all across Medowie and these natural beauties' should always be celebrated	Celebrate and protect
3	Fantastic walking/riding trails that are currently an offence to use. Can we consult with Hunter water and allow the community access on specific marked trails and de-criminalise enjoying nature. Can create a 10km/5km/2km trail with minimal effort.	Celebrate and protect
4	The Medowie State Conservation Area and Medowie Nature Reserve are part of NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service. Could we formalise tracks, add signage and enhance the experience for locals and visitors alike (similar to Tilligerry Habitat)? What are we conserving? Are there points of interest?	Celebrate and protect
5	Transmission Line Trail should be not gated and opened up for runners, and bushwalkers, Great walk up to Daniel James trial and showcases Medowie's natural beauty	High Priority
6	Create a nature trail through bushland	High Priority
Enhancing existing organised sport / public recreation areas		
7	Consider a skate park redesign and seek input from the local kids. Get them to design a park with bowls etc. similar to that in Raymond Terrace or near Mereweather Beach in Newcastle. There are heaps of great young artists in town that could create some amazing murals if encouraged and supported by council	High Priority
8	Medium Priority – Skate park is not a quality place, it's messy and not a good place for younger children. Offering better place for teenagers to hang out may allow better use of the skate park area for younger kids as it is currently a safety issue for them (feeling unsafe).	Medium priority
9	Upgrade Ferodale Oval Amenities and provide second oval for cricket and AFL.	Med. priority
10	Upgrade amenities for Yulong Oval	Med. priority
11	Rarely see this great facility open? [Grahamstown Aquatic Club] can we make it more accessible for kite surfers/windsurfers as well as sailing.	Celebrate and protect
12	Expand the current BMX bike track	Celebrate and protect
13	Park run location? [Pacific Dunes]	Other
14	Coolabah reserve- protect, maintain this area	High Priority

	Theme 2: More/enhance existing public recreation areas including unlocking bushwalking/mountain biking opportunities (23 comments)	
#	Comment	Pin type
15	Retaining wall and Path coming from Coolabah Rd damaged.	High Priority
16	Coolabah reserve	Celebrate and protect
Enhancing existing passive recreation / walking areas		
17	Formalised car parking for access to dam walk.	High Priority
18	Great connection to Raymond Terrace. Would like to see workout stations along this section of path from Fairlands to the Sailing club. This would be a great feature and enhance the path to become a fitness trail. Addition of 1-3 water stations along here would also be a benefit (Join the party Hunter Water?)	Celebrate and protect
19	Toilet at beginning of shared pathway (across the road from Kedahla Close). Toilets are provided at Finnan Park (Hunter Water Corporation), but it is very dangerous crossing Richardson Road from the shared path to access them.	High Priority
20	like to see exercise work stations along the Lisadell/Grahamstown road section of the footpath toward the sailing club	Medium priority
21	Fantastic pathways have been installed from the Bower Estate all the way to Catherine McAuley Catholic College. I think it's worth considering placing some bins along the path at few points. Many afternoons the pathway is packed with people walking, riding and running up and down Medowie road and it will only get busier when the connection to the catholic college is complete. It's a beautiful path to keep this path spotless and to celebrate it I advise we install some garbage bins.	Medium priority
22	Lighting along this path would be a great asset especially in the winter months when people are exercising after dark.	Medium priority
23	Need to incorporate fitness stations within residential areas of Medowie to promote health and wellbeing - installation of exercise equipment in various parks connected by walkways/ pathways to create a 'fitness trail'	Medium priority

	Theme 3: No town square or quality central place for people to meet and/or community space in general (8 comments)	
	Comment	**Pin type**
1	Public space quality - no place that is safe, close to business. connected to central area, school. No town square in the town centre. Can create a better place for teenager to be. Skatepark is not a quality place. messy. Nowhere else to go for teenager.	High Priority
2	Quality public space for teenager. High tech benches, solar. Connect to these public spaces (bike paths)!	High Priority
3	Public Space - Missing town Square and facilities to accommodate a growing community. Well connected to the rest of medowie.	High Priority
4	Creating a centre will give Medowie a starting point from where connections radiate from. The town is a hotchpotch of commercial development. A centre with a pedestrianised area/green space/memorial etc would bring the commercial area together.	High Priority
5	There is a hut / shed in the bush here used by the kids as a place to engage in antisocial behaviours such as drug use. May be worth having a look to see what's going on there and what options can be provided for teens if this is the best thing in town	High Priority
6	Link [shopping centre] better with education opportunities.	Med. priority
7	Mens shed and community veggie garden location? [Near Medowie Community Centre]	Other
8	Medowie country music festival location? [Medowie social]	Other

	Theme 4: Other (6 comments)	
	Comment	**Pin type**
Road improvements		
1	There should be turning lane for the Bower estate when come from the highway, its dangerous with cars to slow up and turn with cars following behind having just gone from 100km/hr to 80km/hr (Apologises for photo google maps hasn't been updated)	High Priority
2	Traffic island - many people turning right into Boundary Rd (from Medowie Rd), cut across and end up on the incorrect (right) side of the street. Many Bower estate residents have almost had collisions whilst leaving the estate because of people entering it.	High Priority
3	Seal the whole of Ferodale Road, rethink this intersection [Ferodale and Fairlands) and traffic priority	High Priority
Other		
4	Mobile reception is appalling - not sure if there is anything Council could do to help here	High Priority
5	**Time for our own Police station?**	**High Priority**

Activity: 'Vision for Medowie in 10 years' time'

Participants were asked to provide three words to describe their vision for Medowie in 10 years' time. The following word cloud resulted (the larger the font the more times the word was used by participants):

Activity: Local case study – Continue momentum from the 7 Day Makeover

A case study using online break out rooms was used to discuss ways to continue momentum from the 7 Day Makeover, with the view that creating great places can benefit business and community and doesn't necessarily mean at great cost.

Some of the key ideas included

- Extend 7 Day Makeover main features throughout town i.e. 'gum leaves' along new shared path together with seating
- Lights in trees at Community centre
- Town centre map
- Pedestrian crossing across Ferodale Road
- More mountain bike/walking trails to suit young people and family activity

Activity: Quick Wins, Big Picture

At the conclusion of Workshop 1 participants were asked to undertake a home work exercise which would feed into the activities for Workshop 2. This activity centred around people detailing their quick win and big picture ideas. These were presented as part of the presentation for Workshop 2 as follows:

Quick wins

- Street library in Bower playground
- Garden clean up
- Walk and bike trails map
- Small and large dog parks
- Food truck nights
- Local park run
- Nature trails through state forest
- Shade along new Medowie Road path
- Lining bike paths where footpaths aren't available
- Maintain existing fire trails
- Workout stations along the path to the Dam

Big picture

- Run a farmers market
- More shared pathways
- Water play splash park at Finnan Park
- Unpowered watercraft activities expanded on Grahamstown Dam
- Bins, seating and shade along new Medowie Road pathway
- Develop a Men's shed
- Upgrade trails from Moffatts Swamp to Oyster Cove
- Develop a community garden

Appendix D - Workshop 2 (Sept 2021)

Workshop 2 attendees produced a series of Action Plans based on quick win and big picture ideas:

QUICK WIN 1: Run food truck nights	
What do we already have to work with?	Monthly market around Bull'n'Bush Existing food truck event at the Bower Teddy Bear's picnic fundraiser AFL Field has water, power and toilets available
What's the situation?	Businesses can benefit from extra people in the town centre New toilets in town centre park should have power available Community centre can be used stall holders to complement event
What does success look like?	Event should be welcoming to residents and community members Opportunity for fund raising for community projects (tie in with 'leaf' stickers) Pleasant night time environment (fairy lights etc) Appropriate timing (not when other large events are on)
Who needs to be involved and what is their role	Business owners – to enable use of their car parking Land developers Guides and Scouts groups (car wash fundraising / can collection) Business owners (sponsorship opportunity) Volunteers
What might stop this happening?	Lack of toilets Lack of room Lack of parking Availability of power and water Ability to attract enough food trucks

Three key actions to make it happen	1. Council approval and backing 2. Schedule it at the right time 3. A facilitator or group/team to lead the event.
QUICK WIN 2: Implement a local park run	
What do we already have to work with?	Existing runners or interested parties – gyms to assist; Little Athletics group Local café sponsor – support for event and for participants and business Existing Park Run Australia network see website link https://www.parkrun.com.au/
What's the situation?	Where would the park run go – needs to go for 5km. The run around the dam would work? Safety of track – pedestrian track. No crossing of roads. Bushland track – space for car parking?
What does success look like?	Would be having a park run
Who needs to be involved and what is their role	Land owner approval Community action group – volunteers for the actual park run – set up flags, timers etc
What might stop this happening?	Lack of suitable land; major roads; difficulties with insurance; lack of community support; COVID
Three key actions to make it happen	1. Find the right person/team to lead the event 2. Find the appropriate location that meets all the requirements, safety , access, permissions 3. Get approval from Parkrun Australia, promotion to potential users
QUICK WIN 3: Street Library in Bower Playground	
What do we already have to work with?	7 day makeover included a street library – look at what works and doesn't work for this one Bower Playground
What's the situation?	Bower Playground is a little removed so the location is helpful Connection to Bower Playground is good Playground will have toilets and car parking Enough room for the library to be included

What does success look like?	Would motivate kids to ride to Bower Playground to access the library People are using it to take books away but also while they are there Good circulation of books Preschool nearby and could be a partnership
Who needs to be involved and what is their role	Parents with kids to help facilitate Facebook group for people that live in Bower Men shed to build the structure Business donations from materials Council could assist with funding if a group was to facilitate
What might stop this happening?	Vandalism – make it vandal proof – Perspex rather than glass Content might not be an issue so someone should monitor No one wants to do the project but unlikely
Three key actions to make it happen	1. Identify the leading group/person – possibly 7 day makeover group rep 2. Sourcing community feedback on the project 3. Researching other successful street libraries 4. Sourcing of building materials 5. Approvals to build on the land 6. Identify a content manager/librarian
QUICK WIN 4: Shade trees along new Medowie Road pathway	
What do we already have to work with?	Brocklesby Road is a good example. Planting like this would work; going to the Bower has taller trees Nursery at Shoal Bay (Council run – Ngioka) can assist with appropriate planning. Volunteers could contribute. Create a visual barrier between the existing pathway and the road. Need some 'middle growth/scrubs, not just trees.

	Garden beds work well, compare western shoreline at Stockton and garden projects at Kindlebark Oval Medowie. Brocklesby Road is a good example. Planting like this would work; going to the Bower has taller trees
What's the situation?	Brand new path, but the southern end still has lots or road works. No trees, barren. Leaves and sticks create hazard for kids scooters and skateboards. Gumtrees are a problem. High speed traffic and lack of lighting for pedestrians. Car lights make it difficult to see.
What does success look like?	Looks less new/sparse. Will look more Medowie like. Will bring more wildlife with lower bushes. Filtering car lights. Solar lights would add to the look and feel and provide safety. It will be more pleasant to walk there. Higher use rate of people. Drink water station along the path, rubbish bins, and a place to sit and rest (sandstone blocks like in town centre. Convenience. The path to continue to the RAAF base to the south.
Who needs to be involved and what is their role	Council, Ngioka Centre (nursery). Council - Regular sweeping of the path to keep it clean and safe. Volunteers to install. Garden groups, landcare groups, scouts. Could be a 7 day makeover project? i.e seating, garden beds etc. Could this be a school project? Like a Tree Planning Day, garden beds etc. Schools would be happy to be involved
What might stop this happening?	Lack of funding, although it is not expected to be too expensive (gardens, limestone blocks).
Three key actions to make it happen	1. Just do it! 2. Get key stakeholders together. 3. Get nursery ready to start. Pick the right trees.

BIG PICTURE 1: Promote the community garden	
What do we already have to work with?	Community garden on Waropara Rd
What's the situation?	Owned by Medowie Christian College Run by a separate group Publically available – need to coordinate with group running the garden Facebook page for the community garden
What does success look like?	Potential for additional garden(s) – shared knowledge in running new gardens
Who needs to be involved and what is their role?	Community garden running group Council available of land (new sites) Facebook group – Medowie Permies. Could be linked with new or existing gardens Residents Council / Businesses / Farmers – materials, manure, soil, plants etc
What might stop this happening?	Nil.
Three key actions to make it happen	Obtain materials from sponsors – start with local businesses Advertising signage (Council approvals etc.) Access to Medowie Tidy Towns materials etc.
BIG PICTURE 2: Develop a Regional Play Space	
What do we already have to work with?	Have previously held a Christmas Carnival experience on the AFL grounds/Medowie Social land Potential use of existing car park space behind Medowie hall – which is only for overflow for community centre – often used for burnouts and other anti-social behaviour Also, space for land behind Coles for regional play space? Use of 'paper roads' in Medowie strategy to connect to regional play space' See link to Medowie Strategy on Council's website here https://www.portstephens.nsw.gov.au/grow/local-area-planning-strategies/medowie-strategy Other locations not discussed?

What's the situation?	Would solve a lot of problems already identified around meeting places. Medowie doesn't have anything like Speers Point park; Maitland Park – it would be great to have something of this calibre (but would cost $$) Some kind of permanent stage and seating potential includes previous discussion around Rotunda
What does success look like?	Would be a long time to deliver – and launch event would need to be huge!
Who needs to be involved and what is their role?	Everybody would need to be involved - would need master planning!
What might stop this happening?	Risk of delivery – is related to funding availability
Three key actions to make it happen	1. Would need some suitable space allocated to allow this to happen. 2. Would need consultation around what it would look like – supersized like Speers Point, Maitland or smaller 3. Masterplan
BIG PICTURE 3: More shared paths around Medowie	
What do we already have to work with?	Key connections are already in place (e.g. new Medowie Road pathway) Port Stephens Pathway Plan to review and prioritise from there
What's the situation?	Key pathways are there but there is no connections.
What does success look like?	Pathways joined from key connections to make the it easy to ride and not needing to drive with bike to shared pathway Interim measure to facilitate joining of pathways such as on road lined pathways (cycleways) where safety isn't a concern.
Who needs to be involved and what is their role?	Council for funding and construction, community for input
What might stop this happening?	Funding as pathways are expensive

Three key actions to make it happen	Port Stephens Pathway Plan to review and prioritise from there Talking to community to confirm priorities Community to work with Council to lobby external funding
BIG PICTURE 4: Run a farmers market	
What do we already have to work with?	Monthly markets already being held in front of Bull & Bush (private land). Town centre feels really alive when it is on! Food truck event held occasionally.
What's the situation?	Lack of parking at the moment and unsafe situations for young kids with cars driving in and out. Current location is very visible which is very important. You can combine the market with a visit to town centre business as well. This benefits the businesses. Location of markets: - Parking solution - perhaps moving market to Medowie social? Boyd Oval has sufficient parking and could be good location. - Moving markets elsewhere than Bull & Bush will take business away from shopping centre. The combination & proximity of markets + shops is important for business and customers.
What does success look like?	Activated town square for the markets. Strong social opportunities, meet and greet, be connected with your community, friends, and family. Music adds to the atmosphere of the markets. The market offers opportunity for additional activities. The markets are connected to other places and it is easy to move between (markets, skate, Medowie social, new rotunda for music). Location: the combination & proximity of markets + shops is important for business and customers. Maybe just rebrand the current markets? Use these to add other elements like music, food vans.
Who needs to be involved and what is their role?	Town centre Businesses Current market organisers and market stall holders.

What might stop this happening?	Nil.
Three key actions to make it happen	1. Start talking with organisations that are already doing it (current markets, food trucks). 2. Permanent advertising (sign) to create awareness (not just leading up to the day). Also use Facebook. 3. Provide supporting infrastructure like water, power, and waste.

Appendix E - Workshop 3 (June 2022)

Two community workshops considered the town centre expansion site at 38 Ferodale Road, Medowie. These workshops focused on how the new site can fulfil the community aspirations and priorities for improving the Medowie town centre.

Major themes considered were Community and Recreation, Movement and Place, and the Town Centre expansion site. Below an overview of the suggestion made by workshop attendees.

1. Community and Recreation

Look and feel

- Reflect the Place of Tall Trees theme
- Reflect the Medowie 7 Day Makeover theme - natural look and feel with timber and sandstone.
- Consider seasonal colours.
- No concrete or hard surfaces.
- Classier open spaces to complement future cafes and restaurants in a future commercial space.
- Use sustainable materials

Shade

- Provide sufficient shade and reflect the Place of Tall Trees theme
- Use a combination of trees (plants and trees native to the area, well maintained), shelters (hard covers not shade sails, arbours, made of natural materials like timber and sandstone)
- Integrate infrastructure and street furniture with trees and natural space.
- 2-sided shade structures (wind protection)

Furniture

- Practical seating//supportive; no sunlounge chairs
- Locked garbage bins/cabinets
- Public toilets - accommodate women’s needs
- Covered picnic tables
- Something a bit different like chairs that have pushbike repair kits attached, furniture that can be moved around, solar charging points for phone charging and bird hives (nest boxes).
- Moveable furniture that can be moved around
- Include power for multiuse

Play elements (see also under Miscellaneous)

- Bike/scooter circuit, also suitable for little kids
- BMX pump, track with asphalt surface
- Something like Bare Creek Bike Park in Sydney: the park features 1.6km of downhill bike trails, flow trails, skills and dirt jump areas, a pump track, walking trails, a dedicated access road, as well as toilets, drinking fountains, bike maintenance stations
- Consider examples like Boomerang Park and Maitland Park with open areas, fenced play area for kids (especially next to road), where you can ride a bike and with footpaths around the park
- Create opportunity for teenagers to ride their bikes (push and motor) somewhere away from the town centre. Include shaded areas
- Playground positioned back from the road
- Centrally located so parents can supervise on one spot
- Talk to young people about design of play spaces
- Flying fox, climbing wall, tree tops equipment
- Tree based play concept e.g. Tree houses, ropes between trees, tree tops equipment, flying fox, slide coming down
- Fountain splash pad for little kids
- Range of ages for children for play
- Playground close to coffee shop/café
- Fenced playground like at Maitland Park
- Hedge maze
- Big kids playground - natural looking obstacle course circuit with things like railway sleepers etc
- Big boulders to enable people/kids to climb over rocks
- Climb on rocks and wander through gardens

Skate Park

- Playground/skate park receives polarised views across participants of the workshops: large skate park or a smaller park with a mix of other uses and facilities
- Existing skate park not in a great location that should be central in the community and collocate with playground, furniture etc
- Flat surface, bowls, rails etc
- Medowie Skate and Scoot - high proportion of young people - 680 signatures on petition
- Purpose built skate park with flats, fun box, and half pipes. Connectivity is important and needs passive surveillance so it does not attract unwanted activities. Should be twice the size of Stockton Skate Park, with covered seating, a cafe, and opportunity for birthday parties
- Co-locate skate and play to parents can grandparents can have eyes on both of the kids
- Relocate skate park to new site
- Skate park needs lighting

- Stockton example - combination of skate park element & adjacent to playground/play space (but separated)
- Lighting for a skate park to be dim normally and button push for brighter use lighting at night
- Not supportive of skate park as don't want to take up a new space with the skate park
- Playground: either a large skate park or a smaller park with a mix of other uses and facilities
- Can the existing ovals accommodate a skate park so it does not have to be on the new town site?
- No big skate park on the new town centre site
- Expand the park and include a young children skate park

Access and accessibility

- Accessibility to be considered
- Make access pathways wide enough for accessibility, prams etc
- All abilities
- Connecting key facilities
- Public transport stop
- Needs to be for everyone, use at different times etc.
- Wide shared walkways (prams, walk, bikes etc.)
- Make the toilets more accessible

Parking

- Provide sufficient parking
- Parking to be located close to picnic areas
- Rear to curb for safety of unloading kids & 'stuff'
- Rear to curb parking on both sides, and expand at the community centre to wrap around the block to connect the two blocks
- Rear to kerb parking for unloading kids
- Children areas away from parking
- Provide bike parking
- Car parking that can also cater for mobile vans for service delivery, like breast screening, library services, blood tests etc.
- Parking set back from recreation space areas with connecting pathways, like Stockton Park

Lighting

- Light up trees
- Main path lighting
- Solar panel that lights up in the night (interactive lighting)
- People will move through at night when area is lit up
- Use solar lighting
- Lighting needs to be highly elevated
- Security lighting

- Decorative lighting - can dress up at Christmas time etc
- Skate park needs lighting

Existing community centre

- Incorporate library, outdoor stage, presentation area
- Library - new branch/media/public Wi-Fi - sub-par internet
- Renovate and paint outside of the Community Centre
- Community Centre is location for the mobile library and provides for a range of other community services – would be good to provide options for them to take their services (which?) outside, but need to be able to do this safely and efficiently

Miscellaneous

- Water/pond
- Rope bridge or something to cross the creek to Medowie Social
- Programs for young people
- Outdoor furniture provider (kiosk) e.g. Beanbags, cushions etc.
- Indoor space/multi-purpose space
- Programs for young people
- Coffee van space
- Wetlands/boardwalks in marsh area; Raised walkway through the wetlands area
- Aerial ropes to pull yourself along
- Multipurpose space/sports:
  - PCYC
  - Community centre is used well; could this space be more functional
  - Mini library – programs
  - Wifi/internet
- Consider vandalism
- Outdoor fitness equipment
- Little dog area; separate small and large dog off leash areas; dogs on lead ok
- Basketball/multipurpose court
- Hopscotch on pathways
- Remote control boats
- Community amphitheatre
- Larger area to congregate everyone for ANZAC services etc
- Highlighting the indigenous culture of the area through street art or public art
- Cultural art display spaces - installations
- Artists wall - young people
- Inspiration - Wagga Victory Memorial Garden would be an option
- Multipurpose event spaces for outdoor cinema; for carols by candlelight, bands, markets etc; Markets - open events space
- Gardens that you can wander through; Artists wall - young people
- Native trees for the area to reduce maintenance - donate and buy a tree program to empower the community
- Whole family integrated space

2. Movement and Place

Traffic management

- Need to improve the flow and safety of shopping precinct that will affect traffic into and around proposed site (Ferodale Road)
- Currently 3 different levels within the shopping precinct and the number of driveways that people have to navigate means that people drive from shop to shop. This is unhealthy way to live in a township. Much better to promote health benefits of park and walk.
- Lights likely on Peppertree Road rather than bridge, roundabout or tunnel – this would allow larger groups of people to move between both precincts (shopping / retail and natural open space)
- Investigate one way options to slow down traffic
- Elevated and quirky speed humps would be preferable along Ferodale Road rather than diverting the road into the parcel of land
- Redirect heavy traffic (trucks) out of centre of town (signage / speed humps)
- Provide wayfinding signage from Medowie Road into Ferodale and shopping precinct
- We need a distinctive town centre. Car parking angled. Slowing down the traffic along Ferodale Road so people can choose to walk around town. At the moment people drive from one set of shops to the other - not healthy and dangerous.
- Fast chargers for electric vehicles (EV)
- Fairlands Road needs to be widened
- Campvale Drain bridge linked to Medowie Social

Parking

- Angled parking on southern side Ferodale Road and limit the speed to 40kms
- Angled parking can convert into food trucks parking
- Small cluster car parking throughout the site will give access to all types of visitors/residents i.e. easy to park close to amenities for families with kids, elderly (short walk), all accessible (wheelchair friendly)
- Currently parking outside Bull and Bush is used to support retail and markets once a month. The facility has been sold and may lose parking – where is the overflow and where will the markets go? Do we need to allow space for meandering markets on the site?
- Better use of the community centre car parking
- Preferably no parking lots at the new town centre site, but maybe some parallel/angle to curb parking if it’s really necessary

Pathways

- Place footpath / bike track across the Ferodale road to keep kids safe. The bike track could form part of the experience with access into the nature area / playground / park. There needs to be provision for bike racks, water fountains, dog bowls

- Boardwalk type pathways that relate and reinforce nature, but also provide options to still visit the southern side of the block where flooding occurs… turn the negative into a positive and have footpath as having safe access to go above the ground level and look out over the water (when heavy rain) i.e. Tilligerry walk
- Wide enough to provide options for shared pathways and also enough space on either side for exercise equipment stations, grassed area for picnicking, tai chi overlooking water – people need to be able to peel off as they discover new options "around the corner" it becomes a surprise and a delight to discover new uses in the space
- Wide walkways (as wide as possible) paved or decorative concrete with key features spaced throughout (e.g. water feature, climbing things, large potted plants, comfortable timber seating in line with the Medowie Makeover)
- Can we have dedicated zones / times that close down the footpaths so dedicated running / cycling groups i.e. park run can use this asset.
- Can we provide options to link the community centre with pathways through to Medowie Social and sporting precinct
- Very important the feeling of meandering, discovering and exploring along the footpaths, rather than just a mechanism to get from point A to point B
- Use pathways to create art trails, even as simple as painted hopscotch etc - allow people to really interact and play! Flooded and wet areas - interact with the environment - turn the deficit into something wonderful i.e. duck ponds, boardwalk
- Connect the 2 sides of Ferodale and make it easier for pedestrians
- Shared pathways – need an education campaign to support the mixed use bikes / people / prams / wheelchairs
- Concerns over driveways / lots of crossings - need to watch out for these, need to consider safety bike path on the new block to keep it safer for people / kids
- Connect pathway from Medowie social through the trees and connect to Tallowood and another to the community centre
- Wetlands bridge and path to connect to Medowie Social and Medowie Sports Complex and track around at all

Lighting

- Creative use of lighting that provides unique ways to light pathways, seating and footpaths – encourages people to linger in their place for longer
- Encourages and promotes night time economy opportunities such as "light up the night" walks, nocturnal animal spotting tours, musicians / buskers
- Use lighting to promote safety in creative ways i.e. pedestrian lighting etc
- Use up-lighting into trees to again reinforce the importance of trees / nature have to those in the community of Medowie
- Solar stations should be incorporated – sustainability and nod to the environment
- Lighting options that can double as heat lamps during winter therefore encouraging people to get out after dark
- Need to be mindful of animals that lighting doesn't have negative impact
- Example Sun Dial in Zadar – Croatia

Place making / public spaces / things to do

- Sensory options – if we can't have the big playground, perhaps we look at a different USP… having a sensory garden / walk / areas instead
- Natural water play
- Artworks that give something interesting to see on the ground and / or encourage people to walk further around the path to explore more
- Giant piano on the floor that lights up and plays music
- Shaded areas
- Provide seating that celebrates the essence / feel of Medowie (tree seating, quirky design, charging stations built into seats)
- We want people to meet and converse in public spaces – would like to hear music (would be good to incorporate power, charging stations, speakers, wireless, Bluetooth, power)
- Graffiti wall – encourage people to "leave their mark" – show the art / youth
- Open BBQ areas / community pizza oven
- Buy a picnic at the shops and use BBQs near the tree area
- Hold events like open-air cinema, mountain bike weekend (with camping), or use the skate park for remote controlled cars
- Community garden opportunity and path to Medowie Social. Connect all the different opportunities and places that the centre has to offer
- Consider 7 Day Makeover / place activation opportunities
- The new stage created at the 7-Day Makeover is not utilised as it is a bit too small
- Perhaps look for small-scale opportunities or find ways to improve the area further to make attractive and get activity around it. For example, coffee and bacon roles on Sundays with an opportunity to use the stage
- There are at least 5 coffee car owners in Medowie - contact for future activation opportunities in staged area

Planting/ Nature/ Environment

- Preserve and strengthen the "theme" of our town: Medowie is a Place of Tall Trees
- Working with community groups, like the gardening groups to assist in planting, growing of plants and trees
- Use street plantings / trees to encourage people to turn off from the roundabout and be led naturally into the town centre
- Use street trees to create an avenue of deciduous trees - makes a statement of what is the town centre and encourages people to slow down, walk, relax, ponder, appreciate colours and seasons
- Use deciduous trees where possible and replace with light when leaves fall
- Please retain nature corridor between site and housing estate next door - so that natural perimeter screens out housing
- Bird feeders / nature boxes to encourage animals

Spaces

- Open dining areas like a piazza area (Medowie Common) that has extended opening hours (thus activating night time economy as well as early morning get togethers post tai chi, meditation sessions etc) / shaded seating areas are missing - great opportunity to provide seating that celebrates what is the essence / feel of Medowie
- Provide options for hammocks – people hanging about in the trees
- Vibrancy in the space, activate and allow events and activities to take place
- Use the terminology 'natural creeks' (instead of a drain)
- Splash park incorporated into the design

3. Town Centre

Look and Feel/Character

Create a pedestrian friendly town centre

- The centre has a strong car focus. Many people don't walk, but drive between the shops in the town centre. This further creates a less attractive environment for pedestrians, as it remains car dominated.
- Ensure the town centre is accessible and pedestrian friendly.
- Create better bike and pedestrian areas and access with the commercial areas reflecting this.
- Connect the Tallowwood development to the new town centre site with a footpath.
- End of trip facilities are required for (mountain) bike riders. People come from all over the (outer) region to ride in the Medowie area, but there is no supporting infrastructure.
- Create a Piazza style town square, linked with businesses and open recreational space.
- There is no wheelchair access and not even pedestrian access to McDonalds.
- Inspiration from The Canopy - Lane Cove Canopy: environment for the community and retailers to converge, convenience and atmosphere for day and night trading and activities. Open green space casual and formal dining options, park activities for all ages and a purpose built stage for entertainment and events.

Include Park and Playground in new town centre site:

- The site needs to include open space - park/playground, BBQs.
- Like Centennial park has a shop for beanbags and the like so you spend the whole day in the park. Could this be a community run kiosk?
- Take into account all abilities, sensory experiences.

Look and Feel:

- Residents appreciate the rural look and feel of Medowie and support the concept of Tall Trees.

- Town centre needs more charm, character, and personality. There are currently no attractive buildings. We want to be a town not a suburb.
- Country town feeling is missing in the town centre. Main Street concept is important, with trees and places to sit.
- Use natural materials, like natural stone. Don't create a concrete jungle in our beautiful natural setting. Integrate new development in this natural setting.
- Create a really organic environment in the town centre, like garden café and a boardwalk like in Tilligerry.
- Building height may affect the look and feel of the place. No more than 2 storeys and no high-rise/multi-storey in the town centre.
- Need an urban design panel - not cheap and nasty. Future developments - look to future/not tossed out.

Inclusive:

- Space should provide for all and be inclusive. Ensure accessibility for all people. Don't use pavers and ensure accessibility.
- Young people 14-24 considerations.
- Public spaces to remain alcohol free (if kids around).
- Create an inclusive place, not just for one group of people. Places for all ages. Refer to Oatley (Hurstville).

Commercial land and uses

Support for commercial uses:

There is general support for the inclusion of commercial uses on the new Town Centre site, but it is 'conditional' to:

- Limited height.
- Small scale (no big box).
- No big-box retail (like Best & Less), but focus on smaller businesses, that can be run by (local) families.
- The rural setting of Medowie is to be maintained and strengthened; big franchises do not fit this profile.

Commercial type of uses:

- Small-scale eateries - near playground. Restaurants and café's that overlook open space.
- Cafe would be nice, but is hard to get to Medowie.
- Cafes with outdoor seating.
- No pub; no Aldi.
- Eco-lodge/ accommodation.
- Eco hotel on this site could cater for family visiting Medowie and mountain Bike riders could stay for a weekend, spend money in town. Target people who are already visiting to stay longer.
- Wedding venue.

- Businesses that outgrow the markets. Possible collectives (Nelson Bay) or "try space" for business; incubator style.
- The new town site can be a catalyst for other sites to also (re)develop. I.e. existing town centre site or land on the other side of Ferodale Rd (Bull n Bush strip).
- Restaurants could accommodate 2-storey in a central area of town where there is always something to do, day and night. Like cinema, restaurants, play opportunities.
- Park could generate money for the park by including a volunteer run kiosk with rentals.
- Rooty Hill RSL as an example.
- Commercial sport business/places/ Indoor sports centre are looking for space in Medowie (like gymnastics).
- PCYC could be as a focus area for young people (Medowie is a very sporty town) - see Cessnock.

Mix of residential and commercial:

- There would be substantial population growth in coming years and need for additional housing and commercial uses.
- Sydney/Rousehill shopping centre is an example of commercial and living mixed - could be an idea, but very modern; not sure if it fits Medowie?
- Scale of development could be single storey or multi- storey.

Surrounds:

- Piazza style eating opportunities and with places to sit; well connected by footpaths.
- Missing in the centre is a piazza style outdoor area. Need to work out where cars can park elsewhere.
- Shopping centre is very enclosed. Piazza idea could work. Shaded areas would be good
- Standardised shop fronts with a common design running throughout
- No A-frame signs cluttering the space.

Residential uses and type

- A suitable mix of commercial and residential will support a growing population.
- Option is for 1 or 2 storeys of residential above commercial ground floor.
- The new town site could offer more residential and commercial diversity for Medowie.
- Development of the site should consider the look and feel of Medowie (trees, rural character).
- If development doesn’t go upwards, you will need to spread out and take up more land for the residential and commercial needs at the cost of other uses.
- There are design solutions that mitigate height, like screening, recess, and use of trees.

Environmental assets and constraints

- Consider the flood prone land at the western end of the new town site (near Medowie Social) for boardwalks and other infrastructure that may be suitable to access and utilise this part of the site.
- Protect and enhance vegetation and wildlife (koala) crossings near Bull n Bush and habitat/corridor in the western part of the new town centre site.
- Can Campvale Drain become a natural asset with incorporated wetland walks?
- Introduce EV charging points as it fits with the natural environment of Medowie.

Tourism

- Plenty of tourists coming through the town - encourage them to stay longer and spend.
- RV parking and friendly town for short term overnight; RV parking and RV Friendly Town, short term.
- Need the right signage and activation to pull tourists off the main roads and take some time to shop or kids to play in Medowie.
- Medowie could become an attraction for visitors and encourage hotel operators / developers to invest in the town.
- Caravan parking is missing for tourists wanting to visit and spend in town.
- Mountain bike riders visit Medowie from far, but no place to stay.

Other

- Consider cost of living and cost to Council when planning for the town centre area as there is a long term effect on rates. For example, skate park may chew up a lot of Council budget.
- Community and businesses can assist and contribute to projects, which reduces costs to Council. For example, Landcare groups could assist with implementation and future maintenance of landscaping, or tree planting.

Appendix F – School workshops (Aug 2022)

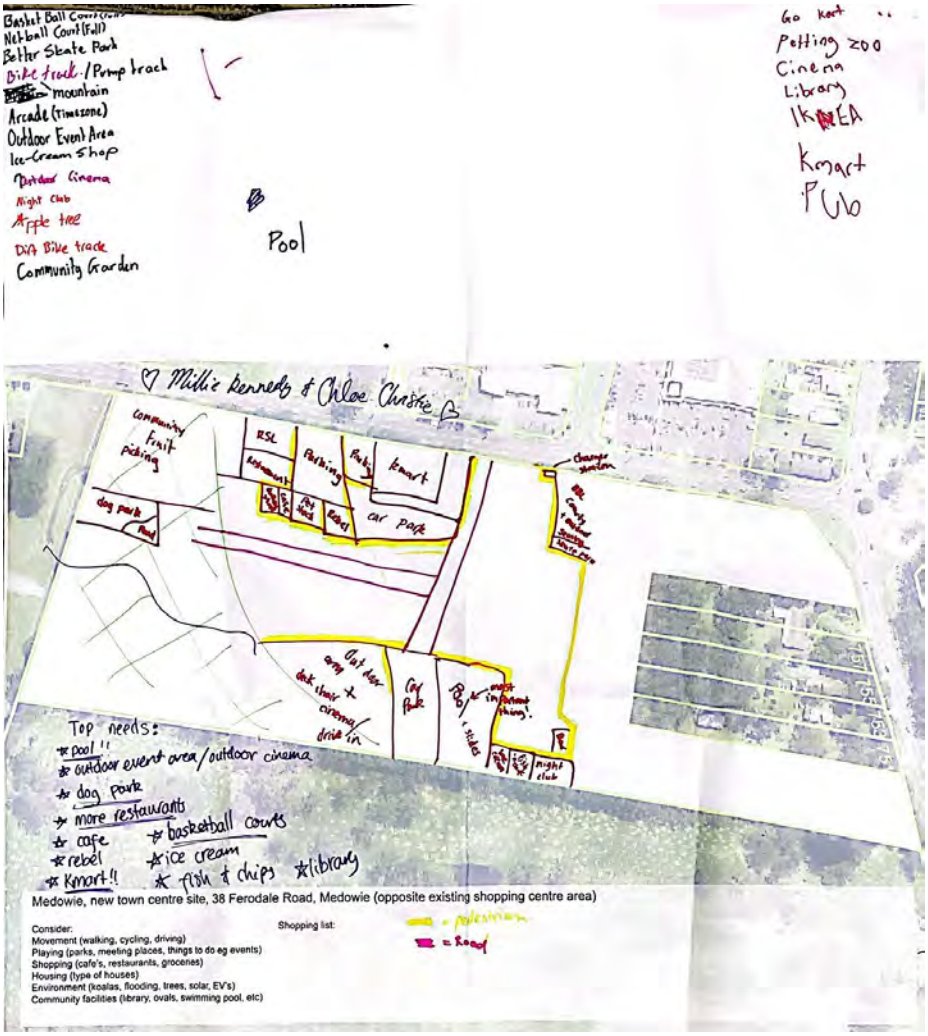
School Workshop results

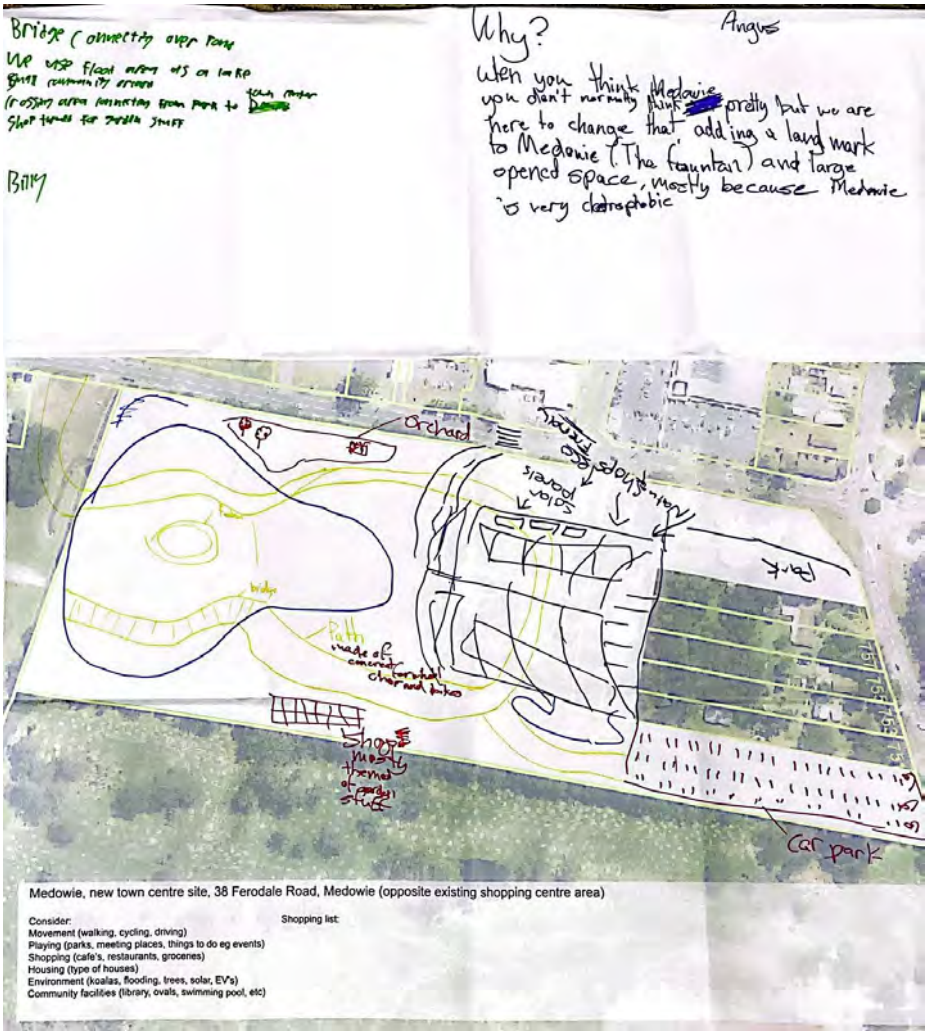
School workshops were held in August 2022 at Medowie Public School (8 students) and Catherine McAuley Catholic College (28 students).
The workshop encouraged students to think about the needs of various users of the town centre and the opportunities offered by the town centre expansion site (38 Ferodale Road). They used this information to create a plan/design for the site.

The topics they considered were:

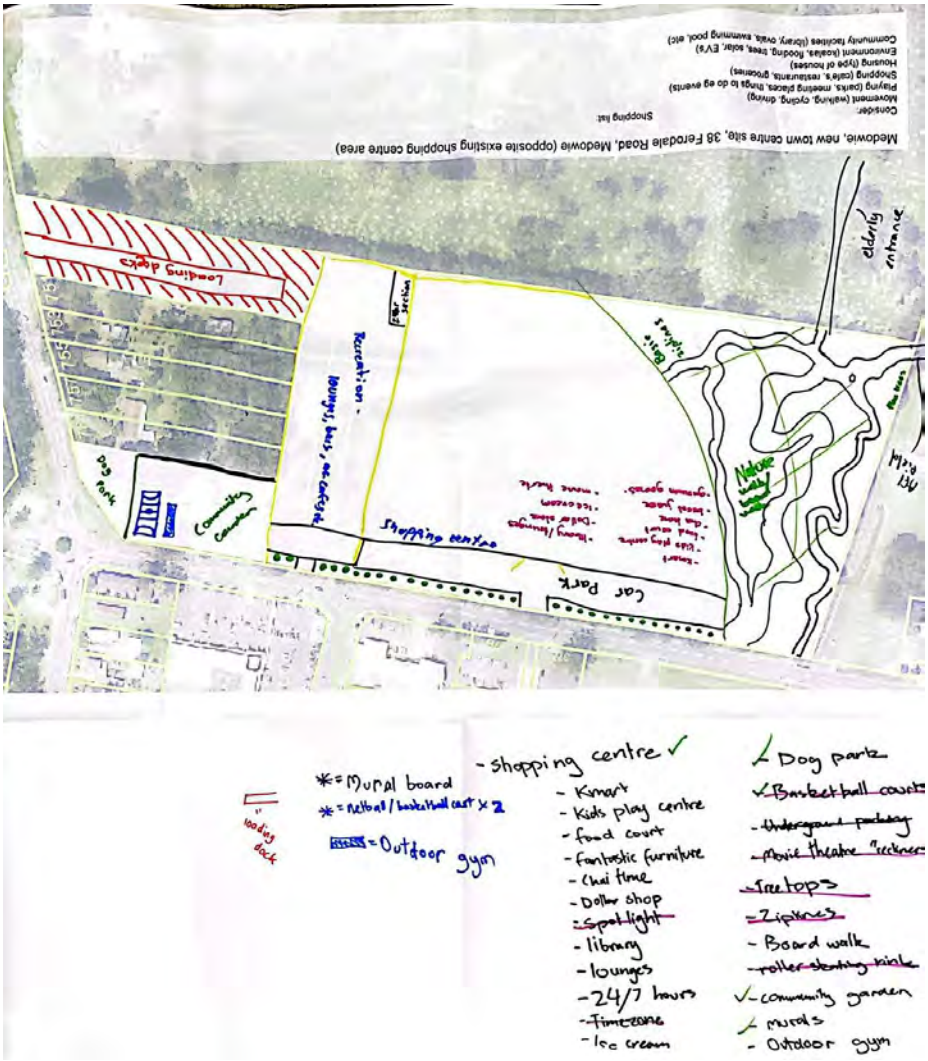
- Movement (walking, cycling, driving)
- Playing (parks, meeting places, things to do, events)
- Shopping (cafes, restaurants, groceries)
- Housing (types of housing)
- Environment (koalas, flooding, trees, solar, electric vehicles)
- Community facilities (library, ovals, swimming pool)

Below are some of the plans they created for the new town centre expansion site at Ferodale Road.

