

Coastal Management Program

Key points document



Introduction

Port Stephens is part of the Hunter Region on the NSW coast, located about two hours north of Sydney. Its white sandy beaches and clear waters are one of the main attractions for residents and the 1.5 million people who visit each year.

Port Stephens is home to the Port Stephens-Great Lakes Marine Park, which is twice the size of Sydney Harbour, as well as the largest moving coastal sand dunes in the southern hemisphere.

Our community values the coast for its environmental, social and economic benefits. But there are also many threats which have the potential to impact how our community enjoys the coast both now and in the future.

Port Stephens Council is developing a Coastal Management Program (CMP) to provide a framework for managing these priority coastal threats now and into the future so we can all enjoy the benefits of the coast for years to come.

“Port Stephens Council is developing a Coastal Management Program (CMP) to provide a framework for managing coastal risks now and into the future so that we can all continue **to enjoy the benefits of the coast for years to come.**”



Social
benefits



Economic
benefits



Environment
benefits



Community
wellbeing

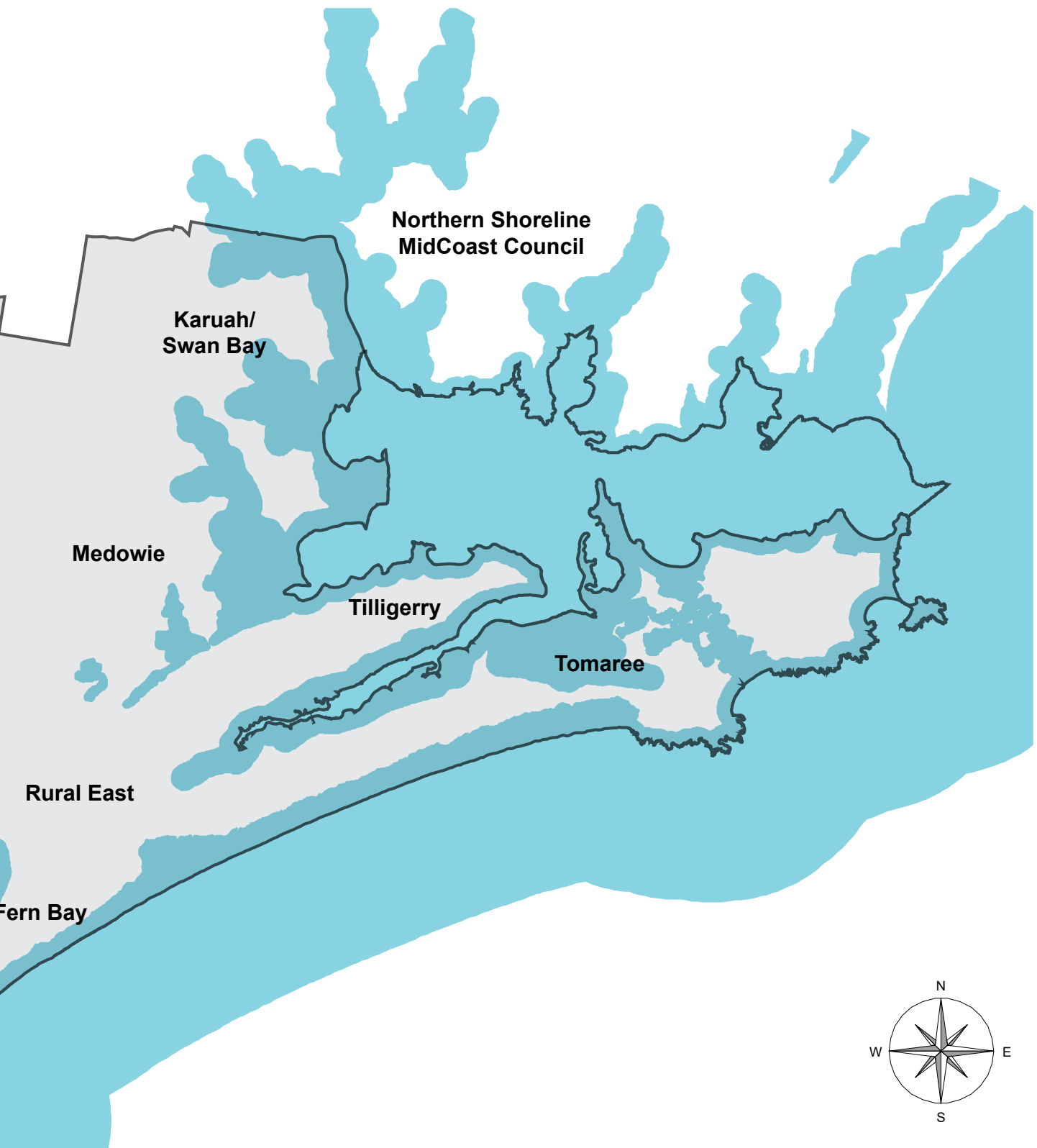


