



PORT STEPHENS BOATING AND FISHING INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN

Final Report - January 2023



Prepared by Otium Planning Group Pty Ltd in conjunction with:





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.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION	1	6. FISHING AND BOATING INFRASTRUCTURE IN PORT STEPHENS	14
1.1. Study Approach	1		
1.2. What is Included in the Port Stephens Boating and Fishing Infrastructure Plan?	1	7. ENGAGEMENT SNAPSHOT	17
2. SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS	2	8. SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS AND DEMAND	19
2.1. Overall Recommendations	2	9. PLANNING FRAMEWORK	20
3. THE PORT STEPHENS POPULATION	8	9.1. Strategic Goals	20
3.1. Population and Growth	8	9.2. Guiding Principles	21
3.2. Age	8	9.3. Hierarchy of Provision	22
3.3. Population Projections	8	9.4. Provision Standards	23
3.4. Socio-Economic Characteristics of the Port Stephens Community	9	9.5. Key Support Infrastructure	29
3.5. Implications for Boating and Fishing Infrastructure	9	10. RECOMMENDATIONS	31
4. TOURISM IN PORT STEPHENS	10	11. SITE SUMMARIES AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS	32
5. FISHING AND BOATING TRENDS	11	11.1. Boat Ramps	32
5.1. Participation in Fishing and Boating	11	11.2. Jetties and Wharfs	69
5.2. Boat Ownership and Registration	12		
5.3. Boating and Fishing Infrastructure Trends	13	12. WARRANTIES AND DISCLAIMERS	83
5.4. Summary of Participation and Boat Ownership	13		

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 Maritime 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:



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> « 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> « 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> « 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> « Improve wayfinding and line marking of rigging and de-rigging areas and manoeuvring bays. This may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> « 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 in the car park. 	\$371,542	High
Tomago Boat Ramp	Local	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> « 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 (includes \$60,000 for toilet facilities)	Low
Wanda Beach Reserve (Salamander) Boat Ramp	Local (District if parking upgraded)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> « 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> « 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
Taylor's Beach Boat Ramp	Local	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> « 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> « 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
Raymond Terrace Boat Ramp	District	<p>Investigate the feasibility of either:</p> <p>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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> « 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. <p>Or</p> <p>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.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> « 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: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 (opt B)	High
Lemon Tree Passage Boat Ramp	Regional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> « Improve wayfinding and manoeuvring throughout the site, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 accommodate additional de-rigging areas and trailer parking « Investigate opportunities to upgrade the informal paddle launch area located at Kooindah Park. 	\$2,326,687 (includes \$150,000 for relocation of toilets to adjoining park)	High

BOAT RAMP	HIERARCHY	RECOMMENDED DIRECTIONS	INDICATIVE COSTS	PRIORITY
Foster Park Boat Ramp	Local	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> « 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> « 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> « 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> « 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> « 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> « Retain as a local wharf « In consultation with the SES, undertake improvements to support emergency response. 		High
Karuah Wharf	Regional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> « 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> « 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> « 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> « 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> « Retain as local wharf. 	-	-
Salamander Bay Jetty	District	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> « 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. 	\$277,030	Low
Shoal Bay Jetty	District	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> « Retain as district jetty « Enhance support infrastructure such as lighting, seating, water, shelters etc. 	\$160,000	Medium
Taylor's Beach Pontoon	District	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> « Retain as a district pontoon « In accordance with boat ramp directions, investigate opportunities to improve parking. 	-	Medium

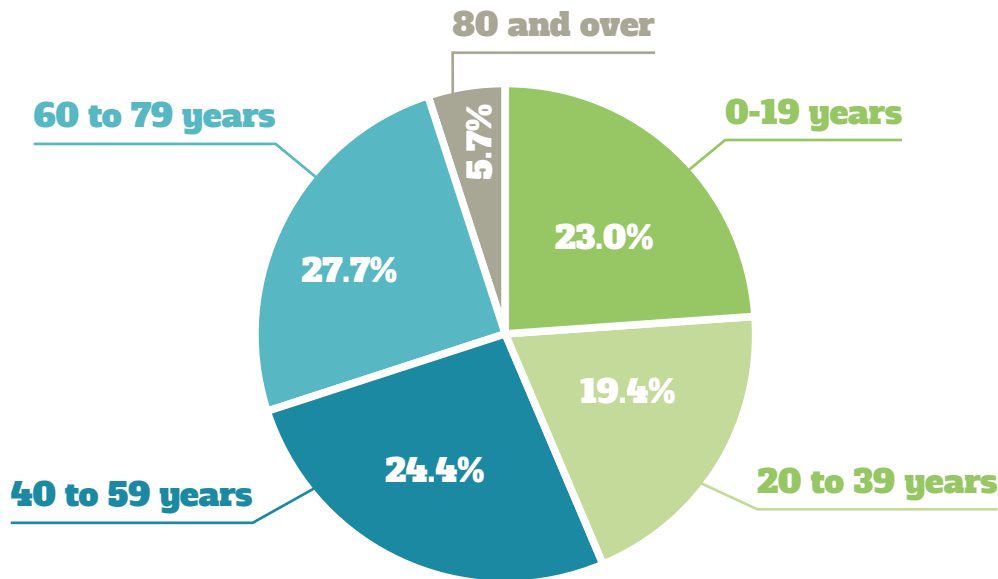
3. THE PORT STEPHENS POPULATION

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 2010¹.

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 2040²:



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 group** 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=Dz52HYk1wFwIJ3XcPI29JuEhyld4DHazK2hGs3QPqRtpw9HesGXzkumsKtMdN>

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 group³**, 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.

Council's Economic Development Strategy 2021-2025 notes that Tourism in Port Stephens generates an output of \$434.8 million.