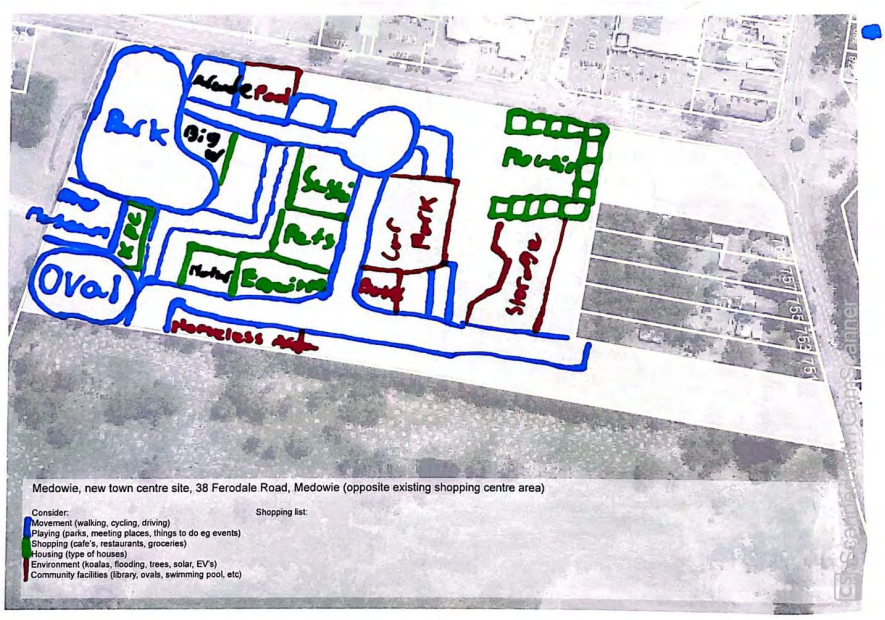

Netball Court (Full)
Better Skate Park
Bike track / Pump track
mountain
Arcade (Timezone)
Outdoor Event Area
Ice-Cream Shop
Outdoor Cinema
Night Club
Apple tree
Dirt Bike track
Community Garden
Pool
Go Kart
Petting zoo
Cinema
Library
IKEA
Kmart
Pub
Millie Kennedy & Chloe Christie
Community Fruit picking
RSL
Parking
Kmart
car park
dog park
Pool
Top needs:
pool!!
outdoor event area / outdoor cinema
dog park
more restaurants
cafe
basketball courts
rebel
ice cream
Kmart!!
fish & chips
library
Medowie, new town centre site, 38 Ferodale Road, Medowie (opposite existing shopping centre area)
Consider:
Movement (walking, cycling, driving)
Playing (parks, meeting places, things to do eg events)
Shopping (cafe's, restaurants, grocenes)
Housing (type of houses)
Environment (koalas, flooding, trees, solar, EV's)
Community facilities (library, ovals, swimming pool, etc)
Shopping list:
= Road

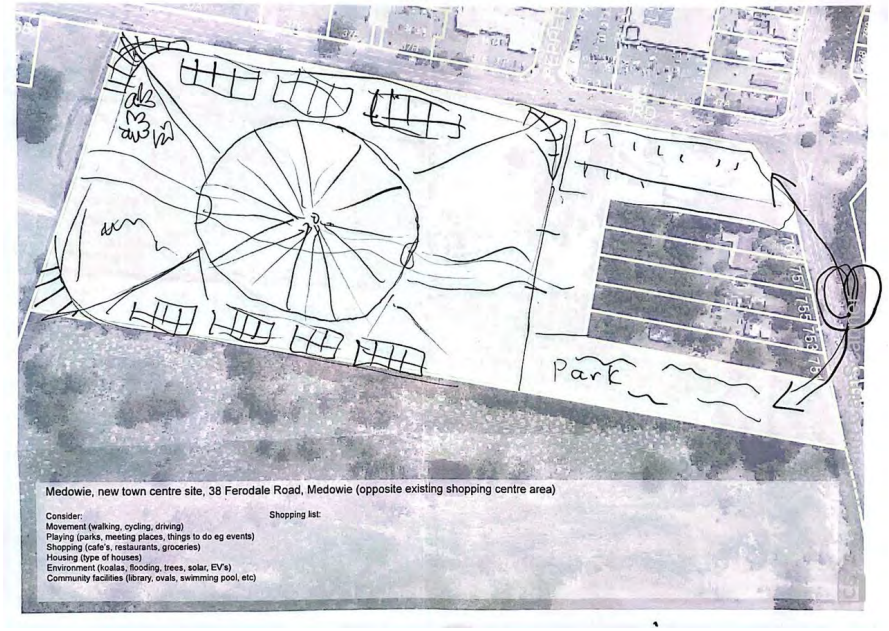

Why?
Angus
Billy
Orchard
Park
Path
Car park
Medowie, new town centre site, 38 Ferodale Road, Medowie (opposite existing shopping centre area)
Consider:
Movement (walking, cycling, driving)
Playing (parks, meeting places, things to do eg events)
Shopping (cafe's, restaurants, grocenes)
Housing (type of houses)
Environment (koalas, flooding, trees, solar, EV's)
Community facilities (library, ovals, swimming pool, etc)
Shopping list:

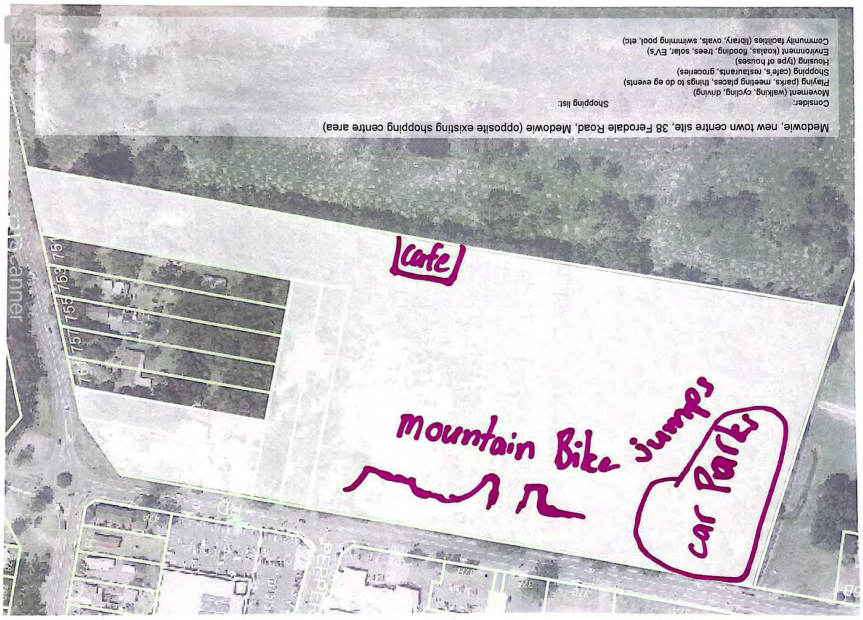
Medowie, new town centre site, 38 Ferodale Road, Medowie (opposite existing shopping centre area) –
Consider:
Movement (walking, cycling, driving)
Paying (parks, meeting places, things to do or events)
Shopping (cafe's, restaurants, groceries)
Housing (type of houses)
Environment (koalas, flooding, trees, solar, EV's)
Community facilities (library, ovals, swimming pool, etc)
Shopping list
Pool
dog Park
Baseball Park
Shops
Car Park
Toilets
Art
New skate Park
Cafe
Baseball
more shops
mountain Bike Jumps and trails.
Pump track for Bmx, scooter and skate board.
Libary
medowie rugby team + feild
art murals
non smoking areas

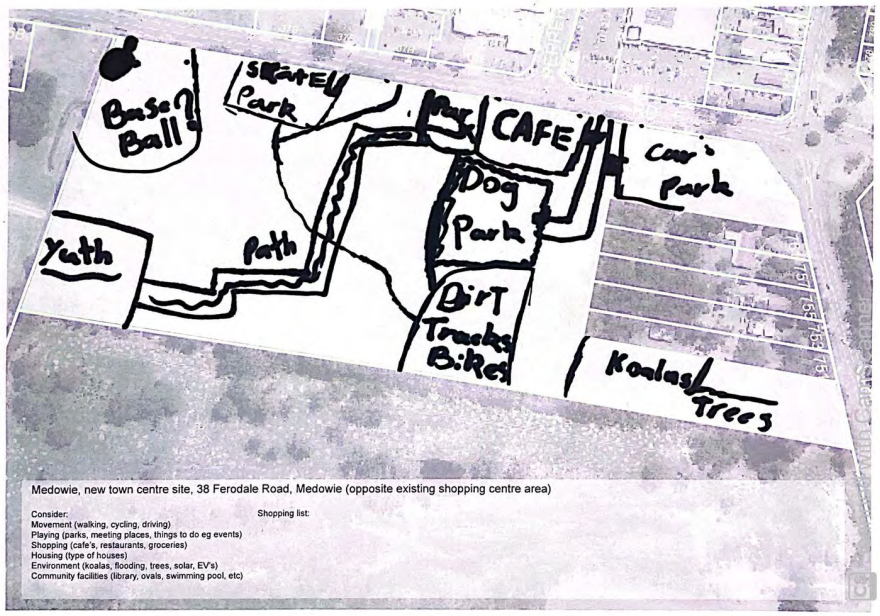

Medowie, new town centre site, 38 Ferodale Road, Medowie (opposite existing shopping centre area)
Consider:
Movement (walking, cycling, driving)
Playing (parks, meeting places, things to do eg events)
Shopping (cafe's, restaurants, groceries)
Housing (type of houses)
Environment (koalas, flooding, trees, solar, EV's)
Community facilities (library, ovals, swimming pool, etc)
Shopping list
Loading docks
Recreation - lounges, bars, or cafe's
Shopping centre
Car Park
Dog Park
Community Garden
Basic Zipline
Nature walk
Mini Pitch
elderly entrance
*= Mural board
* = netball / basketball court x 2
= Outdoor gym
loading dock
- shopping centre ✓
- Kmart
- Kids play centre
- food court
- fantastic furniture
- chai time
- Dollar shop
- Spotlight
- library
- lounges
- 24/7 hours
- Timezone
- Ice cream
✓ Dog park
✓ Basketball courts
- Underground parking
- Movie theatre "recliners"
- Treetops
- Ziplines
- Board walk
- roller skating rink
✓ - community garden
✓ murals
- Outdoor gym

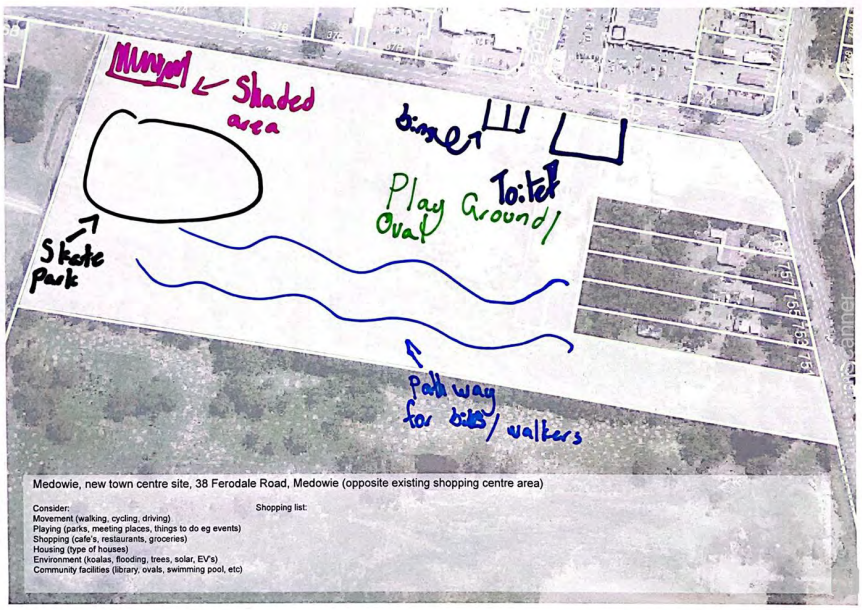
A Bush walk near trees (around flood area)
new houses
Bike path (duel, loop)
cinema
Band (lange)
Markets
Shops
food court
Play ground (fence around)
fenced in field
roller coaster
ferris wheel
toys r us
Medowie letters
Art mural statues
gardens
Pedestrian crossing
Black Bike path
Pink walking track
green grass area
shops/food court/cinema
art mural on the shopping wall
Parking
Play ground
ferris wheel
gardens
free space Markets
Light up fountain/park
fenced in field
Bike path/duel path
Market
Medowie, new town centre site, 38 Ferodale Road, Medowie (opposite existing shopping centre area)
Consider:
Movement (walking, cycling, driving)
Playing (parks, meeting places, things to do eg events)
Shopping (cafe's, restaurants, groceries)
Housing (type of houses)
Environment (koalas, flooding, trees, solar, EV's)
Community facilities (library, ovals, swimming pool, etc)
Shopping list:

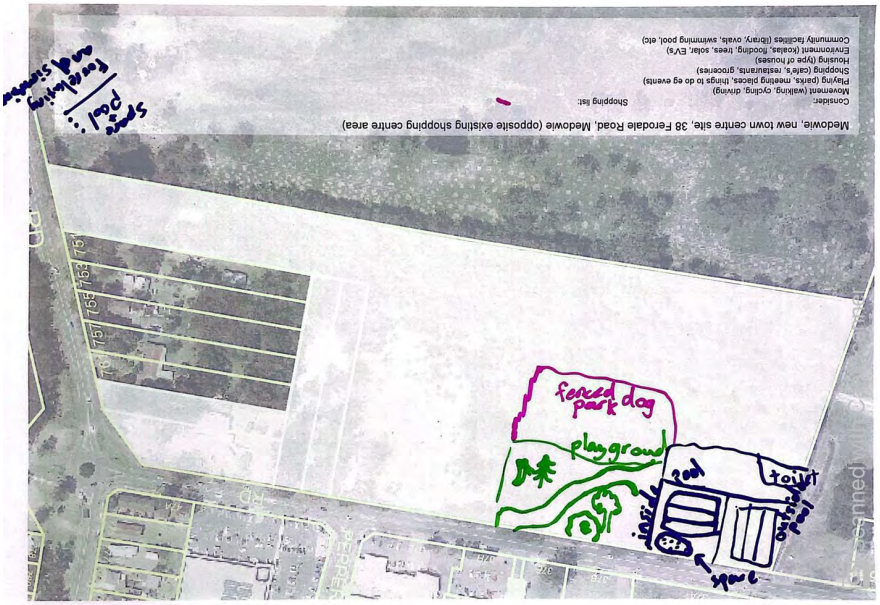

Park
Big W
Pets
Oval
Storage
Medowie, new town centre site, 38 Ferodale Road, Medowie (opposite existing shopping centre area)
Consider:
Movement (walking, cycling, driving)
Playing (parks, meeting places, things to do eg events)
Shopping (cafe's, restaurants, groceries)
Housing (type of houses)
Environment (koalas, flooding, trees, solar, EV's)
Community facilities (library, ovals, swimming pool, etc)
Shopping list:

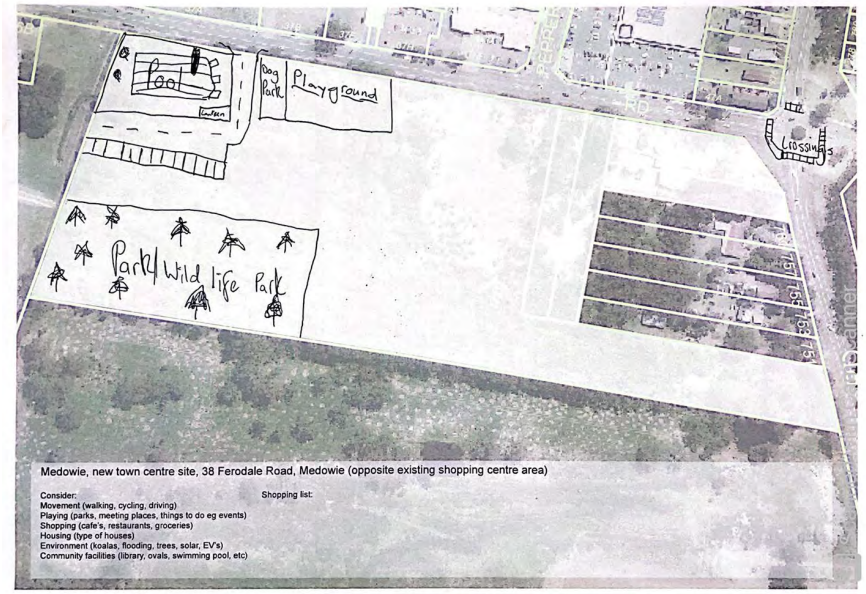

Park
Medowie, new town centre site, 38 Ferodale Road, Medowie (opposite existing shopping centre area)
Consider:
Movement (walking, cycling, driving)
Playing (parks, meeting places, things to do eg events)
Shopping (cafe's, restaurants, groceries)
Housing (type of houses)
Environment (koalas, flooding, trees, solar, EV's)
Community facilities (library, ovals, swimming pool, etc)
Shopping list:


Medowie, new town centre site, 38 Ferodale Road, Medowie (opposite existing shopping centre area)
Consider:
Movement (walking, cycling, driving)
Playing (parks, meeting places, things to do eg events)
Shopping (cafe's, restaurants, groceries)
Housing (type of houses)
Environment (koalas, flooding, trees, solar, EV's)
Community facilities (library, ovals, swimming pool, etc)
Shopping list:
Cafe
mountain Bike jumps
car Parks

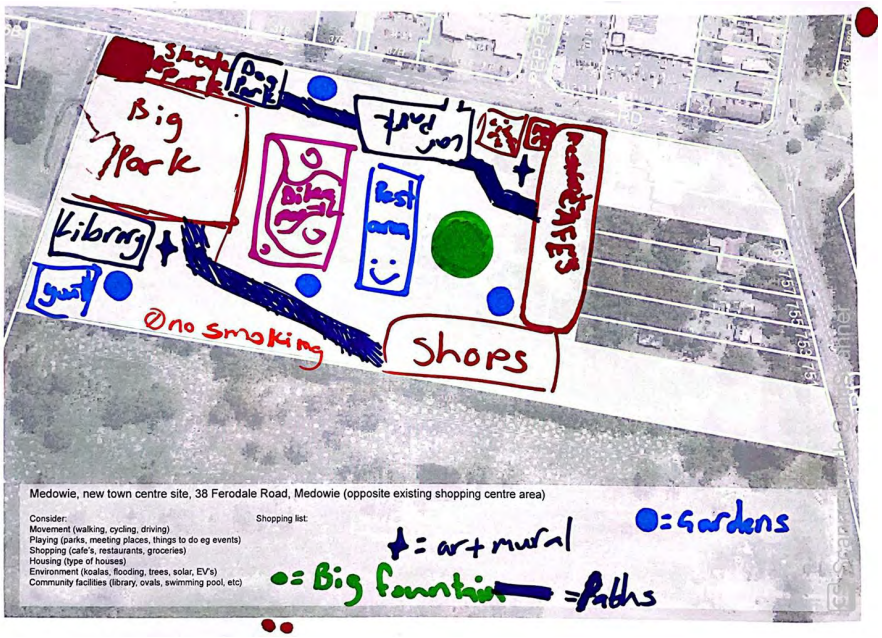

Medowie, new town centre site, 38 Ferodale Road, Medowie (opposite existing shopping centre area)
Consider:
Movement (walking, cycling, driving)
Playing (parks, meeting places, things to do eg events)
Shopping (cafe's, restaurants, groceries)
Housing (type of houses)
Environment (koalas, flooding, trees, solar, EV's)
Community facilities (library, ovals, swimming pool, etc)
Shopping list:
Base Ball
SKATE Park
CAFE
car Park
Dog Park
Yeath
Path
BIRT Tracks Bikes
Koalas Trees


Shaded area
Skate Park
Play Ground/ Oval
Toilet
Path way for bikes/ walkers
Medowie, new town centre site, 38 Ferodale Road, Medowie (opposite existing shopping centre area)
Consider:
Movement (walking, cycling, driving)
Playing (parks, meeting places, things to do eg events)
Shopping (cafe's, restaurants, groceries)
Housing (type of houses)
Environment (koalas, flooding, trees, solar, EV's)
Community facilities (library, ovals, swimming pool, etc)
Shopping list:


Medowie, new town centre site, 38 Ferodale Road, Medowie (opposite existing shopping centre area)
Consider:
Movement (walking, cycling, driving)
Playing (parks, meeting places, things to do eg events)
Shopping (cafe's, restaurants, groceries)
Housing (type of houses)
Environment (koalas, flooding, trees, solar, EV's)
Community facilities (library, ovals, swimming pool, etc)
Shopping list:
fenced park dog
playground
toilet
inside pool
outside pool
spare


Pool
Toilets
Dog Park
Playground
Park/Wild life Park
Medowie, new town centre site, 38 Ferodale Road, Medowie (opposite existing shopping centre area)
Consider:
Movement (walking, cycling, driving)
Playing (parks, meeting places, things to do eg events)
Shopping (cafe's, restaurants, groceries)
Housing (type of houses)
Environment (koalas, flooding, trees, solar, EV's)
Community facilities (library, ovals, swimming pool, etc)
Shopping list:

Trails with Jumps
Sporting club
Medowie, new town centre site, 38 Ferodale Road, Medowie (opposite existing shopping centre area)
Consider:
Movement (walking, cycling, driving)
Playing (parks, meeting places, things to do eg events)
Shopping (cafe's, restaurants, groceries)
Housing (type of houses)
Environment (koalas, flooding, trees, solar, EV's)
Community facilities (library, ovals, swimming pool, etc)
Shopping list:

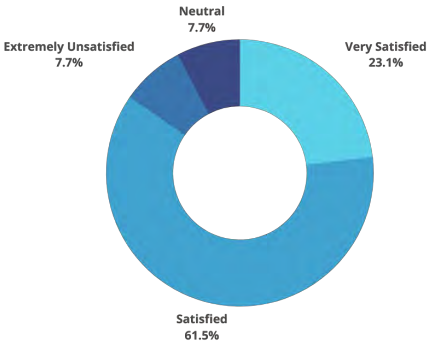

Big Park
Library
no smoking
Shops
Medowie, new town centre site, 38 Ferodale Road, Medowie (opposite existing shopping centre area)
Consider:
Movement (walking, cycling, driving)
Playing (parks, meeting places, things to do eg events)
Shopping (cafe's, restaurants, groceries)
Housing (type of houses)
Environment (koalas, flooding, trees, solar, EV's)
Community facilities (library, ovals, swimming pool, etc)
Shopping list:
= art + mural
= Gardens
= Big fountain
= Paths

Appendix G - Check-in survey (Aug 2022)

People who attended at least one of the workshops about the Medowie Place Plan had the opportunity to respond to a short survey to confirm the direction of the draft place plan. A draft concept plan for the town centre expansion site and draft place plan actions were provided for this purpose (August 2022). The survey was completed by 14 people.

Note: One respondent contacted Council after submitting their survey because they had answered at the wrong end of the spectrum. Their answers to those questions were removed.

1. What do you think of the concept plan for the town centre area at 38 Ferodale Road, Medowie and its immediate surrounds?*

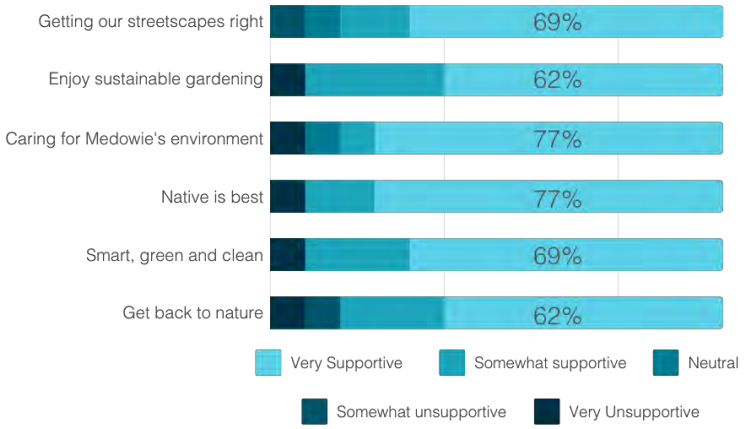


Optional question (8 response(s), 6 skipped)

2. Do you have any specific comments about the concept plan in general? (short answer)

#	Comments
1	Please make sure we have open space and lots of native plants and trees.
2	Love the inclusion of conservation
3	Must provide longevity ... do it first ... do it right. Any installation must be robust and maintained.
4	Great idea. Gives the kids a place to socialise.
5	no town square? no connectivity from community centre to the new square
6	Concerned about the areas of residential expansion in size proximity to play areas and style to suit the recreation area
7	Should not have allowance for future residential. This removes further opportunity for additional public space as the town grows.

3. What do you think of each of the 6 Environment action items for the draft Medowie place plan?*



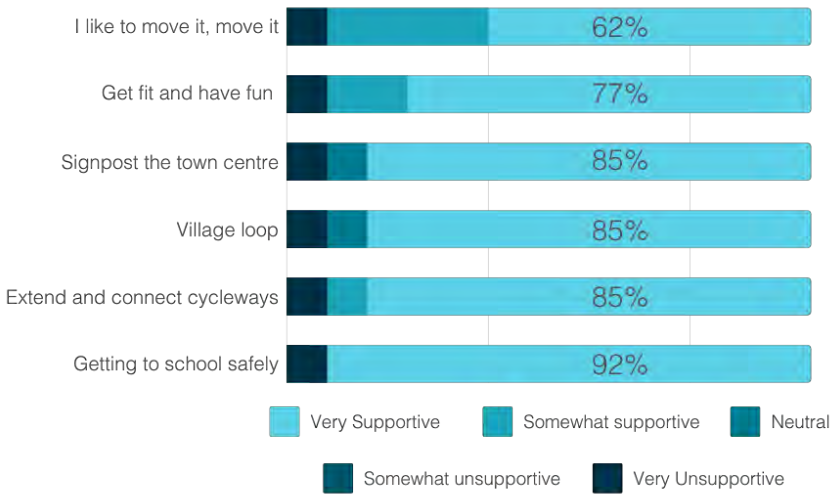
4. Do you have any specific comments about the draft Environment action items (short answer)?

#	Comments
1	Would love a sustainability hub like Randwick where the community can be involved and kids and groups can be educated.
2	Inclusiveness is very favourable
3	Plant native trees and remove foreign trees (pine trees). Love the avenue of trees & lighting for Ferodale Rd, Peppertree & Medowie Rd. Involve Murrook Green Team.
4	Keep it as green as possible, minimize the # of buildings and roads.
5	Plant trees please
6	Need to minimise felling of native trees. Some are over 100 years old but the council has no concern for clearing natives
7	The more native plants the better, the more birds we get

Optional question (7 response(s), 7 skipped)

Question type: Single Line Question

5. What do you think of each of the 6 Movement action items for the draft Medowie place plan?*



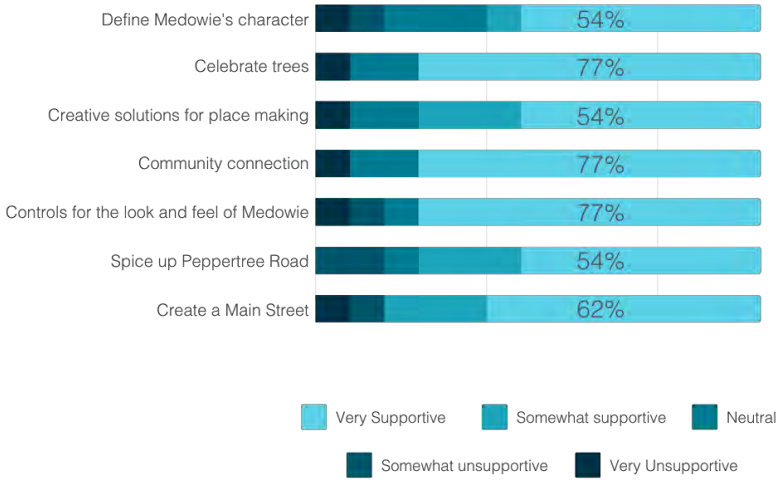
6. Do you have any specific comments about the draft Movement action items (short answer)?

#	Comments
1	Definitely need bike tracks in the town centre.
2	Look after the children, they are our future.
3	Put a cycle path from Medowie Rd roundabout up to Wirreanda School and down to Medowie School for kids to ride scooters and bikes to school. Indigenous murals by Jim Batt are amazing! More of these please.
4	Excellent.
5	Children / elderly safe areas.
6	Need to have good parking areas for bikes in town areas.
7	To have it in place as soon as possible.
8	Extend sign posting to other areas of the town, eg, skate parks, playgrounds, businesses, sporting facilities (tennis, Soccer, etc.).

Optional question (8 response(s), 6 skipped)

Question type: Single Line Question

7. What do you think of each of the 7 Character action items for the draft Medowie place plan?*



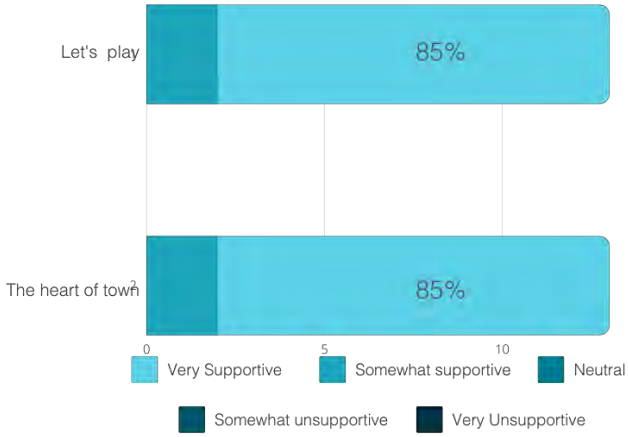
8. Do you have any specific comments about the draft Character action items (short answer)?

#	Comments
1	Need more shade and places for young people to hang.
2	We need a main street style of encouragement.
3	It would be great to achieve this, presently our look is all over the place.
4	Open drains on Medowie Rd/Ferodale Rd=3rd world country character, should be enclosed, curb the gutters there. Cutting down trees for housing developments means Medowie not a Place of Tall Trees. Focus on village character with a big YES to avenue trees.
5	Excellent ideas.
6	We need controls in what businesses move into peppertree road to prevent a repeat of what we just saw happen.
7	Murals tend to attract graffiti, which decreases aesthetics, would prefer to see small gardens and sculptures.

Optional question (8 response(s), 6 skipped)

Question type: Single Line Question

9. What do you think of each of the 2 Open space action items for the draft Medowie place plan?*



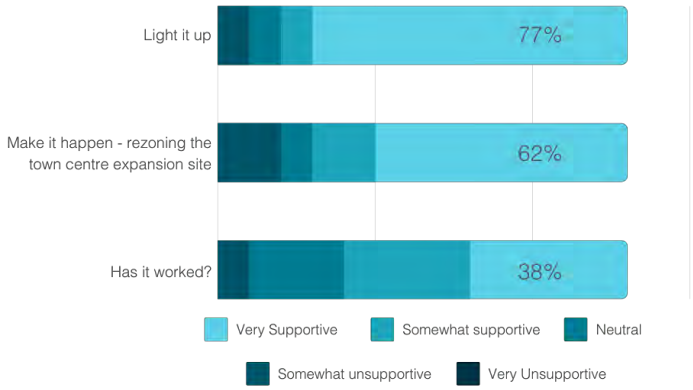
10. Do you have any specific comments about the draft Open space action items (short answer)?

#	Comments
1	We need an accessible lay ground and skate park. My son has disabilities and the current one is out of his league. Maybe we could have a mini track with street signs for kids around the playground.
2	Recreation precinct with skate park, toilets, water fountain, covered BBQs and picnic tables right next to Ferodale Rd for passive surveillance and kid's playground, NOT next to the carpark. Sealed path into the skatepark so kids can ride there. Splash Park.
3	Keep the town square as open and grassy as possible where fitness classes can operate and kids can run around. improve the existing play area near the community centre. Ensure no road truncates the two to allow freedom of movement.
4	Perhaps dog friendly, with poo bags and bins around.

Optional question (4 response(s), 10 skipped)

Question type: Single Line Question

11. What do you think of each of the 3 Management and safety action items for the draft Medowie place plan?



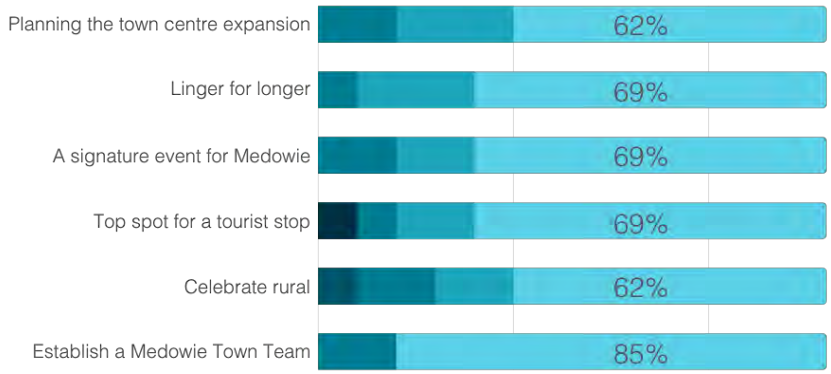
12. Do you have any specific comments about the draft Management and safety action items (short answer)?

#	Comments
1	With lighting up I'd risk of younger people and antisocial behaviour after hours. Don't have any tunnels or spaces that could be used for vaping.
2	Not happy not what was talked about.
3	Alcohol free zone at skate park, zero tolerance on graffiti. Install lights for skate park (users hit button for brighter lights set timer like at Charlestown skate park). Skate park remote control car races at night. Demolish townhouses Ferodale Rd roundabout.
4	lean toward conservation and recreation for this space not commercial development.
5	Lots of lighting.
6	I support future commercial growth in the town centre but not residential. The proposed residential area could be repurposed for short term, 1 or 2 night, caravan parking to attract passing through traffic, which intern, supports businesses.

Optional question (6 response(s), 8 skipped)

Question type: Single Line Question

13. What do you think of each of the 6 Economy action items for the draft Medowie place plan?*



14. Do you have any specific comments about the draft Economy action items (short answer)?

#	Comments
1	Support, space and incentive for local businesses to open on a Sunday.
2	We need to be on the same page.
3	Growers markets are a strong draw card and should be key to promoting out town.
4	Custom-made street furniture has not weathered well; no one uses it or the hopscotch. Better to plant trees and lighting to create character. Put rubbish in the bin for free-WiFi at skate park, like Raymond Terrace. Medowie as a rest stop from the freeway.
5	The current town centre needs a face-lift to improve connectivity. It is a dogs breakfast currently and a local team to have oversight is a good thing.
6	Can't wait to have this happen, to liven it all up.
7	As above, adding overnight caravan use area can increase tourist pass through on the way, or driver reviver stop for highway.

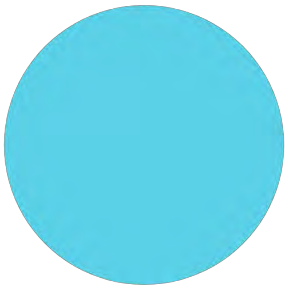
Optional question (7 response(s), 7 skipped)

Question type: Single Line Question

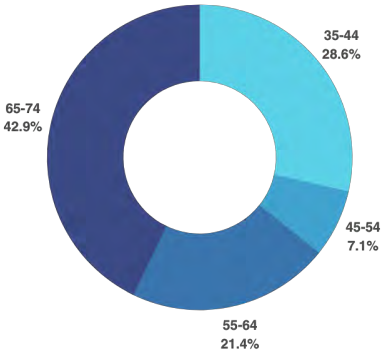
15. Please put your email address here to help us confirm and build up our list of local Medowie experts!*

Answers were removed for privacy reasons.

16. What is your suburb?



17. What is your age bracket?



PORT STEPHENS
COUNCIL

council@portstephens.nsw.gov.au | 02 4988 0255 | PORTSTEPHENS.NSW.GOV.AU

Draft Place Plan

Medowie

Draft copy for exhibiiton (September 2022)

PORT STEPHENS COUNCIL

Guudji Yiigu

(Goo-jee ik-koo)

We welcome you to Port Stephens – part of the Worimi Aboriginal Nation.

We acknowledge the Worimi as the original Custodians and inhabitants of Port Stephens.

We acknowledge and pay respects to Worimi elders past and present.

May we walk the road to tomorrow with mutual respect and admiration as we care for the beautiful land and waterways together.

Contents

What is a Place Plan **4**
Our place planning approach 5
About Medowie **6**
We've been listening **8**
Community engagement 10
How you value your town centre 10
Emerging themes for Medowie **11**
Environmental sustainability 11
More opportunity for walking and cycling 11
Enhance the look and feel of Medowie 11
Create quality open spaces 12
Comfortable, safe and looked after 12
Increase employment land for commercial and industrial uses 13
Planning for the future of Medowie **14**
Commercial and employment land 16
Residential and rural residential land 16
Habitat protection 17
Future connecting road 17
Planning proposal process 17
A shared responsibility for our place **18**
Creating better places and spaces in Medowie **21**
What projects are in the pipeline for Medowie? 21
Other potential future projects 21
Look and feel for Medowie **24**
A vibrant Medowie **26**
Medowie Town Centre Concept Plan **26**
Actions **32**

What is a Place Plan

Place plans are a new way of planning for the growth of the unique towns and villages across Port Stephens. Place plans provide a local filter on the Port Stephens Community Strategic Plan and other strategic documents to create actions which improve the liveability and wellbeing of our communities.

Actions

The actions in our local place plans create alignment in the way we plan for future land use, invest in infrastructure, attract investment and bring life to our streets. Place plans recognise the importance of our public spaces in creating great places to live, work and visit.

Community

Most importantly, place plans start with our community. They respond to the community's values and aspirations; they enable partnerships between residents, business and council and guide a collaborative approach to the delivery of great place outcomes.

Understand current community participation.

Encourage community participation...

... in all areas – from visioning to implementation.

Our place planning approach

Local values

Through the Port Stephens Liveability Index, we know the values and priorities of our individual communities. This information creates the foundations of our place plans and helps guide planning decision making across our community.

Start with yes

A culture that supports innovation and ideas is critical to the success of our place plans. By starting with yes, we can encourage new thinking, new ideas and attract more people to share in creating great places.

Test and trial

Great places don't appear by accident; they take time and effort and a shared understanding that not every project will work every time. By testing and trialling low cost, short term ideas we learn by doing and create the stepping stones to bigger and better things.

Civic pride

The Port Stephens community is abundant with energy and expertise and people who want to be involved in planning and creating for their place. Place plans will create opportunities for collaboration, foster pride and create connections.

Measure benchmark

When we trial a new idea, launch a new program or invest in our public spaces, we need to understand what works and what does not. Measuring the success of our projects and comparing these to the best possible examples we can find will help build amazing places where people will want to live, work and play.

About Medowie

Just half an hour from the City of Newcastle, 15 minutes from Raymond Terrace and 20 minutes to the Tomaree Peninsula, the rural village of Medowie is growing fast.

Known as the Place of Tall Trees, the open space and bushland setting are central to the identity of the place.

Medowie is located on the edge Grahamstown Dam and surrounded by open bushland, the Medowie State Conservation Area, The Tilligerry State Conservation Area and the Moffatt Swamp Nature Reserve.

Medowie provides a wide range of local community and sporting facilities, and is within close proximity to key employment areas like Williamtown, Raymond Terrace and Newcastle.

The Medowie town centre offers locally owned and operated businesses which provide a range of services to support the growing community. The growth of Medowie has also been identified by National retailers who have established a presence in the town over the past decade.

The rural landscape in Medowie has always been an ideal location for produce farmers. The community has strong ties to this farming background and celebrates this through regular markets and farm gate sales.

Events are a highlight of Medowie's social calendar, attracting both local residents and visitors to the town centre.

Medowie provides good quality sporting facilities that cater to AFL, Cricket, Rugby Union and Netball that support the local population. However, as the community grows and the demographics change, demand on these facilities will increase.

In 2021, more than 200 residents participated in the Medowie 7 Day Makeover. This project harnessed the passion of volunteers from all across the community who worked to transform the look and feel of the town centre through public art, landscaping and sculptures. This event created a stronger connection to the identity and ownership of the place and was a catalyst to the development of this place plan.

By 2040, Medowie's population is projected to grow to 15,000 people. As new residents choose to live and invest in this community, it is important that new development respects the identity of the place; the open bushland setting, the natural environment and its rural residential character.

Future planning in Medowie will focus on supporting residential development near the town centre, ensuring that community facilities cater for growing demand and the natural assets are protected and enhanced, with the ultimate goal of delivering environmentally neutral development.

To support this population growth in the next 15 years, additional commercial and employment zoned land will also be needed to ensure opportunities for business investment and economic growth.

The Worimi are the traditional custodians of Port Stephens.

Character principles

- Medowie's 'tall trees' strongly contribute to the identity of the place and have ecological, aesthetic and cultural value.
- Protection and enhancement of habitat and corridors, and planning for the conservation of koalas, is a vital consideration for development in Medowie.
- New development respects the semi-rural look and quiet village character that is valued by the community.
- Safe and accessible pathways create a network for pedestrians and bike riders to key shopping, community and social services, and the green spaces that surround the town centre – it is safe and easy to walk or ride in Medowie.
- Pathways are provided in a collaborated approach between Council and developers.
- Quality social and recreational infrastructure is accessible and suitable for the growing town.
- The town centre is the focus for commercial and community activity; proposals outside of this area are unlikely to be supported.
- Local business is supported, and new commercial activity is encouraged to service the growing community.
- A more cohesive town centre continues to provide for the needs of the community and is activated by regular community events and social activities.
- Development will have a neutral or beneficial effect on water quality and no increase in flooding impacts.

The residents of Medowie are unique, knowing who they are helps us understand what they think and what type of community they can create.

Population
10,879

6.9%
Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander population

3,154
Families

629
Active Businesses trading in Medowie*

Median Age
37

429
Current Defence personnel

ABS 2021 Census data; *Remplan data July 2022

We’ve been listening

The community explored the future of Medowie through an extensive community engagement process. The following provides a snapshot of the Medowie Place Plan Engagement Report. You can view the full report here.

345 responses to the liveability survey	**4** community workshops (face to face and on line)	**81** workshop participants	**14** submissions to the draft concept plan
36 students at school workshops	**7** stakeholder meetings	**119** respondents to the town centre survey	

What makes Medowie a great place to live?

In September 2020, 345 people from Medowie told us through a liveability survey what they value about their community and their priorities for their place. We used this data to shape the Medowie Place Plan, to set the vision, and define the actions that best benefit the wellbeing of Medowie locals.

Key themes

The liveability survey results indicate that the 6 most important themes of liveability for the people of Medowie are:

- **Protection of natural environment**
- **Movement**
- **Character**
- **Quality of open space**
- **Management and safety**
- **Economy**

In Medowie, you most value

These are the things most important to you in your ideal neighbourhood.

- Elements of natural environment (natural features, views, vegetation, topography, water, wildlife)
- Locally owned and operated business
- Sense of neighbourhood safety (from crime, traffic and pollution)
- General condition of public open space (street trees, footpaths, parks)
- Local businesses that provide for daily needs (grocery stores, pharmacy, banks)

In Medowie, your top strengths are

These are the things you care about most and which you say are performing well. We must continue to celebrate and protect these.

- Elements of natural environment (natural features, views, vegetation, topography, water, wildlife etc.)
- Locally owned and operated businesses
- Local businesses that provide for daily needs (grocery stores, pharmacy, banks etc.)
- Sense of personal safety (for all ages, genders, day or night)
- Access to neighbourhood amenities (cafes, shops, health and wellness services etc.)
- Sense of belonging in the community

In Medowie, your top priorities are

These are the things most important to you, but you believe they are underperforming. We must work together to improve these.

- Evidence of recent public investment
- General condition of public open space (street trees, footpaths, parks etc.)
- Walking/jogging/bike paths that connect housing to communal amenity
- Quality of public space (footpaths, verges, parks etc.)
- Access and safety of walking, cycling and/or public transport
- Protection of the natural environment
- Evidence of Council/government management

Liveability Index – how does Medowie compare?

Medowie **61** /100

Port Stephens **66** /100

National Average **67** /100

Community engagement

Phase 1: Liveability index survey and Town Centre survey

Phase 2: Series of workshops with community and businesses, meetings with key stakeholders, and workshops.

Phase 3: Workshop with community, businesses and schools about the town centre expansion site.

Phase 4: Draft actions and Concept plan for town centre expansion site tested via survey with workshop participants.

Phase 5: Public Exhibition of the draft Medowie Place Plan.

How you value your town centre

A town centre survey for Ferodale Road between Peppertree Road and Medowie Road provided place-specific insights into how the community rates the strengths and weaknesses of the town centre area. These views provide valuable direction for town centre improvement.

Strengths

- Vegetation and natural elements (street trees, planting, water, etc.)
- Welcoming to all people
- General condition of vegetation, street trees and other planting
- Sense of safety (for all ages, genders, day/night, etc.)
- Overall look and visual character of the area

Improvement priorities

- Things to do in the evening (shopping, dining, entertainment, etc.)
- Maintenance of public spaces and street furniture
- Cleanliness of public space
- Walking paths that connect to other places
- Ease of walking around (including crossing the street, moving between destinations)
- Elements of natural environment (views, vegetation, topography, water, etc.)

Emerging themes for Medowie

Environmental sustainability

Medowie residents place a high value on the natural environment, which should be protected and celebrated.

Medowie provides key habitat corridors for a number of native species, including Koala, Brush-tailed Phascogale, Squirrel Glider and Powerful Owl. These corridors are made up of important vegetation, including Endangered Ecological Communities, like Swamp Sclerophyll Forest and Hunter Lowland Redgum Forest.

To ensure the long term protection of these plants and animals, these corridors need to be maintained, strengthened, and where possible, rehabilitated. This is particularly important at road crossings where traffic management measures can be used to minimise negative impacts.

Grahamstown Dam is a major source of drinking water for the greater Hunter region and improving drainage infrastructure and maintaining or improving water quality is of very high importance.

The protection and conservation of the environment presents opportunity for the community to get involved through education campaigns, citizen science, interpretive signage, trails, and environmental programs, or partnerships between community groups, schools, Council, Hunter Water and state agencies.

More opportunity for walking and cycling

Medowie offers great connectivity for private vehicles. However, poor active (walking and cycling) transport infrastructure and a lack of public transport options are limiting overall liveability. The town centre over caters to cars, which has made moving around the public domain difficult and unsafe for pedestrians. Visitors identify this as one of the biggest issues of the town centre.

Medowie's population growth continues to put connectivity and traffic flow under pressure, with potential bottleneck intersections that will impact movement. These roads and intersections have been identified for further investigation by Council.

Creating streets that give pedestrians and cyclists priority over cars will increase the liveability and appeal of the town centre. We can both increase the use of the town centre and length of time people stay, shop, and interact in this area by slowing down cars, ensuring the connectivity of the shared pathway network, and creating end of trip facilities like bike racks. We can also make streets attractive places for people to be, by adding landscaping, shade, and seating.

Enhance the look and feel of Medowie

Character is what makes a neighbourhood distinctive and shapes the identity of a place. It encompasses the land, people, the built environment, history, culture and tradition, including Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal. These elements create a specific look and feel, and a sense of belonging that a person feels for that place.

The community often refer to Medowie as 'the place of tall trees' with a character influenced by a bushland setting and village feel. This has changed over the past few years with a number of large developments and commercial interests in the town centre supporting the increased population growth.

To protect and enhance the character of Medowie while still enabling growth, planning controls need to be established. These controls create consistency and aligns development to the desired character of the place. We can start by identifying in more detail what elements make the character of Medowie.

Create quality open spaces

Medowie has a large amount of open space around the town centre, however this space is used primarily for sports fields or inaccessible bushland space.

Open space is important for exercising, relaxing, playing and accessing the natural environment. Walkable, accessible, well-designed open spaces are integral to a town's character and promote healthier lifestyles, support diversity and improve wellbeing.

Quality open space needs to be multifunctional, enable group or community activities, provide gathering places, create areas suitable for play and adventure, and encourage wildlife through natural habitat.

The site at 38 Ferodale Road offers opportunity for expansion of the town centre and is critical to the future growth of Medowie. Through strong and collaborative planning and sustained investment, we can create open space that is accessible and accommodates a range of different uses, support events and ultimately, improves the liveability and wellbeing of those that live, work and visit Medowie.

Comfortable, safe and looked after

When we visit a place we like to feel comfortable, safe and welcome. Medowie's town centre lacks a sense of comfort; it is not always safe for pedestrians to move around, and parts of the public domain feel tired and unloved. While there has been a noticeable shift in the last few years, particularly in the community's ownership of the public domain following the 7 Day Makeover, more work is still needed.

Improving the public domain is a shared responsibility. It needs ownership from the community, business and Council to create long term improvement.

Business and property owners within the town centre can create a more inspiring environment through improved shopfronts and retail space that encourage people to stay longer and spend more. Council can impact design and development through planning controls and maintenance whilst residents can grow pride and ownership through volunteering, events and activations.

Council can also work with property owners to create a more unified town centre. Grants may be available to kick-start improvement ideas.

The establishment of a Town Team is the first step towards connecting motivated residents, businesses and property owners to develop a clear identity, brand, and vision for Medowie as a great place to live, work and play.

Increase employment land for commercial and industrial uses

Consolidating the town centre as the focus for commercial and community activity is a key feature of this place plan. Commercial uses should be located on land with frontage to, and generally bound by, Medowie Road, Ferodale Road and Peppertree Road.

The community told us that they value the local businesses that service their daily needs, but would like to see more cafes and restaurants, as well as more things to do in the evening (bars, dining, cinema, and live music). Smaller scale shops and businesses are preferred over ‘big box’ or mall type development.

Creating opportunities for new businesses in Medowie is important. Rezoning additional land for commercial development or redevelopment of the older parts of the town centre can assist in attracting new business. However, even if land is available, some shops and services need a larger catchment area than Medowie can offer and are best located in regional centres like Raymond Terrace.

Planning for the future of Medowie

Council adopted the Medowie Planning Strategy (the Strategy) in 2016 to guide future growth of the town. The Strategy provides local direction for land use planning and sustainable growth, including residential land release, habitat and key corridors, and community facilities. It also sets out the requirements for planning proposals in Medowie.

Since the adoption of the Strategy, a large amount of the land identified for residential development has been rezoned, with new housing estates complete or under construction. More shops and commercial services have moved to the Medowie town centre, but the community tells us that the centre itself is neither functional or inviting.

The Medowie Place Plan will deliver a vibrant town centre which supports the growing community. Actions from this place plan will result in an improved variety of shops, recreation and entertainment opportunities, with better public spaces and improved pedestrian connectivity. Retaining and enhancing the natural environmental setting of the town centre will create a place that not only provides for the retail and service needs of the community, but also allows people to connect and live their lives.

The Medowie Place Plan has been designed to be considered in conjunction with the Medowie Planning Strategy. The place plan updates the Strategy by identifying additional opportunities for employment lands, recreation and public infrastructure. The place plan does not identify any new residential land in addition to that identified in the Strategy. Where there are any inconsistencies between the place plan and the strategy, the Medowie Place Plan will prevail.

The Future of Medowie map provides guidance and considerations for future growth, while protecting the natural environment and enhancing liveability.

The Future of Medowie

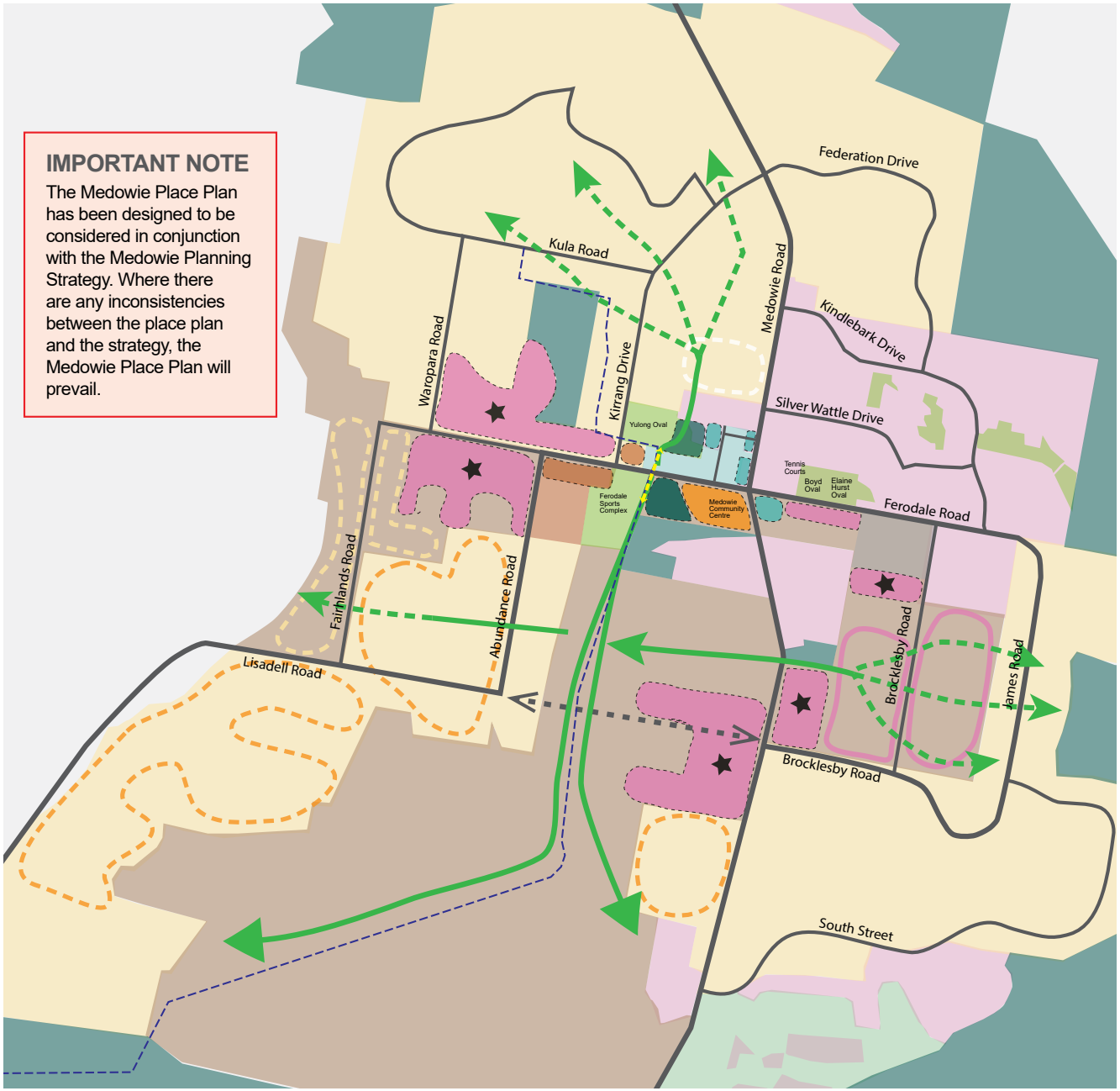
Key

Existing Structure

- Conservation
- Commercial
- Rural Residential
- Residential
- Rural
- Education
- Light Industry
- Pacific Dunes
- Recreation
- Habitat Corridor
- Roads
- Campvale drain

Proposed Structure Changes

- Future residential
- Future commercial
- Future conservation
- Future town centre site (residential, commercial, mixed use, recreation)
- Investigate for future expansion of employment land
- Future connecting road
- Future rural residential
- Rural residential infill
- Existing rural residential zoned land. undeveloped
- Opportunity to improve habitat corrdior
- Long term residential investigation
- Refer to Medowie Planning Strategy for details



Biodiversity

Biodiversity and fauna movement corridors are not designed to restrict development but to enhance the liveability of the place, protect local habitat and increase the wellbeing of those that live, work and visit the place. These areas can become an asset for the community, particularly when they can be visited and used for recreation, education or relaxation.

Commercial and employment land

A recent commercial land needs assessment demonstrates that in order to meet demand for commercial land in Medowie over the next 20 years, up to four additional hectares of land needs to be rezoned for commercial development. Land within and near the town centre is identified as being potentially suitable for rezoning.

