

Draft Salamander Bay Town Centre

Place Plan



July 2025 – This document is for public exhibition purposes and is expected to change with community feedback received.

Guudji Yiigu

(Goo-jee ik-koo)

We welcome you to
Port Stephens – part of
the Worimi Aboriginal
Nation who speak the
Gathang language.

Artwork by Regan Lilley.



We acknowledge the Worimi as the
original Custodians and inhabitants
of Port Stephens.

May we walk the road to tomorrow
with mutual respect and admiration
as we care for the beautiful land and
waterways together.

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What is a Place Plan?

Place plans are a new way of planning for the growth of the unique towns and villages across Port Stephens. Place plans provide a local filter on the Port Stephens Community Strategic Plan and other strategic documents to create actions which improve the liveability and wellbeing of our communities.

Actions

The actions in our local place plans create alignment in the way we plan for future land use, invest in infrastructure, attract investment and bring life to our streets. Place plans recognise the importance of our public spaces in creating great places to live, work and visit.

Community

Most importantly, place plans start with our community. They respond to the community's values and aspirations; they enable partnerships between residents, business and council and guide a collaborative approach to the delivery of great place outcomes.

Our place planning approach



Local values

Through the Port Stephens Liveability Index, we know the values and priorities of our individual communities. This information provides the foundations of our place plans and helps guide planning and decision making across our community.



Start with yes

A culture that supports innovation and ideas is critical to the success of our place plans. By starting with yes, we can encourage new thinking, new ideas and attract more people to share in creating great places.



Test and trial

Great places don't appear by accident – they take time, effort and a shared understanding that not every project will work every time. By testing and trialling low cost, short term ideas, we learn by doing and create the stepping stones to bigger and better things.



Civic pride

The Port Stephens community is abundant with energy and expertise and people who want to be involved in planning and creating for their place. Place plans provide opportunities for collaboration, foster pride and create meaningful community connection.



Measure and benchmark

When we trial a new idea, launch a new program or invest in our public spaces, we need to understand what works and what doesn't. Measuring the success of our projects and comparing them to the best possible examples we can find will help build amazing places where people will want to live, work and play.

About Salamander Bay Town Centre

Located in the heart of the Tomaree Peninsula, the Salamander Bay Town Centre is a key commercial and community hub, offering a wide range of services and shopping experiences. It includes several large-scale retailers alongside a variety of smaller businesses across the retail, hospitality, health, entertainment, and professional services sectors.

The Centre also provides important community and educational facilities, including the Tomaree Connected Learning Centre, a community childcare centre, the Tomaree Library and Community Centre, and is in close proximity to both public and private schools – making it a focal point for both commerce and learning.

As the only dedicated shopping precinct on the Tomaree Peninsula, the Salamander Bay Town Centre services a broad catchment area beyond its immediate surroundings. Its strong retail offering enables the nearby town of Nelson Bay to focus on boutique shopping and tourism experiences.

The **Town Centre** is primarily made up of low-rise buildings and is surrounded by a mix of land uses, including residential areas, visitor accommodation, recreational facilities, schools, churches, commercial developments, and conservation land.

To the west of the Centre lies the **Mambo-Wanda Wetlands**, covering approximately 175 hectares. This environmentally significant area supports a diverse range of native flora and fauna and holds cultural significance for the Worimi people, the Traditional Custodians of the Port Stephens region.

The **Tomaree Peninsula** is a popular tourist destination, attracting thousands of visitors each year. Tourists come to enjoy the area's beaches, coastal parks, and natural attractions within the Port Stephens–Great Lakes Marine Park and Tomaree National Park, including the recently completed Tomaree Coastal Walk. The region also features a variety of experiences, from wildlife encounters and sand dune tours to dining, heritage sites, arts and crafts, and whale and dolphin watching.

As a result, the local population increases significantly during peak holiday periods. During these times, the Salamander Bay Town Centre becomes a busy hub, placing pressure on traffic flow and parking availability.

Currently, the Centre's layout—with a focus on vehicle access and separation of land uses—can make it challenging to create a vibrant, walkable and inviting environment. However, with improvements to the public domain, including the addition of community gathering spaces, activation initiatives, public art and cohesive landscaping, the Centre has strong potential to develop a unique identity.

As the Tomaree Peninsula continues to grow, the focus will be on enhancing pedestrian access and traffic circulation, strengthening community connections, protecting and showcasing natural assets, and creating new opportunities for housing, health services, and commercial development—supporting a dynamic and sustainable future for the Salamander Bay Town Centre.

Character principles



To create a sense of identity for a unified community and commercial precinct



To ensure future development is sympathetically integrated with the existing surrounds and appropriately activates the precinct



To ensure an integrated pedestrian and vehicular network promotes improved connectivity between developments within the precinct, and reaffirms the precinct as a hub



To ensure appropriate intersections are considered to accommodate for the expansion of the precinct



To ensure future development respects neighbours and users of the precinct



To ensure future development protects the ecological systems within and adjacent to the precinct



To ensure future development is designed with the safety of neighbours and users in mind



To ensure future development supports and is consistent with community activities



To ensure different design styles are developed with people in mind and are brought together holistically



To ensure future development offers economic advantages to the community in the immediate and long term

The residents of Salamander Bay are unique. Knowing who they are helps us understand their values and priorities.



Population

4,991

1,421

Families



42.7%

Labour Force

57

Median age



**Top responses
from industry
of employment**

4.3% Aged care residential services (NSW 2.2%)

3.4% Cafés / restaurants (NSW 2%)

2.9% Accommodation (NSW 0.8%)

2.8% Supermarket / grocery stores (NSW 2.5%)

2.7% Takeaway food (NSW 1.8%)



We've been listening

The community explored the future of the Salamander Bay Town Centre through an extensive community engagement process. Here's a snapshot of the *Salamander Bay Town Centre Place Plan Engagement Report*.

151

Comments
on online
map

66

Online
comments

390

Visitors to
Salamander
Bay Shops
Drop In

16

Workshop
participants

30

Community
Connect
Day

6

Stakeholder
meetings

331

Emails to
businesses
and community
groups

What makes Salamander Bay a great place to live?