What is the Port Stephens CMP coastal zone?

A coastal zone is the interface between the land and marine environment. More than a third of the NSW population lives in a coastal zone.

Port Stephens has a unique coastal zone — from its sandy beaches and rocky headlands to its mangroves, salt marshes and wetlands. It stretches from Fern Bay in the south to Yaccaba Headland in the north, including the estuary of Port Stephens. The coastal zone (mapped in blue) covers areas of both Port Stephens Council and MidCoast Council.





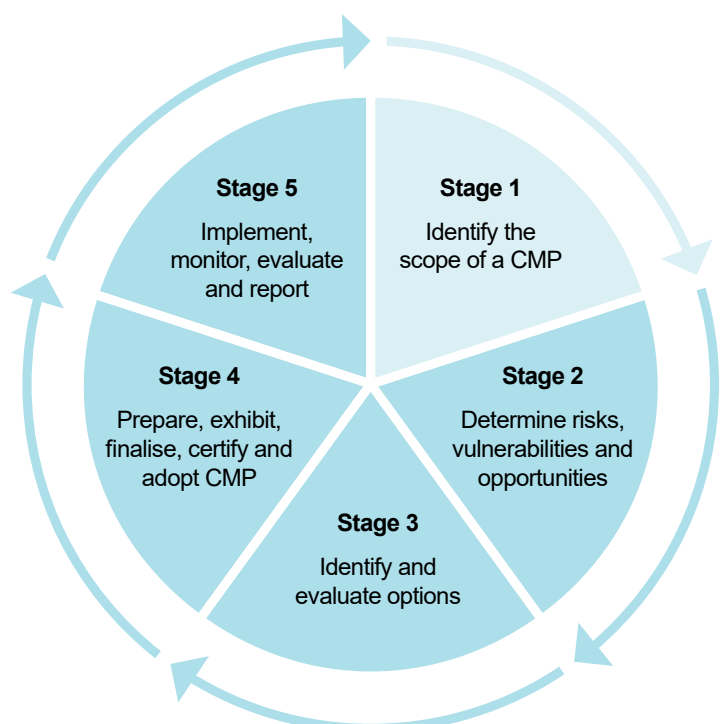
Why do we need a Coastal Management Program?

Coastal zones are continually changing. It's important to have an understanding of the risks and hazards associated with coastal zones to enable better planning, management and continued enjoyment of the coast now and into the future.

Coastal management has become a growing area of concern in recent years. This program aims to answer the questions:



Port Stephens Council is developing our CMP in line with the Coastal Management Act 2016 and according to the NSW Coastal Management Manual's five step process. This CMP is not just for Council use, but has been designed to guide management of the coast for the entire community.