The town centre expansion site south of Ferodale Road will include commercial land within a mix of residential and recreational uses, with the appropriate land zoning to be determined.

The light industrial area located at Abundance Road is expected to meet demand for employment land in the short term. Land to the north of this area and opposite Medowie Social is identified for the possible future expansion of employment land. Further investigation at the planning proposal stage is required to understand the short and long-term needs and the most suitable use or zone for this land, which could be light industrial, commercial, or other appropriate use.

Residential and rural residential land

The Medowie Planning Strategy identified 14 residential release areas in 2016, and since its implementation, 6 precincts have been rezoned and are at various stages of completion.

Opportunities for future rural residential development are identified to the west of town. This includes infill opportunities on rural residential land that can already be subdivided under current planning controls and rural land that will need to be rezoned in order to allow new development.

The town centre expansion site on Ferodale Road will likely include higher density residential development, mixed with other uses. Further consultation and master planning of the site will determine how this can be achieved in conjunction with other uses proposed for the site.

Planning proposals for future residential development, particularly those close to the town centre, will need to demonstrate how they will achieve housing diversity and higher densities.

This place plan does not identify any future residential or rural residential land in addition to that which is already identified in the Medowie Planning Strategy.

Habitat protection

Habitat corridors dissect Medowie and provide connections for wildlife to various conservation areas. Habitat fragmentation and connectivity is a consideration under the test of significance in the Biodiversity Conservation Act and planning proposals or development applications must demonstrate how the corridors will be managed.

The Medowie Planning Strategy identifies key habitat corridors, which have been reviewed and updated in this place plan. The place plan also demonstrates the importance of improving the north-south corridor through the town centre, which is a dangerous crossing location for wildlife, and actions detail how this corridor can be enhanced in this urban area.

There is high-value vegetation outside of the identified corridors, and the identification of corridors in this plan does not prevent full consideration of the impacts of future development on the biodiversity values of an area during the planning process.

Two sites have been identified for future conservation zoning; the western side of the town centre expansion site and east of Yulong Oval. The conservation of these sites will contribute to the improvement of the habitat corridor.

Future connecting road

The Medowie Planning Strategy proposes the investigation of a new Brocklesby to Lisadell Road link. This link would reduce pressure and congestion of Ferrodale Road, and contribute to creating a more pedestrian friendly town centre. This requires discussions with landholders and investigation of funding opportunities.

Planning proposal process

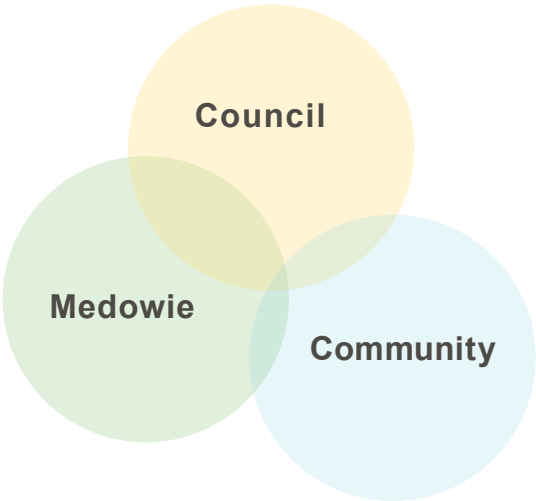
To rezone land, a land owner or developer (the proponent) can request Council to change the planning laws to allow a different type of development on the land. The application needs to provide very specific detail of the proposed use of the site and the potential impacts that this new type of use might have on the place.

Planning proposals will need to address the requirements outlined on Council's website and the Medowie Planning Strategy.

Planning process

- Medowie Planning Strategy
- Medowie Place Plan
- Town Centre Master Plan
- Town Centre LEP amendment/ Development Control Plan/ Design Guidelines
- Local Infrastructure Contributions Plan amendment
- Development Applications

A shared responsibility for our place



Aboriginal community

Place-making activities that are based on strong Aboriginal cultural values, developed in partnership with our Aboriginal community, enhance the nature of place and a sense of community.

Local workers

Port Stephens workers and volunteers contribute to place creation through their work with local business, industry and tourism. Collective working power is a strong resource in place-making activities.

Business and tourism leaders

Businesses have many opportunities to contribute place making, these may include funding community projects, collaborating, sharing resources, training local workers, or simply ensuring up-keep of their slice of the main street.

Port Stephens Council

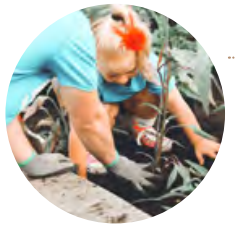
Council can play one of 4 roles in implementing place plans; as a coordinator by providing guidance and assistance for a project; as a supporter by providing inspiration or project funding; as a partner by working with community groups and business; or as the primary organisation that delivers the project.

Residents

All kinds of residents in Port Stephens make an important contribution to the place they live through individual or collective effort. Residents might plant trees, share their knowledge or skills with community, voice an opinion on a strategic direction from Council or initiate a street party!

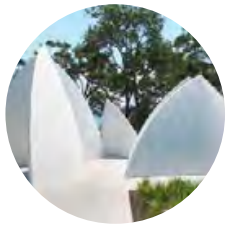
Investment stakeholders

A town or city need people who believe in it's potential and celebrate it's success. Investors play an active role in ensuring development aligns with strategic directors and invests in it's future.



Community groups

Community groups have a can-do and proactive attitude which is a highly valued quality in place-making projects. These groups are wide-ranging and may include sports, teams, schools, charities, clubs and social groups.



State Government

State government has three roles in place-making; an authority, a strategic visionary and a funding body. Importantly, they have a significant role in the management of roads, parks and heritage - all important parts of place identity.

Working together

Creating great places requires a collaborative approach and ownership from all those that live, work and visit the place. By working together we can harness people-power to achieve more, and best of all, create lasting connections that improve liveability and increase the wellbeing of the Medowie community.

Town Teams

Town Teams are a group of positive and proactive people that work collaboratively to improve a place or area. The Town Team model is inclusive and open to everyone – businesses, residents, community groups and anyone keen to have a go. Talk to Council about how you can join Medowie's Town Team and connect with other ambitious community members to start delivering outcomes for your town.

Medowie
LIONS PARK MEDOW

Creating better places and spaces in Medowie

What projects are in the pipeline for Medowie?

In the next 5 years, we expect a range of projects, as shown on the map, to commence. These projects will improve liveability in Medowie and include improvements or replacement of existing roads, additional pedestrian and cycle infrastructure, and a range of community and recreational facilities.

Council has already started to budget for these projects and you can find more detail in our Resourcing Strategy, Local Infrastructure Contributions Plan and Projects and Works page.

IMPORTANT NOTE
Timing, funding, or locations are subject to change.

Other potential future projects

Potential future projects shown on the map represent opportunities to deliver desired outcomes for Medowie, but these projects are not yet funded in Council's work program.

There are many other ways to deliver these outcomes – such as grant funding obtained by either Council or community groups, fundraising by individuals or charity groups, donations or sponsorship by businesses, or through voluntary planning agreements.

These projects should inspire all of the community (including developers) to get involved in creating a better Medowie; delivering the best future for Medowie requires everyone to contribute and work together. Talk to Council if you are interested in delivering one of these projects.

Creating better places and spaces in Medowie
IMPORTANT NOTE
Timing, funding, or locations are subject to change.
TOWN CENTRE
KIRRANG DEIVE
FERODALE ROAD
MEDOWIE ROAD
KULA ROAD
KIRRANG
DRIVE
ABUNDANCE ROAD
KINDLEBARK
COACHWOOD
BROCKLESBY ROAD
JAMES ROAD
0 20 40 60 80 100

Recreation Projects

1	Medowie Childcare Centre shade shelter replacement.	2023
2	Yulong Oval. Sports amenities building replacements with kiosk, change rooms and toilets.	2023
3	38 Ferodale Road District open space with recreational facilities.	2024
4	Coolabah Reserve. Park furniture, seating and half multi-sport court.	2026
5	Coachwood Reserve. Off-leash dog exercise area improvements.	2026
6	Kindlebark Reserve. Playground replacement.	2028
7	Creighton Reserve. Playground replacement.	2029
8	Medowie Tennis. Facility upgrade.	2027

Potential Future Projects

9	Ferodale Oval. Expansion into a 2 oval facility at senior competition standards.
10	Community Precinct upgrades.
16	Wilga Road Off-road shared path from Wilga Road to Town Centre including bridge for creek crossing.
17	Ferodale Road Campvale drain bridge upgrade.

Location Non Specific

Improve and enlarge existing drains crossing roads, overland flow paths, downstream drainage systems.	2027
Bus facilities.	
Bicycle parking facilities (end of trip facilities).	
Medowie Road. Fitness equipment along shared path.	
Skate park.	
Short term RV parking area.	
Campvale Drain nature walk.	

Civil Projects

1	Medowie Road Gateway treatment at entrance to Medowie north of Boundary Road.	2026
2	Medowie Road Gateway treatment and change in speed zone north of Kindlebark Drive.	2026
3	Medowie Road Gateway treatment and change in speed zone south of Ferodale Road.	2026
4	Medowie Road Upgrade off-road shared path from Medowie Road to Cherry Tree Close.	2028
5	Medowie Road New pedestrian refuge island south of Ferodale Road.	2028
6	Brocklesby Road New pedestrian refuge island at Ferodale Road.	2023
7	Ferodale Road Upgrade pedestrian refuge island west of Medowie Road.	2023
8	Lisadell Road and Abundance Road Pavement widening from Fairlands Road to Abundance Road.	2024
9	Ferodale Road Road widening with parking at 51 Ferodale Road to 85 Ferodale Road.	2027
10	Ferodale Road/Peppertree Road Upgrade intersection, to be signalised.	2027
11	Ferodale Road Roundabout to 46 Ferodale Road.	2025
12	James Road Pavement rehabilitation and widening from 52 James Road to 76 James Road.	2025
13	James Road Pavement rehabilitation and widening from 90 James Road to 101 James Road	2027
14	Silver Wattle Drive. New path from Medowie Road to Bottle Brush Avenue.	2027
15	Various roads. Restore/maintain, including Medowie Road between Kindlebark Drive and Federation Drive.	2023 to 2029

Investing in your community

In recent years Council has invested over $10 million in Medowie through road works, new shared paths, sports facility improvements and the construction of Medowie Social. Council is expected to invest over $8 million in Medowie over the next 5 years.

Key

- Schools
- Community Buildings
- Shopping Centre

Access / Connections

- Upgraded Shared Path

Projects

- # Upcoming Recreation Projects
- # Upcoming Civil Projects
- # Potential Future Projects

Look and feel for Medowie

Creating an attractive streetscape brings people into town and compels people to stay and linger. The use of a consistent colour palette and materials can help to create a beautiful town with its own, unique 'look and feel'.

Small projects such as shop front renovations, fence replacements and street furniture may all present opportunities to create a more cohesive town centre and a sense of belonging to the community.

The colour palette of earthy tones, represents the many attributes of Medowie and celebrates the diversity of the broader Port Stephens Central Ward region.

Yellow for the sandy soil and for the stunning skies at dawn and dusk.

C: 0% **M:** 9% **Y:** 44% **K:** 0%
R: 255 **G:** 229 **B:**159
HEX: FFE59F

Burnt orange for the bright coloured earth found around Medowie.

C: 19% **M:** 69% **Y:** 94% **K:** 6%
R: 193 **G:** 102 **B:** 50
Hex: C16632

Teal for the community spirit shown during the 7 Day Makeover.

C: 66% **M:** 5% **Y:** 35% **K:** 0%
R: 181 **G:** 211 **B:** 178
Hex: b5d3b2

Brown for the bark of our trees and shells of our delicious macadamias.

C: 29% **M:** 41% **Y:** 56% **K:** 3%
R: 181 **G:** 146 **B:** 117
Hex: B59275

Deep green for the tall trees that form Medowie's name sake.

C: 91% **M:** 44% **Y:** 66% **K:** 35%
R: 0 **G:** 86 **B:** 78
Hex: 00554D

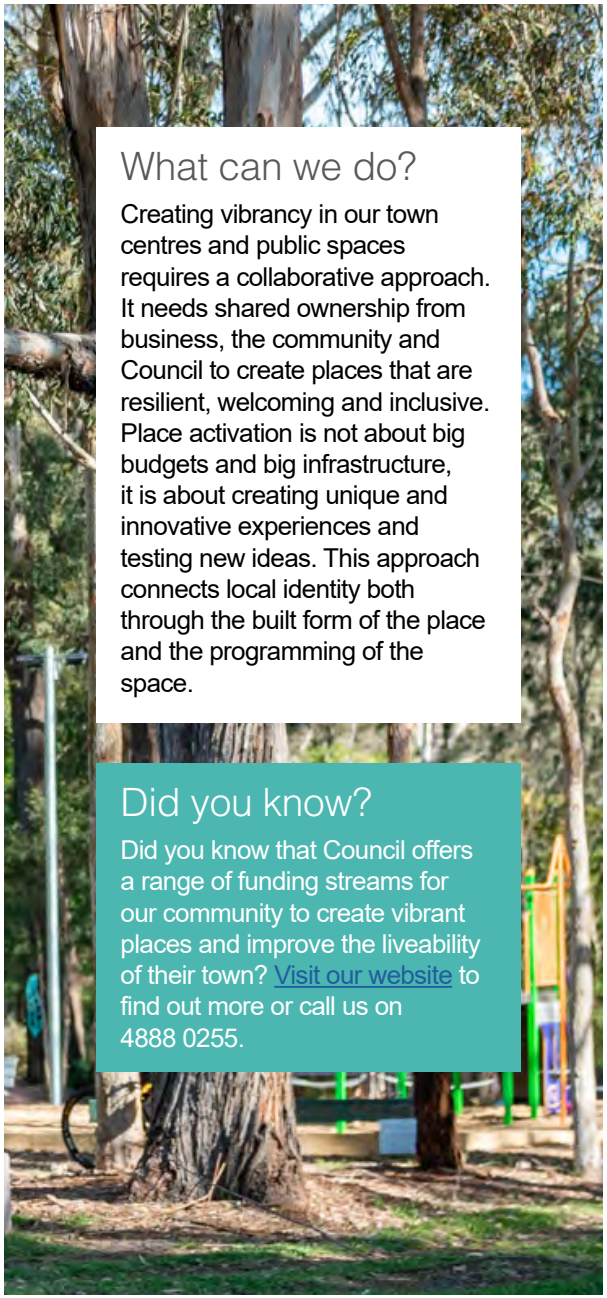
Deep blue for the cool waters of the Grahamstown Dam.

C: 86% **M:** 58% **Y:** 44% **K:** 26%
R: 43 **G:** 83 **B:** 101
Hex: 2A5364

Rusted steel for industrial components of the Central Ward and its surrounds.

Clear-finished timber for the natural materials found in and around Medowie.

Medowie



What can we do?

Creating vibrancy in our town centres and public spaces requires a collaborative approach. It needs shared ownership from business, the community and Council to create places that are resilient, welcoming and inclusive. Place activation is not about big budgets and big infrastructure, it is about creating unique and innovative experiences and testing new ideas. This approach connects local identity both through the built form of the place and the programming of the space.

Did you know?

Did you know that Council offers a range of funding streams for our community to create vibrant places and improve the liveability of their town? Visit our website to find out more or call us on 4888 0255.

Key

Points of Interest

- Markets
- Ceremonies & Celebrations
- Community Centre
- Entertainment Space
- Making Memories
- Walk to School
- Wayfinding Signage
- Schools
- Community Buildings
- Shopping Centre

0 20 40 60 80 100

Art is in the Heart of Community

Art is an expression of the community… create a public mural or put together a "Walk and Talk" street art trail to enjoy with friends and show off to visitors.

Be Active or Chill Out

Open spaces like ovals and natural reserves make great activation spaces. These areas can be used actively through sport or simply to chill out and enjoy each other's company at a casual outdoor cinema event.

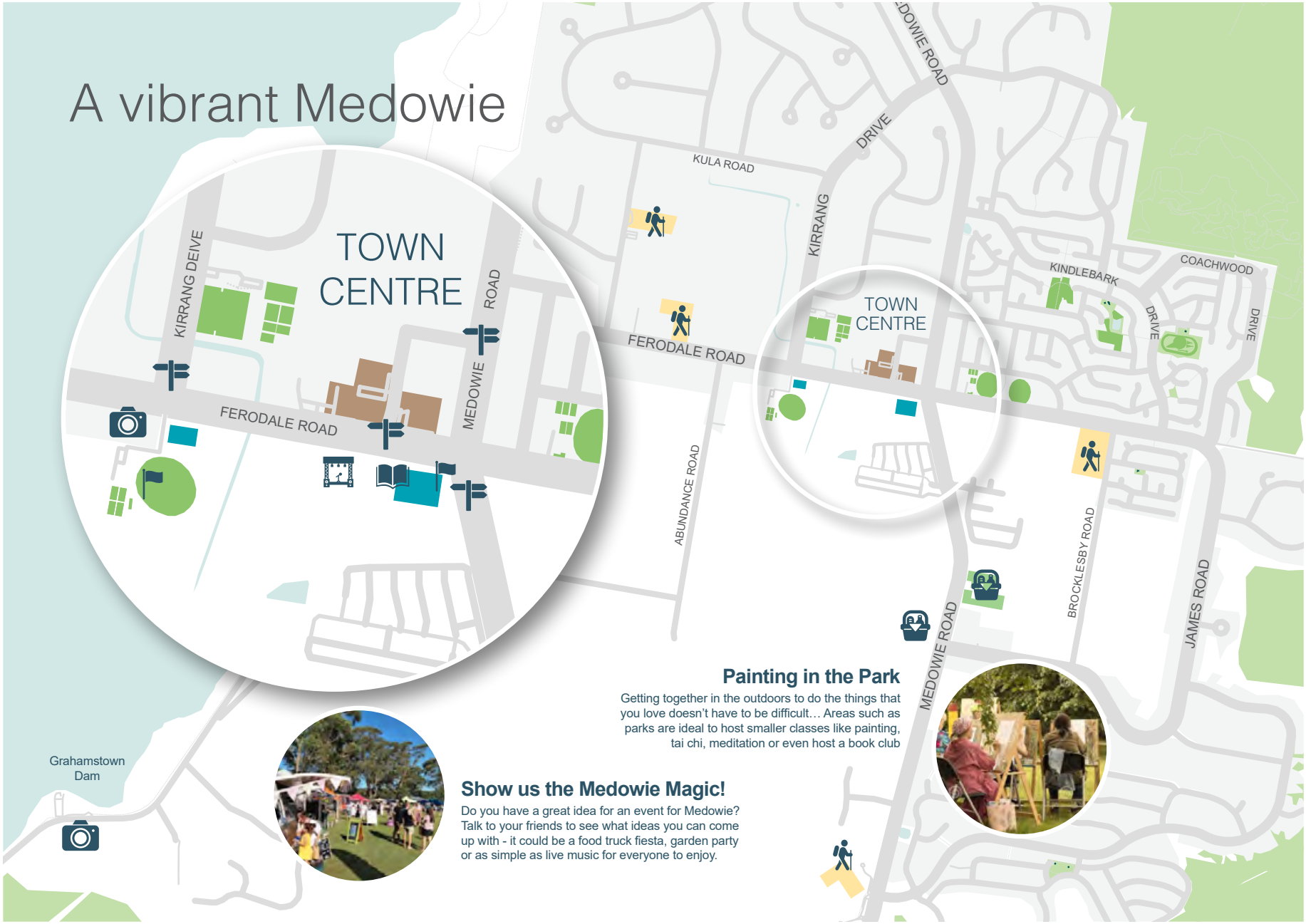
Meet in the Street!

Liven up our streets with unique pop up displays, coffee van or acoustic busker to add vibrancy – little things make a big difference!

Meet the Makers

Do you know someone growing their own produce in Medowie? Consider creating a produce swap or farmers market or take some time to attend an open flower farm tour in your very own backyard.

ITEM 5 - ATTACHMENT 2 DRAFT MEDOWIE PLACE PLAN.



Medowie Town Centre Concept Plan

The Medowie Town Centre Concept Plan was prepared in response to what you told us was important in recent workshops, surveys and discussions - to create a great place for the community of Medowie. The concept plan provides an indication of what the town centre expansion site and surrounding streets might look like. This concept will be refined through further consultation and master-planning of the site. Changes to the concept are made as detailed information becomes available.

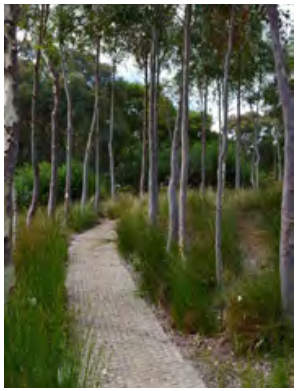
Council purchased the land at 38 Ferodale Road in 2021. The concept plan shows how this site and immediate surrounds can become a multifunctional space that delivers on the community vision by accommodating a range of community priorities. The site could include retail premises, housing, tourist accommodation, pathways, car parking, recreation and play spaces, and a meeting place for Medowie.

The future development areas represent a higher density style of development, specially designed to fit within and enhance the natural environment. These buildings could provide housing or tourist accommodation on the upper floors, while retail space, catering for businesses like boutique shops and cafes, is provided at ground level to activate the village square. Development controls will be prepared to ensure that future development protects and enhances the highly valued village character of Medowie. A community and cultural precinct contains the existing community centre, to cater for future population growth.

The concept plan aims to improve walkability in and around the town centre expansion site by connecting key destinations with new and better pathways in a more pedestrian friendly environment. An avenue of trees planted along main roads, as well as other road treatments, will help slow traffic and make it easier to cross the road for both people and wildlife, while contributing to the town's 'tall trees' character.

There will be space for social gatherings, such as picnics, markets, or events. The mix of uses at the village square will create a vibrant place and strengthen the sense of community.

The vegetated land to the west of the site can be reserved as a conservation area. Native vegetation can be rehabilitated and restored, and opportunities to access this area for passive recreation will be explored. The site will be enhanced through carefully selected landscaping, with a strong focus on native species, which will reinforce Medowie's natural bushland setting.



Town Centre Concept Plan

Legend

1. Village square
2. Potential Recreation Precinct with play area
3. Access road with avenue of trees
4. Carparking
5. Conservation area
6. Future residential development site
7. Riparian corridor and drainage upgrade works
8. Connection paths through site
9. Upgrades to Ferrodale Road
10. Upgrades to Peppertree Road
11. Future mixed use site
12. Community and culture precinct

ITEM 5 - ATTACHMENT 2 DRAFT MEDOWIE PLACE PLAN.

Actions

Key: Emerging themes

Environment	Open Space
Movement	Management and safety
Character	Economy

Key: Council's roles

- Coordinate
- Deliver
- Partnership
- Support

IMPORTANT NOTE

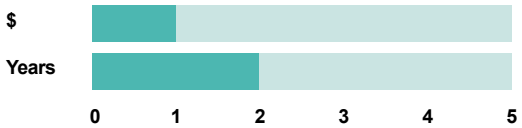
Cost estimates and delivery timeframes are indicative only and subject to further investigation.

The order in which the actions can be completed is flexible and will be based on timing and availability of funding and resources, and community willingness.

Getting our streetscapes right

The streetscape has a big impact on the look and feel of a place. The quality of a street affects whether people choose to walk, cycle or take the car and can affect whether people feel safe.

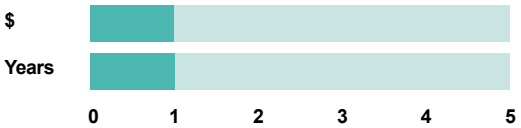
It is important that the right vegetation is planted in the right place and that there is sufficient street furniture like shade structures, rubbish bins, and seating. A streetscape guide will be developed to provide guidance about streetscape embellishments such as landscaping, paving, materials and colours; strengthening the rural character of Medowie and reflecting the town's character as the "place of tall trees". This will guide private landscaping and street tree planting, and provide inspiration for developers.



Lead: Council

Enjoy sustainable gardening

There is a growing interest in sustainable gardening, but many would-be gardeners don't know where to start. Together with knowledgeable community groups, a series of education programs and a sustainable planting guide will be developed for Medowie residents to learn about sustainable gardening, the use of appropriate garden varieties, bush tucker, edible species and shade species. Community members could consider creating a community garden or a native edible garden with likeminded people to practice and teach their skills.

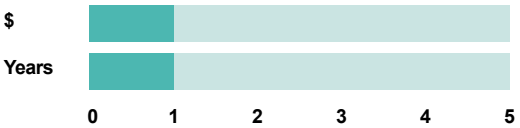


Lead: Community

Caring for Medowie's environment

Community members could organise a working bee or support conservation group to help care for Medowie's environment. Projects could include looking after native vegetation in reserves to provide a high quality environment for local fauna and native bees, or maintain stormwater quality improvement devices to mitigate risk of pollutants entering waterways. Council can put you in touch with existing groups, or talk to us about setting up a new group. We can also help you access community grant funding for your proposed project.

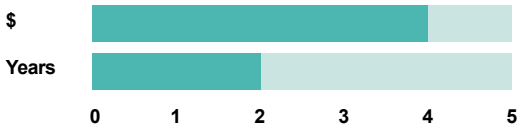
Reach out the Council's Volunteers Support Officer to express your interest in joining a conservation group.



Lead: Community

Native is best

The town centre extension site is currently dominated by exotic pine trees, which impacts on the ability of native flora to flourish and offers limited habitat for native wildlife. Removal of these pine trees and replanting the site with native species will be a great conservation outcome for Medowie and will create habitat and wildlife movement corridors for our precious native animals. Maintaining this new vegetation would make a great project for a community group.



Lead: Council

Living and working in your community

Medowie's Liveability index results have inspired a series of action items. Port Stephens Council is part of the community and we have various roles in delivering these actions.

As a **coordinator**, we will provide guidance on how to start your project, help by identifying approvals required, advise you about funding opportunities, get you in touch with other organisations, or advocate for your project.

As a **supporter**, we may provide support, permission, inspiration or funding.

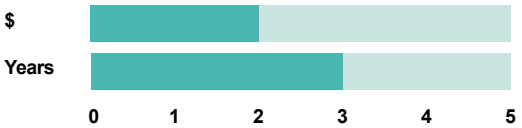
In **delivering**, we will fund and deliver the project.

As a **partner**, we will work with the community, business, developers, and state agencies to undertake projects or programs.

Keeping our drinking water clean and safe

Medowie plays a very important role in maintaining healthy drinking water catchments for the region. High value conservation land often coincides with flood prone land or land required for drainage, forming a 'blue-green' corridor. Opportunities to beautify and maintain blue-green corridors can be explored with the aim of achieving both environmental benefits, and community and recreational benefits, by including boardwalks, interpretive signage and seating.

Educational programs can support these projects and inform the community and school aged children about our shared responsibilities for water management and quality. Partnerships between community, schools, Council, state agencies and Hunter Water Corporation would be essential in making these actions successful.



Lead: Community

Smart, green and clean

Medowie has an opportunity to implement a smart, clean and green philosophy by introducing sustainable practices into the design of new public spaces and businesses.

Consideration should be given to including solar panels on public and private buildings, planting trees to provide shade and reduce heat, as well as investigating the inclusion of USB and EV charging stations throughout our public spaces.

Lead: Business

Get back to nature

Residents and visitors highly value the natural setting of Medowie. Opportunities to be immersed in the natural environment in public spaces and along pathways should be provided. This could include aesthetically pleasing boardwalks over flood prone areas, bird hides with educational and interpretive information to increase awareness and encourage environmental responsibility or working with relevant agencies to improve connections to state forests and National Parks.

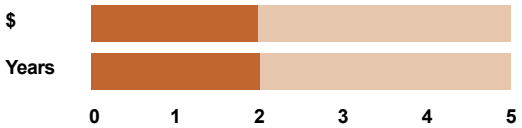
Lead: Council

I like to move it, move it – moving around Medowie

It is important that everyone can move around a place in a safe and convenient way. Medowie has experienced significant growth over the past several years, with new residents and businesses investing in the town.

While various means of transport need to coexist, in some areas pedestrians will have a clear priority over cars. We can trial this idea with occasional road closures for events, markets, or cycling and think about introducing end of trip options. That way we can see what may work and what the response is.

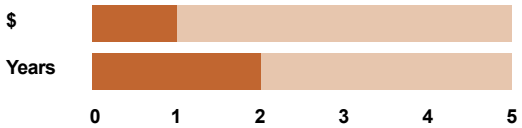
An updated traffic study will guide future infrastructure projects.



Lead: Council

Get fit and have fun

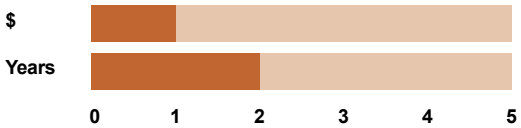
Pathways are more than a piece of infrastructure to get you from A to B. People can discover something new "just around the corner" and walking or cycling becomes an adventure particularly with new or temporary uses popping-up in the area. Pathways can incorporate art, be environmental or historical trails, invite fitness, or play and provide easy and safe access to destinations in the town centre. Enhancing pathways with exercise equipment and activating them through events such as a Medowie Park Run, will open up more opportunities for the community to activate and utilise these routes in different and interesting ways.



Lead: Community

Signpost the town centre

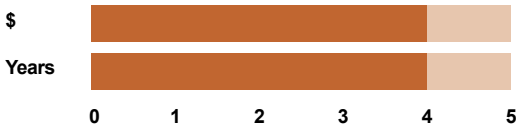
Attracting visitors to the town centre starts with helping them locate it! Update Google Maps and other online mapping systems to label the Medowie Town Centre and consider supplementing these online tools with appropriate signage along Medowie Road or create an attractive town centre map.



Lead: Community

Village loop

The Medowie town centre is car orientated and does not provide a pedestrian or bicycle friendly environment. Consider the construction of a shared pathway loop connecting the town centre to the shared path along Medowie Road, and provide easy access to end of trip facilities and amenities in the town centre.

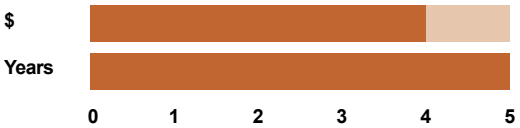


Lead: Council

Extend and connect cycleways

Options for active and more sustainable transport will be encouraged and investigated.

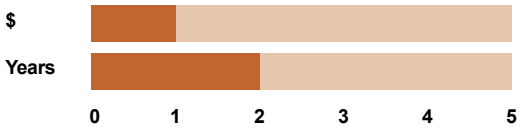
Existing shared pathways could be extended and improved to include connections to nearby suburbs, key features and sites. Investigate options and extend the Medowie Road shared path to the RAAF Base (at Williamtown), Newcastle Airport and Raymond Terrace to improve and enable better commuter options.



Lead: Council

Getting to school safely

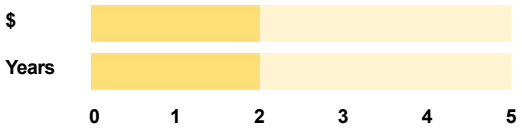
Giving our kids a safe walking and cycling environment to get to school is great for their physical wellbeing, confidence, independence, and for creating social connections. Shared paths along Ferodale Road to connect to school will benefit Medowie's kids. Regular 'walk to school' and 'safe cycling' days can be organised to encourage the use of these paths.



Lead: Community

Define Medowie's character

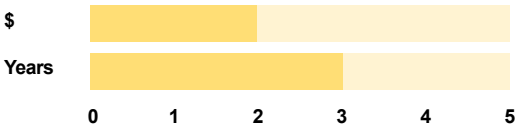
What do we really mean when we refer to Medowie as the 'place of tall trees', or having a 'village feel'? Using liveability data and feedback from community workshops, we can create a more detailed character description for Medowie. This character description can be used in the design of the built environment and celebrated through theming for unique events, public art, community activities, and place making.



Lead: Council

Controls for the look and feel of the Medowie town centre

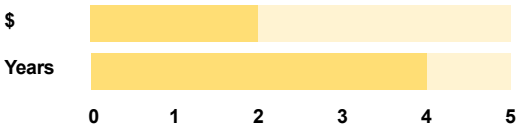
To ensure that Medowie's town centre develops in a desirable way, a site specific Development Control Plan (DCP) for the Medowie town centre will be prepared. The new DCP chapter will include the existing shopping precinct and the town centre expansion site. The DCP will set out the future character of the town centre, including creating a natural setting and a high degree of connectivity. Objectives should include achieving a shady and green town centre, with buildings designed to fit within a natural setting.



Lead: Council

Celebrate trees

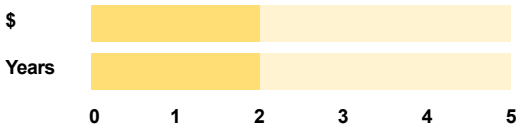
To reinforce Medowie as 'place of the tall trees', it is proposed to plant an 'avenue of trees' along Medowie's main roads. To celebrate, a planting day can be organised that includes multiple sites around town. Council will help facilitate partnerships and activities with local schools, community groups and seek corporate sponsors to align efforts with initiatives such as National Tree Day.



Lead: Council

Community connection

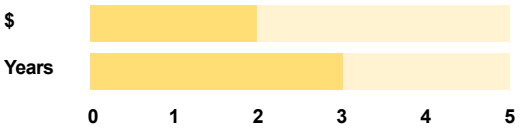
Community groups are important to the vitality of a place. They offer encouragement, connection, resources and support. You might want to support some of the efforts and projects that existing groups are doing or talk to council's Vibrant Places team who can provide advice on how to create your own community group.



Lead: Council

Creative solutions for place making

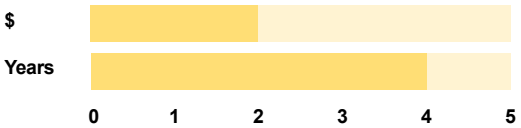
Creating great places doesn't always have to cost large amounts of money or require permanent fixtures. Commercial operators and shopkeepers could consider running a kiosk style business, potentially renting out play equipment, quirky furniture such as beanbags, as well as selling food and souvenirs. There is also opportunity to develop a makers space to support the creative community in Medowie. If this sounds like you, we encourage you to talk to our Vibrant Places team to discuss your ideas.



Lead: Council

Spice up Peppertree Road

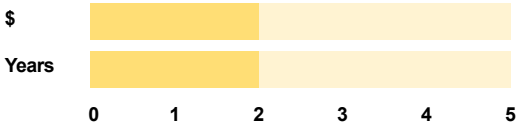
Murals, sculptures, landscaping, and interesting street furniture create a sense of place and help reinforce a town's character. Peppertree Road is an ideal location for murals and art installations to increase the visual appeal of the town centre. Some businesses have already made a start, but there is still more to do, like in the surrounding shopping areas. An avenue of street trees and the provision of street furniture and lighting will spice up this street even more.



Lead: Council

Create a Main Street

Medowie's town centre lacks a classic 'country town' main street. Road treatments, building design, pedestrian facilities and landscaping will transform Ferodale Road from a car focussed collector road, to a charming main street that prioritises pedestrians. To reclaim Ferodale Road for pedestrians, a main street public domain plan will be required for the road between the bridge over Campvale Drain to the roundabout at Medowie Road. A main street should provide opportunities for on-street parking, additional street trees, crossing points and new pathways. Ferodale Road will need to be widened to accommodate this change. Investigate opportunities to develop a similar public domain plan for Peppertree Road.



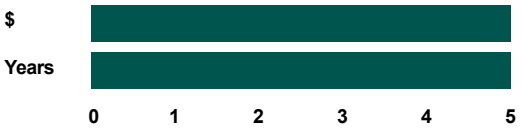
Lead: Council

Let's play!

Building on the great work of the 7 Day Makeover, the community have made clear that they want to spend time with their friends and family in the heart of Medowie. There is an opportunity for a new, integrated recreational precinct close to the shops and community facilities, and well connected by footpaths and cycleways.

A recreational precinct could include elements like a play space, skate park, climbing structures and nature play so that it can be enjoyed by a range of ages. A great community hub integrates with its surroundings and offers amenities for parents and carers such as a comfortable place to sit and watch the kids play, somewhere to grab a coffee, or a bite to eat. The Medowie community has some great ideas for such a recreational precinct as shown in the engagement report that accompanies this place plan.

Where it will be located, what elements should be included and what it may look like requires further investigation. When the time comes, we want you to get involved and help us design a place that will be exciting for our community as well as friends, families and visitors when they visit the town centre.

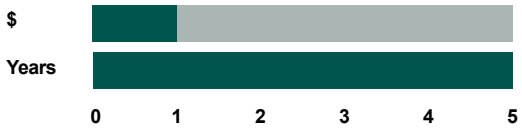


Lead: Council

The heart of town

The new town centre expansion will offer quality public space for people to come together, play, socialise and do business. With your help, the open space areas planned for the site will become the new heart of town – the place to be, to meet friends, recreate, dine, or to just relax. The design of the open space, which could include pocket parks to support small group activities, will be determined through the master planning of the site. Would you like to be involved in small tai chi and yoga classes, host regular boot camps, organise a 'movies in the park' event, or have Christmas carols with your community in our open spaces?

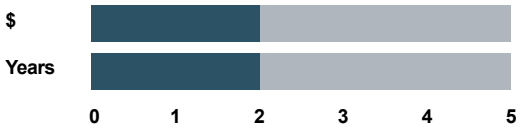
Until such time that the town centre expansion site is ready, you can use an existing park or space for your group activity. Get a group together and talk to Council's Vibrant Places team about your proposed activity.



Lead: Community

Light it up

Creative use of lighting is a great place making tool. It improves safety through passive surveillance and encourages people to stay out longer, supporting the night-time economy. Lighting up pathways, seating, trees and buildings will make the town centre a more pleasant place to be. Lighting needs to be carefully designed to not impose on wildlife habitat, where it can scare away native animals, and the use of sustainable options like solar should be investigated.



Lead: Community / business

Make it happen – rezoning the town centre expansion site

Land at the town centre expansion site requires rezoning to enable future development. Council will prepare a planning proposal to ensure sufficient future supply of residential and commercial land, while also identifying land suitable for environmental conservation (environmental zones) and recreational purposes.

Lead: Council

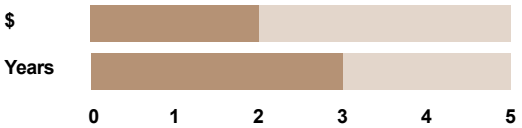
Has it worked?

In 2021, a liveability assessment was undertaken for an area along Ferodale Road between Peppertree Road and the Medowie Road roundabout. Visitors provided insight into the strengths and priorities for improvement of this area and these comments were used in the preparation of this place plan. To see if the place plan actions have had a positive impact on the town, an Impact Maximiser assessment will be undertaken in about 5 years.

Lead: Council

Planning the town centre expansion

Medowie has a unique opportunity to plan for an extension to its town centre from scratch. Council, together with other key stakeholders like residents, business, and state government agencies will work together to create a masterplan for the site. The masterplan will incorporate the community vision and priorities, and respond to the Medowie character description and guidelines. It will define the type and best location of commercial, residential, recreation and open spaces required, including supporting infrastructure, pathways and connections to surrounding areas, and environmental and drainage and stormwater quality infrastructure. Staging of development and funding opportunities will also be investigated through this process. Council will undertake comprehensive community engagement during the master planning process.



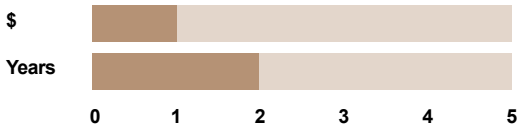
Lead: Council

Linger for longer

The 7-Day Makeover in Medowie demonstrated that communities can shape their own environment. Small-scale projects can create a sense of place when they celebrate the essence and look and feel of Medowie.

Community members and groups can run place based activations and projects, with Council support, that include music, art, sensory gardens, and custom-made street furniture like benches.

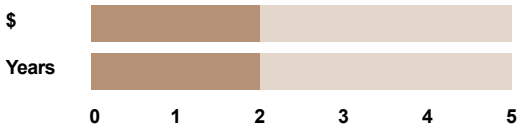
Do you have a great idea for projects that you'd like to see in your town centre and public spaces? Council will work with you to scope out your idea for events and projects that will add vibrancy to Medowie, giving more reasons for people to come together, enjoy each other's company to benefit business and build community.



Lead: Community

A signature event for Medowie

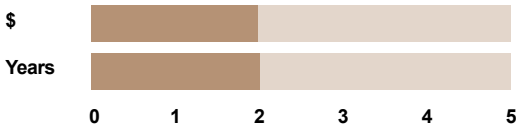
Medowie does not have a signature event that celebrates the town and its people. Consider designing and delivering an annual signature event that is specific to Medowie. We encourage the community to work with Council to identify unique opportunities to create an event that highlights the things you love about your place.



Lead: Community

Celebrate rural

Medowie's soils are rich and fertile and support many small producing farms and local growers. There is opportunity to celebrate the contribution that these farm gate experiences offer the community. Council can work with growers to create an ongoing community food market to showcase local farms and highlight flowers, food and produce. These events could include presentations or local produce dinners. For those a little more established, there is also the option to create farm gate experiences and agritourism opportunities for your business.

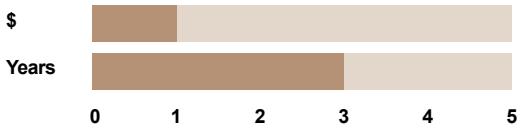


Lead: Community

Top spot for a tourist stop

Creating drawcards for tourists to visit, stay and shop in towns takes a dedicated effort. Medowie's proximity to Newcastle Airport and the Pacific Highway makes it a top spot for a tourist stop!

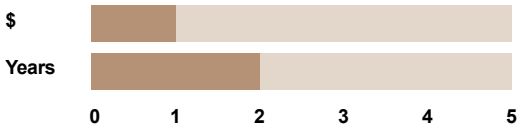
Developing key attractions such as a hedge maze, tree tops adventure, a graffiti wall as well as leafy open space would help draw visitors to Medowie. Diversifying the tourism offering will help attract more visitors from within the LGA as well as from further afield. As day visitors extend their stay, there will be options for Medowie to consider hosting RV friendly vehicles and commercial accommodation options should be explored.



Lead: Community / business

Establish a Medowie Town Team

Align the vision and ambitions of residents and local businesses by creating a local group that can deliver quick wins and progress bigger ideas. One option for doing this could be to establish a Medowie Town Team. This will help local change makers find each other and connect with potential partners across Port Stephens. Establishing this group is also the first step towards developing a clear identity, brand, and vision for Medowie as a great place to live, work and play.



Lead: Community

PORT STEPHENS
COUNCIL

council@portstephens.nsw.gov.au | 02 4988 0255 | PORTSTEPHENS.NSW.GOV.AU

PORT STEPHENS BOATING AND FISHING INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN

Draft Report - September 2022

PORT STEPHENS COUNCIL

Prepared by Otium Planning Group Pty Ltd in conjunction with:

OTIUM SPORT + LEISURE + COMMUNITIES

BLIGH TANNER

Otium Planning group

HEAD OFFICE
Suite 304/ 91 Murphy Street
Richmond VIC 3121
p (03) 9698 7300
e info@otiumplanning.com.au
w www.otiumplanning.com.au
ABN: 30 605 962 169
ACN: 605 962 169

LOCAL OFFICE
Suite 13.03 Plaza Building
95 Pitt Street
Sydney NSW 2000

CONTACT
Martin Lambert
p 0418 151 450
e martin@otiumplanning.com.au

OTIUM PLANNING GROUP OFFICES

- Brisbane
- Cairns
- Melbourne
- New Zealand
- Perth
- Sunshine Coast
- Sydney

Otium Planning Group acknowledges the Australian Aboriginal, Torres Strait and South Sea Islander peoples of this nation.

We acknowledge the traditional custodians of the lands on which our company is located and where we conduct our business. We pay our respects to ancestors and to Elders, past, present and emerging.

Otium is committed to national reconciliation and respect for Indigenous peoples' unique cultural and spiritual relationships to the land, waters and seas, and their rich contribution to society.

© 2022 Otium Planning Group Pty. Ltd. This document may only be used for the purposes for which it was commissioned and in accordance with the terms of engagement for the commission.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION 1
1.1. Study Approach 1
1.2. What is Included in the Port Stephens Boating and Fishing Infrastructure Plan? 1

2. SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS 2
2.1. Overall Recommendations 2

3. THE PORT STEPHENS POPULATION 8
3.1. Population and Growth 8
3.2. Age 8
3.3. Population Projections 8
3.4. Socio-Economic Characteristics of the Port Stephens Community 9
3.5. Implications for Boating and Fishing Infrastructure 9

4. TOURISM IN PORT STEPHENS 10

5. FISHING AND BOATING TRENDS 11
5.1. Participation in Fishing and Boating 11
5.2. Boat Ownership and Registration 12
5.3. Boating and Fishing Infrastructure Trends 13
5.4. Summary of Participation and Boat Ownership 13

6. FISHING AND BOATING INFRASTRUCTURE IN PORT STEPHENS 14

7. ENGAGEMENT SNAPSHOT 17

8. SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS AND DEMAND 19

9. PLANNING FRAMEWORK 20
9.1. Strategic Goals 20
9.2. Guiding Principles 21
9.3. Hierarchy of Provision 22
9.4. Provision Standards 23
9.5. Key Support Infrastructure 29

10. RECOMMENDATIONS 31

11. SITE SUMMARIES AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS 32
11.1. Boat Ramps 32
11.2. Jetties and Wharfs 69

12. WARRANTIES AND DISCLAIMERS 83

1. INTRODUCTION

Set amongst an idyllic coastal paradise within the Great Lakes Marine Park, Port Stephens' spectacular beaches, bays and unique Peninsulas offer the perfect environment for water-based recreation activities. Recreational boating and fishing are central to the Port Stephens community and a major tourism drawcard. Popular amongst local and visiting boating and fishing enthusiasts and boating and fishing tourism operators, Port Stephens also plays an essential role in supporting the commercial fishing and aquaculture industry.

Port Stephens Council is aware of the value of Port Stephens as a recreational and commercial boating and fishing location. It provides infrastructure such as boat ramps, jetties, wharves and pontoons, and facilities such as car parking, public amenities and boat racks to support recreational boating and fishing.

The importance of Port Stephens as a boating and fishing location is emphasised in the NSW Government's Marine Infrastructure Plan (MIP), which identifies Port Stephens as a key waterway area and investment location.

With support through the NSW Government's Boating Now program, Council has commissioned the Port Stephens Boating and Fishing Infrastructure Plan, which will provide a strategic framework to guide boating and fishing infrastructure provision in the future.

1.1. STUDY APPROACH

The project involved a three-stage project methodology as detailed below.

Figure 1: Project Methodology

1.2. WHAT IS INCLUDED IN THE PORT STEPHENS BOATING AND FISHING INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN?

The Port Stephens Boating and Fishing Infrastructure Plan relates to boating and fishing infrastructure managed by the Port Stephens Council. It includes:

18
Council boat ramps

16
Council wharfs (i.e. wharfs, jetties and pontoons)

Supporting infrastructure for Council's boatramps and wharfs such as dinghy storage, fish cleaning facilities, parking

The Plan does not include boating and fishing infrastructure owned or managed by other authorities, or privately owned infrastructure.

2. SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1. OVERALL RECOMMENDATIONS

Incorporate the **Boating and Fishing Infrastructure Plan** and associated Work Plan (separate document) into Council's four-year Delivery Program.

Adopt the proposed **planning framework and provision standards** and ensure future boating and fishing infrastructure developments and upgrades are undertaken in accordance with the provision standards and other relevant planning and legislative frameworks.

Adopt a **principle of universal design** to future boating and fishing infrastructure provision.

Implement the recommended directions for existing boat ramps, wharfs, jetties and pontoons to ensure they are able to **operate at the recommended hierarchy classification.**

Continue to work with relevant agencies to ensure **future boating and fishing infrastructure development or upgrades** respond to unique environmental conditions of each site and minimise impacts on surrounding sensitive land and marine environments.

Undertake a **progressive review and update of signage** at boating and fishing infrastructure across Port Stephens to ensure consistency, legibility and currency of the information. This should include co-operation with other external agencies as required (e.g. NSW Government and Marine Rescue)

Review the current **Foreshore Vessel Storage Policy** and consider a revised approach that enables Council to:

- Nominate sites where dinghy storage is permitted focusing on foreshore reserves where boating and fishing infrastructure is provided or that is within close proximity to mooring areas
- Identify sites where a large number of vessels are likely to be stored and install dinghy storage racks. Consider the type of dinghy rack that would be most suitable for the environment and amenity of the area (i.e. vertical racks, horizontal racks, kayak racks etc.)
- Allow informal storage at low key sites only and look to move to dinghy racks at these locations in the longer term.
- Multi level dinghy racks or upright storage racks are preferred to reduce space use.

Establish a consistent approach to the **provision of fish cleaning facilities** across Port Stephens that includes:

- Providing fish cleaning facilities at regional and district level facilities
- Ensuring modern design of fish cleaning facilities with sufficient water, tapware and hoses and drainage of waste
- Shelters over fish cleaning facilities
- Adequate waste disposal, preferably through provision of fish waste compost facilities and provision of a fish waste collection service.