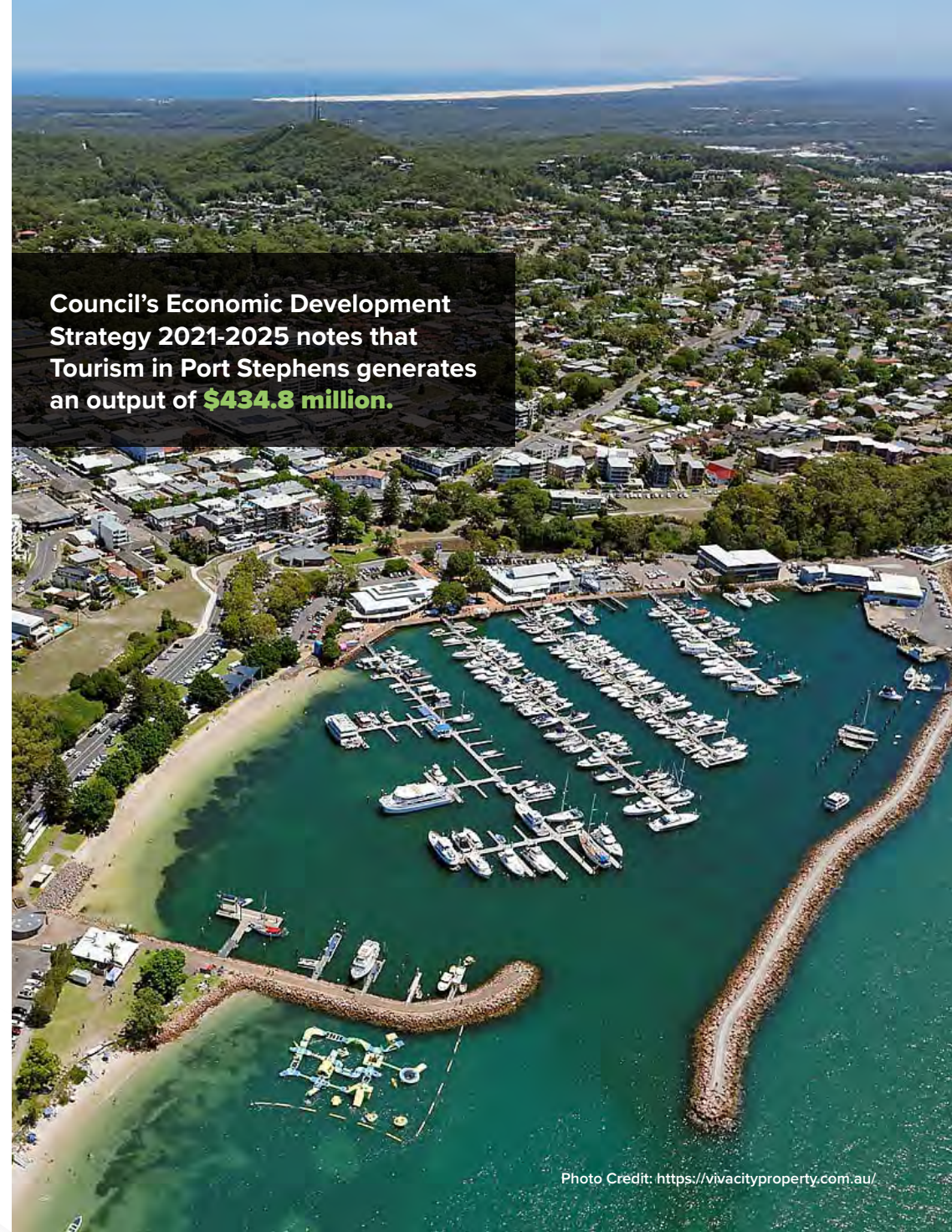


Photo Credit: <https://vivacityproperty.com.au/>

5. FISHING AND BOATING TRENDS

5.1. PARTICIPATION IN FISHING AND BOATING

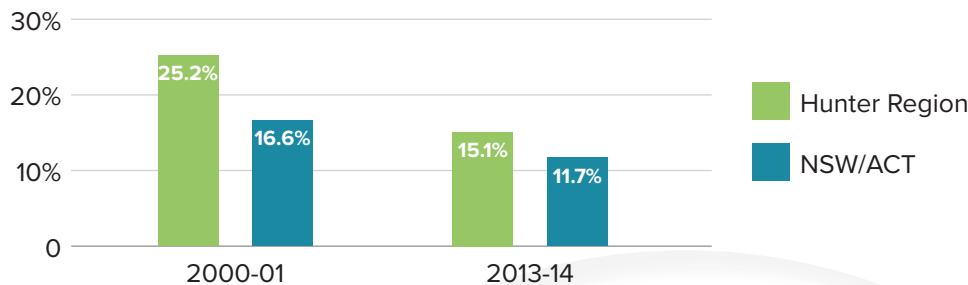
5.1.1. Recreational Fishing Survey

A state-wide survey of recreational fishing was undertaken by the NSW Department of Primary Industries (DPI) in 2013-14⁴. An earlier National Recreational and Indigenous Fishing Survey was undertaken in 2000-01⁵. 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.

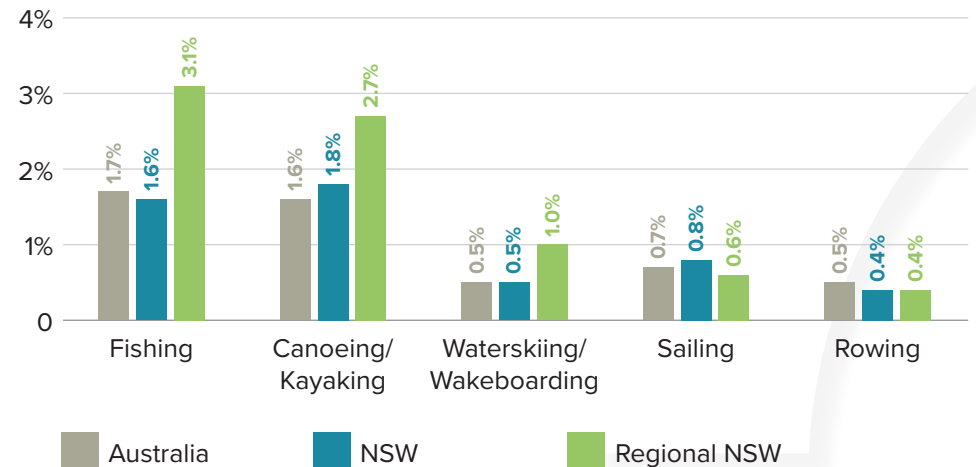
Figure 2: Recreational fishing participation rate in the Hunter Region and NSW/ACT, 2000-01 and 2013-14



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 et al. (2015). Survey of Recreational Fishing in New South Wales and the ACT, 2013/14. NSW Department of Primary Industries.