In September 2020, 243 people and in 2024, 170 people from Salamander Bay and Taylors Beach completed the Liveability survey, telling us what they value about their community and their priorities for their place. We used this data to shape the Salamander Bay Town Centre Place Plan – to set the vision, and define the actions that deliver the best outcomes for the community.

Key themes

The Liveability survey results indicate that the 6 most important themes of liveability for the people of Salamander Bay are:

-  **Economy**
-  **Housing**
-  **Environment**
-  **Character**
-  **Access**
-  **Community wellbeing**

Most valued

These are the things that are most important to you in your ideal neighbourhood.



Elements of natural environment
(natural features, views, vegetation,
topography, water, wildlife)



Local businesses that provide for daily
needs (grocery shops, pharmacy, banks)



Locally owned and operated businesses



Access to neighbourhood amenities
(cafés, shops, health and wellness
services etc)



Sense of neighbourhood safety
(from crime, traffic, pollution)



Sense of belonging in the community



Sense of personal safety
(for all ages, genders, day or night)

Top strengths

These are the things you care about most
and you believe are performing well. We'll
continue to celebrate and protect these.



Protection of the natural environment



Landscaping and natural elements
(street trees, planting, water features etc.)

Top priorities

These are the things most important to you,
but you believe they're under performing.
We'll work together to improve these.



General condition of public open space
(streets, trees, footpaths, parks etc.)



Evidence of recent public investment
(roads, parks, schools etc.)



Walking / jogging / bike paths that connect
housing to communal amenity
(shops, parks etc.)



Quality of public space
(footpaths, verges, parks etc.)



Access and safety of walking, cycling /
public transport (signage, paths, lighting)





Emerging themes for Salamander Bay Town Centre

Economy: Creating more opportunities for local business

The community told us that they value local businesses that meet their daily needs. The Town Centre is anchored by the Salamander Bay Square Shopping Centre, which is surrounded by a variety of small businesses that provide essential goods and services to residents of the Tomaree Peninsula and nearby areas.

There is a desire from the community for more shopping options within the Town Centre, and for businesses, particularly food and coffee vendors, to be open for longer hours. They also want a lively and inviting atmosphere, with outdoor dining, community activities and vibrant public spaces. Improving the overall design, adding better landscaping and making the area more accessible is likely to enhance the character and vitality of the Centre.

A recent study found that to meet growing demand, the amount of commercial floor space in the Tomaree Peninsula needs to increase. This includes developing existing undeveloped Council-owned land surrounding the Town Centre.

Guiding the future use of undeveloped commercially zoned land within the Town Centre precinct is a key part of this Place Plan, to support local businesses and create a thriving, accessible shopping and community hub.

Housing: Increasing housing diversity in the Tomaree

Council is committed to facilitating a diverse range of housing to meet our growing community over the next 20 years. Undeveloped land, known as greenfield land is becoming scarce in Port Stephens for development, and a greater focus on more diverse housing options in our town centres is required.

Higher density housing close to town centres means there is a larger concentration of people in the centre. When more people live within walking distance, it leads to more activity and foot traffic throughout the day and evening. This constant presence of people creates a lively and safe atmosphere and supports businesses and public transport services that rely on regular customers.

People have different housing needs based on income, household size, age, and lifestyle. A mix of housing types helps everyone find a home that suits their needs. Housing diversity makes it easier for people to downsize and age in place, and provides more supply and choice for first home buyers and people looking for a low maintenance property.

Environment: Investing in the environment

The Port Stephens community highly values the natural environment. In Salamander Bay, a balance is needed between protecting areas of high environmental value, the need to accommodate the growing population, and commercial enterprises that contribute to the local economy and local jobs. Increasing density in town centres is a key way to minimise urban sprawl and reduce car trips.

Protecting our environment requires ongoing investment and management in order to control weeds, feral animals and other environmental threats, and to restore and improve biodiversity values.

To enhance the sustainability of the Town Centre and reduce carbon emissions, we will explore innovative solutions – such as

installing solar panels on more buildings or structures within the Town Centre, increasing shaded car parks or providing electric vehicle chargers.

The community have told us they would like more opportunities to access surrounding bushland areas for recreational activities and educational purposes, and have a desire to see more street trees and native landscaping in the Town Centre.



Public Domain and character: A thriving and vibrant Town Centre

The Town Centre functions as a shopping precinct, that provides essential goods and services to the community. Although functional, there are opportunities to create more vibrancy and character by introducing cohesive landscaping and public art that celebrates the adjoining Mambo-Wanda Wetland. Additionally, creating inviting spaces for community gatherings and entertainment would foster a lively and engaging atmosphere.

People living in higher density homes in the Town Centre can also help create more vibrancy, as residents are more likely to use and activate public open space, walk around the Centre and provide passive surveillance.

The Town Centre is an employment hub. Workers in the centre have told us that they don't have access to a suitable outdoor space to enjoy their lunchbreak, or a nice space for passive recreation. Creating spaces for people

to recreate and gather will improve liveability in the centre, and create a place that is more than just a functional shopping centre. These spaces could also be used for community events and activities.

In response to the Place Plan, a future review of the site-specific chapter of the Development Control Plan (DCP) for the Town Centre will be undertaken. This review will assess whether planning controls are needed to ensure future development enhances the character of the centre, creating a more attractive and vibrant place for residents, workers and visitors.

Community wellbeing: A healthy, accessible and well-connected town centre

Wellbeing is achieved when individuals and communities feel healthy, happy, safe, and connected. It is essential that the Town Centre is a place where everyone—regardless of age, gender, cultural background, or ability—feels welcome and included.

Supporting wellbeing in the Town Centre involves ensuring accessible and reliable transport options, hosting inclusive events and activities that encourage social interaction, and providing access to affordable and appropriate housing, education, and employment opportunities.