Key benefits of a CMP



understanding
of risk exposure
to current and
future threats



a clear, strategic
and consistent
approach to the
management of
coastal challenges
and risks



partnerships with
adjacent Councils
and agencies that
promote
opportunities for
knowledge transfer



identify
opportunities for
improvement in
land-use and
infrastructure
planning



improved grant
funding
opportunities,
resource sharing
and procurement
processes



Risks associated with no CMP

- limited understanding of the long term risk of exposure to coastal hazards
- potential reduction in access to funding sources for future capital works
- limitations to future government and external funding opportunities



Community values

Our community's vision for the coast

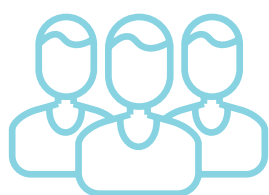
This CMP aims to manage the current and future threats to the coast in a way that protects the values of our community. The key values include:

- ✓ unique character
- ✓ amenity
- ✓ public access
- ✓ equity and fairness
- ✓ water quality
- ✓ biological diversity
- ✓ ecosystems integrity and resilience

These key values have been compiled from previous community consultation and the community's vision as set out in the Port Stephens and MidCoast Community Strategic Plans. To achieve the community's vision, we need to manage the coastal environment to allow ecologically sustainable development while protecting the social, cultural and economic wellbeing of the Port Stephens community.



Port Stephens Community Strategic Plan



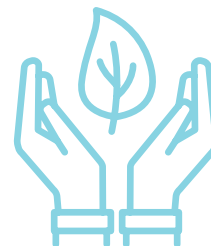
Our Community

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



Our Place

Port Stephens is a liveable place supporting local economic growth



Our Environment

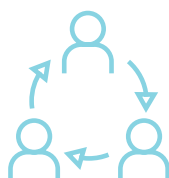
Port Stephens' environment is clean and green, protected and enhanced



MidCoast 2030 Community Strategic Plan



We value our unique, diverse and culturally rich communities



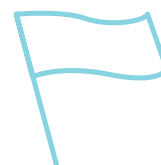
We value a connected community



We value our environment



We value our thriving and growing economy



We value strong leadership and shared vision

Assets, values and benefits that characterise the coastal zone



Economic

- recreation
- visual amenity
- tourism
- commercial boating
- commercial sand extraction
- coastal infrastructure eg roads, drains
- growth centres
- primary industries eg fishing, irrigation