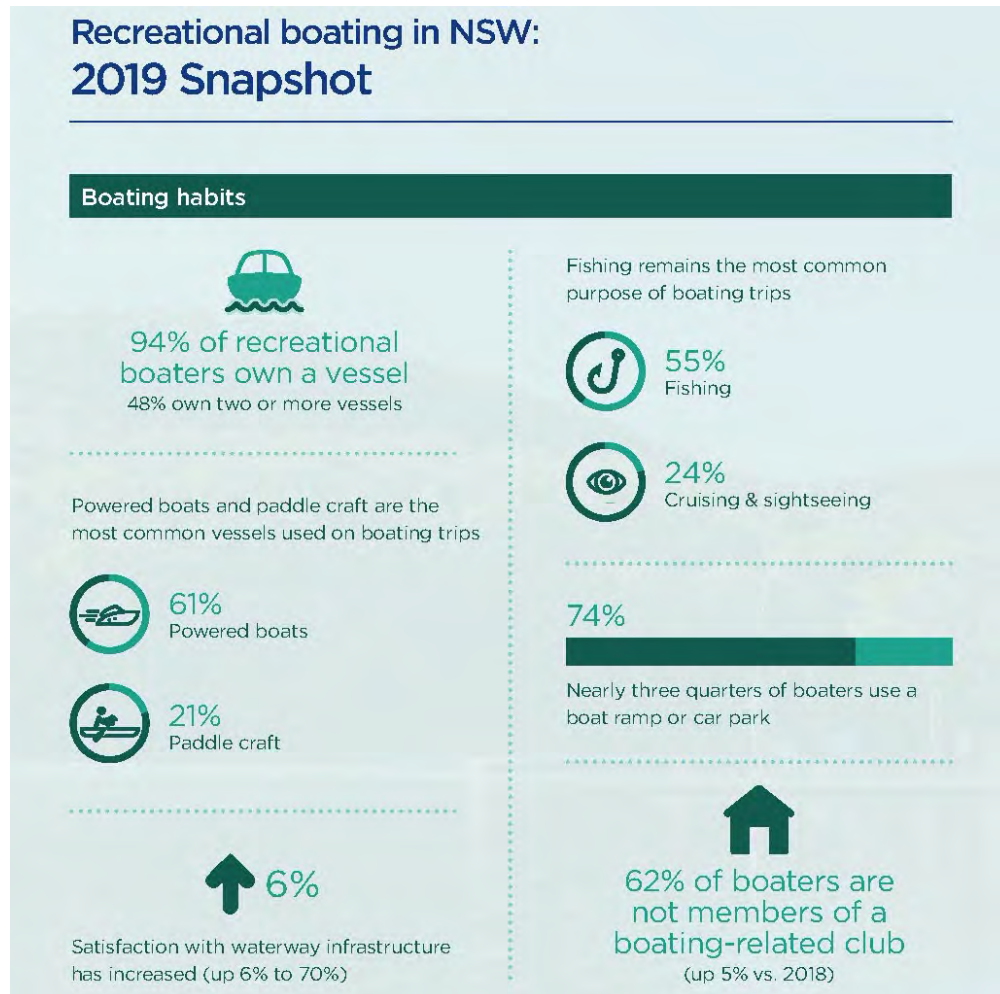
⁵ Henry, G.W. and Lyle, J.M. (Ed), 2003. The National Recreational and Indigenous Fishing Survey. NSW Fisheries Final Report Series No. 48.

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 NSW⁶. 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.

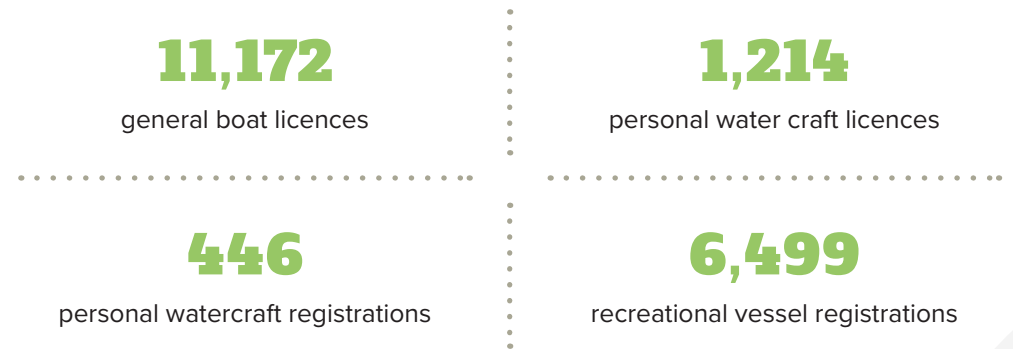
A snapshot of key results from the 2019 survey is shown below:

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 LGA⁷. This included:



⁶ 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).

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)