Equally important is ensuring the community knows how to access local services, participate in group activities, and respond to emergencies such as bushfires, floods, or storms. Easy access to the natural

environment also contributes significantly to physical and mental wellbeing, offering spaces for recreation, relaxation, and connection with nature.

By focusing on inclusivity and connection, the Town Centre can play a central role in supporting the wellbeing of the broader community.

Traffic and Movement: Moving around the Town Centre

A town centre that is welcoming and accessible for everyone, whether using public transport, walking or cycling, or traveling by mobility scooter or private car, is important in ensuring that everyone can participate in community life and access essential services.

Currently, the design of the Town Centre prioritises cars over pedestrians, making movement around the area difficult and unsafe for pedestrians, parents with small children, cyclists, or mobility scooters.

Community feedback has highlighted the need to enhance access to the Town Centre and improve movement between businesses within the area. Key improvements include better intersection control at access points, upgraded pedestrian facilities both within and around the Town Centre, and more effective traffic management strategies.

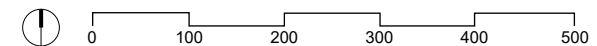
As part of any future Council-led development, improving the current intersection on Salamander Way will be investigated.



Planning for the future of Salamander Bay Town Centre

Key

- 1 Commercial
- 2 Health/Commercial
- 3 Mixed use/housing
- 4 Environment
- 5 Community facilities
- 6 Existing commercial
-  New intersection control
-  Landscape buffer





Mambo
Wetlands
Reserve

SANDY POINT RD

BAGNALL BEACH WAY

SALAMANDER
WAY

2

4

6

5

3

1

Commercial

The Salamander Bay Town Centre precinct is zoned E2 Commercial Centre, serving as the hub for business, retail, community and cultural activity. Within the Town Centre precinct, Council owns 4.7ha of land that is zoned for E2, which remains undeveloped. This land does not include the Tomaree Library and Community Centre, the child care centre, or land with a high environmental value. However, it offers opportunities for future development that can enhance the vibrancy and functionality of the Town Centre.

Strategic planning of this land can support a mix of uses that contribute to a more dynamic and connected centre, while meeting the evolving needs of the community.

Increase capacity of existing zoned land

The Port Stephens Centres and Employment Land Study 2024 (CELS) found that without expanding the capacity of existing commercial zoned land, there may not be enough commercial land to meet demand by 2041. However, by increasing the capacity within the Town Centre—including vacant and undeveloped sites—future demand for commercial space can be accommodated without rezoning additional land.

Achieving higher density on these sites would require redevelopment, which involves significant private investment from property owners. The Council's role in this process is limited but may include facilitating change through planning strategies. Existing development within the Town Centre could increase by adding extra floors (currently, the maximum building height is 15m, or approximately 4-5 storeys), increasing site coverage, or providing underground car parking.

A review of planning controls for the Town Centre will help determine if changes are needed in order to guide redevelopment that meets future needs while maintaining the area's character and community value.

New commercial development

The Council-owned land at 155 Salamander Way and 10 Central Avenue is the only remaining undeveloped zoned commercial land left in the Salamander Bay Town Centre. Environmental studies undertaken for the precinct indicate that most of this land is suitable for development.

As shown on the Planning Map (page 15), future uses of the land are proposed to include commercial development fronting Salamander Way, and mixed-use development — located behind the Library and Community Centre. At 10 Central Ave, future uses include a mix of commercial development and health premises.

To realise this vision for the land, future development applications would be required to subdivide the 155 Salamander Way and 10 Central Avenue sites.

All development applications over the land will be required to include detailed environmental and engineering studies, and will undergo a thorough and robust assessment process.

Community facilities

Tomaree Library and Community Centre

Port Stephens Libraries are welcoming, vibrant spaces that help our community connect and interact. They offer a wide variety of programs designed to inform, educate, and entertain, encouraging participation, creativity, and lifelong learning.

Tomaree Library opened in March 2000, was constructed as a purpose-built building and is well located close to local schools, public transport, and the shopping centre. The total floor space of the centre is 1,822 square metres. The library occupies 749 square metres with an additional 33 square metres of library space used by Port Stephens Historical Society and the Tomaree Museum Association.

An upgrade to the Tomaree Library and Community Centre is not being considered at this time or as part of this Plan. However, Council is preparing a Library Strategy to investigate the future needs for libraries in Port Stephens.

The proposed subdivision retains land around the library, leaving sufficient room for an outdoor gathering space for the community to use for passive recreation. It is intended to enhance this space so it can be used for recreational activities and educational opportunities.

Precinct facilities

The Salamander Bay Town Centre Precinct is also home to a range of community services that support local residents.

The Tomaree Neighbourhood Centre provides essential services like emergency relief, food support, and community outreach programs.

Salamander Early Education is a community based not-for-profit child care centre that has been serving the Port Stephens community since 1992.

Jupiter is a creative hub that supports local entrepreneurs and artists by providing flexible workspaces, events, and programs aims as fostering innovation and collaboration.

Port Stephens FM (100.9) operates as a community-run radio station, sharing local news, music, and events, and fostering a strong sense of local identity and connection.





Housing

Like many regional communities across Australia, Port Stephens is facing the challenge of housing supply, diversity, and affordability. The NSW Government forecasts that over the next 20 years, Port Stephens will need to accommodate an additional 20,000 residents. Specifically, the Tomaree Peninsula is projected to require around 2,680 new homes to support population growth.

With limited opportunity for new greenfield housing developments, housing prices continue to increase, pushing low to middle-income families out of the market.

To address this issue, Council adopted the Port Stephens Local Housing Strategy. This strategy identifies areas for potential rezoning, recommends housing types suitable for different locations, and outlines infrastructure required to facilitate new development.

In preparing the Port Stephens Local Housing Strategy, Council surveyed residents to better understand their satisfaction with available housing choices in Port Stephens. The results provided valuable insights into resident needs, including a desire for more diverse housing options such as smaller lot homes, higher-density housing types like duplexes,

apartments, and terrace houses, as well as senior-friendly housing. The survey highlights that the current supply of these housing types is limited, despite a strong demand.