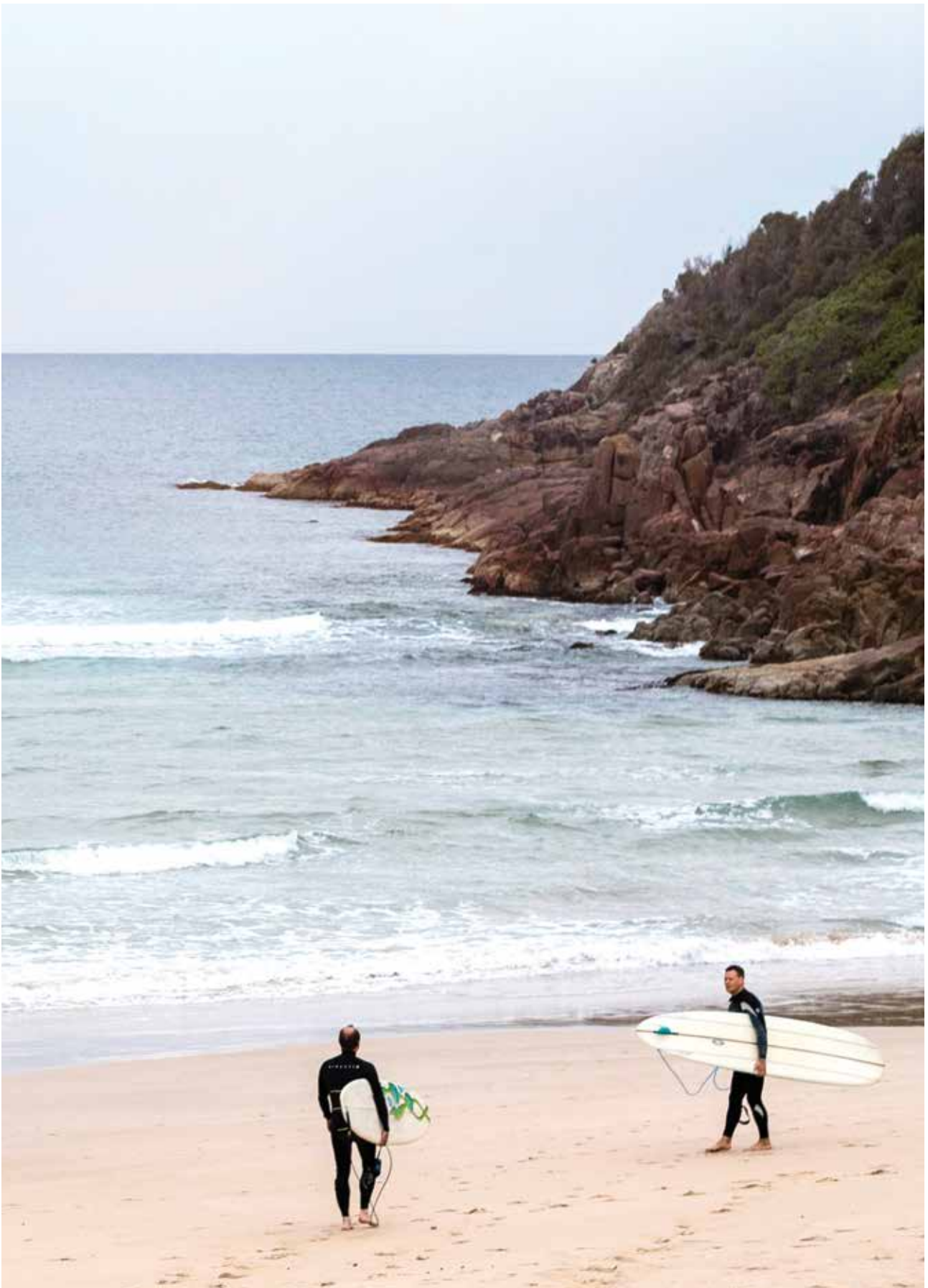
Social

- public access
- natural coastal landscape
- aboriginal cultural heritage
- strong community ownership of foreshores
- european heritage
- safe place for socialising
- encourages an active, healthy lifestyle
- cultural heritage for future generations
- natural beauty
- boating
- public reserves / infrastructure



Environmental

- seagrass
- endangered ecological communities
- wildlife corridors
- clean waters
- abundant marine life
- unique biodiversity
- migratory shorebirds
- threatened species
- coastal wetlands and Littoral Rainforest





Priority threats

There are many threats to the Port Stephens coastal zone which have the potential to impact how our community enjoys the coast. Threats were identified for the CMP in two ways:

- Reviewing existing coastal management documents such as the Estuary Management Plan and Foreshore Plan, and NSW Marine Estate's Threat and Risk Assessment (TARA).
- Workshops with internal and external stakeholders including agency staff and the Port Stephens / Myall Lakes Estuary and Coastal Zone Consultative Committee.

A full list of identified threats and their risk levels will be able available in the CMP Scoping Study. Contact Council for further information.

The following priority threats have the greatest potential to negatively affect the unique values of the coast or have a high level of uncertainty and represent the focus of the CMP.

It is important to note that the CMP is not designed to identify all the solutions for all threats. While general opportunities for improvement will be identified, the focus of the CMP is to provide ways for us to manage our use of the coast to adapt to Beach Erosion, Shoreline Recession and Aeolian Sand Inundation.