5 Wharfs



8 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

Figure 5: Boat Ramps in Port Stephens Council area

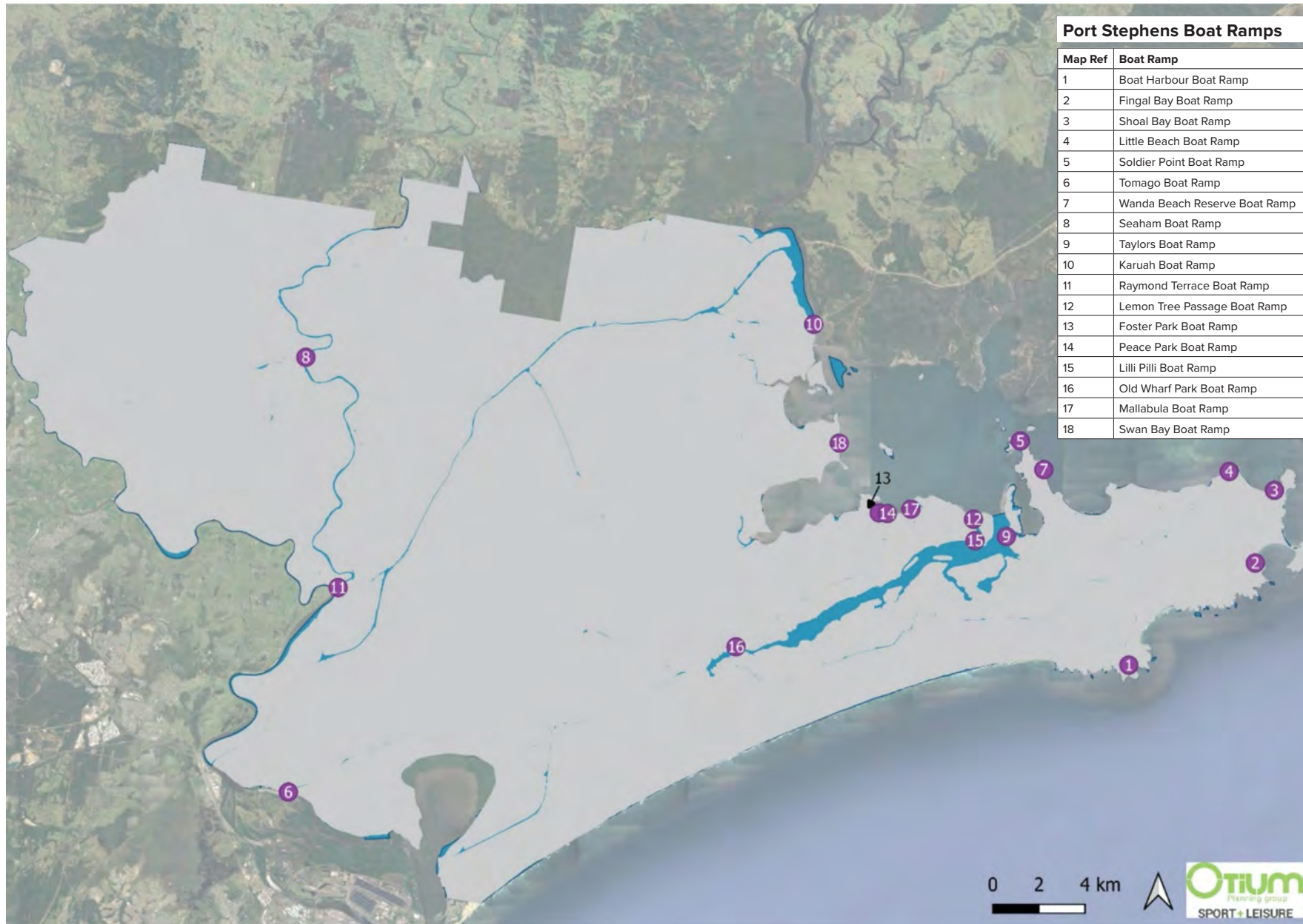
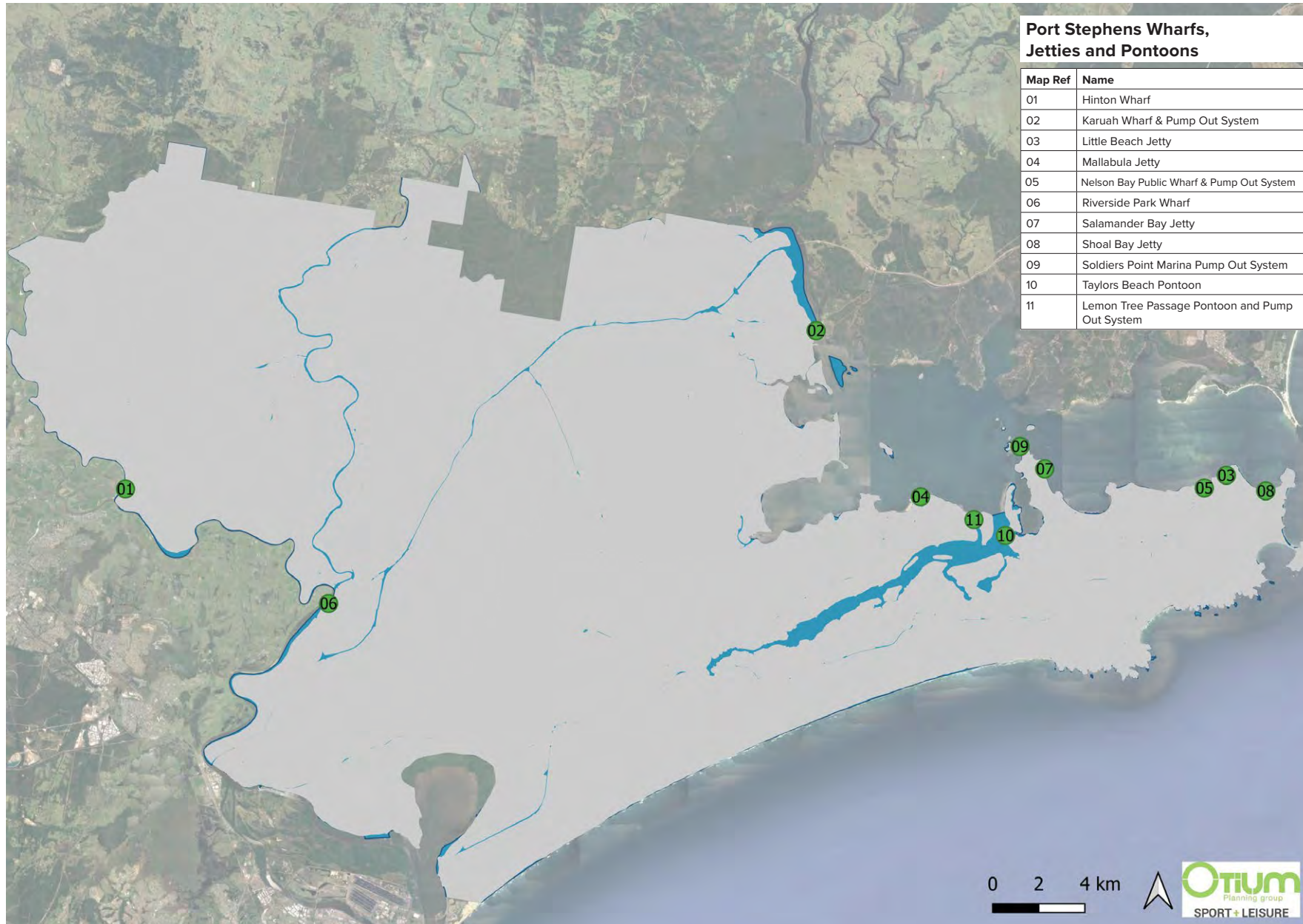


Figure 6: Wharfs in Port Stephens Council area



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.



9.2. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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:



HIERARCHY CLASSIFICATION	DESCRIPTION	EXAMPLES
Regional	<p>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.</p> <p>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).</p> <p>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.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> « Lemon Tree Passage Boat Ramp « Soldiers Point Boat Ramp « Little Beach Boat Ramp
District	<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> « Karuah Boat Ramp « Shoal Bay Boat Ramp « Raymond Terrace Boat Ramp
Local	<p>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.</p> <p>These facilities generally include a lower level of investment and service provision.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> « 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	<p>Informal facilities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> « 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. <p>These facilities generally include a lower level of investment and service provision.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> « 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 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	<p>Minimum clear width of 1.8m</p> <p>Should be longer than 25 m in length but may be angled or “returned”. Should provide for deeper water/ all tide access</p> <p>May include adjacent swimming enclosure</p> <p>Tide responsive loading and access provided via floating pontoon or stairs and Multi-level platforms</p> <p>Provision of potable water and power</p> <p>Access to sewage pump out is desirable</p>	<p>Minimum width of 1.5m</p> <p>1.8m preferred</p> <p>Minimum length of 10 m, depending on water depth and tidal variation</p>	<p>Minimum width of 1.5m</p> <p>May range from small fishing landing/ platform to a jetty of 10m in length</p>
Accessibility	<p>PWD access essential. Must be sufficiently wide to enable access by people using mobility aids or wheelchairs</p>	<p>Disabled access desirable.</p> <p>Must be sufficiently wide to enable access by people using mobility aids or wheelchairs</p>	<p>Not essential</p>
Car Parking	<p>Up to 20 car spaces</p> <p>Can be provided as part of shared spaces in adjacent parkland</p> <p>At least 1 PWD car park</p> <p>Parking should be adjacent or within 100m</p>	<p>10 car spaces</p> <p>Can be provided as part of shared adjacent parkland</p> <p>Where space is restricted, provide sufficient on-street car parking</p> <p>At least 1 PWD car park</p>	<p>Parking area for 5 spaces or on street car parking</p> <p>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</p>
Mooring	<p>Provide facilities for short term mooring for large boats including ferries</p> <p>Extended mooring up to 8 hours</p>	<p>Provide facilities for short term mooring for boats up to 8m</p> <p>Maximum stays of 4 hours</p>	<p>Facilities may be provided for short term mooring (small boats only <5m)</p> <p>Dinghy storage may be provided in close proximity</p>
Signage & Wayfinding	<p>Signage to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> « Use etiquette « Fishing information « Safety and operational information « Visible from shore and water 	<p>Signage to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> « Use etiquette « Fishing information « Safety and operational information. « Visible from shore and water 	<p>Signage to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> « 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 dinghy storage, many Council's are moving towards:

- « permitting storage of dinghies in permitted dinghy 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 dinghy 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



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 Condition¹⁰ and Functionality

- « Satisfactory Condition (3)
- « Suitable for beach launch by experienced boat users only
- « Suitable for paddle craft.



Support Infrastructure¹¹

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.

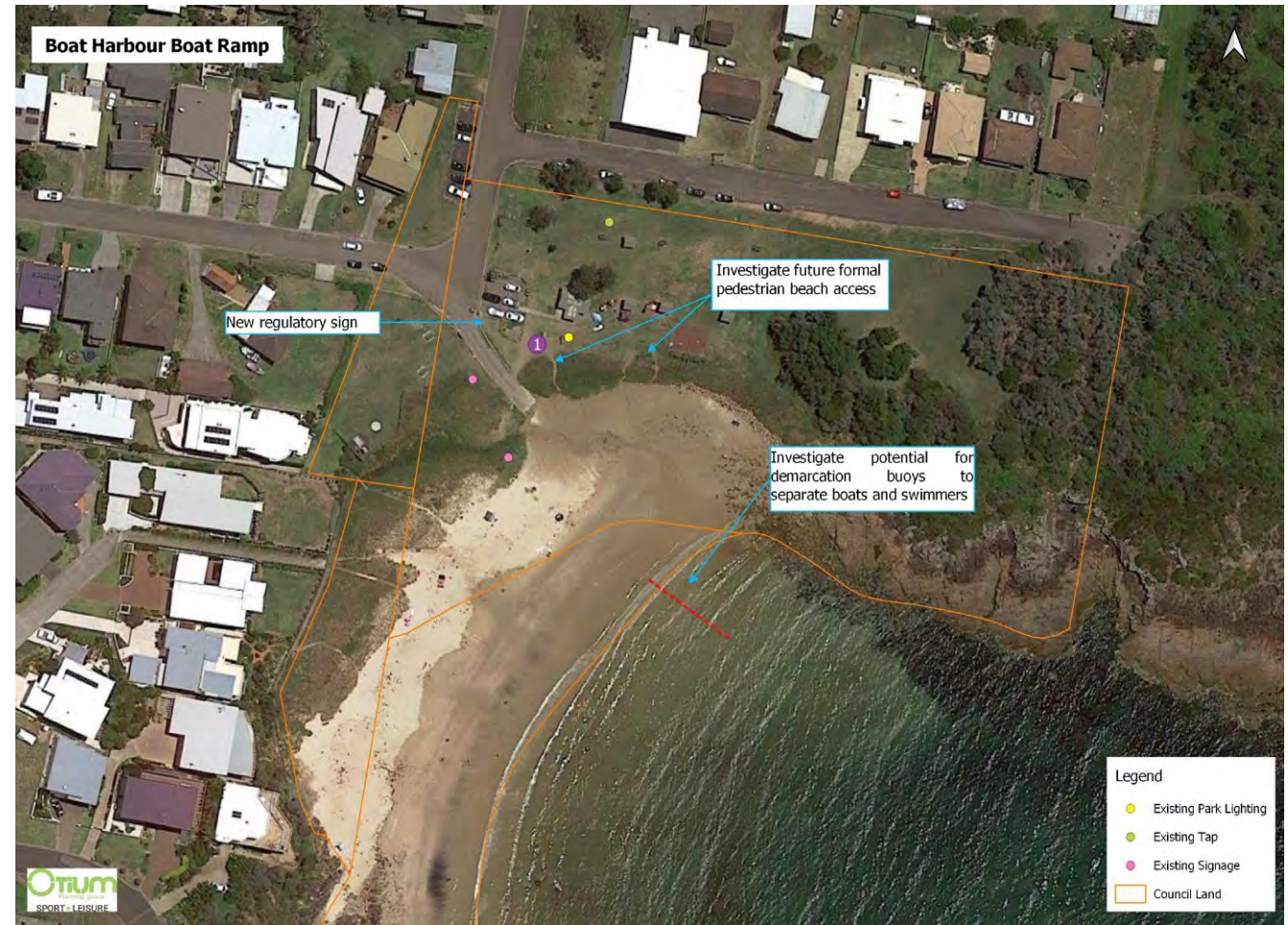


Priority
High



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 Condition¹² and Functionality

- « Satisfactory Condition (3)
- « Suitable for beach launch by experienced boat users only
- « Suitable for paddle craft.



Support Infrastructure¹³

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 and Easter school holiday periods.



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 and Easter school holiday periods, 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 Condition¹⁴ 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 Infrastructure¹⁵

- « 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 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 Condition¹⁶ 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 Infrastructure¹⁷

- « 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 Condition¹⁸ and Functionality

- « Good condition (2)
- « Suitable for use by large vessels in all tides
- « Not adversely affected by excessive wind and wave conditions



Support Infrastructure¹⁹

- « 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 it is 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 within the car park
- « Provide linemarking to delineate rigging, de-rigging and manoeuvring areas
- « Continue to monitor the rock wall/groynes for any rack fall or degradation, and take remedial action if needed.