Port Stephens has long been a desired destination for retirees and older people seeking a more relaxed lifestyle in beautiful surroundings. As the median age of residents continues to rise, the demand for homes suitable for older people is likely to continue. Facilitating downsizing options can help free up larger family homes for buyers and renters, ensuring that existing residents can remain in the area.

To help facilitate the delivery of new housing, Council is progressing the development of Council-owned land in Salamander Bay. These initiatives aim to create a pipeline of new housing types across Port Stephens, meeting population growth, improving affordability and meeting workforce demands.

These projects will provide a variety of housing densities and types, offering suitable options for different community members. The development of these sites can also generate income that can be reinvested into infrastructure improvements and environmental initiatives.

155 Salamander Way

Land surrounding the existing Town Centre offers a valuable opportunity to accommodate both additional commercial development and diverse housing options. Introducing new housing in this area would enable more people to live close to established services, including shops, healthcare, community facilities, and public transport.

The site is already zoned for mixed-use development, allowing for ground floor commercial uses with residential apartments above. Current planning controls support this form of development with building heights of up to 15 metres (approximately 4–5 storeys).

To increase housing supply and support urban consolidation, there is potential to pursue a planning proposal to allow greater building heights on parts of the site—enabling more homes within walking distance of the Town Centre.



Infrastructure

Community feedback highlighted the need to improve access to the Town Centre for both cars and pedestrians. The existing access to the Town Centre from Salamander Way has been highlighted as a particular concern as it only allows for left-turning vehicles. This has allegedly led to dangerous U-turns by drivers when approaching the centre from the east. To address this, Council intends to deliver a new intersection control at this access point. In consultation with Transport for NSW, further studies and design will need to be undertaken to determine the most appropriate treatment.



Did you know?

The process of changing planning controls, such as building heights, starts by identifying an investigation area in a Council strategy, like a place plan. This helps us inform the community about upcoming developments in their area over the next few years.

Next, we perform detailed studies to determine whether an area can accommodate additional development.

We then prepare a planning proposal that explains in detail the proposed changes to the planning controls contained in a Local Environmental Plan (LEP). The planning proposal is processed in accordance with a legislated process that is overseen by the NSW Government. This process includes mandatory community consultation.

Environment

Protecting the natural environment is a top priority for the Port Stephens community. As the area grows, it is essential to balance the need for new housing and development with the preservation of environmentally significant land.

To support this, detailed environmental studies have been undertaken to guide the future use of Council-owned land, ensuring that areas with the highest environmental value are identified and protected.

Proceeds from the sale of Council-owned land will be reinvested into environmental projects—helping to preserve, enhance, and restore the local natural environment for current and future generations.

Town Centre

Approximately 1.41ha of land at 155 Salamander Way, that adjoins the Mambo-Wanda Wetlands, has been identified through a Biodiversity Development Assessment Report (BDAR) as high value environmental land, containing Koala feed trees. This area will be preserved to support conservation.

Further environmental studies will be undertaken at the Development Application stage to guide further development activities.

While expanding the Town Centre may involve some vegetation removal, the BDAR confirms that the land designated for development is not of high environmental value. However, additional environmental studies will be undertaken to determine how development can proceed within legislative frameworks, including biodiversity offsetting mechanisms, to ensure the ongoing protection and proper management of the site.

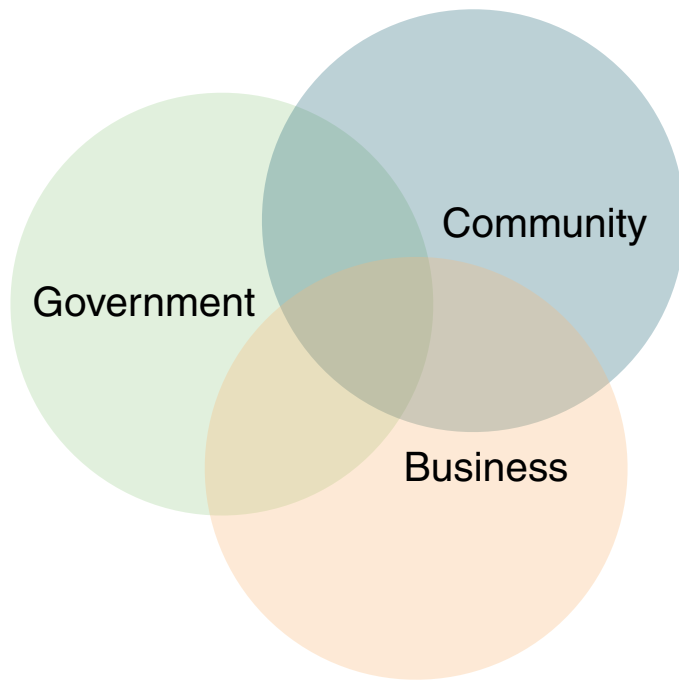
Mambo-Wanda Wetlands

The Mambo-Wanda Wetlands adjoins the Town Centre and is greatly valued by the community as a place of environmental and cultural significance. The land is zoned C2 Environmental Conservation and is owned by Port Stephens Council. As the landholder, Council is responsible for ensuring that this significant area is well looked after and continues to undertake pest and weed management, fire trail management and bush regeneration works. Council relies on volunteers from the community to help look after this important natural asset.

To help maintain this area, Council will be investing money from the sale of the Council-owned land in the Town Centre into the conservation and management of the Mambo-Wanda Wetlands.



A shared responsibility for our place



Individual responsibilities with opportunities for partnerships



Residents

Residents make an important contribution to their place through individual or collective efforts. The impact on the look and feel of a place is through the diversity of people; their rich heritage, lived experience and their sense of ownership of public and private space. Place making activities are developed in partnership with the residents and consider the cultural values with the Traditional Owners of the Land, the Worimi people.

Local workers

Local workers contribute to a place in many ways, and have a connection to a place even if they don't live there. Their presence activates a place and makes it vibrant and they support local business. Some workers even volunteer their time to activities that improve the place.