1.2 Boat Ramps

BOAT RAMP	HIERARCHY	RECOMMENDED DIRECTIONS	INDICATIVE COSTS	PRIORITY
Boat Harbour Boat Ramp	Informal/ Beach	« Retain for small craft beach launching and paddle craft only. « Improve wayfinding in relation to parking, launching and vehicle restrictions on the beach. « Consider introducing boating restrictions ("no boating") on certain days of the week. « In the longer term, explore opportunities to separate boats, cars and pedestrians using the ramp by providing a formalised pedestrian beach access from the amenities/ parkland.	$6,250	High
Fingal Bay Boat Ramp	Informal/ Beach	« Retain this ramp in the immediate term « Consider establishing a marked out boat launching area using beach markers and buoys to clearly separate boat ramp users from beach users and upgrade signage to indicate boating and swimming areas « Continue to close the ramp over the Christmas school holiday period, and consider similar closures at other peak times « In the longer term, review the effectiveness of the above measures and review the need for a public boat ramp, including consideration to retaining for use by commercial fishers and paddle craft only	$2,500	High
Shoal Bay Boat Ramp	District	« Retain this boat ramp as a district boat ramp supporting regional facilities « Investigate options to improve traffic management and provide clearly marked spaces for rigging, de-rigging and manoeuvring (not costed) « Upgrade amenities at end of life « Upgrade/ improve lighting to ramp and car parking	$222,790	Low
Little Beach Boat Ramp	Regional	« Improve wayfinding and line marking of rigging and de-rigging areas and manoeuvring bays. This may include: • Line marking of rigging area along the left-hand side accessway • Clear line marking and signage of de-rigging area • Improve signage and direction related to queuing and manoeuvring « Improve signage relating to use of the beach for boat holding while launching and retrieving « Formalise car only parking area « Reposition and redesign the fish cleaning area to provide additional de-rigging bays « adjacent to the fish cleaning area « Upgrade amenities « Upgrade/ increase lighting of manoeuvring area « Undertake traffic engineering consideration of surrounding streets to determine opportunities to improve on-street parking	$840,612	High

BOAT RAMP	HIERARCHY	RECOMMENDED DIRECTIONS	INDICATIVE COSTS	PRIORITY
Soldiers Point Boat Ramp	Regional	« Provide adequate signage at the Soldiers Point boat ramp directing boaters to the public pumpout facility in the marina. « Upgrade amenities « Upgrade/ increase lighting of boat ramp and maneuvering areas « Consider reinforcing the turf swale	$371,542	High
Tomago Boat Ramp	Local	« Retain as a local ramp. « Investigate potential for the site to be developed as an RV site or other recreation area to increase activation and visitation to the site. « Investigate future need for public toilets at this site.	$986,461	Low
Wanda Beach Reserve (Salamander) Boat Ramp	Local (District if parking upgraded)	« Redesign the access and formalise as one-way in/ out through the site. « Investigate opportunities to provide formalised car and trailer parking to at least local boat ramp levels. Preferably on adjacent Council managed open space. « If sufficient car parking is possible, and subject to future demand, consider upgrading in the longer term to District Level.	$268,813	Medium
Seaham Boat Ramp and Canoe Launch	Local	« Retain as a local ramp for small vessels and paddlecraft only « Provide water tap in adjacent parkland « Retain informal focus and consider minor redesign of the area at the top of the ramp, adjacent to the parkland, to improve car and trailer parking space « In the long term investigate options to provide a small jetty/pontoon at Seaham either in the vicinity of the boat ramp, or at Seaham Park	$9,150	Low
Taylors Beach Boat Ramp	Local	« Retain as local ramp « Investigate options to improve car and trailer parking « Consider provision of dinghy storage racks	$55,336	Medium
Karuah Boat Ramp	District	« Wayfinding and line marking of rigging and de-rigging areas and manoeuvring bays « Reinstate line-marking and consider opportunities for on-street parking « Improve signage and direction related to queueing and manoeuvring. « Install lighting to ramp, rigging and manoeuvring areas and car park. « In the longer term, undertake a broader investigation into the Memorial Park – Karuah Boat Ramp precinct to determine future use of this area and investigate opportunities for increased car and trailer parking to service a district-level boat ramp.	$1,003,327	Medium

BOAT RAMP	HIERARCHY	RECOMMENDED DIRECTIONS	INDICATIVE COSTS	PRIORITY
Fitzgerald Bridge Boat Ramp	District	Investigate the feasibility of either: a) Developing a district boat ramp facility at the alternative identified site approximately 300m upstream off Newline Road. In accordance with Council's provision standards and the NSW boat ramp guidelines, this should include: « A 3-lane concrete ramp « On-ramp holding structures (i.e., pontoons) « Approximately 25 car and trailer spaces per lane and 5 car spaces per lane « Sufficient manoeuvring, rigging and de-rigging space with wayfinding and line marking « Fish cleaning facilities « Lighting « Signage « Toilets Or b) If it is not feasible to develop a new boat ramp upstream, developing a driveway connection from the Newline Road to the existing Fitzgerald Bridge boat ramp. « Upgrade the existing boat ramp and support infrastructure to improve its function as a district boat ramp in accordance with the proposed concept layout, including: • Improve launch and boat holding structures to support ski boats • Formalisation of parking area to include car and trailer spaces and car only spaces (on opposite side of bridge) • Wayfinding and line marking of rigging and de-rigging areas and manoeuvring bays. • Improve signage and direction related to queuing and manoeuvring • Lighting of boat ramp, manoeuvring areas and parking « Consider upgrading the foreshore from the extent of the sports fields to the Riverside Park Wharf to enhance recreational function and support the function of the boat ramp as a district facility attracting users from the whole LGA and beyond.	$1,707,813	High – Medium in accordance with intersection planning
Lemon Tree Passage Boat Ramp	Regional	« Improve wayfinding and manoeuvring throughout the site, including: • Formalisation of the rigging area along the left-hand side accessway • Redesign of the manoeuvring and parking area to incorporate more functional de-rigging bays and fish cleaning facilities • Line marking of the manoeuvring bays « Upgrade fish cleaning facilities and review their location to ensure they are adjacent to/ in close proximity to de-rigging bays « Improve signage and direction related to queuing and manoeuvring « Relocation of the amenities to an alternative location within Henderson Park « Upgrade/ increase lighting of manoeuvring area « Re-design of car only parking to accommodation additional de-rigging areas and trailer parking « Investigate opportunities to upgrade the informal paddle launch area located at Kooindah Park	$2,326,687	High

BOAT RAMP	HIERARCHY	RECOMMENDED DIRECTIONS	INDICATIVE COSTS	PRIORITY
Foster Park Boat Ramp	Local	« Retain as a local ramp for small vessels and paddle craft only. « Retain and upgrade dinghy storage. « Redesign the area at the top of the ramp to enhance separation from park users, improve vehicle flow and manoeuvrability, and to formalise car and trailer parking. « Update signage to show new entry/ exist and manoeuvring.	$312,280	Medium
Peace Park Boat Ramp	Informal	« Retain for fishing and general water access by non-trailerable craft « At end of life, remove and replace with paddle launch only	$4,000	Low
Lilli Pilli Boat Ramp	Local	« Retain in the immediate term as a local ramp for small vessels and paddle craft only and stabilise the aggregate below the ramp and replenish as required. « Retain dinghy storage. « In the medium to longer term, investigate the feasibility of upgrading to a longer ramp at this location, suitable for use in low tide, or relocating to an alternative site in close proximity (e.g. in John Parade Reserve or Nyrang Reserve).	$17,612	Low
Old Wharf (Salt Ash) Park Boat Ramp	Informal	« Retain ramp as a paddle launch and upgrade at end of life « Upgrade car park « Provide edge hardening at existing informal creek access directly off the parkland to enable fishing « Investigate the provision of a safe crossing treatment on Lemon Tree Passage Road « Investigate opportunities for a canoe trail	$53,690	Low
Mallabula Boat Ramp	Informal	« Retain and replace as a paddle launch at end of life « Retain the existing turning head at the boat ramp for paddle craft drop-off « Consider formalising car parking	$98,554	High

1.3 Wharfs

WHARF/ JETTY/ PONTOON	PROPOSED HIERARCHY	RECOMMENDED DIRECTIONS	INDICATIVE COSTS	PRIORITY
Hinton Wharf	Local	« Retain as a local wharf « In consultation with the SES, undertake improvements to support emergency response		High
Karuah Wharf	Regional	« Retain as a regional wharf with sewage pump out facility. « At end of life replace with accessible pontoons and retain swimming enclosure and sewage pump out facilities.	$302,400	Low
Little Beach Jetty	Regional	« Retain as a regional, accessible jetty. « At end of life replace with accessible fishing platform/ jetty of similar dimensions.	$275,000	Low
Mallabula Jetty	Local	« Retain as a local wharf. « Upgrade car parking. « At end of life, do not replace, but provide a carry-in swim and paddle launch water access in this vicinity. This may be at the existing location with improved pathway access, or investigate an alternative location to direct public use away from houses towards Mallabula Point.	$43,562	Low
Nelson Bay Public Wharf	Regional	« Retain as a public wharf and pumpout facility « Review the need for use of the public wharf for commercial mooring and develop a commercial mooring policy that enables a market value commercial rent to be charged, with revenue directed back into boating and fishing infrastructure improvements « Consider converting the permanent moorings on the public wharf to short term public mooring only	$277,030	High
Riverside Park Wharf	Local	« Retain as local wharf.	-	-
Salamander Bay Jetty	District	« Retain as a district jetty and investigate opportunities to upgrade parking in accordance with boat ramp directions. « At end of life replace with accessible jetty.	-	Low
Shoal Bay Jetty	District	« Retain as district jetty. « Enhance support infrastructure such as lighting, seating, water, shelters etc.	-	Medium
Taylors Beach Pontoon	District	« Retain as a district pontoon « In accordance with boat ramp directions, investigate opportunities to improve parking.	-	-

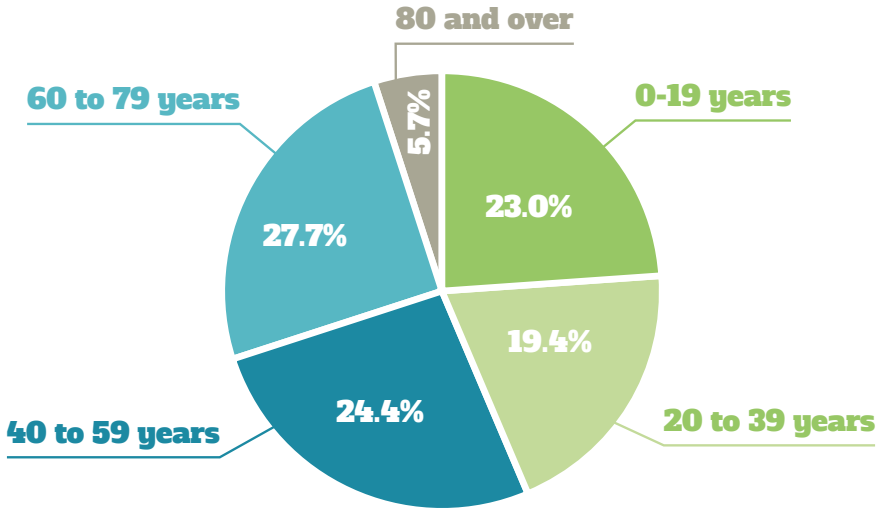
3. THE PORT STEPHENS POPULATION

3.1. POPULATION AND GROWTH

The 2021 Estimated Resident Population of Port Stephens is 75,282 people, which represents an increase of 8,068 persons since 2010[1].

3.2. AGE

The median age of Port Stephens' residents is 47 years of age, which has increased from 42 in 2011, indicating an ageing population. Over one-third (33.3%) of the Port Stephens population is aged over 60 years, and more than half (57.8%) are aged over 40.



3.3. POPULATION PROJECTIONS

The Port Stephens LGA population is expected to increase to 87,933 by 2040.

Projections indicate that between 2021 and 2040[2]:

13,570

An increase of 13,570 people is expected

+ 5,570

The largest growth is expected in the **80+ age cohort**

6.96%

The largest age cohort will be the **50-54 age grou**p with an expected population of 6,123 accounting for 6.96% of the total population

decline

There will be slight declines in the **20-24** (-20) and **70-74** (-212) age groups

Tomaree, Raymond Terrace and Medowie will remain the major population areas within Port Stephens

Raymond Terrace is projected to experience the highest growth (+6,586 people)

Projections overall reinforce the ageing of the population

[1] *REMPLAN. https://app.remplan.com.au/portstephens/community/population*
[2] *https://app.remplan.com.au/portstephens/forecast/population/age-5-year-groups?state=Dz52HYk1wFw1J3XcPl29JuEhyId4DHaZK2hGs3QPqRtpw9HesGXzkumsKtMdN*

3.4. SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PORT STEPHENS COMMUNITY

The Port Stephens community exhibits the following key socio-economic characteristics:

Families with children make up 34.94% of families in Port Stephens, while couples with no children make up 28.56%.

Approximately half of all families in Port Stephens have a weekly income of **less than $1,250**

Port Stephens' SEIFA score was **980**, which places it within the middle of the local government areas assessed in Australia, with 258 LGA's with a higher score (less disadvantaged) and 285 LGA's with a lower score (more disadvantaged).

ABS data (2016) recorded 25,437 occupied **private dwellings** in the Port Stephens LGA.

3.5. IMPLICATIONS FOR BOATING AND FISHING INFRASTRUCTURE

The following implications of the demographic profile may be relevant to planning for boating and fishing infrastructure:

While the projected population growth is moderate only, the 50-54 age group is expected to be the largest population group by 2040. **Peak fishing participation occurs in the 55-64 year age group**[3], so there is likely to be increased demand for boating and fishing as this cohort grows.

On the contrary, the ageing population, with high proportions of people **aged over 80 may lead to a decrease** in boating and fishing demand.

The relatively **high proportion of families** indicates there may be demand for fishing and boating related activities, particularly water sports activities.

[3] *Australian Sports Commission. AusPlay Fishing Report. Accessed via: https://www.clearinghouseforsport.gov.au/research/ausplay/results*

4. TOURISM IN PORT STEPHENS

Tourism is a crucial economic driver, bringing people to Port Stephens.

In 2019 (pre-Covid-19):

1,573,000

Port Stephens had a total of 1,573,000 visitors

Comprised of:

40,000
international visitors

721,000
domestic overnight visitors

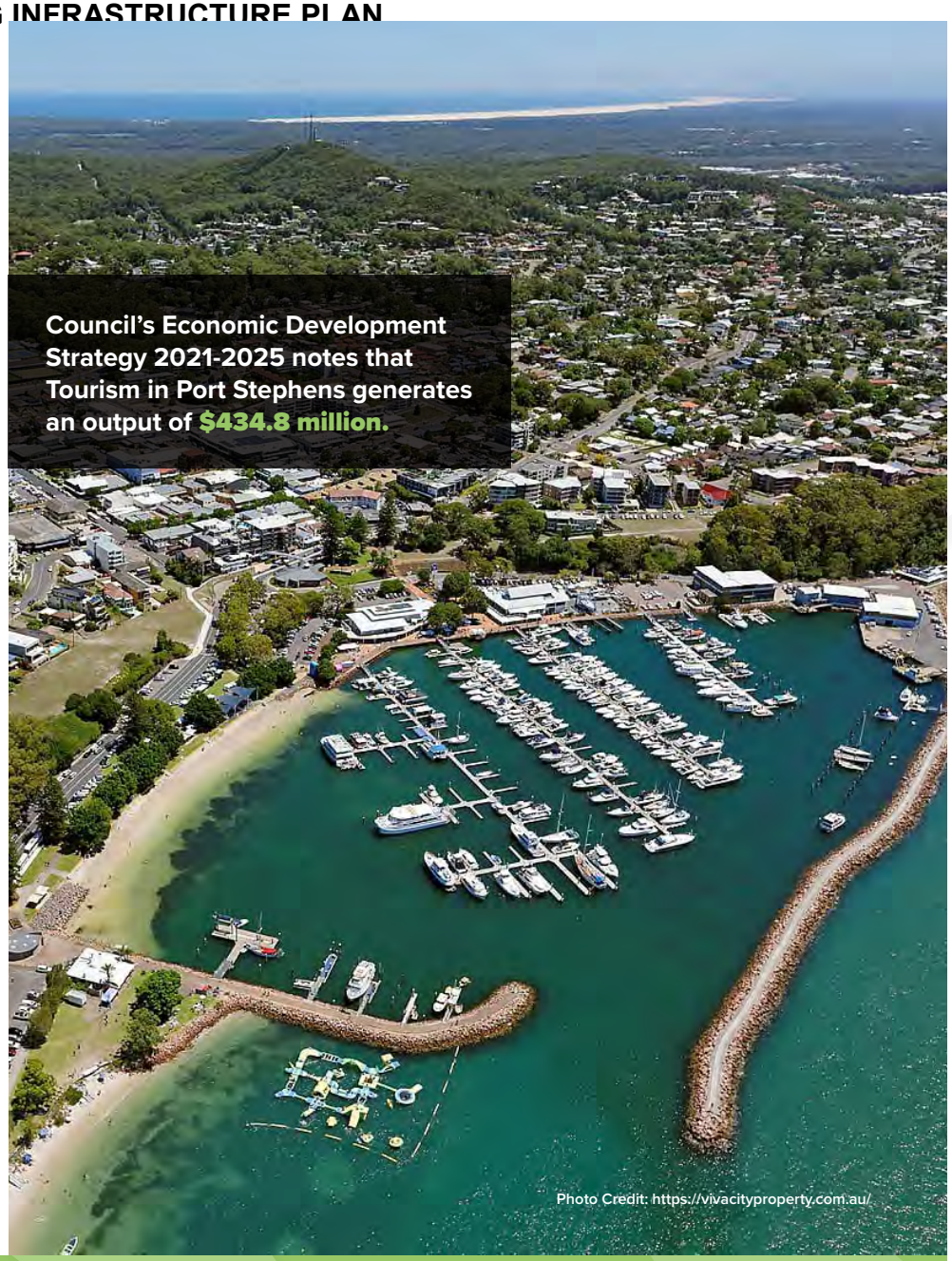
811,000
domestic day trip visitors

988,000 visitors were **holiday-makers,** while 443,000 were **visiting** friends or relatives

These visitors spend approximately **$358 per trip** with roughly $563 million spent within the LGA

There were **638 tourism-related businesses** in operation, providing job opportunities to the local population

Approximately **81,000 domestic overnight travellers** to Port Stephens went **fishing** during their visit



5. FISHING AND BOATING TRENDS

5.1. PARTICIPATION IN FISHING AND BOATING

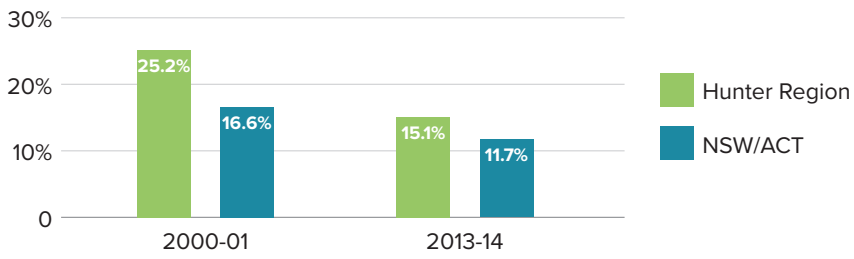
5.1.1. Recreational Fishing Survey

A state-wide survey of recreational fishing was undertaken by the NSW Department of Primary Industries (DPI) in 2013-14[4]. An earlier National Recreational and Indigenous Fishing Survey was undertaken in 2000-01[5]. A 2021-22 survey is currently being undertaken however, data is not yet available.

Key results relating to NSW and Hunter Region data for 2000-01 and 2013-14 indicates that:

- In 2000-01 the Hunter Region had a recreational **fishing participation rate of 25.2%**, compared with 16.6% for NSW/ACT
- The participation rate for the Hunter Region **declined to 15.1%** by 2013-14 compared to 11.7% for NSW/ACT
- In 2013-14 there were **36,741 households** in the Hunter Region **owning at least one boat** and 22,490 boats owned by households participating in fishing.
- The mean number of **boats per fishing household was 1.4.** This compares to 1.27 boats per fishing household in NSW/ACT
- In the Hunter Region in 2013-14 there were **16,530 boats measuring less than 7 metres,** and 197 boats measuring longer than 7 metres.

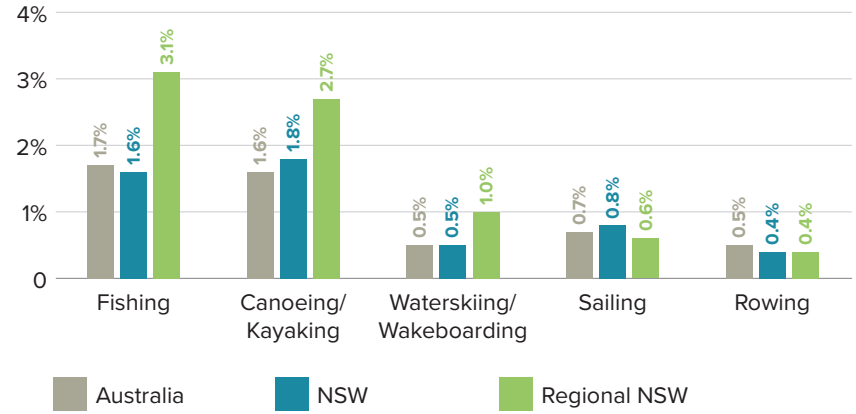
Figure 2: Recreational fishing participation rate in the Hunter Region and NSW/ACT, 2000-01 and 2013-14



5.1.2. AusPlay Insights

Since October 2015, Sport Australia has conducted the AusPlay survey replacing previous sport and recreation data collection methods such as ERASS. Participation rates for boating and fishing related activities for NSW, regional NSW and Australia are shown below.

Figure 3: Participation Rate (aggregated data 2015 to 2021)



[4] *West etal. (2015). Survey of Recreational Fishing in New South Wales and the ACT, 2013/14. NSW Department of Primary Industries.*

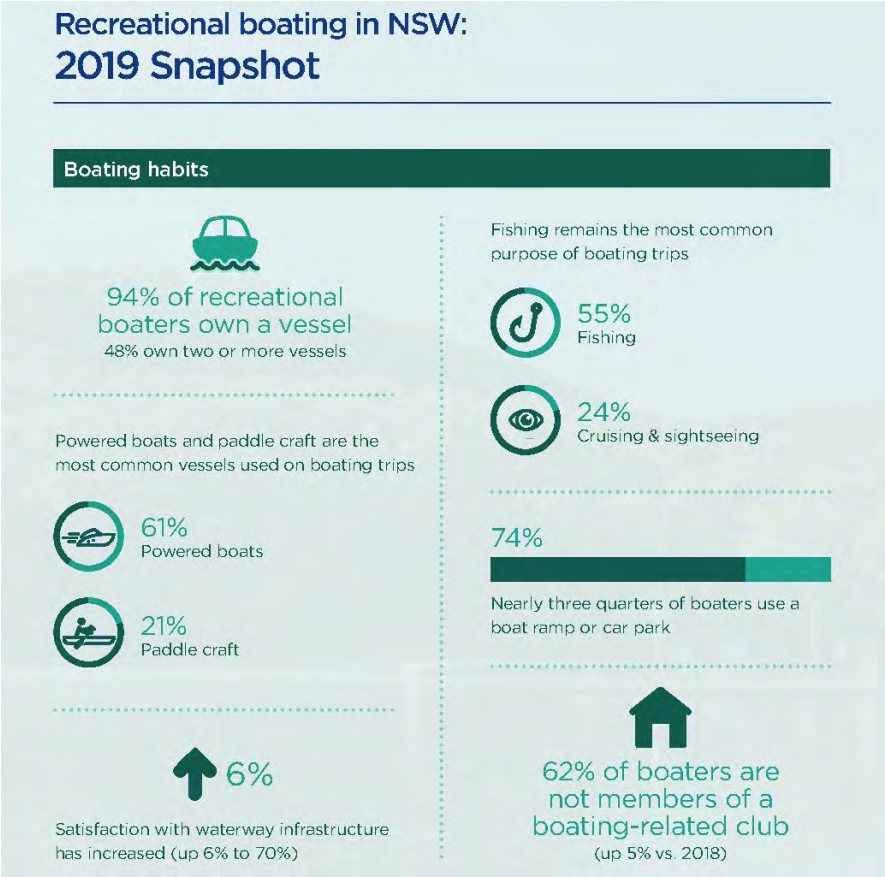
[5] *Henry, G.W. and Lyle, J.M. (Ed), 2003. The National Recreational and Indigenous Fishing Survey. NSW Fisheries Final Report Series No. 48.*

5.1.3. Recreational Boating in NSW Survey

The Transport for NSW Centre for Maritime Safety conducted surveys in 2018 and 2019 on recreational boating in NSW[6]. The survey aimed to provide better understanding of "boater" characteristics and boating activity in NSW and provides statistical information on boating participation and vessel ownership.

A snapshot of key results from the 2019 survey is shown below:

Figure 4: Recreational boater behaviour characteristics (Source: 2019 NSW Recreational Boating Survey)



5.2. BOAT OWNERSHIP AND REGISTRATION

As at 30 September 2021, there were 19,331 boat licences and registrations linked to the seven postcodes of the Port Stephens LGA[7]. This included:

11,172
general boat licences

1,214
personal water craft licences

446
personal watercraft registrations

6,499
recreational vessel registrations

[6]

[7] *Transport for NSW Open Data GLS Licences and Registrations Report – by Display Names and Postcodes. Accessed online https://opendata.transport.nsw.gov.au/dataset/nsw-boat-registrations-and-licences. (Postcodes include: 2315, 2316, 2317, 2318, 2319, 2321, 2324).*

5.3. BOATING AND FISHING INFRASTRUCTURE TRENDS

The NSW Maritime Infrastructure Plan 2019 – 2024 outlines several significant trends that are likely to influence the demand for, and use of, waterways and maritime infrastructure into the future. These include:

- Increasing use of waterways –Recreational boating numbers are increasing, driven by population growth and movement to areas with high levels of water-based recreation. Tourism is also expected to grow in coastal areas, increasing demand for tourism experiences such as fishing and dive charters, whale and dolphin watching, bare boat charters and hire and drive.
- Changes in the commercial fishing industry –Domestic and overseas markets for seafood are expected to continue to drive growth in fishing and aquaculture. The fishing fleet is also changing, with larger and more modern vessels entering the fleet, while fishing co-operatives play an increasing role as tourist attractions.
- Changing models of boat ownership and use –Increasing numbers of boat-share or boat management schemes are offered in NSW that extend the type of experiences offered by hire and drive operators and provide recreational boaters periodic access to luxury-end motor cruisers or yachts with maintenance and care managed by the operator.
- Superyachts –A small but significant niche market, with implications for maritime industries and tourism sectors in areas where the amenities and services exist, or could be provided, to attract and cater for them.
- New uses and novel vessels –Emerging innovations in the maritime sector such as autonomous ferries and off-shore service vessels, small high-speed ferries, recreational submarines and larger luxury house boats.
- Changes to the coastal environment –Long-term changes to coastal waterways – such as erosion and rises in sea levels – will influence the management of coastal zones and planning context for infrastructure.

5.4. SUMMARY OF PARTICIPATION AND BOAT OWNERSHIP

Key points from the review of participation and boat ownership data that have implications for provision of boating and fishing infrastructure include:

Participation in recreational fishing declined in the Hunter Region between 2000-01 and 2013-14, however AusPlay data shows that between 2016-17 and 2020-21 participation in fishing has increased nationally.

Launching facilities are important, with nearly three quarters of boaters across NSW using a boat ramp or boat ramp carpark.

Boat ramp toilets, and wharfs and jetties are **important infrastructure features**, used by over 50% of boaters.

There are **6,945 registered vessels** in the Port Stephens LGA, with 6,499 of these being for recreational vessels and the remaining 446 for personal watercraft (recreational). This equates to one vessel for every 3.7 households, or one vessel for every 10.7 people.

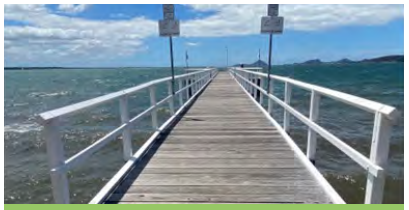
6. FISHING AND BOATING INFRASTRUCTURE IN PORT STEPHENS

Boating and fishing infrastructure owned or managed by the Port Stephens Council includes:

18 Boat Ramps (31 lanes)

4 Wharfs

9 Pontoons



4 Jetties

1 Canoe Launch

Support facilities include 4 marine pumpout facilities, fish cleaning tables, dinghy racks, amenities, lighting, car parking and picnic and barbecue facilities.

The locations and distribution of the boat ramps and wharfs is shown in the maps below and information specific to each boat ramp/ wharf facility is detailed in Section 8.

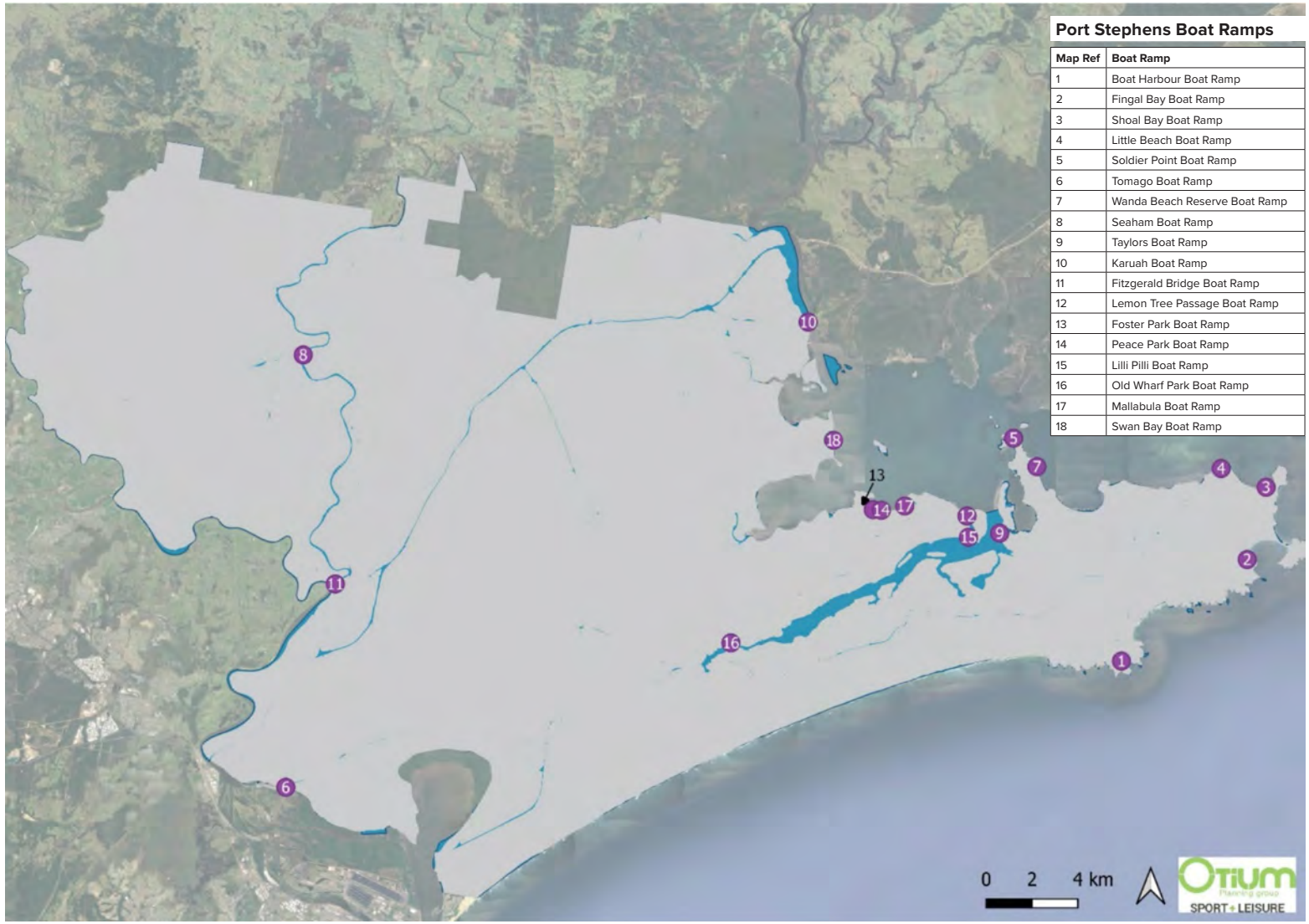
The table below shows the number of boat ramps per population and the number of boat registrations per boat lane in Port Stephens.

Table 1: Boat ramp supply per population and boat ramp lane supply per boat registrations

BOAT RAMP SUPPLY PER POPULATION	
Number of boat ramps	18*
Population	74,506
Population per boat ramp	4,139
BOAT RAMP LANE SUPPLY PER BOAT REGISTRATIONS	
Number of boat registrations	6,945
Number of boat ramp lanes	31
Number of boat registrations per boat ramp lane	224
WHARF INFRASTRUCTURE SUPPLY PER POPULATION	
Number of wharfs/ jetties/ pontoons	15**
Population	74,506
Population per wharf infrastructure	4,967

* *Swan Bay is included in the overall Boat ramp count but is not considered a functional ramp and does not contribute to lane capacity.- it is not included in Site Summaries or future directions*
* *Does not include canoe launch or Marine Rescue Pontoon*

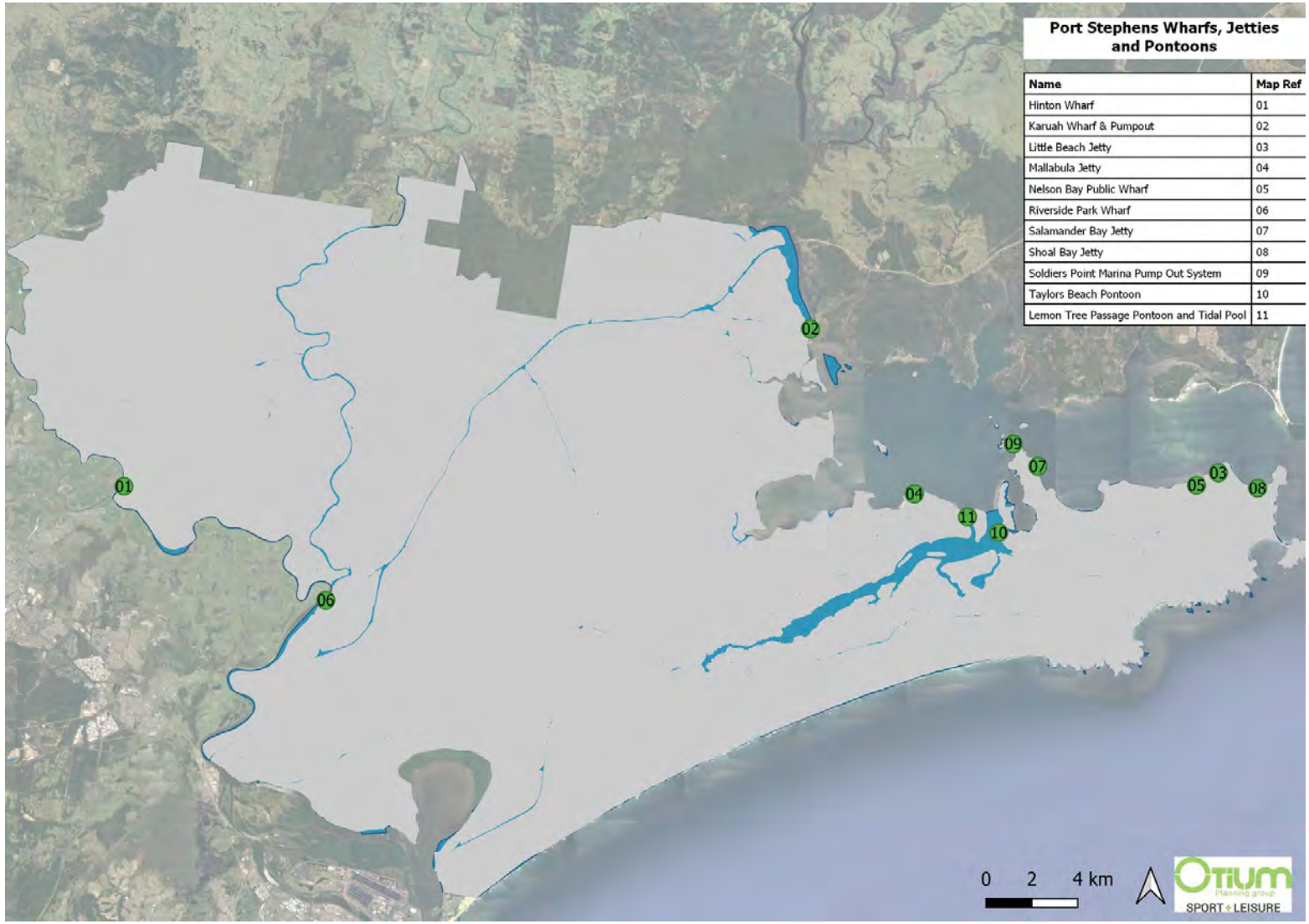
Figure 5: Boat Ramps in Port Stephens Council area



Port Stephens Boat Ramps

Map Ref	Boat Ramp
1	Boat Harbour Boat Ramp
2	Fingal Bay Boat Ramp
3	Shoal Bay Boat Ramp
4	Little Beach Boat Ramp
5	Soldier Point Boat Ramp
6	Tomago Boat Ramp
7	Wanda Beach Reserve Boat Ramp
8	Seaham Boat Ramp
9	Taylors Boat Ramp
10	Karuah Boat Ramp
11	Fitzgerald Bridge Boat Ramp
12	Lemon Tree Passage Boat Ramp
13	Foster Park Boat Ramp
14	Peace Park Boat Ramp
15	Lilli Pilli Boat Ramp
16	Old Wharf Park Boat Ramp
17	Mallabula Boat Ramp
18	Swan Bay Boat Ramp

Figure 6: Wharfs in Port Stephens Council area



Port Stephens Wharfs, Jetties and Pontoons

Name	Map Ref
Hinton Wharf	01
Karuah Wharf & Pumpout	02
Little Beach Jetty	03
Mallabula Jetty	04
Nelson Bay Public Wharf	05
Riverside Park Wharf	06
Salamander Bay Jetty	07
Shoal Bay Jetty	08
Soldiers Point Marina Pump Out System	09
Taylors Beach Pontoon	10
Lemon Tree Passage Pontoon and Tidal Pool	11

7.ENGAGEMENT SNAPSHOT

Engagement for the project was undertaken by Council and a detailed Engagement Report was prepared by Council's Engagement staff.

Engagement included:

Media Release

72 direct emails
to boating and fishing stakeholders

On-site promotional posters
with QR code survey link – 16 key locations

Social Media Awareness Raising Campaign
18,000+ impressions and 610 click-throughs

Online project information
on Council's web page

Feature story in
Council's Engagement News newsletter
1,469 subscribers

Social Pinpoint Mapping
enabling respondents to geo-map places they love, places for improvement and other comments on a map of Port Stephens – 378 responses

Community Survey
18,000+ impressions and 610 click-throughs

Club/ User Group Survey
13 responses

Targeted focus group sessions
with key stakeholders including internal Port Stephens Council staff, commercial operators, tourism operators, Aboriginal Land Council, Government Agencies and emergency services – 27 focus group sessions.

Key themes to emerge from the engagement are outlined below:

Soldiers Point boat ramp
is the most popular boat ramp in the Port Stephens LGA

Nelson Bay public wharf
is the most popular wharf, jetty or pontoon in the Port Stephens LGA

57%
of survey respondents use their preferred boat ramp because it is **close to home**

42%
of survey respondents are **happy with the number of boat ramps** in Port Stephens

32%
of survey respondents are **not happy with the quality of boat ramps** in Port Stephens

37%
of survey respondents are **not happy with the number of wharfs, jetties or pontoons** in Port Stephens

The community would like to see:

- More on-ramp pontoons
- Upgraded/ more boat ramps across the LGA
- Improved or new jetties and wharfs
- More/ improved paddle launch access points and storage facilities
- Improved governance and safety particularly relating to jet skis, on-water policing, dogs on beaches and signage
- Improved parking at boat ramps and wharfs
- More toilets and showers
- More fish cleaning facilities
- Increased lighting at boat ramps and in adjacent parking areas
- Dinghy racks
- Improved Environmental protection and sustainability measures related to over- fishing, wildlife protection and sea grass protection
- Improved maintenance of boat ramps and support facilities, particularly toilet cleaning, boat ramp cleaning and rubbish disposal

77% **of boating and fishing clubs/ user groups expect their membership numbers to grow in the short term.**

Clubs and user groups would like to see:

- Improvements to parking areas
- Improved boat rigging areas
- More lighting adjacent to boat ramps
- Improved maintenance of boat ramps
- More fish cleaning facilities
- More rubbish bins
- Improved signage
- Increased paddle storage facilities

Overall Key Findings were:

Sustainability of boating and fishing is paramount to community and business in Port Stephens

Pontoons and **ease** of boat launching and retrieval is important

While the community is satisfied with the number of boat ramps in Port Stephens, there is a need to **improved support facilities** such as parking, lighting and fish cleaning, and ramp maintenance.

Community would like **smaller boat ramps formalised** and consideration of additional options at Raymond Terrace and Hinton

Safety and governance was a key concern including on-water policing, rubbish dumping, overfishing, and improved signage, education and parking controls at boat ramps

8. SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS AND DEMAND

Research, engagement and demand analysis has identified the following key findings:

There is an **adequate supply** of boating and fishing infrastructure throughout Port Stephens to cope with regular boating and fishing demand.

There is **good distribution** of boating and fishing facilities across the LGA, which generally covers most key access points to the Karuah River mouth and inland rivers.

Whilst provision is adequate, the **influx of users during peak periods** places additional pressure on key boating and fishing infrastructure.

Examination of potential opportunities for provision of boating and fishing infrastructure in new locations indicates that there are very **limited opportunities to increase** the number of access points.

Development potential for new infrastructure in some areas is restricted due to **ecological and/ or cultural constraints** (e.g. Corlette, Bagnall Beach, Dutchman's Bay)

The quality of support infrastructure and site layouts impacts on the ease of use at many locations. As such **some regional level facilities are not adequately coping with demand** during peak times.

As there is limited scope to expand existing regional facilities or develop more regional facilities, **capacity of regional facilities should be enhanced through improvements to support facilities.**

There is a key need to **increase the capacity for car and trailer parking** at regional and district facilities to better cope with peak demand, and enhance the capacity and functionality of these ramps.

More legible manoeuvring areas, with clearly marked rigging, de-rigging and manoeuvring bays will **improve boat ramp etiquette and enhance the useability** of facilities.

Enhancing the capacity of district level facilities will help to disperse demand during peak periods taking pressure off regional facilities.

Signage is inconsistent across the LGA, with some examples of out-dated, illegible, or non-existent signage. There are opportunities to improve organisation, visibility and clarity of wayfinding, traffic management, use and regulatory signage.

There are some **gaps in provision for local waterway access in the smaller hinterland localities,** particularly around Hinton and Raymond Terrace, with opportunities to provide improved access to the Williams and Hunter Rivers for fishing and watersports and to the Paterson River.

A significant amount of input and community sentiment relates to **on-water safety and compliance.**

Some boat ramps are in satisfactory/ average condition and will require upgrades to continue to service demand.

There is an **increased demand for access points for paddle craft** and opportunities for some very poor local level boat ramps to be converted to paddle launch.

There is **strong demand for dinghy and paddle craft storage** across the region. There is currently a mix of formal and informal storage, with evidence of overflow and disorganisation of dinghy storage, which has social and environmental implications. There is a need for improved management dinghy and paddle craft storage across the LGA, with opportunities to improve capacity in areas with higher mooring density.

There is **some demand for additional wharf and pontoon access,** however there are limited opportunities for additional wharf locations.

9. PLANNING FRAMEWORK

A strategic planning framework for boating and fishing infrastructure has been developed for Port Stephens.

EQUITABLE PROVISION
Ensuring that all communities in Port Stephens have access to boating and fishing opportunities within a reasonable distance considering the constraints and geography of different areas.

INCLUSIVE DESIGN
Facilities at district or higher levels of provision should consider inclusive design and accessibility. Local facilities should provide for inclusive access where possible.

SUSTAINABLE PROVISION
Providing infrastructure in a way that maximises use opportunities and minimises operational cost. This includes ensuring that provision is appropriate to demand and that over provision in terms of number of locations or design of access points is avoided.

ACTIVATION AND PLACE
Facilities should be located and designed to encourage use and participation in outdoor recreation. Design and location should also consider the place values and benefits of activating public waterside spaces with boating and fishing infrastructure and should seek to complement other place based planning.

CONSISTENT AND INTEGRATED
Boating and fishing infrastructure should be consistently designed, with the same direction, information and wayfinding signage used at all locations. Design should also be consistent with State guidelines and legislation. Integrating multiple uses and purposes to ensure high levels of recreation return on investment should also influence design.

PROTECT ENVIRONMENTAL VALUES
Design and use of boating and fishing infrastructure will consider environmental impact and sustainability and will ensure impacts on surrounding sensitive land and marine environments are minimised.

MAINTAIN CURRENT SUPPLY
Fishing and boating is integral to the lifestyle of Port Stephens and the current supply of fishing and boating infrastructure should be maintained to support local, district and regional use by residents and visitors to Port Stephens.

FUNCTIONAL
Boating and fishing infrastructure will be fit-for-purpose, designed in accordance with NSW guidelines, and well-maintained to meet the needs of users

ADEQUATE SUPPORT INFRASTRUCTURE
Fishing and boating infrastructure will be supported by a range of facilities, commensurate with the hierarchy and provision standards, that enhance the functionality of boating and fishing infrastructure.

SUSTAINABLE
Provision of boating and fishing infrastructure is based on a strategic, evidence-based approach that incorporates sustainable design and maintenance practices and recognises ongoing financial management responsibilities.

CLEAR SIGNAGE AND WAYFINDING
Use of fishing and boating infrastructure will be supported by signage and wayfinding to clearly define use, movement and orientation of spaces and functions.

SAFE
Design of boating and fishing infrastructure and support infrastructure will facilitate safe use and will incorporate Safety in Design requirements and Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design principles.

ACCESSIBLE
Boating and fishing infrastructure is easy to get to and where possible designed in accordance with universal design principles to ensure access for all users.

9.3. HIERARCHY OF PROVISION

The following hierarchy has been developed to guide planning and provision of boating and fishing infrastructure in the Port Stephens LGA. It has been developed based on analysis of:

- The existing hierarchy contained with Council's Asset Management Plan
- Council's existing supply
- The NSW Boat Ramp Facility Guidelines
- Boating and fishing infrastructure hierarchies contained in other areas of NSW and Australia

HIERARCHY CLASSIFICATION	DESCRIPTION	EXAMPLES
Regional	A major boating and fishing facility that services the whole LGA and attracts users from outside the LGA. It caters for a high level of boating and fishing activity and a wide range of users. Regional boating and fishing facilities often act as key "boating destinations" within the network. They can include, or be located within or close to a regional marine precinct (e.g. marina or harbour that provides a range of services and facilities for public and commercial users). These high-level facilities generally include a high level of investment and service provision and need to cater for significant demand peaks in holiday periods.	« Lemon Tree Passage Boat Ramp « Soldiers Point Boat Ramp « Little Beach Boat Ramp
District	District boating and fishing facilities generally provide for boating and fishing across the LGA and will service larger catchments of multiple suburbs within the LGA. They provide an important role in supporting regional facilities during peak boating seasons (and holiday peaks), but are restricted in fully servicing regional demand due to constraints resulting from tidal, wave or wind conditions or limitations on support infrastructure such as boat holding structures, parking and manoeuvring. These facilities generally include a medium level of service provision and a medium level of investment commensurate with their role in the network as a support facility to regional infrastructure.	« Karuah Boat Ramp « Shoal Bay Boat Ramp « Fitzgerald Bridge (Raymond Terrace) Boat Ramp
Local	A local boating and fishing facility provides access, for local users. They provide a basic standard of facilities, but generally do not support a wide range of services. These may often have constraints on the size of craft that can be launched. These facilities generally include a lower level of investment and service provision.	« Taylors Beach Ramp « Wanda Beach (Salamander Bay) « Tomago Boat Ramp « Seaham Boat Ramp « Foster Mark Boat Ramp « Mallabula Boat Ramp « Lilli Pilli Boat Ramp
Informal Beach Access/ Paddle Launch	Informal facilities include: « beach launch facilities that are accessed by a limited number of users, usually with a high level of skill; and « informal facilities for paddle craft only. These facilities generally include a lower level of investment and service provision.	« Boat Harbour Boat Ramp « Fingal Bay Boat Ramp « Old Wharf (Salt Ash) Boat Ramp « Swan Bay

9.4. PROVISION STANDARDS

Standards of Service for provision of these facilities have been developed to guide planning and management.