Priority Threats	Description	Existing Management	Level of focus	What the CMP will provide
Beach Erosion	The wearing away of sand material by wave action, tidal currents, and/or stormwater drainage that generally returns out over time.	Very limited	Primary	Direct management actions
Shoreline Recession	A net landward movement of the shoreline.	Very limited	Primary	Direct management actions
Aeolian Sand Inundation	Movement of sand by the wind over an area to smothering existing landscape / asset.	Very limited	Primary	Direct management actions
Coastal Inundation	Temporary and permanent flooding by seawater of a portion of land within the coastal zone through tides, waves, and catchment influences.	Yes	Primary	Filling management gaps as interaction with other hazards is understood.
Obstruction to Public Amenity / Use	Private infrastructure and management that extends onto public land (seawalls, boat ramps, stairs gardens etc).	Limited	Primary	As it relates to the management of erosion & recession
Urban Stormwater	Chemical and biological inputs including influxes of freshwater and sediment from public and private properties within urban areas.	Yes	Secondary	Identify areas of improvement
Acid Sulphate Soil run-off	Oxidation of acid sulphate soils, leading to discharges of low pH water into the estuary.	Yes	Secondary	Identify areas of improvement
Agricultural run-off	Diffuse runoff of water from rural land containing sediment from poor land management and or gravel roads and creek crossings, fertiliser.	Yes	Secondary	Identify areas of improvement
Point source discharge	Discharge from marinas, slipways, boating (black water), sewage infrastructure (treatment plants, pump stations and pipes), industry and aquaculture.	Yes	Secondary	Identify areas of improvement
Septic run-off	Diffuse run-off from on-site waste water treatment systems.	Yes	Secondary	Identify areas of improvement
Biosecurity Threats	Weeds, pests and disease.	Yes	Secondary	Identify areas of improvement
Land Clearing	The legal and illegal clearing of native vegetation for development, agriculture, views and public safety.	Yes	Secondary	Identify areas of improvement



Process

1

Stage 1

We are here.

2

Stage 2

Determine risks, vulnerabilities and opportunities

1. Coastal Hazard Mapping to understand the extent of beach erosion, shoreline recession and Aeolian sand inundation for 20, 50, 100 years and beyond scenario incorporating climate change.
2. Improve understanding of coastal inundation impacts regarding tolerance of critical infrastructure (Council & utilities) and significant ecosystems to both coastal storm and tidal inundation under present day and projected climate change scenarios.



Community consultation:

Work with the community to provide localised context to broad values.

3

Stage 3

Identify and evaluate options.

4

Stage 4

Prepare, exhibit, finalise, certify and adopt CMP.

5

Stage 5

Implement, monitor, evaluate and report.



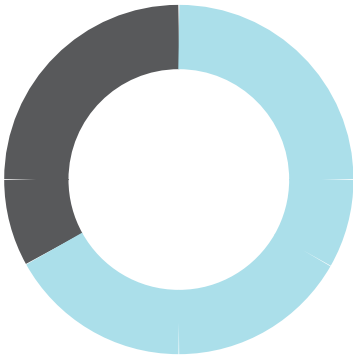
Short term outcomes

Development Outcomes (Stage 1 – 4)

Next steps

The purpose of the CMP is to provide a framework for the long-term strategic and integrated management of priority threats to the Port Stephens coastal zone in line with the community's needs, state objectives and relevant legislation.

- Risk management approach to identify coastal management issues. Identify built, social, natural and cultural assets under threat now and in 20, 50 and 100 years.
- Integration of coastal considerations into land-use, infrastructure and asset planning frameworks and decision making.
- Management solutions that are feasible and affordable, including cost benefit analysis and a business case for priority actions.
- Alignment of coastal management priorities with broader community priorities—inclusion in Community Strategic Plan and improved monitoring, reporting and ongoing community engagement and stakeholder consultation.

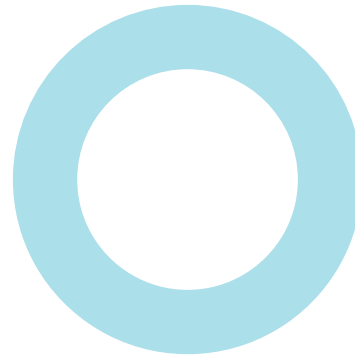


Medium term outcomes

Implementation
outcomes
(Stage 5)

In ten years, the Port Stephens coastal zone will have:

- transparent, informed and supported strategic planning decisions
- clear development controls and guidance
- management of natural and built public and private assets that address current risk levels and community demand and with documented actions for managing future risks
- community understanding and involvement.



Long term outcomes – 10 years +

Success

In the presence of increasing coastal risk, our community will have established adaptation pathways that support evidence based decision making for the management of current and future private and public assets. The overall objective is to preserve the following key coastal community values:

- unique character
 - amenity
 - public access
 - equity and fairness
 - water quality
 - biological diversity
 - ecosystems integrity and resilience
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