Visitors

Visitors and tourists, including day trippers, overnight visitors, or those just passing through, play an important role in a place. They provide a customer base that may result in new local businesses, like cafés and restaurants, or key attractions that also benefit residents by offering a larger variety of things to see and do.

Business

Businesses have many opportunities to contribute to placemaking. These could include funding and supporting community projects, collaborating with other businesses, sharing resources or training local workers. Businesses make a vital contribution to the character of the place. Maintaining an attractive shopfront that presents positively to the streetscape contributes to an appealing and welcoming town centre.



Port Stephens Council

Council has 4 different roles in implementing place plans – as a coordinator by providing guidance and assistance for a project; as a supporter by providing permission, inspiration or project funding; as a partner that works with community groups and business to undertake projects; or as the primary organisation that funds and delivers the project.



Investors and developers

A town or city needs people and organisations that believe in its potential, and who are able to invest in its future. Investors, including families, businesses, and developers play an active role in ensuring that development aligns with the strategic direction of a place. They're in a position to deliver and maintain housing, infrastructure, and business opportunities that improve and grow places.



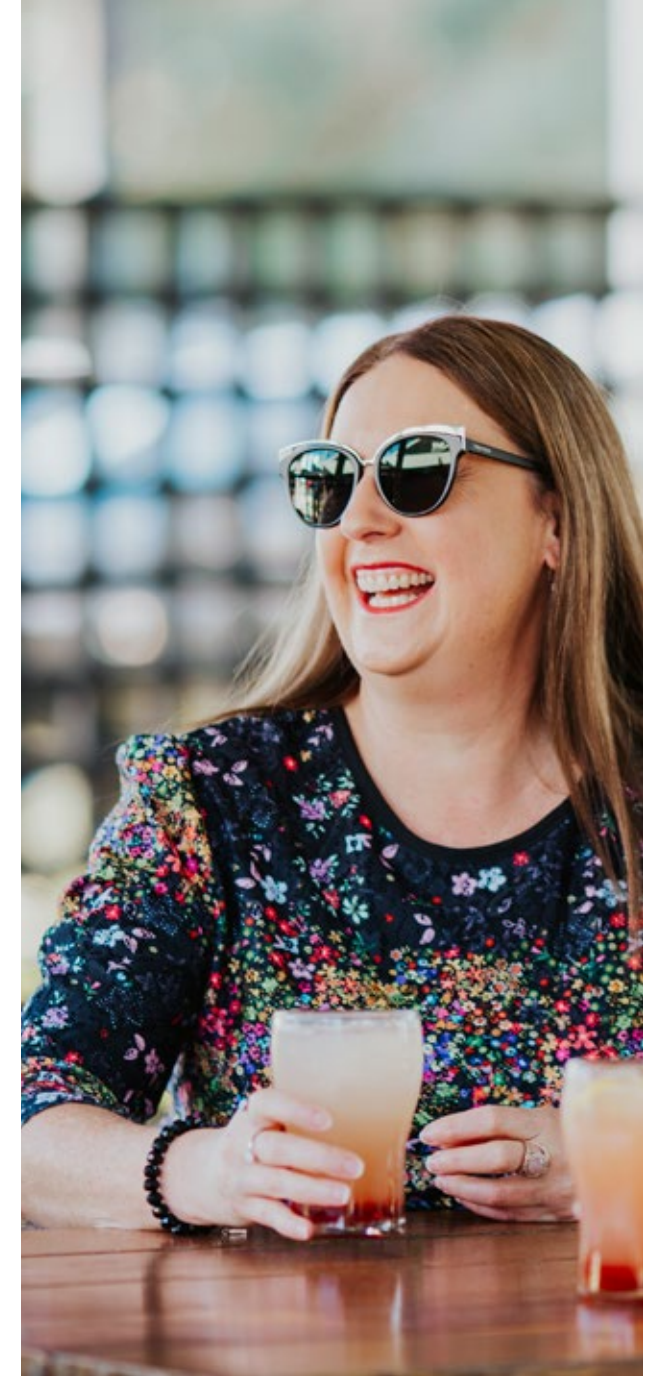
Community groups and volunteers

Community groups and volunteers with a can-do and proactive attitude are vital for placemaking projects. They include sporting clubs, schools, charities, churches, clubs, social groups and environmental custodians. Community groups and volunteers contribute significantly to their community.



State Government

State Government has 3 roles in placemaking – as an authority, setting strategic direction and a funding body. Importantly, they have a significant role in the management of roads and other infrastructure, parks and heritage, which are all essential contributors to the identity of a place.



Look and feel for Salamander Bay

Creating an attractive streetscape brings people into town and compels people to stay and linger. The use of a consistent colour palette and materials can help to create a beautiful town with its own, unique 'look and feel'.

Small projects such as shop front renovations, fence replacements and street furniture may all present opportunities to create a more cohesive town centre and a sense of belonging to the community.

The colour palette represents the many attributes of the Salamander Bay area and celebrates the outstanding natural beauty of the broader Port Stephens East Ward region.



Green for the vibrant foreshore parklands and mangroves that line our waterways.

C: 41% **M:** 0% **Y:** 58% **K:** 0%
R: 91 **G:** 208 **B:** 230
HEX: 5BD0E6



Deep green for the native bushland supporting our wildlife.

C: 91% **M:** 44% **Y:** 66% **K:** 35%
R: 0 **G:** 86 **B:** 78
Hex: 00554D



Blue for the ocean against the horizon line.

C: 89% **M:** 52% **Y:** 44% **K:** 11%
R: 33 **G:** 102 **B:** 119
HEX: 206677



Sandstone for the sandy shores of the East Ward and coastal parts of Port Stephens.



Orange for the stunning skies at dawn and dusk.

C: 0% **M:** 32% **Y:** 68% **K:** 9%
R: 233 **G:** 158 **B:** 75
HEX: E99E4B



Brown for the pale tones of the bark and sedges in the dappled shade of the Mambo Wetlands.

C: 29% **M:** 41% **Y:** 56% **K:** 3%
R: 181 **G:** 146 **B:** 117
Hex: B59275



Sandy white for the glittering sand and boats dotted throughout our waterways.