9.4.1. Boat Ramps

Table 2: Boating and Fishing Infrastructure Provision Standards

FEATURE	REGIONAL	DISTRICT	LOCAL	BEACH ACCESS/ PADDLE LAUNCH
Key/ Base Infrastructure				
Boat Ramp Lanes	3 or more lanes concrete construction linked to fully surfaced parking and access network.	2 or more lanes concrete linked to access network and serviced by dedicated boat parking area	1 lane, constructed concrete ramp and sealed road access, in some cases may be stabilised rock and / gravel ramp and manoeuvring space with informal parking	Informal launch facility including basic path, gravel ramp or stair access to the water. Only for small craft and paddle craft
Loading Pontoons and Boat Holding Structures	Multiple structures such as pontoons/ jetties At least 2 pontoons Allow for loading and access and be tide responsive	Pontoon/ jetty desirable	Not usually provided	None
Car & Trailer Parking	25-spaces per lane	25- spaces per lane	A minimum of 10 spaces with nearby overflow parking	Informal space for 5- cars/ cars and trailers May be provided on beach or nearby if suitable space and tenure available
Car Parking (not for car and trailer)	Separate area providing 5 spaces per lane and At least one PWD car park	If space permits provide separate area providing 5 spaces per lane At least 1 PWD car park Where space is restricted, provide sufficient on-street carparking	Small parking area and/ or on street car parking	Informal parking adjacent or nearby
Manoeuvrability	Provide a clear manoeuvring area in accordance State Guidelines	Provide a clear manoeuvring area in accordance State Guidelines	Provide a clear manoeuvring area in accordance State Guidelines	Clear access from parking to launch facility
Rigging	Designated and line marked rigging areas in accordance with State Guidelines	Designated and line marked rigging areas in accordance with State Guidelines desirable.	Not essential	Not provided

FEATURE	REGIONAL	DISTRICT	LOCAL	BEACH ACCESS/ PADDLE LAUNCH
De-rigging and tie-down area	Designated and line marked de-rigging areas in accordance with State Guidelines	Designated and line marked de-rigging areas in accordance with State Guidelines desirable	Not essential	Not provided
Berthing and Mooring	Courtesy moorings may be provided at regional facilities Commercial mooring may be provided at major regional facilities	Not provided Mooring at loading pontoons or jetties only permitted for short duration as part of boat ramp use (e.g. queuing for ramp access, loading/unloading).	Not provided	Not provided
Signage & Wayfinding	Signage to include: Traffic control/ speed limits Delineation of car and trailer parking and car only parking Parking conditions or restrictions Wayfinding to direct to accessways, manoeuvring areas, queuing, rigging and washdown areas Ramp and waterway etiquette Boating information, safety and standards Maps	Signage to include: Traffic control/ speed limits Delineation of car and trailer parking and car only parking Parking conditions or restrictions Wayfinding to direct to accessways, manoeuvring areas, queuing, rigging and washdown areas Ramp and waterway etiquette Boating information, safety and standards Maps	Signage to include: Traffic control Wayfinding including access, queuing, rigging and de-rigging and manoeuvring Ramp etiquette Boating information, safety and standards	Location signage and relevant wayfinding/ information signage, safety and regulatory signage
Tidal Conditions	Full tidal access - can be used in all tides	Can be used in most tides	May have restricted tidal access (i.e. may only be able to be used at high tide, mid-tide, or low tide, not all tides)	Will vary depending on the site.
Wind/ Wave Conditions	Sheltered from excessive wind and wave conditions	May be subject to some restrictions due to wind and wave conditions.	Will vary depending on site. May be affected by wind and wave conditions	Will vary depending on the site

FEATURE	REGIONAL	DISTRICT	LOCAL	BEACH ACCESS/ PADDLE LAUNCH
Support Infrastructure				
Sewage Pump out	May be provided at large regional facilities with free mooring access	Not provided	Not provided	Not provided
Storage	Not provided	Some dinghy and paddle craft storage may be provided	Dinghy and paddle craft storage where appropriate	Dinghy/ paddle craft storage may be provided within close proximity
Toilets	Toilet facilities provided in close proximity Showers desirable Should be access compliant	Toilet facilities desirable in close proximity with access compliance	Generally not provided May be provided in nearby open space	Generally not provided
Washdown	Washdown area desirable if space permits	Not usually provided May provide small washdown area if space permits	Not provided	Not provided
Fish Cleaning	Min. 2 tables per lane Accessible design Should include shelters	1 table per lane desirable Accessible design and shelter desirable	Not usually provided may provide fish bins.	Not provided
Security	CCTV may be provided at large regional facilities with courtesy and/ or commercial moorings	Not generally provided	Not provided	Not provided
Lighting	Provide adequate lighting to boat ramp, pontoon/ gangways, and carpark	Lighting to ramp and carpark is desirable	Solar lighting to ramp desirable	Generally not provided
Garbage	Garbage facilities provided at de-rigging/ washdown areas and at fish cleaning facilities May include tangler bins and fish composting facilities	Garbage facilities provided at de-rigging/ washdown areas and at fish cleaning facilities May include tangler bins and fish composting facilities	Garbage bin provided	Garbage bin provided
Other	Surrounding area may include other community and recreation facilities such as picnic facilities, BBQs, pathways etc	Surrounding area may include other community and recreation facilities such as picnic facilities, BBQs, pathways etc.	Surrounding area may include local level park facilities	May be adjacent to open space with other recreation facilities

9.4.2. Jetties and Wharfs

The following refers to jetties and wharfs that are stand-alone facilities. They may be located within close proximity to a boat ramp but are not attached to a boat ramp. They can be used for temporary mooring and loading as well as fishing, swimming and paddle craft launching. There are three locations where sewage pump out stations are provided and boats can moor there for extended periods. In general these facilities are not for extended mooring periods and are not intended for overnight use.

FEATURE	REGIONAL	DISTRICT	LOCAL
Key/ Base Criteria			
Jetty/ Wharf Size	Minimum clear width of 1.8m Should be longer than 25 m in length but may be angled or "returned". Should provide for deeper water/ all tide access May include adjacent swimming enclosure Tide responsive loading and access provided via floating pontoon or stairs and Multi-level platforms Provision of potable water and power Access to sewage pump out is desirable	Minimum width of 1.5m 1.8m preferred Minimum length of 10 m, depending on water depth and tidal variation	Min width of 1.5m May range from small fishing landing/ platform to a jetty of 10- in length
Accessibility	PWD access essential. Must be sufficiently wide to enable access by people using mobility aids or wheelchairs	Disabled access desirable. Must be sufficiently wide to enable access by people using mobility aids or wheelchairs	Not essential
Car Parking	Up to 20 car spaces Can be provided as part of shared spaces in adjacent parkland At least 1 PWD car park Parking should be adjacent or within 100m	10 car spaces Can be provided as part of shared adjacent parkland Where space is restricted, provide sufficient on-street car parking At least 1 PWD car park	Parking area for 5 spaces or on street car parking Can be provided as part of adjacent parkland. Walking access to jetty is acceptable if parking or park area parking is no more than 300m
Mooring	Provide facilities for short term mooring for large boats including ferries Extended mooring up to 8 hours	Provide facilities for short term mooring for boats up to 8m Maximum stays of 4 hours	Facilities may be provided for short term mooring (small boats only <5m) Dinghy storage may be provided in close proximity
Signage & Wayfinding	Signage to include: « Use etiquette « Fishing information « Safety and operational information « Visible from shore and water	Signage to include: « Use etiquette « Fishing information « Safety and operational information. « Visible from shore and water	Signage to include: « Use etiquette « Fishing information « Safety and operational information « Visible from shore

FEATURE	REGIONAL	DISTRICT	LOCAL
Tidal Conditions	Full tidal access - can be used in all tides	Can be used in most tides	Use may be restricted in some tides
Wind/ Wave Conditions	Useable in most wind and wave conditions	May be subject to some restrictions due to wind and wave conditions	Will vary depending on site May be affected by wind and wave conditions
Vehicular access	Vehicular access may be provided at major regional facilities	Not provided	Not provided
Support Infrastructure			
Fuel	May be provided at large regional facilities with courtesy or commercial moorings	Not provided	Not provided
Sewage Pumpout	May be provided at large regional facilities with free mooring access	Not provided	Not provided
Storage	Not provided	Some dinghy and paddle craft storage may be provided on shore adjacent to facility	Dinghy and paddle craft storage where appropriate may be provided on-shore nearby
Toilets	Toilet facilities provided in close proximity (within 100m) Showers desirable Should be PWD compliant	Toilet facilities desirable in proximity (within 200m)	Generally not provided May be provided in nearby open space
Water	Potable Water supply provided at jetty/ wharf proximity	Water supply desirable in close proximity within 100m	Not usually provided
Fish Cleaning	May be provided at large regional facilities	Not usually provided	Not usually provided
Security	CCTV may be provided at large regional facilities	Not generally provided	Not provided
Lighting	Provide adequate lighting to jetty/ wharf and car parks Ensure minimum lighting for passing vessels or navigation aids	Lighting to jetty/ wharf and carpark is desirable Ensure minimum lighting for passing vessels or navigation aids	Solar lighting to jetty/ wharf and car park desirable
Garbage	Garbage facilities provided May include tangler bins	Garbage facilities provided May include tangler bins	Garbage bin provided
Other	Surrounding area may include other community and recreation facilities such as picnic facilities, BBQs, pathways etc.	Surrounding area may include other community and recreation facilities such as picnic facilities, BBQs, pathways etc.	Surrounding area may include local level park facilities

Figure 7: Fingal Bay Boat Launch Facility- only suited to small craft and low volumes of local users.

9.5. KEY SUPPORT INFRASTRUCTURE

9.5.1. Dinghy Storage

Dinghies and small vessels are stored on a number of Council reserves in Port Stephens. These vessels provide resident and visitor access to the waterways. A large number are used to access swing moorings. Others may be stored for the convenience of not having to transport vessels to and from home, for ease of access to the waterways, or to avoid commercial watercraft storage.

Council's current Foreshore Vessel Storage Policy was developed in 2015 due to large number of reserves being cluttered with abandoned and unauthorised dinghies, kayaks, canoes and catamarans, thereby detracting from the amenity and enjoyment of the beaches and waterways for residents.

Under this policy owners of dinghies, kayaks or canoes need to register for a 12-month permit to store their vessel on Council Reserves.

A dinghy refers to a single hulled or multi hulled vessel to a maximum of 3m. Once registered, these can be stored on any Council managed Foreshore Reserve, of which there are 77 listed. At most of these, storage occurs on the foreshore. Designated storage racks are provided at 18 Foreshore Reserves across eight key locations.

A kayak or canoe is defined as a single hulled vessel up to a maximum of 5m. Once registered, storage of these is only permitted at four locations, with three of these providing designated storage racks.

A review of dinghy storage management approaches in other areas has identified a number of benefits, constraints, issues and considerations, many of which are pertinent to Port Stephens:

- Foreshore reserves are limited and in high demand
- There is no legislative requirement for Council's to provide dinghy storage, however many recognise the value in supporting public use of foreshores for all users
- Dinghy storage can contribute to the maritime character of an area
- Informal and ad hoc storage of dinghies can contribute to cluttering of foreshores, interfere with public use of foreshores, cause damage to vegetation, trees or other infrastructure, pose a public safety risk, and impact Council management of foreshore reserves.
- Some local authorities have successfully introduced dinghy storage policies that create a more organised, manageable method of vessel storage on foreshores.

In managing dingy storage, many Council's are moving towards:

- permitting storage of dinghies in permitted dingy storage facilities only
- nominating select sites for dinghy storage, where dinghy storage facilities are provided.
- not permitting any ad hoc (i.e. on foreshore) storage

A suggested approach to dinghy storage for Port Stephens consistent with the existing dinghy storage policy, boating and fishing infrastructure directions and dingy storage industry practice is outlined below:

1. Nominate sites where dinghy storage is permitted focusing on foreshore reserves where boating and fishing infrastructure is provided or that is within close proximity to mooring areas
2. Identify sites where a large number of vessels are likely to be stored and install dinghy storage racks. Consider the type of dinghy rack that would be most suitable for the environment and amenity of the area (i.e. vertical racks, horizontal racks, kayak racks etc.)
3. Allow informal storage at low key sites only and look to move to dinghy racks at these locations in the longer term.
4. Multi level dinghy racks or upright storage racks are preferred to reduce space use.

Suggested locations are:

- Shoal Bay
- Dutchmans Beach
- Corlette
- Salamander Bay
- Wanda Beach
- Kangaroo Point/ Soldiers Point East
- Soldiers Point West
- Taylors Beach
- Lemon Tree Passage
- Tanilba Bay
- Karuah

Dinghy storage at Foster Park boat ramp (multi-level racks reduce space usage and allow for more secure storage)

Dinghy storage at Taylors Beach (informal storage is not supported as it uses too much space, is hard to manage and obstructs other users)

9.5.2. Fish Cleaning Facilities

Fish cleaning facilities are important infrastructure supporting boating and fishing facilities. While these facilities play an important support role for users of boating and fishing facilities, they do have some disadvantages:

- If the cleaning facilities are not supported by adequate disposal mechanisms, users may dispose of waste in waterways, which can attract dangerous marine species and increase hazards for boaters and beach users.
- Fish cleaning facilities can generate significant odour, creating an unpleasant environment for users and non-users of boating and fishing facilities.
- Pests such as birds, vermin and insects can be attracted to the fish cleaning area.

It is therefore recommended that fish cleaning facilities only be provided at District and Regional facilities where volumes of use support the need for formal cleaning stations.

At larger, high use sites, adequate, well-managed fish cleaning facilities can enhance the functionality of fishing and boating infrastructure. Modern design of fish cleaning facilities with adequate disposal mechanisms for waste will ensure the facilities continue to support users of the boating and fishing infrastructure while effectively managing the disadvantages of fish cleaning facilities.

The following is suggested:

- Provide fish cleaning facilities at regional and district level facilities
- Ensure modern design of fish cleaning facilities with sufficient water, tapware and hoses and drainage of waste
- Provide shelters over fish cleaning facilities
- Investigate fish waste disposal options, including potential provision of fish waste compost facilities and provision of a fish waste collection service through partnership with an external provider such as that being provided at Bega Valley Shire Council.[8]

Fish cleaning at Soldiers Point

Fish waste compost bin (Source: https://begavalley.nsw.gov.au/council/turning-fish-waste-into-compost)

Fish Cleaning station at Karuah

Fish Cleaning station at Little Beach

[8] *https://begavalley.nsw.gov.au/council/turning-fish-waste-into-compost*

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are provided to guide the implementation of the Boating and Fishing Infrastructure Plan. The Site Summaries and Directions (Section 10) provide an overview of the recommended future directions for each boat ramp and wharf within Port Stephens.

1. Incorporate the Boating and Fishing Infrastructure Plan and associated Work Plan (separate document) into Council's four-year Delivery Program.
2. Adopt the proposed planning framework and provision standards and ensure future boating and fishing infrastructure developments and upgrades are undertaken in accordance with the provision standards and other relevant planning and legislative frameworks.
3. Adopt a principle of universal design to future boating and fishing infrastructure provision.
4. Implement the recommended directions for existing boat ramps, wharfs, jetties and pontoons to ensure they are able to operate at the recommended hierarchy classification, including:
   - improvements to access, wayfinding, manoeuvrability and function of the sites
   - improvements to trailer parking provision to increase capacity and ability to cope with peak demand
   - ensuring provision of adequate support facilities in accordance with provision standards.
5. Continue to work with relevant agencies to ensure future boating and fishing infrastructure development or upgrades respond to unique environmental conditions of each site and minimise impacts on surrounding sensitive land and marine environments.
6. Undertake a progressive review and update of signage at boating and fishing infrastructure across Port Stephens to ensure consistency, legibility and currency of the information. This should include co-operation with other external agencies as required (e.g. NSW Government and Marine Rescue)
7. Review the current Foreshore Vessel Storage Policy and consider a revised approach that enables Council to:
   - Nominate sites where dinghy storage is permitted focusing on foreshore reserves where boating and fishing infrastructure is provided or that is within close proximity to mooring areas
   - Identify sites where a large number of vessels are likely to be stored and install dinghy storage racks. Consider the type of dinghy rack that would be most suitable for the environment and amenity of the area (i.e. vertical racks, horizontal racks, kayak racks etc.)
   - Allow informal storage at low key sites only and look to move to dinghy racks at these locations in the longer term.
   - Multi level dinghy racks or upright storage racks are preferred to reduce space use.

   Suggested locations for formal dinghy storage are:
   - Shoal Bay
   - Dutchmans Beach
   - Corlette
   - Salamander Bay
   - Wanda Beach
   - Kangaroo Point/ Soldiers Point West
   - Soldiers Point West
   - Taylors Beach
   - Lemon Tree Passage
   - Tanilba Bay
   - Karuah
8. Establish a consistent approach to the provision of fish cleaning facilities across Port Stephens that includes:
   - Providing fish cleaning facilities at regional and district level facilities
   - Ensuring modern design of fish cleaning facilities with sufficient water, tapware and hoses and drainage of waste
   - Shelters over fish cleaning facilities
   - Investigate fish waste disposal options, including potential provision of fish waste compost facilities and provision of a fish waste collection service through partnership with an external provider such as that being provided at Bega Valley Shire Council.[9]

[9] *https://begavalley.nsw.gov.au/council/turning-fish-waste-into-compost*

11. SITE SUMMARIES AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

11.1. BOAT RAMPS

11.1.1. Boat Harbour Boat Ramp

Description & Location
Beach launch ramp located at Boat Harbour North Headland Playground in Boat Harbour, providing ocean access.

Current PSC Hierarchy
Informal/ Beach

Fishing and Boating Infrastructure
- Beach launch accessed by 1 lane ramp to sand
- Boat safety and information signage

Access, Parking & Manoeuvring
- Limited available boat and trailer parking at top
- Users drive headlong down the ramp and launch on the beach
- Informal trailer parking occurs on beach
- Some signage managing vehicle and boat access, but not in a prominent position

Ramp Condition[10] and Functionality
- Satisfactory Condition (3)
- Suitable for beach launch by experienced boat users only
- Suitable for paddle craft

Support Infrastructure[11]
Toilets, Beach Showers, Park Lighting, Bins, Seating, BBQs, Picnic tables, Shelters, Taps

[10] *Condition is based on condition description and score provided by Council, with a Condition Score of 1 being 'Near Perfect' and 4 being 'Very Poor'*
[11] *Support infrastructure includes open space infrastructure recorded within 100m of the boat ramp*

Usage/ Issues/ Constraints

- Ramp is mainly used by serious boaters
- Very popular location for beach users
- No beach access for beach users, which means the boat access is used by beach users, creating conflicts and safety issues
- This is the only ramp in the area
- Beach is a designated dog off lead area

Future Directions

- Retain for small craft beach launching and paddle craft only
- Improve wayfinding in relation to parking, launching and vehicle restrictions on the beach
- Discuss potential for some boating restrictions or "boat free" days with Maritime NSW
- In the longer term, explore opportunities to separate boats, cars and pedestrians using the ramp by providing a formalised pedestrian beach access from the amenities/ parkland

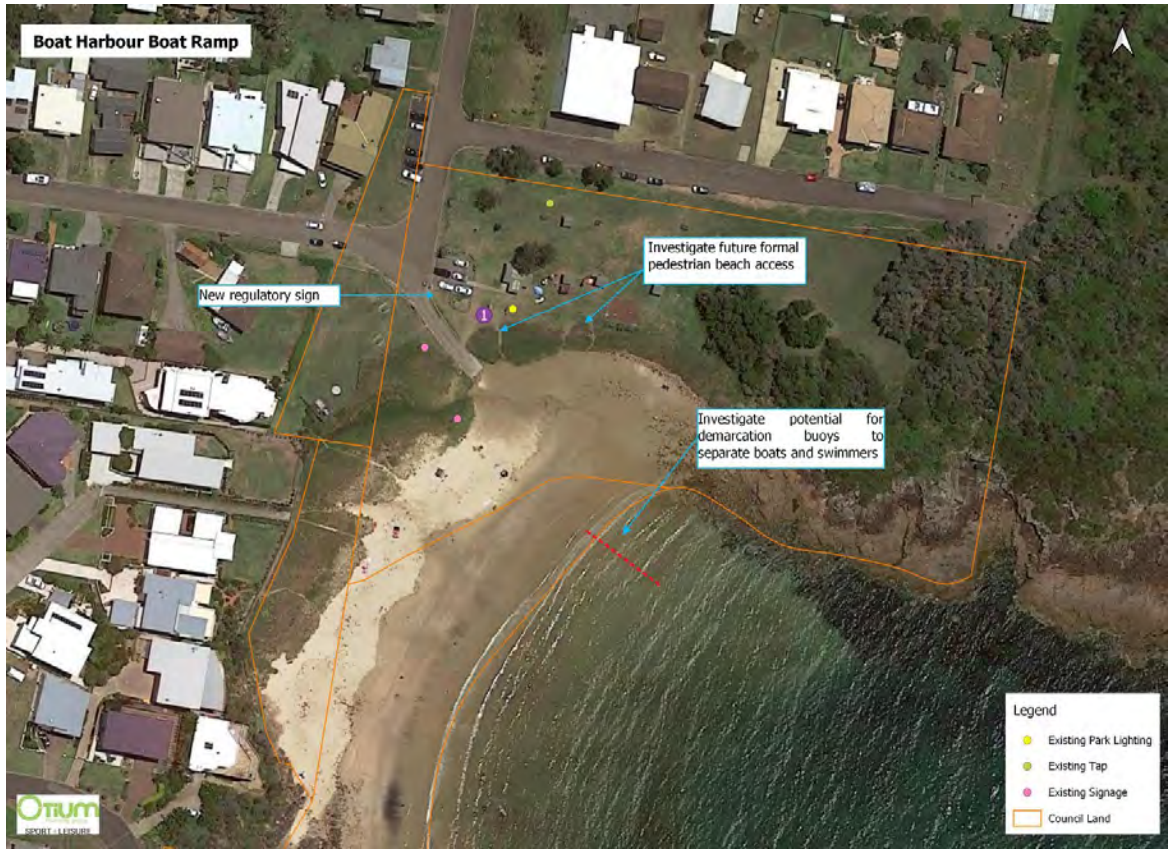
Priority

High

Indicative Costs

$6,250

Figure 8: Future Directions



11.1.2. Fingal Bay Boat Ramp

Description & Location
Beach launch ramp located on Marine Drive at the southern end of the Fingal Bay Foreshore Reserve, providing access to Fingal Bay and the ocean.

Current PSC Hierarchy
Informal/ Beach

Fishing and Boating Infrastructure
- Beach launch accessed by 1 lane ramp to sand
- Boat safety and information signage

Access, Parking & Manoeuvring
- No car and trailer parking
- Users drive headlong down the ramp and launch on the beach
- Informal trailer parking occurs on beach

Ramp Condition[12] and Functionality
- Satisfactory Condition (3)
- Suitable for beach launch by experienced boat users only
- Suitable for paddle craft

Support Infrastructure[13]
Toilets, Park Lighting, Bins, Seating, Beach showers, Picnic tables, Shelters, Taps, Bubbler

[12] *Condition is based on condition description and score provided by Council*
[13] *Support infrastructure includes open space infrastructure recorded within 100m of the boat ramp*

Usage/ Issues/ Constraints

- Ramp is mainly used by serious boaters/ fishers
- Popular location for beach users. Beach goers use the ramp to access the beach, creating some user conflicts, especially during busy periods
- This ramp is only 3.6km (6 minute drive) from the Shoal Bay boat ramp
- Ramp is currently closed over the Christmas school holiday period

Future Directions

- Retain this ramp in the immediate term
- Consider establishing a marked out boat launching area using beach markers and buoys to clearly separate boat ramp users from beach users and upgrade signage to indicate boating and swimming areas (not costed)
- Continue to close the ramp over the Christmas school holiday period, and consider similar closures at other peak times
- In the longer term, review the effectiveness of the above measures and review the need for a public boat ramp, including consideration of relocating the ramp and retention of this site for paddle craft only.
- Discuss with Maritime NSW the potential to restrict boating use to commercial fishers and paddle craft only

Priority

High

Indicative Costs

$2,500

Figure 9: Future Directions

11.1.3. Shoal Bay Boat Ramp

Description & Location
A key ramp in Port Stephens, this boat ramp is located on Shoal Bay Road, Shoal Bay. Includes two lanes.

Current PSC Hierarchy
District

Fishing and Boating Infrastructure
- 2 lane concrete boat ramp
- Fish cleaning table
- Boat safety and information signage
- Dinghy storage rack

Access, Parking & Manoeuvring
- Insufficient car and trailer parking to support function as a regional facility. (approximately 22)
- Parking is provided across the road. This is awkward from a traffic perspective but functional given space constraints adjacent to the ramp
- Limited signage for traffic management
- Sufficient car only parking in the park and on-street
- Large area for wayfinding, but no line marking of de-rigging, rigging or manoeuvring areas

Ramp Condition[14] and Functionality
- Near perfect condition (1)
- Suitable for use by large vessels in some tides. Constrained at low tide due to shallow water and insufficient ramp length
- Significant seaweed build-up, particularly at low tide, which creates a slip hazard and is problematic for launch and retrieval
- Affected by strong crosswinds and currents, which limits ability to provide boat holding structures

[14] *Condition is based on condition description and score provided by Council*

Support Infrastructure[15]

- Toilets, Lighting, Bins, Beach showers, BBQ Picnic tables, Shelters, Taps, Bike rack
- Shoal Bay Jetty is located approximately 400m to the west

Usage/ Issues/ Constraints

- This is a busy facility at peak times
- Potential boat and swimmer conflicts due to the popularity of the beach as a swimming beach
- Car and trailer parking is at capacity during peak periods.
- Evidence of cars parking in car/trailer parks
- Support infrastructure limits the ability of this ramp to function as a regional facility. Current function would be district level, however the ramp supports regional demand in peak times

Future Directions

- Retain this boat ramp as a District boat ramp supporting regional facilities
- Investigate options to improve traffic management and provide clearly marked spaces for rigging, de-rigging and manoeuvring
- Upgrade amenities at end of life
- Upgrade/ improve lighting to ramp and car parking

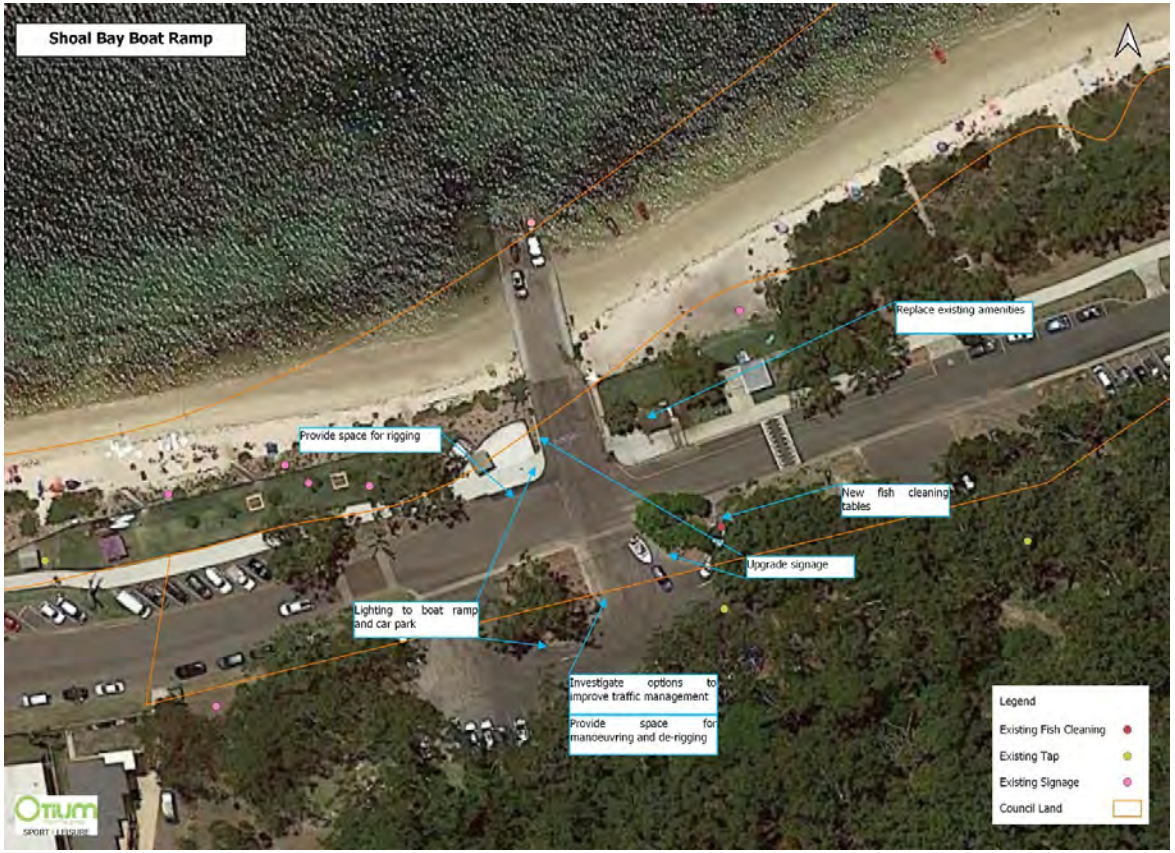
Priority

Low

Indicative Costs

$222,790

Figure 10: Future Directions



[15] *Support infrastructure includes open space infrastructure recorded within 100m of the boat ramp*

11.1.4. Little Beach Boat Ramp

Description & Location
One of the major boat ramps in Port Stephens, located at Little Beach Reserve. Upgraded as part of the Better Boating Now program in 2021. Includes three lanes.

Current PSC Hierarchy
Regional

Fishing and Boating Infrastructure
- 3 lane concrete boat ramp
- Fish cleaning tables
- Boat safety and information signage

Access, Parking & Manoeuvring
- Sufficient car and trailer parking to support regional status (approximately 75 car and trailer spaces)
- Limited car only parking with small, informal space provided
- Good delineation of car and trailer parking and parks are marked as “Trailer Parking Only”
- Limited line marking of de-rigging, rigging or manoeuvring areas and wayfinding is unclear
- Limited space for rigging, de-rigging and manoeuvring and the area is congested

Ramp Condition[16] and Functionality

- New Condition
- Suitable for use by large vessels in most tides
- Wind and wave conditions affect functionality and prevent provision of boat holding structures. Use of beach is permitted for launch and retrieval only

Support Infrastructure[17]

- Toilets, Lighting, Bins, Seating, Beach showers, BBQ, Picnic tables, Shelters, Bubbler
- Maritime safety jetty is located adjacent, however not for public use
- Beach holding available on one side of the ramp although signage is ambiguous

Usage/ Issues/ Constraints

- This is a popular and well-used facility that is reportedly at capacity at peak times.
- Coastal Management Plan notes car and trailer parking capacity concerns.
- There is generally adequate provision for car and trailer parking, however this is compromised by cars parking in bays designated for car and trailer parking due to limited formal car parking space
- The site would benefit from additional car parking (and rehabilitation of dune areas currently used for overflow parking) and clearer delineation of rigging/ de-rigging and manoeuvring areas.
- On-ramp pontoons or boat holding structures are unable to be provided at this location due to tidal constraints. There is a need for education around this, and improved signage relating to use of the beach for boat holding
- Council has developed an initial concept to address traffic and parking on site

Future Directions

- Improve Wayfinding and line marking of rigging and de-rigging areas and manoeuvring bays. This may include:
  - Line marking of rigging area along the left-hand side accessway
  - Clear line marking and signage of de-rigging area
  - Improve signage and direction related to queuing and manoeuvring
- Improve signage relating to use of the beach for boat holding while launching and retrieving
- Better management of pedestrian access and circulation
- Formalise car only parking area
- Reposition and redesign the fish cleaning area to provide additional de-rigging bays adjacent to the fish cleaning area
- Upgrade amenities
- Upgrade/ increase lighting of manoeuvring area
- Undertake traffic engineering consideration of surrounding streets to determine opportunities to improve on-street parking

Priority

High

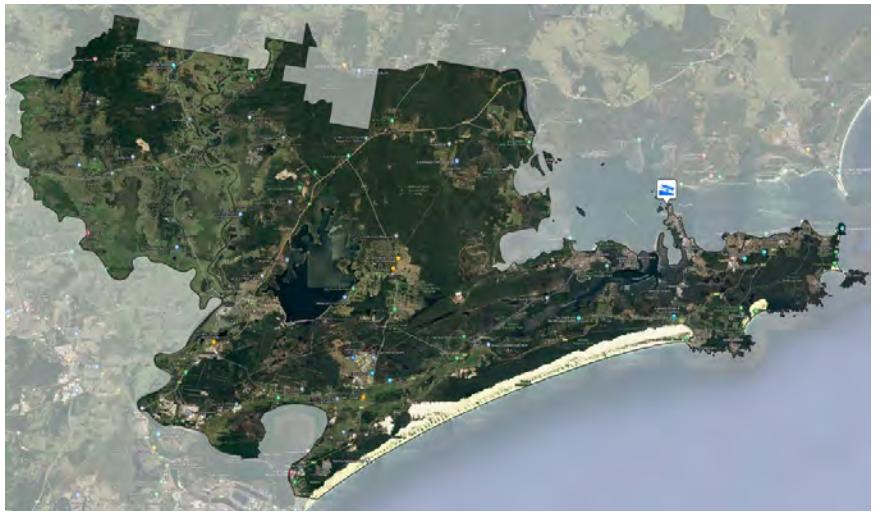
Indicative Costs

$840,612

[16] *Condition is based on condition description and score provided by Council*
[17] *Support infrastructure includes open space infrastructure recorded within 100m of the boat ramp*

Figure 11: Future Directions

11.1.5. Soldiers Point Boat Ramp



Description & Location
One of the major boat ramps in Port Stephens, this boat ramp is located within Everitt Park at Soldiers Point.

Includes three lanes with two on-ramp pontoons recently provided under the Better Boating Now program.

Current PSC Hierarchy
Regional

Fishing and Boating Infrastructure
- 3 lane concrete boat ramp
- 2 on-ramp pontoons with mooring cleats accessible to all lanes
- Fish cleaning table
- Boat safety and information signage
- A public sewage pump out facility is provided in the nearby Soldiers Point Marina

Access, Parking & Manoeuvring
- Approximately 60 car and trailer spaces. Would require 10 more to adequately support operation as a regional boat ramp
- Turf swale in poor condition
- Sufficient car only spaces (approximately 45)
- Clear and adequate areas for de-rigging, rigging or manoeuvring areas, but no line marking

Ramp Condition[18] and Functionality

- Good condition (2)
- Suitable for use by large vessels in all tides
- Not adversely affected by excessive wind and wave conditions

Support Infrastructure[19]

- Toilets, Lighting, Bins, Picnic tables, Shelters
- A public sewage pump out facility is located within the nearby Soldier's Point Marina. Its location in the commercial marina restricts public use due to lack of awareness that is it a public pump out facility
- Improving wayfinding signage and awareness is recommended.

Usage/ Issues/ Constraints

- This is a popular and well-used facility
- Well designed and generally in accordance with NSW Boat Ramp Facility Guidelines and functions well
- Engagement notes that the parking can reach capacity during peak times
- Toilets are provided, but are inadequate
- Car parking is often noted as an issue at this site

Future Directions

- Provide adequate signage at Soldiers Point boat ramp directing boaters to the public pump out facility in the marina.
- Upgrade amenities
- Upgrade/ increase lighting of boat ramp and manoeuvring areas
- Consider reinforcing the turf swale
- Provide linemarking to delineate rigging, de-rigging and manoeuvring areas
- Continue to monitor the rock wall/groyne for any rack fall or degradation, and take remedial action if needed.

Priority

High

Indicative Costs

$371,542

[18] *Condition is based on condition description and score provided by Council*
[19] *Support infrastructure includes open space infrastructure recorded within 100m of the boat ramp*

Figure 12: Future Directions

11.1.6. Tomago Boat Ramp

Description & Location
Local boat ramp on Tomago Road, Tomago, situated on a large riverside site providing access to the North Channel Hunter River

Includes an on-ramp loading pontoon.

Current PSC Hierarchy
Local

Fishing and Boating Infrastructure
- 1 lane concrete boat ramp
- 1 on-ramp pontoons with mooring cleats accessible to all lanes
- Boat safety and information signage
- Fish cleaning table

Access, Parking & Manoeuvring
- Large, unsealed informal area provides sufficient car and trailer and car-only parking space
- Sufficient manoeuvring space

Ramp Condition[20] and Functionality
- Good condition (2)
- Suitable for use by large vessels in all tides
- Not adversely affected by excessive wind and wave conditions

Support Infrastructure[21]
Toilets, Lighting, Bins, Shelters

[20] *Condition is based on condition description and score provided by Council*
[21] *Support infrastructure includes open space infrastructure recorded within 100m of the boat ramp*

Usage/ Issues/ Constraints

- Toilets are dated and scheduled for replacement
- Evidence of antisocial activity

Future Directions

- Retain as a local ramp
- Investigate potential for the site to be developed as an RV site or other recreation area to increase activation and visitation to the site
- Investigate future need for public toilets at this site

Priority

Low

Indicative Costs

$986,461

Figure 13: Future Directions

11.1.7. Wanda Beach Reserve (Salamander) Boat Ramp

Description & Location
- A local boat ramp located at Wanda Beach Reserve on Salamander Bay, Soldiers Point
- Includes a large adjacent jetty

Current PSC Hierarchy
Local

Fishing and Boating Infrastructure
- 2 lane concrete boat ramp
- Large adjacent jetty (Salamander Jetty)
- Fish cleaning table
- Boat safety and information signage
- Sewage pumpout facility
- Adjacent pontoon and tidal pool to the south with mooring cleats

Access, Parking & Manoeuvring
- Access to the boat ramp and parking is highly constrained, with poor sightlines and signage and narrow access roads
- Adequate manoeuvring space, but no formal car parking or car and trailer parking
- Users park near the Hotel at the top of the hill

Ramp Condition[22] and Functionality
- Satisfactory condition (3)
- Suitable for use by large vessels in all tides
- Not adversely affected by excessive wind and wave conditions

[20] *Condition is based on condition description and score provided by Council*

Support Infrastructure[23]
Lighting, Bins, Seating, Picnic tables, Shelters, Taps

Usage/ Issues/ Constraints

- Access significantly constrained
- There is limited opportunity to increase car and trailer parking around the boat ramp or existing access from Seaview Crescent
- Due to parking and access issues this facility is only suitable as a local facility

Future Directions

- Redesign the access and formalise as one-way in/ out through the site
- Investigate opportunities to provide formalised car and trailer parking to at least local boat ramp levels. It is preferable that this be provided within Council managed open space adjacent to boat ramp or on Soldiers Point Road
- If sufficient car parking provision is possible and subject to future demand, consider upgrading this boat ramp in the longer term to a District level facility

Priority
Medium

Indicative Costs
$268,813

Figure 14: Future Directions

[21] *Support infrastructure includes open space infrastructure recorded within 100m of the boat ramp*

11.1.8. Seaham Boat Ramp and Canoe Launch

Description & Location
A small local boat ramp located in Seaham. Used by small boats and paddle craft.

Current PSC Hierarchy
Local

Fishing and Boating Infrastructure
- 1 lane concrete boat ramp
- Some boat safety and information signage

Access, Parking & Manoeuvring
- Very limited informal parking and manoeuvrability space

Ramp Condition[24] and Functionality
- Near perfect condition (1)
- Suitable for use by small vessels and paddle craft

Support Infrastructure[25]
Bin, Picnic table, Shelters

[24] *Condition is based on condition description and score provided by Council*
[25] *Support infrastructure includes open space infrastructure recorded within 100m of the boat ramp*

Usage/ Issues/ Constraints

- Basic facility in good condition
- Adjacent to small local parkland
- Limited/ no parking

Future Directions

- Retain as a local ramp for small vessels and paddlecraft only
- Provide water tap in adjacent parkland
- Retain informal focus and consider minor redesign of the area at the top of the ramp, adjacent to the parkland, to improve car and trailer parking space.
- In the longer term investigate options to provide a small jetty/ pontoon at Seaham either in the vicinity of the boat ramp, or at Seaham Park

Priority

Low

Indicative Costs

$9,150

Figure 15: Future Directions

11.1.9. Taylors Beach Boat Ramp

Description & Location
- Local boat ramp located at Taylors Beach
- Includes 2 lanes with a new pontoon separate from the boat ramp

Current PSC Hierarchy
Local

Fishing and Boating Infrastructure
- 2 lane concrete boat ramp
- Separate pontoon
- Boat safety and information signage
- Dinghy storage on foreshore (no racks)

Access, Parking & Manoeuvring
- No car and trailer parking and limited space (currently on-road)
- 5 car only parks
- Adequate space for manoeuvring to support local use

Ramp Condition[26] and Functionality
- Satisfactory condition (3)
- Sand deposits evident on ramp, affecting launch and retrieval in low tide

Support Infrastructure[27]
- Toilets, Bins, BBQ, Seating, Picnic tables, Shelters, Taps
- Adjacent, separate pontoon

[26] *Condition is based on condition description and score provided by Council*
[27] *Support infrastructure includes open space infrastructure recorded within 100m of the boat ramp*

Usage/ Issues/ Constraints

- This is a popular local facility with limitations on parking and functionality during low tide

Future Directions

- Retain as a local ramp
- Investigate options to improve car and trailer parking
- Consider provision of dinghy storage racks

Priority

Medium

Indicative Costs

$55,336

Figure 16: Future Directions

11.1.10. Karuah Boat Ramp

Description & Location

- Major boat ramp providing access to the Karuah River, located on Bundabah Street, Karuah
- Includes two lanes with two adjacent pontoons. A floating buy barrier is provided under the western pontoon and the eastern pontoon is L-shaped to alleviate safety issues with run-out tide conditions

Current PSC Hierarchy

District

Fishing and Boating Infrastructure

- 2 lane concrete boat ramp
- 2 on-ramp pontoons with mooring cleats accessible to all lanes
- Fish cleaning table
- Boat safety and information signage

Access, Parking & Manoeuvring

- Limited car and trailer parking includes 9 angle car and trailer bays and 16 car only bays at the boat ramp and approximately 4 car and trailer bays in nearby Memorial Park. Not sufficient to support regional status
- No linemarking of parking, de-rigging, rigging or manoeuvring areas
- Limited space for rigging

Ramp Condition[28] and Functionality

- Good Condition (2)
- Suitable for use by large vessels although fast run-out tides create challenges for launch and retrieval
- Not adversely affected by excessive wind and wave conditions

Support Infrastructure[29]

- Bins, Seating, Picnic tables, Shelters
- Toilets and additional facilities are provided at the Karuah Wharf (Longworth Park), which is a 500m walk or 700m drive.
- Sewage pumpout facility located at Karuah Wharf

Usage/ Issues/ Constraints

- Previous planning and engagement outcomes note that car and trailer parking is at capacity during peak periods.
- Limited space for car and trailer parking and limited space for upgrades to carparking
- Limited space around the head of the boat ramp for manoeuvring and de-rigging and rigging and de-rigging areas are unclear
- Toilets in Memorial Park are scheduled for removal with a view to providing overflow parking at this park, however large trees, power lines and the memorial significantly restrict capacity to increase car and trailer parking at this location. It is unlikely that additional car parking works would enable numbers to be sufficiently increased to regional facility levels. Broader consideration of future use of this park and traffic studies of the surrounding streets should be undertaken to determine potential parking options

Future Directions

- Wayfinding and linemarking of rigging and de-rigging areas and manoeuvering bays
- Reinstate the line-marking and consider opportunities for on-street parking
- Improve signage and direction related to queuing and manoeuvering
- Install lighting to ramp, rigging and manoeuvring areas and car park
- In the longer term, undertake a broader investigations into the Memorial Park – Karuah Boat Ramp precinct to determine future use of this area and investigate opportunities for increased car and trailer parking to service a district level boat ramp

Priority

Medium

Indicative Costs

$1,003,327

[28] *Condition is based on condition description and score provided by Council*
[29] *Support infrastructure includes open space infrastructure recorded within 100m of the boat ramp*

Figure 17: Future Directions

11.1.11. Fitzgerald Bridge Boat Ramp (Raymond Terrace)

Description & Location

- A major boat ramp providing access to the Williams and Hunter Rivers, this ramp is located at the Fitzgerald Bridge with access from both sides of Seaham Road
- The 3-lane ramp is located adjacent to a large sport and recreation precinct with pathways that extend along the Hunter River to the Riverside Jetty

Current PSC Hierarchy

District

Fishing and Boating Infrastructure

- 3 lane concrete boat ramp
- Boat safety and information signage
- Fish cleaning table

Access, Parking & Manoeuvring

- Sufficient sealed, informal car and trailer parking space on both sides of the bridge
- Minimal line marking of parking, de-rigging, rigging or manoeuvring areas

Ramp Condition[30] and Functionality

- Good Condition (2)
- Suitable for use by large vessels in all tides
- Not adversely affected by excessive wind and wave conditions

Support Infrastructure[31]

- Toilets shared with adjacent sports facilities
- Park Lighting, Bins, Seating, Picnic tables, Shelters, Taps
- Pathway along river to Riverside Jetty

Usage/ Issues/ Constraints

- This is a popular and well-used facility, particularly for ski boats, attracting visitors from outside the LGA
- The car parking is often at capacity during peak use times.
- The site is subject to flooding and riverbank erosion
- Council have identified an alternative site for development of a boat ramp approximately 300m upstream following the future signalisation of the Newline Road/ Seaham Road intersection (refer figure below)

Priority

High – Medium in accordance with intersection planning

Indicative Costs

$1,707,813

Future Directions

- Investigate the feasibility of either:

  a) Developing a district boat ramp facility at the alternative identified site approximately 300m upstream off Newline Road. In accordance with Council's provision standards and the NSW boat ramp guidelines, this should include:
  - A 3-lane concrete ramp
  - On-ramp holding structures (i.e. pontoons)
  - Approximately 25 car and trailer spaces per lane and 5 car spaces per lane
  - Sufficient manoeuvring, rigging and de-rigging space with wayfinding and linemarking
  - Fish cleaning facilities
  - Lighting
  - Signage
  - Toilets

  Or

  b) If it is not feasible to develop a new boat ramp upstream, developing a driveway connection from the Newline Road to the existing Fitzgerald Bridge boat ramp.
  - Upgrade the existing boat ramp and support infrastructure to improve its function as a district boat ramp, including:
    - Improve launch and boat holding structures to support ski boats
    - Formalisation of parking area to include car and trailer spaces and car only spaces (on opposite side of bridge)
    - Wayfinding and line marking of rigging and de-rigging areas and manoeuvring bays
    - Improve signage and direction related to queuing and manoeuvring
    - Lighting of boat ramp, manoeuvring areas and parking
  - Consider upgrading the foreshore from the extent of the sports fields to the Riverside Park Wharf to enhance recreational function and support the function of the boat ramp as a district facility attracting users from the whole LGA and beyond

[30] *Condition is based on condition description and score provided by Council*
[31] *Support infrastructure includes open space infrastructure recorded within 100m of the boat ramp*

Figure 18: Future Directions

11.1.12. Lemon Tree Passage

Description & Location
One of the major boat ramps in Port Stephens, located within Henderson Park on Cook Parade, Lemon Tree Passage. Includes three lanes with two adjacent pontoons, a Marine Rescue Pontoon, and a free public pump out facility.

Current PSC Hierarchy
Regional

Fishing and Boating Infrastructure
- 3 lane concrete boat ramp with 2 on-ramp pontoons with mooring cleats accessible to all lanes
- Fish cleaning table
- Boat safety and information signage
- Sewage pump out facility

Access, Parking & Manoeuvring
- Sufficient car and trailer parking to support regional status (approximately 90)
- Sufficient car only parking in the park and on-street
- Minimal signage at car park entrance indicating boat and trailer parking only
- No line marking and wayfinding is unclear

Ramp Condition[32] and Functionality

- Good Condition (2)
- Suitable for use by large vessels in all tides
- Not adversely affected by excessive wind and wave conditions

Support Infrastructure[33]

- Toilets, Lighting, Bins, Seating, Beach showers, Picnic tables, Shelters, Taps
- The Lemon Tree Passage Jetty and Tidal Pool is located to the south of the boat ramp and includes a 60m x 2m L-shaped pontoon with short term mooring facilities.
- A 52-berth commercial Marina is located south of the tidal pool.
- Public Marine Pump-out Facility

Usage/ Issues/ Constraints

- This is a popular and well-used facility.
- There is generally sufficient parking space to support a Regional facility, although this can be impacted by cars parking in car/trailer bays
- Previous planning and engagement outcomes note that car and trailer parking is at capacity during peak periods
- There is some lack of clarity around manoeuvring, rigging and de-rigging, which anecdotally causes congestion at the boat ramp
- The fish cleaning facilities are currently removed from de-rigging areas
- There is an informal launch area for paddle craft located at Kooindah Park, 400m west of the Lemon Tree Passage Boat Ramp. Investigate opportunities to upgrade this with parking and shower facilities.

Future Directions

- Improve wayfinding and manoeuvring throughout the site including:
  - Formalisation of the rigging area along the left-hand side accessway
  - Redesign of the manoeuvring and parking area to incorporate more functional de-rigging bays and fish cleaning facilities
  - Line marking of the manoeuvring bays
- Upgrade fish cleaning facilities and relocate to a new position adjacent to new de-rigging bays
- Improve signage and direction related to queuing and manoeuvring
- Relocation of the amenities to an alternative location within Henderson Park
- Upgrade/ increase lighting of manoeuvring area
- Re-design of car only parking to accommodate additional de-rigging areas and trailer parking
- Investigate opportunities to upgrade the informal paddle launch area located at Kooindah Park

Priority

High

Indicative Costs

$2,326,687

[32] *Condition is based on condition description and score provided by Council*
[33] *Support infrastructure includes open space infrastructure recorded within 100m of the boat ramp*

11.1.13. Foster Park Boat Ramp

Description & Location
A small local boat ramp located in Foster Park, Tanilba, with adjacent dinghy storage. Used by small boats and paddle craft. One of three local boat ramps in Tanilba Bay.

Current PSC Hierarchy
Local

Fishing and Boating Infrastructure
- 1 lane concrete boat ramp
- Dinghy storage racks
- Boat safety and information signage

Access, Parking & Manoeuvring
- Limited parking and manoeuvrability space

Ramp Condition[34] and Functionality
- Satisfactory Condition (3)
- Good quality ramp suitable for use by small vessels
- Not useable at low tide.

Support Infrastructure[35]
- Bins, Seating, Beach showers, Picnic tables, Shelters, Taps, Bubbler

Usage/ Issues/ Constraints
- Basic facility in good condition with good functionality during high-mid tides and providing access to offshore moorings.
- Adjacent to local parkland, with limited shared car parking

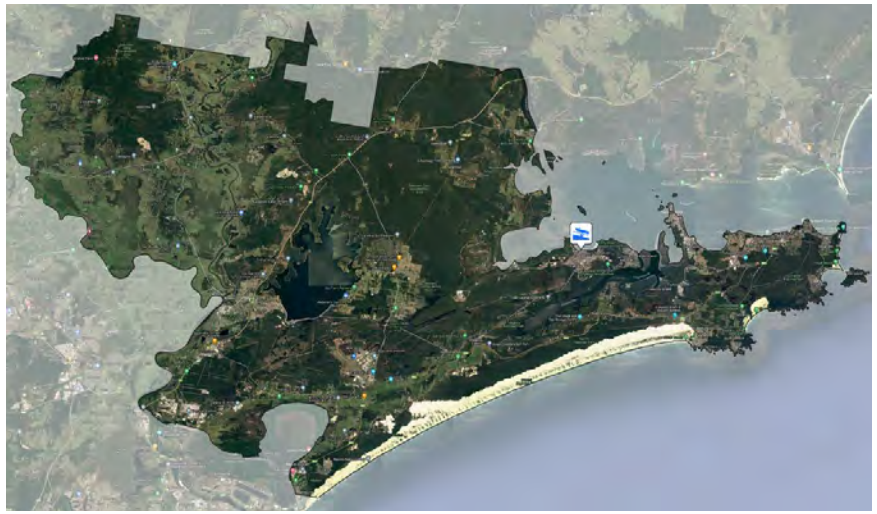
Future Directions
- Retain as a local ramp for small vessels and paddle craft only
- Retain dinghy storage
- Redesign the area at the top of the ramp to enhance separation from park users, improve vehicle flow and manoeuvrability, and to formalise car and trailer parking
- Update signage to show new entry/ exit and manoeuvring

Priority
Medium

Indicative Costs
$312,280

[34] *Condition is based on condition description and score provided by Council*
[35] *Support infrastructure includes open space infrastructure recorded within 100m of the boat ramp*

11.1.14. Peace Park Boat Ramp



Description & Location
A small local boat ramp located in Foster Park, Tanilba, with adjacent dinghy storage. Used by small boats and paddle craft. One of three local boat ramps in Tanilba Bay.