Priority
High

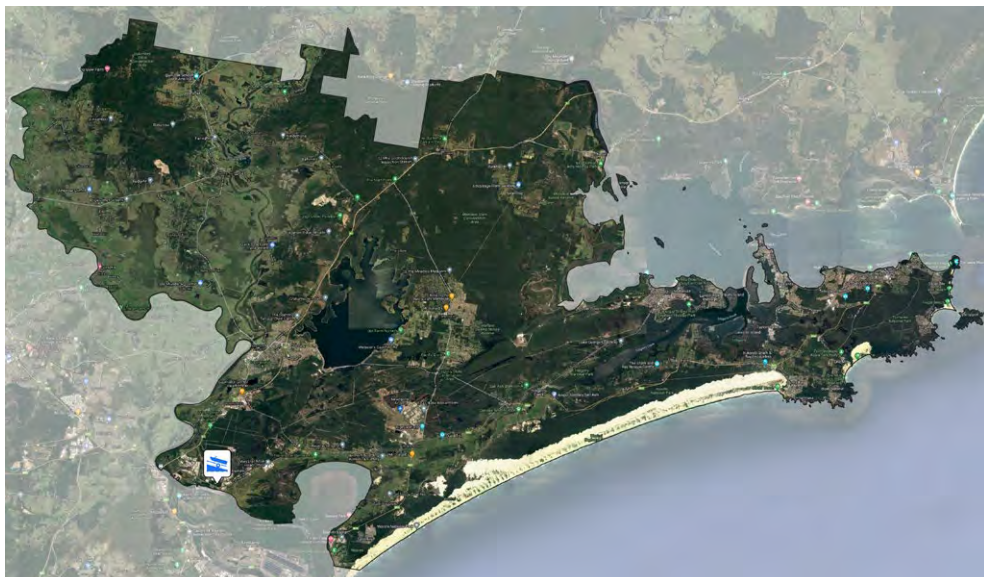


Indicative Costs
\$371,542

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

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 Condition²⁰ and Functionality

- « Good condition (2)
- « Suitable for use by large vessels in all tides
- « Not adversely affected by excessive wind and wave conditions.



Support Infrastructure²¹

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 (includes \$60,000 for toilet facilities)

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 Condition²² 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 Infrastructure²³

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.



Fishing and Boating Infrastructure

- « 1 lane concrete boat ramp
- « Some boat safety and information signage.



Ramp Condition²⁴ and Functionality

- « Near perfect condition (1)
- « Suitable for use by small vessels and paddle craft.



Current PSC Hierarchy

Local



Access, Parking & Manoeuvring

- « Very limited informal parking and manoeuvrability space.