C: 3% **M:** 4% **Y:** 9% **K:** 0%
R: 244 **G:** 240 **B:** 228
Hex: F4F0E4



Actions

Timeframe

This Place Plan has a planning horizon of 5 years. Timeframes denote when delivery of an action is expected to start.

Short term – 0 to 2 years



Medium term – 2 to 4 years



Long term – 4 to 5+ years



Cost

Cost indicates whether an action is a relatively cheap or a costly undertaking.

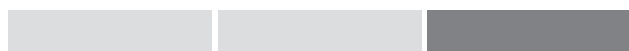
Low



Medium



High



Lead

Each action will be lead by Council or a specific group associated with the action.

Council role

Salamander Bay's Liveability Index results have inspired a series of action items. Port Stephens Council has 4 possible roles in delivering these actions:

- **Coordinate** – As a coordinator, we'll provide guidance on how to start your project, help by identifying approvals required, advise you about funding opportunities, get you in touch with other organisations, or advocate for your project.
- **Support** – As a supporter, we may provide support, permission, inspiration or funding.
- **Deliver** – In delivering, we'll fund and deliver the project.
- **Partner** – As a partner, we'll work with the community, business, developers, and state agencies to undertake projects or programs.

Emerging themes

The Liveability survey results indicate that the 6 most important themes of liveability for the people of Salamander Bay are:

- **Economy**
- **Housing**
- **Environment**
- **Character**
- **Access**
- **Community wellbeing**

Please note: Cost estimates and delivery timeframes are indicative only and subject to further investigation.

The order for commencement of actions is flexible and will be based on timing and availability of funding and resources, and community initiative.

1. Establish a Salamander Bay Town Centre Precinct group

Businesses and property owners play a vital role in shaping a vibrant and welcoming Salamander Bay Town Centre. To harness this local energy and drive positive change, it is proposed to form a dedicated Salamander Bay Precinct Group under the umbrella of the Port Stephens Business Chamber.

This precinct group would bring together property owners and business operators, who are passionate about revitalising the Salamander Bay Town Centre. Acting as a united voice and catalyst for action, the group would lead to initiatives that improve

the appearance of the Town Centre, develop collaborative approaches to revitalisation, create a distinct local identity, and foster a stronger sense of place for the community.

Several priority projects outlined in this Plan provide immediate opportunity for the precinct group to get started, delivering visible, community-driven improvements from the outset.

Council will provide support to bring together the key stakeholders and guide actions to commence this initiative.

Timeframe (ongoing)



Cost



Lead: Port Stephens Business Chamber **Council role:** Support





2. Attracting local businesses to Salamander Bay Shopping Centre

Locally owned businesses play a vital role in creating a distinctive, engaging, and community-connected retail experience. In partnership with the Port Stephens Business Chamber, there is an opportunity to develop a targeted program aimed at attracting locally owned and operated businesses to the Salamander Bay Shopping Centre.

By focusing on local entrepreneurs and independent operators, this initiative would bring together property owners, centre management, business leaders, and community advocates to help shape a more vibrant and locally relevant tenant mix.

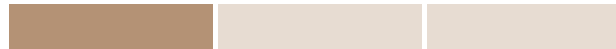
This may include identifying suitable tenancies for activation, developing flexible leasing models and pop-up opportunities, partnering with the Port Stephens Business Chamber to promote opportunities and attract local businesses and supporting fit-out and design initiatives to ensure a high-quality presentation aligned with centre standards

This approach would not only enhance the shopping experience but also build stronger ties between the Centre and the local community.

Timeframe



Cost



Lead: Port Stephens Business Chamber **Council role:** Support

3. Unlocking new commercial, community and housing opportunities

The development of vacant Council-owned land surrounding the Salamander Bay Town Centre presents a major opportunity to deliver vibrant public spaces and a wider range of housing options across the Tomaree Peninsula.

The next step is to prepare and lodge a Development Application for the subdivision of the land, supported by a visionary concept plan that outlines future land uses. Council will undertake detailed environmental studies and design work to ensure the proposal reflects both environmental values and community needs before formally submitting the application for assessment.

Following subdivision and sale, future Development Applications will be required for the construction of new buildings—potentially including commercial, residential, and mixed-use spaces.

The community will have opportunities to provide feedback during the formal public notification periods, helping shape the future character and function of Salamander Bay.

Timeframe



Cost



Lead: Council **Council role:** Deliver





4. Integrating health services into future development

The community have told us that health services in the Tomaree are under increasing pressure and have long expressed the need for expanded health care access. Council recognises that services are stretched thin and providers that once offered bulk billed services are no longer able to do so. This has far reaching consequences, and urgent action is required.

With an ageing population, along with rising housing affordability challenges and the cost of living pressures, many in our community are facing increasing disadvantage.

Council will continue to advocate to State and Federal Governments for more health services in Port Stephens, particularly those that bulk-bill.

Once Council-owned land is subdivided, we will proactively seek to include additional health facilities in the Town Centre. Expressions of Interest will be sought for a developer to construct and manage a health facility in the northern section of the development footprint, as shown on the “Planning Map” on Page 15. While the market will determine what this facility will include, Council will look to support those submissions that deliver quality community health outcomes.

Timeframe



Cost



Lead: Council **Council role:** Deliver

5. Review and strengthen planning controls for the Town Centre

The current site-specific Development Control Plan (DCP) for the Town Centre includes a number of broad objectives, which have been incorporated into this Place Plan as 'character principles' to help shape future development. However, the existing DCP lacks the detailed and tailored controls needed to effectively guide development and ensure it reflects the community's vision for the area.

In the absence of specific provisions, assessment relies on criteria from other DCP chapters, which may not fully address the unique character and planning needs of the Town Centre.

Following approval of the land subdivision, Council will undertake a comprehensive review of the DCP. This review will determine whether additional site-specific controls are required to ensure that future development delivers high-quality outcomes and contributes positively to the evolving identity of the Town Centre.