Current PSC Hierarchy
Informal

Fishing and Boating Infrastructure
- 1 lane concrete boat ramp
- Dinghy storage racks
- Boat safety and information signage

Access, Parking & Manoeuvring
- Limited parking and manoeuvrability space
- Limited, informal gravel car park

Ramp Condition[36] and Functionality
- Very poor condition (4)
- Ramp in very poor condition, in deep water, but subject to significant sand build up

Support Infrastructure[37]
- Toilets, Bins, Seating, Picnic tables, Shelters, Taps

[36] *Condition is based on condition description and score provided by Council*
[37] *Support infrastructure includes open space infrastructure recorded within 100m of the boat ramp*

Usage/ Issues/ Constraints

- Basic facility located close to a local park, which has recently been extended to increase the park/ play focus at this location
- Potential user conflicts between boat and park users
- Limited parking space
- Very close to Foster Park and Mallabula boat ramps

Future Directions

- Retain for fishing and general water access by non-trailerable craft
- At end of life, remove and replace with paddle launch only

Priority

Low

Indicative Costs

$4,000

Figure 19: Future Directions

11.1.15. Lilli Pilli Boat Ramp

Description & Location
A small local boat ramp located at Lilli Pilli Park on Beach Road, Lemon Tree Passage where the Tilligerry Creek meets the Lemon Tree Passage. Includes dinghy storage and is used by small boats and paddle craft.

Current PSC Hierarchy
Local

Fishing and Boating Infrastructure
- 1 lane boat ramp with concrete at top and aggregate at bottom
- Dinghy storage racks
- Boat safety and information signage

Access, Parking & Manoeuvring
- Sufficient car parking and manoeuvrability space, recently partially upgraded to bitumen

Ramp Condition[38] and Functionality
- Very poor condition (4)
- Suitable for small vessels and paddle craft
- Strong current has caused gravel to wash away making the ramp unusable at low tide

Support Infrastructure[39]
- Bins, Seating, Picnic tables

[38] *Condition is based on condition description and score provided by Council*
[39] *Support infrastructure includes open space infrastructure recorded within 100m of the boat ramp*

Usage/ Issues/ Constraints

- Basic facility in good condition with good functionality during high-mid tides and providing access to offshore moorings
- Adjacent to local parkland, with limited shared car parking

Future Directions

- Retain in the immediate term as a local ramp for small vessels and paddle craft only and stabilise the aggregate below the ramp and replenish as required
- Retain dinghy storage
- In the medium term investigate the feasibility of upgrading to a longer ramp at this location, suitable for use in low tide, or relocating to an alternative site in close proximity (e.g. in John Parade Reserve or Nyrang Reserve)

Priority

Low

Indicative Costs

$17,612

Figure 20: Future Directions

11.1.16. Old Wharf (Salt Ash) Boat Ramp

Description & Location
A small local boat ramp located at Salt Ash provides access to the upper reaches of Tilligerry Creek.

Current PSC Hierarchy
Informal

Fishing and Boating Infrastructure
- 1 lane concrete boat ramp

Access, Parking & Manoeuvring
- Informal parking

Ramp Condition[40] and Functionality
- Very poor condition (4)
- Suitable for paddle craft only

Support Infrastructure[41]
- Adjacent to a large open space area previously used for tennis and general recreation
- Bins, Shelter

[40] *Condition is based on condition description and score provided by Council*
[41] *Support infrastructure includes open space infrastructure recorded within 100m of the boat ramp*

Usage/ Issues/ Constraints

- Very poor facility in a good position adjacent to open space
- Potential for development as a paddle launch and local fishing location

Future Directions

- Retain ramp as a paddle launch and upgrade at end of life
- Upgrade car park
- Provide edge hardening at existing informal creek access directly off the parkland to enable fishing
- Investigate provision of a safe crossing treatment on Lemon Tree Passage Road
- Investigate opportunities for a canoe trail

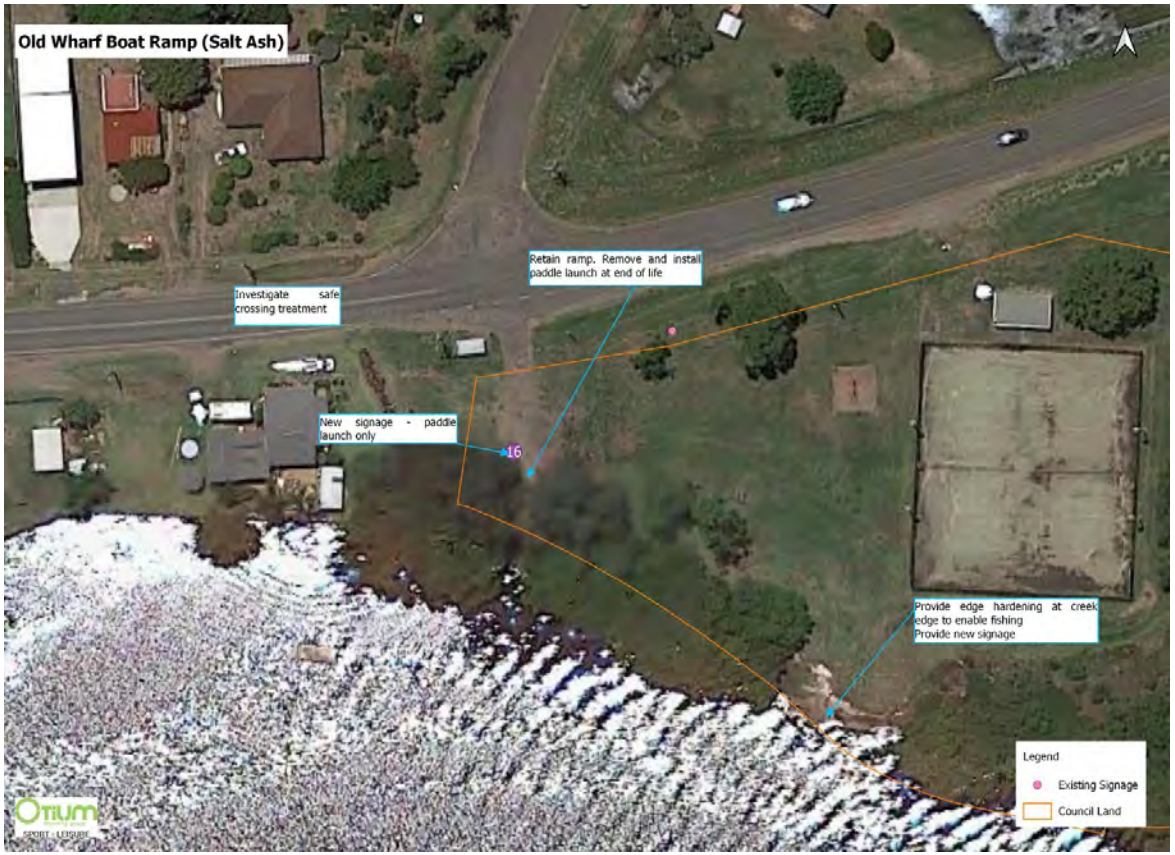
Priority

Low

Indicative Costs

$53,690

Figure 21: Future Directions



11.1.17. Mallabula Boat Ramp

Description & Location
A small local boat ramp located at Caswell Reserve, Tanilba. One of three boat ramps located in Tanilba Bay.

Current PSC Hierarchy
Informal

Fishing and Boating Infrastructure
- 1 lane concrete boat ramp
- Some boat safety and information signage

Access, Parking & Manoeuvring
- No car and trailer parking
- Limited car parking
- Poor manoeuvrability

Ramp Condition[42] and Functionality
- Very poor condition (4)
- Suitable for small vessels and paddle craft

Support Infrastructure[43]
- New playground and amenities in adjacent parkland
- Bins, Seating, BBQ, Picnic tables, Beach Shower, Shelters

[43] *Support infrastructure includes open space infrastructure recorded within 100m of the boat ramp*
[43] *Support infrastructure includes open space infrastructure recorded within 100m of the boat ramp*

Usage/ Issues/ Constraints

- Basic facility in a good location, but in very poor condition
- Functionality limited by lack of parking and manoeuvrability space
- Adjacent to local parkland with good facilities
- Anecdotally there is continual movement of sand towards Mallabula which limits the ability for larger boats to use this ramp

Future Directions

- Retain and replace as a paddle launch at end of life
- Retain the existing turning head at the boat ramp for paddle craft drop-off
- Consider formalising car parking

Priority

High

Indicative Costs

$98,554

Figure 22: Future Directions

11.2. JETTIES AND WHARFS

11.2.1. Hinton Wharf

Photo: Port Stephens Council

Description & Location
Small wharf located on the Paterson River adjacent to the Hinton Bridge.

Hierarchy
Local

Size
10m x 2m

Car Parking
- Unmarked parking provided at Old Punt Road for approximately 10 cars

Mooring
- No mooring

Condition[44] and Functionality
- Near perfect condition (1)
- Functions as a local fishing and swimming platform on the riverside

Support Infrastructure[45]
- BBQ, Bin, Park lighting, Picnic tables, Shelters, Tap

Issues/ Constraints/Opportunities
- Community engagement notes a need in this area for a boat ramp and launching facilities
- Bank conditions and flooding mean it is unlikely to be feasible to provide a boat ramp or pontoons at this site. A nearby ramp is available at Morpeth in the Maitland City Council area
- SES use this location to launch vessels during floods

Future Directions
- Retain as local wharf
- In consultation with the SES, undertake improvements to support emergency response

Priority
High

Indicative Costs
-

[44] *Condition is based on condition description and score provided by Council*
[45] *Support infrastructure includes open space infrastructure recorded within 100m of the boat ramp*

11.2.2. Karuah Wharf

Description & Location
Large timber fishing wharf located in Longworth Park, Karuah with swimming enclosure.

Hierarchy
Regional

Size
73m x 3m

Car Parking
Sufficient car parking

Mooring
Yes

Condition and Functionality
- Satisfactory condition (3)
- Popular fishing and swimming location within parkland setting.
- Recent upgrades to toilet block
- Sewage pump out and mooring facilities support boating users

Support Infrastructure

- BBQ, Beach Shower, Seating, Bike rack, Bins, Tap and bubbler, Car park lighting, Picnic tables, Shelters

Issues/ Constraints/Opportunities

- Well used wharf facility
- Has been historically repaired and ongoing maintenance is required

Future Directions

- Retain as a regional wharf with sewage pump out facility
- At end of life replace with accessible pontoons and retain swimming enclosure and sewage pump out facilities

Priority

Low

Indicative Costs

$302,400

Figure 25: Future Directions

11.2.3. Lemon Tree Passage Pontoon and Tidal Pool

Description & Location
Pontoon located adjacent to the Lemon Tree Passage boat ramp.

Hierarchy
Regional

Size
60m x 2m

Car Parking
Sufficient car parking

Mooring
Yes

Condition and Functionality
- Near perfect condition (1)
- Popular fishing and swimming location within parkland setting
- Sewage pump out and mooring facilities support boating users

Support Infrastructure
- BBQ, Beach shower, Seating, Bike rack, Bins, Tap and bubbler, Car park lighting, Picnic tables, Shelters

Issues/ Constraints/Opportunities
- Well used, new pontoon facility

Priority
-

Indicative Costs
-

11.2.4. Little Beach Jetty

Description & Location
Accessible timber jetty with fibreglass reinforced plastic decking located on Little Beach

Hierarchy
Regional

Size
55m x 2m

Car Parking
PWD car parking provided on the road with pathway access to the jetty

Condition and Functionality
- Satisfactory condition (3)
- Provides an opportunity for people with disabilities
- Adjacent to accessible sensory style playspace
- Toilets are located halfway between the jetty and boat ramp

Figure 26: Future Directions

Support Infrastructure
- Seating, Bins, Tap and bubbler, Park lighting, Picnic tables, Shelters

Issues/ Constraints/Opportunities
- Well used accessible jetty
- Evidence of repairs over time

Future Directions
- Retain as a regional, accessible jetty
- At end of life replace with accessible fishing platform/ jetty of similar dimensions

Priority
Low

Indicative Costs
$275,000

11.2.5. Mallabula Jetty

Description & Location
Small, local jetty in an appealing natural location to the west of Mallabula Point

Hierarchy
Local

Size
20m x 2m

Car Parking
- Car parking at the end of Mallabula Street
- Pedestrian access only to the jetty

Mooring
Yes – small boats

Condition and Functionality
- Good condition (2)
- Small wharf in a secluded location likely to be used by immediate locals only
- Gravel walk-to access (track closed to vehicles)

Support Infrastructure
- Seating, Bins, Picnic table, Shelters

Issues/ Constraints/Opportunities

- Likely to be limited public awareness of this facility and functions as a "private-like" facility for immediate locals
- Opportunity to upgrade parking and pathway to improve access for a broader catchment

Future Directions

- Retain as a local wharf
- Upgrade car parking
- At end of life, do not replace, but provide a carry-in swim and paddle launch water access in this vicinity. This may be at the existing location with improved pathway access, or investigate an alternative location to direct public use away from houses towards Mallabula Point

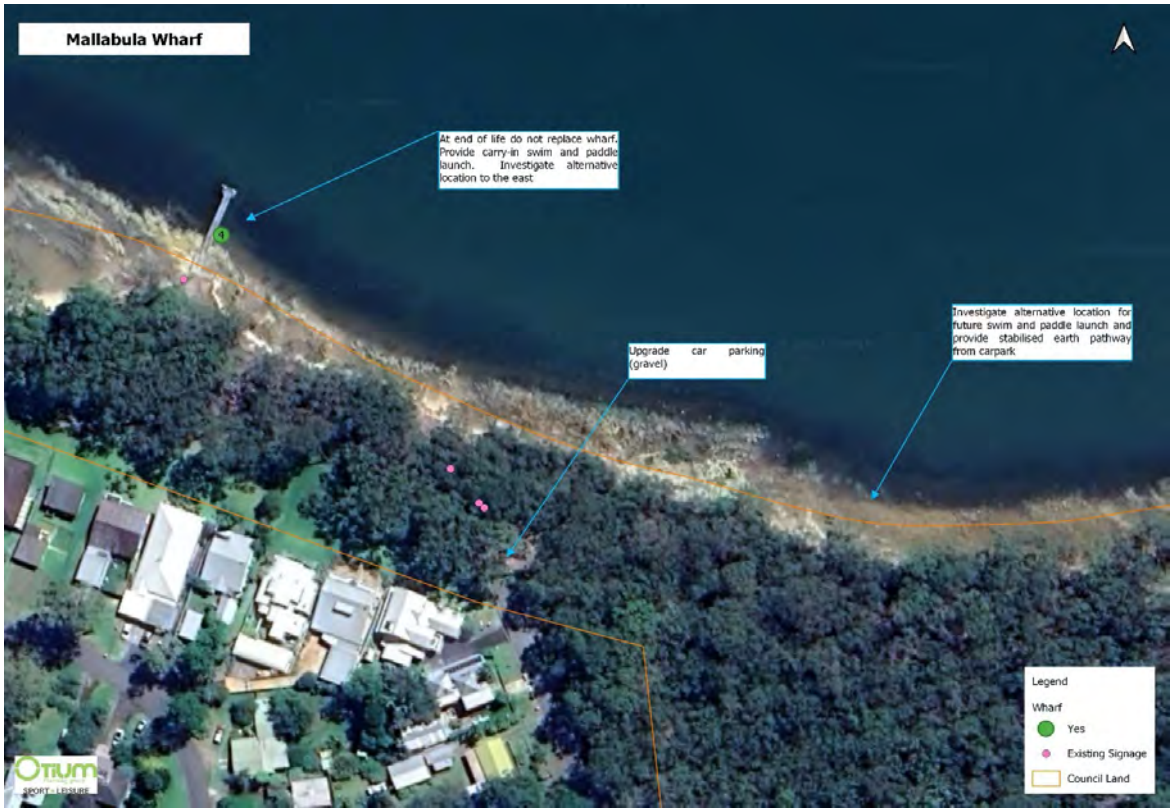
Priority

Low

Indicative Costs

$43,562

Figure 27: Future Directions



11.2.6. Nelson Bay Public Wharf

Description & Location
Public wharf provided in the vicinity of the busy Nelson Bay marina. Provides leased mooring for commercial operators

Hierarchy
Regional

Size
22m x 6m

Car Parking
Ample car parking on Victoria Parade

Mooring
Commercial mooring

Condition and Functionality
- Satisfactory condition (3)
- Significant resource for commercial providers (e.g. dolphin and whale watching etc.)
- Public marine pump-out facility

Support Infrastructure
- Seating, Bins, Park lighting, Shelters

Issues/ Constraints/Opportunities

- Berths currently leased to commercial providers
- Infrastructure is at end of life
- NSW Maritime Infrastructure Plan notes significant demand for commercial operators in this area

Future Directions

- Retain as a public wharf and pumpout facility.
- Review the need for use of the wharf for commercial mooring and develop a commercial mooring policy and charge a market value commercial rent, with revenue directed into boating and fishing infrastructure improvement
- Consider converting the permanent moorings on the public wharf to short term public mooring only
- Continue to provide a "visitor/day stay facility and improve signage explaining management and use policies.

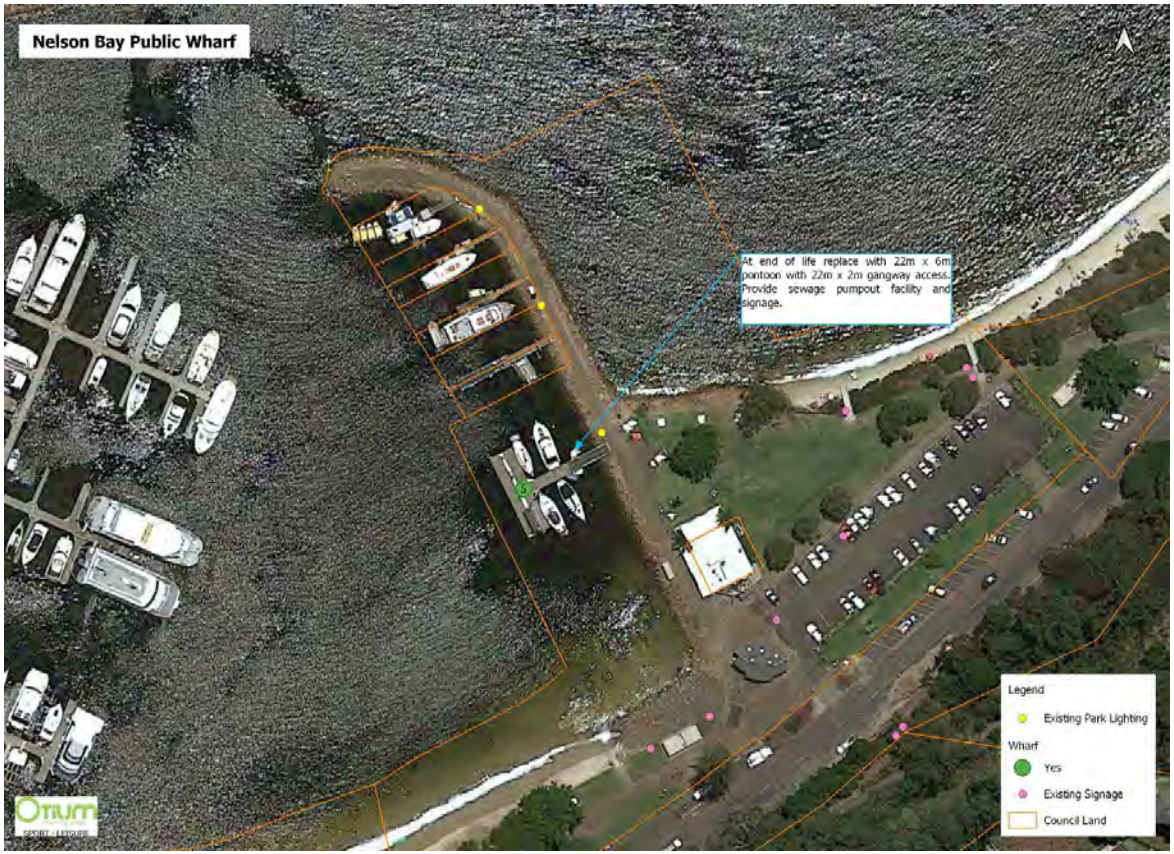
Priority

High

Indicative Costs

$277,030

Figure 28: Future Directions



11.2.7. Riverside Park Wharf

Description & Location
Concrete wharf on the Hunter River at Riverside Park, close to the Raymond Terrace town centre.

Hierarchy
Local

Size
24m x 3m

Car Parking
Small carpark

Mooring
Mooring capability for small vessels

Condition and Functionality
- Good condition (2)
- Small jetty located in riverside parkland, most likely to support fishing and water skiing

Support Infrastructure
- Bike rack, Bins, Picnic tables, Shelters, Tap
- Toilets within 200m

Issues/ Constraints/Opportunities
- Located in close proximity to parkland and provides recreational opportunities.
- May be used by water skiers launching at Fitzgerald Bridge, however distance from Fitzgerald Bridge ramp constrains this use.

Future Directions
- Retain as local wharf

Priority
-

Indicative Costs
-

11.2.8. Salamander Bay Jetty

Description & Location
Large timber fishing jetty located adjacent to boat ramp in Salamander Bay

Hierarchy
District

Size
80m x 3m

Car Parking
No formal car parking

Mooring
Pile mooring only

Condition and Functionality
- Good condition (2)
- Very large wharf providing good fishing opportunities with stepped access to varying water levels

Support Infrastructure
- Lighting, Bins, Seating, Picnic tables, Shelters, Taps

Issues/ Constraints/Opportunities
- Well used jetty facility
- Access significantly constrained due to lack of car parking
- Unable to function efficiently as a district or regional jetty due to lack of car parking

Future Directions
- Retain as a district jetty and investigate opportunities to upgrade parking
- At end of life replace with accessible pontoon style jetty

Priority
Low

Indicative Costs
-

11.2.9. Shoal Bay Jetty

Description & Location
Large concrete jetty located within approximately 400m of the Shoal Bay Boat ramp

Hierarchy
District

Size
60m x 10m

Car Parking
- On street car parking
- No evident PWD parking

Mooring
Pile mooring only

Condition and Functionality
- Good condition (2)
- Very large wharf providing good fishing opportunities with stepped access to varying water levels

Support Infrastructure
- Nil recorded within 100m
- Toilets located close to Shoal Bay boat ramp
- Located within parkland with shared pathways and nearby cafes

Issues/ Constraints/Opportunities
- Well used jetty facility located in a well used foreshore area
- Potentially constrained due to car parking and commercial cafes

Future Directions
- Retain as a district jetty- primarily for swimming and fishing uses.
- Enhance support infrastructure such as lighting, seating, water, shelters etc.

Priority
Medium

Indicative Costs
-

11.2.10. Taylors Beach Pontoon

Description & Location
Large, new pontoon-style jetty of concrete construction with aluminium gangway located adjacent to the Taylors Beach Boat Ramp

Hierarchy
District

Size
60m x 10m

Car Parking
- Limited car parking (5 spaces)
- On street parking

Mooring
Yes – mooring cleats

Condition and Functionality
- Near perfect condition (1)
- Large jetty recently upgraded to pontoon style from old timber wharf

Support Infrastructure
- Toilets, Bins, BBQ, Seating, Picnic tables, Shelters, Taps

Issues/ Constraints/Opportunities
- Potentially constrained due to limited parking

Future Directions
- Retain as a district pontoon
- In accordance with boat ramp directions, investigate opportunities to improve parking

Priority
-

Indicative Costs
-

12. WARRANTIES AND DISCLAIMERS

The information contained in this report is provided in good faith. While Otium Planning Group has applied their own experience to the task, they have relied upon information supplied to them by other persons and organisations.

We have not conducted an audit of the information provided by others but have accepted it in good faith.

Accordingly, neither Otium Planning Group, nor any member or employee of Otium Planning Group, undertakes responsibility arising in any way whatsoever to any persons other than client in respect of this report, for any errors or omissions herein, arising through negligence or otherwise however caused.

Photo Credit: https://hometownaustralia.com.au/

Otium Planning group

www.otiumplanning.com.au

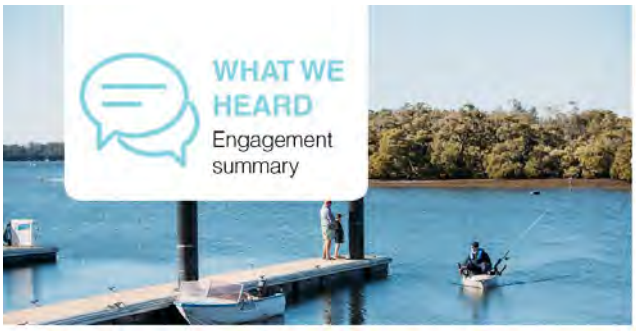
Boating and Fishing Infrastructure Plan

Engagement Report

September 2022

March 2022 – September 2022

PORT STEPHENS COUNCIL



Boating and fishing community engagement

Over the 2021/22 summer, we asked locals and visitors what they think about boating and fishing facilities in Port Stephens. This information will be used to develop a Boating and Fishing Infrastructure Plan – a strategic document that will guide infrastructure planning for boating and fishing over the next 15 years, and support Council with future funding applications for key upgrades.

What we did:

Focus group workshops
27 workshops with boating and fishing stakeholders

Online surveys
2 surveys and 200+ completed surveys received

Online mapping
378 comments showing treasured areas and places for improvement

What we heard:

- Boating and fishing is a treasured leisure activity and an important part of the Port Stephens economy and lifestyle.
- Sustainability – community care about our waterways and marine and plant life, and want to see boating and fishing conducted in sustainable ways for future generations.
- Accessibility of boat ramps and launch facilities could be improved to enhance access for more users.
- Quality over quantity – community would rather see improvements to existing assets rather than investing in new infrastructure.

PORT STEPHENS COUNCIL
PORTSTEPHENS.NSW.GOV.AU

1 Port Stephens Council

Community quotes:

"[We need] some educational signs about biohazard risks to our waterways; what you can and can't put in the water."

"Access to the waterways should be number one priority. It's why people come here."

"More boat and trailer parking. There's never a spot when you need one."

"I love Fingal Bay beach. It's great for beach fishing [and I've] done so here my whole life when my Nan and Pop used to live a few streets back from the beach."

Great suggestions we heard:

- Existing boating and fishing facilities could be improved with more lighting, additional fish cleaning tables and rubbish bins, and enhancing wash-down and toilet amenities.
- Improve boating and fishing safety by providing signage and education on boat usage, fishing catches and speed limits.
- Line mark existing car parks to separate cars from boat and trailer parking.

Project timeline – what's next?

Boating and Fishing Plan drafted
Mid 2022

Boating and Fishing Plan on Public Exhibition
Late 2022

Seek funding opportunities and implement actions
2022 – ongoing

PORT STEPHENS COUNCIL
PORTSTEPHENS.NSW.GOV.AU

Contents

Summary

Communication Methods

Engagement Methods

Key Findings

Engagement Activities: Community Mapping

Appendices

- Appendix A: Survey data – Community Survey
- Appendix B: Survey data – Club Survey
- Appendix C: Further Comments – Community Survey
- Appendix D: Community Mapping Comments

Summary

Port Stephens offers a variety of popular recreational boating and fishing activities for residents and visitors to enjoy including sailing, boating, fishing, kayaking, canoeing, jetskiing, paddleboarding and scuba diving. Furthermore, commercial boating and fishing is important to the Port Stephens economy.

Council currently maintains 18 boat ramps and 16 wharf, jetty and pontoon locations across the LGA. Supporting infrastructure includes sewer pump-out systems, car parking, public amenities, fish cleaning tables, tidal pools and dinghy racks.

In 2021 Council secured a grant from NSW Boating Now program to develop its first Boating and Fishing Infrastructure Plan. In partnership with Council, Otium Planning Group will develop this plan.

An engagement program was developed to consult with key stakeholders on usage, satisfaction, and aspirations for boating and fishing infrastructure in Port Stephens. It aimed to:

- Understand opportunities and constraints of current Port Stephens boating and fishing infrastructure;
- Identify current and projected participation and usage rates; and
- Identify required upgrades, renewals and removals to meet community needs

Engagement was undertaken by Port Stephens Council staff between October 2021 and February 2022. This report summarises the community and clubs findings.

Communication methods

ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION	REACH
Website	Host for community survey and related information on boating and fishing in Port Stephens November 2021 - February 2022	NA
Direct emails	Direct emails to boating and fishing contacts; environmental groups and users Dec 2021 - January 2022	72 emails sent
Social media	Awareness raising to promote the project and highlight opportunities for engagement December 2021- January 2022	18000+ impressions; 610 click-throughs
Poster/On-site signage with QR code	Promotional signage and posters encouraging participation in survey 16 December 2021 - 7 February 2022	16 signs displayed at key boat ramps and wharves
Newsletter	Story featured in *Engagement News* newsletter December edition 23 December 2021	1469 subscribers
Media Release	*Have your say on boating and fishing in Port Stephens* - Port Stephens Examiner 23 December 2021	NA

Engagement methods

ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION	PARTICIPATION
Focus Groups	Focus group discussions with key stakeholders November 2021 - February 2022 • Internal PSC staff • Commercial operators • Tourism operators • Aboriginal land council • Government agencies • Local Government • Emergency Services	27 sessions
Engagement Portal - Social PinPoint	Online ideas board/ photo-story activity encouraging residents to submit commentary on specific sites 16 December 2021 - 7 February 2022	378 comments
Community Survey	Survey of general community accessing waterways 16 December 2021 - 7 February 2022	191 responses
Club Survey	Survey of clubs accessing infrastructure 16 December 2021 - 7 February 2022	13 responses

Key Findings

PLEASE **NOTE**

These key findings were drawn from the engagements with Boating and Fishing stakeholders, using data collected from the community and club surveys, as well as the focus group sessions and Social PinPoint activity.

Sustainability

Sustainability of boating and fishing is paramount to community and business in Port Stephens. Lots of commentary throughout the engagement focused on jet ski bans, policing and governance for boating speed limits, overfishing, and damage to and destruction of sea-life. Although this commentary can be viewed purely as a negative sentiment, it was clear that community and business are concerned about the ongoing sustainability of their waterways, and want to see protections and policy that provides environmental sustainability for the future. This view was also echoed by industry who rely on the ongoing sustainability of fishing and boating in Port Stephens.

Access

Pontoons and ease of boating access was discussed frequently. Community would like safer and easier ways to tie-off a boat while retrieving their car, and lots of commentary for this focused on solo and elderly boaters who find it difficult to launch and retrieve.

Improving Conditions

Whilst most respondents were satisfied with the number of boat ramps in Port Stephens, there was discussion on improving boat ramp conditions and support facilities through increasing parking, making areas safer with more lighting, and increasing the number of amenities and fish cleaning tables.

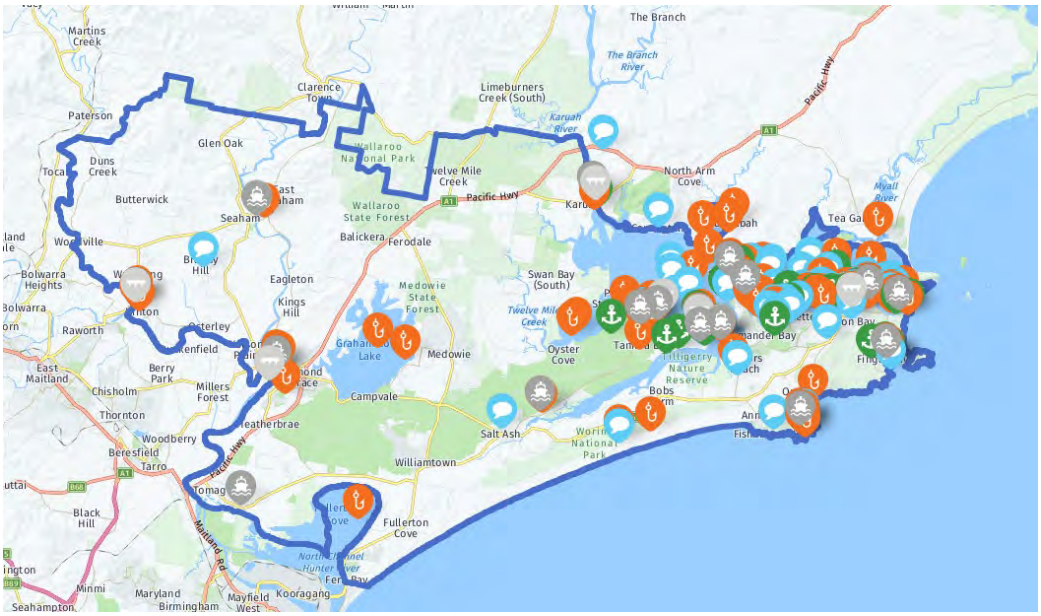
More Options

Community would like smaller boat ramps (like Boat Harbour) formalised and concreted, and there was some discussion on having more options in the West of Port Stephens for boating and kayak users- i.e. at Raymond Terrace and Hinton.

Safety

While it is clear that boating and fishing is a treasured activity in Port Stephens, there was a sentiment amongst community that the waterways here are largely uncontrolled and somewhat unsafe. Safety and governance was a concern with community calling for greater water policing on speed limits, rubbish dumping, and overfishing, and greater governance for boat ramp areas through signage, education and parking controls i.e. time limits

Engagement Activity – Community Mapping



This activity asked participants to geo-map Places they Love, Places for Improvement, and Other Comments on an online map of Port Stephens using social pinpoint. There were 378 responses received and some of the key themes identified are:

- Support for a ban jet skis due to environmental concerns for local wildlife and plant life, local noise, and danger to swimmers
- Need for improvements to local boat ramps e.g. formalizing and concreting existing dirt/sand boat ramps; cleaning and maintenance of boat ramps to make them safer and less slippery; and building a boat ramp at Hinton
- Need for more pontoons, particularly around Tomaree Peninsula to assist solo and senior boaters park and retrieve cars and boats
- Environmental protections for local wildlife and plant life, including introduction of tighter fishing limits and bans, remove netting, concerns over-fishing and boating/anchors caused to sea life.

Please note that Improvement Ideas and Other Comments have been grouped together for ease of analysing the data.

Participant comments have been adjusted and uplifted to focus on a broader theme rather than on specifics. For example, if someone had commented, ‘There should be a floating pontoon boat ramp” (at Boat Harbour) this has been uplifted to ‘Pontoons. This process ensures similar comments can be grouped and key priorities are more easily highlighted.

Several ‘Place I love’ comments were also included in ‘Improvement Ideas’ if the recorded comment included both an area they like, and an improvement suggestion.

A full list of comments can be found in Appendix D.

a) Place I love

Of the 46 comments received, 13 loved boating and fishing spots in Nelson Bay or Shoal Bay, 9 were cherished places in the Tilligerry, 5 in Fingal Bay, amongst others. Comments from this activity are displayed in the below cloud.

b) Improvement Ideas and Other Comments

The following table is a summary of the findings from Improvement Ideas and Other Comments. There were 335 comments received. Because of the public nature of the mapping tool, some comment threads included both supportive and opposing views of one topic for example jet skis, and dogs on beaches. 1 comment was removed from the online wall due to inappropriate content.

Table 6: Improvement Ideas and Other Comments

Type	Theme	Example	Comment count
IMPROVED ASSETS	Boat ramps	Upgrade and/or more boat ramps across the LGA	48
	Pontoons	More pontoons to ease on-boarding and to improve safety. Majority of comments centred around the Tomaree Peninsula	33
	Jetties/wharves	Improved or new jetties and wharves	11
	Moorings	More public and private moorings around Tomaree peninsula	9

	Access points for kayaks	More access points to launch a kayak/canoe/SUP at Oyster Cove, Soldiers Point, and Hinton	3
	Improved foreshores and surrounding parks	Improvements to Raymond Terrace foreshore and Salt Ash boat ramp surrounds	2
GOVERNANCE & SAFETY	Ban jet skis	Majority of commentary was around concern for marine life, sea grass damage, and swimmer safety	53
	Support jet ski use	Counter to jet ski ban- support for jet ski usage in Port Stephens	11
	Other governance	Including increased water patrols and surveillance, water speed limit enforcement , mooring time limits	14
	Dogs on beaches	Banning dogs on beaches	6
		Support for dogs on beaches	3
	Signage	Safety signage on beaches and in waterways e.g. boat ramp etiquette, no swimming/fishing when vessels are launching off ramps, no parking signs at Raymond Terrace boat ramp	6
SUPPORT FACILITIES	Parking	Improved parking facilities adjacent to ramps and jetties	21
	Toilets and showers	More toilets and showers	12
	Fish cleaning tables	More fishing cleaning facilities	6
	Lighting	Increased lighting in car parks e.g. Shoal Bay boat ramp; Nelson Bay wharf lighting to improve night fishing safety	6
	Kayak/dingy storage	Dingy racks to reduce damage to foreshore	3
	Supporting roads and footpaths	Improved pedestrian access at Boat Harbour (avoid sharing with cars and boats), pathway between caravan parks at Shoal Bay, and headland paths to protect against erosion in Shoal Bay	3
	Ocean Pools	Construct ocean pools in PSC	1
	Disability access	Improve disability access to Hinton wharf to undercover shelters (across grass and no path)	1
SUTA INABI LITY	Environmental protection and sustainability	Policing or introduction of fishing limits; no netting; concern for over-fishing; fishing bans;	56

		wildlife protection, sea grass protection from boats and anchors	
	Artificial reefs	Support for creation of artificial reefs	2
	Tree	Tree planting in surrounding beaches and parks	2
	Education	Education programs to reduce rubbish in waterways	2
MAINTENANCE	Clean and healthy facilities	Toilet cleaning, rubbish disposal (more often), boat ramp cleaning	7
INFORMATION	Access to information	More information on boating and fishing and what's available in the local area	2
SUPPORTING BUSINESSES	Ferry Service	Call for improved local ferry service	1
	Caravan Parks	Caravan park commentary (too expensive, creation of more caravan parks)	5
Boating & fishing expansion & support	Boating Clubs	Increased support for boating and water sport clubs in Port Stephens	3
	Fishing support	Greater support for fishing industry (recreational and commercial), including permission to fish from Grahamstown dam	14
General		General comments	8

APPENDIX A

Survey Data - Community Survey

The Boating and Fishing community survey was open for 53 days, with 191 responses being received. Of the responses received 81% of respondents live in Port Stephens; 72% of respondents were male; and 50% of respondents were 55 years and over.

Question 1: Which boat ramps do you use?

The below table shows the usage of boat ramps across Port Stephens. Note: respondents could select ALL the boat ramps they use. 40% of respondents indicated they use Soldiers Point boat ramp – the most used ramp of all boat ramps across the LGA.

Table 1: Boat Ramps Usage

Boat Ramp	% of respondents who use this boat ramp
Soldiers Point boat ramp	40%
Little Beach boat ramp (Nelson Bay)	32%
Shoal Bay boat ramp	24%
Lemon Tree Passage boat ramp	18%
Boat Harbour boat ramp	11%
Taylors Beach boat ramp	11%
Fitzgerald Bridge boat ramp (Raymond Terrace)	8%
Karuah boat ramp	6%
Wanda Beach Reserve boat ramp (Salamander Bay)	5%
Lilli Pilli boat ramp	3%
Seaham boat ramp	3%
Mallabula boat ramp	3%
Peace Park boat ramp (Tanilba Bay)	3%
Tomago boat ramp	3%
Foster Park boat ramp (Tanilba Bay)	1%

Question 2: Which wharves and jetties do you use?

The following table indicates that Nelson Bay public wharf is the most used wharf or jetty in Port Stephens, with almost a third of respondents indicating they use the facility.

Table 2: Wharf/Jetty usage

Wharf or jetty	% of respondents who use this wharf/jetty
Nelson Bay public wharf	32%
Shoal Bay jetty	29%
Salamander Bay jetty	24%

Lemon Tree Passage jetty	23%
Little beach jetty (Nelson Bay)	23%
Taylors Beach jetty	14%
Karuah Wharf	10%
Hinton Wharf	6%
Mallabulla Wharf	4%
Riverside Park jetty (Raymond Terrace)	4%
Seaham canoe launch	3%

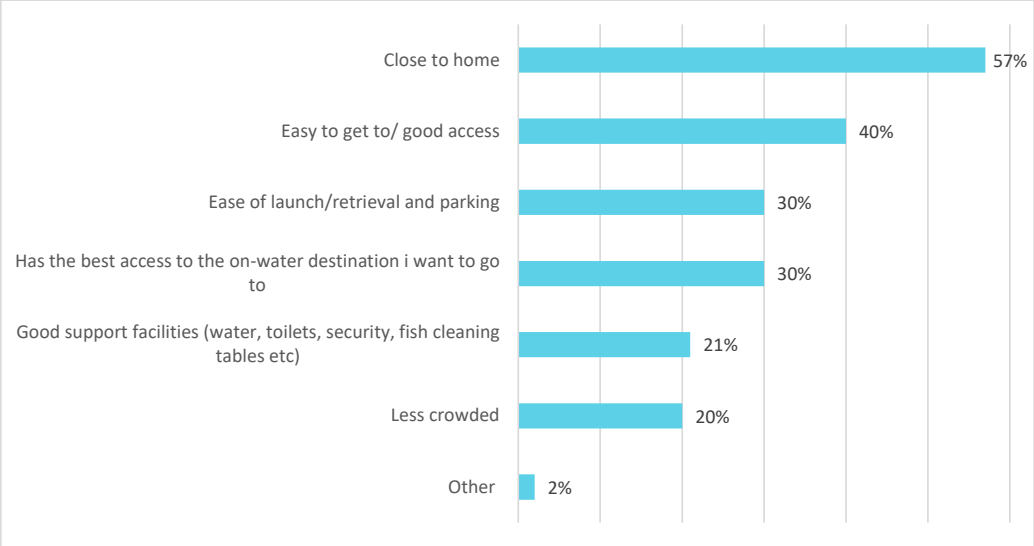
Question 3: Which boat ramp, wharf or jetty do you use the most?

Soldiers Point boat ramp is the preferred ramp, jetty or wharf in Port Stephens. Despite Shoal Bay boat ramp being used by almost a quarter of (24%- refer question 1), only 3% of respondents use it as their preferred boat ramp, wharf or jetty.

Table 3: Preferred boat ramp, wharf or jetty

Boat Ramp, wharf or jetty	% of responses
Soldiers Point boat ramp	20%
Little Beach boat ramp	18%
Lemon Tree Passage boat ramp	8%
Nelson Bay public wharf	5%
Salamander Bay jetty	4%
Fingal Beach boat ramp	4%
Little Beach jetty (Nelson Bay)	4%
Fitzgerald Bridge boat ramp (Raymond Terrace)	3%
Lemon Tree Passage jetty	3%
Shoal Bay boat ramp	3%
Boat Harbour boat ramp	3%
Shoal Bay jetty	3%
Taylors Beach jetty	3%
Hinton wharf	2%
Foster Park boat ramp (Tanilba Bay)	2%
Taylor Beach boat ramp	2%
Karuah wharf, Lilli Pilli boat ramp (Lemon Tree Passage), Seaham boat ramp, Tomago boat ramp, Karuah boat ramp, Mallabula wharf Old Wharf Park boat ramp (Salt Ash), Peace Park boat ramp (Tanilba Bay),	All 1% each
Mallabula boat ramp, Riverside Park jetty (Raymond Terrace) Seaham canoe launch	0%

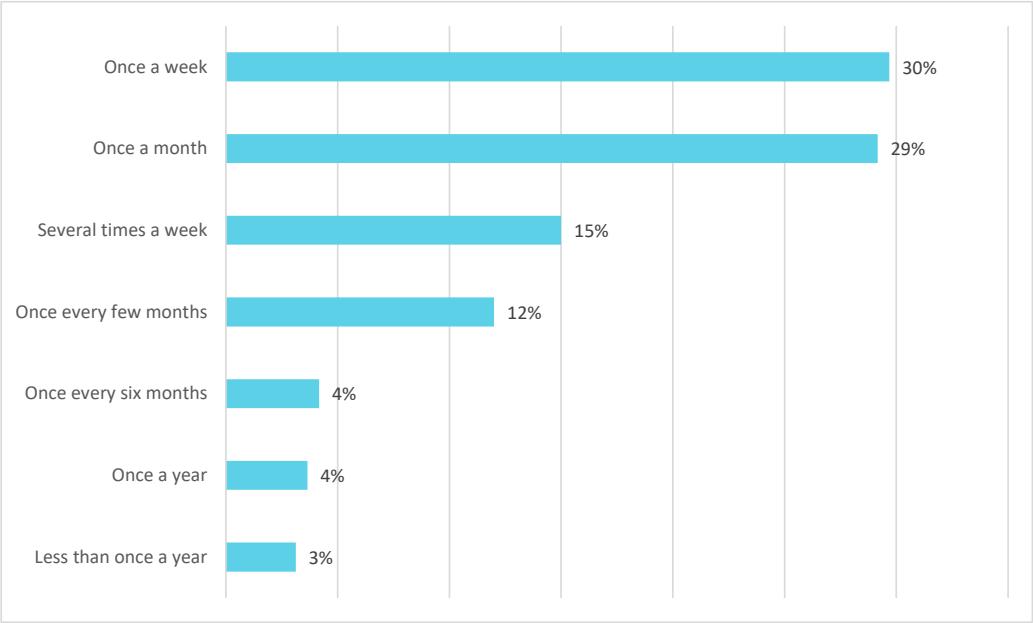
Question 4: For the boat ramp, wharf or jetty you use the most, why do you use that facility?



Graph 1: Facility selection factor

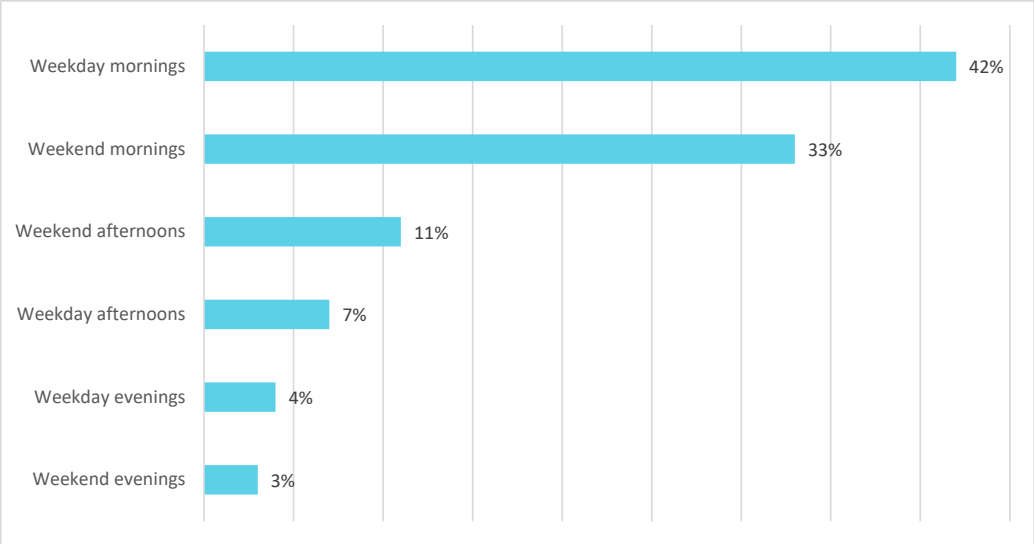
'Other' responses included *protection from water*.

Question 5: For the boat ramp, wharf or jetty you use the most, how often would you use it?



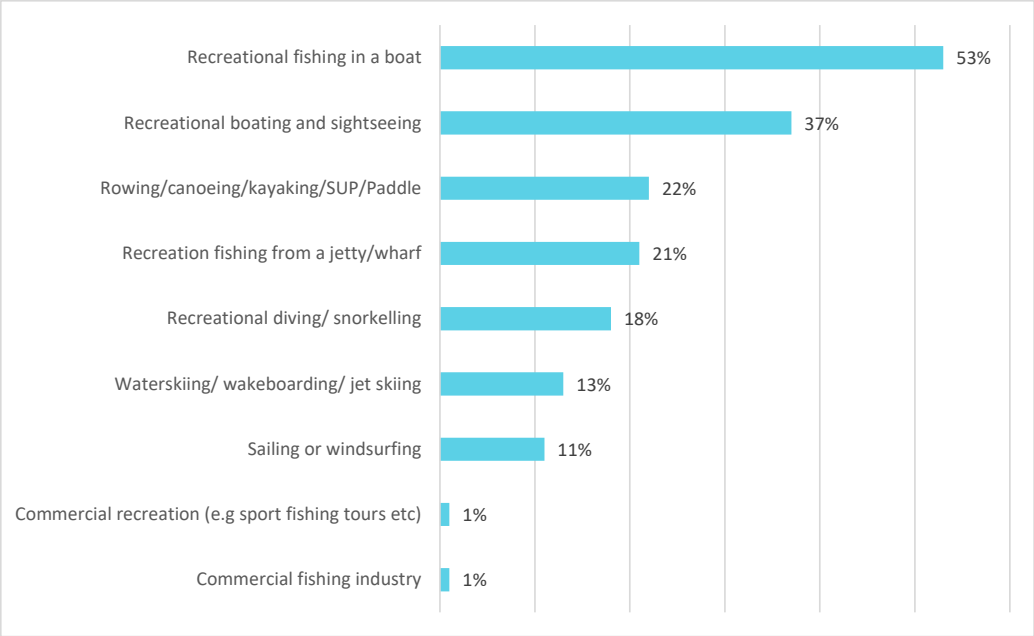
Graph 2: Facility frequency

Question 6: For the facility you use the most, when are most likely to use it?