Support Infrastructure²⁵

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

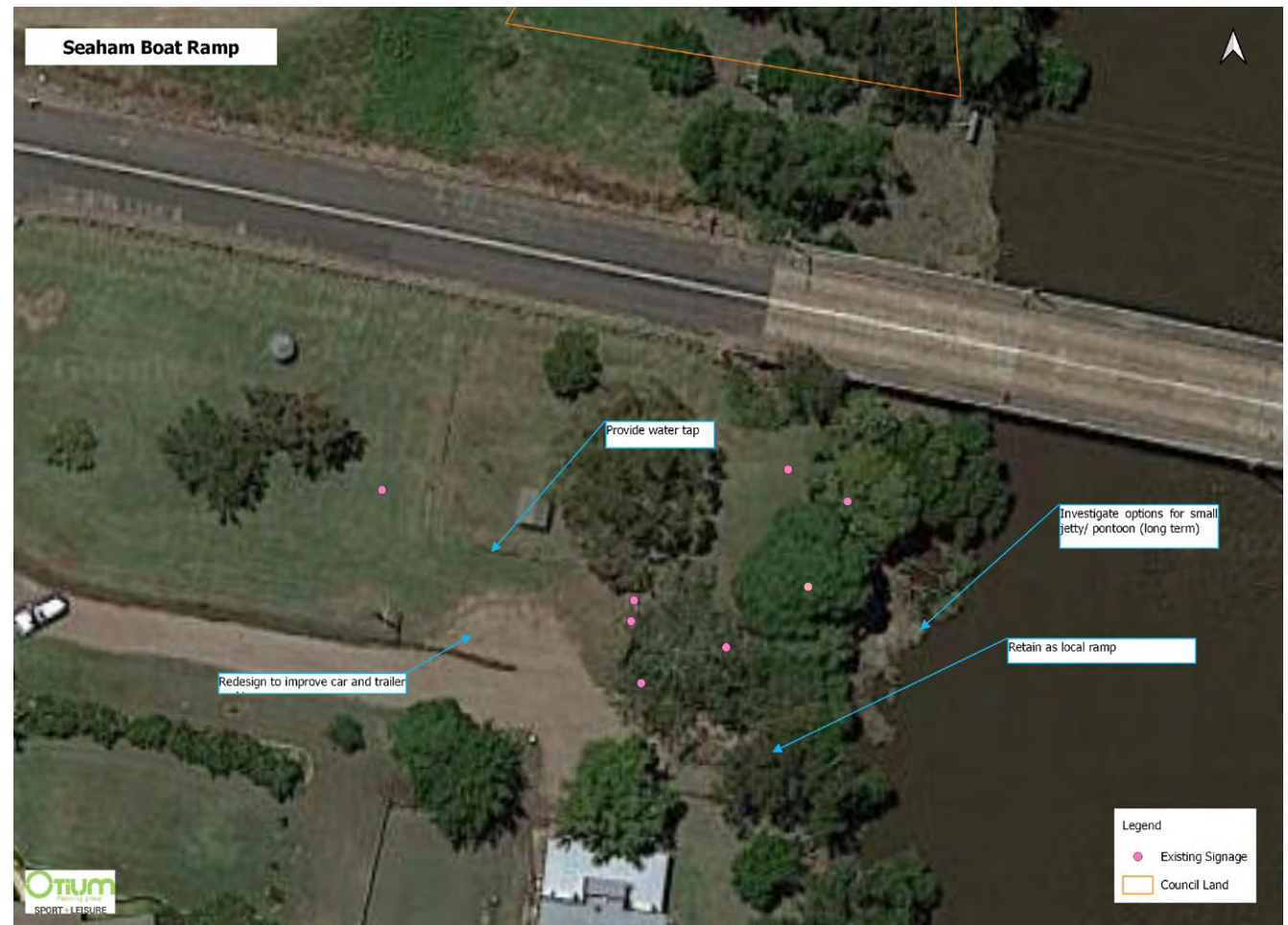
Low



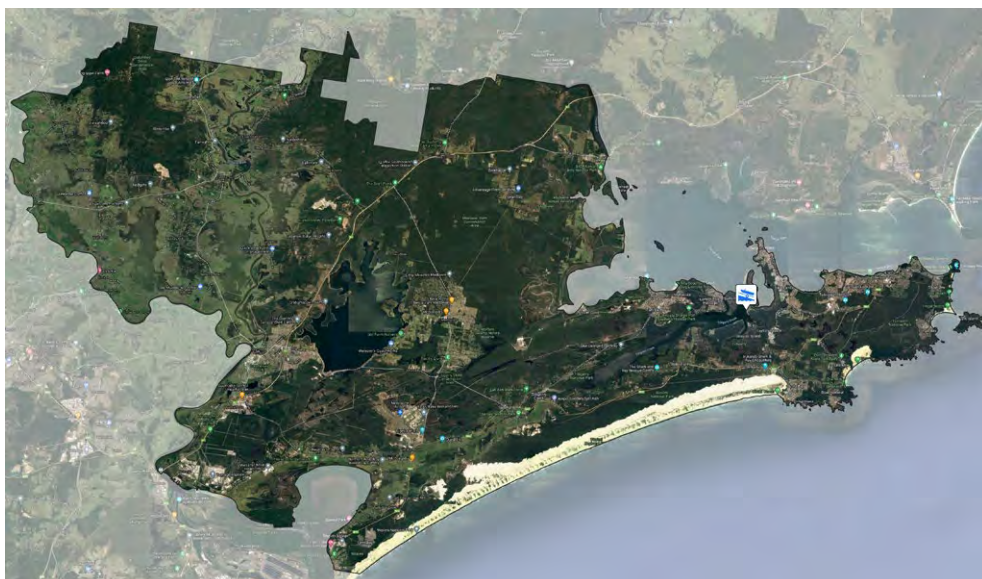
Indicative Costs

\$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 Condition²⁶ and Functionality

- « Satisfactory condition (3)
- « Sand deposits evident on ramp, affecting launch and retrieval in low tide.



Support Infrastructure²⁷

- « 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

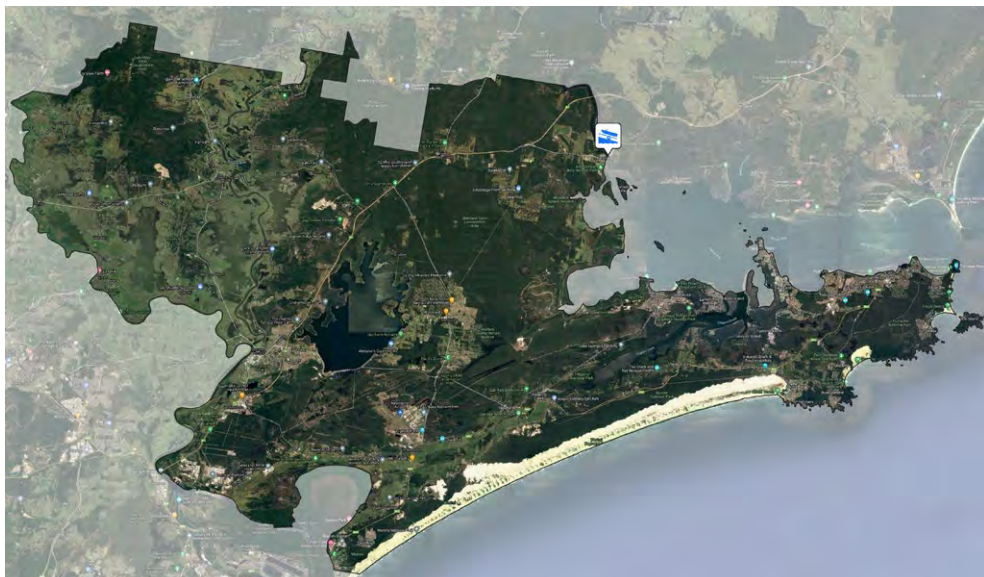


Indicative Costs
\$55,336

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 Buoy 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 Condition²⁸ 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 Infrastructure²⁹

- « 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 manoeuvring bays
- « Reinstate the line-marking and consider opportunities for on-street parking
- « Improve signage and direction related to queuing and manoeuvring
- « 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. Raymond Terrace Boat Ramp



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 Condition³⁰ and Functionality

- « Good Condition (2)
- « Suitable for use by large vessels in all tides
- « Not adversely affected by excessive wind and wave conditions.



Support Infrastructure³¹

- « 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



Indicative Costs

\$1,707,813 (based on the ramp remaining at the current location)



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 Condition³² and Functionality

- « Good Condition (2)
- « Suitable for use by large vessels in all tides
- « Not adversely affected by excessive wind and wave conditions.



Support Infrastructure³³

- « Toilets, Lighting, Bins, Seating, Beach showers, Picnic tables, Shelters, Taps
- « The Lemon Tree Passage Wharf 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



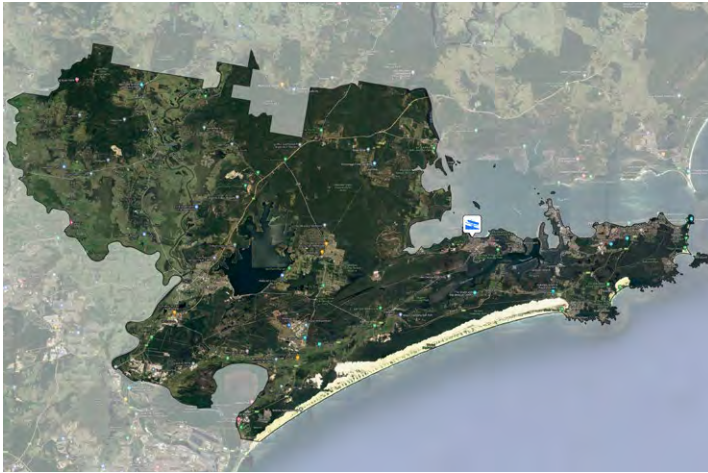
Indicative Costs

\$2,326,687 (includes \$150,000 for relocation of toilets to adjoining park)

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 Condition³⁴ and Functionality

- « Satisfactory Condition (3)
- « Good quality ramp suitable for use by small vessels
- « Not useable at low tide.