Timeframe



Cost



Lead: Council **Council role:** Deliver





6. Increase housing diversity in the Tomaree

The Port Stephens Local Housing Strategy aims to increase housing supply and diversity in the Tomaree Peninsula. Council will continue to encourage housing investment in Port Stephens by working to streamline assessment process and reduce planning approval times, making it easier and more cost effective for developers to invest in a variety of housing types.

Council will actively work with developers to ensure diverse housing options are available including houses on smaller lots, higher density housing developments and seniors housing to meet our growing community's needs.

There is a relatively high rate of unoccupied dwellings in the Tomaree Peninsula compared to rates in NSW and Australia. This may

reflect the popularity of short-term rental accommodation (STRA) in Port Stephens, which supports our tourist and visitor economy. However, the data also shows that many of these are holiday or secondary homes that don't contribute to the long-term rental market or support the local economy.

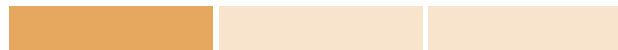
Council will continue to monitor short and long-term rental availability across the Tomaree Peninsula, to inform future actions.

In collaboration with the NSW Government, which oversees the state-wide regulatory framework for STRA, Council will advocate for reforms and explore initiatives aimed at reducing the negative impacts of short-term rentals on neighbourhood amenity and Councils resources.

Timeframe



Cost



Lead: Council **Council role:** Deliver

7. Investigate increased building heights in the Town Centre

Increasing building heights within town centres limits urban sprawl, boosts housing capacity, reduces car reliability and helps improve safety and vibrancy.

While current planning controls permit buildings up to 15 meters (approximately 4-5 storeys), the Council may consider a planning proposal to increase building heights and facilitate additional housing.

For shop-top housing that is within 400m of a town centre or train station in nominated areas, State Planning Policy (Housing) 2021 (SEPP) allows buildings to be up to 24 metres, or 6-8 storeys. While Salamander Bay is not a nominated area, given the close proximity

of retail, health and community services, and public transport, matching the height limits set by the SEPP might be a suitable maximum building height in the Town Centre.

A planning proposal would be required in order to increase building heights, including community engagement, to ensure community feedback is incorporated and developments align with community values.

Timeframe



Cost



Lead: Council **Council role:** Partner



8. Environmental education and sustainability

Education is one of the most powerful tools for protecting the natural environment. There is strong community interest in learning more about the local ecology—particularly the Mambo-Wanda Wetlands.

Expanding environmental education programs, including sustainability workshops tailored to both residents and businesses, offers a valuable opportunity to raise awareness and support practical action to reduce the Town Centre’s carbon footprint.

We will work closely with local community groups, environmental experts, Tomaree Education Centre, St Phillips Christian College and Salamander Child Care Centre to explore and deliver engaging, place-based learning opportunities that inspire long-term stewardship of the local environment.

Timeframe



Cost



Lead: Council **Council role:** Partner

9. Connect with nature

The Town Centre currently lacks a welcoming outdoor space where people can gather, socialise, play, or simply relax in nature. Accessible green space is particularly important for those living in medium-density housing with limited private open areas and for workers seeking a place to enjoy a break during the day.

To address this need, Council will preserve the environmentally significant land north of the library as a public green space. Options to improve access will be explored, including the introduction of nature trails through the site. Enhancements such as picnic tables,

wayfinding signage, and outdoor learning areas may also be incorporated to support both recreation and education, particularly around the adjoining Mambo-Wanda Wetland.

Council will also explore partnerships with local community groups, such as Landcare, to help maintain walking trails and enhance native vegetation and habitats—encouraging biodiversity and providing safe havens for local fauna.

Timeframe



Cost



Lead: Council **Council role:** Deliver





10. A sustainable Town Centre

The Port Stephens Emissions Reduction Action Plan outlines the short, medium and long-term actions to reduce or remove Greenhouse Gas Emissions.

A number of initiatives have already been implemented on Council-owned buildings in the Town Centre, including the installation of photovoltaic systems and energy-saving LED lighting at the Library. The Salamander Early Education Centre has also installed a number of solar panels, at their own cost, to improve the energy efficiency of the building.

A number of property owners in the Town Centre have already invested in solar panels on their buildings. However, to further improve the efficiency of the centre, there is an opportunity for more buildings to utilise solar power.

Additional shaded parking areas could also be installed to reduce the amount of heat absorbed by vehicles and to help mitigate the urban heat island effect.

With the increasing use of Electric Vehicles, businesses are encouraged to investigate opportunities to install public EV fast chargers in the Town Centre. The community have expressed a need for additional options for fast charging in the Tomaree Peninsula.

Timeframe



Cost



Lead: Business **Council role:** Partner

11. Alternative options for staff parking

Customers highly value easy access to shopping centre. Ensuring parking is safe, convenient and located close to entrance points is important for delivering a positive customer experience.

To optimise parking availability for customers, staff parking should be designated on the periphery of a parking lot. While further away, the turnover of staff parking is significantly less as they spend far more time in the Centre. This approach not only reserves parking for shoppers but also contributes to a more organised and efficient parking system.

To encourage staff to park in designated parking, communications around the importance of designated parking and incentives for compliance could be introduced.

In addition, Salamander Bay businesses could engage with nearby schools to open car parks for staff parking during school holidays, freeing up parking closer to the Centre for customers.

Timeframe



Cost



Lead: Business **Council role:** Support

12. Improving community connectivity and access

We want to make it easier and safer to get around Salamander Bay Town Centre — whether you're walking, driving, or parking. To do this, Council will carry out a detailed Traffic, Access and Parking Study. This study will help us understand what improvements are needed and guide future decisions. It will:

- Identify the best spots for new pedestrian crossings and pathway upgrades to keep everyone safe.
- Look at ways to better connect Town Centre Circuit for cars, bikes, and pedestrians, while respecting the environment at 155 Salamander Way.
- Explore options to improve traffic flow, including possible one-way street changes.

- Review parking availability and check if it meets Australian standards.
- Examine intersections, especially near Salamander Way, to improve vehicle access in partnership with Transport for NSW.
- Find new opportunities to improve pedestrian access, including potential new pathways along Salamander Way.