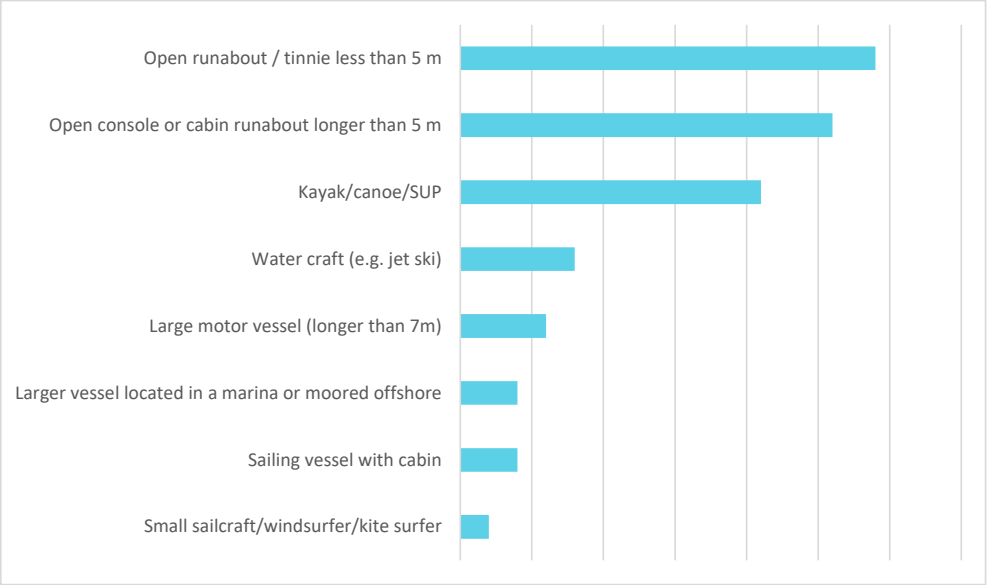
Graph 3: Time of day

Question 7: In what capacity do you mainly use boating and fishing facilities?



Graph 4: Activity type

Question 8: For the facility you use the most, what type of watercraft do you normally launch?



Graph 5: Watercraft

Question 9: Indicate your level of agreement with the following statements:

42% of respondents indicated they were happy with the number of boat ramps in Port Stephens, however 32% indicated they were not happy with the quality.

Table 4: Community satisfaction level

Statement	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Not sure
I'm happy with the NUMBER of boat ramps available in Port Stephens	42%	25%	28%	5%
I'm happy with the QUALITY of boat ramps available in Port Stephens	31%	31%	32%	5%
I'm happy with the NUMBER of jetties/ wharves/ pontoons/ fishing platforms available in Port Stephens	33%	24%	37%	4%
I'm happy with the QUALITY of jetties/ wharves/ pontoons/ fishing platforms available in Port Stephens	33%	35%	26%	5%

Question 10: Do you have any further comments or suggestions on boating and fishing facilities in Port Stephens? *(open question for comment)*

The following table is a summary of the findings from question 10. There were 113 comments received. Refer to Appendix C for the detailed comments received.

Please note participant comments have been adjusted and uplifted to focus on the broader theme rather than on specifics. For example, if someone had commented, ‘Crack down on boats tying off on jetty’s for more than specific time frame’ this has been uplifted to ‘Other governance’. This process ensures similar comments can be grouped and key priorities are more easily highlighted.

While 113 responses for this question were recorded, only 96 have been coded for responses. 17 responses received were general thanks, a comment of ‘no’ or ‘nothing further to add’, and these have been discarded from the below breakdown. Some comments have been recorded in two separate themes if the comment had more than one suggestion. All responses in detail have been included in the appendices.

Table 5: Further Comments

Type	Theme	Example	Comment count
IMPROVED ASSETS	Pontoons	More pontoons at Nelson Bay, Shoal Bay, Soldiers Point, Tanilba Bay and Raymond Terrace	15
	Boat ramps	Upgrade and/or more boat ramps	12
	Jetties/wharves	Improved or new jetties and wharves	6
	Moorings	More public and private moorings	5
GOVERNANCE	Ban jet skis	Majority of commentary was around concern for marine life. Also included 1 comment to ban paddle boards	10
	Other governance	Governance and patrols for speed limits, mooring time limits, and having in/out marked on boat ramps	5
	Signage	Increased signage at facilities for boat ramp etiquette	4
	Dogs on beaches	Banning dogs on beaches	1
SUPPORT FACILITIES	Prking	Improved parking facilities adjacent to ramps and jetties	8
	Toilets and showers	More toilets and showers	5
	Fish cleaning tables	More fishing cleaning facilities	4
	Kayak storage and launch	Improved kayak storage and launch facilities	3
	Lighting	Increased lighting In car parks	1
	Ocean Pools	Call to construct ocean pools in PSC	1
	Disability access	Improve disability access to Hinton wharf to undercover shelters (across grass and no path)	1
	Supporting roads and footpaths	Taylors Beach road is too narrow and is used by both boat and fishing users and walkers	1

SUSTAINABILITY	Environmental protection and policing	Policing or introduction of fishing limits; no netting; concern for over-fishing; fishing and jet skis bans or designated zones	10
MAINTENANCE	Clean and healthy facilities	Toilet cleaning, rubbish disposal (more often), boat ramp cleaning	5
INFORMATION	Access to information	More information on boating and fishing and what's available	2
OTHER COMMENTS		General dissatisfaction, satisfaction, preference for certain fishing spots etc.	10

APPENDIX B

Survey Data - Club Survey

A targeted clubs survey was emailed to fishing and boating clubs in Port Stephens and clubs who use Port Stephens facilities, as well as key small business operators, e.g. tackle shops and boating hire. The following is a summary of responses received. Please note, only a small number of responses were received, therefore some questions have been not been included in the report. Refer see the appendix for a link to the survey data.

Question 1: Groups and current membership

The below table outlines the groups who responded to the survey and their current membership numbers (if applicable).

Table 7: Club membership numbers

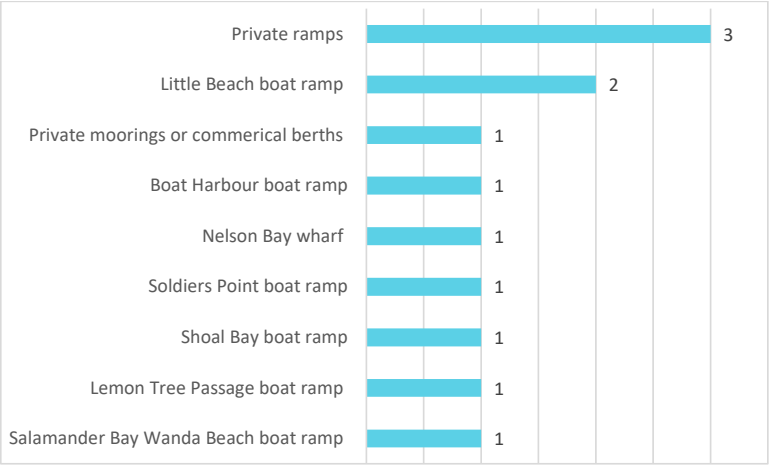
Club/Group	Member numbers
Hunter Surf Lifesaving	12,000
Newcastle & Port Stephens Game Fish Club	2000
Bay Sailing Centre (formally known as Port Stephens Sailing and Aquatic Club)	1200+
Tanilba Bay Sailing Club	20
Port Stephens Beach Fishing Safaris	3
Salty Pilgrims Freediving	20-50
Anna bay fishing club	250
Tanilba Bay Sailing Club	25
Port Stephens Yacht Club	250
Port Stephens Outrigger Canoe Club Port Stephens Yacht Club	75
Cove Marine Pty Ltd	9
Nelson Bay Boat Hire	NA

Question 2: Over the next 3 years, do you expect your membership numbers to grow, stay the same, or decline? And Why?

77% (10 responses in total) of groups expect their membership numbers to grow in the short-term.

This is a result of current demand and national trends, strategic growth plan and COVID impacts of holidaying locally rather than overseas/interstate.

Question 3: Which boat ramp, wharf or jetty does your group use as their main facility?



Graph 6: Club facility use

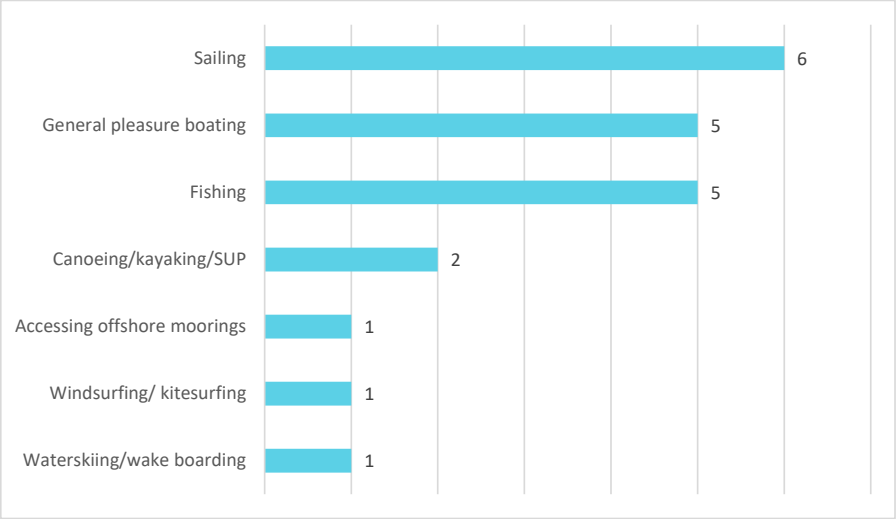
Question 4: What time of day does your organisation access the main facility?

Of the 8 groups that use PSC-managed ramps and wharves, 4 indicated they use their main facility on weekend mornings, 2 indicated week-day mornings, 1 indicated week-day evenings, and 1 weekend afternoons.

Question 5: How often does your organisation/group access this main facility?

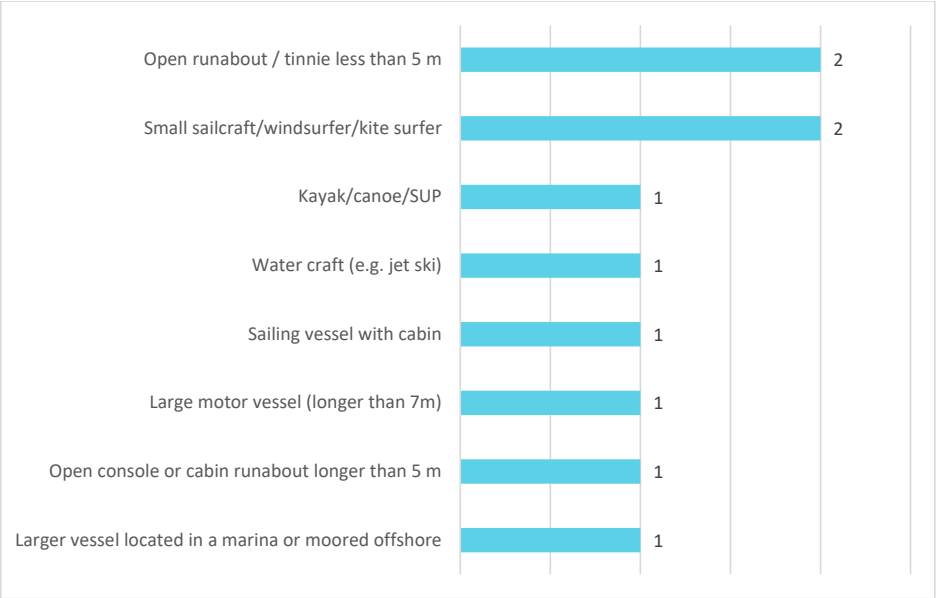
Of the 8 groups that use PSC-managed ramps and wharves, 4 indicated they use their main facility daily, 3 indicated weekly, and 1 monthly.

Question 6: What activity does your organisation/group use your main facility for?



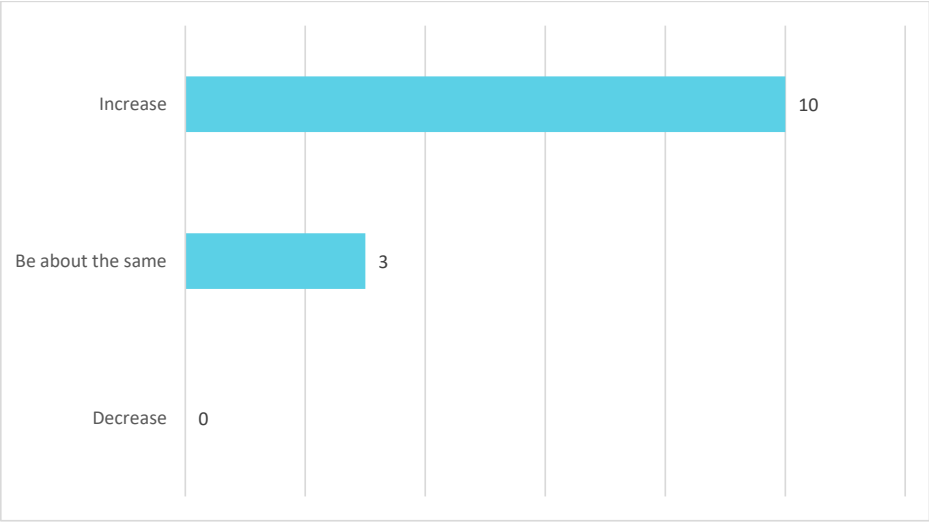
Graph 7: Club activities

Question 7: What type of watercraft does your organisation normally launch?



Graph 8: Club watercraft

Question 8: Over the next 3 years, do you expect your organisations use of the main facility will increase, be about the same, or decline?



Graph 9: Club growth of facility usage

Question 9: How would you rate your satisfaction with the main facility your organisation uses?

Of the 9 responses related to PSC managed facilities, 3 indicated they were satisfied; 3 were neutral; 1 was very satisfied and 1 was very dissatisfied.

Question 10: General comments for improvement included:

- Parking improvements, including parking areas for boat rigging (2 comments)
- More lighting adjacent to boat ramps and along Nelson Bay break wall to improve safety (2 comments)
- Boat ramp improvements including cleaning (Boat Harbour boat ramp) and lengthening (Salamander Bay boat ramp) (2 comments)
- Increased storage facilities for canoes (1 comment)
- Fish cleaning facilities at Boat Harbour (1 comment)
- Install rubbish bin at Nelson Bay wharf (1 comment)
- Signage on boating and fishing etiquette and protecting the local environment (1 comment)

APPENDIX C

Further Comments - Community Survey

10. Do you have further comments or suggestions on boating and facilities in Port Stephens?
Stop the out of control jet skiers!
Ban the jet skis!
Restrict the use of jet skis east of solders point to the heads
Please ban jet skis for the sake of our sea mammals and animals
Ban the jet skis in the bay for the sake of the marine life.
Please ban Jet Skis in Port Stephens
I dislike Jet skis. They totally change the experience and are dangerous to people and marine life. Please ban them.
* Ban Jet-skis OR New Boat Ramp located at Tomaree Lodge is logical. Extracts watercraft traffic across Shoal Bay. Safer beaches. Aids Dolphin, Turtle, Penguin, water bird populations. * Then implement 10 Knot speed restriction for the entire Port. If not many more Dolphins, Turtles, Penguins, sea birds, etc. will continue to disappear. This is happening NOW.
Ban Jet-skis OR impose speed limit for entire Port. Dolphins are disappearing.
Separate kayak launching facilities at any of the boat ramp areas would be great
Due to the location of Shoal Bay, Fingal Bay and Little Beach boat ramps, there are swimming beaches in close proximity. The launching and retrieval of boats and jet skis (the latter especially) represents a danger and inconvenience for swimmers. It would be ideal if a 'corridor' of floating buoys (like the swimming buoys at Little Beach) could be created on either side of the boat ramp, say 10m either side of the ramp to allow for boats and jet skis to 'wait' for their trailers, with the corridor stretching out about 100m offshore so that swimmers can stay out of the way of boats and jet skis, and vice versa. In my opinion, boats and jet skis should not be allowed to enter anywhere near swimming beaches and neither should they be allowed to anchor there.
Crack down on boats tying off on jetty's for more than specific time frame as in peak seasons jetty space is at a limited amount.
Stop people stopping in the narrow roadway in front of fish cleaning facility at Little Beach to wash boats. It is not designated for that and previously taps were filed down to stop connection by boaters. They stop and block traffic to do something which should be done away from the ramp at home. It's very disruptive and causes angst amongst other users especially at peak times. Please cut off tap spouts so hoses will not join. Thank you.
I'd like to see better control and even removal of dogs from all beaches.

Given the limited number of courtesy moorings available for visiting vessels (there are a huge number of cruising yachts that call into Port Stephens on their way north or south) it is ridiculous that commercial vessels such as Moon shadow's 'Spirit' have dedicated moorings just to tie up for 30 mins very occasionally while their passengers swim. We witnessed Spirit's captain chase a visiting yacht from their (hardly ever used) commercial mooring very late in the afternoon this week - the wind was blowing over 25 knots and the visiting yacht was forced out into it. Visiting cruising yachts spend a lot of money in the area and often pick up a mooring at Little Salamander to walk to the shops for provisioning. There is also the issue of vessel speed within the bay. Given the number of high powered motor cruisers and jet skis on the water, a speed limit should apply - for the safety of other vessels and our marine wildlife - it is a marine park after all. Mooring fields such as Little Salamander Bay should be 4 or 6 knots only - someone is going to get killed there one day. Boat Harbour boat ramp should be for commercial fishers only. Recreational users with cars on the beach are a threat to swimmers.
Signage at boat ramps required instructing on etiquette and how long can leave boat tied up for.
Signage and line marking telling people what they can and can't do at the boat ramp. Too many selfish idiots around unfortunately.
More signage at every launching facility and popular beach that is adjacent.
At marina brake wall should be improved to cater for people fishing e.g. rod holders fish cleaning facilities and toilets closer to brake wall.
A public shower/rinse off spot towards the Fly Point end of Nelson Bay beach would be great
I think the amenities are a disgrace in port Stephens. Surely we could have a clean flush toilet and a solar hot shower in this day and age.
It's improving, there has been a lot of money spend in the Bay....now let's bring some improvements to the Peninsula. There have been some great improvements to the boat ramp and pontoons, let's keep going and make improvements to carpark, covered seating, toilets etc.
Please light up the car park even add security cameras to prevent theft Soldiers point boat ramp
Would love a public ocean pool
The fish cleaning tables at Soldiers point are terrible and should be replaced with far better well-designed ones.
More kayak storage required
Need better facilities to launch Kayaks
Parking and maneuvering boat trailers is difficult. Due to the number of people at shoal bay this has become difficult. Yesterday 28th December you could not find trailer parking at Shoal Bay due to the number of cars parked illegally. Not sure how this can be fixed. The launching facility at Soldiers Point is good, due to the new wharves, parking is good at present, but this is nearing capacity. It would be great to have all boat

ramps with the wharves/ fingers as it makes launching easier. Most boat ramp users are considerate of others, but some aren't, perhaps their needs to be some type of notice or eradicate on use.
During peak times there is a lack of parking for trailers however it is a problem not easily solved.
Improve parking
Trailer parking is being overrun by PWCs visiting the area
More parking at all boat ramps Make it free parking for residents and paid parking for visitors
The boat ramp needs the parking upgraded and nothing there to wash your boat down
It would be very much appreciated if you could provide toilets and concreted paths to the tables and chairs at Hinton so that disabled people can use the facilities. As it is the path enables you to get disabled people to the wharf but it is very difficult to get wheelchairs across the grass to the undercover shelters
Divers platforms or benches are desirable at Pipeline, Little Beach Dive site, Fly Point etc.
The road into Taylors Beach is used constantly by boaties and other people visiting our beautiful area - people walk the road also - it needs a road base shoulder put in to create a walk way so people are not forced to walk on the narrow road - I see dangerous pedestrian situations weekly as a resident of Taylors Beach - the road needs to also kept in repair with deep patching etc. as buses and trucks are regular users etc.
Major Facilities have been well constructed and maintained, however secondary facilities seem to be overlooked when upgrades/maintenance are necessary
Please don’t let the environmentalists that will take over this survey with an orchestrated effort to stop any fun.
Please listen to others apart from the militant environmental groups. Let the people use the waterways
Access to the waterways should be number one priority. It’s why people come here
The north side hasn't got a mention. Bundabah needs a decent single lane boat ramp! I can bring more visitors to this area.
Do not increase size of BH ramp. Already too busy for a small beach to share.
Bring Port Stephens in line with other developed countries.
No further comments at this time - just a plea to support an old bloke’s passion - and no doubt to benefit many. Comments on Public Wharf indicate use to join other recreational opportunities like Tea Gardens Ferry, Whale Watching etc.
Not continuing to fill this out as its clunky survey when you have to continue to populate information you have already submitted.
Why wouldn't you put a boat ramp in at Little Beach as part of the upgrade you can park your boat beside and walk out like most other boat ramps

I believe you do a great job at the Bay and the one at the Terrace but forget about the west ward….leppers
Please look after Raymond terrace riverside
Think outside the square, I couldn't answer a lot of the questions, this is also what needs to be improved
I would like to have more say on boating and fishing infrastructure projects and suggest a more community orientated approach to seek ideas to get it right. Rather than just do it without talking to the people who will use them the most.
It all seems strongly geared towards fishing only. The area has so much potential to be a good waterskiing location if managed properly. It's very hard to find a good area to base yourself for a day of waterskiing which means you need to carry everyone and everything you need in the boat for the day, this increases weight which increases wash and fuel usage.
I like that the Boat Harbour and Fisherman's boat ramps are beach launch. Please keep it that way. Bigger boats going outside can use Shoal Bay, Little Beach and Soldiers Point.
Would be nice to have something internal but they wouldn't know dredging and some sort of jetty put in
I just want to save the nippers from extinction.
This survey seems to ignore that there are people who are not boat users or fishers who use the bay.
Please can there be a cap at fishing on Boat Harbour beach. They leave rope, hooks etc. all along a well-used beach for kids.
The cleaning table are appalling at little beach poor design and bins aren't emptied enough they are covered with maggots a lot of the time not to mention the stench and you clean your fish next to it with blowflies all around the fish fillet you're going to eat that night □ Soldiers point cleaning facilities is an indication of the lack of fish taken by recreational fishing in the bay due to depravation of fish species taken by commercial fishing in the bay …they target fish when they congregate to spawn Wiping out tonnes of fish that don't have the chance to spawn and replenish the fish stocks in the port to provide a food source for other fish, aquatic species and native bird life It's not rocket science Stop netting fish stocks in our port, especially when they congregate at the most important part of their life cycle …. To reproduce thanks
The main thing is to stop NETTING in the bay. This will dramatically improve the marine environment.
Need floating jetties, improved infrastructure and more public moorings throughout the bay to cater for visitors and prevent damage to sea grass areas.
As an avid spear fisher, local business owner, and scuba diver; I see all sides of how important Marine Park status is to our fish stocks. Halifax Park to D'Albora Marinas (including Little Beach) should be a no fishing or anchoring area (environmentally sound moorings could be used).

As a Port Stephens local, there are ample fishing destinations that are not in a Marine Park where young children should be safe to swim without being hooked by fishing lines. After seeing the degradation of coral, & debris laid on our ocean floor inside the Marine Sanctuary (Little Beach especially), I think fishing should be completely abolished from this area. Allow our fish & children to be safe & grow healthy into adult life.
The facilities are ok until tourist season and nothing can cope, the pro fisherman take what they can sell and kill everything else in the net, the bycatch is too great to be sustainable.
More policing needs to be done on the waterways to ensure marine habitats are not decimated by recreation and the fishing industry
Get somebody out to fix the MAIN BOATRAMP in Tanilba that the vast majority of people here use (the one you didn't mark - you marked one people hardly use due water depth) People with boats and trailers don't drive their cars straight down the ramp and into the water with the trailer behind them----they actually reverse in boat first!!!! (But that's how you have designed that boat ramp...idiots. Go down and watch the struggle. Especially when all other cars without trailers go clockwise - and boaties are forced anticlockwise in an area that doesn't fit x2 cars passing each other when one has a trailer.
Easier access to information on what jetties, wharfs and buoy locations that we can use
Marine Rescue should have a base at Henderson Park Lemon tree Passage were we could get additional local information regarding the Port Stephens marine area
Better toilet facilities required at soldiers point, the automated one is cool but always dirty. Needs to be maintained and self-clean more often and be kept up with toilet paper.
More lawn maintenance at Hinton park
More grass maintenance at Hinton park
Check this sentence. Better cleaning stations and rubbish removal. More TAngler bins available to take fishing line and old hooks, sinkers and lures.
There is no deep water access to shipyard facilities other than Nelson bay which does not have the capacity to facilitate any significant repairs or maintenance. The ramps can be slippery from time to time, more regular cleaning would be good
Pontoons at Little beach Shoal and Fly point Lots more toilets and showers
Little beach boat ramp recently upgraded but the jetty is not useable to most smaller boats-particularly at lower tides. Need a floating type pontoon.
Shoal Bay ramp also needs somewhere to tie your boat off while parking and retrieving your trailer.
Floating pontoon/s required at little beach boat ramp to reduce launch time
Floating pontoons, wharfs for loading and unloading at the smaller boat ramps used mainly by locals would be appreciated

Recommend pontoon to facilitate launch at Shoal bay. Recommend removal of overhead power lines or at least safety signage at Shoal Bay.
Soldiers point ramp is great. Little beach upgraded ramp is great it just needs a quality jetty/pontoon as stated.
Definitely there is a great need of a proper pontoon at Little Beach Boat Ramp. I handle the boat by myself and I'd find it extremely difficult to park the car and trailer while the boat left alone sometimes about to drift away.
More specific fishing pontoons would be great. Create Jet Ski Zones, education on protecting marine life through looking after our waterways.
Just a floating ramp at Little Beach boat ramp replacing the old narrow timber wharf.
Additional public mooring would be great.
Pontoon style boat ramps are the go .... would like to see more installed in the area - , at least one between little beach and solders point , maybe at corlette / dutchies / bagnells coast line .... it would put the pressure off the 2 main ramps in the bay , little beach and solders point ...
Better boat ramps i.e. to have pontoons , and an extra boat ramp between little beach and Soldiers with pontoons and facility's , Wanda head ramp near the yacht club has really no parking and needs pontoons and better facility added
Add more boat ramps to the area, re surface soldiers point boat ramp and fill in the big craters that cause popped tyres
A boat ramp at Roy Wood reserve or close proximity would be good.
Raymond terrace wharf needs to be bigger and the reeds need removing from around the wharf
Upgrade of ramp in Raymond terrace beside the trawler jetty would be a great improvement to the boating and recreation community
Soldiers is a good ramp but it is so congested that there needs to be another one in a better location.
The lower half of Port Stephens is well serviced but inland of Soldiers point there are only 2 ramps with all tide access on the southern side, which is a problem for small boat owners as distance make boating risky in all but the calmest weather. A decent ramp at Sunset Point (Tanilba) would open up a lot of water for small boat use.
Yes more boat ramps with better parking .Like Soldiers Point .The Little Beach boat ramp is very disappointing
Definitely more ramps & jetties like Soldiers Pt & Lemon tree Passage. Safe, floating pontoons, close parking, etc. There needs to be another big decent ramp somewhere in Salamander Bay/Corlette as suggested by others too. With a break wall like Soldiers Pt if needed to make it usable in all winds. Cheers!
Little Beach ramp needs much more work, shoal bay ramp needs upgrading, Soldiers point needs more parking to now take on more people that can no longer use little beach or shoal bay.

I would love to see another jetty for recreational fishing. My son loves fishing and I would hope to see more kids fishing if we had these facilities I'm sure we would see a rise in numbers.
Jetty from Tanilba bay would be a fantastic play item for families and swimming, would mean boats can be utilized and tied off plus would create opportunities for business and tourism if larger vessel could pick up and drop off public.
Jetties supplied in Port Stephens are not practical for yacht usage. They are not in deep water (<2m), often in exposed sites and piles easily damage yachts. There is a need for pontoons with the above qualities, otherwise yachts are at the mercy of commercial marinas. Really limits the ability take pax with limited mobility.
More Jetty so people with out boats can fish Tanilba Bay would be a great location.
Should consider new jetty at Tomaree Lodge as part of adaptive re-use of the site for community benefit. Council should actively support maintenance and extension of Sanctuary Zones as part of the Marine Park, in the context of the current State Draft Marine Parks Management Plan, which threatens primary environmental protection role of the Parks. This survey does not offer options for users of SUPs/Kayaks off beaches - assumes you use a ramp or jetty - not conducive to getting full input
Need more public wharves for deep keel yachts
More or bigger marinas or mooring areas for SPS
Matke easier to get private mooring
You neglected to include tender facilities at many locations and unseaworthy mooring minders. additional public moorongs (pink) to encourage visitors whilst protecting seabed and toilet/showers, fish cleaning stations and bins at each site. Ask people to identify WHS hazards at each site.
Shallow water FADS or small artificial reefs CLOSE to shore so smaller kids and parents/family can access FROM shore a reasonable eating table fish without the need for a boat
Larger boat ramps- good Smaller boat ramps- no good. Often not tidal. Lilli Pilli boat ramp needs a mat so you can retrieve your boat at low tide
No
no
no
Nothing further to add
No
See other post.
Appreciate the opportunity to have a say. Thanks :)
no

No
No

APPENDIX D

Community Mapping Comments

Comment type	Comment	Area
A place I like-02	Tilligerry creek- good spot to fish around the oyster racks	Lemon Tree Passage
A place I like-03	Council has done a tremendous job when putting bitumen on the parking area, however the ramp itself needs to be resurfaced and perhaps deepened if possible	Shoal Bay
A place I like-03-child	During the holiday periods is possible to have more rangers on the water around Tilligerry Creek due to some people helping themselves to other peoples crab pots etc.	Lemon Tree Passage
A place I like-04	relaxing spot	Nelson Bay
A place I like-04-child	Need upgrade of toilets at Fly point we need at least 8 toilets for females only and toilets for people with disabilities	Nelson Bay
A place I like-05	Good parking, good size ramp, room for everyone. The fish cleaning area is a good idea.	Soldiers Point
A place I like-05-child	This pin is in the middle of the water nowhere near a boat ramp or a fish cleaning area both of which are round the corner.	Soldiers Point
A place I like-06	My home port :)	Fingal Bay
A place I like-07	Love Fingal Bay for swimming and relaxing	Fingal Bay
A place I like-08	Lovely spot to picnic	Fingal Bay
A place I like-09	Great place to take kids snorkeling	Nelson Bay
A place I like-09-child	This place is absolutely underrated by the council. It attracts so many young families to the area	Nelson Bay
A place I like-10	We love this spot for paddle boarding and a safe enjoyable beach for young kids. The new extra parking spaces just further up are much appreciated also.	Nelson Bay
A place I like-10-child	This is also a scuba diving site known as the Seahorse Gardens. It suffers major damage from	Nelson Bay

	boats anchoring there. Seagrass-friendly moorings should be installed for public use, no mooring allowed.	
A place I like-11	I would love to have An ocean pool in Nelson Bay Area as there used to be where the Nelson bay marina now is. Newcastle has 2 lovely pools & the Sydney area has many	Nelson Bay
A place I like-11-child	This pin is in Cromarty Bay a long way from Nelson Bay so this comment is also a bit out of place	Nelson Bay
A place I like-11-child	There was once a really good ocean pool at Tomaree headland. Just the remnants of it now in front of the hospital.	Nelson Bay
A place I like-12	Add boat ramp and launching facilities	Hinton
A place I like-13	Thought this place was crowded, and it would be nice to have company. There's a lot of fish in there, too	Salamander Bay
A place I like-13-child	Thought this place was crowded, and it would be nice to have company. There's a lot of fish in there, too	Salamander Bay
A place I like-14	I like fishing here. The environment is better here	Taylors Beach
A place I like-15	The Karuah area is great, as it is quiet, and few people seem to appreciate the beauty of the area.	Karuah
A place I like-16	我喜欢这儿，喜欢大海	Salamander Bay
A place I like-16-child	What a terrible, ignorant comment. You don't only have to be Australian or English speaking to visit this great place. For anyone else interested... a quick google translate reveals the following comment..... "I like it here, I like the sea"	Salamander Bay
A place I like-17	I really like the environment here	Boat Harbour
A place I like-17-child	I agree, only 4WDs launching boats and parking on the beach. Not keen on the blow-ins setting up camp for the day. No to any floating pontoons, jetty's or concrete ramps. The sand moves around so much, it would be an eyesore, mostly useless and a waste of precious funds. I love Boaty just the way it is.	Boat Harbour
A place I like-17-child	There should be a floating pontoon boat ramp	Boat Harbour

A place I like-17-child	Boat harbour beach: 4wd should not be on beach unless launching a boat	Boat Harbour
A place I like-18	The environment here is very beautiful	Tanilba Bay
A place I like-19	I'm very satisfied here	Nelson Bay
A place I like-20	I'm very comfortable here	Lemon Tree Passage
A place I like-21	Because I like boating	Lemon Tree Passage
A place I like-21-child	Rowing for exercise	Lemon Tree Passage
A place I like-22	Great ramp for boats since upgraded. But toilets need to be upgraded and cleaned more often.	Shoal Bay
A place I like-22-child	I used the upgraded boat ramp at Little Beach on the opening day. Great job done well done Port Stephens Council. I believe the sand build up problem is solved. But, pontoon needed and boat tie up.	Shoal Bay
A place I like-23	Great job on the upgrade to Shoalbay water front	Shoal Bay
A place I like-23-child	Agree with shoal bay water front improvements however the trees that have been planted are going to spoil the good work you have done here PCC. Need shady trees like the ones at little beach and around the marina, appear to be better suited to the grass and don't drop the foliage gums drop or ruin the views of agave that land owners	Shoal Bay
A place I like-24	Great new boat ramp at Little Beach. Much better traffic movement and easier to get boats in and out at low tide. Too bad Council couldn't get the toilets renovated satisfactorily for the summer season!	Shoal Bay
A place I like-24-child	Council was going to replace the amenities with an unsuitable alternative (one without changing area) and have responded to public pressure to reconsider.	Shoal Bay
A place I like-25	This is an excellent boat ramp. The only problem being there are not enough parking spaces for peak demand.	Soldiers Point
A place I like-26	Fly Point is one of the best if not the best snorkeling and diving sites in Port Stephens. This attracts visitors from outside the area. Due to the distance from Sydney and other places they usually stay overnight so it is a tourist attraction.	Nelson Bay
A place I like-27	A great little pontoon but water too shallow even for small boats. Great views along the foreshore.	Taylors Beach

A place I like-29	Beautiful and relaxed and friendly locals	General
A place I like-30	Add public moorings here 2 at least.	Corlette
A place I like-31	Bagnells Beach is great, the amount of public interaction and socializing as a result of dog owners getting around is fantastic	Corlette
A place I like-31-child	*fantastic	Corlette
A place I like-32	Great location however walking through the Anchorage to get here is uncomfortable	Corlette
A place I like-33	A great little jetty, could do with an enhancement/extension	Taylors Beach
A place I like-34	Great ramp and access. Couple more lights in the turnaround area would be handy	Lemon Tree Passage
A place I like-35	More parking spaces	Corlette
A place I like-36	Boat ramp needs attention. Tricky (even dangerous) at low tide. Very narrow mouth and sudden drop off at entrance to ramp. Parking area good.	Lemon Tree Passage
A place I like-36-child	Ramp needs to be improved substantially, or closed.it is dangerous in its current condition	Lemon Tree Passage
A place I like-37	I love Fingal bay beach, it's great for beach fishing have done so here my whole life when my Nan and pop used to live a few streets back from this beach. It could be improved by adding a better cleaning table etc.	Fingal Bay
A place I like-38	Would be nice to have some more carparks for Boadies hard to find a park to park your trailer is all the cars are parking the trailer parking spots	Henderson Park Lemon Tree Passage
A place I like-39	Port Stephens Council please lobby our state government to restrict or ban the use of jet skis on our magnificent waterways. The main tourist attraction to our area is our marine parks and pristine beaches why should we risk this income at the expense of a few careless irresponsible goons endangering our marine life. I am a resident ratepayer and have come here for over 60 years and never seen the waterway at more risk. It would be negligible for Port Stephens Council to do nothing.	General

Improvement idea -119	Add a floating wharf like soldiers pt. to make the boat ramp area safer. Swimmers and kayakers etc. are always moving through there.	Shoal Bay
Improvement idea -104	Boat ramp	Not in PSC
Improvement idea -059-child	+1 for kayak fishing in the dam, keen for release only too	Medowie
Improvement idea -066	Get rid of rubbish bricks and rusted engine, and replace with beautiful rocks from the area.	General
Improvement idea -120	The bumper material on the pontoons requires replacement. It leaves marks on your boat and the corners are missing. The missing corner has gouged my boat as well as most of my friend's boats so badly they required panel beating and re-spraying. A more suitable material would be a massive improvement. On another note- taking down the trees in the car park was a great idea. Thank you	Soldiers Point
Improvement idea -107	Taylors Beach Ramp 1.Can't launch / retrieve unless high tide - needs cement extended right down to low tide and beyond - lots of people get bogged - dangerous - I've had to assist with my snatch strap with several boaties 2. Needs dredging out and a protecting groyne added with extension of cement ramp - the wharf is already acting as another groyne	Taylors Beach
Improvement idea -072-child	There is nobody to police this.	General
Improvement idea -069	Fish cleaning tables at boat ramp as Tanilba has none. Also the ramp location forces cars with boat trailers to drive around anticlockwise to get a straight reverse run down the boat ramp - else they have to do a mad reverse zigzag. Normal car traffic goes clockwise and this causes mayhem around the tight roundabout time and time again....sack the designer responsible - and get somebody with at least half a brain in to fix the issue.	Tanilba Bay
Improvement idea -002-child	Regulate jet skis now! Too much noise, too much danger.	Nelson Bay
Improvement idea -003	Small boats coming up to the beach are damaging sea grass along the beach, especially at the east end of the beach. Access to the beach should be limited to high tide and / or restricted to the eastern end of the beach with marker buoys placed to warn boaters.	Corlette

Improvement idea -006-child	More shade trees are needed on the Tomaree water's edge, out on the point. The one that was there died and has been removed.	Shoal Bay
Improvement idea -008	We need more toilets at least 8 for females and a lot more showers and taps	Nelson Bay
Improvement idea -007	Where did the water tap with hose attachment go? Being able to wash down the boat with a hose was greatly appreciated.	Soldiers Point
Improvement idea -006	Toilets need updating, however it is still great place to park your car and visit	Shoal Bay
Improvement idea -013	make more toilets available at all the parks so you don't have to walk as far	General
Improvement idea -004	need more parking	General
Improvement idea -108	Upgrade this boat ramp so it can be used in low tide.	Tanilba Bay
Improvement idea -006-child	The toilets need up grading with at least 6 toilets for females only there needs to be toilets for people with disabilities and lots more showers	Shoal Bay
Improvement idea -005-child	More car parking	Nelson Bay
Improvement idea -005	More boat n trailer parking there's never a spot when U need one	Nelson Bay
Improvement idea -011	How ridiculous is it that we have a boat launching facility but can't use it in the Christmas holidays	Fingal Bay
Improvement idea -009	More toilets at least 8 for ladies and toilets for people with disabilities and a lot of showers and taps the showers with 4 roses Cycle path to little beach then on to fly point and Nelson Bay	Nelson Bay
Improvement idea -009-child	Please enforce the "no dogs" rule on the beach.	General
Improvement idea -010	Shallow water FADS or small artificial reef	Salamander Bay
Improvement idea -001-child	I support a few more public moorings for larger boats in Salamander Bay. Also - is there any way larger boats could book & pay (reasonable rates) for longer stays (one week) - as there is already a shortage of berths at peak times. This could be done online or via the Nelson Bay Tourist Office.	Salamander Bay
Improvement idea -012	the car park needs improvement also increase size the ramp itself is not really a boat ramp it's just the	Boat Harbour

	beach it needs to be concreted and a floating wharf added .	
Improvement idea -049-child	This ramp is only suitable for small boats & Jet Skis. Parking is sufficient for current usage. The problem here is Bannisters. They need to find additional parking on their own land for their patrons	Not in PSC
Improvement idea -056	Stop NETTING in the bay, especially when the fish are spawning. In 1 season the bay will start to get back to what it used to be. There is evidence that this will work.	General
Improvement idea -063-child	This might be a good idea but here is no room for this to happen. I think problem mainly occurs when the bay is full of visitors. It doesn't take long to release it downs. Fishing gear etc. should already be in the boat.	Soldiers Point
Improvement idea -005-child	The boat ramp needs a floating pontoon adjacent to the existing pier. This might be the easiest option, with a ladder from wharf to pontoon might be all that's needed. If fees were asked for I wouldn't bother as this will deter boaties which will remove the money that comes to the community via the healthy spend on local businesses.	Nelson Bay
Improvement idea -121	The foreshore area can be developed into a beautiful precinct with eateries overlooking the river. Penrith have managed to do this really well! We obviously won't be on the same scale but could have similar effect	Raymond Terrace
Improvement idea -047-child	Great idea. Definitely need for more boat ramps in the bay. This would be a good location but will have major parking problems.	Salamander Bay
Improvement idea -017	Boat ramp And amenities block	Hinton
Improvement idea -009-child	Please create more caravan parks not cabins park	Shoal Bay
Improvement idea -016	Please add boat ramp, launching facilities and toilets facilities	Hinton
Improvement idea -056-child	We would like to see the commercial fishing industry continue and grow all around Australia. It would be nice if the general public could have some education about commercial fishing and support industry. It is the most sustainable fishing industry in the world. It is sad that politics have decimated the industry from over 4000 fishing business to less than 600 in nsw.	General

Improvement idea -015	Boat ramp and launching facilities	Hinton
Improvement idea -019	Shoal Bay ramp is a great ramp to launch my small boat from when heading offshore but it really needs a jetty or pontoon to tie the boat up to while parking or retrieving the car and trailer. Almost impossible to launch and retrieve safely here solo.	Shoal Bay
Improvement idea -122	Some educational signs about biohazard risks to our waterway what you can and cannot put in the water e.g. using imported meat using for fish and crab bait can spread disease. Education about oyster farms. Oyster theft crimes, not to tamper with commercial farming equipment, e.g. don't tie boats to oyster poles, don't drive on top of oyster leases.	General
Improvement idea -067	An excellent initiative of council to close Fingal Beach to vehicles during the Christmas Holidays Previous years there have been many incidents where vehicles towing trailers have driven through groups of children and even over towels and beach chairs. There is No need to use this ramp In the holidays with this part of the bay used extensively by families with small children	Fingal Bay
Improvement idea -109	Ban Jet skis they are a threat to our marine environment an annoyance to swimmers and the noise is intolerable and the riders are reckless	General
Improvement idea -068	Hi in W A. No need for anchoring as they have boys to moor on & doesn't disturb the sea bottom. Also additional trailer parking required at shoal Bay	Shoal Bay
Improvement idea -020-child	Agree with and strongly support the concept of floating/pontoon boat ramp and Shoal Bay	Shoal Bay
Improvement idea -123	Would like to see more public wharf access or another public wharf for dropping off & access to shops etc.	Nelson Bay
Improvement idea -014-child	Jet skis need to be banned in the Shoal Bay Area also as they come in too close and too fast to swimmers around the whole beach area and in and around the moored boats. We need to protect the precious marine life in this beautiful area as well as the human life.	Shoal Bay
Improvement idea -014	Ban Jetskis from Nelson Bay main beach and within 50-75M as it’s a highly populated beach in summer and I see jet skis come in and beach around swimmers. Between break wall and fly point,	Nelson Bay

Improvement idea -024	The boat parking area should be painted with new markings to maximize current allocation of spaces. In addition, better signage to identify area allocated to prepare boats before boaters pull onto ramp reversing area would provide an improved experience using the Soldiers Point boat ramp.	Soldiers Point
Improvement idea -019-child	Need the rangers to patrol the trailer car park as many people without trailers park there and makes it difficult for boat owners to get a park.	Shoal Bay
Improvement idea -026	Concrete ramp similar to shoal bay required.	Boat Harbour
Improvement idea -030	The ramp is okay but what would make it better is remove all the rocks on the southern side of the ramp and turn it into a beach to temporarily park a boat or Jet Ski whilst the owner parks or getting their vehicle/trailer from up near the Cheeky Dog boating car park.	Soldiers Point
Improvement idea -018-child	Same as below a floating pontoon similar to that at Lemon Tree Passage would be ideal.	Nelson Bay
Improvement idea -018	Little Beach Boat Ramp really needs a pontoon to tie your boat up to while parking or retrieving your car and trailer. I usually fish solo and my boat can be beached sideways by the time I return with the trailer. Also, the trailer parking spaces are not long enough for the longer rigs these days (mine is OK).	Nelson Bay
Improvement idea -028	The boat ramp at Seaham has been up graded in recent years even a canoe launching ramp. Sadly there is no pontoon, wharf or any structure to tie off to whilst parking the trailer. Would make the place safer for all that use it, especially when loading children, disabled and elderly. It would be a great asset to have a place to board and unboard and to secure the boat whilst reversing a trailer down to pick it up.	Seaham
Improvement idea -026-child	The boat ramp to Boat Harbour has been in place for many years with no improvements for pedestrian access. There is no vehicle/trailer parking off the beach. There would very few to zero beaches on the east coast that allows beach parking for cars and trailers. The whole port area has grown, Boat Harbour needs a whole review to take into account how people, cars/boats and dogs can better use this valuable asset.	Boat Harbour

Improvement idea -021	Spots for larger trailers to be parked as at the moment larger trailers have to park over multiple spots to be parked safely.	Lemon Tree Passage
Improvement idea -025	The lighting at Soldiers Point boat ramp needs improvement. Early morning or at night visibility is poor at best. Cleaning tables could use an upgrade.	Soldiers Point
Improvement idea -029	A boat ramp on the opposite side of the bay would be great.	Fingal Bay
Improvement idea -020	- Floating docks for easier boat release and retrieve - peak season make 1 ramp for boat rease and 2 ramps for boat retrieve, it will reduce congestion	Nelson Bay
Improvement idea -027	Tanilba bay really needs a boat ramp that is of slightly higher quality than we have, one is unusable and the other can only be used at high tide.	Tanilba Bay
Improvement idea -125	For security reasons soldiers point ramp car park needs lights added as it is dark and encourages theft	Soldiers Point
Improvement idea -002	The pipeline is one of the most iconic/historic dive sites in Port Stephens. It had public access to a dive entry stairway built by volunteer divers until the seafood store was sold and became a restaurant. The new owners of this property with absolute waterfront rights has cut off the historic access by divers. Council should have the right to rezone this site to reinstate a miniscule strip of waterfront property for public access for divers. Divers were there long before the current owner.	Nelson Bay
Improvement idea -022	Jet Skis and family fun must stay. This rubbish regarding banning should not see the light of day. Currently regulations do a great job.	General
Improvement idea -085-child	Yes please ban them from our sanctuary. They only do damage and disturb marine and land life. No consideration as to where they are racing around. Send them outside the heads or let them try the surf. Ban them from the Bay urgently.	General
Improvement idea -023	A third pontoon at the ramp would be excellent. I would also suggest that during the AM two of the three lanes should be for boats going out and during the PM switch it to two lanes coming in. Far too often people argue and clash as someone is coming in etc. and blocking a boat going out.	Soldiers Point
Improvement idea -124	More lighting on the jetty for night and early morning use. A wire cage required around the cleaning tables to stop birds (Pelicans) stealing your catch and shitting all over the tables	Soldiers Point
Improvement idea -077	Access to the water would be great	Oyster Cove

Improvement idea -014-child	It's my opinion that jet skis should be banned from Port Stephens and tributaries. They are a menace to wildlife and swimmers. They mostly seem to be operated by irresponsible hooligans who are careless as to the safety or amenity of other water users. I don't like the noise either.	General
Improvement idea -027-child	Very true ... the ramps in this area of the bay are pretty poor , they do need major help remodeling to make them usable	Tanilba Bay
Improvement idea -031	The transportation is convenient Health clean and tidy No odor	General
Improvement idea -032	Fish cleaning tables	Taylors Beach
Improvement idea -105	Dredging the channel to allow deeper draft vessels to access shipyard facilities would be pretty sensible	Oyster Cove
Improvement idea -001	Public mooring for large boats (50T) are required around the Port - egg. Shoal Bay, Salamander Bay, Fame Cove, Broughton Island. There is an increasing number of large boats both residing & visiting the Port & every time an anchor is dropped, damage is done to the seabed. Also, some public moorings at Jimmy's Beach as this area has high boat usage during summer months	General
Improvement idea -065	Such beautiful place to sit on rocks and fish. Could the rubbish bricks and rusted engines be removed and replaced with same beautiful rocks around the foreshore.	Soldiers Point
Improvement idea -031-child	交通便利 卫生干净整洁 无异味	General
Improvement idea -070	The parking at Little beach has become outdated. The average size of modern day trailer boats has increased along with ownership. Whilst the new ramp provides large trailer boats the opportunity to launch, the carpark does not cater parking of their car and trailer. Past arguments have been to just use another (more suitable) ramp in Port Stephens however this is not practical for offshore fisherman requiring extra time and fuel to do. This is turn leaves offshore fishing pursuits less viable.	Shoal Bay
Improvement idea -019-child	Council has done a tremendous job when putting bitumen on the parking area, however the ramp itself needs to be resurfaced and perhaps deepened if possible	Shoal Bay