Support Infrastructure³⁵

- « 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

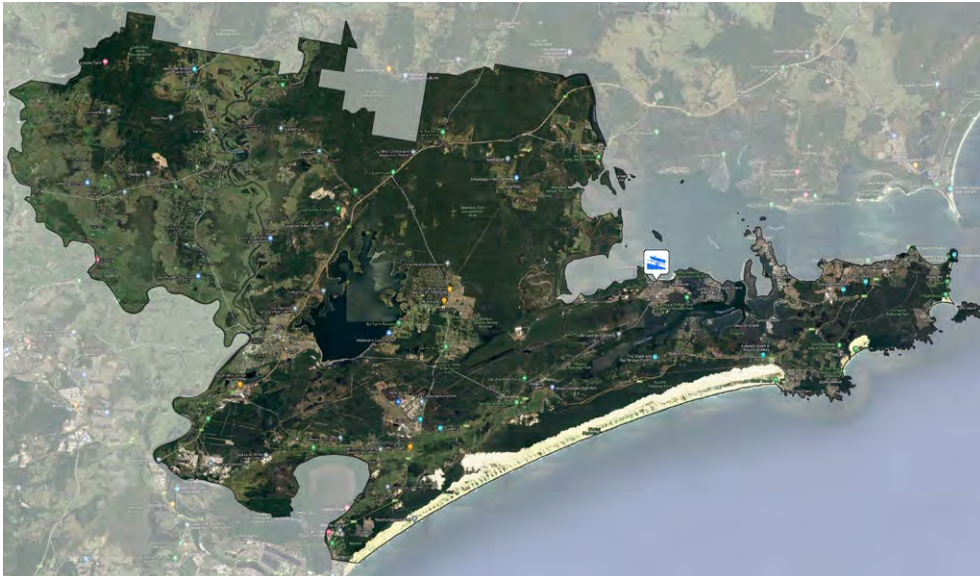


Indicative Costs
\$312,280

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 Peace 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 Condition³⁶ and Functionality

- « Very poor condition (4)
- « Ramp in very poor condition, in deep water, but subject to significant sand build up.



Support Infrastructure³⁷

- « 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.



Fishing and Boating Infrastructure

- « 1 lane boat ramp with concrete at top and aggregate at bottom
- « Dinghy storage racks
- « Boat safety and information signage.



Ramp Condition³⁸ 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.



Current PSC Hierarchy

Local



Access, Parking & Manoeuvring

- « Sufficient car parking and manoeuvrability space, recently partially upgraded to bitumen.



Support Infrastructure³⁹

- « 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 Condition⁴⁰ and Functionality

« Very poor condition (4)
« Suitable for paddle craft only.



Support Infrastructure⁴¹

« 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



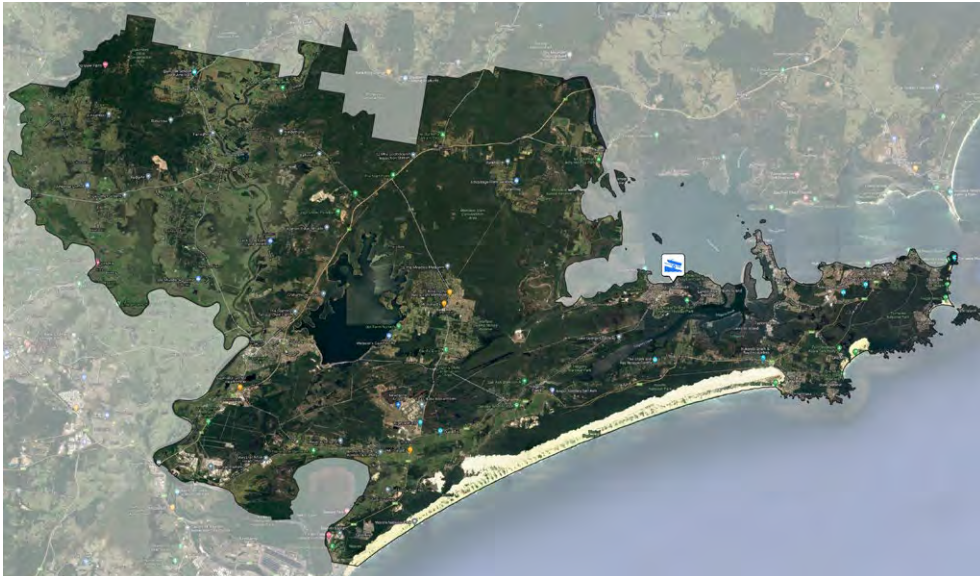
Indicative Costs

\$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 Condition⁴² and Functionality

- « Very poor condition (4)
- « Suitable for small vessels and paddle craft.



Support Infrastructure⁴³

- « New playground and amenities in adjacent parkland
- « Bins, Seating, BBQ, Picnic tables, Beach Shower, Shelters.

⁴² 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.



Condition⁴⁴ and Functionality

« Near perfect condition (1)
« Functions as a local fishing and swimming platform on the riverside.



Support Infrastructure⁴⁵

« 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 Wharf and Tidal Pool



Description & Location

Wharf 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.



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

Figure 26: Future Directions



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 jetty
- « 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

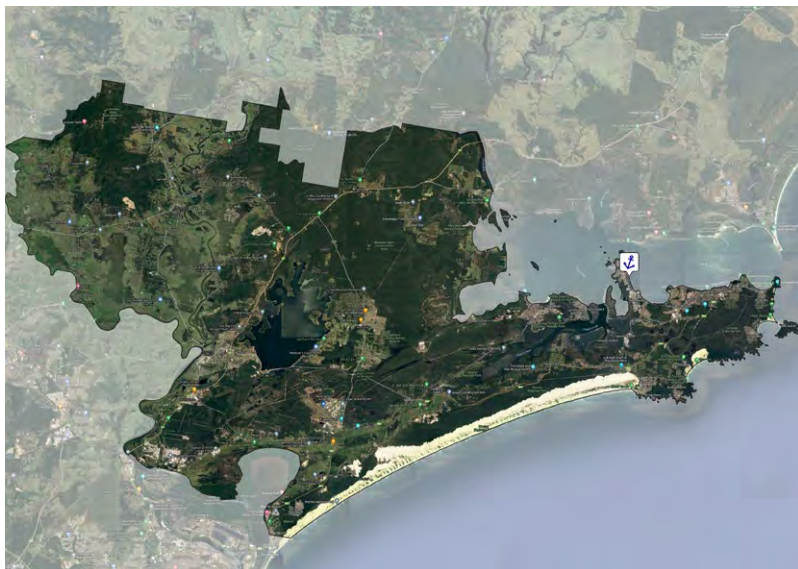
-



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

\$357,789

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

\$160,000 (provisional sum subject to further investigation).

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

Medium



Indicative Costs

Included in boat ramp 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/>





www.otiumplanning.com.au