As many parking areas within the Town Centre are privately owned, successful implementation of the recommendations in the study will require collaboration with local property owners and / or the proposed precinct group.

Timeframe



Cost



Lead: Council **Council role:** Deliver

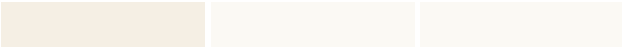
13. Create a sense of identity

Establishing a distinct identity and brand for the Town Centre will help differentiate it from nearby shopping areas and make it easier for residents and visitors to find and recognise the Centre.

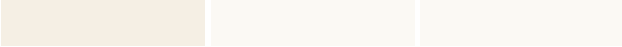
This could be achieved through the installation of welcoming gateway signage at key entry points, along with improved wayfinding from major roads like Nelson Bay Road and Port Stephens Drive.

Businesses and the proposed precinct group can play an important role in bringing this identity to life by sponsoring gateway signage and advocating for enhanced directional signage, reinforcing a strong, consistent image of the Town Centre.

Timeframe



Cost



Lead: Business **Council role:** Support

14. Make our Town Centre more beautiful together

Most of the public spaces in the Town Centre are owned by local businesses and property owners. To make the area more attractive and welcoming, Council, businesses, and proper owners need to work together — the Council, businesses, and property owners.

A connected, clear, and visually appealing environment will give our Town Centre a unique feeling and encourage visitors to stay longer, helping local shops and services.

In collaboration, Council, Port Stephens Business Chamber and the Precinct Group will guide this process, by developing a Streetscape Guide for the Town Centre. This guide will give clear direction on the design, layout, materials, and landscaping

of public spaces—to make public spaces look great and feel consistent across the area.

Businesses and property owners will be encouraged to use the guide when planning upgrades or new developments. A precinct group could support implementation on private land, or businesses may choose to sponsor community groups to deliver landscaping projects and help with ongoing maintenance.

The Streetscape Guide may also be integrated into a future Development Control Plan (DCP) for the Town Centre, with elements such as landscaping to be considered as part of development applications for new buildings.

Timeframe



Cost



Lead: Business **Council role:** Support

15. Improve connection to community services

Social connection and knowing where to find help are vital for community wellbeing.

The Tomaree Library and Community Centre offers a range of services, including free internet and Wi-Fi access, regular programs and author visits. A variety of permanent and casual tenants, groups, services and activities operate from the Centre on a regular basis. These include recreation and social activities, healthy lifestyle, spiritual, educational, cultural and hobby groups.

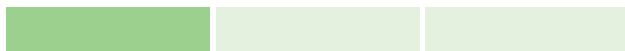
If you're looking for a space for your group to operate from, there are a number of meeting spaces at the Tomaree Library and Community Centre available for hire. For more information, visit:

pscouncil.info/tomaree-library

Timeframe



Cost



Lead: Council **Council role:** Support

Council's Community Support Fund aims to build sustainable local communities, and enhance the wellbeing and development of the Port Stephens community. This grant welcomes applications from community groups and not-for-profit organisations seeking support for projects, activities and events that address community needs. For more information, visit:

pscouncil.info/grants-scholarships

The Tomaree Neighbourhood Centre plays a vital role in supporting vulnerable and marginalised members of the Port Stephens community. Currently operating from the Tomaree Library and Community Centre building, the Centre can be difficult to locate.

To improve its visibility and accessibility, a new sign will be installed in a prominent location, making it easier for community members to find and access the essential services it provides.



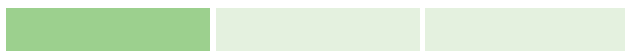
16. Preparing for our library's future

Libraries are important community hubs that offer access to resources, programs, and welcoming spaces for everyone. To make sure our libraries keep serving us well into the future, Council will develop a Library Strategy looking ahead to 2041.

This plan will look at what the community needs, how we can deliver services more effectively, and what new or improved facilities might be needed — including the possibility of expanding the Tomaree Library and Community Centre in the next 10+ years to keep up with growth.

Community members have also shown interest in having a café at Tomaree Library. The courtyard outside could be a great spot for this, and Council will explore working with private partners to make it happen.

Timeframe



Cost



Lead: Council **Council role:** Deliver

17. An accessible Town Centre

Ensuring accessible infrastructure is essential to creating a Town Centre where everyone can participate fully—regardless of age, ability, or mobility needs. Features such as ramps, safe and even footpaths, tactile paving, clear signage, accessible transport infrastructure, and inclusive digital platforms all contribute to a more welcoming and usable environment.

Community feedback has highlighted several barriers to accessibility in the Salamander Bay Town Centre, including uneven footpaths and a lack of appropriate parking for community buses—making it difficult for people with mobility issues and care providers to visit the area.

Council, Port Stephens Business Chamber and the Precinct Group will conduct a Disability Access Audit to identify specific areas for improvement. The findings will be shared with local property owners and businesses, and Council will work collaboratively with them to support necessary upgrades.

By making these targeted improvements, we can create a Town Centre that not only supports people with disabilities, but also benefits older residents, families with prams, and anyone experiencing temporary mobility challenges.

Timeframe



Cost



Lead: Business **Council role:** Support

22. Community connect

We heard that at times, the Tomaree community can find it hard to access information and feel that they miss opportunities to participate and contribute. A community noticeboard is one way for the community to know what is going on in their place.

Theres lots of ways to create a community noticeboard – it could be a digital noticeboard hosted via social media or a physical noticeboard on the wall in the shopping centre. This could be developed and managed through a local community group or business.

Council also provides information on events, projects and engagement opportunities through social media, a digital newsletter, Your Port and printed newsletters.

Council will work on ways to increase the distribution of the Your Port newsletter and other information to ensure it reaches as many Tomaree residents as possible.

Destination Port Stephens provide information on their website about 'what's on' and visitor services that are available.

For further information head to **portstephens.org.au/events**

Timeframe



Cost



Lead: Community **Council role:** Deliver





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