Improvement idea -001-child	The public moorings should be the kind that do minimal damage to the seagrass beds, which are a valuable part of the estuary marine environment. Like reefs, they provide shelter for small fish etc. and they sequester large amounts of c02 and oxygenate the water - also good for the aquatic life. The existing anchorages clear large areas of seagrass. There are alternative moorings that do minimal damage to the seagrass. It would be better if the Nelson Bay anchorages were closer to the Marina.	Nelson Bay
Improvement idea -004-child	Parking is a hassle and more parking is needed	Taylors Beach
Improvement idea -071	Some improved fish cleaning tables	Tanilba Bay
Improvement idea -029-child	Please create more caravan parks not cabins park	Fingal Bay
Improvement idea -007-child	Parking is a hassle and more parking is needed	Soldiers Point
Improvement idea -127	Karuah boat ramp is dangerous, slippery at low tide and the tidal current crosses the ramp making it extremely difficult to launch and retrieve. It needs a bay created with a break wall and/or moved south into the bay area adjacent. Ramp needs cleaning as it's very slippery. It's a very popular ramp, should get investment as many rate payers use it. Thanks	Karuah
Improvement idea -027-child	Jet Skis and family fun must stay. This rubbish regarding banning should not see the light of day. Currently regulations do a great job.	General
Improvement idea -031-child	Tanilba bay really needs a boat ramp that is of slightly higher quality than we have, one is unusable and the other can only be used at high	Tanilba Bay
Improvement idea -126	Toilet block needs a total rebuild, great improvements to ramp and jetty, but with more visitors to the park and boat ramp the toilets are a massive letdown. This whole foreshore could be amazing with a little planning and investment. A large jetty to get out to fish deeper water would improve land based angling, as well as provide	Lemon Tree Passage

	structure for fish, be a feature for LTP and assist wheelchair and disability access to the waterway for recreational use.	
Improvement idea -033	A single-lane decent boat ramp at Bundabah, please.	Not in PSC
Improvement idea -028-child	Where did the water tap with hose attachment go? Being able to wash down the boat with a hose was greatly appreciated	Seaham
Improvement idea -018-child	I agree 100 % needs a floating Pontoon. I fish solo a lot out of s 6.5 m boat and it's a pain and dangerous at times during summer with all the swimmers and kids.	Nelson Bay
Improvement idea -004-child	The transportation is convenient Health clean and tidy No odo	General
Improvement idea -084-child	Very true a floating pontoon would have been the go .... I'm sure it could have been installed some how	Nelson Bay
Improvement idea -004-child	definitely needs more parking	General
Improvement idea -035-child	Boat ramp is awkward in a nor'Easter, & sometimes hazardous. Needs a floating pier.	Shoal Bay
Improvement idea -035	Shoal Bay boat ramp could be made safer for launch of trailer sailors if the low overhead powerlines are rerouted. Currently you cannot drive between to the boat ramp from the trailer parking with mast up.	Shoal Bay
Improvement idea -036	Boat ramp needs a safe platform for alighting passengers. A tiered platform like Salamander shore jetty is necessary for safety.	Nelson Bay
Improvement idea -073	Marine Rescue should have base at Henderson Park where we could get more information regarding the local marine area's	Lemon Tree Passage
Improvement idea -110	Defiantly needs improvement , this ramp is nightmare and really unusable	Tanilba Bay
Improvement idea -037	Upgrade is needed to boat ramp as it's not easily accessible during low tides. The elevation is too steep to use, therefore more people could use it and less likely a congested ramp at lemon tree.	Lemon Tree Passage
Improvement idea -038	I would like to see a jetty for recreational fishing for public use.	Tanilba Bay

Improvement idea -020-child	I use this regularly. Great boat ramp upgrade already. Floating pontoon would enhance the facility and make it safer for swimmers.	Nelson Bay
Improvement idea -021-child	At Lemon Tree Passage boat ramp there is ample room for the council to move fence and then larger trailers could be parked there releasing the smaller areas for smaller trailers. Also the Ranger should police this Boat ramp as at present there are more cars using the parking facility than boat trailers- NO Parking available elsewhere . The is an area on the continuation of Stanley Street that is vacant and well drained this could be easily converted for parking	Lemon Tree Passage
Improvement idea -034-child	Opportunity to work with yacht clubs to redevelop this area. Great to see bigger combined yacht club better on water facilities to support the many regattas that come to the area and provide millions of dollars boost to our local economy every year.	Soldiers Point
Improvement idea -034	This is a great alternative boat ramp for locals. The ramp seems ok but there's nowhere to secure your boat while you park/retrieve your car & trailer. Rocks on both sides which makes it very dangerous for people launching/retrieving your boat. A small floating jetty would elevate those concerns, similar to the jetty at the larger Soldiers Point ramp.	Soldiers Point
Improvement idea -072	We would appreciate the reduced speed for boats being extended back past the moored vessels towards the bay as the wash from motor boats traveling at speed causes excess wear and tear on moorings and damage to the shore.	General
Improvement idea -082	Jet skis should have restrictions placed upon them within the entire Port Stephen's marine park to protect the environmental values the park seeks to conserve. Speeds should be limited in the park for all vessels (not just commercial). Noise pollution needs to be considered. Jet skis should be confined to a designated zone, preferably one which is not frequented by sea turtles and dolphins. Even those doing the right thing cannot avoid a sea turtle when travelling at the speeds currently allowed.	General
Improvement idea -057-child	It's the dog owners who don't pick up the poop or worse still leave plastic bags full lying around rather than proper disposal who are the problem not the dogs. Great to see families with dogs enjoying the beach.	General
Improvement idea -076	Dinghy racks required to relieve foreshore damage	Salamander Bay

Improvement idea -038-child	Agree a jetty would be a great asset for the area, especially if this had connection capabilities for local ferry. Ferry Tanilba to lemon tree would be popular	Tanilba Bay
Improvement idea -043	A public floating wharf at the old Tomaree Lodge site will enable access by the public, with no additional vehicular traffic. Also will boost tourism opportunities.	Shoal Bay
Improvement idea -039	Signage to inform visitors the rules in vehicle beach access. Too many people driving their vehicles down and staying all day. They put people at risk and impact the beach environment.	Fingal Bay
Improvement idea -040	Tanilba Bay great for families	Tanilba Bay
Improvement idea -007-child	Boat wash down at every boat ramp in Port Stephens is always good idea.	General
Improvement idea -041	Jetty and ferry connection for loop around Karuah, Tanilba Bay, Lemon Tree Passage and Pindimar	General
Improvement idea -045-child	Would love to see this happen as we spend time with our grandchildren fishing and it's very rocky and would be a wonderful spot for a jetty.	Corlette
Improvement idea -042	What a mess. Also needs a pontoon.	Raymond Terrace
Improvement idea -044	Raymond terrace boat ramp needs upgrading and a wharf needs to be built close to the area for loading and unloading of passengers the reeds need to be removed and a general cleanup of the whole area gardens around the trees or extend the tar to fill in the dirt around the trees a playground to entertain kids while boats are being unloaded/loaded from trailer	Raymond Terrace
Improvement idea -075	Dinghy racks required to reduce damage to foreshore.	Salamander Bay
Improvement idea -062-child	As per below or set up a jetty for all the people that fish off the old wharf site or are launching their kayaks, great easily accessible spot for both.	Salt Ash
Improvement idea -059-child	allow kayak fishing in the dam	Raymond Terrace
Improvement idea -027-child	a better boat ramp would be good	Tanilba Bay

Improvement idea -046	Can there be signage requesting that dogs are not to swim in the rockpools as they can be detrimental to the sea life. There are not many assessable rock pools with the diverse life from nudibranch to sea slugs and octopus. Would hate to lose them all after learning how to look at and respect them with Jeannie. The dogs can swim at the beach.	Boat Harbour
Improvement idea -045	Love to have a long jetty out into the deeper water area. Many families on holiday do short time recreational fishing. Often they go on the rocky area infront of the water front houses which is very dangerous. Fishing can be a great past time, give great excitement to people of all ages. And possible end up taking home a fish (or a squid) as bonus for dinner.	Corlette
Improvement idea -003-child	The black Swans love this area and feed constantly on the sea grass, there are about 35 swans frequent this area.	Corlette
Improvement idea -020-child	A floating dock would aid senior local residents launching and retrieving their vessels.	Nelson Bay
Improvement idea -047	Possible location for new boat ramp with westerly wind protection. Improved safety and overall reduction in congestion over 15 years.	Salamander Bay
Improvement idea -045-child	The state fisheries research should bread and release more fingerling	Corlette
Improvement idea -010-child	Ban all fish netting and fish trapping in the bay.	General
Improvement idea -078	Mow the foreshore reserve at least once a month to the north west of the playground equipment. This helps keep snakes at bay. Only mowed twice in 2021.	Tanilba Bay
Improvement idea -042-child	Needs a pontoon	Raymond Terrace
Improvement idea -112	Great ramp but zero protection from any kind of swell. Makes it pretty dangerous. Double floating pontoons like Soldiers Pt could help this	Shoal Bay
Improvement idea -049	Parking for cars with boat trailers is very limited here, and is now being overrun by patrons at Bannisters, the sign designating parking for cars and boat trailers are simply ignored.	Not in PSC

	Access to Boat Harbour is very poor for pedestrians. At one end have to share with cars and boats. Other end has no path. Hard for older members of the community. This needs to be improved for people who cannot clamber over rocks and with the Coastal walkway coming this way.	
Improvement idea -050	Also need defined paths on headland to protect it from erosion.	Boat Harbour
Improvement idea -059-child	Kayak and stand up paddle boarding	Raymond Terrace
Improvement idea -080	No parking signs in the area adjacent/opposite boat ramp to allow easier reversing into ramp. Lighting at boat ramp and car park area would be amazing also	Raymond Terrace
Improvement idea -079	A great location for a number of leisure activities however the egress up past cheeky dog is restricted due to the two large eucalypts	Soldiers Point
Improvement idea -051	Would like to see additional fish cleaning tables installed between Shoal Bay and Birubi.	Shoal Bay
Improvement idea -052	Mallabula Boat Ramp really needs a restoration. The surrounding park and walkways are amazing but the ramp lets it down a little.	Mallabula
Improvement idea -053	At low tide it is difficult to get from water onto bottom step thus the kids throw shopping trolleys in so they can climb up. Perhaps a ladder at end of wharf would fix this safety concern and prevent trolleys in the water	Raymond Terrace
Improvement idea -111	When building a boat ramp it is safer, easier and less stressful on the user to have a position to tie up to by way of a pontoon, wharf or jetty. This is needed at both ramps Little Beach and Shoal Bay. All boaters say how good Soldiers Point ramp is but it’s too far if you’re wanting to travel to the islands by boat.	Nelson Bay
Improvement idea -019-child	More parking if possible, or at least enforced for trailers only, weed on low tide is an issue also, and I know it’s a natural occurrence but, maybe a longer ramp.	Shoal Bay
Improvement idea -081	Access point required for the back of the cove to general public for kayaks, etc.	Fullerton Cove
Improvement idea -086	This is the only ramp suitable for larger boats. Another ramp with more parking and ideally closer to the heads is required.	Soldiers Point
Improvement idea -087	Additional public moorings would be good	Shoal Bay

Improvement idea -091	Mast up boat storage at the sailing club. Also a floating pontoon/ jetty for safe access to rescue vessels	Tanilba Bay
Improvement idea -084	I was trying to place the marker on Little Beach Boat Ramp. As a woman of 72 years old. I would like a floating ramp, exactly the same that is in at Lemon Tree Passage. I find it very hard getting into the boat at the boat ramp. I don't know why this wasn't thought of or done when the upgrade of the boat ramp was done this year.	Shoal Bay
Improvement idea -113	* New Boat Ramp located at Tomaree Lodge. Extracts watercraft traffic across Shoal Bay. Safer beaches. Aids Dolphin, Turtle, Penguin, water bird populations. Is logical. * Blanket 10 Knot speed restriction for the entire Port could then be implemented. If not many more Dolphins, Turtles & sea birds will continue to disappear.	Shoal Bay
Improvement idea -083	Introduction of several artificial reefs throughout the bay. Even some placed in non-fishing zones for diving would bolster both marine life and recreation.	General
Improvement idea -085	Please let's get jet skis banned from the Bay - it's not enough for residents to complain because nothing gets done - 3 jet skis we're doing donuts just off Bagnalls Beach - no wonder a dead turtle got washed up with a cracked shell - Jervis Bay has banned them why not here then?	General
Improvement idea -088	Pontoon for the ramp would make this a lot safer And user friendly … It's like ice/slippery and dangerous. Pontoon would have somewhere to tie the boat up too. A floating pontoon? Any pontoon Would be Awesome!	Nelson Bay
Improvement idea -043-child	This proposal has merit but only if there is a plan to allow Tomaree Lodge to be used for public facilities such as a museum or small business i.e. cafes , art sales etc. . I trust that council will not allow major development in this critical area.	Shoal Bay
Improvement idea -089	Pontoon would be a massive improvement again a lot safer and user friendly. It's as slippery as ice on the ramp, so somewhere to tie up and guide the boat on would make it quicker and safer for single users and families	Nelson Bay

Improvement idea -046-child	Dogs have a right to life and need to have healthy activities. Dogs have as much right to swim in the sea and rock pools as the slugs and octopus and dogs do not chase or harm them. Dogs are essential companion animals and also protect their owners and their children from horrible people and danger.	General
Improvement idea -084-child	I neglected to say that the wharf at Little Beach is not tidal. Low tide it's very hard to get into our boat that is why it would be great to have a floating wharf line Lemon Tree	Shoal Bay
Improvement idea -046-child	Dogs can swim at the beach at Boat harbour only until end of January (trial ends then). Not sure what will happen after that. The Rock pool is the only accessible place for dogs to swim if we can't take them into the beach at boat harbour	General
Improvement idea -055	Please can we not have those revolting jet ski's riding around. They are detrimental for the whales that pass through and also incredibly loud and annoying	General
Improvement idea -090	Dredge channel, it is terribly shallow even at high tide	Lemon Tree Passage
Improvement idea -063	Soldiers point boat ramp This is a very busy ramp which needs signage and line marking. Too many people pull onto the ramp area not ready to launch their boat. They haven't removed tie downs, loaded fishing gear etc. Signage is needed saying do not come onto the ramp or the reversing bay until you are ready to launch. Do all that prep work in the carpark. Also line markings are needed to indicate where you can and can't stop to do this stuff. Same with retrieving boats. Get off the ramp!	Soldiers Point
Improvement idea -054	Sydney harbour and Lake Macquarie's sea life flourishes even with Recreational fishing Still being done Stop commercial netting in port Stephen's and the fish will comeback just like lake Mac and Sydney harbour as it's been proven just ask the locals of Lake Macquarie	General
Improvement idea -014-child	Yes I agree strongly, to ban Jet Ski between main beach and fly point .I witnessed towing children with Jet Ski, between and around boats etc. mid December. Very dangerous and noisy	General
Improvement idea -104-child	Great idea. A boat ramp and parking	Not in PSC

Improvement idea -128	The boat ramps should be marked as in and out … also the parking area around get a bit massy with people doing whatever they want.	Soldiers Point
Improvement idea -048	Redevelopment of this ramp would be a significant improvement to boating access over the next 15 years. This would provide for safer launching in westerly winds and alleviate congestion on the peninsula. The current set-up here makes it difficult to use for medium sized or larger vessels.	Soldiers Point
Improvement idea -003-child	Also if we ban boats let's ban dogs from this beach.	General
Improvement idea -044-child	The area could become so much more useful as a waterskiing location with better facilities so that it's easier to launch/retrieve your boat, and to load passengers in between skiing sessions.	Raymond Terrace
Improvement idea -114	Lights along both break walls at night making it both an easier and safer fishing spot at night.	Nelson Bay
Improvement idea -092	An electric hoist to assist wheelchair users to transfer safely in and out of boats and canoes.	Nelson Bay
Improvement idea -057	Stop dogs on this beach, they are ruining the environment through dog poop and also ripping up grass in the area. There should be no dogs on any beaches.	General
Improvement idea -022-child	Well said - let them have fun	General
Improvement idea -043-child	Relocation of the Shoal Bay boat ramp and installation of a wharf with a parking area back near the current entrance will allow boat access without crossing the road and footpath as well as negating propeller damage to the seagrass beds. Stops the buildup of seagrass wrack and sand at the ramp and make it safer for swimming at the beach. A win for boating, a win for tourists and swimming, a win for the environment and will still allow lots of usable space for public spaces.	Shoal Bay
Improvement idea -093	The ramp can be dangerous at low tide. As it is sand lots of people get stuck etc. would be good to see concrete extended down	Taylors Beach
Improvement idea -032-child	Yes!!! Much needed	Taylors Beach
Improvement idea -096	Needs a shower you can wash off from fly point beach	Nelson Bay

Improvement idea -022-child	The regulations are fine but jet ski riders do not obey them.	General
Improvement idea -115	Stop all commercial fishing within the Port, it has been proven that in Lake McQuarrie this has regenerated the fish stocks so that amateur fisherman can actually catch some fish	General
Improvement idea -058	I would like to see a boat ramp and car park And the existing wharf made longer So we can hold Fishing competitions and the canoeist can have a place to put the canoes in the river thank you	Hinton
Improvement idea -095	WE need a pathway between the two caravan parks. So dangerous to walk that route	General
Improvement idea -026-child	Personally, I love the basic beach launch and parking on the beach. Its part of what makes Boaty a cool place to live in and fish from. There's never going to be room for much parking anywhere close by and it's nice that it suits the smaller boats and a few commercial fishos. We're not keen on dogs off lead on the beach. We have a dog but have also seen how dogs trash the beach with poop and scare little kids. On lead is cool. Not real keen on the blow-ins who drive on without launching a boat.	Boat Harbour
Improvement idea -098	Please reopen Grahamstown to recreational fishers on foot or in boats powered with electric motors or paddles.	Raymond Terrace
Improvement idea -097	A boat ramp somewhere on Sunset Point would be great as there are not a lot of places at Tanilba where an all tide ramp is possible. There used to be one to the right of the junction of Admiralty and Caswell but there was never parking...	Tanilba Bay
Improvement idea -103	Please consider banning Jet Skis in the Port Stephens waterways. All other watercraft Seem to behave in a completely different way with respect to our wild life. About a month ago I witnessed 2 Jet skis at high speed racing along Bagnalls beach and 1 went straight through a small group of black swans. Splitting the group and sending them flying off in all directions. I couldn't see if any were injured but the act was terribly cruel.	General

Improvement idea -099	Signs needed badly for ramp area. No swimming fishing or paddling etc. when vessels are in area. It puts the skipper into an illegal position as they cannot approach the shore due to distance off regulations. The sign at the moment faces out to sea to towards the shore where it can be seen easily. If someone is run over it will be a disaster and I have seen many near misses The worst thing is , that when asked to moved aside for an approaching vessel , one is abused by ignorant bathers	Nelson Bay
Improvement idea -100	Fix the wharf light for after access at night, make more parking options	Salamander Bay
Improvement idea -116	Watersport launch area. It would be great to see recreational areas that allow watersports to be conducted on the river much easier. An area with parking and easy river access would allow people to congregate away from boat ramps and wait on the banks while the boat is out. This would prevent you from having everyone in the boat the whole time. It would also provide a safe area for people to swim.	Raymond Terrace
Improvement idea -059-child	None powered water sports minimum for our beautiful dam. Even if it's through a club	Raymond Terrace
Improvement idea -059	Low impact all release fishing in Grahams town dam for the local bass fishing club	Raymond Terrace
Improvement idea -012-child	Yes to semi-regular maintenance. No to more concrete or jetty. It is unique and slightly exclusive to smaller boats and keen fishos. I love it with the challenges it provides. Good to see the odd bogging from time to time too. Gets people together to help out etc.	Boat Harbour
Improvement idea -083-child	I am very much in favour of the introduction of artificial reefs (outside of the common navigation channels). This would be a great investment for the port as a recreation destination.	General
Improvement idea -106	Please improve boat ramp and surroundings Need small jetties(like lemon tree)	Raymond Terrace
Improvement idea -059-child	Access to Grahamstown Dam for fishing, kayaking. Even release only fishing would be a great step. I'm sure local clubs would then get behind a stocking program if required. Providing recreational activities in this area gives locals another option, rather than travelling to the upper Hunter to fish for freshwater species as well as	Raymond Terrace

	bringing in visitors to the area, especially if managed correctly to become a trophy fishery.	
Improvement idea -059-child	There is no reason boating should be excluded from Grahamstown dam. Many inland dams designated for drinking water still allow boating (lake St Claire and Lostock are local examples) at the very minimum electric motors should be perfectly acceptable!	Raymond Terrace
Improvement idea -060	Create a jet ski exclusion zone within the protected Boat Harbour bay area (however allow jet skis to traverse the bay to get access to the open water). The prolonged use of jet skis within the relatively small bay area creates excessive noise and increases likelihood of collision with swimmers, especially during peak periods.	Boat Harbour
Improvement idea -059-child	Please open Grahamstown dam to the public. Most large dams allow recreation on them. It would be a great recreational asset to the community	Raymond Terrace
Improvement idea -098-child	This would be a fantastic idea. If you have a petrol driven outboard, a plastic sock, i.e. heavy duty garbage bag, must be placed over the bottom leg of the outboard and only electrical or paddle propulsion permissible. All for this idea	Raymond Terrace
Improvement idea -062-child	Please fix the salt ash boat ramp, it's a hazard slippery with mud	Salt Ash
Improvement idea -061	The state of the area around the Salt Ash boat ramp is a disgrace and the council should be ashamed. It should be maintained as a park for the community to enjoy, and respected as a local heritage site. It desperately needs attention.	Salt Ash
Improvement idea -034-child	I use this ramp when there is a westerly blowing. As is mentioned there is no place to tie up to whilst parking the car and trailer. A floating pontoon out from the ramp would be great and if possible the addition of a floating pontoon to the existing jetty would be great for dropping of and picking up passengers.	Soldiers Point
Improvement idea -044-child	You need some where to tie you boat up while parking the car	Raymond Terrace
Improvement idea -102	Boat ramp is next to useless from 1/2 tide down and is worst when the sand builds up not to mention you can never get a park having to leave the boat unattended whilst you walk a block to the car due to	Taylors Beach

	people without trailers parking in the trailer parking area	
Improvement idea -012-child	Agree with improvements to the ramp in terms of ease of accessibility, even if its increased frequency of inspection by council and remedial sand banking at the toe of the ramp as this area erodes frequently. Disagree with any extensions to concreted path or a floating wharf into the water as this would be detrimental to the visual amenity of the beach and swimmers' use of the northern end of the beach.	Boat Harbour
Improvement idea -117	I am all for lobster pots and plan to drop one in myself soon. BUT, I am not happy with the poor setting of them with buoys that are nearly invisible, covered in weed or too small or bobbing just under the surface and ropes floating meters along the surface. Dangerous for prop snags and tangles. I understand the effort required to clean, maintain and weight rope down etc., especially for the busy commercial fishos, I get it, but rules are rules and safety is crucial on the water.	Boat Harbour
Improvement idea -062	Please rehabilitate salt ash boat ramp area into a park community can use	Salt Ash
Improvement idea -072-child	From other vessels, structures and the shore Powered vessels – including PWC – travelling at a speed of 6 knots or more must keep a minimum distance of 30m from: other vessels – including when these vessels are moored or at anchor structures – including jetties, bridges and navigation markers the shore.	General
Improvement idea -079-child	They have been there for the 40 years I have been using the ramp. I've not had any problems.	Soldiers Point
Improvement idea -038-child	Great idea	Tanilba Bay
Improvement idea -094	More parking Free parking for residents and paid parking for visitors	Soldiers Point

Improvement idea -072-child	There are signs that say No wash zone up and down the channel. Bigger boats don't pay any attention to this. I saw a kayak tip over last week due to a wake. Even the cut through has a 6knt sign and people just go through at full speed. It's the law to go slow past other boats at anchor or fishing. When in a river or channel I slow to minimize my wake as a courtesy. I have filmed this and shown Maritime but they are not very helpful.	General
Improvement idea -054-child	I was going to say exactly the same. STOP NETTING! Especially in spawning season. The bay will come back alive in 1 season.	General
Improvement idea -063-child	I'm not aware of any pre-launch space to prepare. I take a minutes or two to be ready to launch and usually have to wait a short time for cars to vacate the ramp. The usual rule it out coming boats have right of way over in going boats.	Soldiers Point
Improvement idea -064	The Nelson Bay "Wall" is one of the great fishing attractions during the Luderick season which happens to be just the winter time when visitors are most needed. Problem is the rocks make access very difficult for old blokes like me and I can no longer visit with safety. How about a few access steps and platforms - wouldn't cost much and local businesses would benefit.	Nelson Bay
Improvement idea -003-child	We need to look after the sea grass beds. They are the nursery of the oceans. We are so lucky to have so much sea grass in and around our port. Any loss and damage can be upsetting too many who know this fact. Besides it's not a very good beach to land a boat at.	Corlette
Improvement idea -019-child	The area is a shoal and that means shallow water. The sea grass is the nursery of the ocean and is protected. I only use this ramp if going outside the port and only higher than half tides. Parking has been a problem here for many years now. I tend to go mid-week and don't have a problem with parking. A jetty and pontoon would make it safer to launch and retrieve when on your own.	Shoal Bay
Improvement idea -074-child	We moved to Salamander to enjoy the marine life, kayaking and peace and quiet. I pose council Ban Jet Skis! They're noisy, hoon around on the surface doing figure of eights, cut across the daily route of dolphins and other marine life and do all this next to the Wanda boat ramp wharf and close to the beach. Jet Skis pose a danger because of their high speed.	General

	Riders wouldn't know if they hit dolphins or turtles. I have seen deep cut marks on Nicky the dolphin's calf in early January. Ban them.	
Improvement idea -074	This is a good boat ramp that is going to waste. While the ramp is good & has good access, there's nowhere to secure your vessel after you launch it. Especially if you're on your own, i.e. Jet Ski etc. I'd suggest installing a floating pier that comes out from the main jetty. I've spoken to many Soldiers Point boat users who'd use this ramp if it had a somewhere to secure your vessel while you park your car & trailer.	Soldiers Point
Improvement idea -057-child	Can't agree more. No more dogs on beaches	General
Improvement idea -101	The sponge gardens in this area are being devastated by boat anchors. This should be a no anchor zone. Alternatively eco moorings could be put in.	Nelson Bay
Improvement idea -022-child	More education and a bigger stick for when laws and rules are not obeyed. Most I've seen over Christmas have been too close to others and much too fast. Animal strikes over the break have been higher than previous years. Turtles and dolphins can't react quickly enough to get out of the way of a speeding jet ski.	Nelson Bay
Improvement idea -118	We need better management of jet skis in the Port - some users pose a risk to swimmers at popular family beaches, and to marine wildlife when speeding. Should not be banned but high speed use restricted to designated areas such as shallows between Nelson Bay and Winda Woppa	General
Improvement idea -103-child	I agree, ban jet skis in Port Stephens as they seem to mainly be operated by ignorant people who have no respect for nature or human life, and why should locals who moved here to live in paradise be subjected to the noise and bad behavior of these people. I have seen jet skis darting amongst swimmers at Shoal Bay Beach, spraying them with water and speeding close to shore.Send them back to where they live so they can behave badly in their own area.	General

Improvement idea -021-child	Some time ago I did make this suggestion to Council and was told it was not necessary - I am pleased to see that other persons who use this facility can see the sense in providing parking for longer trailers - it is a simple fix by extending the parking bays on the western side of the parking area - could also consider linemarking to assist in maximising the parking space	Lemon Tree Passage
Other comment-53	Little Beach boat ramp has been absolutely butchered, it needs to be like Soldiers point ramp or ripped out and put back the way it was, yes the sand could cause a bog or two... but its 10times worse now. As an individual boater I can no longer use this ramp as its way to deep and steep for me to launch and recover alone, it's my local ramp, now soldiers is going to be way too busy taking on the people who can't use little beach... shoal Bay is to shallow for my boat. Terrible decision.	Shoal Bay
Other comment-22-child	Jet skis should not be allowed on the Bay, they put dolphins and turtles in danger, as well as children swimming nearby. They also disturb the peace! One jet ski might give pleasure to one or two riders, however their "noise pollution" can be felt by so many people, both tourists and residents living in the area. Depending on the wind, they can be heard far afield.	General
Other comment-36-child	Yes they should be especially on marine park and family areas	General
Other comment-05	I feel the current fishing rules are appropriate, low speed boating is better but the JET SKIING is out of control and totally inappropriate for the beach and family areas of the bay. Little is done to control the cowboys and the noise is ridiculous and destroys the enjoyment of spending time at any of the beaches from Corlette to Shoal Bay	General
Other comment-04	Small sailing boats /cats are making a comeback despite most councils removing or making launching and rigging areas almost nonexistent unless you have access to a sailing club, I and many I know travel to Wallace lake when we would much rather sail Port Stephens or Lake Macquarie so please make more areas accessible thank you	General
Other comment-03	Please restrict all boat and PWC to 25 knots on all inside waters in Port Stephens	General
Other comment-03-child	Ban all jet skis	General

Other comment-46	Please ban jet skis. They don't seem to have any Road rules and can be quite intimidating in their behaviour and dangerous to both people and marine life. They also disturb the peace and atmosphere of Port Stephens.	General
Other comment-44	1. Maintain Marine Park Sanctuary Zoning to protect existing and threatened habitats, encourage renewal of damaged habitats as well as enable growth of juvenile fish and aquatic species which in turn support terrestrial species AND our tourist industry. 2. Ban jet skis. People cannot be relied upon to observe speed restrictions. Jet skis are destructive to the marine environment and dangerous to people. Please DO NOT WAIT to act until there is a fatal accident.	General
Other comment-02	Port Stephens marine life and environmental are degraded and not sustainable. The simplest way to address this is to make a significant amount of the Port a Marine reserve stopping all commercial and recreational fishing together with other appropriate strategies. This will enable recovery of the seabed vegetation and fish stocks within the marine Reserve areas.	General
Other comment-31-child	Not in calm areas people fish from them and family ski from them	General
Other comment-22-child	No way could u imagine the idiots lol	General
Other comment-22	Allow the use of small Hovercraft in Port Stephens without the need of a special permit, which is the current requirement. Hovercraft are more ecologically friendly than boats or PWC. There is no record of a minor, let alone a fatal accident involving a hovercraft in Port Stephens. This includes a collision between a Hovercraft and any marine animal, fish or fowl. The need for a special use permit for Hovercraft is redundant.	General
Other comment-18-child	Not only the eastern area of the port but the whole port.	General

Other comment-03-child	Please control the speed of the Jet Skis in this area.	General
Other comment-07	Sail Port Stephens is the best event on the calendar.	General
Other comment-06	The price of staying at your Caravan parks now is crazy. $80.oo a night in my own caravan. It's keeping the local pensioners away from the Bay and going up the coast.	General
Other comment-05-child	Totally agree with this comment @ Christmas time it’s ridiculous.	General
Other comment-40-child	Exactly what damage to marine life are you referring to?	General
Other comment-45	Re the advert in the examiner just received . I own 2 jet skis and my family ride them very responsibly. They do no harm to our environment with concealed propeller unlike outboard engines. You do not ban motor cars because of bad drivers, nor should you ban jet skies. I pay very heavy license fees for the right to ride & 50K plus for the skies won't give in to a minority group, who will reimburse us our investment, and 10 year prepaid Jet ski license.	General
Other comment-01-child	I recently saw two jet skis close to shore, riding fast past dolphins, when they came ashore I asked them to be aware there were dolphins about, all I got was a sneer, and no response. The jet skis are loud and annoying and distract from the lovely beautiful environment.	General
Other comment-27-child	Ban paddle boards. They are navigation hazards to boaters and jet ski operator's. They often destroy sea grasses and habitat areas from launching from non-designated areas, often parking cars off the road damaging more native vegetation areas.	General
Other comment-55	Concerned with the over fishing of nippers by commercial fishermen in a small area that has several critically endangered and vulnerable birds. Please make it a protected area.	General
Other comment-02-child	We need to limit commercial and recreational fishing. The fishing has been poor these last few years and needs to be given the opportunity to restock and recover. More needs to be done to prevent loss of seagrass, which is the nursery for many fish and other marine species.	General

Other comment-05-child	Jet Skies are a real problem, causing problems for people trying to enjoy a peaceful day at the beach, for other boat users out for a quiet fishing day and for the marine life. If we want visitors to come and experience, dolphins, turtles and the relaxed beauty of the Bay, then we need to do something about the jet skies.	General
Other comment-20	The endangered saltmarsh area of Mambo Wetland Reserve is a Marine Park sanctuary zone with no fishing allowed. This is an important nursery area for juvenile fish and invertebrates. Even more important now that the old culvert under Foreshore Road has been replace with a bridge allowing much improved tidal exchange.	Salamander Bay
Other comment-07-child	A lovely event, even when you are watching and not part of the event.	General
Other comment-54	Please stop the jet skis. It has been horrible watching them going into the sanctuary near little beach with no regard of anything in its way. Even people are weary now. It's not fair. Seeing flypoint being destroyed is sad	General
Other comment-10	This shouldn't be classed as a boat ramp. Not usable at low tide. The street view picture is at high tide so not showing what it really is like at low tide. Attached photo is at low tide	Tanilba Bay
Other comment-56	The roundabout is dangerous when you are travelling down Nelson Bay Road and turn into Richardson Road. If you want to go the services station you have to negotiate the roundabout doing a right toward Richardson Road and change lanes mid roundabout to exit to access the shops. People travelling north on Nelson Bay Road assume you are going to continue a turn into Richardson Road until you cut across them to go to the service station (or cake shop!).	General
Other comment-09	Leave ramp alone...by all means fix it ut do not remove it please	Boat Harbour
Other comment-12	More moorings needed	General
Other comment-06-child	80.00 cheap compared to others. Maybe time to move on	General

Other comment-05-child	I disagree its great seeing young people having fun with their families. Sounds like a bunch of nimby's are taking over this survey. Listen to the real ppl not just those who are sad at life.	General
Other comment-05-child	Why destroy our amenity in paradise for enjoyment of a small number mostly Sydneysider Jet Skis. Options are 1) go elsewhere, 2) designated inside area 3) defined corridor and speed limit to outside waters, 4) max 25 knots all craft on inside waters. Trailer parking at peak times at Little Beach and Shoal Bay is totally inadequate. Noise, ramp rage, overflow of trailers where families wish to park AND risk of fatal on water accident will increase every year until action is taken.	Shoal Bay
Other comment-08-child	Pontoons added to Shoal Bay wharf. Somewhere to tie up and load and unload for day trips. Will also help to separate boats from swimmers on the beach. My boats moored in Shoal Bay, I live in Shoal Bay. It's hard for older people to move from the tender to the big boat.	Shoal Bay
Other comment-08	Don't give in the environmental terrorists that will take over this survey to stop the fun. Open the place up for all to use. Current controls on jet skis are fine and fair. Open up more fishing	General
Other comment-43	Unless you own a water craft, the bay isn't a place where I want to go for my long holiday. It's boring. For the water area in shoal bay and Nelson Bay need an inflatable park. It is great entertainment for both kids and adults. The turn off for people will be the parking, the expense (most business feel the need to rip people off with costs, accommodation included). I travel up to Maroochydore caravan park every xmas holiday, it's a lot cheaper and there is plenty to do, check sunshine coast	General
Other comment-08-child	100% agree.	General
Other comment-17-child	Like Sydney jet skis should be banned from the waters of Port Stephens. The noise levels are intrusive. The threat to marine wildlife is extreme.	

Other comment-47	I am a resident of the bay and I too wish that the jet skis be banned from the bay. Our poor Marine life, swimmers, not to mention the noise, traffic etc. They all need our protection. We as humans have to save the Marine life, it's our job. Like the Sydney Council and others they have seen the destruction and noise that these jet skis destruction and noise that these jet skis cause. They come up here because they have no other place to go? The right choice is, Please ban the jet skis.	General
Other comment-06-child	If you don't like the price don't stay. You will find it's like this all the way up the coast	General
Other comment-48	To have an extra ramp installed as another option to launch from between Nelson bay to soldiers point would be such a great bonus ...also it would stop major congestion at peak times of use at the two major ramps , little beach / soldiers point that is only the 2 options if you launch in the bay with facility's and ample parking	Nelson Bay
Other comment-11-child	I like it	Soldiers Point
Other comment-11-child	I like it	Soldiers Point
Other comment-19-child	Access to this site (Pipeline Dive site) needs to be provided. Apparently the 'owner' has a lease that goes to the edge of the cement path/ rocks. Is there a way that footpath can be extended behind fenced carpark and owners demarcation line to give access to steps behind premises? This would avoid adding another entry to the water and thereby disturbing fragile marine life below! This area is renowned for its Seahorses, Nudibranchs etc.	Nelson Bay
Other comment-27	I would like to see jet skis banned from the estuary. They are most certainly not abiding by speed limits as we have observed and the noise is atrocious! Our marine environment is special and precious which jet ski hoons are not appreciating. We live a kilometer from Salamander Bay waterfront but can still hear the noise.	General

Other comment-27-child	Agree look at Sydney harbour they banned them because the majority not minority issues.	General
Other comment-28	Salamander Bay should be a 4 or 6 knot zone from Corlette Point across the mooring field. The speed that many vessels travel through the moored boats and along the beach is horrific especially considering the popularity of this bay with swimmers, kayakers, and SUPS. We've seen several near misses and someone is going to get killed. There is also the issue of turtles and dolphins (often mums with calves) and fast moving vessels (not just jet skis - power boats too).	Salamander Bay
Other comment-31	Ban Jet Skis like they have in Sydney.	General
Other comment-08-child	Disagree with the jet skis while there are some that do the right thing unfortunately there's a lot who don't. Suggest designated areas in the middle of the bay away from houses and swimmers and only certain areas where they can land on beaches as a large majority of the drivers appear trigger happy when entering or exiting beaches, posing a risk to those using the beach's for the likes of swimming.	General
Other comment-01	I would definitely like to see the use of jet skis eliminated from our waterways due to their excessive noise, excessive hooning, the disturbance placed on our marine life, the destruction/invasion of the natural protected environment and the inability to enjoy a peaceful day on the bay. Please consider the impact placed on our marine life and the peaceful ambience that locals and visitors come to our waterways to enjoy.	General
Other comment-13	Improvement idea - add direction arrows to channel markers as many visitors are confused and end up running aground when navigating the south end of Bull island	Lemon Tree Passage
Other comment-14	Please fix the beach erosion problem at Western end of Nelson Bay beach. This is one of the main attractions for Port Stephens visitors. Seeing hazard tape and cyclone fencing for the last few years is not a great view for visitors.	Nelson Bay
Other comment-15	Requires marked area for boat washing only, and picnic tables and associated parking areas moved away from boat ramp area.	Lemon Tree Passage
Other comment-04-child	Ban jet skis from Port Stephens They are dangerous to swimmers and to marine life are noisy and serve no useful purpose whatsoever	General

Other comment-16-child	Needs a wave breaking floating dock added to both sides at a minimum if it went out one side onto a t dock (wave breaking) it would improve the usability of this ramp in westerly winds. Further and more importantly it will improve the safety as already mentioned the new ramp now poses issues with safely getting to and from the beach there is no way other than driving your boat. Look at other facilities in the bay and other council areas which offer floating docks.	Nelson Bay
Other comment-29	Need more public moorings here.	Shoal Bay
Other comment-16-child	When was the last time you used the ramp. Because it is steep now. Please check it out now. You be impressed.	Nelson Bay
Other comment-17	PLEASE ban all jet skis in Port Stephens. Got that? PLEASE BAN ALL JETSKIS IN PORT STEPHENS. They are noisy at all times. If you are downwind, you cannot escape the noise. At home, two streets from the beach, I hear them .nearly every day through the summer, especially when the nor 'easterly is in, which is most afternoons. On any beach at the east end of Port Stephens, they are a rude, rude intrusion. Ban them.	General
Other comment-49	Ban jet skis! Protect our marine wildlife	General
Other comment-17-child	What worries me is the marine life being effected also the constant drone as you are trying to enjoy your time on the beach with family. To my understanding there is a 4 knot zone each side of the main channel off Nelson Bay beach also Little beach, this is broken time and time again along with the distance from the shore rule and jumping wake, can our waterways and police do more to correct these problem please or BAN JETKIS as they have been in waterways south of Port Stephens.	General
Other comment-30	We pay a fee for tender storage. Replace dinghy racks with WHS compliant system. Spend money to design a system that stores dinghies vertically on transom to minimize footprint, maximize space, provide secure storage during storms and high winds and most of all minimize risk of injury to dinghy owners. Use Roy Wood Reserve as a pilot site for rack design. Consult users, modify then contract local firm to build, install, and roll out solution across Port Stephens. Volunteers could design.	Corlette

Other comment-17-child	Agree 100% that Jet Skis should be banned, at least restricted to designated areas AND observe a max 25 knot (along with all other water craft) on inside waters including up rivers. If we don't act soon the numbers will increase every year with escalating annoying noise and impact on marine life in our picture perfect paradise.	General
Other comment-11	thanks for new picnic table and hard stand on Sunset beach, improved access for kayaks would be helpful like the spot closer to Marina	Soldiers Point
Other comment-11-child	It's become more difficult for boat owners to store their tenders on the foreshore. The residents are surreptitiously claiming rights over public lands and boat owners are subject to a level of hostility when accessing their tenders. Boat owners have to pay a fee to store their tenders adjoining public reserves. This fee hasn't resulted in an observable increase in utility and therefore doesn't appear to serve any purpose other than to raise revenue to cover admin costs.	Soldiers Point
Other comment-02-child	It's obvious this person is not a person who fishes. I am not against Marine Parks, but to increase the % of the Bay already classified as Marine park for no particular reason isn't the answer.	General
Other comment-32	I am a kayaker and enjoy this activity on the waters of Port Stephens. In my experience, jet skis often travel at a speed that would make it difficult for them to see me (and marine animals and swimmers and moored boats) in time to take evasive action. Either ban them or limit them to a specific area away from other users.	General
Other comment-42	We need traffic lights at the T junction Nelson Bay Rd/Gan Gan Rd. It is very hard to get across that junction from GG Rd towards Nelson Bay. Especially during the tourist season.	General
Other comment-01-child	All jet skis are becoming hoons, msb, should re-address areas, they can hoon, No wash, and speed limits.	General
Other comment-33	Maintain Marine Park Sanctuary Zoning to protect & allow for growth of juvenile fish species	Nelson Bay
Other comment-18	Ban the use of jet skis in the eastern end of Port Stephens	General
Other comment-34	In order to protect the sea bed and marine habitats more public moorings are required. Visitors bring	General

	much to the economy but protection of marine environment is paramount.	
Other comment-16	The new boat ramp is a big improvement but the problem is the ramp angle at the water is not steep enough, meaning it's necessary to reverse further into water before the boat will float. And for single person launches, there needs to be steps off the side of the ramp below the water line so the boat can be walked to the beach. The current steps are too far up the ramp for single person launches at low tide. Also get rid of the concrete kerbs below the water line.	Nelson Bay
Other comment-57	With the huge increase in Jet Ski licenses in the last 2 years, there is heightened risk and disturbance for both people and wildlife. There are reports of near misses with divers and snorkelers, and incidents with wildlife harassment and injury. While it a small number of rogues, restrictions being made elsewhere will see Port Stephens becoming a magnet for those who see 'personal right to speed' as a right to ignore the impact on others. We need speed limits for all vessels in the Bay.	General
Other comment-50	* Shoal Beach sand moving West for years. Eroding Shoal Beach & coastal vegetation, inundating Little Beach boat ramp. Smothering Halifax SZ & sponge gardens, decimating Cauliflower Sponges & Seahorse populations. Council solution: Build new $2.2 Million boat ramp. Boats now forced to drive on & off trailers. Be dangerous. Expect injuries. Return sand from Western end back to mid Shoal beach would have solved all problems. Also given area to complete Shoal waterfront footpath.	Shoal Bay
Other comment-19	This is the iconic Pipeline shore dive site. It should be a Marine Park sanctuary zone with no line fishing, trapping or spearfishing (neither shore nor boat) and no jet skis or anchoring of boats. These activities impact the unique ecosystem here and can be hazardous to divers.	Nelson Bay
Other comment-35	Strict speed limits need to be applied and enforced in the Bay regarding PWCs. Noise and damage to the Marine Park caused by the huge increase of PWCs banned from Sydney harbour needs to be assessed to protect our unique environment.	General

Other comment-21	Please ban jet skis from Port Stephens waterways. I have very nearly been run over in two separate incidents with jet skis whilst swimming off Corlette Beach. They introduce unnecessary noise and are dangerous to both sea life and swimmers/boaters. They are not compatible with our pristine environment.	General
Other comment-01-child	Whilst I'm no fan of PWC I think it would be a big ask to ban them from the bay totally. That said could at least one beach be a motorized boat (PWC, RIB etc.) free zone. It would allow a peaceful beach for those that want to swim, SUP, Sail or Kayak in quiet safety, and enjoy the natural beauty of Port Stephens.	General
Other comment-19-child	I am a diver and I agree with all the above comments however I do not want to see recreational fishing from the break wall banned.	Nelson Bay
Other comment-41	I have lived in the bay for over 40 years and have seen the increase in jet ski usage and the corresponding increase in dangerous and disrespectful behaviour. Council has shown a preference for a grab for tourism dollars rather than protecting residents and the environment. Please ban these craft from our waterways.	General
Other comment-17-child	Only rude intrusion is the eco warriors. Let's get more boats on the water including jet skis. Perhaps a jet ski competition would work well.	General
Other comment-23	We need to create an awareness campaign around "litter free Port Stephens" similar to Plastic Free PS, based on our what is getting washed, thrown or blown into our waterways putting all marine life at risk. We do have bins but they are the green sulo ones & a few stainless steel ones, we should make them stand out on all water front reserves & have images of our marine life & our pristine waterway. Signage is not very effective so let's run a program in all our schools to start with.	General
Other comment-36	Jet skis should be banned in the bay as they create havoc to sea life. Also, areas that are already Marine Park Sanctuary Zones should stay as they are as they provide a safety zone to fish so they can breed and grow.	General
Other comment-04-child	Ban the fun ban everything! Let's ban Dickheads in surveys - people need to be fair to all users. No jet skis would be the beginning of the end of the bay as we know it. I would like to see the peer reviewed	General

	research that shows the issues these people speak of.	
Other comment-22-child	Ha-ha - And ppl worry about noise this would be worse than all the jet skis in Casula.	General
Other comment-21-child	We own property and we love the lively noise summer brings to the beach. I urge you not to take notice of these sort of silly comments. Perhaps this person should stick to inland pools.	General
Other comment-37	Ban the use of jet skis in this area. People come in and out off the beach daily during the busy season at dangerous speeds. Also the noise is terrible.	General
Other comment-01-child	Sad comments from uniformed people. I notice a few of the eco terrorist Facebook pages have shared this survey and told their brainless followers what to say. Eco network Port Stephens, Tomaree Voice, Sally Bay on Facebook just to name a few. I suggest that you dismiss the majority of the comments from those pages.	General
Other comment-08-child	100% agree - Facebook pages to lead people astray and not let them think for themselves. Also Kate Washington pushing a fishing ban and boat ban is causing issues.	General
Other comment-38	Crab pots or fishing boys around the bay are hazardous for other boaters especially at night. I understand it’s hard to regulate and check but I’ve seen small buoys in the middle of the bay and they’ve been there for a while now. Maybe organizing a cleanup day for those traps would be a good idea.	General
Other comment-39	There is not a boat ramp on the Port Stephens side of the Hunter River and Patterson River between R/T and Patterson despite it being a fishing and water sports destination. A continuation of the flood one near Hinton bridge would be appreciated	Hinton
Other comment-21-child	Dead turtle on Bagnalls beach this morning, clearly hit by a boat or jet ski. We need a speed limit of 20 knots except for a channel in middle of Port that can be used for faster travel.	General
Other comment-01-child	I have never owned a Jet Ski but feel that this comment does not reflect the modern personal watercraft. The appeal of a PWC is low cost compact fast fun access to waterways. If every PWC was replaced by a boat on the water crowding would be worse. Modern PWC's also have very low noise level compared to the one "etched" into our memories of the 1980's & 1990's. Jets skis do not use	General

	propellers, one immediate safety & environmental advantages propellers. Rules are already very strict.	
Other comment-27-child	My Vote: BAN Jet Skis & Fast Craft. We MUST. They are menacing dolphins, turtles, kayakers, stand up boards, swimmers & fishers who want a peaceful environment without noise and waves coming from their hoon-like behaviour. One man had children 5 & 9 clinging to him whilst he did figure of eights near the shore and then when he saw 9 speeding jet skis racing he let out the throttle and sped up to a dangerous speed. Luckily he didn't hit a turtle or floating log. Return Bliss to the Bay.	General
Other comment-34-child	Totally agree, but in sensitive areas like the pipeline and the sponge beds. There are no moorings for public and anchors are doing heaps of damage. Maybe we need anchor free zones.	General
Other comment-25	STOP DESTROYING KOALA HABITAT	General
Other comment-51	A wharf or jetty would be a great addition to the area	Tanilba Bay
Other comment-40	Please ban all high speed jet ski use inside the harbour - the noise from these machines carries way beyond the waterfront, and the users often don't seem to be aware of the damage they can cause to marine life.	general
Other comment-01-child	There are always two opinions about this. Jet Skis are the ideal form of transport through shallow areas and are ideal for surf lifesaving and rescue activities. The problem is that some people make a nuisance of themselves with speed and proximity to others. I work in the area and have noticed that there are a lot more boat strikes from jet skis than any other boating activity. There are rules about this and they are not being obeyed. Maybe more education is needed.	General
Other comment-24	Please leave the boat launching access at Fishermans Bay. It has been in use for many years by local fisherman and residents. It is part of the areas heritage and should remain. It’s used infrequently and does not affect other beach users. It should also be kept as for safety and to launch and retrieve rescue craft	Fishermans Bay
Other comment-25-child	Nothing to with this survey. Get a life	General

Other comment-26	Fly Point Marine Reserve needs to be clearly marked on all maps. Protected areas include the Little Beach Dive-site and the Seahorse Gardens between Fly Point and the Eastern end of Nelson Bay Beach. Much appreciated alterations to Fly Point Carpark but much congestion with walking path and cars in this fragile area.	Nelson Bay
Other comment-52	Keep the Marine sanctuaries in place to ensure protection of marine populations and habitats for future generations	General

PORT STEPHENS
COUNCIL

council@portstephens.nsw.gov.au | 02 4988 0255 | PORTSTEPHENS.NSW.GOV.AU